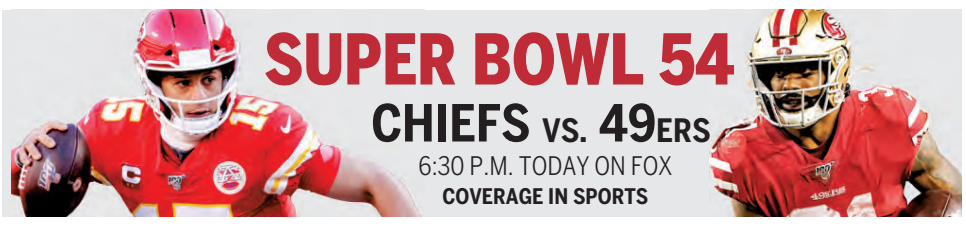
PARADE RETURNS
WITH JIM CARREY AND HIS ROLE IN SONIC THE HEDGEHOG » INSIDE



MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

THE VOICE OF THE COMMUNITY FOR 130 YEARS

Sunday, February 2, 2020 • MARTINSVILLEBULLETIN.COM • Martinsville, Virginia **$2**

Peace be with you

BILL WYATT/MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

Father Mark in prayer at St. Francis of Assisi in Rocky Mount.

Martinsville priest Father Mark White's popular blog has drawn lots of readers and the scorn of leaders of the Richmond Diocese because of his criticism of the Catholic Church's handling of sexual abuse cases. But his voice and his words have been silenced. This week he could be out of a job.

By Bill Wyatt | *bill.wyatt@martinsvillebulletin.com*

In February 2019 the sexual abuse scandal that has bedeviled the Roman Catholic Church landed in Martinsville when the Diocese of Richmond named two former priests at St. Joseph Catholic Church among 42 across central and Southwest Virginia who it said had been sex abusers.

The diocese, in its statement identifying John Joseph Munley, who was pastor between 1971 and 1975 and died in 1995, and Harris Markam Findlay (1955-59), did not say how many accusers the men faced, simply releasing a statement from Bishop Barry Knestout: "To those who experienced abuse from clergy, I am truly, deeply sorry."

That announcement, though, was only a byproduct of a much more troubling announcement that same month that has started a process that could threaten the appointment of a third priest in Martinsville, one whose only contribution to the sex scandal was his widely consumed comments about how badly he thought the church was handling it.

That February, former Cardinal Theodore Edgar McCarrick had been dismissed from the clergy about eight months after his resignation in July 2018 from the College of Cardinals was accepted by Pope Francis. A church investigation and trial had found him guilty of sexual crimes against adults and minors and abuse of power.

The Catholic News Agency reported three weeks ago that McCarrick voluntarily had left the St. Fidelis Friary in Victoria,

SEE **WHITE** | A8

IMPEACHMENT TRIAL

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

President Donald Trump will give the State of the Union address Tuesday, the day before a vote is expected in the impeachment trial.

Senate delays final vote

The decision will come after Trump's State of the Union speech.

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The Senate voted to bar new evidence in the impeachment trial Friday, paving the way for President Donald Trump's acquittal even as several top Republicans acknowledged that his actions toward Ukraine were not appropriate.

Eleven days into the trial, the highly anticipated vote, which was decided 51 to 49, revealed the partisan divisions in the chamber over whether to subpoena witnesses and documents, a step Democrats argued was crucial to weighing whether Trump abused his power in pressuring Ukraine to announce investigations of his political rivals. Among Republicans, only Sens. Susan Collins of Maine and Mitt Romney of Utah supported the resolution.

In declining to add to the case presented by House Democrats, the Senate delivered a victory for the White House that all but guaranteed that Trump will remain in office. With

SEE **TRIAL** | A10

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WEATHER

60 HIGH | 38 LOW

Sunny and mild this afternoon and clear and partly cloudy tonight.

For detailed weather information, **see Page A2**

Historical society pays tribute to furniture industry.

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White

From Page A1

Kan., and would only describe his new residence as "a community for those removed from the ministry." And a much-anticipated report from the Vatican concerning McCarrick has remained sealed. Both of those facts have outraged many Catholics.

Among those critics was Father Mark White, priest of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Martinsville and St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Rocky Mount.

But now he speaks no more.

McCarrick

The Diocese in Richmond late last year ordered White to silence and possibly could dismiss him from the priesthood for the disgust he has expressed about how the church has responded to the sexual abuse scandal and McCarrick's involvement in it in both a widely read blog and from the pulpit.

White's comments about McCarrick and other issues related to sexual abuse in the church not only are based in his understanding of how the church works but also from a deep and very personal angst: He was ordained by McCarrick, who was once one of the most recognized Cardinals in American history.

"I'm from D.C.," White said. "I served in the Archdiocese of Washington from 2003 to 2010. I was in Montgomery County, Rockville, Maryland, for a period of time. I was in Prince George County for a period of time."

McCarrick became a cardinal in February 2001 and served as the Archbishop of Washington, D.C., from 2001 to 2006. Considered to be a power broker and connected to prominent politicians, he wielded an incredible amount of influence in the nation's capital.

"He ordained me as a priest in 2003," White said. "I was in D.C. for a good number of years in the city itself, and then I was transferred down here in the spring of 2011 by my own volunteering to do so because the diocese of Richmond is much more in need of priests than the Archdiocese of Washington is."

McCarrick's alleged sexual abuse of adult seminarians was reportedly known to bishops as early as 1993, and word had reached the Vatican by 2016.

"In the summer of 2018 it was publicly made known that someone had accused him [McCarrick] of sexual abuse of a victim while he was a minor," White said.

"It was a great blow to me and to my brother priests of the same generation that were ordained by him.

"Later that summer, as often does happen in cases like this, additional victims let the world know that they also had been victimized by him.

"Then an archbishop of the church who had retired released information about how authorities in the church had in fact known about all of this for decades without it ever being acknowledged publicly, and that gave me an impetus – a psychological need in order to preserve my own faith to study the whole thing as carefully as I possibly could."

White said he was not one of McCarrick's victims, but he observed signs that later would become clear to him he was among seminarians who were being abused.

"He [McCarrick] wanted some of the men to wear certain shirts or clothes because he liked the way they looked. He built a trust that this was the way they could show their love for him."

When the allegations of sexual abuse against underage males were made public in 2018, White said, he was shocked at the realization that in the infancy of his new life as a Catholic priest, he had been living in a cesspool of deceit, lies and manipulation.

'Father Mark Blog'

White began a personal blog called "Father Mark Blog" in August 2008. In the beginning he used it primarily for posting his homilies online for the benefit of the parishioners.

But as time passed and more of the egregious actions of McCarrick came to light, White began using his blog as a means of expressing his personal frustration with specific people in the Catholic Church and the apathetic attitude of the church hierarchy in general.

St. Joseph Eucharist Minister Barbara Kurtz says this is more than a story of a local priest being silenced.

"This is not just Father Mark or people in this diocese, this is across the board in the United States," Kurtz said.

"People are very impatient about the fact that one Theodore McCarrick, who was a cardinal and is the cardinal that ordained Father Mark.

"He [Father Mark] knew him as somebody he looked up to. He [McCarrick] was a mentor of sort.

"I was listening to the conference of Catholic Bishops in the United States about two weeks ago. What I heard was more than one bishop say was that the people of their respective diocese anywhere in the United States are inpatient about this issue [sexual abuse] not being resolved and the issue is that Theodore McCarrick climbed the ranks … priest, probably monsignor, bishop, cardinal – it's a very high position – and how did he do that because everybody – or many, many people seem to know that this man had been abusing children, young adults.

"How and why did he get to be so high in the church with a history like his, and the questions are not being answered and people are inpatient.

"Father [White] has been very vocal about his impatience."

The popularity of the "Father Mark White Blog" began to grow, and on Nov. 7 White posted that he had received his "one millionth visit."

"For good or ill, I find that a respectable number of visits," White wrote. "Sharing this ride with you makes me a happy man. Let's do another million together."

Two weeks later, though, the blog of Father Mark White disappeared. He was silenced by the Richmond Diocese from communicating to the public online.

He is scheduled to meet Wednesday in Richmond with Bishop Barry Knestout. There is some thought – by White and his parishioners – that this could be his final moment as the priest of St. Joseph and St. Francis Assisi.

How it began

In September 2018 White began posting some of his correspondence with Bishop Knestout from Richmond. Knestout has accused White of demanding that Pope Francis resign.

"You write that, in my open letter, I 'demanded' that the Holy Father resign," White shared with his blog readers. "That is not true. I begged him to resign. I explicitly acknowledged that he alone has a right to make such a decision.

Knestout

"You could easily check what I wrote on my weblog – except you censored the post. I never demanded anything. I humbly begged. 'Beg' was my exact word.

"Did I disrespect you, or Pope Francis, by begging? Did I act with anything less than courtesy towards you [Knestout], or Pope Francis, by begging? Did I damage ecclesial communion by begging?

"You asked me to apologize to Pope Francis. For what? For loving him enough to point out that we have reached a dangerous impasse? If the full truth about McCarrick does not come out, then how will any of us who have been touched by his ministry recover?

"But, at the same time, how can any of us have confidence that the Holy Father will see to the full disclosure of all the facts? He has had ample time and opportunity to disclose them. But he studiously has refused to do so.

"You write that I have done you wrong by 'addressing issues that directly affect' you. Have you yourself suffered reprisals from the Holy See because of what I, one of your priests, has written? If so, I am sorry. But you can hardly identify me as the villain in that scenario."

Bishop confronts White

On Nov. 21, parishioners at St. Francis of Assisi in Rocky Mount were in awe at the sight of Bishop Knestout and Vicar General Michael Boehling waiting for White at the conclusion of their noon Mass.

Both men had traveled from Richmond to meet Father White unannounced.

"Mark, I need to spend 15 minutes with you, after we greet the people," Knestout was overheard by parishioners saying.

After that meeting in White's office at the church, which lasted about 20 minutes, White's blog was removed, and he was to abide by a new directive that limited his ability to communicate with the public only in person or from the pulpit.

Until Friday, there had been no public explanation from Knestout despite the outcry from local parishioners and followers of White's blog.

"It is not the practice of the diocese to speak to any one individual's blog or webpage, nor to personnel matters that are between Bishop Knestout and his priests," Diocese Communications Director Deborah Cox said in response to the Bulletin's request for comment from Knestout.

The parishioners speak

With their priest under a mandate of silence, members of the book club at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Martinsville sat at a table together recently and spoke openly about the situation and their extreme displeasure in the action taken by the Richmond Diocese against their White.

Jim Reaghard is the coordinator for the Reach Out program and on Parish Council at St. Joseph.

"He [Bishop Knestout] had a conference with him in his office," Reaghard said. "I asked Father when I heard about it. … I said, 'Was that an order?' — being military, you know, I'm a retired Naval officer — and he says, 'Oh I guess so.'

"I don't know the full story, but I do know that Father has a blog, and a lot of people have read it.

"I don't follow blogs. I don't follow things on social media or anything like that myself, but I heard the bishop kind of censured him and told him not to do this anymore, and I just went – why – and I was just kind of curious – and I don't know, it must of struck a note with the bishop or maybe someone above him.

"Other people have read this blog, and it has helped them heal through some of the abusiveness that has occurred in the church.

"I'm really surprised that bishop is muffling his speech because one of the best things we can do is speak out and be honest and open with people and talk about what's hurting us and he's putting the pinch on him and telling him not to do that. I don't think that's fair.

"In America we have the right to free speech."

Irma Harrison is the sacristan at St. Joseph.

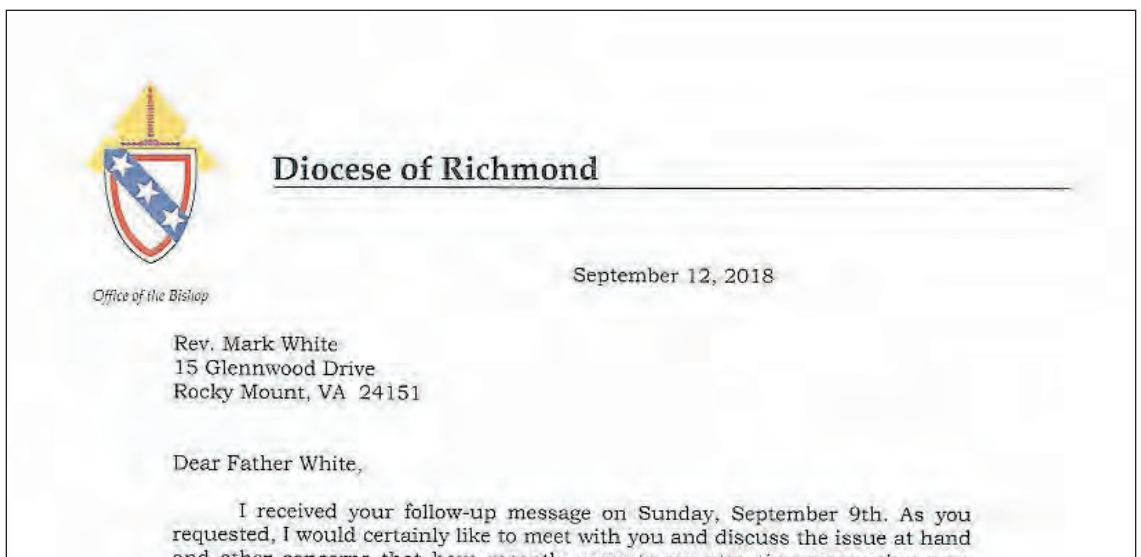
"I think Father Mark's blogs hit a nerve with the diocese because in those blogs he expresses concern, caring, he expresses frustration that things just aren't moving fast enough – that the diocese isn't doing everything it can and I think it strikes a chord with the hierarchy and the diocese that – 'we don't want to hear this.'

"I think that's why he was asked to remove his blog. So he has no blog anymore. Since all this has broken loose, all this abuse in the church – Father has been very vocal about it."

Systemic lack of transparency

Said Eucharist Minister Kurtz: "So somehow what we have here with our bishop forbidding Father from continuing a blog and also demanding that he erase and remove any blog that he's ever done in the past – obliterate all of it. One can't help but think he's protecting something.

CONTINUED ON PAGE A9



Diocese of Richmond

Office of the Bishop

September 12, 2018

Rev. Mark White
15 Glennwood Drive
Rocky Mount, VA 24151

Dear Father White,

I received your follow-up message on Sunday, September 9th. As you requested, I would certainly like to meet with you and discuss the issue at hand and other concerns that have recently come to my attention concerning your homily on the 23rd Weekend in Ordinary Time.

Having provided you with several dates and times to meet this week, and with an openness to accommodate your busy schedule, I am saddened that you have refused my request to meet. However, as I mentioned in my email to you, a mutually convenient time can be arranged. Please give me some suggested dates and I will confirm our appointment.

In your message you stated that you were peacefully minding your own business when Father Boehling contacted you on my behalf. I know that you are fully aware that what is most properly your business is the pastoral care and oversight of the people of Saint Francis of Assisi and Saint Joseph Parishes. When you wrote an open letter to the Holy Father, my immediate ecclesiastical superior, demanding his resignation and posted it on your blog, you were addressing issues that directly affect me. You wrote the letter without having the courtesy to consult with me about such a controversial demand. I found this disrespectful and not in keeping with the ecclesial communion that you and all priests of the diocese would ideally share with me as your bishop. I ask that you withhold judgement until such time that more clarity of the facts has occurred.

I am grateful that you cooperated and removed the letter from your blog, but I also asked that you apologize to the Holy Father as well.

I look forward to our frank and open conversation.

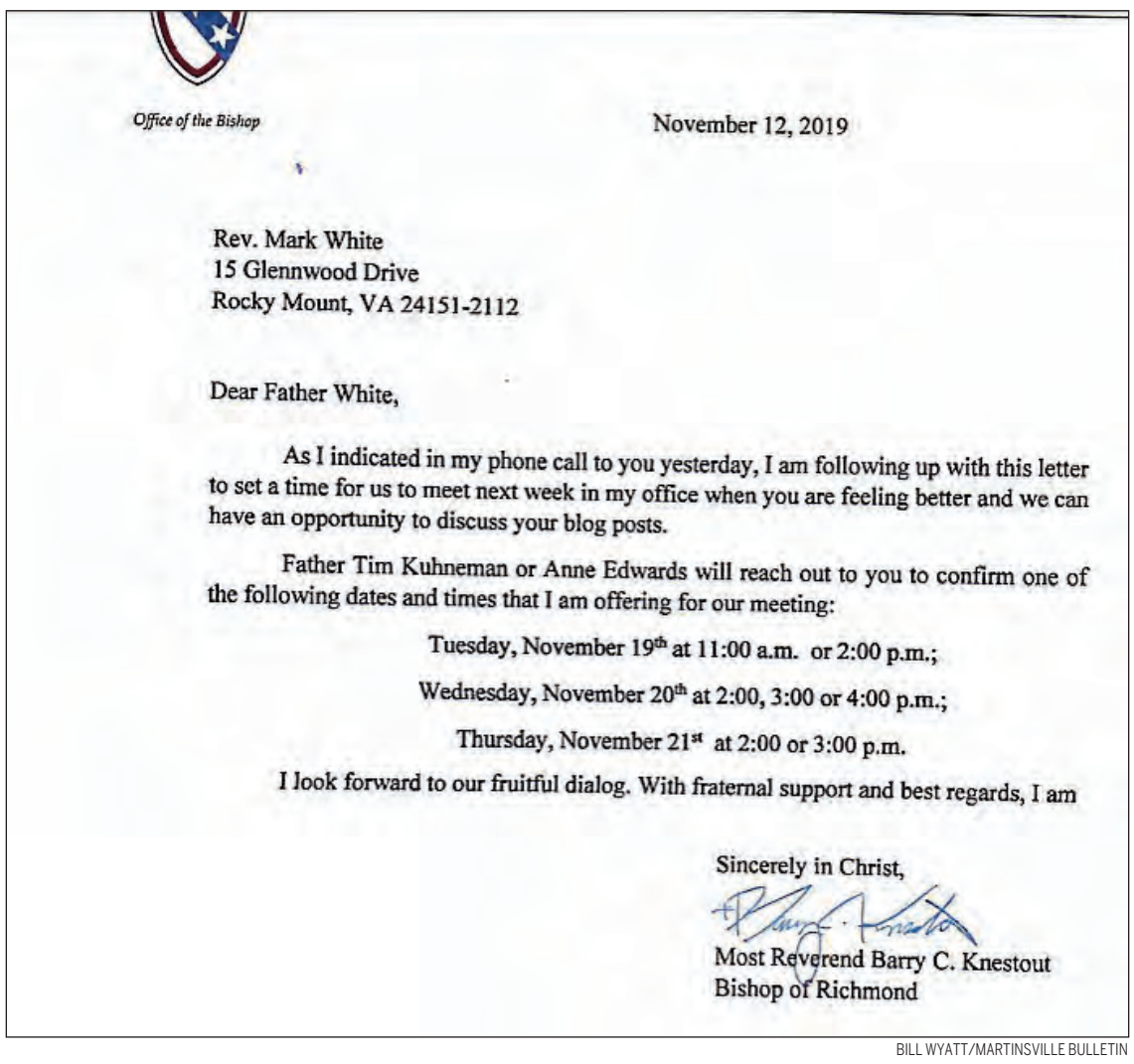
Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Barry C. Knestout
Bishop of Richmond

Pastoral Center • 7800 Carousel Lane, Richmond, Virginia 23294-4201 • Phone: (804) 359-5661 • Fax: (804) 358-9159

BILL WYATT/MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

A letter from the bishop to Father Mark White.



Office of the Bishop

November 12, 2019

Rev. Mark White
15 Glennwood Drive
Rocky Mount, VA 24151-2112

Dear Father White,

As I indicated in my phone call to you yesterday, I am following up with this letter to set a time for us to meet next week in my office when you are feeling better and we can have an opportunity to discuss your blog posts.

Father Tim Kuhneman or Anne Edwards will reach out to you to confirm one of the following dates and times that I am offering for our meeting:

Tuesday, November 19th at 11:00 a.m. or 2:00 p.m.;

Wednesday, November 20th at 2:00, 3:00 or 4:00 p.m.;

Thursday, November 21st at 2:00 or 3:00 p.m.

I look forward to our fruitful dialog. With fraternal support and best regards, I am

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Barry C. Knestout
Bishop of Richmond

BILL WYATT/MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

A letter from the bishop to Father Mark White.

White

From Page A8

"Why is he coming down so hard on Father's questions and issues which are held by so many, many people. That's questionable. And our bishop also was in Washington D.C., for many, many, many years. He worked as secretary to the last cardinal, the last archbishop of the diocese of Washington and he also worked for a brief time for the then-Cardinal Theodore McCarrick.

"So part of Father Mark's anger has to do with our current bishop saying right up at the front when he first became bishop he wrote in our newspaper 'I know nothing about all of this.' And Father Mark is skeptical – I'm putting it mildly – that he doesn't know anything about it.

"It comes down to being a scapegoat.

"Two things that are the problem – lack of transparency. It seems to be systemic in the church. What you hear in the dark doesn't get spoken in the light. You're out there – people know what you're thinking and what you're saying. That isn't happening. There is no transparency because none of the higher-ups in the church, at least a great number of them, are not willing to say anything and so this drags out and drags out and drags out.

"The second is clericalism – which is a strange thing. It sounds like kind of a vague term but what it comes down to is like the old boys club. You take my back and I'll take your back. So, if this priest or bishop knows that someone is being abusive – they don't talk about it. Shoved under the rug."

Many of the followers of White's blog offered opinions like Mike Keyser:

"Apparently, the 'good old boys club' in Virginia is closing ranks and trying to keep others silent on the issue of sexual abuse of children for their own self-preservation.

"Any attempt by the hierarchy to squelch this evil deed will eventually prove them to be on the losing side of His Story.

"Thank you, Father White, for not sweeping this under the carpet like it has been for so long.

