

## St. Paul Elementary ranks second in Virginia

By SHAWN STREET  
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Last month the Virginia Department of Education released the results of the 2025-2026 Standards of Learning tests.

SchoolDigger, a platform that calculates precise annual rankings based on year-over-year test performance metrics, found that one school in the local area performed exceptionally well – St. Paul Elementary School.

“It has become one of the most remarkable academic success stories in rural Southwest Virginia,” officials with St. Paul Elementary School Family Engagement said in a statement.

“The school is currently ranked number two out of 1,111 Virginia elementary and middle schools for the 2025–2026 school year, placing it in the 100th percentile with a five-star rating,” the statement went on to say. “This is not a one-year fluke—St. Paul Elementary has ranked in the

top five schools in Virginia for three consecutive years, after climbing steadily from 107th in 2015–2016.”

In 2025–2026, SPES achieved proficiency rates of 95 percent or higher in every tested subject and grade level, including 100 percent in 3rd, 4th, and 8th-grade math and 100 percent on the 8th-grade Algebra I test.

“For parents, St. Paul Elementary represents an extraordinary combination of high achievement, equity, and efficiency,” the statement said.

Belfast Elementary was the highest ranked elementary school in Russell County. BES ranked 142nd with an average standard score of 84.1 percent. BES slipped 126 spots after having been ranked 16th last year.

Honaker Elementary ranked 359th. The average score at HES was 69.3. HES was 232nd last year, which is a fall of 127 positions.

Lebanon Elementary was the third highest ranked elementary school in the county at position 421. The average score at LES was 64.5. LES climbed up 196 positions after having been ranked 617th the previous year.

Castlewood Elementary had an average standard score of 22.6 and was ranked 919th in Virginia. CES fell a total of 110 spots after having been ranked 809th the previous year.

Lebanon Middle School ranked 253rd out of 416 middle schools across Virginia. The average standard score for LMS was 46.2. For the 2024-2025 school year, LMS was ranked 130th. That is a slip of 123 spots.

Castlewood High School was the highest ranked high school in the county. CHS ranked 237th out of Virginia's 331 high schools. CHS had an average score of 41.7. This marks a slip of 66 spots, as CHS was ranked 171st last year.

Lebanon High was the second highest ranked high school in Russell County. LHS had an average score of 40 and was ranked 245th. Last year LHS ranked 236th, which is a dip of nine spots.

Honaker High was ranked 246th, with an average score of 39.6. HHS fell 66 spots after being ranked 180th the previous year.



A special tribute was held for Gaines and Lynda Dickenson.

## Special events added to the Russell County Fair

By SHAWN STREET  
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Two special events have been added to the schedule of the 2026 Russell County Fair.

In 1967 a relatively unknown country music artist made her debut with the Porter Wagoner Show at the Russell County Fair, which was then held in Lebanon. That artist was Dolly Parton, who would go on to become one of – if not the – greatest country singers of all time.

Parton passed away in August following a brief battle with cancer.

In order to honor Parton's legacy, as well as her link to the Russell County Fair, a “Dress like Dolly” contest will be held on Sept. 10.

Contestants are asked to gather at the General Store on the fairgrounds, with the contest beginning at 2 p.m.

The winner will receive a Russell County Fair Basket.

The second event will honor those who lost their lives in the terror attacks of September 11, 2001.

The 9/11 Memorial will be held on Sept. 11 – the 25th anniversary of the attacks -- beginning at 6 p.m. The memorial will be held at the truck pull strip.

Led by Bill Price, the memorial will include the presentation of colors by the Russell County Sheriff's Office Honor Guard. A bell ceremony will be held by members of the Lebanon Volunteer Fire Department. The Lebanon Veterans of Foreign Wars will have a 21-gun salute, followed by “Taps”.

Delegate Israel O'Quinn will serve as keynote speaker for the event. Miss Virginia Association of Fairs and former Miss Russell County Fair, Izzy Horn will also be present.

First responders in uniform will be admitted free of charge to the fair for the special ceremony. First responders will also receive a challenge coin.

## Russell County Fair in full swing

By SHAWN STREET  
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The 2026 Russell County Fair is in full swing and will continue until this Saturday, September 12.

During the annual Fair Kick-off, several awards were handed out to some of the fair's most dedicated and hardest workers.

The Heritage Award was presented to Ernie and Nancy Perkins.

The Fair Person of the Year went to Josh Castle.

A special tribute was also given to Gaines and Lynda Dickenson.

Although the fair is officially halfway over, there are still plenty of highlights on the remaining schedule.

Wednesday, September 9 is Special Needs Day from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

A cornhole tournament and goat show will get underway at 6:00 p.m. Bull riding will begin at 7:00 p.m. and the 4H market goat show is scheduled for 7:30 p.m.

Mountain Highway will provide musical entertainment at 8:00 p.m.

Senior Citizens, those 55 and older, will be admitted free from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m., as part of Senior Day.

Pen cattle judging will begin at 2:00 p.m. The horseless cowboy contest is scheduled for 5:00 p.m. The Russell County Horse Show is also scheduled for 6:00 p.m.

Gospel acts performing that

SEE COUNTY FAIR | 2A

## Buchanan County man convicted of first-degree murder

By SHAWN STREET  
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A Russell County jury has found Dustin Barrett Owens guilty of the first-degree murder of his pregnant girlfriend.

The trial, which was moved to Lebanon from Buchanan County, lasted just over a week and wrapped up on Thursday, September 3. The jury needed only two and a half hours to return with the guilty verdict.

Owens, 42, a former guard at Keen Mountain Correctional Facility, was charged with the shooting death of Amber Dawn Compton, 35, in October 2022. Authorities said Compton had been shot approximately nine times inside her Vansant home. Several of the

bullets hit the unborn baby she was carrying. Compton was seven months pregnant at the time of her death.

Owens is scheduled to be sentenced on November 20.

Buchanan County Commonwealth's Attorney Nikki Stiltner issued the following statement:

“Today belongs first to Amber Compton, her unborn child, and the family who has carried their loss for nearly four years.

“Rachel and Larry have waited years to see the person responsible for their daughter's death held accountable. They have endured an unimaginable loss, followed by years of investigation and court proceedings, and then sat in that courtroom throughout this trial as the most painful de-



Dustin Barrett Owens

tails of Amber's death were presented to a jury. Their strength and their commitment to seeing this case through have never wavered.

“Nothing we did in that courtroom can give Rachel and Larry their daughter back. Nothing can restore the life Amber should have lived or the life of the child she was preparing to welcome. A guilty verdict cannot undo what happened to this family. But today, twelve jurors heard the evidence, considered it carefully, and unanimously held Dustin Barrett Owens accountable under the law.

“Throughout this case, we have tried never to lose sight of the reason we were there. This case was not about the attorneys trying it, the attention surrounding it, or any single moment in a courtroom. It was about Amber. It was about her child. And it was about presenting the truth of

what happened to them to a jury.

“I am profoundly grateful to the jurors for their service and careful attention throughout this trial. I am equally grateful to the law-enforcement officers, investigators, expert witnesses, victim advocates, witnesses, and members of our prosecution team who worked for years to bring this case to a jury. There were many people from many agencies who carried a piece of this case, and today's verdict would not have been possible without their work.

“Most of all, I hope today gives Amber's family some measure of peace. Justice cannot make this family whole again. But today, Amber and her child were heard. Today, they mattered. And today, there was accountability.”

# OBITUARIES

## Anna Hill Stevens

With deep love and gratitude for a life well lived, the family announces the passing of Mrs. Anna Hill Stevens, a devoted wife of 47 years, a loving mother, and a Christian woman whose life was a testament to her unwavering faith in God. She was the heart of her family, always putting others' needs before her own and sharing her love through kindness, compassion, and quiet strength. Her gentle spirit, steadfast faith, and unconditional love touched countless lives, and her legacy will continue to live on in the family and friends who were blessed to know her.

Anna Hill Stevens, age 64, passed away at Lebanon on September 5, 2026. Mrs. Stevens was preceded in death by her special father-in-law, D. G. Stevens, and mother-in-law, Julia Stevens; maternal grandmother, Mary Wolford; paternal grandparents, Alvin and Lilly Hill. She is also happy to see her pets Butterball, Cricket, Blue, Prissy, Kip Kat, Todd Packer, and Nora Charles Stevens in

Heaven. She is survived by her husband, Anthony Gerald Stevens of Lebanon; two children, Anthony Gerald Stevens, Jr., of Abingdon, and Valerie Lynn Stevens, of Shepherdstown, WV; Anna's beloved animal children, Izzabella "Izzy" Stevens (her favorite daughter) and Catfish Stevens; her parents, Clyde and Betty Hill, of Clintwood, Virginia; two brothers, Conrad Hill and wife, Regina, of Bee, Virginia, and William Joseph Hill of Clintwood, Virginia; two sisters-in-law, Carolyn Farley and husband, Jamie, of Lebanon, Virginia, and Charlotta Stevens of Atlanta. She also had great affection for Jean Murphy, a friend who was like family.

Visitation was 6:00 p.m. and Celebration of Life services was 7:00 p.m. for Mrs. Stevens on Tuesday, September 8, 2026, at the Pleasant View Global Methodist Church, 18416 Lee Highway, Abingdon, Virginia, with Pastor Jake Herron and Associate Pastor Barbara Farmer officiating. A



private burial was held Wednesday in the Forest Hills Memory Gardens. Pallbearers were Conrad Hill, Joe Hill, Randy Rose, Adam Hill, Zach Hill, and Jake Hill.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made in her honor to the Animal Defense League of Washington County, Virginia, P.O. Box 2099, Abingdon, Virginia 24212, [www.adlwashcova.org/](http://www.adlwashcova.org/) or Glioblastoma Foundation, P.O. Box 62066, Durham, NC 27715, [glioblastomafoundation.org/](http://glioblastomafoundation.org/).



Josh Castle is the Fair Person of the Year.

## COUNTY FAIR

FROM PAGE 1A

night will include the Holston River Boys at 6:00 p.m., followed by The Hubbard Family, The Jackson Family, Mike Upright, and Jeff Tolbert and Primitive Road.

School Day is Friday, September 11. School-aged children will be admitted free until 3:00 p.m.

Activities for that day include the youth tractor driving contest at 9:00 a.m., School Day activities beginning at 10:00 a.m., baby crawling contest at noon, toddler stickhorse race at 12:15 p.m., and the carnival will open at 1:00 p.m.

The open poultry show is scheduled for 5:00 p.m. The truck pull will start at 6:00 p.m., with the horse pull beginning at 7:00 p.m. The 4H poultry show and sale is scheduled for 7:30 p.m.

Gents and Liars will take to the stage at 8:00 p.m. The last day of the fair, Saturday, September 12, will be a busy one. The Open Western Horse Show, side-by-side race, lineman rodeo, breeding sheep show and horseshoe pitch tournament are all scheduled to begin at 10:00 a.m.

The commercial sheep show will get underway at 11:00 a.m. Double elimination horseshoe pitch will start at noon, as will more side-by-side races.

The chainsaw demonstration and competition are scheduled for 1:00 p.m. The pet show will start at 2:00 p.m.

Weighing of market hogs is at 3:00 p.m., the market hog show at 5:00 p.m. and the open horse show at 6:00 p.m.

Kickn' Up Dust will headline the main stage at 8:00 p.m.

Daily tickets to the Russell County Fair are \$10. Children ages 6-17 are \$5 and children under 5 are free. Season tickets are \$40 for adults and \$20 for children.



The Heritage Award was presented to Ernie and Nancy Perkins.

## Belcher Named to Virginia Business Power 500 List

Virginia Coalfield Economic Development Authority Executive Director/General Counsel Jonathan Belcher has been named to the Virginia Business Power 500 listing for the fifth year in a row.

The 2026-2027 list recognizes what the magazine defines as Virginia's most powerful and impactful leaders in business, government, nonprofits and higher education. Leaders are categorized among 20 sectors, including banking, economic development, government contracting, healthcare, law and real estate.

Belcher's work in economic development was recognized by the magazine, which also took note of his leadership as executive director of the Virginia Coalfields Expressway (CFX) Authority.

Belcher became executive director of VCEDA in 2006 and was named executive director of the Virginia Coalfields Expressway Authority in 2020. He has been with VCEDA since 1997, initially as its funds administrator and general counsel and also continues to serve as its general counsel.

"I am humbled by the recognition and I feel honored to be listed among so many leaders in our Commonwealth," Belcher said. "I congratulate the others who were also named to the list in the various categories the magazine considered."