"You are close to the cross."

Richard Long is a parishioner of St. Francis of Assisi.

"I am angered that this has happened," he said. "His [Father Mark's] blog created healthy dialogue among Catholics and the public. Yes, he wrote about difficult topics. Like the sex abuse scandal in the church.

"It was meaningful enough to actually keep me in the church, when I considered leaving the church, because of the abuse crisis."

Impending removal?

On Jan. 12 at Sunday Mass, Father Mark told his parishioners from the pulpit of St. Joseph in Martinsville that the bishop had threatened to remove him as their priest:

"In this church, we agree on faith and morals. We share the faith of the Apostles, which they and their successors have handed down to us, through the ages. And we govern our lives by the Christian rule of conduct. That does not mean, however, that we agree on everything.

"In the Catholic Church, we must respect each other's right, and each other's need, to study, to reflect, to form opinions, and to express ourselves.

"From the very beginning of our church's pilgrimage on earth, open and honest debate has made up an essential part of the Christian life. The original Apostles argued about circumcising non-Jewish converts to Christianity.

"Different apostles had different opinions about it. It took some intense arguing before they found the path forward, and went down it together. And the uncircumcised men of the ancient world all breathed a sigh of relief.

"I dislike talking about myself up here. But I find myself in a difficult situation. And it's a difficult situation for us all.

"The holy Catholic Church faced a profound crisis in the summer of 2018, as many of us remember. I began writing on my weblog about it, trying to understand the problem myself, and offering the reader whatever insight I had.

"I did 18 months' worth of writing on the subject – hopefully in the service of our Catholic faith, not against it. I don't claim never to have made any mistakes. I'm sure I did.

"Until this past November, our bishop, Barry Knestout, tolerated my writing on my blog. Then he made a surprise visit to Rocky Mount, a week before Thanksgiving. He ordered me, in no uncertain terms, to keep silent. To remove my blog from circulation entirely, and to publish nothing further – not even my Sunday homilies.

"The bishop has every right to correct me, even to censor my writing, if he judges it necessary. We Catholic priests do not enjoy an absolute right to free speech.

"All kinds of cranks publish all kinds of blogs, after all. If I'm just another nut-job with a laptop – so be it. At least, that's how I saw it, until this past Nov. 21.

"A month ago, I wrote the bishop asking him to reconsider his decision. He answered, expressing his willingness to meet with me next month, in February.

"If I don't have a nervous breakdown before then, I will try to persuade the bishop at that meeting that he shows the strongest and most admirable leadership by tolerating the free expression of opinions. Especially opinions regarding the sex-abuse crisis in the Church.

"In November, he sternly threatened to remove me as pastor here if I did not silence myself.

"I, for one, do not want to be removed as pastor here."

Bill Wyatt is a reporter for the Martinsville Bulletin. He can be reached at 276-638-8801, Ext. 236. Follow him @billdwyatt

BILL WYATT/MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

St. Joseph Catholic Church in Martinsville.

BILL WYATT/MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Rocky Mount.

Sunshine Tours
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2020 TOUR SCHEDULE

Date	Tour	Per Person Price
Feb 10	Mardi Gras Casino / Cross Lanes WV	35
Feb 14-17	Daytona 300 / Daytona 500	995
Feb 16-18	Wind Creek Casino & Resort / Bethlehem PA	395
Feb 24	Harrah's Casino / Cherokee NC	45
Feb 28	Southern Spring Show / Charlotte NC	70
Feb 29	Southern Spring Show / Charlotte NC	70
Mar 1-4	Atlantic City / Resorts Casino & Hotel	495
Mar 5-7	Philidelphia Flower Show	575
Mar 6-8	Winter Wildlife Cruise / Virginia Beach Va	460
Mar 6	Southern Spring Show / Charlotte NC	70
Mar 7	Southern Spring Show / Charlotte NC	70
Mar 14	Highland Maple Festival	65
Mar 16	Mardi Gras Casino / Cross Lanes WV	35
Mar 16 - 22	Baseball Spring Training / Florida	1695
Mar 21	Highland Maple Festival	65
Mar 21	Spring Shopping / Ashville Outlets	60
Mar 23	Harrah's Casino / Cherokee NC	45
Mar 30 - Apr 5	Travel Like a Rock Star	1985
Apr 3-4	"Esther" / Lancaster PA	435
Apr 3-5	Washington DC / Cherry Blossom Festival	475
Apr 4	Biltmore House / Festival of Flowers	105
Apr 4-10	Charleston / Savannah / Jekyll Island	1750
Apr 5-7	Wind Creek Casino & Resort / Bethlehem PA	395
Apr 13	Mardi Gras Casino / Cross Lanes WV	35
Apr 16-May 2	Southwest & California / Motorcoach	3350
Apr 18	Biltmore House / Festival of Flowers	105
Apr 18-27	Mississippi River Cruise	6850
Apr 21-30	Texas "The Lone Star State"	2055
Apr 27	Harrah's Casino / Cherokee NC	45
Apr 30-May 3	Kentucky Derby / Louisville	2945
May 2	Billy Graham Library / Botanical Gardens	65
May 4	Andy Griffith Mayberry / Mt Airy NC	65
May 5-8	Cape May New Jersey	995
May 5-8	Tulip Festival / Holland MI	865
May 5-24	San Francisco CA / Pacific Northwest	3595
May 6	Shatley Springs	70
May 9	North Carolina Zoo / Asheboro NC	60
May 11	Mardi Gras Casino / Cross Lanes WV	35
May 12-18	Texas Baseball / Two Stadiums	1895
May 13-15	Enchanting Wilderness & Waterfalls	775
May 13-16	Creation Museum / Ark Encoutner	650
May 14-16	"Esther" / Lancaster PA	595
May 15-17	New York City / Springtime	1050
May 16-17	Tangier Island / Monticello	370
May 17-23	Best of Ozarks/Branson/Eureka Springs	1450
May 18	Harrah's Casino / Cherokee NC	45
May 18-20	Wind Creek Casino & Resort / Bethlehem PA	395
May 22-24	Nashville TN / Music City USA	895
May 30-Jun15	Newfundland /Labrador/Nova Scotia	3325
June 1-9	Castles, Capitols & Countryside	1595
Jun 2-5	The Walking Dead & Tombstones	875
Jun 5-10	New Hampshire / Purple Moose Tour	1325
June 7-11	Trapp Family Lodge / Vermont	1750
June 7-13	Michigan & The Grand Hotel	1795
June 11-14	Mystery Tour...SSSHH! It's a Secret	710
June 12-13	"Esther" / Lancaster PA	435
June 12-14	Washington DC / Our Nation's Capital	450
June 12-22	Nova Scotia & The Atlantic Provinces	1995
June 14-17	Atlantic City / Resorts Casino & Hotel	495
June 14-20	Plymouth Rock 400th Anniversary	1550
June 15	Mardi Gras Casino / Cross Lanes WV	35
June 15-19	Florida's NE Shore / Amelia Island	895
June 17-28	Americas Southwest Fly / Land	3235
June 21-17	Niagara Falls / Montreal / Quebec	1295
Jun 23-26	Pennsylvania's Caverns & Taverns	1010
June 24-27	Florida's Holyland / Orlando	645
June 25-27	Chincoteague Island	640
Jun 28-Jul 7	Hawaii/Honolulu/Waikiki	4435
June 29	Harrah's Casino / Cherokee NC	45
Jul 1-5	Niagara Falls / USA / Erie Canal	815
July 3-11	Baseball/West Coast/Phoenix/LA/SF	3485
July 4-11	New England Summer / Martha's Vineyard	1525
July 5-19	Canyonlands / Our Most Scenic Tour	2875
Jul 5-Aug 2	Alaska & Canada Fly / Land	6125
July 9-11	Bible Musuem / Washington DC	525
Jul 12-24	Cowboy Country/South Dakota/Wyoming	2735
Jul 13	Mardi Gras Casino / Cross Lanes WW	35
July 19-22	Wind Creek Casino & Resort / Bethlehem	575
Jul 19-26	Canadian Rockies VIA Rail / Fly / Land	7225
July 27	Harrah's Casino / Cherokee NC	45
July 29-Aug 1	Amish Acres Festival / Indiana	650
July 31-Aug 2	Explore Nashville"Music City" USA	725
Aug 4-23	San Francisco CA / Pacific Northwest	3595
Aug 5-9	Baseball / Three Stadiums	960
Aug 6-8	"Ester" / Lancaster PA	595
Aug 8 - 9	Tangier Island / Monticello	370
Aug 10	Mardi Gras Casino / Cross Lanes WV	35
Aug 10-13	Culinary Tour / Pigeon Forge TN	995
Aug 10-21	Great Lakes	2650
Aug 13-17	Elvis / Tupelo / Memphis	1150
Aug 17-21	Wind Creek / Foxwoods / Dover Downs	750
Aug 18-22	Wisconsin / Racine / Milwukee	1025
Aug 22-23	Smoky Mountain Railroad / Cherokee	545
Aug 23-29	Pioneer Woman & Magnolia Market	1635
Aug 24	Harrah's Casino / Cherokee NC	45
Aug 31-Sept 12	Germany's Cultural Cities / Oberammergau	8995
Sept 2-5	Creation Museum / Ark Encounter	650
Sept 2-6	Mystery Tour ...We're Still Not Telling	875
Sept 4-6	Ohio Amish	745
Sept 5	North Carolina Zoo / Asheboro NC	60
Sept 6-8	Wind Creek Casino & Resort / Bethlehem	395
Sept 6-12	Niagara Falls / Montreal / Quebec	1295
Sept 6-12	Best of the Ozark/Branson/Eureka Springs	1450
Sept 10-13	Myrtle Beach SC	625
Sept 11-13	Washignton SC / Our Nations's Capital	450
Sept 12-13	Atlanta Braves Baseball	395
Sept 12-19	Trains of New England	2085
Sept 14	Mardi Gras Casino / Cross Lanes WV	35
Sept 14-19	Agawa Canyon Canadian Train	1155
Sept 14-26	Nova Scotia & New England / Fall	1975
Sept 17-19	"Ester" / Lancaster PA	595
Sept 18-19	Tygart Flyer / Gandy Dancer / Elkins WV	405
Sept 18-20	Loretta Lynn's Homeplace / Pikeville KY	495
Sept 19-25	New England / Fall	1295
Sept 25-27	Neptne Festival / Virginia Beach	575
Sept 26	Andy Griffith's "Mayberry Days" Mt Airy NC	65
Sept 27-30	Resorts Casino & Hotel / Atlantic City MJ	495
Sept 28	Harrah's Casino / Cherokee NC	45
Sept 29-Oct 2	National Quartet Convention / Pigeon Forge	825
Oct 2-3	"Ester" / Lancaster PA	435
Oct 2-4	West Virignia Haunts	525
Oct 2-5	Talladega Superspeedway	995
Oct 3	Brushy Mountain Apple Festival	55
Oct 3-19	Southwest & California / Motorcoach	3350
Oct 4-8	Niagara Falls / Toronto	950
Oct 5-11	New England in the Fall	1295
Oct 7	Shatley Springs	70
Oct 7	Cass Railroad / Cass WV	105
Oct 7-11	Shipshewana / Indiana Amish	925
Oct 9-11	Nashville TN / Music City USA	725
Oct 9-14	Albuquergue Balloon Fiesta	4410
Oct 10	Billy Graham Library / Botanical Gardens	65
Oct 10	Cass Railroad / Cass WV	105
Oct 12	Mardi Gras Casino / Cross Lanes WV	35
Oct 13-16	Rockin' the Boardwalk / Virginia Beach	1025
Oct 17	New River Gorge Bridge / Bridge Day	80
Oct 17	Carolina Balloon Fest / Statesville NC	70
Oct 19-23	Wind Creek / Foxwoods / Dover Downs	750
Oct 26	Harrah's Casino / Cherokee NC	45
Nov 6-8	Sunshine Tours Family Reunion	710
Nov 12	Southern Christmas Show / Charlotte NC	70
Nov 12-15	Biltmore / Smoky Mountain Christmas	880
Nov 13	Southern Christmas Show / Charlotte NC	70
Nov 14	Southern Christmas Show / Charlotte NC	70
Nov 14	Concord Mills / Bass Pro Shop	50
Nov 15-18	Wind Creek Casino / New York City	575
Nov 16	Mardi Gras Casino / Cross Lanes WV	35
Nov 23	Harrah's Casino / Cherokee NC	45
Nov 25-28	Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade	1450
Dec 1	Lights at Tanglewood Park / Hanes Mall	50
Dec 1-3	Blue Christmas at Graceland	1150
Dec 1-5	Christmas Mystery	1495
Dec 2-6	Charleston / Savannah at Christmas	1125
Dec 3-7	Norman Rockwell Christmas	1195
Dec 4-6	Christmas at Myrtle Beach	475
Dec 4-6	New York / Radio City Christmas Show	1250
Dec 5	Charlotte Premium Outlets	50
Dec 5	Christmastown USA / McAdenville NC	45
Dec 5	Grove Park Inn / Gingerbread Competition	105
Dec 5	Biltmore House & Gardens / Christmas	105
Dec 6-12	Branson MO / Ozark Christmas	1335
Dec 11-13	New York / Radio City Christmas Show	1250
Dec 11-13	Nashville / Country Christmas / Opryland	1150
Dec 12	The Polar Express	95
Dec 12	Biltmore House & Gardens / Christmas	105
Dec 14	Mardi Gras Casino / Cross Lanes WV	35
Dec 26-31	Florida / Christmas at Disneyland	1675
Dec 28	Harrah's Casino / Cherokee NC	45

All Pricing listed is for 2quests per room – Double Pricing. Single, Triple and Quad pricing will vary. All tours include round-trip Motorcoach transportation by Modern, Air-Conditioned, DVD and restroom equipped Deluxe Motorcoach, Hotel acccommodations and Admission to all listed attractions. Baggage handeling is provided at each night's lodging as indicated in the catalog. Please refer to our cancellation policy in the 2020 Catalog of Tours or on our website.
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‘ELITE CLASS’

Coach Fuente outlines lofty goals for Virginia Tech’s 2021 signing class » B1

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Plan ahead and find area events » A8

MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

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Friday, February 7, 2020 • MARTINSVILLEBULLETIN.COM • Martinsville, Virginia **$1.50**

Father White remains collared but quiet

MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN/FILE

Father Mark White, priest of St. Joseph in Martinsville and St. Francis of Assisi in Rocky Mount.

Bishop does not fire Father Mark White during two meetings, but he continues his directive not to post comments in his blog.

By Bill Wyatt
bill.wyatt@martinsvillebulletin.com

RICHMOND — Father Mark White, priest of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Martinsville and St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Rocky Mount, will keep his job under a modified agreement of silence arranged at a meeting Wednesday at the Catholic Diocese offices.

Father White emerged from the meeting wearing black with his white clerical collar intact and was greeted by echoes of “he’s still got his collar on!” from a small group of parishioners who made the 4-hour trip in support of their beloved priest.

Late last year Bishop Barry Knestout ordered White to silence and threatened to remove him from the priesthood because of a popular blog White populated with comments of frustration and disgust over how the church hierarchy had responded to the many sexual abuse scandals in the church and particularly the cases involving former Cardinal Theodore Edgar McCarrick, who had ordained White as a priest.

In June 2018, McCarrick was suspended after dozens of stories became known involving details of sexual misconduct with seminarians and then allegations of sexual abuse of children. McCarrick resigned from the College of Cardinals in July of 2018, but his file still remains sealed at the Vatican.

White complained forcefully in his blog that the file should be released, even to the point of begging Pope Francis to resign. Knestout responded by forcing White to remove his blog, which had drawn more than a million

SEE **WHITE** | A5

Rains, flooding but no big problems

BILL WYATT/MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

Water powers through the Smith River Bridge on U.S. 220 Business south of Martinsville.

Weather that shut down schools offers few other disruptions in Martinsville, Henry and Patrick counties.

By Bill Wyatt
bill.wyatt@martinsvillebulletin.com

The heavy rains and tornadic winds that did so much damage east of Martinsville and across North Carolina on Thursday gave students some extra free time but otherwise caused very little disruption around Henry and Patrick counties.

Patrick County dismissed schools for the day based on forecasts of possible tornadoes and local flooding, and as rains pounded down through the morning, Patrick Henry Community College and Henry County and Martinsville public schools dismissed at midday. Some government offices also closed early, too.

Henry County, out of an abundance of caution, announced around 6 p.m. that it would delay schools for 2 hours

SEE **WEATHER** | A7

Every dog has its day (care) in Collinsville

Two facilities to groom and care for “fur babies” open near one another.

By Holly Kozelsky
hkozelsky@martinsvillebulletin.com

Doggie day care has come to Henry County.

About a mile apart on Virginia Avenue in Collinsville, Spunky’s Spa and Urban Tails offer grooming and boarding for dogs and cats.

About 40 dogs (“fur babies,” in modern parlance) on a regular basis spend their days in the day cares while their owners (“pet parents”) are at work.

Wanda Wood of Woolwine was a nurse who took dog-grooming classes just to take care of her own dog, a shih-tzu named Brody.

A year later, she made the plunge entirely into dog care with Spunky’s Spa

SEE **CARE** | A7

HOLLY KOZELSKY/MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

The grooming area of Wanda Wood’s Spunky’s Spa in Collinsville has two grooming tables and two bathing areas.

HOLLY KOZELSKY/MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

Lu Toler said she has been working with dogs since 1989. She opened the dog daycare Urban Tails Spa Resort on Nov. 30.

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WEATHER

49 HIGH | 25 LOW

Windy and cool today turning partly cloudy and colder into the evening.

For detailed weather information, **see Page A2**

Capital needs are discussed at Henry Co. meeting.

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REYNOLDS

REYRita Benz

REYRita Benz Reynolds, 82, of Greensboro, North Carolina, passed away on Tuesday, February 4, 2020, peacefully in her son's home joining her daughter, Manuela Isabella Reynolds (Kika) of New York, N.Y., and her brother, Frank Eugene Benz of Patrick Springs, Va., in everlasting peace.

Rita was born in Mannheim, Germany on October 8, 1937, to Martin Benz and Helene Ahl Benz, both deceased.

She is survived by her children, Rogers Reynolds and daughter-in-law, Sharon, Audrey Callahan, Karen Reynolds, and Lance Reynolds and daughter-in-law, Carolyn; she was a grandmother to nine grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Rita came to the United States in 1960, with Samuel Rogers Reynolds and her daughter, Kika and eventually became a U.S. Citizen alongside her daughter. She built a life and grew her family in Northern Virginia, Baltimore, Md., Patrick Springs and Ridgeway, Va., and Las Vegas, Nev., before settling down in Greensboro, N.C. to spend the later part of her life closer to her children.

During her time living in Virginia, Rita worked as a substitute teacher at Hardin Reynolds Memorial and Patrick County High School in Critz, Va., and as a nurse secretary for Martinsville Memorial Hospital in Martinsville, Va., where she ultimately retired from before moving to Las Vegas with her family. After retirement, Rita went back to work as a TSA baggage screener in Las Vegas, Nev., to meet people and fill her time. It was during this time that Rita developed a passion for line dancing, which she did regularly throughout her time in Vegas. Once moving back to the east coast, Rita continued to work for TSA in Greensboro, N.C.

Rita was an incredible mother and person. Her hip blue eyeliner and smiling face made her the light of every room. Her grandchildren will always remember her sweet and cute nicknames for each of them, for teaching them the German alphabet while cooking them dinner, and for never being without her feisty little dog, Fritz. Her children will remember her for caring immeasurably for each of them, especially Karen who has been disabled for her entire adult life. Rita lived a spectacular life as a proud German-American woman and instilled in all of her children the love of food, travel, and adventure. She will be deeply missed and will live on through all of the many lives she touched.

A private service will be held at Saint Paul the Apostle Catholic Church where she was an active member of the congregation. Please make donations to Hospice and Palliative Care of Greensboro, 2500 Summit Avenue, Greensboro, NC 27405.

Hanes Lineberry North Elm Chapel is assisting the Reynolds family with arrangements. Online condolences may be shared by visiting www.haneslineberryfhnorthelm.com.

Wanted woman found in hospital

By Bill Wyatt
bill.wyatt@martinsvillebulletin.com

Jalisa Dickerson, 28, of Lancelot Lane in Roanoke, the woman wanted by police in Martinsville for taking her mother's car, has been found hospitalized in North Carolina.

"Jalisa was located by the Reidsville [N.C.] Police Department at the Annie Penn Hospital in Reidsville, and her mom's car was located in the hospital parking lot," Martinsville Police Lt. S. Hines said Thursday.

Hines said he was unsure exactly when Dickerson was found but said it had been within the past 48 hours.

Dickerson

On Jan. 24, Catherine Evans of Smith Lake Road in Martinsville told police she had loaned her silver 2000 Volvo to her daughter (Dickerson), and the vehicle had not been returned.

"The mom wants the daughter charged felony — unauthorized use," Deputy Chief of Police Rob Fincher said on Tuesday.

Hines said Dickerson would be charged upon her release from the hospital by Reidsville authorities and that "the vehicle is being released to the mother."

Reports on social media had described Dickerson and another woman, Valerie Renee Saunders, 41, of Carroll Ave. in Roanoke, as missing.

Martinsville Police had classified Dickerson as "wanted" and not missing or endangered.

Hines did not have any information regarding Saunders and would not release details as to why Dickerson was hospitalized.

Bill Wyatt is a reporter for the Martinsville Bulletin. Reach him at 276 638-8801, ext 236 and follow him at @billdwyatt

Woman dies after being struck by car

By Bill Wyatt
bill.wyatt@martinsvillebulletin.com

A Martinsville woman died after being struck by a vehicle Wednesday night.

Donna Day Spencer, 52, of Martinsville was attempting to cross the road in the 300 block of Fayette Street was she was struck by a 2014 Toyota Prius, a report from the Martinsville Police Department said.

"She succumbed to her injuries at Roanoke [Carilion] Memorial," Martinsville Police Lt. S. E. Hines said.

Martinsville police responded to the scene at 6:25 p.m., the release stated. Spencer was transported to Sovah-Martinsville and then to Roanoke Carilion Memorial Hospital.

Investigators processed the scene and interviewed witnesses, but no charges have been filed.

The case is still under investigation by Martinsville Police's Crash Reconstruction Team.

Anyone with additional information is asked to contact Hines at 276-638-8751 or Crime Stoppers at 276-63-CRIME.

Bill Wyatt is a reporter for the Martinsville Bulletin. Reach him at 276 638-8801, ext 236 and follow him at @billdwyatt

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2020

Legislation to ban LGBTQ discrimination passes

By Justin Mattingly
Richmond Times-Dispatch

RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH

Sen. Adam Ebbin (at podium), D-Alexandria, addresses a news conference ahead of the floor votes on SB868, the Virginia Values Act, in Richmond on Thursday.

RICHMOND — Sen. Adam Ebbin, D-Alexandria, came to Richmond for the first time 30 years ago for a gay rights lobby day. Only a handful of legislators talked to him.

"I don't think it made a difference — at least not at that time," said Ebbin, who became Virginia's first openly gay legislator after he was elected in 2003. "Things have changed."

The state Senate on Thursday passed an Ebbin-sponsored bill, dubbed the Virginia Values Act, that would prohibit discrimination in housing as well as public and private employment based on someone's sexual orientation or gender identity. The House of Delegates passed a similar bill Thursday.

The act also would create new nondiscrimination protections for members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) community in housing and public accommodations.

"This legislation is needed. It is urgent. It is important to know that discrimination is still happening in Virginia," Ebbin said. "It is time to drive it out and until we do, our commonwealth will continue to suffer the psychological, physical and economic vandalism simply because of who people are or who they love."

The bill, Senate Bill 868, passed the Senate in a bipartisan 30-9 vote.

"It's certainly time that we embrace equality for everybody in the commonwealth of Virginia," said Sen. Jill Holtzman Vogel, R-Fauquier, one of nine Republicans to join the 21 Senate Democrats in voting for the bill.

LGBTQ people are not explicitly protected from discrimination under state law, meaning they could be fired, evicted or denied service in restaurants because of their sexuality or gender identity.

James Parrish, the director of the Virginia Values Coalition, called Thursday a "historic day in Virginia."

Alphonso David, the president of the Human Rights Campaign, said Virginia would be the first state in the South to have nondiscrimination protections for LGBTQ people if the legislation is signed into law.

Virginia is home to roughly 250,000 LGBTQ adults, according to Vee Lamneck, the executive director of Equality Virginia, the state's main LGBTQ advocacy organization.

"Virginia has often been a leader, so passing this legislation really helps to affirm Virginia's place in history as a leader around fairness and around equity," Lamneck said.

The House of Delegates backed the companion bill, House Bill 1663 from Del. Mark Sickles, D-Fairfax, in a 59-35 vote.

In 2014, Sickles announced that he is gay, making him the second openly gay member of the General Assembly.

"What we are now seeing here is a statement of affirmation in which we welcome Virginians and we welcome you because of who you are, not despite it, and not for what discriminatory politicians tell you you're supposed to be," said Del. Danica Roem, D-Prince William, the first openly transgender lawmaker in a U.S. legislature.

Before the vote, Del. Dave LaRock, R-Loudoun, expressed concern that the bill could violate people's religious freedom.

Gov. Ralph Northam said Tuesday at an Equality Virginia reception that he supports the bills.

White

From Page A1

viewers, and to remain silent.

Late Thursday the Diocese of Richmond issued a statement that confirmed White would remain as pastor and explained the position on why his blog would go silent.

"Father White continues a fruitful parish ministry while serving as pastor but does not require a blog to do so," the statement said. "As shepherd of the diocese, Bishop Knestout encourages Father White to continue to focus his energy on celebrating the sacraments, proclaiming the Gospel, and modeling works of charity among the parishioners who are entrusted to his care.

"Bishop Barry C. Knestout has and continues to support the priests of our diocese in speaking about the impact of the sexual abuse crisis with their parishioners to help heal the Body of Christ. All communications should be expressed with charity, further the Gospel message and respect the dignity of all individuals. Bishop Knestout expects all clergy to express themselves in a manner that is respectful through their preaching, teaching, catechesis, and counseling within their parish communities.

BILL WYATT/MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

The Catholic Diocese of Richmond, where Father Mark White met with officials on Wednesday.

"For priests who may be struggling themselves with the deep pain of the crisis or who are still trying to come to terms with it and with the pain it has brought survivors, the faithful and them personally, Bishop Knestout's door is open to provide assistance to help them and to accompany them along the way.

"The Catholic Diocese of Richmond has and continues to address and offer accountability and transparency about the abuse crisis."

The statement then referred to the diocese's web site for more information.

But others are beginning to openly express frustration similar to White's.

Bishop Joseph E. Strickland of Tyler, Texas, was at the Vatican on Jan. 20 and told the Catholic News Service that he had asked Pope Francis directly about the Vatican's investigation of McCarrick and why his file is still sealed.

"I said these allegations about McCarrick need to be investigated, and they have been, and the report, according to Pope Francis yesterday," will be published, Strickland told the Catholic News Service. "An institution that's been around 2,000 years doesn't turn on a dime."

In Wednesday's meeting, Knestout agreed to allow White to post his homilies on the websites of St. Joseph and St. Francis, but he held steadfast his order that White refrain from expressing his opinion about anything by means of a personal blog.

"I asked the bishop to reconsider his previous order prohibiting my blog under threat of removal as pastor. He did not reconsider that," White said.

"During the meeting, the bishop refused to get into any specifics regarding my blog. But he repeatedly referred to posts I had written as 'intemperate insults.'

"They were not, however, intemperate insults. They were well-documented accounts of the dishonesty of some of his brother prelates."

Asked if he would comply with the modified directive, White said: "I will obey the order I have been given."

There actually were two meetings at the Catholic Diocese headquarters at 7800 Carousel Lane.

Knestout and White met privately first. Vicar General Michael Boehling and two parishioners from St. Francis joined Knestout and White for the second meeting.

"We were given an opportunity to speak, but the bishop made it clear — three times he made it clear — that this [White's blog] will not continue for now," said Joseph Graf, a member of the St. Francis of Assisi's parish council. "He said, 'For now,' but I don't know how long that might be.

"If you compare it to the corporate world, the bishop is like the manager. It's his job to keep everybody in line. I'm not saying Father Mark is out of line, but the bishop thinks he is, and so that's the way it goes."

Graf was asked what advice he might offer Father Mark.

"Reflect, and pray," he said, "and then do what he thinks the Lord has called him to do."

Last month at Mass, White had asked the congregation at St. Joseph to pray for him:

"Please pray that the bishop will leave me at least a little patch of ground to stand on. I want to keep standing here with you. But everyone needs to be able to say their piece somehow."

When asked if he felt the bishop had given him that patch of ground, White said he was unsure.

"It will take some time to know," he said.

Bill Wyatt is a reporter for the Martinsville Bulletin. Reach him at 276 638-8801, ext 236 and follow him at @billdwyatt

SPORTS: MARTINSVILLE GIRLS FACE GW-DANVILLE IN BASKETBALL » B1

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Priest refuses to sign order

PHOTOS BY BILL WYATT/MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

Father Mark White watches from a distance after Mass on Monday as Richmond TV station WRIC-Channel 8 interviews parishioners about their priest being forced to silence.

Father Mark White said he wasn't allowed to review a document read aloud to him by officials of the Diocese of Richmond a day after he had met with the bishop.

By Bill Wyatt
bill.wyatt@martinsvillebulletin.com

That truce reached last week in a dispute between a Martinsville priest and a Richmond bishop that preserved the priest's job now appears to have been short-lived.

About 24 hours after that meeting last Wednesday, Father Mark White, priest of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Martinsville and St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Rocky Mount, was visited in Rocky Mount by officials of the Diocese of Richmond and again was threatened with the loss of his position.

But White refused to sign the order, presented to him orally, because he wasn't given the directive in writing, and he said he questioned its legality in the first place.

SEE **WHITE** | A6

Parishioner Gerry Lawicki talks to WRIC-Channel 8 reporter Kerri O'Brien.

Senate votes for voluntary ban list

People who register themselves would be barred from owning or buying a gun.

By Justin Mattingly
Richmond Times-Dispatch

RICHMOND — Virginia could soon have a list of people who would voluntarily bar themselves from buying guns.

The state Senate on Monday voted to create the Virginia Voluntary Do Not Sell Firearms List, which would prohibit people who register themselves onto the list from owning or being sold a gun.

The chamber backed Senate Bill 436 from Sen. Scott Surovell, D-Fairfax, in a 21-18 vote.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2020

INSIDE

» Decriminalization of marijuana moves forward with House vote. **Page 3**

Sen. Jeremy McPike, D-Prince William, said the bill would help people "who are struggling and take a moment in their better times to put some preventative measures in place."

State police would maintain the list, which also disqualifies someone from getting a concealed handgun permit.

It would be a class three misdemeanor for someone on the list to have a gun.

Sen. Mark Peake, R-Lynchburg, joined Democrats in supporting the measure. Other Republicans felt the list would be unnecessary.

"It really boils down to what Nancy Reagan said: 'Just say no,'" said Sen. John Cosgrove, R-Chesapeake.

The bill would take effect July 1, 2021.

Also on Monday, the Senate backed a bill, Senate Bill 14 from Sen. Dick Saslaw, D-Fairfax, to outlaw the manufacturing and sale of trigger activators, including bump stocks. Bump stocks allow semi-automatic guns fire at a rate similar to a machine gun.

One Republican, Sen. Emmett Hanger, R-Augusta, also sided with Democrats in approving the bill in a 21-18 vote.

Also Monday, the House of Delegates signaled preliminary approval of a proposed assault weapons ban, which Gov. Ralph Northam backs. On a voice vote, the House advanced House Bill 961 to a final vote today.

Roselawn is singing a new tune

New general manager — and longtime singer — Kelly Ratcliff said he is excited about new attitudes at Roselawn in Henry County.

HOLLY KOZELSKY/MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

With more than 30 years experience, Kelly Ratcliff is the new general manager of Roselawn Chapel Funeral Home and Burial Park.

By Holly Kozelsky
holly.kozelsky@martinsvillebulletin.com

It's a new day at Roselawn Chapel Funeral Home & Burial Park, Kelly Ratcliff says — and he is excited to be at the helm for the improvements.

"We have made some tremendous changes, and it's a positive thing, and I think the community recognizes" it, said Ratcliff, who is the general manager of the cemetery and funeral home and the location manager of the funeral home.

Both are owned by StoneMor Inc., which owns 321 cemeteries and 90 funeral homes in 27 states.

He does it all, he said, including embalming, cosmetic work and conducting funerals as a certified celebrant.

In the fall, "the company here [StoneMor Inc., owner of Roselawn] reached out to me. They had done some checking on my background and felt like I was the right fit — if anyone could turn this around, I could do it," Ratcliff said.

He did not specify what

SEE **ROSELAWN** | A5

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WEATHER

62 HIGH | 41 LOW

Occasional rain today and cloudy tonight with rain continuing Wednesday.

For detailed weather information, **see Page A2**

Nine-vehicle crash occurs in front of elementary school. **Page A3**

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White

From Page A1

Bishop Barry Knestout late last year had ordered White to silence and threatened to remove him from the priesthood because of a popular blog White populated with comments of frustration and disgust about how the church hierarchy had responded to the many sexual abuse scandals in the church and particularly the cases involving former Cardinal Theodore Edgar McCarrick, who had ordained White as a priest.

At the conclusion of their meeting on Wednesday, Knestout amended his order to allow White to post his homilies to the websites of both parishes, but he had held firm his earlier demand that White cease blogging and commenting about the church's positions on McCarrick and other cases.

A day after that meeting in Richmond, Episcopal Vicar Father Kevin Segerblom and Vicar Forane Monsignor Sal Annonuevo appeared at Saint Francis in Rocky Mount.

"We hung around and waited for them to show up," said Joseph Graf, a member of the St. Francis of Assisi's parish council. "They were very abstract, terse and business-like."

Graf was invited into the meeting with White, the two vicars and two other members of the parish.

A statement was read to White by Segerblom to confirm the bishop's permission to allow White to post his homilies to the parish websites but reinforcing that he is prohibited from offering personal opinions by means of social media, by audio or video, in print or any digital means.

If White fails to meet the demands of the bishop, he will be subject to additional penalties and could be fired.

"It almost looked like it was something they forgot to do after the meeting in Richmond" Graf said. "It was very brief."

White was told to sign a statement agreeing to the orders that had been read to him and that he understood them.

Unlike a visit to Rocky Mount in November by Knestout, this time White refused to sign because he wasn't allowed to read the document to be sure it said what he had heard.

"I have a question about whether the bishop's directives to me are legally enforceable under church law if I never receive them in writing," White said. "I have received nothing in writing about the content of my blog since the bishop's letter to me in September 2018."

Asked if anything had changed, White said: "I believe, based on my memory of what I heard read, that the second [directive from last week] amended the first [from November] to the following effect: I do not risk removal as pastor if we put the text of my Sunday homilies on the parish websites of St. Joseph and St. Francis.

"The threat of removal remains in force for any other dissemination of my writings on the internet."

Despite not signing the most recent directive, White said he would comply with the demand.

Asked for a comment on White's position, Deborah Cox, communications director of the Catholic Diocese of Richmond, said in an email to the Bulletin late Monday afternoon that "you have our statement that is all we wish to say at this time."

WRIC-Channel 8, a television station in Richmond, sent a reporter to Mass at noon Monday at St. Joseph in Martinsville. Several of the parishioners were questioned by Reporter Kerri O'Brien after the service.

"Father Mark has done an excellent job," Parishioner Gerry Lawicki said. "I'm a lifelong Catholic, and he [White] needed to address this issue.

"We need more action — it [sex abuse scandal] not only is a sin, it's a crime. Sure the blog was irritating to the hierarchy, but he [White] was right on it."

Said Sebastian Lopez: "Father's blog was fair and balanced. This has been a problem for several years, but I'm optimistic it will turn out well."

Lopez' mother, Iris Lopez, said she wasn't so sure: The church hierarchy is "not transparent — otherwise Father Mark would not be writing."

White said he was "very humbled" by the people who spoke about the problem to the media.

In his homily at mass on Monday, White spoke of the Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. May God give us the gift for that to be us."

Graf and his wife were on the road headed to their winter home in Florida for the rest of the month.

"We came back to go with Father Mark to the meeting in Richmond last week," Graf said. "Now we're headed back.

"I thought this thing was going to be on hiatus, but it's obvious it's far from over."

Bill Wyatt is a reporter for the Martinsville Bulletin. He can be reached at 276-638-8801, Ext. 236. Follow him @billdwyatt

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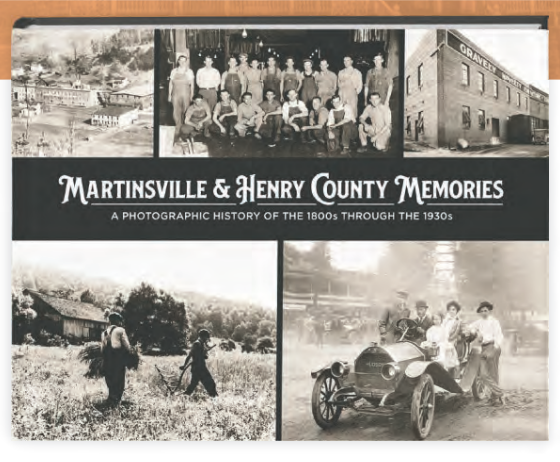

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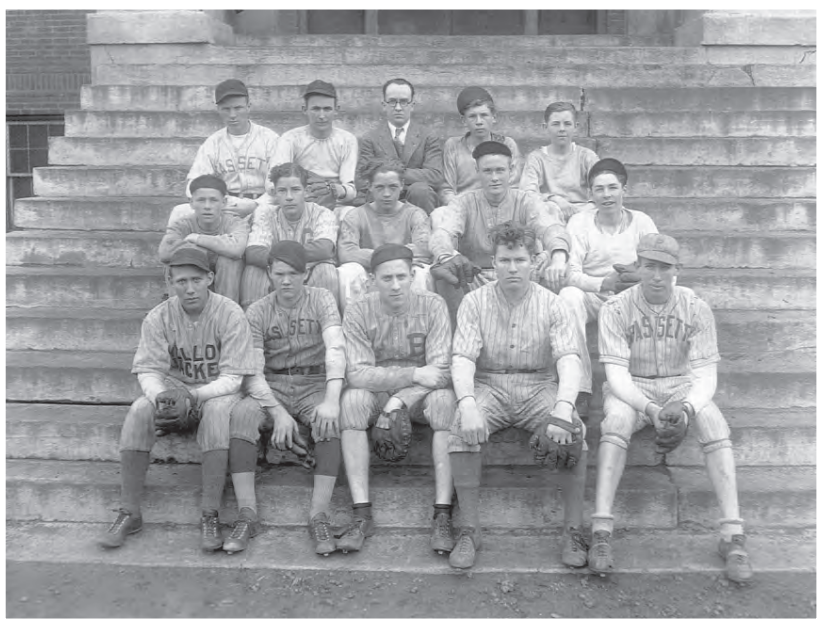

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MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

CARA COOPER: WHAT'S LEFT TO WATCH IN THE SPORTS WORLD » SPORTS

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CORONAVIRUS EXPANDED COVERAGE

Father Mark resumes blog

Father White of Martinsville asked for his bishop's permission because of the restrictions on service caused by COVID-19, but he has not received a response.

By Bill Wyatt
bill.wyatt@martinsvillebulletin.com

A Martinsville priest has defied his bishop's order to stop communicating online and resumed posting to a blog he made popular with his critical comments of the Catholic hierarchy's handling of its sex abuse crisis.

Father Mark White, the priest of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Martinsville and St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Rocky Mount, in February received an order from Bishop Barry Knestout of the Diocese of Richmond to remove his blog completely and cease his online communication with more than a million visitors under threat of removal as a priest.

White complied initially, but then COVID-19 happened. In response to the pandemic and in keeping with the Gov. Ralph Northam's orders that church assembly not include more than 10 people, Knestout issued a

SEE **VIRUS** | A8

BULLETIN FILE PHOTO

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Father Mark White of Martinsville has resumed the blog for which he was was ordered to silence or face removal from the priesthood.

Paths for their flocks

Martinsville and Henry County churches are taking approaches to serve their members.

By Holly Kozelsky
Holly.kozelsky@martinsvillebulletin.com

Over the years, Pastor Michael Jordan of Mount Vernon Baptist Church has preached that a church is not a building – it's the people of God.

This COVID-19 isolation "is the best opportunity I've ever seen in my lifetime to see how this works out in practice," he said.

Since health officials have deemed it not safe for large groups to meet, Jordan has come up with a new type of workshop service: a drive-in, like the old form of showing movies outdoors.

The congregation would stay in their parked cars instead of going inside the sanctuary. He would stay on the steps of the church to lead the service. A form of technology would make it all possible.

"I have ordered this piece of equipment that looks pretty simple to me," he said. "The way I understand it: Put a microphone to this piece of equipment. It will broadcast on an FM signal, like drive-through movies do. We'll invite people to come here into the parking lot on Sunday morning and stay in their cars. Hopefully that's enough social distance for us."

That first 11 a.m. Sunday service will be quite an experiment, he said.

"We're going to … try to sing some songs, do prayer requests. Instead of people yelling them out to me, I'll invite them to text them to my phone."

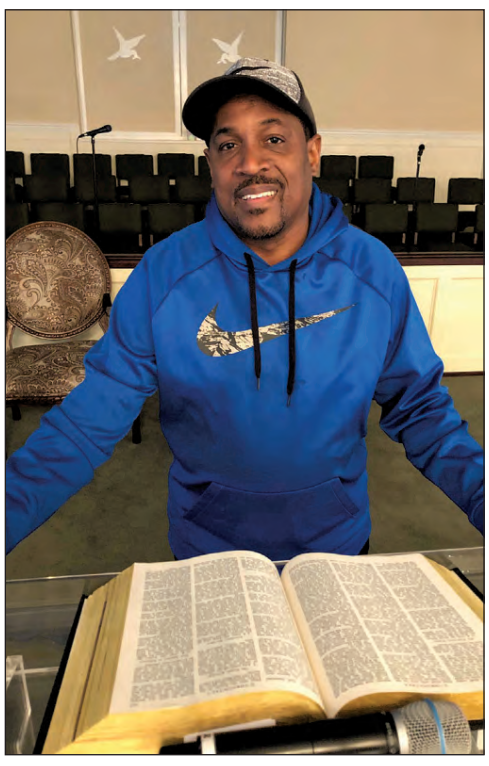
During the time of greeting, when people normally walk around to chat and hug each other, members will wave to each other from their cars, he said.

That's just one of many alternatives area churches are coming up with in response to government recommendations of avoiding crowds during the COVID-19 pandemic. On March 12, Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam declared a state of emergency in Virginia, and on Tuesday he and State Health Commissioner Norman Oliver issued a public health emergency order banning more than 10 patrons in restaurants, fitness centers and theaters.

Online services

The Rev. Libby Grammer of First Baptist Church in Martinsville also has talked about doing a drive-in service. That might be a joint Maundy Thursday (April 9) service with

SEE **CONNECT** | A1



PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Top: That hand sanitizer at the pulpit may have come in handy last week at Mt. Vernon Baptist Church, but this Sunday the congregation won't go inside. Pastor Michael Jordan (pictured) will lead an outdoor worship service drive-in movie-style. That's just one of many creative ways pastors are reaching their congregations during the COVID-19 isolation period.
Left: Mid-week, Pastor Alan Preston was in Refuge Temple Ministries preparing for Sunday's service. Like last Sunday, this Sunday there will be plenty of hand sanitizer everywhere you look. The church will be clean, and the congregation will be careful not to touch anything, all precautions against the spread of COVID-19.