Southwest Virginia honorees in addition to Belcher included in this year's edition are Virginia Delegate Terry Kilgore; Chancellor of the University of Virginia's College at Wise Donna Henry; CEO of the Virginia Tech Foundation and President



VCEDA Executive Director/General Counsel Jonathan Belcher was among the honorees named to Virginia Business Magazine's Power 500 list for 2026-2027.

of the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center Elizabeth McClanahan; President of the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino in Bristol, Allie Evangelista; and President and CEO of EO Travis Staton.

The magazine noted that during his time at VCEDA, Belcher "has helped bring tens of thousands of jobs and billions in private investment to the authority's seven-county, one-city Southwest Virginia region through numerous economic development deals."

In 2025, as the magazine noted, VCEDA approved 59 loans and grants totaling \$18.7 million. Funded projects are expected to create 584 full-time and 124 part-time jobs and generate \$180 million in private investment.

Belcher also serves as the executive director of the Virginia Coal-

fields Expressway Authority. Approximately 10 percent of the total mileage of the CFX in Virginia has been completed and opened in the last three years. Another 2.07 miles is expected to open in late 2027. Projects of the CFX Authority so far this year have been approved for \$3 million in federal CDS funding; \$7 million in the state budget signed this year; and \$1.6 million in AMLER funds announced last week. More than \$32 million for CFX projects has been raised since the CFX Authority became operational in 2021.

"It takes a team of dedicated individuals to create economic development opportunities in our region and I am proud to be a part of that team," Belcher said. "The VCEDA board is tasked with helping the region grow and diversify and the Virginia Coalfields Expressway Authority Board is tasked with helping to advance what I would argue is one of the most critical road projects in the state."

Belcher credited the men and women who serve on the boards with which he works for the growth and accomplishments which have been made through the years, adding, "I am proud to do my part to assist in that growth and I look forward to the great things we will accomplish in the future."

Belcher is a graduate of Morehead State University with a bachelor's degree in real estate and holds a law degree from William & Mary.

The complete Power 500 listing in Virginia Business Magazine may be found at <https://virginiabusiness-vanewsmemory.com/?token=am9uYX-RoYWSAdmNIZGEudXM=>

## Hooker reviews start of the school year

By SHAWN STREET  
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The 2026-2027 school year is off to a good start, according to Russell County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Kim Hooker.

Hooker stated during the Sept. 1 meeting of the school board that a total of 3,295 students are enrolled from Pre-K to 12th grade.

"We have gotten a lot of transfer students in," Hooker explained. "I'd also like to thank our staff, our teachers and our administrators for a great start of the school year. I appreciate everyone and the work they've done over the summer to get our schools ready."

The first day off for students was for Labor Day and the second day off will be Sept. 11, as it is Fair Day. Sept. 11 will be a work day for teachers, Hooker said.

Castlewood Elementary School will soon have a new principal. Current principal Adam Padgett will resign from the position, effective Sept. 30. Padgett will be replaced by Adrienne Robinson.

District 3's JJ. Eaton asked Hooker and school board members to look into the dress code as it pertains to hats.

"I'd like to look at the dress code for the pros and cons of allowing boys to wear hats in our high schools," Eaton said. "I'd like to look into allowing them to wear hats."

Eaton also offered praise for the Go Tech Lab at Honaker High.

"If you get a chance, you need to go check it out," he told his fellow board members. "They've got 3D printers, engravers that does metal and wood. They got digital animated welding. It is just unreal. It is something I wished we had when I was in school. That's an awesome program."

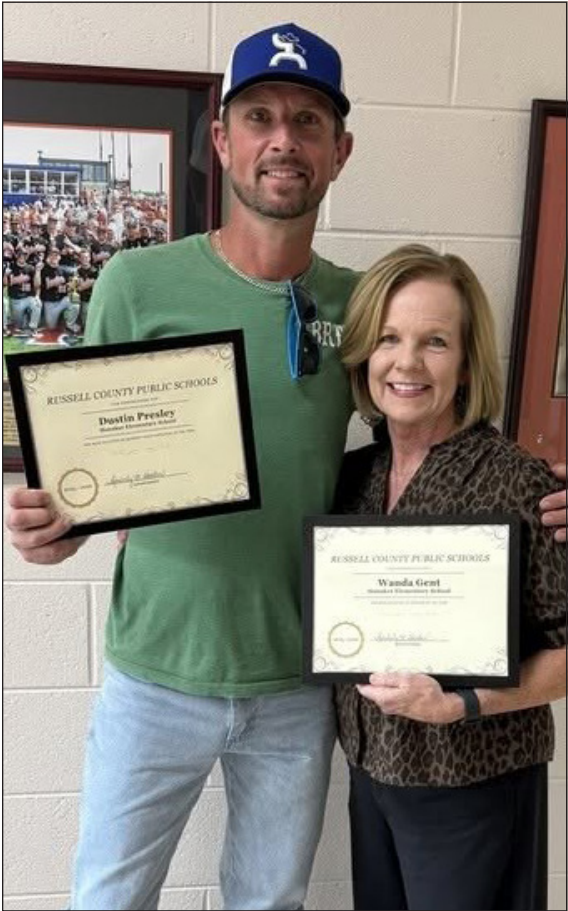
School board members voted to name the press box at Castlewood High School's baseball field after Dan Glass.

The price for adult breakfast and lunch will be increasing. The price for breakfast will be \$2.95 and lunch will be \$5.05.

"I do want to add that this is not a Russell County decision," Hooker said. "It is something our school nutrition

coordinator goes through filling out information and it comes through the federal program."

The school board also honored its Teacher of the Year and Employee of the Year. Wanda Gent, of Honaker Elementary School, is the Teacher of the Year. Honaker Elementary School's Dustin Presley was selected as the Employee of the Year.



Dustin Presley and Wanda Gent were honored by the school board.



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Russell Democrats to host Change on the Clinch this week

By SHAWN STREET  
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The Russell County Democratic Committee is hosting Change on the Clinch this week at the Cleveland Community Center in Cleveland.

The event is scheduled for Thursday, Sept. 10 from 4 p.m. until 8 p.m.

Joy Powers, the Democrat nominee for the Ninth District's seat in Congress, will serve as the keynote speaker. A question and answer session with Powers is scheduled for 6:30 p.m.

Other speakers include Dr. Amy Branson and former Cleveland Mayor Jennifer Chumbley.

Topics of discussion include the proposed data center that would be located on the old Moss 3 site, local pharmacies, the local coal industry, and farming and agriculture issues.

Change on the Clinch will also feature plenty of fun activities as well.

Various booths and vendors will be on hand, as well as the food truck Holy Smokes BBQ.

Games such as giant jenga, cornhole, ring toss, cake walk and a community



Congressional candidate Joy Powers will be in Cleveland on Thursday.

raffle will take place from 4 p.m. until 6 p.m.

Honaker Harvest Jubilee scheduled, talent announced

By SHAWN STREET  
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The lineup for the second annual Honaker Harvest Jubilee has been announced.

According to Aaron Bostic, who will be serving as emcee of the event, the concert will take place on Oct. 3 from noon until 3 p.m. The concert will be held on the Town Park Stage.

Dove Award and Grammy Award winner Jason Crabb will be headlining the event.

Eddie Street, Servants Heart and the Taylor Brothers will also be performing.

"This year will be the second annual Honaker Harvest Jubilee gospel singing," Bostic said. "Last year was such a great success, we look forward to building on that event and continue to grow each

year."

Bostic praised the town's concert area and encouraged everyone to attend.

"The Town of Honaker has a beautiful new town park with a beautiful stage, picnic shelters, a splash pad and a park for children," he said. "This is a perfect place for families to hang out."

Bostic added, "There will be great gospel singing, along with good food from local vendors. We ask everyone to come out and bring a friend and be sure to bring your lawn chair and enjoy a great time."

The Honaker Harvest Jubilee is free of charge.

In case of inclement weather, the event will be moved to the Honaker High School auditorium.

For more information, call 276-701-7625.



Jason Crabb will be headlining the Honaker Harvest Jubilee in October.

Calendar of Events

SUPPORT GROUP FOR FEMALE SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

Women survivors of sexual assault are invited to attend regular support group meetings or individual support if they prefer. Survivors meet in a safe environment with other women who have had similar experiences. Clinch Valley Community Action, Inc. Family Crisis Services knows and understands what a survivor is going through. The fact that you are alive and reading this means that you are incredibly strong, courageous and intelligent. We are here to aid in the recovery process with individual support sessions. Please call and let us help. We are a confidential service. For information, call Rannetta Davis (276) 889-8206 or Haley Slade at (276) 988-5583.

SONS OF CONFEDERATE VETERANS MEETING

Sons of Confederate Veterans Capt. John F. McElhenny Camp 840 meets 4th Thursday each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Russell County Public Library, Lebanon, Va.

GOSPEL SINGING

There will be a Gospel Singing at the Church of Jesus Christ on Stoots Street, Lebanon on Sept. 11, 2026 at 7 p.m. The singers will be Faith on Fire, Divine Glory, and Spirit and Truth Singers. Everyone come out and worship with us.

DISASTER RECOVERY TASK FORCE

The Russell County Disaster Recovery Task Force will meet at Pat's Diner in Lebanon on Sept. 17 at 6 p.m.

HONAKER HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 1966 REUNION

The Honaker High School Class of 1966 will hold its 60th Reunion on Saturday, Sept. 19, 2026, at the Russell County Conference Center in Lebanon. Details about the time, as well as the cost per person will be forthcoming. Also, the Class of 1968 has asked to join us. It'll be a great time for us to reconnect!

Contact Jim Baldwin for more information at the following: Phone/Text 276-608-7186, Email: jimbaldwin2@outlook.com

COMMUNITY MEN'S BREAKFAST

A Community Men's Breakfast originally organized by men of the Lebanon Memorial United Methodist Church is held the 2nd Saturday each month at Pat's Kountry Diner at 8 a.m. All men in the area are welcome to attend. The purpose of the gathering is to share in fun, food and fellowship. Breakfast can be purchased from a buffet or menu. If not interested in eating breakfast, just show up for funny stories, a brief devotional, and community announcements.

These three activities take about 20 minutes. The next breakfast is Sept. 12, 2026. We hope you will join us.

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- GAME ROOM COMING IN SEPTEMBER WITH POOL TABLES, DART BOARD, BOWLING GAME, AND GOLF GAME PAC MAN
- AND OTHER GAMING ACTIVITIES

Congressman Griffith: War Drones

Technological innovation in warfare fuels American strength.

The American Civil War introduced numerous innovations in warfare, including tethered gas balloons for aerial reconnaissance as well as ironclad gunboats.

Throughout the history of our country, perhaps no weapon was more impactful than the atom bomb. The bomb helped the United States force Japan's surrender and end World War II.

Later, during the Cold War, the United States deployed the world's first-of-its-kind fleet of nuclear-powered ships, including submarines. This advantage cemented the status of American naval power in the world.

The evolution of modern military technologies continues to reverberate in the 21st century.

A central component of this evolution is the proliferation of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), more commonly known as drones.

The drone universe is incredibly diverse and the settings for their uses continue to grow.

The range of these technologies extends from niche surveillance tools to critical features of modern military power. They support counterterrorism missions, maritime security, and rapid-response scenarios.

Further, many cheap, commercially adapted drones now perform reconnaissance, artillery spotting, electronic warfare and kamikaze strikes.

Meanwhile, advanced militaries deploy stealthy combat drones, swarming systems capable of overwhelming defenses, and counterdrone technologies such as directed-energy weapons and electronic jamming.

Collectively, these advancements have reshaped battlefield dynamics. Persistent surveillance, precision strikes, and smaller actors who historically lacked access to advanced airpower represent the dramatic rise in drone activity for combat.

Modern conflicts and military strategies now reflect the reliance on drone technologies.

Exhibit A? The Russia-Ukraine conflict.

The power of drones was on display during the early weeks of the conflict when Ukrainian drones substantially halted a Russian convoy of Russia's best tanks.

Further, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky remarked that Russia fired nearly 1,500 drones at Ukraine during a recent four-day period in August.



MORGAN GRIFFITH

WEEKLY REPORT FROM THE CAPITOL

Russian drone incursions into Eastern Europe are unsettling our European allies. Germany recently accused Russia of trying to launch a drone attack on a German airport.

Meanwhile, Iran's drone program, propped up by Russian interests, continues to target American military assets and threaten stability in the Middle East.

Further, Iran helped supply the Maduro regime in Venezuela with UAV capabilities that put American shores within striking distance.

This growing industry shows that numerous militaries, namely America's adversaries, view drones as a vital technology for success.