Harvest to give $150K for childcare

Grants would provide care for children of those working in medical and emergency fields.

By Holly Kozelsky
holly.kozelsky@martinsvillebulletin.com

Childcare assistance is coming to people who work in the medical and emergency fields.

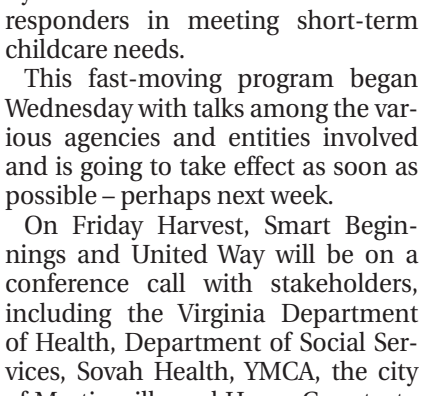
The Harvest Foundation is partnering with United Way and Smart Beginnings Martinsville Henry County to provide a $150,000 Emergency Childcare Relief Fund to aid priority health-care workers and first responders in meeting short-term childcare needs.

This fast-moving program began Wednesday with talks among the various agencies and entities involved and is going to take effect as soon as possible – perhaps next week.

On Friday Harvest, Smart Beginnings and United Way will be on a conference call with stakeholders, including the Virginia Department of Health, Department of Social Services, Sovah Health, YMCA, the city of Martinsville and Henry County, to iron out details. The plan for how the program will be carried out should be completed today, after that call, said Philip Wenkstern, executive director of United Way of MHC.

Regarding the release of the funds, Harvest President Allyson Rothrock said, "We're ready. As soon as everybody's ready, we're ready. We don't want any time to lapse for these really important people who need to work, to have a safe place for their children."

SEE **FUNDS** | A7



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Brad Kinkema, YMCA executive director, said the children attendance count has been down since schools have been out.

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Television **B5, B7**	Crossword **B7**	Opinion **A4**
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WEATHER

79 HIGH | **57** LOW

It will be cloudy and mild, with a few afternoon showers and clouds.

For detailed weather information, **see Page A2**

MORE INSIDE

» SPCA in Martinsville pushing for help with fostering for animals. **A6**

6 56525 10671 2

Virus

From Page A1

public letter earlier this week closing the doors to "public celebrations of Mass, on Sundays, holy days and weekdays in the Diocese of Richmond." White's parishes in Martinsville and Rocky Mount are assigned to the Richmond Diocese. Even Knestout is finding a need to expand his own use of online communications.

"This weekend, during a private celebration of Mass at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart and in the midst of our Jubilee year, I will celebrate Mass without a congregation, asking God's grace and forgiveness, consecrating our diocese to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary," Knestout wrote. "So that you may join me in this moment, it will be streamed live for the faithful."

While Knestout celebrates Mass live online, he has instructed the priests under his purview "to celebrate his daily Mass in private in the church or a chapel."

White thinks if online communication is important enough to be used by Knestout, it should be important enough to be used by his priests. Just before to the governor's restriction and Knestout's letter closing all churches to public celebrations of Mass, White had said, "We have already reached the point where many people will wisely stay home from Mass, and the bishop may yet suspend Masses altogether."

"If the governor counsels against large gatherings...," White said. "Seattle, Santa Fe, Washington, D.C., and Newark have already suspended all Masses for the weekend."

The governor did just as White expected, and so White reached out to Knestout and asked for relief from Knestout's directive. I wrote "to the bishop … with my canonical arguments and asked that, especially considering the imminent need we priests will have to communicate over the internet, he formally remove his threat to remove me if I publish my blog."

White said he received no response from Knestout, so he made the decision to defy Knestout's order, resurrect his popular blog.

"Given all the strains on our parish community life caused by the virus outbreak, I feel duty-bound to use my blog as an avenue of pastoral communication," White said.

Working under the constraints caused by the pandemic, in his letter Knestout encouraged the faithful to "continue with the Church's mission: teaching the faith, celebrating the sacraments as needed in this age, and care for the poor, even as we support the common good and assure the health and well-being of our neighbor." White said he applauded Knestout's recent efforts.

"Bishop has been very busy, trying to make good decisions about how to deal with the virus, so I'm not surprised that he hasn't answered my letter yet," White said. "I'm hoping he acknowledges the soundness of my legal arguments, so that we can put this whole conflict behind us."

CANCELLATIONS AND CLOSINGS

» Effective Monday payment windows located in the Henry County treasurer's office and the Public Service Authority will close for walk-up service. Residents are urged to pay online at www.henrycountyva.gov/paymybill, by mail or use the drop box in front of the Henry County Administration Building. PSA customers who need to sign up for service or disconnect service should call 276-634-2505.

» Southwestern Virginia Gas Company has closed its lobby at 208 Lester St. in Martinsville until further notice. Customers may call 276-632-5662 between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday or email customersupport@swvagas.com. Payments may be made at https://swvagas.com/paybill.php or at the drop box at the building.

» An event about substance abuse being conducted at Radford University and streamed to participants at New College Institute in Martinsville, scheduled for next Friday, has been rescheduled because NCI is closed. The conference will be May 22. The schedule remains the same. NCI is closing through March 28, when the situation will be re-evaluated. The LIFE events on March 18 and March 25 will be rescheduled.

» Antioch Christian Church in Spencer canceled services for Sunday.

» The Martinsville-Henry County Visitor Center will be closed to the public Monday through March 30. Center personnel remain available for assistance. Call 276-632-8006 or email Tourism@YesMartinsville.com.

» St. Joseph Catholic Church in Martinsville and St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Rocky Mount have suspended all public celebrations of Mass, on Sundays, holy days and weekdays until further notice. Both parish churches will keep their doors open during the daylight hours for private prayer or devotion.

» Averett University has postponed its spring commencement, which had been scheduled for May 2. The university has said the ceremony is not canceled and will be rescheduled.

» All Virginia State Parks visitors centers are closed.

» The MOPS DIY wreath class at Forest Hills Presbyterian Church is canceled.

» The Patrick County Music Association jamboree has been canceled.

» A 31 Bingo fundraiser at Bassett Volunteer Fire Department has been canceled.

» 4-H Camp registration has been postponed as has an informational scheduled for Thursday. The status of these events will be re-visited after April 1.

» All branches of the Blue Ridge Regional Library — that includes the Martinsville Public Library — will be closed until March 30. At that time, a decision will be made whether to reopen.

» Henry-Martinsville Department of Social Services has adjusted its schedule. The office will be open for lobby hours between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Customers are encouraged to mail in required documents and schedule interviews by telephone. When the lobby is closed, questions or to report abuse/neglect complaints should be directed to 276-656-4300.

» Social Security offices — including the one in Martinsville — will offer phone and online services only. For more information, visit www.socialsecurity.gov. or call 800-772-1213.

» The Virginia CareerWorks offices in Martinsville and Stuart are closed until March 31. All hiring events also are canceled. Virtual services are available in at 276-634-3600 (Martinsville) and 276-694-6542 (Stuart).

» U.S. Rep. Morgan Griffith's office hours, scheduled for Henry County on Wednesday, has been canceled.

» The SPCA's Woofstock Furball fundraiser, scheduled for March 28, has been canceled. A new date will be announced.

» Ridgeway United Methodist Church has canceled its community breakfast scheduled for Saturday and its indoor yard sale scheduled for April 4.

» Way of Truth Holy Church Men's Fellowship has canceled its ushers' anniversary service which had been scheduled for Sunday.

» Patrick County Chamber of Commerce career readiness workshops, scheduled for Tuesdays in March, are canceled.

» Drug Free Martinsville/Henry County Coalition has canceled its meeting for March. Its next scheduled meeting is April 15. Planning for the National Drug Take Back Day on April 25 is continuing.

» TheatreWorks Community Players will not be hosting a public audience for our upcoming production "Of Mice and Men," which was scheduled for this and next weekend. An alternative presentation is being developed.

» Piedmont Arts will be closed to the public through March 31. All public events and classes scheduled during this time have been be canceled. Museum offices will remain open. Dancing for the Arts, scheduled for April 4, will be postponed until a later date.

» Reynolds Homestead will be closed until at least March 30. All programs scheduled at the Reynolds Homestead Community Enrichment Center and Creative Arts Center through April 30 have been canceled. Individuals registered for activities requiring a prepayment will be contacted about program credit and refund options. The Reynolds Homestead staff will work to reschedule programs where feasible and will continue to provide updates about programs and events on the Reynolds Homestead Facebook page.

» Patrick Henry Community College canceled all public meetings on campus for 30 days. This includes the Patriot Player's production of "Sister Act," the Martinsville Mini Maker Faire, the Simulation Center grand opening at SOVAH Health, PHCC's Community Career Fair and Administrative Professionals Day and other events. Commencement scheduled for May has been canceled.

» The Martinsville-Henry County Triad S.A.L.T. Council seminar that was slated for Wednesday has been canceled.

» Martinsville Senior Center is curtailing all activities at the center located through next Friday. This includes the senior nutrition site, Bible study classes, Rook games and bingo games. The shutdown does not include transportation for seniors to medical appointments, grocery store, pharmacy, etc. All activities are planned to resume on March 30. For questions, call 276-403-5260

» The Gap Civil concert and Bassett Music Jamboree at HJDB Event Center scheduled for today is canceled.

» The program with author Donald Wright schedules for Tuesday at the Bassett Historical Center will be rescheduled.

» The bluegrass and gospel music by One Day at Time and Game-on activities scheduled for today at HJDB Event Center have been canceled.

» The community breakfast scheduled for Saturday at First Presbyterian Church, 1901 Patrick Henry Avenue, has been canceled.

» Smith Memorial United Methodist Church in Collinsville will do drive-through only for its community meal on Wednesday March 25.

» First Baptist Church of Martinsville will not hold any services on Sunday through May 3. Its Early Learning Center will be open normal hours this week, with some restrictions for parental drop-off and pick-up. Full details here: https://fbcmartinsville.com/fbc-elc-response-to-covid-19/.

» The free community dinner scheduled for April 7 at Grace Baptist Church of Ridgeway will not be held. The meals tentatively will resume June 2.

» The Historic Garden Week in Virginia house and garden tours, set locally for April 22, have been canceled.

» Our customer service department will be happy to assist customers Monday-Friday from 8:00 AM — 4:00 PM

» Send any cancellations or schedule changes to info@martinsvillebulletin.com.

COVID-19
COVERAGE

Sign up for our daily COVID-19 newsletter at
martinsvillebulletin.com/newsletters

All subscribers can access the exact replica of the newspaper online at
martinsvillebulletin.com/eedition

For all the latest local, national and breaking news, please visit:

martinsvillebulletin.com

Martinsville Bulletin

ALL-NEW FOR 2020

Scanning Sessions Postponed

SHARE YOUR PHOTOS ONLINE

The Martinsville Bulletin is proud to announce its partnership with Bassett Historical Center, Fayette Area Historical Initiative, Martinsville-Henry County Historical Society and our readers on the newest addition to our Martinsville and Henry County Memories series, "**Martinsville and Henry County Memories II: The 1940s, 1950s & 1960s**."

YOU'RE INVITED

We are excited to invite you, our readers, to participate in this unique project. Scanning sessions have been postponed due to the current health concerns, and new dates will be announced as they are available. We encourage you to submit photo submissions online! Please submit your photos online at **Martinsville-HenryCounty2.PictorialBook.com**.

Submit photos online and pre-order at
Martinsville-HenryCounty2.PictorialBook.com

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

- General interest photos, such as: commerce, industry, transportation, rural life, public service, etc.
- Photos taken between 1940 and 1969.
- Photos only — preferably original (no newspaper clippings or photocopies).
- Photos taken in Martinsville and Henry County.
- Limit 10 photos per family. No appointment necessary.
- If you're a private collector, call 360-723-5800 to set up an appointment.

Not all photos submitted or used in ads will appear in the final book.

Martinsville Bulletin

WHAT WOULD HAVE BEEN: THE NBA, NHL AND MLB STILL SIT IDLE » SPORTS

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Father Mark White ousted

Bishop makes good on threat to remove Martinsville's priest for posting on his blog.

BULLETIN FILE PHOTO

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Father Mark White has resumed the blog for which he was was ordered to silence or face removal from the priesthood.

By Bill Wyatt
bill.wyatt@martinsvillebulletin.com

Father Mark White has been removed as pastor of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Martinsville and St. Francis of Assisi in Rocky Mount, one day after Easter Sunday.

In a letter dated Monday to the parishioners of both churches, Bishop of Richmond Barry Knestout said the matter was done and named a temporary replacement.

"Today, I write to inform you that Father Mark White has been removed as Pastor of your two parishes effective this day," Knestout wrote. "He has received a new assignment and will [be] leaving the area within the week."

Bishop Barry C. Knestout

According to a statement from Knestout released later Monday, White has been reassigned as "chaplain to various prisons, state and federal, within the diocesan bounds" effective April 13.

Late last year Knestout had ordered White to remove a popular blog he had authored that often was critical of the way the hierarchy of the church has responded to the sexual abuse scandal.

White was summoned in early February to the Diocese of Richmond to meet with church

SEE **WHITE** | A6

Sirens, darkness during storm

CHARLES ROARK/STAR NEWS

Just east of Prospect Hill Drive on Spruce Street one of the taller utility poles was leaning noticeably and one lane of traffic nearest the pole was closed off.

Tornado sirens sound in Martinsville, and hundreds in Henry, Patrick counties were without power.

By Bill Wyatt
bill.wyatt@martinsvillebulletin.com

Many Martinsville residents were awakened at 5:01 Monday morning to the sound of tornado sirens.

The National Weather Service issued a tornado warning for the area until 5:30 a.m.

Although there were no sightings of a tornado within the city limits, high winds and heavy rains caused damage and power outages.

City utility workers were on the scene of downed trees in the road at the intersection of Prospect Hill Drive and Spruce Street.

A short distance east of the intersection on Spruce Street, one of the taller utility poles was leaning noticeably and one lane of traffic nearest the pole was closed off.

Crews with bucket trucks were seen at various locations in the Druid Hills area restoring power.

Meanwhile, Appalachian Power said on

SEE **STORM** | A5

CHARLES ROARK/STAR NEWS

Crews with bucket trucks were seen at various locations in the Druid Hills area restoring power.

PHOTO SUBMITTED

Mount Olivet Elementary School was a site for free meal pick up and delivery when the pandemic first closed schools in March.

HCPS moves to meal pickup

Henry County Public Schools' feeding program is shifting to pickup instead of delivery.

By Kim Barto Meeks
kim.meeks@martinsvillebulletin.com

The student feeding program in Henry County Schools will be transitioning to a new format starting Wednesday, with meals available for pickup at selected schools instead of being delivered to students' homes during the extended school closures.

This is being done to "reduce the chances of exposure to the coronavirus for our staff members and our community," Assistant Superintendent David Scott said in an email.

Families will be able to pick up meals between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Wednesday, Friday, next Monday and April 22, and 24. As has been done so far, this will include a total of four meals per student: One hot entrée on the pickup day, plus two breakfasts and one deli lunch.

"While we continue to work to meet the needs of our students by providing meals and access to the school curriculum, we must also balance those needs with the health and well-being of our dedicated staff members," Scott stated. "Providing meals to our students remains an essential function of the school system."

After this two-week period, more changes are on the way as the school system continues to adjust and move towards its summer feeding program model, officials said.

A survey was sent to parents on April 3 to sign up and choose where they will pick up their meals. Students do not have to pick up their meals at the school they attend, officials said. If a family has students at multiple schools, they should fill out the survey and choose one (and only one) school site for pickup.

Available sites are: Axton Elementary, Bassett

SEE **PICKUP** | A5

More on the virus

New models give dim forecast for Virginia. **A3** | President Trump says he will say when this ends. **A6**
For the latest updates on canceled events, visit **www.martinsvillebulletin.com**.

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WEATHER

62 HIGH | 37 LOW

Partly sunny and cooler, chance of rain tonight.

For detailed weather information, **see Page A2**

Bernie Sanders endorses former rival Joe Biden.

Page A6

6 56525 10671 2

Trump says it's his call when to ease virus rules, not governors'

By Jill Colvin, Zeke Miller and Geoff Mulvihill
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump claimed the authority Monday to decide how and when to reopen the economy after weeks of tough social distancing guidelines aimed at fighting the new coronavirus. But governors from both parties were quick to push back, noting they have the primary constitutional responsibility for ensuring public safety in their states and would decide when it's safe to begin a return to normal operations.

Democratic leaders in the Northeast and along the West Coast announced separate state compacts to coordinate their efforts to scale back stay-at-home orders or reopen businesses on their own timetables, even as Trump tried to say it's his call.

"When somebody is president of the United States, the authority is total," Trump said at Monday's White House coronavirus briefing. "The governors know that."

But he offered no specifics about the source of his authority or his plan to reopen the economy.

Anxious to put the twin public health and economic crises behind him, Trump has backed federal social distancing recommendations that expire at the end of the month. But it has been governors and local leaders who have instituted mandatory restrictions, including shuttering schools and closing non-essential businesses.

Taking to Twitter, Trump wrote that some are "saying that it is the Governors decision to open up the states, not that of the President of the United States & the Federal Government. Let it be fully understood that this is incorrect ... it is the decision of the President, and for many good reasons."

Trump can use his bully pulpit to pressure states to act or threaten them with consequences, but the Constitution gives public health and safety responsibilities primarily to state and local officials.

Meanwhile, the president's guidelines have little force.

White

From Page A1

officials, and church officials traveled to Rocky Mount a few days later to deliver an oral directive to White telling him to cease with the blog under the threat of being removed.

The diocese also took out full-page ads in the Martinsville Bulletin and at least two other state newspapers. Knestout later submitted a letter to Catholics that was published in the Bulletin, and White responded with a public letter to the bishop.

White initially complied with the bishop's requirement, but then the coronavirus pandemic hit, and St. Joseph and St. Francis closed to the public and suspended all Masses.

White said in late March he realized the value of his blog, which has reached over 1 million readers, as a means of communications was more important than ever, so he wrote to Knestout and asked to be allowed to resume his posts.

I wrote "to the bishop … with my canonical arguments and asked that, especially considering the imminent need we priests will have to communicate over the internet, he formally remove his threat to remove me if I publish my blog," White said at the time.

White said he received no response from Knestout, so he made the decision to defy Knestout's order and resurrect his popular blog.

"Given all the strains on our parish community life caused by the virus outbreak, I feel duty-bound to use my blog as an avenue of pastoral communication," White said at the time.

On Monday Knestout removed White from those duties and announced they would immediately become the responsibility of Father Kevin Segerblom, pastor of St. Andrew's Catholic Church in Roanoke Episcopal Vicar for the Western Vicariate, "until such time as a new pastor can be named," Knestout wrote.

White did not comment immediately.

On Easter Sunday, the day before Knestout's letter of dismissal, White posted on his blog that he had called as many of his parishioners as he could to wish everyone a happy Easter and planned to continue doing so through the Easter season.

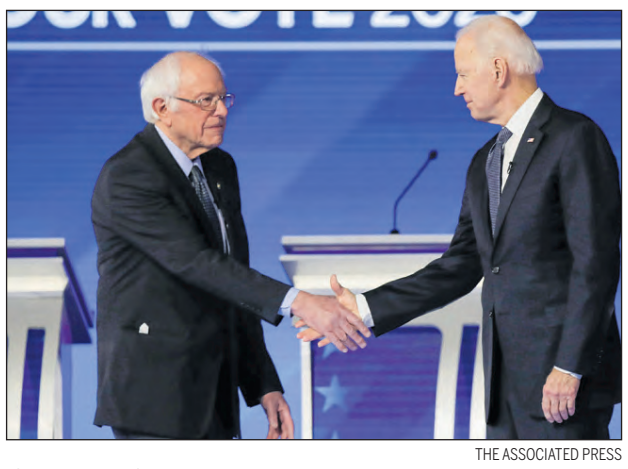
"One question has arisen in many of those conversations," White wrote on his blog Easter Sunday. "'How are you, Father?'

"The virus came; I wrote the bishop; I turned my blog back on; bishop wrote to the parishes; my canon lawyer wrote the bishop, asking him to retract his letter."

That letter was published in its entirety in the Bulletin. In it, Knestout asked the parishioners of both churches what they thought he should do regarding White and his blog.

"You can't endure life in 21st-century America, and remain an orthodox clergyman, without some stubbornness in your soul," White wrote in his blog Easter Sunday, the day before his reassignment. "I accuse no one but myself."

Bill Wyatt is a reporter for the Martinsville Bulletin. He can be reached at 276-638-8801, Ext. 236. Follow him @billdwyatt



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., left, and former Vice President Joe Biden, shake hands on stage before the start of a Democratic presidential primary debate in February.

Sanders backs Biden as ex-rivals join forces

By Bill Barrow and Alexandra Jaffe
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Bernie Sanders endorsed Joe Biden's presidential campaign on Monday, encouraging his progressive supporters to rally behind the presumptive Democratic nominee in an urgent bid to defeat President Donald Trump.

"I am asking all Americans, I'm asking every Democrat, I'm asking every independent, I'm asking a lot of Republicans, to come together in this campaign to support your candidacy, which I endorse," the Vermont senator said in a virtual event with Biden.

The backing came less than a week after Sanders ended his presidential campaign, which was centered around progressive policies such as universal health care. It's a crucial development for Biden, who must bridge the Democratic Party's entrenched ideological divides to put together a coalition that can beat Trump. Democratic disunity helped contribute to Hillary Clinton's loss to Trump in 2016.

Perhaps eager to avoid a repeat of that bruising election year, Sanders offered his endorsement much earlier in the 2020 campaign. Sanders backed Clinton four years ago, but only after the end of a drawn-out nomination fight and a bitter dispute over the Democratic platform that extended to the summer convention.

Biden and Sanders differed throughout the primary, particularly over whether a government-run system should replace private health insurance. Biden has resisted Sanders' "Medicare for All" plan and has pushed instead a public option that would operate alongside private coverage.

Appearing in a split screen with Biden, Sanders said there's "no great secret out there that you and I have our differences."

But Sanders said the greater priority for Democrats of all political persuasions should be defeating Trump.

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3rd Bay Cafe	276-666-8414	Elizabeth's Pizza	Multiple Locations	Mi Ranchito	276-632-6363
Angler's Choice	276-632-5600	El Noreno	276-666-1118	Najjar's Pizza	276-647-3363
Ape's Frozen Yogurt	276-201-2454	El Parral	276-632-6408	Papa John's	276-634-5353
Applebee's	276-638-2377	El Ranchito	276-647-4330	Papa's Pizzeria	276-629-6992
Arby's	276-632-8504	Famous Subs & More	276-632-1390	Pizza Hut	Multiple Locations
Ashley's Taste of Home	276-201-2477	Fenderz	276-647-4555	Rising Sun Breads	276-632-2292
Bojangle's	Multiple Locations	Fridays Deli	276-638-6445	Shindig Uptown Bistro	276-734-9300
Burger King	Multiple Locations	Hamlet Kitchen	276-336-4473	Shun Xing	Multiple Locations
Captain Tom's	276-666-0326	Hardee's	Multiple Locations	Simply Suzanne's	276-957-1142
Checkered Pig	276-632-1161	Hylton's Wood-Cooking Grill	276-673-4379	Subway	Multiple Locations
Chick-fil-a	276-632-2448	Jerry's Pizza	276-638-3990	Sweet Cakes Bakery-Cafe	276-647-8941
Chicken in the Basket	276-201-2049	KFC	Multiple Locations	Taco Bell	Multiple Locations
Coach's	276-336-3679	KWok	276-638-3888	The Pacific Bay	276-647-8217
Cookout	866-547-0011	La Plazita	276-632-2372	Tokyo Express	276-632-7599
D & A Cafe	276-632-1820	Little Caesars	276-647-8811	Walsh's Chicken & More	276-632-1146
Daily Grind	276-632-0035	Livy's Ice Cream Shop	276-340-7402	Wendy's	Multiple Locations
Dippers Ice Cream	276-956-6600	Long John Silver's	276-638-7300	Wild Magnolia	276-666-6666
Dixie Pig BBQ	276-632-9082	Los Nortenos	276-647-1051	Wreath Loft & Cafe	276-622-2593
Dodge's Chicken Store	276-629-4324	Mackie's 57	276-627-0156	Yamato	276-638-8188
Domino's	Multiple Locations	McDonald's	Multiple Locations		
Don Trini's Ice Cream & Taqueria	276-956-3000	MeeMaw's	276-632-1700		

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NASCAR: KYLE LARSON FIRED FOR USING RACIAL SLUR » SPORTS

MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

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Wednesday, April 15, 2020 • MARTINSVILLEBULLETIN.COM • Martinsville, Virginia **$1.50**

Father White: I'm staying

Father Mark White says he isn't leaving Martinsville and Rocky Mount despite his replacement by the bishop.

By Bill Wyatt
bill.wyatt@martinsvillebulletin.com

Father Mark White said he is staying in the pulpits in Martinsville and Rocky Mount.

On Monday night, after Bishop of the Diocese of Richmond Barry Knestout had notified him and his parishioners in an emailed letter that White had been removed as pastor of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Martinsville and St. Francis of Assisi in Rocky Mount, White said he would remain as priest and is seeking legal counsel to defend his right to do so.

White and Knestout have had a monthslong dispute about a popular blog White writes that sometimes includes strong criticism of how the Catholic church has handled cases about sex abuse by priests.

Knestout said in the letter that White would be reassigned as "chaplain to various prisons, state and federal, within the diocesan bounds" effective immediately and would be leaving the area within the week.

"I don't intend to go anywhere until the canonical process has run its full course," White said Monday

SEE **WHITE** | A5

PHOTOS BY BILL WYATT/MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

Father Mark White, here watching as a TV station interviews some of his parishioners in Martinsville, says he will fight legally before leaving his job.

BILL WYATT/MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

Martinsville Vice-Mayor Chad Martin

Martin: We should lock down Martinsville

City's vice mayor calls for governor to order everyone to stay at home.

By Bill Wyatt
bill.wyatt@martinsvillebulletin.com

Martinsville Vice Mayor Chad Martin says if he weren't on City Council he would have an organized group demanding a lockdown for the city of Martinsville.

"Please stop meeting at churches inside," Martin said. "Please stop showing you don't care about others.

"I'm a man of faith, but that doesn't mean you can't have church at home.

"I want people to know ... people at Walmart, Food Lion ... you're supposed to follow the 10-person rule, and it's out the window.

SEE **MARTIN** | A6

Need help to find help

RICK DAWSON/SPECIAL TO THE BULLETIN

Limitations of the pandemic have put a strain on small businesses, such as these on Broad Street and Church Streets in uptown Martinsville. There is help available.

There are opportunities for assistance, and the Longwood SBDC and the Martinsville-Henry County Chamber of Commerce are offering assistance to business owners.

By Bill Wyatt
bill.wyatt@martinsvillebulletin.com

As of Tuesday's report from the Virginia Department of Health, the city of Martinsville and Patrick County have been spared from any confirmed cases of COVID-19. Henry County has eight confirmed cases, among the lowest in the state.

But state-ordered emergency laws regarding the operation of businesses are the same across the state, and this means small businesses all across this part of Virginia are being economically devastated to the same extent as those in Northern Virginia, Richmond and Tidewater, where most of the confirmed cases have been found.

Banks are overwhelmed with desperate business owners trying to wade through the application process for emergency federal assistance, but there is help available if you know where to find it.

"We are receiving four times as many calls and email than normal," said Sheri McGuire, the executive director of Longwood Small Business Development Center. "Many business

SEE **HELP** | A5

McGuire

"We're able to work with our clients one-on-one, taking the time to get to know their business details, offer moral support and give the best, individual advice we can."

— **Sheri McGuire,**
executive director of Longwood Small Business and Development Center

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WEATHER

59 HIGH | 32 LOW

Mostly cloudy in the day, clear and cold at night.

For detailed weather information, **see Page A2**

Cash in on a little pandemic humor.

Page A2

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Obituaries

VIA

Joyce W.

Joyce W. Via, 78, of Martinsville, Va., departed this life, and entered into her eternal rest on Sunday, April 12, 2020, at Martinsville Health and Rehab Center.

The daughter of the late Ulysses Lee Willoughby and the late Elizabeth Jane Hamilton Willoughby, she was born in Mortons Gap, Ky., on February 7, 1942.

Joyce was a member of the Saint Paul High Street Baptist Church where she was a Trustee, Deaconess, Chairman of the Scholarship Committee, and a member of the Culinary Department. She was a member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and a charter member of the Kappa Delta Omega Chapter. Joyce retired from the Henry County Public School System with 33 years of service.

Joyce leaves to cherish her memory, her husband, Willis Henry Via Jr.; one son, Randall A. "Shannon" Via of Martinsville, Va.; one daughter, Lisa Y. Bowens of Martinsville, Va.; two stepsons, Timothy Witcher and Rodney White, both of Martinsville, Va.; seven grandchildren, Juelyan Via of Athens, Ga., Gracelynn Via of Roanoke, Va., Kierra White of Greensboro, N.C., Gerrod White, of Denver, Colo., Jacob Simpson, Jairus Simpson and Jaida Simpson, all of Martinsville, Va.; her sorority sisters of Kappa Delta Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., and a host of other relatives and friends.

A special thanks to the Visiting Angels of Martinsville, Va., especially Susie Carter of Ridgeway, Va., and the staff of Martinsville Health and Rehab Center.

A public viewing will be held on Thursday, April 16, 2020, at Hairston Funeral Home from 12 until 5 p.m. Funeral services will be private according to the CDC guidelines.

Hairston Funeral Home, Martinsville, Va. is serving the Via family.

Since 1949 H Hairston Funeral Home

PACE JR.

Edwin Earl

Edwin Earl Pace Jr., 63, of Martinsville, passed away on Sunday, April 12, 2020.

He was born on November 25, 1956, in Danville, Virginia, to the late Edwin Earl Pace Sr. and Ruby Dyer Pace.

In addition to his mother, he is survived by his wife, Bonny Pace; daughter, Farrell; son, Dyer; and siblings, Gloria Bowes (Tony), Bonnie Moody (Dennis), Milton Pace (Joyce), Susan Picone (Frank), Amy Lampe (Don), and Carol Kemp (Hugh). He is also survived by many nieces and nephews that he loved like his own.

He was a proud graduate of Laurel Park High School class of 1975. He then graduated from Southern Polytechnic College of Engineering in Georgia.

From sports to his family he loved deeply, he was one of the good ones.

A celebration of life will take place at a later date.

In honor of his strong faith and love of his church, memorials may be made to First Presbyterian Church of Martinsville, 1901 Patrick Henry Avenue, Martinsville, VA 24112.

Arrangements are by McKee-Stone Funeral Home-Martinsville, Va.

To express condolences online, please visit www.collinsmckeestonemartinsville.com.

McKee-Stone FUNERAL HOME

DEATH NOTICES

WEBB - Jimmy Ray Webb, 61, of Martinsville, passed away on Monday, April 13, 2020. Wright Funeral Service & Crematory is handling arrangements.

For the latest in local news and sports, check out martinsvillebulletin.com

W.Va. nursing home reports 66 cases of virus

By The Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — A West Virginia nursing home already linked to a coronavirus death is now reporting an outbreak of 66 new cases.

At least 36 residents and 30 staffers of the Wayne Nursing and Rehabilitation Center have the virus, according to a statement posted on the facility's social media late Monday. Ten tests are still pending.

The nursing home said Saturday that a patient with the virus and several other underlying medical conditions had died. No other details were released.

A statement from the center said it is working with local health officials and taking necessary precautions to prevent further spread. A spokesman for the facility declined to comment further Tuesday.

Gov. Jim Justice said he is "really concerned" about the nursing home, adding that the state health department and National Guard are assisting local health officials.

"We're on it," he told reporters at a news conference.

Help

From Page A1

owners — and even banks — are confused and frustrated by changing rules, requirements and applications processes."

Longwood has a deep relationship with the Small Business Administration and often can find answers others cannot.

"Our consultants are consistently looped into conversations with leaders in their communities, often very early on as part of their planning processes," McGuire said.

The Martinsville-Henry County Chamber is working with Longwood to assist local businesses, and as of Tuesday morning officials had helped 35 small business owners, about five to seven inquires per day.

"We provide business owners with a list of items we will likely need during our first contact and set up a one-on-one phone call or Zoom meeting to help them with every question on the applications whether it is the SBA EIDL [Economic Injury Disaster Loan] with up to $10,000 loan forgiveness or the Payroll Protection Program [PPP], which also has a loan forgiveness component and administered through local banks," Chamber President Lisa Watkins said. "Some of the jargon can be confusing to most business owners who may not be familiar with government terminology, so we take the time to explain each item and get them to the finish line with any of the applications."

Although many state and national organization are already offering guidance via email, blogs, fliers and webinars, the chamber and the SBDC's goal is to give attention to each client's specific needs.

"We're able to work with our clients one-on-one, taking the time to get to know their business details, offer moral support and give the best, individual advice we can," McGuire said. "We've adapted our consulting process to be virtual yet real-time, either by phone or video conferencing."

Longwood SBDC has received more than 120 requests for information across its service area, from Martinsville to Petersburg. "The applications for emergency funding for COVID-19 inflicted hardship doesn't require a lot of financial data up front," McGuire said. "Although SBA and you banker will likely ask for additional information later."

Watkins said the process slows down if the business has not filed a tax return or the business owner is not able to quickly access financial information.

"You need financials and corporate documents for the PPP program," Watkins said at last week's local COVID-19 briefing with local leaders. "The process can take three days to at least a week."

But on Tuesday Watkins said the chamber awaits its first success story.

"Unfortunately, none of the applicants have reported back that they have received funding yet. However, we do anticipate having a large number of jobs retained and businesses able to continue to operate over time," she said.

McGuire and her team of consultants are encouraging businesses to gather and keep monthly records of their sales history, business expenses and payroll — all items they can find on a standard profit and loss report and their payroll tax form.

"We're figuring this out together," McGuire said. "We want our small businesses to know that they're not alone."

Said Watkins: "What I have enjoyed the most is having the privilege to work with business owners who are so passionate about their staff and their businesses. It's a true honor for our small but mighty Chamber team to help like this."

Bill Wyatt is a reporter for the Martinsville Bulletin. He can be reached at 276-638-8801, Ext. 236. Follow him @billdwyatt

Need help?

» Longwood SBDC: 434-395-2086 or at www.longwood-sbdc.com/covid19.

» Martinsville-Henry County Chamber of Commerce: Offices on Broad Street in Martinsville are closed, but the staff may be reached at 276-632-6401.

White

From Page A1

evening. "As a sitting pastor, I have the right to recourse before being removed."

J.D. Flynn is the editor in chief for the Catholic News Agency, and Ed Condon is its Washington editor. Both are canon lawyers and wrote a joint article that relates to White's case.

A bishop cannot remove or transfer a pastor "without following a detailed and nonnegotiable process defined by cannon law," they wrote." This procedure can only be initiated if a priest has met one or more conditions for removal outlined in that law."

Those conditions include actions deemed "gravely detrimental or disturbing" and if met, the bishop must consult with a priests' council where the pastor is allowed to see the evidence against him and make a defense.

"During this whole process, the bishop can neither remove the pastor nor appoint a replacement," the article said.

Bishop Knestout said in his letter on Monday that Father Kevin Segerblom, pastor of St. Andrew's Catholic Church in Roanoke Episcopal Vicar for the Western Vicariate, would be White's immediate replacement "until such time as a new pastor can be named."

White's blog has been seen by more than 1 million. Late last year, Knestout threatened to remove White unless he took down the blog and refrained from communicating publicly online.

SHELBY LUM/TIMES-DISPATCH

Bishop Barry C. Knestout kneels during the Mass of Atonement at Cathedral of the Sacred Heart on Friday Sept. 14, 2018.

White complied, but when the coronavirus pandemic hit, he asked for Knestout's permission to resume his blog.

Knestout ignored the request, so White decided to go against the order and resume publishing his posts online.

Within hours of receiving the emailed letter from Knestout, White was on his blog with a video of himself reading a letter he had penned in response.

"I regret the wording that the bishop used in his letter to you of earlier today," White said. "In the church, we have the norm of law. According to the legal norms, I enjoy the right to take recourse against the bishop's decision.

"I have a canon lawyer, and he is helping me deal with this situation in the proper legal way.

"In the meantime … I remain your pastor until the full legal procedure has run its course."

White said the process could take months.

Flynn and Condon wrote that if a bishop removed a priest in violation of canon law procedure and the priest appealed to Rome, "it is likely the Vatican would order the pastor to be reinstated."

Regina Piazza criticized White in the comment area below White's video post.

"You are handling this situation very poorly," Piazza wrote. "The souls of your parishioners are under your care and I fear your current actions will cause many to turn away from God and His church, and that is a grave sin for you to bear."

Judy Rogers disagreed.

"The only actions that may cause people to turn away from God and His church are those of this bishop," Rogers wrote. "I will not pretend for the sake of 'peace' that I think what the bishop is doing is morally right."

White said in his video post on Monday that he had planned some time ago to be away the next few days, and his schedule would not change.

"I will spend the next few days in quiet reflection," White said. "Then I intend to celebrate the upcoming Easter-season Masses with you, as planned."

Bill Wyatt is a reporter for the Martinsville Bulletin. He can be reached at 276-638-8801, Ext. 236. Follow him @billdwyatt

EDITORIAL:
LET'S KEEP KILLER DOGS OUT OF YARDS
» LOCAL

NASCAR:
TRACKS LIKE MARTINSVILLE GETTING A NEW LOOK — EMPTY
» SPORTS

MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

THE VOICE OF THE COMMUNITY FOR 130 YEARS

Sunday, May 3, 2020 • MARTINSVILLEBULLETIN.COM • Martinsville, Virginia **$2**

Priest aims canon at bishop

The ongoing dispute between Father Mark White of Martinsville and Bishop of Richmond Barry Knestout will be decided by a Catholic court.

By Bill Wyatt
bill.wyatt@martinsvillebulletin.com

The boiling dispute between a Martinsville priest and a Richmond bishop could wind up spilling over the doorstep of the Vatican in Rome.

That is the intention of Michael Podhajsky, the canon lawyer retained by Father Mark White to defend against the efforts of Richmond Bishop Barry Knestout to remove White as pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Martinsville and St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Rocky Mount.

Knestout issued a decree effective April 13, the day after Easter Sunday, removing White and declaring the priest had "persistently disregarded" repeated instructions "to desist from his scurrilous and public, published attacks on His

SEE **CANON** | A7

Richmond Bishop Barry Knestout appears unexpectedly at Rocky Mount parish and concelebrates Mass with Father Mark White live online where he talks about an "old wound."

PHOTO SUBMITTED

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

The parents are schooled at home

Students staying at home has left some parents in Martinsville and Henry County learning how to be homeschool teachers.

By Holly Kozelsky | *holly.kozelsky@martinsvillebulletin.com*

Our COVID-closed schools have shifted learning from the classroom to the bedroom — or the kitchen or dining room or family room.

The 3,900 students in Martinsville and Henry and Patrick counties were unleashed with guidance and connectivity to complete their schools year at home, which is not something anyone expected and few were prepared to address.

Many parents these days report challenges in guiding their kids' learning from home, but some of them experienced in homeschooling say it's not as hard as it seems.

Until now homeschooling has been an optional learning process — some states making it easier for families — that has served 1.77 million students nationwide, based on estimates by the U.S. Department of Education. In Virginia, that number is estimated at about 43,500. In 2016 the Virginia Department of Education said there were a couple of hundred in local school divisions.

Each family that chose that option had curriculum and schedule that fit those students' needs. Now parents are learning how best to schedule helping their children, which has to fit around the adults' work schedules, too.

One parent, Latisha Wray, even built a classroom for her family of six children. And she, like many parents, has become a student of the process.

The school divisions provided guidance and the requirements. Students received packets of work from their teachers to complete at home. They meet virtually with their classes over internet video-meeting services such as Zoom. They also work with programs and lessons on school iPads and devices.

SEE **SCHOOL** | A8

PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Above: Brothers (from left) Jaxon, Mason and Rowan Calloway do their schoolwork around the dining room table.
Right: Brothers (from left) Aiden, Jaxon, Rowan and Mason set up school one day in a fort. Their mother, Whitney Calloway, starts their lessons with the materials sent by their teachers, and adds other projects to them.

MORE ON THE VIRUS

» A new hospitalization of COVID-19 case in Martinsville. **A3**

» For a full list cancellations and closings visit **www.martinsvillebulletin.com**.

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WEATHER

84 HIGH | 55 LOW

Mostly sunny, mild with some clouds tonight.

For detailed weather information, **see Page A2**

Sovah-Martinsville treating one of two cases in city as case count continues to rise.

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CANON

From Page A1

Holiness, Pope Francis and other members of the hierarchy."

"My canon lawyer and I both communicated with the bishop our intention to contest his decision to remove me from office, following the normal procedure to do so," White said. "The church-law effect of the contest is: I remain pastor until the process concludes."

But Knestout maintains he has the authority to reassign White. In a letter to the parishioners of both churches, written the same day as the decree, Knestout wrote that White had been reassigned as "chaplain to various prisons, state and federal, within the diocesan bounds."

"He has received a new assignment and will [be] leaving the area within the week," Knestout wrote.

Said White: "He wrote that I must vacate my residence by April 17, and should I continue to disobey, he will petition for my removal from the priesthood."

Late last year Knestout ordered White to remove a popular blog he had authored that often was critical of the way the hierarchy of the church has responded to the sexual abuse scandal.

White was summoned in early February to the Diocese of Richmond to meet with church officials, and church officials traveled to Rocky Mount a few days later to deliver an oral directive to White, telling him to cease posting to his blog under the threat of being removed.

The diocese also took out full-page ads in the Martinsville Bulletin and at least two other state newspapers.

Knestout later submitted a letter to Catholics that was published in the Bulletin, and White responded with a public letter to the bishop.

White initially complied with the bishop's requirement, but then the coronavirus pandemic hit, and St. Joseph and St. Francis closed to the public and suspended all Masses.

White said in late March he realized the value of his blog, which had reached more than 1 million readers, as a means of communications was more important than ever, so he wrote to Knestout and asked to be allowed to resume his posts.

Watch video of joint mass

» Watch a video of joint mass between Bishop Barry Knestout and Father Mark White, celebrated in Rocky Mount.

Receiving no response, White made the decision to violate Knestout's order and resurrect his blog.

Now that Knestout has issued the decree of removal, and White's attorney has petitioned against it. White says he cannot get copies of his records.

"If I want to examine the records of my dismissal from office, I must come to Richmond and sign a statement that I will keep everything I see a secret," White said. [The] "bishop accuses me of 'fomenting dissent … publishing objectionable and misleading statements" and is demonstrating disregard for the obligations that exist between a priest and a bishop.

Knestout has spoken about this conflict only through letters or statement from Deborah Cox, his director of communications. He has taken no direct questions."

Who is in charge?

Knestout has proceeded with his arrangements regarding the parishes in Martinsville and Rocky Mount as if White were cooperating.

On April 16, "Father Kevin Segerblom, pastor of St. Andrew's in Roanoke, calls the parish secretary to make arrangements to say the weekend Masses [via livestream]," White said. "She informs him that she is in possession of the bishop's letter and my letter to parishioners, and, according to her information, I remain as pastor and will celebrate the Masses."

The following day, on April 17, White received a copy of a letter from Knestout to White's lawyer.