Accordingly, the Trump Administration and Republican Congress are working to support American military adjustments to this new reality.

President Trump's "Unleashing American Drone Dominance" Executive Order calls for measures that support American leadership in the drone space.

This summer, President Trump introduced a drone tariff program. This program is meant to reduce our reliance on foreign countries for drone components and parts, bolster American drone production and protect U.S. national security.

Further, in the 2025 reconciliation package, I voted for the Working Families Tax Cuts which invested \$1.4 billion to expand the American unmanned aerial system (UAS) industrial base!

Hundreds of millions in additional federal funds from the bill will support the development, procurement and integration of UAS technologies.

The federal demands to increase our understanding and development of drone technologies have the attention of leading institutions, including Virginia Tech.

In late August, I attended a ribbon-cutting for the new Virginia Tech Counter-UAS Testing & Research Center.

This Center is one of only nine UAS test sites designated by the Federal Aviation Administration.

Other speakers at the program included President Tim Sands, Dr. Eric Paterson of the Virginia Tech National Security Institute, Senator Mark Warner and Mr. Tombo Jones of the Virginia Tech Mid-Atlantic Aviation Partnership.

Jones noted the sophisticated technologies that strengthen the stealth of drones. Thanks to advances, these UAVs can fly undetected by radio frequency detection systems and at extremely high speeds.

This shows the urgent need to develop counter-UAS technologies.

Further, the event featured a live swarm demonstration, a drone library and a radar system platform.

The Center will operate an indoor lab and an outdoor range as part of its initiatives.

With the Center up and running, we are excited that Virginia Tech will provide key insights into counter-UAS technologies, help U.S. national security and project American strength.

The projection of American strength requires an integration of next generation systems.

As military weapons and technologies transform, it is vital that America not only keep pace, but stay ahead.

We recognize that letting our adversaries have the upper hand in advanced weaponry threatens American interests and freedom around the world.

I will continue to support policies that strengthen American military readiness, facilitate American technological progress and accelerate American drone power.

If you have questions, concerns, or comments, feel free to contact my office. You can call my Abingdon office at 276-525-1405 or my Christiansburg office at 540-381-5671. To reach my office via email, please visit my website at <https://morgangriffith.house.gov/>.

Another letter from your Mountain

Dear Cousin,

Well September is here and I'm looking forward to fall and cooler weather. And looking over the old Currier and Ives calendar mom left at her house, I found a few interesting things. It tells a lot of history, what happened, on what date in the month of September.

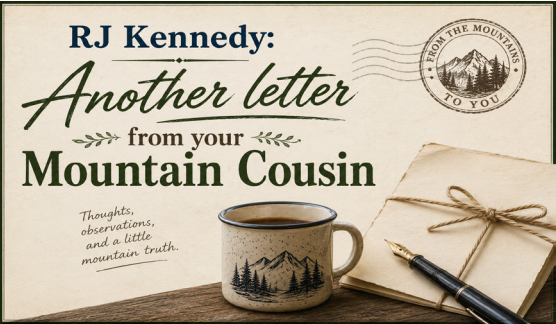
Did you remember that an "Anarchist" shot President McKinley on September the 6th, 1901? So we had trouble with Anarchist way back then. And the youth of our day thought they were on to something new. President McKinley died then on the following September 14th, 1787. And on September 17th, 1787, the U. S. Constitution was signed. On September 19th, 1796, Washington gave his farewell address. In 1789, there was a whole lot going on in that September. On the U.S. Treasury Department was established, and on the 22nd, the United States Post Office was established by an act of Congress.

On the 24th the U.S. Supreme court was established and on the 29th, the U.S. War Department of Army was established. Apparently, people could get more done back then. On September the 3rd, 1783, the Revolutionary War ended. (I didn't remember that it lasted that long!) So there is your free history lesson cuz.

Sorry about last week's letter cuz, I did not realize that Dolly Parton's death had not been released to the press, but was first released to her fans. So the press was a little behind "Verifying" her death. And personally, I like AM over a.m. because I hate typing those little dots, and I can see the capital letters better.

And the news from Nepal just gets worse. The latest death toll at this date is 1252, with 4,875 still missing according to Sikkim News. China's Communist Controlled government news gave the number out as 1093.

News reporters on site are just blown away at the



devastation. It truly is unbelievable. I'm sure by the time this letter reaches you the death toll will have risen significantly.

They now believe the water came through at one hundred miles an hour. Our prayers are with them and the rescue workers. Much aid is needed!

And thankfully the rains have stopped here and the first field of hay is in the barn. It was a bit heavy even with four days of drying out. Everyone struggled with the weight of the bales. We hope to get the rest up the next bunch of dry days. And since the rain stopped, the trees stopped falling.

The weed cutting is still going on. Better half keeps bush hogging the pastures and we keep rotating the cows along. The spring calves are getting big.

Our new help on the farm has been great. He is a hard worker. And he loved the farm so much he and a friend decided to do an overnight camping trip up top. It was a bit hot and humid, and we had trouble with the instantaneous hot water heater, so I suggested a dip in the river to cool off. And so they did and did some fishing as well. His friend loved the goats and they got to see the cows and donkeys. He finished out the day helping cut a very steep hillside, too steep to safely bush hog, while his friend hauled home some very damp covers and tent.

Well that's all for now cuz, I know this is a short letter, but we're taking off this morning to get supplies, these days working out in ninety degree heat is wearing us down and we need a slower day.

Oh, sorry about the confusion about the board of supervisors meeting, it is on the seventh, it will be interesting to see what happens.

Until next week.

RJ Kennedy



DEBBIE GIBSON

The bloom, the fragrance and the thorn

At the end of the school year last year I was gifted by one of my students with a beautiful rose bush. I planted it right beside my front porch so I could see it as I come and go, and remember that beautiful things happen on a daily basis. The bush has not failed to deliver. It has bloomed and bloomed, and is now blooming again before the soon-coming frost creeps by and kisses it. I sniffed and gazed at the flowers this morning as the fog was caressing Old Castlewood and I thought about blooming and dying, leaving a fragrance, sometimes being prickly, and how all of those things come to each of us in due season. Who knew one tiny bush could spark such thought frenzy?

Blooming is hard work. The right conditions have to be present for a bloom to appear. Adversity always comes to a plant, and a person, in the process of blooming. Lack of warmth, drought, pests, poor soil, and being picked before prime picking time will all do a number on the attempt to bloom. All of us have known someone whose life is filled with a chill. Personal drought is even more devastating, in that it slowly withers the mere attempt to bloom. Pests show up uninvited, someone usually has to help with nutrient deficiency in the soil of life, and cruelly, some are picked before their full beauty is even known to the world.

Dying is hard, too. We have occasion to die to self on a daily basis. We lay down our selfishness so that another may be blessed. We die to bad habits and bad attitudes, and the world around us is transformed. If you think about it, we are really born to die. Just as a flower goes to seed, so too does our life. What we sow, we reap, and what we sow others often reap. As a teacher, I understand this. I sow seed on a minute-by-minute basis. Some seed I see mature, and some seed is long in coming. It matters not to me, I only care that the seed eventually comes forth and makes the world a better place.

Fragrance of life is a reminder to me that everywhere one goes something is left behind. That fragrance may be sweet or putrefying. When the petals are crushed on a rose the scent rises up and wafts into the air. Could we say the same about ourselves? If you live long enough, you will be crushed. Someone will thoughtlessly step on you, break your heart, take you for granted, or deceive you. You can hardly be responsible for another person's actions, but you can be responsible for the fragrance you emit after the injury.

But what do we do with these thorns? Thorns protect the rose from animal and human predators. I suppose our own thorniness arises as an attempt at protection also. If you have been taken advantage of, let's say financially, you grow a thorn when it comes to your pocketbook. If the love you offer is thrown away, you grow a thorn so another individual of the same mettle cannot get next to your tender care. The thorn has its divine purpose.

I want that tiny rose bush to survive the winter and come back to me when the snows and chill pass. I want it to remind me of the ways we are alike in intent and desire. I also want it to serve as a reminder that even a thing of beauty is vulnerable. But most of all I want it to remind me that everything and everyone has a season to bloom, a season to rest, natural enemies, and circumstances that must be adapted to. Then, when time is full, we'll perish, but happily not before we lend our beautiful nature to those around us! Here's to the bloom, the fragrance, and even the thorn!

Dolly Parton, We Will Always Love You

I was in the third grade when my teacher announced that President Kennedy had been shot. I was in the parking lot of an auto parts store in Englewood, Ohio when I heard on the radio that Elvis had died. I will always remember where I was when I learned the sad news that Dolly Parton had died.

The first time I saw Dolly was on The Porter Wagoner Show. For a long time, Wagoner's female guest artist was Norma Jean.

He always introduced her as "the pretty Miss Norma Jean". Then, one Saturday night there was a new guest singer. It was Dolly. Dolly was a young rising star who caught the attention of Wagoner. He knew she was an awesome talent.

The parting song that she wrote for Wagoner became a major hit. "I Will Always Love You" was a phenomenal hit for Parton but then became a mega hit when it was sung by Whitney Houston in the 1992 movie The Bodyguard. Houston's version of the song has sold over 24 million copies worldwide and has over 800 million downloads on Spotify.

Dolly made an indelible impression on all of us. Anyone who ever heard her sing or watched her in a movie was touched by the person of Dolly. She wrote great songs. She was



DR. GLENN MOLLETTE

an amazing singer and fabulous actress. She was a smart business person. Her success brought her more and more successes.

There is nothing that any writer or television/radio person can add to Dolly. All we can do is grieve and embrace all she gave us, which was a lot. She had 25 hits on Billboard's Hot Country Song chart. She had many other popular songs like "9 to 5" and "Islands in the Stream".

She made at least 23 movies including 9 to 5, The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas, Steel Magnolias and Joyful Noise. She won eleven Grammys out of 55 nominations. She had many business ventures including Dollywood, a theme park in Sevierville, Tennessee.

She owned Dolly Wines, a line of cake mixes with Duncan Hines, a pet accessories line called Doggy Parton and a plethora of fragrances. She had apparel and beauty products and

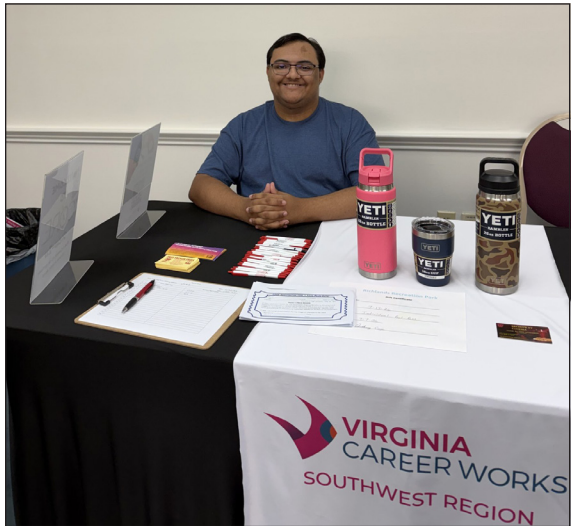
Dolly's Tennessean Travel Stop. Recently, she was working on building a hotel in Nashville called Song Teller Hotel.

Her net worth has been estimated to be between \$450 million and \$650 million.

We loved Dolly for a lot of reasons. She was a real person. The plastic surgery and her super success never tarnished her ability to connect with people on all levels. Her Imagination Library project has gifted millions of books to children. Her financial support of hospitals and medical research was also in the millions. She supported multiple humanitarian causes which helped and encouraged so many.

I saw her in the Ryman Auditorium just a few years back. She was doing an acoustic performance with no bells or whistles and only a small ensemble of musicians. It was a simple show to raise money for struggling Nashville musicians.

My wife and I were able to buy seats in the balcony and then sat for a mesmerizing two-hour show of Dolly just giving us her best in song and performance. I believe that's how she lived her daily life and that's one of many reasons why we will always love her.



James Goodman

# Adult education connection

When most people think of Adult Education classes, they typically associate the term with adults going back to school to work on obtaining a GED ®. While this is true, adult education programs have several other offerings to support adult learners in various areas.

Basic education and GED® classes are options, but they also have programs to teach computer skills, help with job readiness and financial awareness, along with job training programs that lead to certifications such as the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program and the SMAW Welder program. There are many excellent learning and training opportunities available with Southwest Regional Adult Education (SRAE) for adults in our region.