"In that letter, the bishop says he recognizes the 'suspensive' effect of my appeal of his decision to remove me, however I do not have the right to reside in the parishes, and if I stay, I will 'stoke the fires of unrest,'" White said. "Also, I have not been suspended from ministry, but I will be if I continue in 'manifest disobedience.'"

Mass surprise

White said he went about his business as usual on April 18, preparing for the live online version of Mass, which has been the new procedure since the COVID-19 crisis.

PHOTO SUBMITTED

Cars lined the parking lot at St. Josephs in Martinsville with supporters of Father Mark.

But Knestout arrived at the parish in Rocky Mount unannounced that day.

"He says one sentence to me, 'You may concelebrate [celebrate together]," White said. "After Mass he leaves without speaking to me."

The "concelebration" of Mass between the unexpected Bishop Knestout and the surprised Father White was streamed live. The picture of the two men together, steeped in dispute, displayed the awkwardness between them.

Knestout delivered a prepared homily that struck at the core.

"Father White and I are at odds," Knestout said in his homily. "Everyone's aware of that — it was in the Martinsville Bulletin — it's been in other areas in terms of news — carried by AP [Associated Press] all over the country.

"We're at odds, so it's no surprise that it's all over the place.

"What is this about? … Some say it's about the abuse scandal and my desire to tamp it down. I don't believe that's the case, but some believe that.

"I believe it's about communion — about a communion that needs to and should be established and exist between any bishop and priest.

"It's like two brothers that have known each other for a long time and maybe there was an old wound that was never really dealt with and was never expressed — never talked about and it keeps coming out in bad ways later and it needs to be addressed."

'An old wound'

White said he was taken aback by Knestout's description of the dispute between them.

"That there is an 'old wound' between the two of us," White said. "This is the first I ever heard him express this. I have no grudge against him."

The Martinsville Bulletin asked Knestout for clarification on what he meant by an "old wound" and for further comment, but Cox said Knestout was refraining "from any further statements at this time."

The record of the relationship between Knestout and White goes back to 2003, when the now disgraced Cardinal Theodore McCarrick ordained White into the priesthood.

"I was ordained by a predator," White wrote in his blog.

McCarrick's priest secretary at the time was Knestout. After McCarrick was accused of engaging in sexual conduct with adult male seminarians over the decades, many outraged Catholics wondered out loud how the priest secretary of a sex abuser could not have been complicit in the knowledge of what was happening.

In June 2018, the Vatican removed McCarrick from public ministry, and the following month The New York Times published an article about McCarrick's sexual involvement not only with male seminarians but also with minors.

In July 2018 McCarrick resigned from the College of Cardinals and that resignation was accepted by Pope Francis.

McCarrick was dismissed from the clergy in February 2019 and became the most senior church official to be laicized in modern times.

Different in Martinsville

After the surprise visit by Knestout to the parish in Rocky Mount, parishioners in Martinsville, who, like those in Rocky Mount, are staunch supporters of White, had expected Knestout to pay a similar visit at Mass the following day. This time they would be prepared.

On April 19 faithful parishioners gathered in the parking lot, many of them with signs showing their support for Father White, but Knestout failed to show.

"Father [Kevin] Segerblom [of Roanoke, the designated temporary replacement for White] arrives to say the scheduled Mass in Martinsville with his seminarian," White said. "He tells me he has come to celebrate Mass. I told him I intended to celebrate, but that I would be glad to have him concelebrate with me.

"I also invited the seminarian to serve the Mass, and at first Father Kevin agreed, but then a few minutes later he left without a word to me."

Parishioner's perspective

Joseph Kernan was one of the parishioners in the parking lot at St. Josephs.

"I think the bishop will rue the day that he picked on Father Mark," Kernan said. "Don't shoot the messenger is an admonition to not blame the bearer of bad news. It is often used when someone reveals a difficult truth that the listener does not want to hear.

"It reminds the listener that the truth is not the fault of the person revealing the truth.

"What happens if the shooter, in fact, shoots the messenger? Well … the shooter may die or disappear from the scene… but other messengers will take up the cause and continue to deliver the message.

"So what has been gained by the shooter?," Kernan asked. "Nothing, except that the shooter has brought even more attention to the message that they found so troubling to begin with."

Help for Father White

Kernan began a gofundme account to raise $7,500 — the estimated price of a canon lawyer to contest the bishop's decree. In six days $7,975 was raised.

"I have received about 100 letters, emails, phone calls and social media messages of encouragement and support from outside Virginia over the course of the past two weeks," White said. "One came from Michael Fleming of California," a close friend of former Archbishop of Los Angeles Roger Cardinal Mahoney.

"Your sense of outrage at the repugnant and criminal behavior of certain of your colleagues is shared by tens-of-millions of Catholics and non-Catholics the world over," Fleming wrote. "Your efforts to encourage church hierarchy to be public and transparent regarding the horrendous acts upon children by ordained religious is to be applauded.

"Given Bishop Knestout's very close professional and personal relationship with McCarrick followed by a period serving his Eminence Donald Cardinal Wuerl — both having been found guilty to varying degrees of participating in and intentionally covering up these heinous crimes — casts great suspicion on his motivations to muzzle you. … It is well past time for the Catholic church hierarchy to publicly confess the sins of commission and omission and publicly repent.

"It would appear that Bishop Knestout, and many others, are more inclined to deflect the truth in order to protect their position."

'A tranquil life'

White said he looks forward to resolving the conflict, but the legal process of getting to that point is not unexpected.

"The fact I have to deal with is this: I cannot minister honestly as a Catholic priest if I do not try to connect my mind with the mind of the clergy sex-abuse victim sitting in the pew," White wrote in his blog. "I have no choice there.

"I wish none of the disturbance we experience as parishes right now. I want only a tranquil life for us all, praising God and making our way to heaven."

Bill Wyatt is a reporter for the Martinsville Bulletin. He can be reached at 276-638-8801, Ext. 236. Follow him @billdwyatt

Kristen "Krissy" Esget, Squad Sergeant
Ridgeway District Volunteer Rescue Squad

I am *resilient.*

"We take time from our own families to protect others, and we appreciate all of the volunteers who help us do what we can for our community. It takes a special person to do this type of work. It's a scary world right now, and we try to set an example of what we can do to protect ourselves. Self-quarantine, try not to wear gloves in public - if you do, change them often. Look to things that make you happy. Help others, donate, send a card to your local rescue squad. Help us spread positivity."

RESILIENCE MHC
www.resiliencemhc.org

Resilience MHC is a resource for nonprofits, childcare providers, small businesses and community members to navigate challenges presented by the COVID-19 crisis.
Email info@resiliencemhc.org to find out more.
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BASEBALL: MARTINSVILLE MUSTANGS WILL HAVE FAMILIAR FACES » SPORTS

ACCENT: HOLLY KOZELSKY DISCUSSES CURSES AND THE INTERNET » B6

MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

THE VOICE OF THE COMMUNITY FOR 130 YEARS

Sunday, June 28, 2020 • MARTINSVILLEBULLETIN.COM • Martinsville, Virginia **$2**

HCPS' reopen plan awaits state

Staggered schedules, social distancing and other measures await formal state approval.

By Kim Barto Meeks
kim.meeks@martinsvillebulletin.com

A proposal from Henry County Schools to reopen school buildings on Aug. 10 and allow students back in the classroom on a limited basis awaits approval from the state.

The Henry County School Board on Thursday approved a 2020-21 reopening plan that would place students on a staggered schedule, with a mix of in-person and online learning. Most students would attend two days of in-person classes and three days of remote instruction each week.

Or, if parents are uncomfortable sending their children to school, they can choose to do 100% distance learning, Superintendent Sandy Strayer told the board.

Many Virginia schools are considering similar hybrid models of instruction, following Gov. Ralph Northam's announcement on June 9 that they may gradually resume in-person

SEE **SCHOOLS** | A8

Key elements of HCPS' plan

Target campus reopening: Aug. 10
» Mix of on-campus, at-home learning
» Alternating schedules
» Siblings attend same days
» Parents have options
» Younger, special-needs students may attend every day
» Social distancing in all cases
» Constant health screenings and cleaning
Subject to VDOE approval

Vatican says no to priest's appeal

PHOTOS BY BILL WYATT/MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

Parishioners at St. Joseph celebrate an anniversary of Father Mark White's ordination as priest.

Vatican and Bishop of Richmond shut down Martinsville priest Mark White, who criticized the hierarchy of the Catholic church.

Father Mark White visits with parishioners in the parking lot of St. Joseph Church in Martinsville.

By Bill Wyatt
bill.wyatt@martinsvillebulletin.com

The word has come down from the Vatican in an appeal by the suspended Catholic Priest Father Mark White of a decision by the Bishop of Richmond to strip him of his pastoral duties, and that word also means White's appeal likely has run out of time.

Those may sound like cliches, but, according to a letter dated June 2 from Prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy Beniamino Stella, they appear literally true and mean White's appeal never was considered and now probably won't be.

"Unfortunately, the petition as presented is unable to be accepted, inasmuch as you have received from this cleric a mandate to act only as an Advocate and canonical consultant," Stella wrote to White's canon lawyer, Michael Podhajsky.

The letter explains the appeal only will be accepted if it comes from White or someone he designates as a "procurator."

White updated the parishioners of St. Francis

Watch the video

» To see a video of Father Mark White discussing his situation, visit www.martinsvillebulletin.com

SEE **WHITE** | A9

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WEATHER

82 HIGH | 66 LOW

A heavy thunderstorm this afternoon; mostly cloudy and still humid tonight.

For detailed weather information, **see Page A2**

14 new cases in health district, the biggest one-day list in a couple of weeks.

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6 56525 10681 1

WHITE

From Page A1

of Assisi in Rocky Mount and St. Joseph in Martinsville with the news.

"The cardinal [Stella] noted that my lawyer's first submission in the case omitted one word, a word I myself had never heard before: 'procurator,'" White wrote in his blog. "According to the Cardinal, that omission of one word has nullified our entire case.

"I think it's safe to say someone invented the term 'technicality' for situations just like this."

To make matters worse, Stella notified Podhajsky that the time limit for filing an appeal had now passed, indicating an amended appeal would be dismissed as well.

Stella wrote that White should report to his new assignment according to the instructions of Richmond Bishop Barry Knestout.

Those instructions require White to relocate to Abingdon and take up residency at the Jubilee House, a Catholic retreat and conference center.

Knestout had stated it was his intention to have White serve in some capacity as a prison minister.

Armed with the strength of the Vatican's denial of White's appeal, Knestout now says the restoration of White as a priest is conditional upon White's complying with a decree he issued in November.

"Reverend Mark White is to cease from this moment in disseminating his opinions by means of any social media: in print, by audio, or video, or any digital means," the decree states. "Any previous posts are to be removed from all social media, and the account is to be closed.

"In the exercise of his pastoral office, Father White is to refrain from all assertions against, or judgments about, the hierarchy of the Church."

Such opinions are at the heart of this months-old dispute between White and Knestout.

White began a popular web blog 12 years ago. When he began posting critical comments about the Catholic Church hierarchy's handling of its sex abuse scandal — particularly involving White's mentor, Theodore McCarrick — Knestout became displeased and demanded that White remove the blog.

White complied at first, but when the coronavirus pandemic hit, and the church doors were closed, White asked if he could resume blogging as a means of communicating with his parishioners.

Knestout did not respond to the request, so White defied the command to cease and desist, and the strained relationship between Knestout and White deteriorated further.

"I am not a priest of Barry Knestout," White said. "I am a priest of Jesus Christ.

"The pope says we stand for human rights, honesty and openness. I can't betray our ideals by giving in to this."

Requests for additional comment this week from Knestout drew no immediate response.

Path to Martinsville

White turns 50 years old today. He entered the seminary for the Archdiocese of Washington in 1997 and spent the summer of 1999 in a special seminary program in Nebraska.

It was there he realized the rest of the world was not like Washington, where priests were plentiful.

White was ordained in Washington in 2003 and served as a parochial vicar (assistant pastor) and then as pastor in the Washington area for eight years.

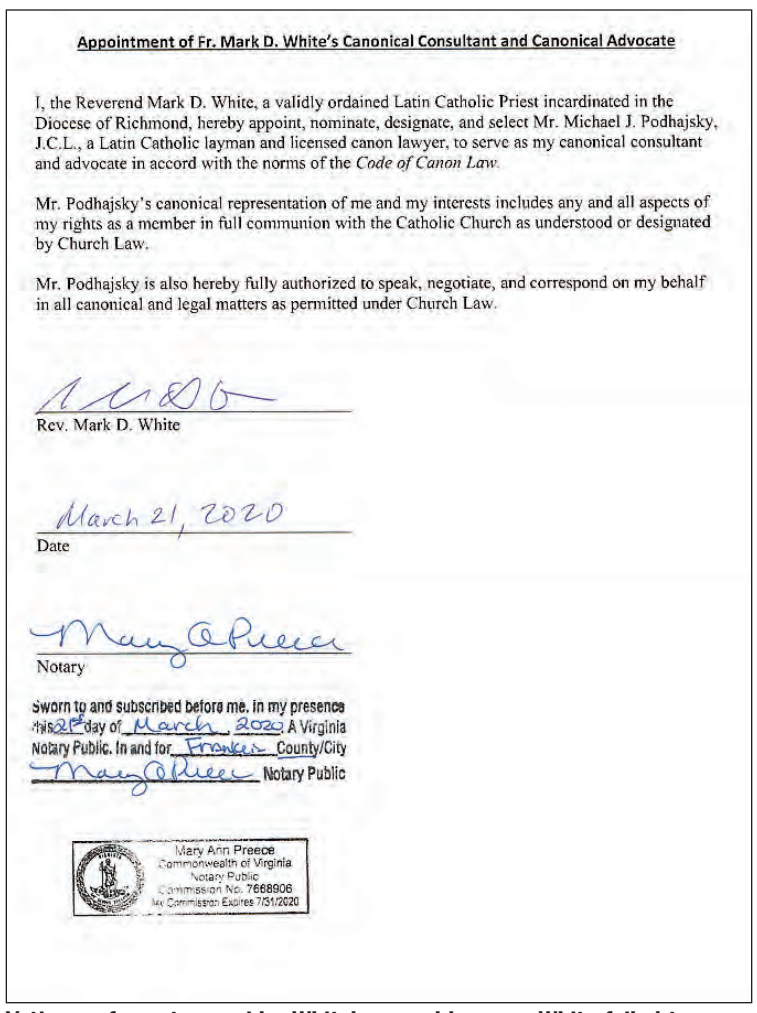
In early 2011 he asked to be assigned to an area in dire need of priests.

That's when he received the assignment to become the priest in both Rocky Mount and Martinsville.

In 2015 White was assigned to Roanoke, with the task of serving two parishes there. The arrangement didn't work as well as it did in Martinsville and Rocky Mount, so White returned to his assignment at St. Francis of Assisi and St. Joseph.

PHOTOS BY BILL WYATT/MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

The number of parishioners celebrating Father Mark White as their priest continues to grow as the afternoon progresses.



Appointment of Fr. Mark D. White's Canonical Consultant and Canonical Advocate

I, the Reverend Mark D. White, a validly ordained Latin Catholic Priest incardinated in the Diocese of Richmond, hereby appoint, nominate, designate, and select Mr. Michael J. Podhajsky, J.C.L., a Latin Catholic layman and licensed canon lawyer, to serve as my canonical consultant and advocate in accord with the norms of the *Code of Canon Law*.

Mr. Podhajsky's canonical representation of me and my interests includes any and all aspects of my rights as a member in full communion with the Catholic Church as understood or designated by Church Law.

Mr. Podhajsky is also hereby fully authorized to speak, negotiate, and correspond on my behalf in all canonical and legal matters as permitted under Church Law.

Rev. Mark D. White

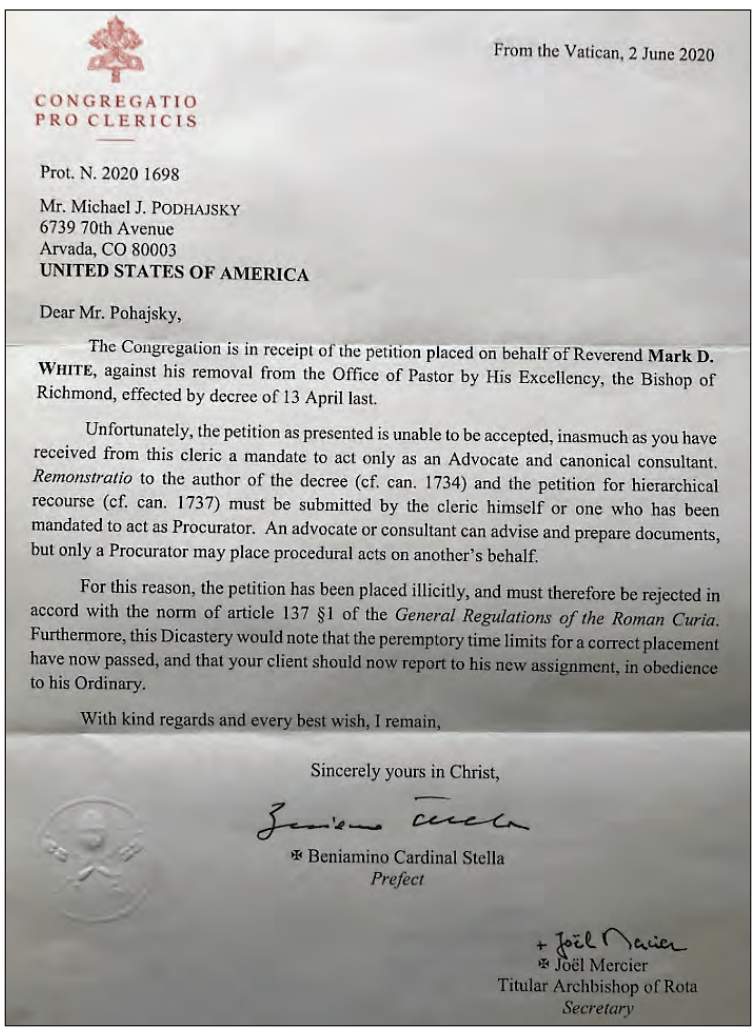
March 21, 2020
Date

Notary

Sworn to and subscribed before me, in my presence this 21st day of March, 2020 A Virginia Notary Public. In and for Frankin County/City Notary Public

Mary Ann Preece
Commonwealth of Virginia
Notary Public
Commission No. 7668906
My Commission Expires 7/31/2020

Vatican refuses to consider White's appeal because White failed to name his lawyer as his "Procurator."



From the Vatican, 2 June 2020

CONGREGATIO PRO CLERICIS

Prot. N. 2020 1698

Mr. Michael J. PODHAJSKY
6739 70th Avenue
Arvada, CO 80003
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Dear Mr. Pohajsky,

The Congregation is in receipt of the petition placed on behalf of Reverend **Mark D. WHITE**, against his removal from the Office of Pastor by His Excellency, the Bishop of Richmond, effected by decree of 13 April last.

Unfortunately, the petition as presented is unable to be accepted, inasmuch as you have received from this cleric a mandate to act only as an Advocate and canonical consultant. *Remonstratio* to the author of the decree (cf. can. 1734) and the petition for hierarchical recourse (cf. can. 1737) must be submitted by the cleric himself or one who has been mandated to act as Procurator. An advocate or consultant can advise and prepare documents, but only a Procurator may place procedural acts on another's behalf.

For this reason, the petition has been placed illicitly, and must therefore be rejected in accord with the norm of article 137 §1 of the *General Regulations of the Roman Curia*. Furthermore, this Dicastery would note that the peremptory time limits for a correct placement have now passed, and that your client should now report to his new assignment, in obedience to his Ordinary.

With kind regards and every best wish, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

✠ Beniamino Cardinal Stella
Prefect

✠ Joël Mercier
Titular Archbishop of Rota
Secretary

Letter from the Vatican denying Father Mark White's appeal.

"And now Bishop Barry Knestout has tried to railroad me right out of the priesthood," White wrote in his blog. "By sheer irrational cruelty."

Letter of support

In an act that surpasses the denominational boundaries of Christians, the Rev. Nicholas Hull and 12 members of the Christ Episcopal Church in Martinsville, representing the Church's Clergy and Vestry, penned an open letter in support of White.

"The growing tension between Fr. Mark White and the Diocese of Richmond has been impossible to ignore, and it saddens us to see how this has hampered your ministry within our community," they wrote. "Now that Fr. Mark's dismissal has made national headlines, there are multitudes of narratives pointing fingers in every conceivable direction.

"We feel that as outsiders, yet allies of your Church, we are called to offer our limited but honest perspective on this painful controversy.

"Unfair blame has been put on Fr. Mark White for creating tension and straining the ministry of the Roman Catholic Church in our community. This controversy stems from the sexual misconduct of ex-Cardinal Theadore McCarrick and the Church's response to his sins.

"Through Fr. Mark's talks at our Church, and through private conversations, it was clear that he was not only deeply hurt by the actions of Theodore McCarrick, but also by the Church's response to this controversy.

"In all of our interactions, he has never seemed spiteful, hateful, or vengeful, but disappointed and sad in a Church that he has dedicated his life to serve, much how a spouse might feel hurt after discovering their beloved partner was unfaithful.

Father Mark White visits with parishioners in the parking lot of St. Joseph Church in Martinsville.

"In a strange way, Fr. Mark's passion, vulnerability, and honesty in discussing his disappointments has increased the respect and rapport of the Roman Catholic Church in our community…

"Although Fr. Mark White was critical of the Church, it was abundantly clear that he was still dedicated to remaining its servant.

"The forces that tried to silence Fr. Mark White claimed they were motivated out of a desire to preserve and protect the Church; however, from our perspective, they have achieved the opposite."

Appeal to Vatican

In a letter written to Knestout on Monday, White writes: "I mean no offense when I point out to you that everyone has the right to communicate with his or her fellow human beings … you do not have the authority to compel my silence in this manner."

On Tuesday, White wrote directly to the Vatican, apologizing for failing to use the word "procurator" in his appeal.