Earlier this year, one adult learner, James Goodman, decided that after being out of school for a few years, he needed to refresh some job skills to make applying for employment more successful. James did not know what exactly to expect when he showed up to Ami Warner's class at the Richlands Career Works Center, but he was definitely motivated to get started. Once he began, it did not take him long to finish five courses in just one week. James took two computer skill courses, NorthStar Digital Literacy and Computer Essentials, as well as Job Essentials, Work Essentials, and Money Essentials.

James admitted that he was concerned with having been out of school for a while and possibly not remembering some subjects very well. But he did not give up when faced with challenges. He stated, "I studied the practice tests and lessons each day and paid attention to the questions I got wrong and where I needed to improve until I passed each test. The programs were filled with examples for each subject and provided a way to re-learn old subjects and grasp new ones." James says that he feels more confident in the knowledge that he has gained and that he learned "It's never too late to get further education or to pursue help."

Ami Warner, who helped James achieve this goal, added, "Like many young people, James needed training to develop the skills necessary to obtain and maintain a job. Southwest Regional Adult Education provides these skills free of charge to anyone who enrolls in our programs. These programs develop the skills necessary for workplace readiness, managing money, and developing the computer skills required to meet societal demands."

If you would like to build up your confidence and are ready to pursue help with your educational goals like James did, please contact SRAE at 276-889-5424. Your educational goals are within your reach; give us a call today!

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# Happenings of the Drill Senior Citizens

By JANIE THOMAS

August 28 found the door to the Drill Community Building open as we prepared for another meeting of the Drill Senior Citizens. It was good to see Don and Betty Sue Hess back with us today. We miss you when you are not here. The potato peelers soon got busy getting the potatoes ready for frying.

Betty Sue called our meeting to order. She read the prayer requests and Rev. Chester Ball opened our devotions with prayer, then Gary Thomas read the 47th Psalm. This psalm celebrates God as King over the Earth. He will provide a home in Heaven for all his people.

After devotions Betty Sue called the roll. We had 31 members present today and one visitor. We missed our members who were absent today.

We then stood and made our Pledge of Allegiance to our Flag. I then gave the financial report. We decided to do a fall tote next time to celebrate Labor Day.

Our singers today were Janet Combs, Joyce Baldwin, Betsy Newton and Tommy Meade. Janet, Joyce and Tommy sang: "God's Coloring Book", "A Change In Me", and "Stroll Over Heaven With You". Then Betsy led everyone in singing "Happy Birthday" to any members having a birthday and "God Bless America", she finished with "As I Have Loved You".

Our menu today was potluck. Betsy Newton asked the blessing over the food. The tables were full of good country cooking. The dessert counters had plenty of sweets to end the meal just right. Bruce had the cooler full of cold drinks.

After lunch was over and clean up was complete, it was bingo time! Nancy Tiller gave out the bingo cards and John Combs brought in the bingo prizes. Then the fun began!

Our winners today were: Greg Noe had his birthday on his card and Betty Sue had the date on hers. Winning one game each: Judy Rowe, Freda Sweeney, Thelma Massie, Betsy Newton, Joyce Baldwin, me, and Linda Baldwin. Winning two games each: Nola White, Chester Ball, Don Hess, Brenda Jackson, David Compton, Kathy Noe and Shelia Hale. Our big winner today winning three games was John Combs.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Sept. 11, beginning at 11 a.m. Our menu will be finger foods. Everyone welcome!

Remember to pray for one another. When prayers go up, blessings come down!



# Warm curry flavors spice up chicken

Few foods are as versatile and as beloved as chicken. Chicken is a lean protein source that many people rely on for meals throughout the day. However, they may be stuck with the same tried and true recipes that can dull the taste buds over time. The good news is that there are no shortage of ways to prepare chicken, which will take on the unique flavor profile of the other spices and ingredients included.

Fans of Asian cuisine can try this Lines+Angles recipe for "Chicken Curry with Peas and Peppers," which offers the warm flavors of curry, ginger and coconut milk for an inviting meal.

## Chicken Curry with Peas and Peppers Makes 4 Servings

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 16 ounces skinless, boneless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 2 cloves of garlic, diced
- 1 teaspoon fresh ginger, minced
- 1 cups chicken stock
- 12/3 cups unsweetened coconut milk
- 2 tablespoons curry powder
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 1 cup frozen peas
- 1 red bell pepper, sliced
- 2 tablespoons fresh cilantro, rough chopped
- Cooked rice for serving

1. Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil over medium heat in a large saucepan. Season chicken with salt and saute until golden brown, about 5 minutes.
2. Remove the browned chicken and set it aside. Coat the pan with the remaining 1 tablespoon of olive oil and reduce the heat to low. Add the cumin, onion, garlic, and ginger; saute for 3 minutes or until onions are soft. Add chicken stock; cook until reduced.
3. Return the pan to medium heat, add the coconut milk to the saucepan, then whisk in the curry powder and season with salt. Let the curry simmer and thicken for 3 minutes.
4. Stir in the chicken, peas and red peppers; bring the saucepan to a boil. Reduce heat to medium low and let simmer for 5 minutes.
5. Garnish with cilantro and serve with rice.

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# ACP Alumnus Appointed to ACP Board of Trustees



Appalachian College of Pharmacy (ACP) Alumnus Dr. Derek Webb was appointed to the ACP Board of Trustees last week during a meeting of the board. His appointment came from the Harvey W. Peter's Foundation.

"We congratulate Derek on his appointment to our ACP Board of Trustees and look forward to working with him in that capacity," said ACP Provost and Dean Susan Mayhew. "Derek brings a unique perspective to the board, having also been a student here in the past."

Webb, who graduated in 2008 as a member of ACP's inaugural graduating class, is the current director of government affairs-East for Empower Pharmacy based out of Houston, Texas.

In that capacity, he leads multi-state legislative and regulatory strategy to expand access to high-quality, affordable compounded medications while enabling licensure, facility expansion and business growth. He joined Empower Pharmacy in October 2025, where he has worked to advance legislative and regulatory priorities supporting patient access, pharmacy operations and growth, is the current director of government affairs-East for Empower Pharmacy based out of Houston, Texas. In that capacity, he leads multi-state legislative and regulatory strategy to expand access to high-quality, affordable compounded medications while enabling licensure, facility expansion and business growth. He joined Empower Pharmacy in October 2025, where he has worked to advance legislative and regulatory priorities supporting patient access, pharmacy operations and growth.

He will join sitting members of the ACP Board of Trustees, including Dr. Lu Ellsworth, who serves as chairman; Dr. Scott Cole; Dr. Rebecca Thornbury; Dr. Sherri Ratliff; Dr. Sue Cantrell; David Compton; Dr. Ida Harris; Tim Hess; Craig Horn; the Hon. Patrick Johnson; Dr. Scott Justus; Derek Keen; Frannie Minton; Dr. Susan Mullins; Dr. Dixie Tooke-Rawlins; Ginger Robertson; John Rocovich; Dr. Eural Viers; and Dr. Jimmy Viers.

"Being appointed to the Appalachian College of Pharmacy Board of Trustees is an incredible honor and a meaningful opportunity to give back to an institution that helped shape who I am today," Webb said. "ACP's commitment to improving healthcare for rural and underserved communities closely aligns with the work I have dedicated my career to: advocating for patients and expanding access to medications and therapies. As a trustee, I look forward to helping advance that mission, strengthening ACP's impact throughout Appalachia and ensuring future

generations of healthcare leaders are prepared to serve the communities that need them most."

"I am thrilled to see Dr. Webb appointed to the board of trustees, a well-deserved recognition of his outstanding expertise and unwavering dedication to the pharmacy profession," said Empower Pharmacy General Counsel and Chief Compliance Officer Edgar Gonzalez. "His depth of knowledge, sound judgment and collaborative spirit make him an exceptional team member who consistently brings positive energy and drives teams toward shared goals."

"Dr. Webb exemplifies the kind of leadership the pharmacy profession needs and I have no doubt he will serve as a role model and source of inspiration for the next generation of pharmacy leaders," Gonzalez added.

Webb also continues to serve on the Virginia Board of Pharmacy, to which he was first appointed in July 2024. There, he is the chair of the by-laws committee and serves on the regulations committee.

He was elected earlier this year as the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (NABP) District 2 president and serves on the NABP Committee on Constitution and Bylaws, as well as Law and Legislation committees.

Webb has nearly 20 years of experience advancing healthcare policy, pharmacy regulation and stakeholder engagement across multiple states, with deep expertise in compounding pharmacy and 503A/503B regulatory frameworks.

Prior to his work with Empower, Webb worked at K-VA-T Foods Inc., from 2008 until October 2025.

At K-VA-T, he first worked as a pharmacy manager, taking care of daily operations, ensuring compliance, safety and patient satisfaction at K-VA-T's Abingdon, Virginia, store. While there, he led a high-performing team focused on operational efficiency and clinical

excellence; collaborated with physicians and regulatory partners to improve patient outcomes through policy-aligned practice; and analyzed business metrics to drive profitability and operational growth.

He next served as a pharmacy administrator for K-VA-T where he led communication with regulatory agencies and pharmacy boards, ensuring compliance and proactive advocacy; oversaw operations for 130 pharmacy locations, coordinating policy integration and quality initiatives; was a media spokesperson and public health advocate, regularly featured on WCYB 'Healthy Living' segments; directed telemedicine and immunization programs supporting community health and access to care; and led pharmacy mergers, acquisitions, and infrastructure expansion projects across state lines.

At the same time, he also represented K-VA-T Foods Inc. before state legislatures, regulatory agencies and pharmacy boards, successfully influencing policies impacting pharmacy practice and patient access.

He previously served as Mayor of the Town of Abingdon from July 2020 to January 2023 and currently serves as a member of its Town Council.

Since 2011, he has owned Phinneas Enterprises, LLC in Abingdon, specializing in locating and leasing rental properties; and has worked as a personal coach for Lululemon Team Webb in Abingdon.

Webb has also been a key opinion leader and speaker for Pharmacy Times and WCYB on a variety of pharmacy-related topics.

He was named as a 2020 Tri Cities Business Journal 40 under 40 award winner; scored in top 99 percent on Pharmacy Board Exam; was the youngest Mayor to ever serve in the Town of Abingdon; and tallied the highest number of votes ever for an Abingdon Council member.

Webb earned his bachelor's degree in biology and chemistry from King College in 2005 prior to enrolling at ACP. While at ACP, he was a member of the student chapters of the American Pharmacists Association and the Virginia Pharmacists Association. He was also a member and past vice president of the Rho Chi honor society. He was the ACP Class of 2008 speaker and earned the TEVA Pharmaceuticals USA Award for outstanding achievement in the study of Pharmacy; the ACP Pharmaceutics highest GPA Award; the Merck Award for outstanding achievement in the study of Pharmacy; and was on

the Dean's List. He served as vice president of his class.

Webb and his wife, Rebecca, reside in Abingdon with their daughter, Eleanor, age 14.

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PERFECT START:  
Lady Pioneers sweep  
Honaker to win Third Straight

**By ANTHONY STEVENS**  
anthony@virginiamediainc.com

HONAKER (Sept. 3, 2026) – The first three games have posed no problem for the Lady Pioneers.

Lebanon secured its third straight volleyball victory to start the season on Thursday. The Pioneers swept the two-game series with the Tigers, winning 3-0 (25-23, 25-20, 25-19) at A.P. Baldwin Gymnasium.

“We were up and down. We’d play steady and smart, and then things would go haywire,” said Lebanon coach Dennis Price. “The thing about these girls is they find a way to pull it together and get it done. That’s part of the process and part of being in these situations. Every situation helps, and they find a way to get through it and make things happen.”

The Tigers came out firing in the opening frame. They took a 5-1 lead, but the Pi-

SEE **PERFECT START | 2B**



Ava Keene (1) with a spike as Lebanon's Raelynn Huff and Jaidyn Fields (2) go for the block. Anthony Stevens | Lebanon News

Honaker  
volleyball  
falls to TS

**By ANTHONY STEVENS**  
anthony@virginiamediainc.com

HONAKER (Sept. 1, 2026) – The struggle continues for Honaker volleyball. The Tigers fell to Twin Springs 3-1 on Tuesday at A.P. Baldwin Gymnasium. Sophomore hitter Meadow McConnell proved too much to contain, and the Titans notched an impressive 25-15, 25-9, 20-25, 25-17 victory.

McConnell pounded 28 kills and also led the Twin Springs (5-2) defense with 37 digs.

“Meadow works her butt off,” Twin Springs coach Rob Tiller said. “She spent most of July and the summer really getting in shape physically, getting her vertical up a little bit, and just being really dedicated to the process of getting better.”

The Titans are off to a strong start. Their only two losses are to powerhouses Wise Central and Ridgeview in a tournament at Virginia High.