"I did 'fully authorize' Mr. Podhajasky to 'speak, negotiate, and correspond on my behalf in all canonical and legal matters as permitted under Church Law,' so while the word 'procurator' did not appear in the original mandate, I nonetheless gave Mr. Podhajsky the essential powers of a procurator, in plenty of time to take recourse within the preemptory deadlines," wrote White.

White pointed out that the merits of his case deserve at least to be heard and failing to do so leaves the problem unresolved.

White explained that he was unable to report to his new assignment as instructed by Stella because he is suspended as a priest.

"Bishop Knestout indicated that he will not restore my priestly faculties unless I remove my weblog from the internet," White wrote. "As your Eminence knows, everyone enjoys the natural right to communicate with his or her fellow human beings, to engage in public discourse and debate.

"Only the cruelest tyrannies try to suppress this right by unjust compulsion …

"Please forgive my presumption on your time and attention. But I must insist that your Congregation consider the merits of this case in full…

This "now constitutes a serious scandal among the people of this region. Archbishop Christophe Pierre, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, Bishop Knestout himself, and the provincial Archbishop, William Lori, of Baltimore, have received correspondence from many quarters on this matter.

"This correspondence, from Catholics and non-Catholics alike, will verify the danger of scandal that exists here, should my case not receive a fair hearing on the merits."

Upcoming 'Chrism'

Now Father Mark White can only wait in hopes of a more favorable consideration this time.

The bishop and his priests gather in Richmond every year to celebrate Mass together and to reaffirm their solemn promises in a ceremony called "Chrism Mass."

This year that event will take place on July 10 at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart.

White will not be allowed to participate because Knestout has prohibited him from publicly celebrating the sacraments.

Parishioners from St. Francis of Assisi in Rocky Mount and St. Joseph in Martinsville will have buses departing that day from both churches for anyone wishing to stand with White on the sidewalk outside the cathedral as Knestout and the priests of the Richmond Diocese walk by.

"I will stand in silent vigil," White said. "The injustice cries to heaven."

Bill Wyatt is a reporter for the Martinsville Bulletin. He can be reached at 276-638-8801, Ext. 236. Follow him @billdwyatt

ACCENT:
A GOOD PREACHER GOES BAD — ON FACEBOOK
» PAGE B6

CORONAVIRUS:
SMITH RIVER SPORTS COMPLEX'S TOURNAMENT COULD BE A BLUEPRINT FOR OTHERS » SPORTS

MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

THE VOICE OF THE COMMUNITY FOR 130 YEARS

Sunday, July 12, 2020 • MARTINSVILLEBULLETIN.COM • Martinsville, Virginia **$2**

Priest, supporters deliver message

Father Mark White of Martinsville and his supporters hold a vigil in Richmond outside a Mass from which he was excluded.

By Bill Wyatt
bill.wyatt@martinsvillebulletin.com

RICHMOND

Father Mark White of Martinsville, along with about 50 supporters, traveled to Richmond on Friday where Bishop Barry Knestout celebrated the ministry of his priests at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart without him.

White was not invited to this annual event because his priestly duties have been suspended by Knestout based on a high-profile difference between the two about White's criticism of church hierarchy in his blog.

And after Friday's trip to the home of the Diocese of Richmond, White said his next stops could be Washington and perhaps even Rome as he continues his fight to resume his priesthood.

Some of White's supporters made the trip Friday in vans, others in their personal vehicles, and after everyone arrived, they gathered at the entrance to the cathedral with signs that read "Justice for Father Mark."

"Usually there is a procession of the priests, and they are greeted by

SEE **VIGIL** | A10

See the video

» To see a video from the vigil by Father Mark and his supporters in Richmond, visit www.martinsvillebulletin.com.

BILL WYATT/MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

Father Mark White in front of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Richmond.

PHOTO SUBMITTED

A Henry County Animal Control officer removed this rabid fox from a yard in Sanville.

Attack of the rabid fox

A woman in Sanville and her daughter come face to face with a rabid fox.

By Holly Kozelsky
holly.kozelsky@martinsvillebulletin.com

Wendy Lynskey said she didn't realize it was a fox she was dealing with until she was twirling it overhead.

It turned out to be a rabid fox, at that.

Now Lynskey has a new wariness about being outside, and her 85-year-old mother, Nerene Tolbert, is feeling that she can survive anything.

Tolbert began her story with the disclaimer that "it sounds like a lie" – but every bit of it is true.

A close call

Around 9:30 a.m. last Wednesday, July 1, she was going to mail her power bill and get her newspaper, outside her home in Sanville. On the way out the door she picked up the container of food scraps she always throws out to "give it to the animals, and it makes the ground more fertile, too," she said. She also picked up the wooden handle of an old metal-toothed rake, which she keeps by the kitchen door. It makes a

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WEATHER

89 HIGH | 66 LOW

Mostly sunny and humid, becoming cloudy and staying humid tonight.

For detailed weather information, **see Page A2**

Smith River Sports Complex hosts first games since the coronavirus pandemic began

Page A3

Vigil

From Page A1

the bishop as they enter," White said. "It doesn't look like that's going to happen this year."

Maybe the presence of White and his supporters caused a change in the way the celebration was carried out. White surmised it may have been because of restrictions required by the coronavirus.

Regardless, the sidewalk that is normally lined with more than a hundred priests, White among them, was empty, and a tent had been erected in front of an opened back door to provide a means of entry that was mostly out of sight.

"We go to Richmond today because we hope and pray that our church could live as a loving family, not a cruel and faceless bureaucracy," White wrote in a blog that is at the core of the contentiousness between priest and bishop. "We will keep a peaceful vigil of Christian love, hoping for a good outcome.

"We focus on justice and openness in our beloved Church."

White has been removed by Knestout as priest of St. Francis of Assisi in Rocky Mount and St. Joseph in Martinsville because of White's personal blog, to which White has been contributing for almost 12 years. It has drawn a million eyeballs to commentaries on a variety of topics, including highly critical comments about how the Catholic Church has handled cases of sexual abuse by priests.

Late last year Knestout insisted White take down the blog from the web and cease his contributions to it. White complied, but when the coronavirus pandemic hit, he asked to be allowed to resume his online writings as a means of keeping in communication with his parishioners.

When Knestout failed to respond to White's request, White returned his blog to the web and began writing again.

As a result, over the next few months Knestout removed White as the priest, and, when White failed to relocate to Abingdon for a new assignment serving in the prisons, Knestout stripped White of his priestly duties.

Knestout responded late Saturday to a request for comment on White's uninvited presence in Richmond:

"During this Mass, I ask the lay faithful to pray that our priests become more like our High Priest and Good Shepherd, the teacher and servant of all, and so be a genuine sign of Christ's loving presence among you.

"I ask those who have joined Father White to pray for him and for all priests and bishops that they recommit themselves to be a genuine sign of Christ's loving presence."

White hired a canon lawyer and made his complaint known to the Vatican, only to have it dismissed without being considered because White failed to name his lawyer the "procurator" in the process.

White has personally appealed to the Vatican to reconsider his complaint, but the letter of dismissal he received states the allowed window for registering a proper complaint has closed.

Joe Kernan is a parishioner, and on Friday this 82-year-old logging truck driver was driving one of the vans headed to Richmond.

"I used to be an airline pilot," Kernan said. "I retired in '92, and several years ago a neighbor told me he knew someone that needed a logging truck driver.

"I said, 'I can do that.'

Kernan has lived in Washington D.C., not far from where White grew up, and said he feels a kinship with White. He also has a unique understanding of White's predicament.

"Father Mark is going to end up being a martyr," Kernan said. "That's all there is to it.

"The older priests in the Richmond Diocese are sympathetic to Father Mark, but the younger ones won't do or say anything that will displease the bishop."

The event held on Friday in Richmond is the Chrism Mass, a time when the priests are invited to renew their commitment of service during Mass and receive the prayers and support from the faithful.

Only those invited were allowed to enter the cathedral and witness the event, but the website of the Richmond Diocese described what was to occur:

"Bishop Knestout will bless three oils that will be used throughout the diocese in the coming year; the oil of the catechumens … the oil of the sick … and the sacred chrism, or consecrated oil," which is used during the confirmation and the ordination of priests."

While Knestout was inside the cathedral blessing the oils, White was outside blessing his flock.

"Do not disrupt this service," White said. "There is nothing to be accomplished by being disruptive."

White spoke to the group of supporters in front of the majestic Cathedral of the Sacred Heart late Friday as the sun beamed through the trees casting shadows along the steps leading to the entrance of the church where the sounds of Mass could be heard wafting through the air outside.

"I've been asked, where do we go from here?" White said. "We will petition the bishop again to sit down and talk about this, and if he does not agree, then we will go to him, to his office.

"And if he doesn't see us then, we will go to Washington [to see Papal Nucio Archbishop Christophe Pierre].

"And if he refuses to meet with us, then we go to Rome."

PHOTOS BY BILL WYATT/MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

Father Mark supporters holding vigil outside Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Richmond.

One of the vans leaving for Richmond where supporters for Father Mark held a vigil outside Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Richmond.

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Father Mark goes to D.C.

Father Mark White and his supporters took their pleas for validation to the Washington Archbishop. Next stop: Rome

By Bill Wyatt
bill.wyatt@martinsvillebulletin.com

WASHINGTON — After being shunned at the doorsteps of a Richmond bishop and now also at the Apostolic Nuncio to the United States in Washington, D.C., Father Mark White of Martinsville and his supporters intend to take their demands for justice to the Vatican in Rome.

You probably know the story by now. Father White was the priest serving St. Joseph Catholic Church in Martinsville and St. Francis of Assisi in Rocky Mount. Late last year Richmond Bishop Barry Knestout told White to remove a popular blog he had created and used to occasionally criticize the church hierarchy's handling of the sex abuse scandal within the church.

White initially complied with Knestout's demand, but when the coronavirus pandemic hit, he asked for permission to resume his blog as a means to remain in contact with his parishioners.

Receiving no answer, White resumed blogging, and Knestout responded by removing White as priest of the two local parishes and reassigning him to service in the prisons of southwest Virginia.

White took issue with the Knestout's perceived authority concerning his right to express his opinion through a blog and submitted a formal request for the Vatican to settle the dispute.

Knestout responded by stripping White of his priestly duties.

The Vatican dismissed White's request on the technicality of not

SEE **FATHER** | A6

BILL WYATT/MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

Father Mark White and supporters in Washington D.C.

BILL WYATT/MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

Father Mark walking toward Apostolic Nuncio to the United States of America, 3339 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C.

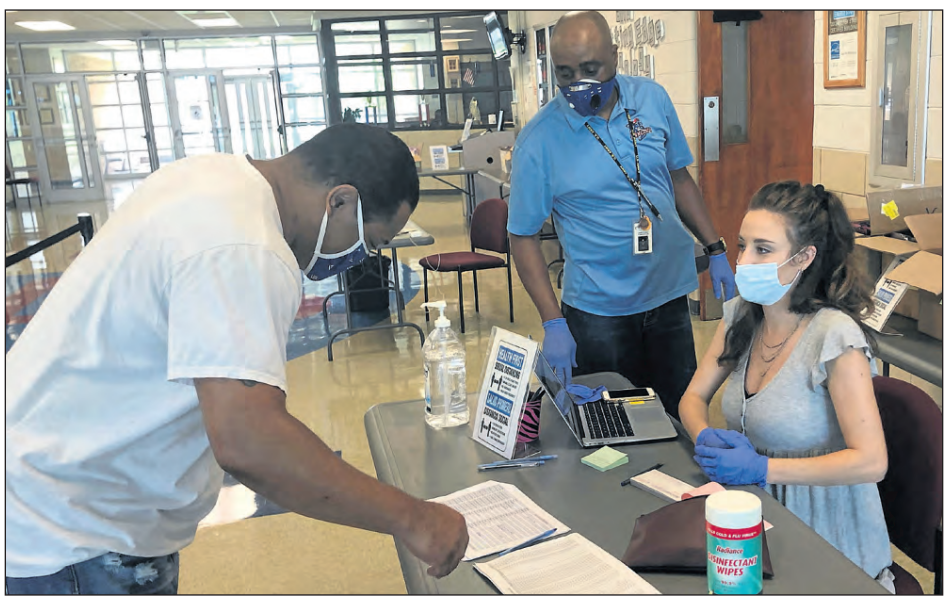
BILL WYATT/MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

Father Mark supporters come in all ages.

BILL WYATT/MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

Father Mark White and supporters in Washington D.C.

FAMILIES' FIRST TRIPS TO SCHOOL



HOLLY KOZELSKY/MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

Terrance Scales (from left), the father of a sixth-grader also named Terrance Scales, picks up his son's iPad from paraprofessional Joseph Ellison and sixth-grade teacher Shayna Foley Monday at Laurel Park Middle School. Families across the area are getting ready this week for the school year which begins next week.

Tracing the path of the virus

Contract tracers stay very busy in Henry County, as recently hired tracers Andy Parker and Kris Landrum are learning.

Andy Parker

Kris Landrum

By Holly Kozelsky
holly.kozelsky@martinsvillebulletin.com

Andy Parker and Kris Landrum are on the forefront of warning people who have been in direct danger of being exposed to the coronavirus.

Parker is in his fourth week of contact tracing for the Virginia Department of Health and Landrum is about to start.

Parker, a former corporate headhunter who has become an advocate for gun control laws on the national level after

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WEATHER

84 HIGH | 64 LOW

Mostly cloudy and humid. Cloudy and muggy tonight.

For detailed weather information, **see Page A2**

Virginia braces for Isaias as it creeps closer.

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6 56525 10671 2

Father

From Page A1

naming his lawyer representing him in the matter as his "procurator."

Last month White and his supporters traveled to Richmond where they protested Knestout's actions outside the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, while Knestout was inside celebrating the ministry of his priests.

On Friday, White and his supporters took their appeal for justice to Apostolic Nuncio Christopher Pierre in Washington, D.C. Pierre serves as the pope's ambassador to the United States.

White's group had sent Pierre a letter two weeks before the trip asking for a meeting at 3:30 p.m. on Friday to discuss Knestout's actions against White including the sex-abuse scandal and the rights of Catholics to speak their minds about the problems they see in the church.

"We came to try to talk to the pope's representative here in the United States," White said. "We had two topics that we wanted to discuss: The first one is — does it help our church to cover up the crimes of bishops and priests — does it help us or does it hurt us? Can we live in the truth? Can we help people to heal and find God again by living in the truth? That's the first topic that we had hoped to discuss with him.

"Question number two: Are we allowed to have free speech in the church? Are we allowed to speak our minds about these things? Are we allowed to get things out in the open? Because that seems to be the way to make some headway here, to make some progress or do we have to suffer reprisals and persecution when we try to have this discussion?

"We're here hoping someone will welcome us to have these discussions … but at least we can say at the end of the day today 'we tried.'"

Two vans from Martinsville and Rocky Mount occupied by White and his supporters arrived at the offices of the Archbishop on Massachusetts Avenue, across the street from the Vice President Mike Pence's residence.

Other supporters were already in front of the building with signs that read "Justice for Father Mark."

BILL WYATT/MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

Father Mark supporters in Washington.

At least two of the supporters called the offices inside the building, requesting to meet with Pierre, but were refused because they did not have an appointment.

"The appointment was requested over a week ago, but they said you can't come in without an appointment," St. Francis of Assisi parishioner Joe Kernan said. "I said it's just a bunch of faithful Catholics out here defending a courageous Catholic priest.

"I said we certainly would like to speak with someone about the issue, and they said well, no one is coming out if you don't have an appointment, and no one is coming in."

The only ones who met White and his group at the archbishop's offices were members of the Secret Service, who arrived in three marked vehicles containing several uniformed officers.

After sizing the demonstration as lawful and peaceful, the officers assisted by closing one lane of traffic closest to the building to provide a safer distance between White and his supporters and passing motorists.

For 90 minutes a group of about 65 people wearing shirts and caps and carrying signs all signifying their support of White, sang, chanted and prayed.

"I'm very much heartened and encouraged by all the people who are here with me and the solidarity with the victim's sexual abuse that everyone is trying to express and a desire for a new day at our church," White said. "We could have a little more openness and honesty about the whole thing."

BILL WYATT/MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

Father Mark speaking to supporters in Washington D.C.

Just as the number of supporters for White continues to grow, so do the number of media outlets covering his plight.

The Diocese of Richmond frequently will offer a comment after a story relating to White, and Knestout has been published or aired on television. Such was the case when WUSA-TV in Washington D.C. broadcast a story about White's plans to come to the nation's capitol.

"As of this writing, this is not just about Father Mark's blog," Deborah Cox, a spokeswoman for Knestout, said. "Father Mark continues to refuse to accept the assignment and the new job he has been given."

White responded in his blog by pointing out what he described as Cox's mischaracterizing the situation.

"I very much want to work as a priest," White wrote. "I appealed my removal as pastor in Rocky-Mount-Martinsville to the Holy See. Last month, the Congregation for the Clergy dismissed my appeal on a questionable technicality.

"In the meantime, Bishop Knestout suspended my priestly faculties — that is, my authorization to minister as one of his priests. I cannot minister in any assignment without that authorization."

White said he asked Cox to correct her statement, but to his knowledge she had not done so.

Apostolic Nuncio Christopher Pierre did not respond to the Bulletin's request for comment.

"Our parish life has really been wrecked by the things the bishop has done, and we want our parish life back and we want a better future," White said. "These are really good Catholic people — practicing Catholics who believe in a church that can deal with the truth."

Bill Wyatt is a reporter for the Martinsville Bulletin. He can be reached at 276-638-8801, Ext. 236. Follow him @billdwyatt

Tracers

From Page A1

the shooting death of his daughter, television journalist Allison Parker, and Landrum, who has been the public relations director for Patrick Henry Community College and more recently S.T.E.P., are among 1,547 contact tracers hired by the Virginia Department of Health to keep up with the spread of the coronavirus.

Parker said he and his wife, Barbara, had been planning on signing on to help with the census, but "when the virus hit," the contact tracing interested him.

"This is what I used to do as a headhunter, the same skill set," he said: A contact tracer has "to be able to call people and have to be able to establish a rapport without having seen them before," in order to talk about the disease.

As a contact tracer, Parker calls people who have been around people who recently had tested positive for the coronavirus. He advises them "how to quarantine and all of that."

Someone in the health department sends him the names of 10 to 20 people a day for him to call. "It depends on how many she gets in the course of the day," he said. "She's the dispatcher."

He works from home over a laptop and smartphone provided to him for that purpose.

He said he had expected that some people would not be receptive to his calls, and the training he received had addressed how to deal with that, but people have been consistently receptive, he said.

"I was quite surprised that there has been no pushback," he said. "People understand it's not a hoax. It's real. Without exception, they're just grateful they have someone checking in on them, that they're doing OK."

When his calls aren't answered, "nine times out of 10 I get a call back very quickly, or a text," he said.

He has found that "people have been very cooperative. There has been little to no resistance on quarantining."

Making those calls takes on "part of the job of a social worker and a psychologist," he said. He has to "provide a measure of reassurance. That's the biggest thing I get out of this. You feel like you're helping people, and you're making a difference."

State Health Commissioner M. Norman Oliver talked about contact tracing during a recent telepress conference hosted by the Virginia Department of Public Health.

To handle the pandemic, "Virginia greatly expanded our capacity tracing," Oliver said. The goal was to have 1,200 contact investigators and tracers by July 1, but the total ended up being 1,547.

West Piedmont Health District, which covers the counties of Henry, Patrick and Franklin as well as Martinsville, has a target of 10 case investigators and eight contact tracers, as well as a data manager, case investigator supervisor and contact tracer investigator, according to district spokesperson Nancy Bell.

One hundred and sixty-six contact tracers speak more languages than just English, with 102 of them speaking Spanish.

The number of contact personnel varies by health district, according to need, he said.

How it works

A case investigator talks to people who just has been diagnosed with the coronavirus to learn everywhere they've been and everyone with whom they've been in contact. Contact tracers call those people to tell them that someone they recently had encountered had tested positive for the coronavirus.

"A case investigator is a higher skilled, more technical job that contact tracing," Oliver said. That role generally falls to nurses, doctors and epidemiologists.

The contact tracers should be "people in local communities, people who are trusted," so that people would be willing to talk with and listen to them, he said.

Parker said that he started out as a contact tracer and just has been asked to switch over to case investigator.

The program has been successful, Oliver said, with a high rate of return: by July 27, contact tracers were able to reach more than 74% of the cases (more than 90,000 statewide), with most of them reached within 24 hours.

Younger trends

Throughout most of Virginia, 6% of the people who get tested for the coronavirus get positive results, he said. In some areas, such as Northern Virginia, positivity rates run as high as 18.6%.

Lately there has been "a significant shift to younger demographics" with a "marked increase in the number of cases" in people between the ages of 20 and 29. Those increases tend to be coming from "social events and gatherings where social distancing is not practiced" and people aren't wearing masks.

It's easier to do contact tracing with people whose movements have been limited, but "if they're in a crowded bar that becomes a little more challenging," he said. It may not be possible to locate everyone with whom the infected person has come in contact, but the tracers could let the establishment's management know, so they could do deep cleaning and sanitization.

Landrum, who is starting her training for the job, said about her reasons for doing it: "This may be one of the biggest, most impactful social developments in my lifetime. I have always wanted my work to be a meaningful contribution to the communities in which I live and work. I hope that by serving as a contact tracer I am helping address this pandemic."

The job has "turned out to be extremely rewarding and interesting," Parker said. "Sometimes it's emotionally gut-wrenching and sometimes it runs the gamut. It's everything in between."

Holly Kozelsky is a writer for the Martinsville Bulletin; contact her at 276-638-8801 ext. 243.