“We’ve played a pretty tough gauntlet in the last week or so,” stated Tiller. “We played two regular games last week, then an all-day tournament on Saturday, and then we came back in and played Monday and tonight. So, we’ve played a lot of volleyball over the last seven days. We had a little bit of tired legs tonight, but as a whole, I thought we played pretty well.”

Twin Springs was tough all over the floor. Bella Lawson directed the offense, dishing out 39 assists. Ava Davis (nine kills, eight digs) and Abby Davis (four kills) helped McConnell at the net.

Even when the Tigers had a spike, it was hard to get it on the floor. Natalie Greear (11 digs) and Ana Lopez (six digs) helped McConnell on the back line.

“That’s something we’re putting a little pride into this year,” Tiller noted. “We feel we can be strong defensively. We’ve got a lot of good DSs (defensive specialists) and liberos back there. Addi Counts, Ana Lopez, and Nat Greear all play their butts off defensively. And when you keep the ball off the floor, you always give yourself a chance offensively.”

Honaker tied the first set three times early but never took the lead. In set two, the Tigers scored the first four points and held an 8-6 advantage until Twin Springs scored 19 of the last 20 points.

Honaker had a solid effort and won the third set.

“We have moments when the girls take initiative and get work done,” said Honaker coach Lindsey Marshall. “When they play well, I believe we can play with anybody. So, we’re working on maintaining that rhythm throughout the match and, mainly, on ourselves.”

The Titans pulled away in the fourth set to get the win.

“We’ve got (hitter) Cadence Rose out, and we rely on

SEE **HONAKER VOLLEYBALL | 2B**

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PLAYER OF THE WEEK

Leanna Franklin

Dished out 24 assists, including several exceptional passes, guiding the Lady Devils to a season-opening sweep at Tazewell in non-district volleyball action.

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Easton Taylor eyes a pass from Will Jessee as Mason Hutton (4) defends for the Rebels. Preston Ball Photography | For the Lebanon News

Stewart & Rebels  
slay Lebanon

**By ANTHONY STEVENS**  
anthony@virginiamediainc.com

LEBANON (Sept. 4, 2026) – On Friday night at Harry Stuart Field, Patrick Henry secured a decisive 35-14 win over the Pioneers. Six-foot-two, 200-pound running back Jeb Stewart was a force to be reckoned with. The elusive senior scored four of the Rebels’ five touchdowns.

“Stewart runs hard. A great football player,” said Lebanon coach Hunter Norris. “Patrick Henry came in with a great game plan and executed it well. He’s just hard to stop. They’re good at getting him the ball in a variety of positions. Wherever he’s at, you’ve got to be aware of him and try to keep him from getting the ball. They do a really good job of scheming it up so he can get the ball multiple ways. They’re just a good football team. They had a great plan, and they executed it well.”

Stewart totaled 240 yards on the ground and also caught four passes for 99 yards.

“Jeb goes to these camps and stuff to get recruited, but I’m like, Guys, if you don’t watch him play football, he’s a gamer, man,” Patrick Henry coach Austin Cooper said. “The stuff he does on the field is remarkable.”

Patrick Henry (1-1) was coming off a 7-0 loss to Virginia High in double overtime.

“I think the loss last week and how badly we wanted the win fueled us coming into this week,”

said Stewart. “It motivated us to do what we did tonight.”

The quality road win will give the Rebels a confidence boost.

“We turned things around,” commented Cooper. “Our defense is still playing lights out, just like they did last week. We finally got some things moving on offense, got Jeb loose, and he was able to do what he does. He’s kind of unbelievable.”

Patrick Henry had over 400 yards of total offense, with 310 coming on the ground. They were big up front and controlled the line of scrimmage.

“We knew that was the key for us to have success up front,” declared Cooper. “These guys have worked hard. They’re young, and we’re figuring out how to move people around, but they mauled Lebanon. They did a great job up front.”

“We always talk about that. That’s the key to victory, right? You have to win the line of scrimmage, and tonight we did that.”

Patrick Henry took the opening kickoff and immediately set the tone for the game. They ran nine plays, all on the ground, with eight carries by Stewart, including a six-yard TD plunge.

After three plays and a punt for the Pioneers, the Rebels scored in just four plays. Stewart broke wide open on the left side for a 33-yard touchdown run.

The Pioneers responded quickly. Freshman

SEE **STEWART & REBELS | 2B**

VHSL approves Pioneer’s move to  
Hogoheegee District

The Virginia High School League moved one step closer to finalizing its alignment plan for the 2027-28 through 2030-31 cycle.

Lebanon, which the VHSL moved to Class 1 earlier but left in the Southwest District with Class 2 schools, appealed to be placed in the Hogoheegee District. That move was approved by a 5-0 vote.

Marion’s appeal to move from the Class 2 South-

west District to the Class 1 Hogoheegee District was denied by a 3-2 vote.

Marion will appeal its placement.

The VHSL’s alignment committee made its recommendations after a meeting on Aug. 25.

Final appeals will be heard Sept. 8, while the Executive Committee will make it official on Sept. 23.



Honaker's Alivia Keene (7) with a tip against the Titans. Anthony Stevens | Lebanon News

HUNTER NORRIS

FROM PAGE 1B

Katie a lot,” Marshall said. “Katie’s a workhorse for us. In the last two games, we’ve had completely new rotations. We’ve never run them before. We’ve just got to find our rhythm, and the girls have just got to start playing from point one to 25.” Ava Keene led Honaker with five kills. Kyndall Miller, JuJu Farmer, and Shalee Sykes each contributed three kills. It was the fourth consecutive loss

to start the season for Honaker (0-4). “We’re definitely young,” commented Marshall. “I do think it gets in their heads a lot. We’ve also been working on being headstrong this season. We’re still trying to gel. We’ve got five new players who came up from JV. Everybody’s still working on getting together. We’ll get there. It’s just going to take some time.” Does Twin Springs have high

hopes in the Cumberland District? “I do. I think we can finish somewhere near the top,” declared Tiller. “You don’t ever want to predict things. There are some good teams in the Cumberland. J.I. Burton, Rye Cove, and Eastside are all going to be good as well. We’re just going to take it night in, night out and see where things take us. I think we’ve got a good chance at some success.”



Meadow McConnell (20) with a hit for Twin Springs, as Tayler Honaker (24) and JuJu Farmer (15) go up to block for the Tigers. Anthony Stevens | Lebanon News

STEWART & REBELS

FROM PAGE 1B

quarterback Will Jessee connected with Easton Taylor down the seam on an 86-yard scoring strike, pulling the Pioneers within 14-7 before the end of the first quarter. The toughest play for Lebanon came just before halftime. PH quarterback Kolby Hicks hit Mason Hutton with a 30-yard touchdown pass with six seconds remaining before the break, putting the Rebels up 21-7. “We just had two busted coverages on defense that put the game out of reach,” Norris stated. “I think if we didn’t have those two, especially the one before halftime, it’s 14-7, and you’ve got a different outlook on it. Again, we’ve got to do a better job. Defensively, we didn’t tackle well. You ain’t going to arm-tackle Stewart. You’ve got to bring a shoulder pad with you, and we didn’t do that tonight.” Lebanon took the second-half kickoff and ended up punting to pin Patrick Henry inside their own 10-yard line. On their second play, Stewart exploded around the right end on a 92-yard TD scamper. It gave the Rebels a 28-7 advantage. To their credit, Lebanon kept battling. Will Jessee led them on a six-play, 50-yard drive. Jessee found Liam Spencer on a 27-yard TD pass. “Will did a good job in the second half, slinging the ball a bit and getting it out to some of our guys in space,” stated Norris. “We had some success with that. We’ve got to be better in the run game, though. We went from rushing for about six yards a carry last week to, I bet, not getting half a yard a carry tonight. We’ve got to clean up the run game a little bit. If we can’t run the ball, we can’t win.” Lebanon appeared to cover an onside kick by Hagin Curry. The officials ruled the Pioneers illegally touched the ball and awarded possession to PH. “We had a couple of things not go our way, like the onside kick,” remarked Norris. “I thought we got that. I thought we had it. We got our guys out there on offense, and then we didn’t get the ball. I thought that was big. We could have gotten some momentum there, scored a quick touchdown, and gotten the ball back with some time

left.” The Rebels put it away when Hicks passed to Stewart, who raced down the sideline for a 41-yard touchdown, the final margin. Will Jessee was 18-of-28 passing for 282 yards with two touchdowns. The Pioneers did not have standout Layne Jessee for the entire second half, and he was only used sparingly in the first half. “Layne tried to gut it out,” Norris noted. “He was out most of the week and didn’t practice. He’s a game-changer for us. When he’s not out there, we’re a different team. But we’ve got to have guys who, if he’s out, step up with a next-man-up mentality. We’ve got to have people rise to the occasion, and we didn’t do that tonight.” Lebanon will host Marion in their first Southwest District contest on Friday.

| PATRICK HENRY 35, LEBANON 14                           |        |        |   |   |   |    |  |  |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------|--------|---|---|---|----|--|--|--|
| P. Henry                                               | 14     | 7      | 7 | 7 | — | 35 |  |  |  |
| Lebanon                                                | 7      | 0      | 7 | 0 | — | 14 |  |  |  |
| First Quarter                                          |        |        |   |   |   |    |  |  |  |
| PH—Stewart 6 run (Ratliff kick), 7:03.                 |        |        |   |   |   |    |  |  |  |
| PH—Stewart 33 run (Ratliff kick), 2:44.                |        |        |   |   |   |    |  |  |  |
| LEB—Taylor 86 pass from W. Jessee (Curry kick), 1:41.  |        |        |   |   |   |    |  |  |  |
| Second Quarter                                         |        |        |   |   |   |    |  |  |  |
| PH—Hutton 30 pass from Hicks (Ratliff kick), 0:06.     |        |        |   |   |   |    |  |  |  |
| Third Quarter                                          |        |        |   |   |   |    |  |  |  |
| PH—Stewart 92 run (Ratliff kick), 5:29.                |        |        |   |   |   |    |  |  |  |
| LEB—Spencer 27 pass from W. Jessee (Curry kick), 0:39. |        |        |   |   |   |    |  |  |  |
| Fourth Quarter                                         |        |        |   |   |   |    |  |  |  |
| PH—Stewart 41 pass from Hicks (Ratliff kick), 9:16.    |        |        |   |   |   |    |  |  |  |
| PHLEB                                                  |        |        |   |   |   |    |  |  |  |
| First downs                                            | 179    | 298    |   |   |   |    |  |  |  |
| Total Net Yards                                        | 427    | 19-16  |   |   |   |    |  |  |  |
| Rushes-yards                                           | 36-310 | 282    |   |   |   |    |  |  |  |
| Passing                                                | 117    | 8-28-0 |   |   |   |    |  |  |  |
| Comp-Att-Int                                           | 5-7-11 | 0-0    |   |   |   |    |  |  |  |
| Fumbles-Lost                                           | 2-2    | 5-40   |   |   |   |    |  |  |  |
| Penalties-Yards                                        | 7-50   | 4-28.8 |   |   |   |    |  |  |  |
| Punts                                                  | 1-35   |        |   |   |   |    |  |  |  |



Hagin Curry gets off a punt for the Pioneers as Patrick Henry's Ben Cuddy (57) dives to try for the block. Preston Ball Photography | For the Lebanon News

PERFECT START

FROM PAGE 1B

oneers slowly clawed back. With Lebanon trailing 10-8, Carlee Ingram had a push for a point to bring Kaytie Lampkin to the service line. Lampkin served the next six points, including five aces. The Pioneers never trailed again as they took the first set. “The service line was a big difference in the game,” Price noted. “Then we started playing at the net a little better and making plays up there, which really helped our confidence. We took our time and took what they gave us, and that was the key. Sometimes we struggled a little, but the service line really helped us a lot tonight.” It was back-and-forth in the second set. Honaker tied it for the sixth time on a dink by JuJu Farmer. A Honaker service error brought Jaidyn Fields to the line, and Lebanon won the next six points to pull within a point of the win. The Tigers kept fighting, taking the next three points until a block by Ingram gave the set to the Pioneers and put them up 2-0 in the match. “We’ve really worked on that in practice—just staying together,” Honaker coach Lindsey Marshall said. “No matter what happens in the game, we’ve got to stay as one unit. We’ve got to stay up. “I believe in these girls, and I wouldn’t put them out there if I didn’t think they could do it. We’re right there. We just can’t get that edge. They’re a young crew. They’ll keep working and eventually find it.” Lebanon took a commanding 16-7 lead in the third set. Honaker could get no closer than four points as the Pioneers put it away. “The girls did a great job,” Price stated. “We didn’t play as well as we’d like, but we got the job done and did some really good things. I’m proud of the girls. “It takes time to gel, and we’re coming along. Volleyball is as much mental as it is physical. It’s such a roller coaster, and you’ve got to be able to handle those situations. We’re working to improve in that. The girls work hard all the time, and they give me everything they’ve got. That’s all you can ask for.” Lebanon had a 34-14 advantage in kills and 12 aces to six for the Tigers. Ava Keene (four kills) and sister Alivia Keene (five assists) led Honaker. Fields and Ingram powered the Pioneers with nine spikes each. Lampkin (five kills) and Rhealyn Barton (four kills) were strong up front. Fields and Ingram each totaled 11 assists for Lebanon. “We’ve got a long way to go,” remarked Price. “But it’s early in the season. Best of luck to Honaker. We’ll be starting our Southwest District play soon. Hopefully, we can get a few more games in before then and continue to improve.” Honaker (0-5) is still searching for its first dub. “I can stomach a loss like this because that’s all I’ve asked them to do all season—play for all three sets, and if we go five, play all five,” declared Marshall. “They’ve done a whole lot better. I was pleased with their effort.”



Kenlie Fields makes a play on the back row in the Lebanon win at Honaker. Anthony Stevens | Lebanon News

Day-by-Day

**Monday (8/31)**  
**Southern Gap 3, Honaker 0 (Volleyball)**  
In their debut on their home floor, Southern Gap rolled to a 3-0 sweep of Honaker in non-district play. Set scores were Leah Rasnake (11 kills), Madison Lester (seven kills, four aces, two blocks), Addy Boyd (five kills), Adyson Bell (four kills, four aces, 13 assists), Lucy Savage (four kills), and Megan Hess (four kills) powered the front-line. Claire Griffey led the Eagles’ defense with 25 digs. Ava Keene and Aliyah Hilton totaled seven digs each for the Tigers.

**Tuesday (9/1)**  
**Castlewood 3, Tazewell 0 (Volleyball)**  
The Lady Blue Devils posted a 25-16, 25-17, 25-23 season-opening victory at Tazewell. Senior Layla Ervin led the way with 12 kills and three aces. Freshman Leanna Franklin distributed 24 assists. Cheyenne Elam (five kills, two aces) and Kadence Culbertson (six kills) also played well for Castlewood.

**Friday (9/4)**  
**Ridgeview 41, Honaker 6 (Football)**  
Ridgeview cruised to a 41-6 non-district victory over visiting Honaker. Sophomore Kyler McFall returned the opening kickoff 95 yards for a touchdown, sparking the Wolf-pack to a convincing win and improving them to 2-0. Ridgeview capitalized on a blocked punt and two interceptions to build a 41-0 halftime lead. Alex Grant scored three touchdowns for the Wolf-pack. Cole Morrison scored on an 18-yard TD rush for the Tigers. Malachi Gilbert had 75 rushing yards. Morrison and Levi Honaker led the defense in the loss. Phelps (Ky.) 44, Castlewood 0 (Football) Castlewood fell to 0-2 with a loss to the Hornets. No other details were available at press time.



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1. Marion at Lebanon

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1. Anyone can enter except employees of this paper and their families. ONLY one entry allowed per person per week.
2. Teams in this week's games are listed in each advertisement on this page. Put your choice-in each game in consecutive order. Pick the total number of points you think will be scored between the two teams playing each other in the appropriate blank at the bottom of the entry. A second tie-breaker is added in case there is still a tie after the first tie-breaker has been used. If a tie still exists, the prize money will be divided evenly. The second tie-breaker is only used if the first fails to break a tie.
3. Your entry can be delivered to the Lebanon News **prior to 4:00 p.m. Friday** or be postmarked prior to 4:30 p.m. Friday each week. **NEW ADDRESS! Mail entries to "Football Contest" c/o The Lebanon News, 20 Clinch Mountain Ave., Lebanon, VA 24266**
4. If a game is postponed, cancelled, or played on Thursday, the submission will automatically be counted as correct for all entrants.
5. Children under 16 years of age NOT QUALIFIED TO ENTER.
6. Winners will be announced following each contest.
7. Decisions of judges will be final! A new contest will be announced each week.
8. Official entry form on this page must be used.

**NO OBLIGATION! NOTHING TO BUY!  
USE CONVENIENT ENTRY FORM ON**

### Scores from last week (9/2/26) Contest

1. Patrick Henry 35, Lebanon 14
2. Ridgeview 41, Honaker 6
3. Phelps (KY) 44, Castlewood 0
4. Union 42, Daniel Boone (TN) 0
5. Rye Cove 35, Southern Gap 24
6. Virginia High 28, John Battle 3
7. Christiansburg 37, Abingdon 34
8. Wise Central 54, Marion 25
9. Heritage 21, Graham 6
10. Lee High 34, Thomas Walker 6
11. Tazewell 30, Pulaski Co. 27
12. Rural Retreat 51, East ontgomery 20
13. George Wythe 63m Fort Chiswell 7
14. Narrows 19, Holston 17
15. Chilhowie 44, J.I. Burton 7
16. Twin Springs 34, Unaka (TN) 24
17. Miami 45, Stanford 6
18. JMU 20, Liberty 13
19. Auburn 17, Baylor 16
20. LSU 51, Clemson 10

## LAST WEEKS WINNERS!

1. Katherine J. Clevinger (17-3), Lebanon
2. Mike O'Quinn (17-3), Lebanon

## OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

Pick The Winner Only! No Scores

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_
12. \_\_\_\_\_
13. \_\_\_\_\_
14. \_\_\_\_\_
15. \_\_\_\_\_
16. \_\_\_\_\_
17. \_\_\_\_\_
18. \_\_\_\_\_
19. \_\_\_\_\_
20. \_\_\_\_\_

### FIRST TIE-BREAKER

will be the total points scored between  
Marion at Lebanon.

### SECOND TIE-BREAKER

will be the total points scored between  
Rye Cove at Honaker..

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

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18. Ohio State at Texas

## Lebanon

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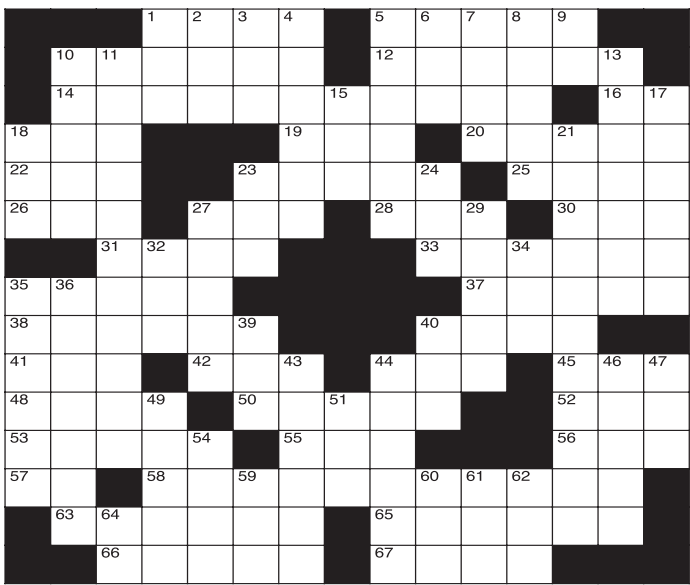


S O N A T A M M P T O A B C R H P O S T  
M T C Y T R V H B N E A M Y A N T H E M  
I E P E M I B C O B U B B E Y P T H D C  
L N H V U V M O O T A C C A T S N T T R  
Y S B A L A N B C O L A O Y C D U A N S  
D E T T R L L P R N S E D V I B R A T O  
O M D C P M C S A E R L N B M D O N V A  
L B N O B S H D R Y R M E M A P P V E L  
E L A A I B H E C H E O C H N V M U I Y  
M E D N A E N A A A D V S S Y O E V U R  
C M P L T A D P P N T E E A D H T R M I  
V C L H D E S Y I O D R R M H B B O H C  
U A A E N O N T T U E T C E Y Y A L N S  
D B D C D O T L S S M U Y Y T B M O U P  
C U E Y H E V O M M I R E N M N D S R C  
A D L P E T R H R Y O E S I O H M D S U B  
O P M C I T S U O C A Y D O U M T C B S  
D Y L E S I V O R P M I P R U E R Y Y I  
S D U Y E M P O V H D R O H C O D A H O  
E H C L V P M A O I D S E B S T U V H R

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

WORDS

- ACOUSTIC
- ANTHEM
- BALLAD
- CADENCE
- CHORD
- CRESCENDO
- DYNAMIC
- ENSEMBLE
- HARMONY
- IMPROVISE
- LYRICS
- MELODY
- OCTAVE
- OVERTURE
- RHAPSODY
- RHYTHM
- SERENADE
- SOLO
- SONATA
- STACCATO
- SYMPHONY
- TEMPO
- TIMBRE
- VIBRATO



CLUES ACROSS

1. Longtime *Vogue* editor Wintour

5. A Spanish title of respect

10. A way of looking

12. Properly

14. Rolled steel

16. Not down

18. Law degree

19. Consume food

20. Intermediate ecological stage

22. Old world, new

23. Dispense justice

25. Stiff hair-like structure

26. Ethiopia

27. Cool!

28. Father

30. An enthusiastic devotee of sports

31. Holm oak

33. Be united

35. Rattling breaths

37. Supermarket chain
38. Provided with a quality

40. Samoan monetary unit

41. Swiss river

42. Hill (Celtic)

44. Have already done

45. ATM company

48. Syngman \_\_, Korean president

50. Very willing

52. Arctic explorers (abbr.)

53. Food listings

55. Bachelor's place to crash

56. Big Blue

57. Sports magazine

58. Relating to a place north of south of the equator

63. Female follower of Bacchus

65. A type of laugh

66. Slovenly women

67. Large jug

CLUES DOWN

1. Boxing's GOAT

2. Zero

3. Midway between north and northeast

4. Concurred

5. Added flavor

6. Amount of time

7. Eggs of parasitic insects

8. S-shaped moldings

9. Atomic #45

10. \_\_ d'art: small artistic item

11. A godparent's "kids"

13. Nocturnal burrowing lizard

15. Hit lightly

17. Aircrafts

18. Witness

21. Alluding to something

23. Take to the limit

24. Baglike structure in a plant or animal
27. Start over

29. Administered

32. Romanian monetary unit

34. Unit of liquid capacity

35. Equips with weapons again

36. Disney town

39. Female deer

40. Title of respect

43. A place to go rafting

44. A way to conclude

46. Type of television

47. Georgia rockers

49. Leonhard \_\_, Swiss mathematician

51. Slang for gun

54. River in Bosnia and Herzegovina

59. Bar bill

60. Small, gray-headed crow

61. Frozen water

62. Norwegian krone

64. Commercial

PUZZLE SOLUTION



SUDOKU

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|   |   |   |   |   |   |   | 6 |   |
|   | 4 |   |   | 5 |   |   |   |   |
|   | 3 | 7 |   |   | 1 |   | 5 |   |
|   |   | 4 | 1 |   |   |   |   |   |
|   |   |   | 9 |   |   | 6 |   | 8 |
| 8 |   | 2 |   |   | 5 |   | 7 |   |
|   | 7 |   |   | 9 |   |   |   |   |
|   |   |   |   |   | 3 |   |   | 7 |
| 3 |   |   |   | 8 | 2 |   |   | 1 |

Level: Intermediate

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to music.

CRIHO

Answer: Choir

GUESS WHO ?

I am an actor born in Connecticut on September 8, 2002. I began my career on the stage starring in musicals. I got a big break when I was cast in a hit Netflix series about a group of kids in the 1980s facing otherworldly creatures.

Answer: Gaten Matarazzo

CRYPTO FUN

Solve the code to discover words related to music. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 6 = N)

- A. 6 25 11 1 24

Clue: Represent a specific pitch
- B. 8 7 1 13

Clue: Indicates pitch of notes
- C. 18 26 19 9 25 6 12

Clue: Combination of musical notes
- D. 8 25 6 2 14 8 11

Clue: Lead a musical group

Answers: A. notes B. clef C. harmony D. conduct

SUDOKU SOLUTION

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 5 | 3 | 7 | 9 | 8 | 6 | 4 |
| 9 | 4 | 8 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 3 |
| 6 | 3 | 7 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 9 | 5 | 2 |
| 7 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 6 | 8 | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| 5 | 1 | 3 | 9 | 2 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 8 |
| 8 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 7 | 9 |
| 2 | 7 | 1 | 5 | 9 | 4 | 3 | 8 | 6 |
| 4 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 7 |
| 3 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 2 | 4 | 9 | 1 |



ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

It may feel like you're coming out of the dark and into the light this week, Aries. A weight has been lifted, but there is still some emotional components to work out.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

Taurus, have a look at the world around you this week instead of just moving forward with your nose to the grindstone. Enjoy a night out with friends and take an active role in the evening.

GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21

Gemini, question what you hear this week, and do not take all of the information you receive at face value. You might need to read between the lines.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22

This is a great week to go out and get things done, Cancer. Even if you feel a little indecisive, you don't have to make any great commitments.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23

Leo, action is the name of the game for you right now. You might notice a sudden burst of physical energy at some point, and that can be channeled into a walk or bike ride.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

Take some of the knowledge you have picked up and processed over the past few weeks and spread it around, Virgo. It is time to put your communication skills to work.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Physical stamina is strong for you this week, Libra. Consider working out to release some of that pent-up energy. A sport or hobby can channel it as well.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

Take a break from the seriousness that has taken root lately, Scorpio. You'll find that some upbeat conversations are the way to navigate the waters this week.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

The things you say to others will have a profound effect, Sagittarius. Be mindful of the words you choose. Enjoy a physical group activity.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

Capricorn, your solid footing may become a bit unstable this week. Don't fret. In fact, infuse a bit of laughter and playfulness into things.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

There is no excuse for laziness this week, Aquarius. Make sure you get out of bed each day and engage in something that gets your body and mind working.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

It is time to take action, Pisces. See how far you can take all of the tasks that are on your to-do list. You may be surprised to find that you accomplish so much.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

SEPTEMBER 6

Idris Elba, Actor (54)

SEPTEMBER 7

Evan Rachel Wood, Actress (39)

SEPTEMBER 8

Pink, Singer (47)

SEPTEMBER 9

Adam Sandler, Actor (60)

SEPTEMBER 10

Colin Firth, Actor (66)

SEPTEMBER 11

Taraji P. Henson, Actress (56)

SEPTEMBER 12

Jennifer Hudson, Singer/Actress (45)

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## LEGAL NOTICES

**TRUSTEE'S SALE** Real property at **414 Lower Bearwallow Road, Dante, VA 24237** In execution of a Deed of Trust in the original principal amount of \$36,630.00 dated May 02, 2025 and recorded on May 09, 2025 in the land records of Russell County, Virginia at Instrument Number 250000906. Default having been made in the indebtedness secured thereby, the undersigned Substitute Trustee will offer for sale at public auction at the front entrance to the Russell County Circuit Court Building, 53 Main St, Lebanon, VA, 24266. The above referenced property and fixtures or improvements thereon briefly described as Tax ID 159RIC2235, and designated as Lot Number 114 on a plat with certificate marked "Map of Clinchfield Coal Corp., Subdivision C, at Dante, Virginia". September 24, 2026 at 11:00 AM TERMS OF SALE: The property will be sold "AS IS," WITHOUT REPRESENTATION OR WARRANTY OF ANY KIND AND SUBJECT TO any environmental or other conditions, covenants, restrictions, reservations, easements, rights of way, prior liens, and all other matters of record taking priority over the Deed of Trust, if any. Substitute

## LEGAL NOTICES

Trustee shall have no obligation to deliver possession of the property or any other obligation as to the premises. A bidder's deposit of \$5,000.00 or 10% of the sale price, whichever is lower, will be required at the time of sale in the form of a certified check or cashier's check from the purchaser or the bid will be rejected. Successful bidder will be required to sign a memorandum of sale at the time of the sale and settle by remitting the balance of the purchase price within fourteen (14) days of sale. If the buyer wishes to use their own settlement company and documentation, there will be a fee of \$300.00 for review of their settlement documents. In the event of default by the successful bidder, the entire deposit shall be forfeited and applied to the costs and expenses of sale and Substitute Trustee's fee according to the Code of Virginia. All other public charges or assessments, including water/sewer charges to be prorated through date of sale; those incurred after the sale date, and all other costs incident to settlement to be paid by the purchaser. In the event taxes, any other public charges have been advanced, a credit will be due to the seller, to be adjusted from the date of sale at the time of settlement. Sale is subject to post sale confirmation that the borrower did not file for protection under the U.S. Bankruptcy Code prior to the sale as well as to post-sale confirmation of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale or whether other legal impediment to title exists. In any such event, the sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the deposit without interest. Additional terms may be announced at the time of sale. FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Cohn Goldberg Deutsch, 410-296-2550 or www.cgd-law.com re: CGD # 465212. Cohn Goldberg Deutsch is a debt collector; any information obtained will be used for that purpose. BLUE RIDGE TRUSTEES LLC Run dates approx. 09/09, 09/16 LN-09,16;2026

**TRUSTEE'S SALE OF 171 HERITAGE DRIVE, HONAKER, VA 24260.** In execution of a certain Deed of Trust dated June 30, 2021, in the original principal amount of \$80,101.00 recorded in the Clerk's Office, Circuit Court for Russell County, Virginia as Instrument No. 2101505. The undersigned Substitute Trustee will offer for sale at public auction in the front of the Circuit Court building for Russell County, 121 East Main Street, Lebanon, Virginia, or any such temporary alternative Circuit Court location designated by the Judges of the Circuit Court, on November 12, 2026, at 1:00 PM, the property described in said Deed of Trust, located at the above address, and more particularly described as follows: ALL OF THAT CERTAIN LOT OR PARCEL OF LAND SITUATE, LYING AND BEING IN THE NEW GARDEN MAGISTERIAL DISTRICT OF RUSSELL COUNTY, VIRGINIA, ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THE NEW GARDEN ROAD AND IMMEDIATELY SOUTHWEST OF THE TOWN OF HONAKER, AND BEING MORE PARTICULARLY BOUNDED AND DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS, TO-WIT: BEGINNING AT A POINT IN THE NEW GARDEN ROAD, A CORNER TO THE LANDS OF ROBY BARNHART, AND LEAVING SAID ROAD, AND RUNNING WITH THE LINE OF THE SAID ROBY BARNHART N 0-15 W 125 FEET; THENCE RUNNING IN A WESTERLY DIRECTION APPROXIMATE-

## LEGAL NOTICES

LY 100 FEET TO THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF THE LANDS OF LEWIS TAYLOR; THENCE WITH THE TAYLOR LINE S 0-15 E 125 FEET TO A POINT IN SAID NEW GARDEN ROAD; THENCE FOLLOWING SAID ROAD N 73-45 E 100 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING, AND BEING THE SOUTHERN PORTION OF LOT NO. G AS SHOWN ON PLAT OR SUBDIVISION MADE BY TATE-HORNEY LAND AUCTION COMPANY, BEARING DATE OF MAY 1941, PROPERLY RECORDED. TERMS OF SALE: ALL CASH. A bidder's deposit of ten percent (10%) of the sale price or ten percent (10%) of the original principal balance of the subject Deed of Trust, whichever is lower, in the form of cash or certified funds payable to the Substitute Trustee must be present at the time of the sale. The balance of the purchase price will be due within fifteen (15) days of sale, otherwise Purchaser's deposit may be forfeited to Trustee. Time is of the essence. If the sale is set aside for any reason, the Purchaser at the sale shall be entitled to a return of the deposit paid. The Purchaser may, if provided by the terms of the Trustee's Memorandum of Foreclosure Sale, be entitled to a \$50 cancellation fee from the Substitute Trustee, but shall have no further recourse against the Mortgagor, the Mortgagee or the Mortgagee's attorney. A form copy of the Trustee's memorandum of foreclosure sale and contract to purchase real property is available for viewing at www.aldridgepite.com. Additional terms, if any, to be announced at the sale and the Purchaser may be given the option to execute the contract of sale electronically. This is a communication from a debt collector and any information obtained will be used for that purpose. The sale is subject to seller confirmation. Substitute Trustee: Equity Trustees, LLC, 8100 Three Chopt Road, Suite 240, Richmond, VA 23229. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Virginia Pre-Sale Department of counsel for Equity Trustees, LLC at 301-961-6555, website: www.aldridgepite.com. VA-383954-1. LN-09-9,16;2026; 10-14-2026

**ORDER OF PUBLICATION**  
**Commonwealth of Virginia**  
**VA. CODE § 1-211.1;8.01-316,-317,20-104**  
**Case No. CL23000786-00**  
**Russell Circuit Court**  
**83 East Main Street,**  
**Lebanon, VA 24266**  
**Jonathan I. Roberts**  
**Stephanie D. Roberts**  
**v.**  
**Oma Jane Ferebee, ET ALS**  
**The object of this suit is to: Partition.**

It is ORDERED that Oma Ferebee, John Keen, Elisa Dye, Ralph Childress, Thomas Keen, Nell Stallard, Norma Honaker, Stanley Keen, Francis Street, and persons unknown appear at the above-named court and protect his or her interests on or before October 2, 2026 at 1:30 PM. LN-09-2,9,16,23;2026

**NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE 1871 Campbell Hollow Road, Honaker, Virginia 24260** In execution of that certain deed of trust in the original principal amount of \$36,800.00 dated December 8, 1988 and recorded among the land records of Russell County, in Deed Book 358, Page 80 and subsequent modifications or re-recordings, if any, as amended by an instrument appointing the undersigned as Substituted Trustee dated in the land records of Russell County, Virginia, default having been made in the payment of the indebtedness thereby secured and having been requested to do so by the holder of the note evidencing the said indebtedness, the undersigned Substituted Trustee will offer for sale at public

auction at the Front Doors of the Russell County Courthouse located at 53 Main Street, Lebanon, VA 24226, on: October 1, 2026 @ 11:00 AM The property described in said deed of trust located at the above street address, and more particularly described as: All that certain parcel of land, with the improvements thereon, situate in the New Garden Magisterial District of Russell County, Virginia, on the west side of and adjacent to Route 647, on Big A Mountain, and which said parcel of land herein conveyed is more particularly bounded and described as follows, to-wit: Beginning at an iron rod in the west right of way line of Secondary Route 647 and in the northwest corner of the Foster Ball property; thence, leaving said road and with the line of Foster Ball, S 77° 41' 05" W 122.08 feet to a stake; thence, S 77° 41' 05" W 170.35 feet to a spike at the base of a 24 inch cedar; thence, N 54° 15' 48" W 140.34 feet to an iron rod at the base of a 20 inch cedar; thence, N 22° 07' 03" W 96.33 feet to an iron rod set at the base of a 12 inch dogwood; thence N 79° 00' E 211.51 feet to the point of Beginning, and containing 1.586 acres, more or less, (one parcel containing 0.886 acres, and one parcel containing 0.700 acres), and being the same real estate as shown on plat prepared by L. K. Addison Certified Land Surveyor, dated June 23, 1987. TERMS OF SALE: Cash or certified funds. A non-refundable deposit of ten percent (10%) of the successful bid price, payable in cash or by certified or cashier's check to the undersigned will be required of the successful bidder at time of sale. Terms of sale to be complied with within 30 days from date of sale or deposit will be forfeit and property will be resold at costs of defaulting purchaser. All real estate taxes to be adjusted as of date of sale. Seller shall not be responsible for any costs incurred by the purchaser in connection with their purchase or settlement, including, without limitation, state and local recording fees, title insurance or research, or any other costs of purchaser's acquisition. The property and the improvements thereon will be sold as is, without representations or warranties of any kind. The sale is subject to all other liens, encumbrances, conditions, easements and restrictions, if any, superior to the aforesaid deed of trust and lawfully affecting the property. Trustee shall have no duty to obtain possession for purchaser. All risks of casualty pass to successful bidder at conclusion of bidding. Sale is subject to post-sale confirmation that the borrower did not file for protection under the U.S. Bankruptcy Code prior to the sale, as well as to post-sale confirmation and audit of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower(s) entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, the sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the Purchaser's deposit without interest. Additional terms to be announced at the sale. FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Terra Abstract Virginia, Inc. 1581 Main Street Suite 20 Warrington, PA 18976 (215) 572-8111, M-F Between 8:00AM - 5 P.M. (VA20250000078) In the event of postponement of the sale, which may be done at the discretion of the trustee, the date of the postponed sale will be announced at the sale. No new

or additional notice will be provided other than the announcement at the sale. LN-09-2,9,16,23;2026

**NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE 1225 Green Valley Rd, Lebanon, Virginia 24266** In execution of that certain deed of trust in the original principal amount of \$62,500.00 dated January 19, 1995 and recorded among the land records of Russell County, in Deed Book 431, Page 59 and subsequent modifications or re-recordings, if any, as amended by an instrument appointing the undersigned as Substituted Trustee dated in Deed Book 522, Page 458 in the land records of Russell County, Virginia, default having been made in the payment of the indebtedness thereby secured and having been requested to do so by the holder of the note evidencing the said indebtedness, the undersigned Substituted Trustee will offer for sale at public auction at the Front Doors of the Russell County Courthouse located at 53 Main Street, Lebanon, VA 24226, on: September 24, 2026 at 11:00 AM The property described in said deed of trust located at the above street address, and more particularly described as: All that certain tract, piece or parcel of land which is designated as Lot No. 2 on that certain map or plat of the Scenic Green Valley Estates, which is dated May, 1976, and prepared by L. K. Addison, Certified Land Surveyor, and of record in the Russell County Circuit Court Clerk's Office in Plat Book No. 5, at Page 55, to the record of which reference is here made for a more full and complete description of said lot. TERMS OF SALE: Cash or certified funds. A non-refundable deposit of ten percent (10%) of the successful bid price, payable in cash or by certified or cashier's check to the undersigned will be required of the successful bidder at time of sale. Terms of sale to be complied with within 14 days from date of sale or deposit will be forfeit and property will be resold at costs of defaulting purchaser. All real estate taxes to be adjusted as of date of sale. Seller shall not be responsible for any costs incurred by the purchaser in connection with their purchase or settlement, including, without limitation, state and local recording fees, title insurance or research, or any other costs of purchaser's acquisition. The property and the improvements thereon will be sold as is, without representation

tations or warranties of any kind. The sale is subject to all other liens, encumbrances, conditions, easements and restrictions, if any, superior to the aforesaid deed of trust and lawfully affecting the property. Trustee shall have no duty to obtain possession for purchaser. All risks of casualty pass to successful bidder at conclusion of bidding. Sale is subject to post-sale confirmation that the borrower did not file for protection under the U.S. Bankruptcy Code prior to the sale, as well as to post-sale confirmation and audit of the status of the loan with the loan servicer including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower(s) entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, the sale shall be null and void, and the Purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the Purchaser's deposit without interest. Additional terms to be announced at the sale. FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Terra Abstract Virginia, Inc. 1581 Main Street Suite 200 Warrington, PA 18976 (215) 572-8111, M-F Between 8:00AM - 5 P.M. (VA202500000121) In the event of postponement of the sale, which may be done at the discretion of the trustee, the date of the postponed sale will be announced at the sale. No new or additional notice will be provided other than the announcement at the sale. LN-08-26;09,2,9,16;2026

## SERVICES

**DIVORCE** - Uncontested, \$525.00 + \$89.00 court cost. WILLS - \$295.00. No court appearance. Estimated completion time twenty-one days. Hilton Oliver, Attorney (Facebook). 757-490-0126. Se Habla Espanol. BBB Member. https://hiltonoliverattorney-va.com

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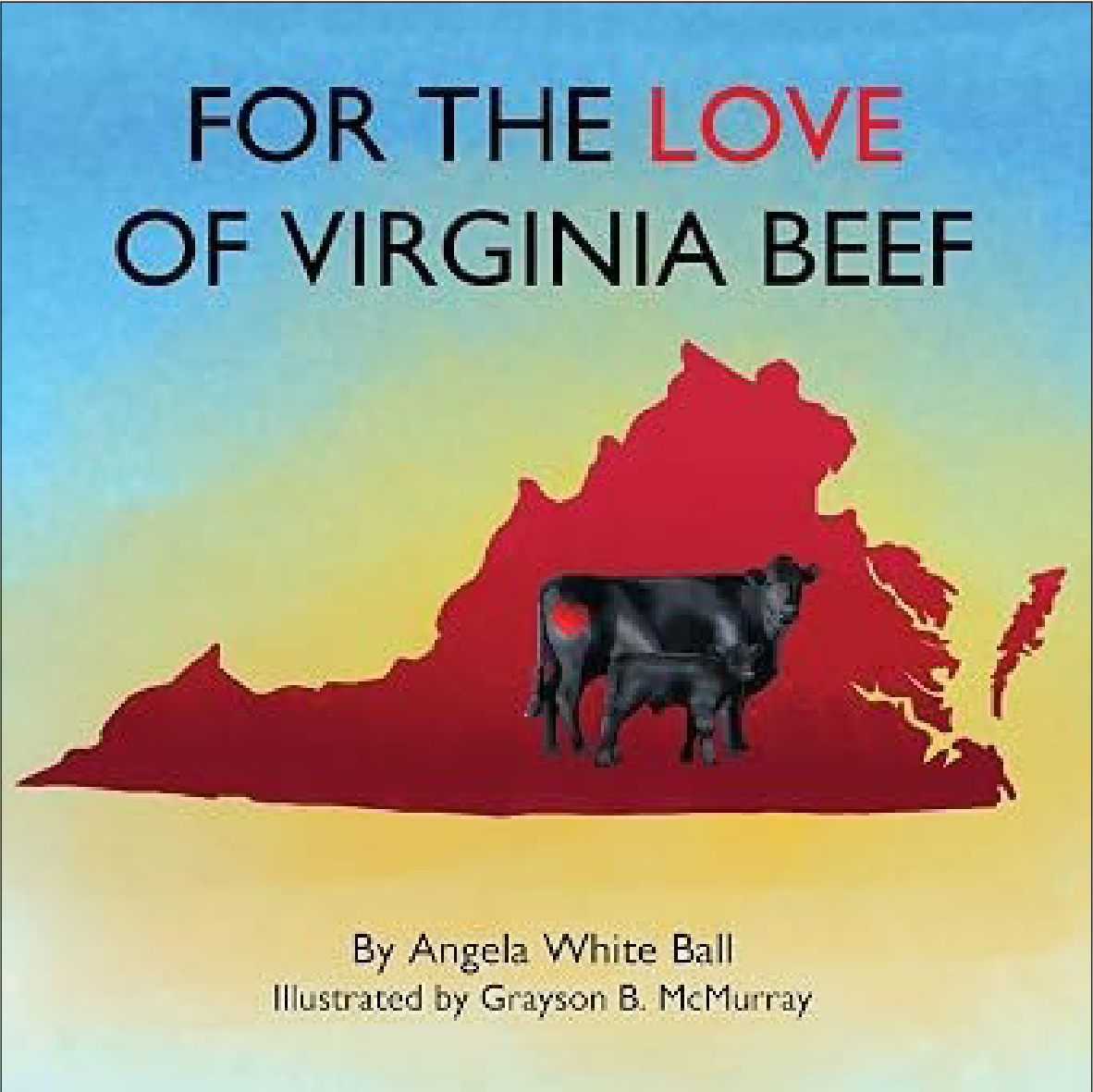
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# Children’s book celebrates Virginia’s beef cattle industry

By SHAWN STREET  
shawn@virginiamediainc.com

A new book by a local author is designed to teach children about Virginia’s beef cattle industry. Written by Honaker author Angela White Ball, “For the Love of Virginia Beef” will take young readers through the seasons of beef cattle production, offering a true-to-life depiction of the industry. Each year books about Virginia agriculture industry are presented to

schools. Ball said she was approached by Bruce Warner, president of the Russell County Farm Bureau. Warner suggested a book with local ties might be appealing for students. For a moment, Ball felt like she was back in school getting an assignment as Warner was her middle school principal when she was a child. In partnership with the Russell County Farm Bureau and the Russell County Farm Bureau Women’s Leadership Committee,

Ball began the task of writing the book. “I started in August of 2025 and I was done by December,” Ball said. “That was the manuscript part. I sent it to several people I trust in the agriculture business for editing.” From there, Grayson B. McMurray was hired to do the illustrations. The book is published by Skippy Creek Publishing. The book’s official launch was last week. “The book goes through all the seasons of beef cat-

tle production,” Ball said. “It highlights 25 of the top beef-producing counties, which of course, includes Russell County.” The book also features “A Note from the Author” that lists the key features of the book and how to utilize those to best support all ages and types of readers: Moo-vement Moments – short playful activities to keep young children engaged and active as the book is read Stretch & Moo Breaks – fun pauses throughout the book



This new trailer will greatly assist VetFest’s commitment to local veterans.

# VetFest receives enclosed trailer

By SHAWN STREET  
shawn@virginiamediainc.com

When VetFest SWVA began several years ago, organizers had the goal of raising funds for Stop Soldier Suicide while drawing attention to the challenges military veterans endure. Veterans were encouraged to come to the festival, held each September in Lebanon, and to events such as the Veteran’s Breakfast during the Russell County Fair. Now, thanks to a donation from the Washington County Moose Lodge, VetFest officials can travel more conveniently throughout the region in order to help veterans. A trailer was donated to VetFest from the Washington County Moose Lodge. The trailer received graphics from NewAge Graphics free of charge. “How can we ever thank Washington County Moose Lodge 1966 and NewAge Graphics out of Wise for making this wonderful trailer!” said VetFest organizer Doro Martin. She added, “Up to now when we had an event it took three or four vehicles to haul all the things we needed. Now we can hook up and pull out! It also

means we can haul more, do more and make more of an impact.” Martin and others honored local veterans with the annual Veterans Breakfast on Sept. 7 at the Russell County Fair. The 2026 VetFest SWVA will take place in Lebanon on Sept. 26. “We have so much going on and can’t wait to see you all!” Martin said.

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# Wellspring Foundation of Southwest Virginia names Courtney Stringer Executive Director

Following an extensive nationwide search that attracted a strong pool of highly qualified candidates, Wellspring Foundation of Southwest Virginia has selected Courtney Stringer to serve as its next Executive Director. Stringer will succeed Sean McMurray, current Executive Director, who is retiring at the end of 2026.



Courtney Stringer

“The search process was extensive, and we were fortunate to consider a strong pool of candidates with impressive experience and commitment,” stated Ramesh Murthy, chair of the search committee. “Board-Walk Consulting was an excellent partner in helping the Foundation navigate this important process. Courtney emerged as the top candidate because of her experience, her love for Southwest Virginia, and her deep passion for the work of the Foundation.” BoardWalk Consulting is a national executive search firm devoted exclusively to supporting the leadership and governance needs of foundations and nonprofits. BoardWalk has recruited dynamic leaders for over 500 nonprofit and grantmaking clients across the nation since its founding in 2002.

“It’s an honor to recognize the strong talent that lies within the Foundation team,” added Dr. JoAnn Price, chair of the Wellspring Foundation board of directors. “Courtney is a trusted presence in Southwest Virginia who leads with integrity, humility and sound judgment, and she brings a deep commitment to relationships that support lasting community impact. We are excited to see her step into the Executive Director role.” Stringer will step into her new role effective October 1, 2026. Over the coming months, Stringer and McMurray will work closely together with Foundation staff and partners to ensure a smooth and thoughtful leadership transition. “It has been a privilege to help establish and grow the Wellspring Foundation alongside such a dedicated team, board and community partners,” said McMurray. “Courtney has been an important part of that work, and I have great confidence in her leadership, her commitment to Southwest Virginia and her ability to guide the Foundation into its next chapter. I look forward to working closely with her in the months ahead to ensure a smooth transition.” A native of Southwest Virginia, Stringer currently serves as the Director of Engagement for Wellspring Foundation. In her current role she has fostered strong relationships with local, regional and state partners as well as managing the comprehensive grant process. In addition to her work with the Foundation, she has nearly two decades of experience in community development and collaboration. Prior to her time at the Foundation, Stringer held various roles at the University of Virginia’s College at Wise, where her focus included community development, entrepreneurship, professional growth, and collaborative coworking. Stringer served as the college’s Director of Community & Business Development for the Office of Administration, Government Relations & Strategic Initiatives. That experience will serve the Foundation well as it advances its mission of addressing the collective health needs of Washington, Grayson, Russell, and Smyth counties. Stringer holds a bachelor’s degree from UVA Wise and a Master of Business Administration from King University. She currently resides in Abingdon, Virginia, with her husband and two children. As a native of the area, she is passionate about improving the quality of life in Southwest Virginia. “I am honored to move into this role and deeply humbled by the opportunity to serve the Foundation and the region I love,” shared Stringer. “I am grateful to the Search Committee and BoardWalk Consulting for their tireless efforts throughout the nationwide search. I have deep respect for Sean McMurray and the incredible work he has done building the Foundation, creating a collaborative team environment, and leading with humility and grace. I look forward to building on that strong foundation and continuing the organization’s work as a true community partner focused on the health and wellbeing of the region.”

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