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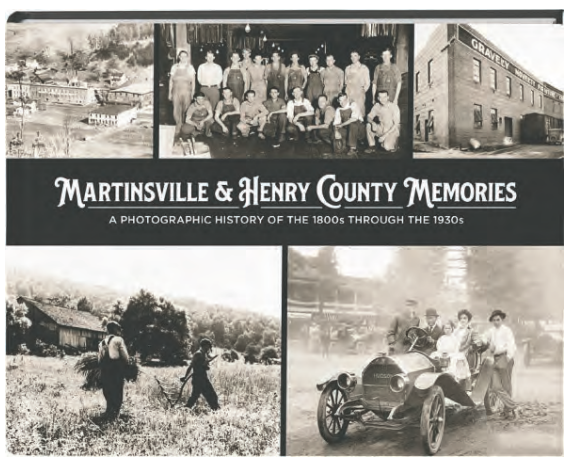

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NFL: WASHINGTON'S ALEX SMITH HAS DEFIED THE ODDS » SPORTS

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COVID-19 deaths spike

Jail, sheriff's office hit

» Two inmates at the Henry County Jail and "a few" members of the sheriff's office have tested positive for the novel coronavirus. **Page A3**

West Piedmont Health District has 7 of state's 14 deaths. Stanleytown Rehab reports 54 cases and 9 deaths.

By Holly Kozelsky
holly.kozelsky@martinsvillebulletin.com

Half of the COVID-19 deaths recorded in Virginia on Wednesday came from this area.

The West Piedmont Health District — Martinsville and the counties of Patrick, Henry and Franklin — reported seven deaths from COVID-19: four of Henry County residents, and three of Patrick County residents.

That makes 25 total deaths since March in the district.

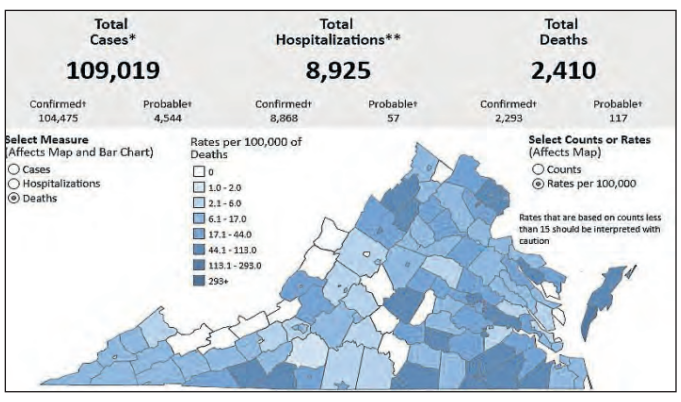
Although it is known that many of the area's total COVID-19 deaths have come from long-term care facilities, exact numbers are not known.

Two facilities report a large number of cases and deaths from the virus.

Stanleytown Health and Rehab has had 54 patients test positive for the coronavirus, Administrator Kennedy Flynn said.

"We are saddened to share that we have

SEE **SPIKE** | A6



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Death density is among state's highest in Henry and Patrick counties and city of Martinsville.

A sound of sad silence

CARA COOPER/MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

Bassett High School's marching band

Bands at Magna Vista and Bassett high schools usually would be deep into preparations for their games and competitions. For now they practice virtually and wait to see when a note might be played together.

By Cara Cooper
cara.cooper@martinsvillebulletin.com

Around the start of August, when high school football teams are typically putting on pads and running out to practice for the first time, those who provide entertainment for those football games already have been working on their own season for eight or more months.

High school marching bands typically will start picking music for the upcoming football season around December, which comes months after summer band camps are scheduled. Usually by February or March bands are focused on a theme for the upcoming football year, which coincides with the competition season, and around late April tryouts and auditions are held up for leadership positions such as drum major and section leaders, and rookie camps are held for students coming up from the middle school.

By the time school starts in August, bands will have held several practices and an intense, week-long camp in the final weeks before the football season begins, moving right into practicing after school three days a week,

SEE **BANDS** | A5

PAUL COLLINS/MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

Members of 2018-19 Magna Vista High School band march in a parade last December.

PHOTO SUBMITTED

Supporters of Father Mark White in Richmond.

More Mass appeal for Father White

Father Mark White and supporters stage a second vigil in Richmond, and he files a second appeal to Vatican to win back his posts in Martinsville and Rocky Mount.

By Bill Wyatt
bill.wyatt@martinsvillebulletin.com

Father Mark White of Martinsville and his supporters took their peaceful protest back to the steps of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Richmond on Sunday.

Enrique Rangel-Rodriguez, a student at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond and a parishioner at St. Joseph in Martinsville, said he knew that students would be returning to campus this past weekend and that Father Michael Boehling, the vicar general of the diocese, would be celebrating Mass at the cathedral to welcome students.

Rangel-Rodriquez suggested White and his group hold a vigil outside the cathedral at 5:15 p.m. while Mass was being celebrated. He also thought it would be an opportunity to engage other VCU students as they passed by and explain White's plight.

Richmond Bishop Barry Knestout has declared the matter closed, but White and his supporters are still seeking consideration from Knestout and even the Vatican that would result in White's being restored to his position as priest of St. Joseph as well as St.

SEE **WHITE** | A5

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WEATHER

77 HIGH | 65 LOW

Cloudy with periods of rain through the day. Mostly cloudy tonight.

For detailed weather information, **see Page A2**

Va. Senate delays vote on eviction moratorium.

Page A3

6 56525 10671 2

Axton man indentified in canoe death

By JOHN R. CRANE
The (Davnille) Register & Bee

DANVILLE — The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources has identified the victim who died after a canoe overturned in the Dan River on Sunday afternoon.

Ronald Edward Reynolds, 76, of Axton, died after the canoe he and his adult grandson were in capsized at the bottom of the dam near the Danville Family YMCA.

The incident occurred when the two went over the dam in the canoe, got tangled up in debris and the current and overturned, said department spokeswoman Paige Pearson.

They were able to get the canoe right-side up and re-enter it, only to capsize again and fall out, Pearson said. The grandson was able to hold on to a rock but Reynolds was not.

Neither Reynolds nor his grandson was wearing a life jacket, Pearson said.

The elevated water level following rainfall could have played a role in the incident, she added. It was at 8.75 feet, more than 2 feet above the normal 6.5 feet, she said.

The Danville Life Saving Crew, Danville Fire Department, Danville Police Department and the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, formerly the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, responded to the incident shortly after 1 p.m. Sunday.

The grandson was able to get out of the water below King Memorial Bridge and was treated by the Danville Life Saving Crew and transported to Sovah Health-Danville.

The life saving crew located and recovered Reynolds' body via rescue boat, the fire department reported.

The department of wildlife resources is investigating, with help from the police department.

DANIEL TURNER/STARNEWS

Car crashes into house on Stones Dairy Road.

Vehicle plows into house

Staff report

An early morning crash sent a vehicle careening into a home on Stones Dairy Road in Bassett.

No details have been made available regarding the incident that occurred shortly before 5 a.m. Wednesday.

The path to the house in the 4900 block of Stones Dairy road indicates the vehicle was headed south when he went off the right side of the road just past Howell's Garage and plowed into the side near the front part of the 2-story house.

The Virginia State Police are investigating the incident, and there is no record of anyone having been transported from the scene to the hospital.

White

From Page A1

Francis of Assisi in Rocky Mount.

White was removed from both parishes and stripped of his priestly duties for contributing to a popular 12-year-old personal blog that has been visited by more than a million people and occasionally waxes critically about the church hierarchy's handling of the sex abuse crisis.

Late last year Knestout insisted White take down the blog from the web and cease his contributions to it. White complied, but when the coronavirus pandemic hit, he asked to be allowed to resume his online writings as a means of keeping in communication with his parishioners.

When Knestout failed to respond to White's request, White reactivated his blog.

During the next few months Knestout banned White from both churches and changed the locks on the doors. When White failed to relocate to Abingdon for a new assignment serving in the prisons, Knestout took away White's priestly duties.

An appeal by White via his canon lawyer was dismissed by the Vatican on a technicality and because the time imposed by the process has expired, Catholic authorities have not recognized a corrected appeal directly from White.

So late Sunday afternoon White and a growing group of supporters took their complaint back to Richmond, where just last month they appeared protesting quietly while Knestout celebrated the ministry of his priests at the Sacred Heart Cathedral.

White says he prays for a miracle, but he does not take any small progress for granted.

"From my point-of-view, things worked out very well," White said. "We spoke with a couple dozen students over the course of about two hours outside the cathedral.

PHOTO SUBMITTED

Supporters of Father Mark White in Richmond.

PHOTO SUBMITTED

Supporters of Father Mark White in Richmond.

"We chanted and prayed … and we came together as a group, renewing out Catholic faith and our continuing hope for a good outcome."

Canon lawyer Michael Podhajsky failed to name himself as White's procurator in an appeal to the Vatican resulting in the dismissal of the appeal.

With the time to file a corrected appeal having expired, Podhajsky filed a petition to Knestout to revoke his suspension of White and restore him to his parishes.

White said he was hopeful Knestout might have a change or heart, but the bishop's refusing to agree to the request and even failing to respond allowed Podhajsky the opportunity to file a new appeal to the Vatican after 30 days.

That period has passed, so that petition has been sent to the Congregation for the Clergy in Rome.

White said a number of local parishioners appealed to Knestout directly to sit down, reason with them and discuss an amicable solution.

Judy Rogers was one of those parishioners who received a response from Knestout last week.

"Please let me assure you that the letters I have received from members of the parish community and others who support Father White, as well as my own correspondence to the parishioners, have been clear in sharing their thoughts and I understand their disappointment," Knestout wrote. "There is no need for further discussion as this matter has been concluded."

Meanwhile, White has embarked upon writing a book about his experience.

"It seems like the thing for me to do at this point," he said.

Bill Wyatt is a reporter for the Martinsville Bulletin. He can be reached at 276-638-8801, Ext. 236. Follow him @billdwyatt

Bands

From Page A1

performing on Friday nights and going to competitions every Saturday.

"In a non-COVID year, as soon as one season ends, you're bouncing ideas around and brainstorming for next year," Magna Vista band director Kevin Lewis said.

The Warriors' band already had purchased music for its 2020 competitive marching band show before schools were shut down in March because of the coronavirus pandemic. Auditions for leadership roles were held through Google form applications and Zoom interviews.

Since then, Henry County announced all extracurricular activities at the schools would be canceled this fall, leaving the marching bands at both high schools with a music-free semester.

Bassett High School band director Trey Harris said this fall will be the first time he hasn't done something with a marching band – either as a member of the band himself or as a director – since 1984.

"This fall is going to be extremely weird," Harris said. "To just all of a sudden not have it around at all is definitely going to be a very different process for me."

The Bengals' band, which has won nine straight state championships and last year attended the Bands of America Grand National Championships in Indianapolis, hadn't done any practicing before the shutdown but did have Zoom calls with the leadership team when schools were shut down this spring. Harris, at the time, said he was hopeful his group would be able to get meet again in July.

"We moved band camp hopefully back to two weeks in July, then we had to keep saying, 'OK, the first week is canceled, now the second week is canceled.' So it's been an ongoing process for all of us in the extracurricular world.

"For the longest time the joke with the band directors and coaches, when we got out in March, we said, 'Well in two weeks we'll know more.' And in two weeks, and we didn't know any more. … We've been saying, 'In two weeks we're going to know more,' since March, and we're now in Augustm and we don't know a whole lot more than we did in March. So it's frustrating. It's frustrating for the kids."

Music in the spring?

The Bengals are now on their fourth show possibility in hopes that they can do something when football is scheduled to be played this spring. The Virginia High School League announced earlier this month plans to hold a condensed fall sports season from February through April, tentatively about 60% of the normal schedule.

Harris said the Bengals had a show in place before the shutdown, but when it became apparent they would have less and less time to prepare, changes were made.

"We stated thinking about what happens if we have less time, so we actually kind of had three shows that we said, 'If we have enough time, we'll do this show. And if we lose some time, we'll do this show, and if we lose more time, we'll do this show.

"I'll be honest with you, we now are on show No. 4 because we think that we hopefully would like to do something if they have a spring football season. … So we probably will have to change gears again just because we definitely are in a different time frame."

A cool idea?

Not only would bands be in a much shorter time frame for preparing music this spring, but also a much colder state of mind. Lewis joked that he is not missing being in the Magna Vista parking lot holding band camp in 100-degree weather this summer, and he's looking forward to seeing what rehearsals in January or February could be like.

"I may have to get a snow plow for my golf cart," he said with a laugh.

In honesty, scheduling camps during Christmas break would be tough, both directors acknowledged. And with a shorter football schedule, and no competitions on the docket, it likely won't be worth it for bands to do full-fledged competitive shows like they would in a regular year.

There's also still the unknown of what the world according to COVID will look like when December rolls around.

'What I hate the most'

For now, Lewis is able to teach his regular band classes virtually, with Henry County Schools going all online classes for the time being. He's uploaded files for students to work on the Magna Vista fight song and given access to other standard songs to "kind of keeping them in the school spirit," he said.

Not being in school has made it tough, as well, to try to bring new students into the band, Lewis said. Whatever they can do to try to keep the music played, though, Harris and Lewis said they would try at least to provide as much hope to their band members as possible.

"Whenever the football team is playing, we plan on supporting them through the stands," Lewis said. "Whatever we're allowed to do, we'll jump right in there."

"The extracurricular stuff, not only band but football, basketball, baseball, all those sports, kids don't come to school just to be in those programs, but it is what makes them really enjoy coming to high school and being around their friends and learning competitive things and commitment, dedication and all those type of things," Harris said. "I will tell you from seeing kids on Zoom calls. … They are missing each other. They're missing being around each other. And that's what I hate the most."

Cara Cooper is the sports editor of the Martinsville Bulletin. You can reach her at (276)638-8801 ext. 241.

PHOTO SUBMITTED

Bassett High School's band in full regalia and with all the hardware it won at state.

WORLD SERIES: WILD-CARD WINNERS SQUARE OFF FOR TITLE » SPORTS

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Whitlow trial not moving

Judge denies change of venue requested by the Commonwealth in trial of Bassett man.

Whitlow Jr.

By Bill Wyatt
bill.wyatt@martinsvillebulletin.com

Henry County Circuit Court Judge David Williams denied a motion Monday to change venue for the trial involving a Bassett man because of pretrial publicity.

The Henry County Commonwealth Attorney's office had sought the change in the case against Charlie Wayne Whitlow Jr., of Bassett, who is charged with various felonies after he allegedly entered a former lover's home in 2018.

Williams said at Tuesday's hearing that he could see no reason why a fair and impartial jury could not be found in Henry County, but he said he would revisit the request if seating a jury proved impossible.

Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney Awbrey Watts argued that articles appearing in the Martinsville Bulletin relating to the case "made it seem like Whitlow was not guilty."

Roscoe Reynolds, Whitlow's attorney, argued the presumption of innocence of his client and that a change of venue is not a right of the

SEE **TRIAL** | A6

Father White's story: From blog to book

BILL WYATT/MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

Father Mark White speaks to group about his new book.

Father Mark White's book addresses the story of a fallen Cardinal, his perceptions of corruption at the Vatican and even connections with the Mafia.

By Bill Wyatt
bill.wyatt@martinsvillebulletin.com

The next chapter of Father Mark White's story has been written, quite literally, by White himself.

White, who was ousted as priest of St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Martinsville and St. Francis of Assisi in Rocky Mount because of a dispute with his bishop, spoke to a group of approximately 40 socially distanced attendees Sunday afternoon at the Grand Fiesta Venue in Ridgeway about a book that he says should be finished in the next two weeks.

"I've missed you," White said. "This is a difficult time — to contend with this virus and this blow to our faith at the same time is a great challenge."

White referred to the news last week of the Catholic Diocese of Richmond's agreeing to pay $6.3

SEE **WHITE** | A5

BILL WYATT/MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

Father Mark White talks about his new book.

BILL WYATT/MARTINSVILLE BULLETIN

Pumpkins-a-plenty at the Pumpkin Patch in Martinsville.

It will be 'Halloween as usual' in Martinsville

Mayor Kathy Lawson proclaims trick-or-treating will go on even though CDC protocols and mask ordinance bring up safety issues.

By Bill Wyatt
bill.wyatt@martinsvillebulletin.com

The CDC is specifically warning the public to avoid traditional trick-or-treating where treats are handed to children who go door to door this year in order to help prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19.

But Martinsville Mayor Kathy Lawson announced during Tuesday's City Council meeting that it was "Halloween as usual" in the city of Martinsville.

We are "asking the residential folks to make sure they are wearing masks when 'treating' their visitors, and using precautions about distance," Lawson said. "The city plans to post the CDC and the Virginia Department of Health's guidelines on the [city's] website."

Halloween this year falls on a Saturday during the same weekend NASCAR is racing at Martinsville Speedway and the night before you turn your clock back an hour for the end of Daylight Saving Time.

Those guidelines say Halloween "will likely need to be different this fall to prevent the spread of the virus that causes COVID-19," and "many traditional Halloween activities can be high-risk for spreading viruses."

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WEATHER

76 HIGH | 53 LOW

Mostly sunny and warmer. Clear and mild tonight.

For detailed weather information, **see Page A2**

Original Buscuitville in Danville closes.

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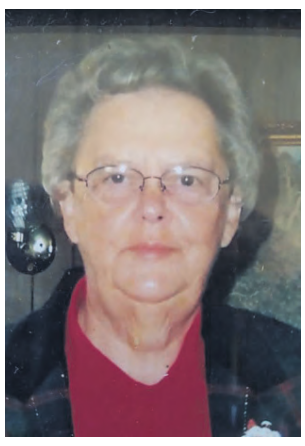
Lavell Reynolds Custer

November 22, 1934 - October 17, 2020



Lavell Reynolds Custer, 85, of Fieldale, died on Saturday, October 17, 2020, at her home. She was born in Patrick County on November 22, 1934 to the late Ezra D. Reynolds and the late Mae Adams Reynolds. She was also preceded in death by her husband, Sanford M. Custer; son, Charles D. Custer and two sisters, Evelane Clark and Gano Wray.

She joined the Church of God of Prophecy in Patrick Springs on September 1, 1968 where she remained a member.

She is survived by her daughter, Carol Sue Jenkins (John A.); several stepgrandchildren; stepgreat-grandchildren; nieces and nephews.

The family would like to acknowledge all the love, kindness and assistance that Josh Mitchell and Vicky Henderson gave to Lavell. Also, a special thank you to the Morris family, the Stowe family and Tom and Debbie Warren for all their support during the Lavell's illness.

The family will receive friends on Wednesday, October 21, 2020 from 1 until 2 p.m. in the Bassett Funeral Service Chapel where the funeral will be held at 2 p.m. with Pastor Tom Warren officiating. Burial will follow in the Custer Family Cemetery.

Due to the governor's requirements for Covid-19, a face covering is required and social distancing is to be observed.

Online condolences may be made by visiting www.bassettfuneralservice.com. Bassett Funeral Service in Bassett is serving the Custer family.

BASSETT FUNERAL SERVICE "Locally Owned And Operated"

James Cecil Hall

James Cecil Hall, 89, of Stuart, Va. died on Sunday, October 18, 2020 at Woltz Hospice Home in Dobson, N.C. Norris Funeral Services in Stuart is serving the Hall family. Online condolences may be made at www.norrisfuneral.com.

Laurel Park staff member tests positive

School will remain open, superintendent says, and those who interacted with individual have been notified and are quarantining.

Staff report

Henry County Public Schools is alerting families of students at Laurel Park Middle School that a staff member at the school has tested positive for COVID-19 and has been on school grounds.

As was the case last week with Carver Elementary, parents received a letter from Superintendent Sandy Strayer informing them of the case and explaining that the school would remain open and the campus would deep cleaned.

The staff member, whose position or role was not identified, was on the LPMS campus between Friday and Monday and had "direct exposure with other members of our community," Strayer wrote.

She said in her letter that the HCPS found out about the positive test on Monday and that those individuals with direct exposure were notified as soon as we knew of a possible exposure. They are quarantining.

The area(s) where the staff member visited were being deep cleaned and sanitized on Monday night, Strayer wrote.

HCPS resumed hybrid classroom learning on Oct. 12, with Meadow View Elementary delaying its opening by two weeks because of cases of COVID-19 among staff. There had been a smattering of cases across the district during virtual learning.

As of Monday, Henry County had recorded 1,248 cases and 31 deaths because of COVID-19, the most of any jurisdiction in the West Piedmont Health District.

Strayer said staff members would be "working closely with the Virginia Department of Health to identify anyone else who had close contact with the person to determine whether they may have been exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19."

Those who were known to be exposed have been informed, she wrote.

"If you or your child are identified as having been potentially exposed, the Virginia Department of Health will contact you to ask that you please stay home and monitor for symptoms of cough, shortness of breath or a temperature higher than 100.4°F, and practice social distancing for 14 days from your last contact," she wrote.

If you are not contacted by the health department or informed by the school, you do not need to stay home or exclude yourself from activities.

Her letter asked parents to monitor their child's health and the health of family members. She said children with COVID-19 generally have mild, cold-like symptoms, such as fever, runny nose and cough. Vomiting and diarrhea have also been reported in some children.

Based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, anyone showing symptoms should contact their doctors, who in consultation with public health officials, would determine appropriate care.

HCPS requests that any positive test for the virus be reported confidentially to the appropriate school.

Sheriff's Office adds 2 new K-9s

The Henry County Sheriff's Office has added two new K-9s to its force. Deputy Corey Waddell and his K-9, Raja, and Deputy Tyler Marinus with his, K-9 Buford, all graduated from K-9 school on Friday. Shelly Gutierrez, a K-9 consultant for law enforcement and master instructor from Lexington, N.C., trained the dogs for duty. Deputy Corey Waddell (from left), K-9 Raja, Shelly Gutierrez, Deputy Tyler Marinus and K-9 Buford.

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White

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million to 51 people who as children were sexually abused by clergy members.

"One of the victims was on TV," White said. "She was grateful for the money, but she longed for justice, which she called 'the free exchange of information,' sharing of information by authorities — and that has not occurred to this day."

White was ousted from his parishes because of a protracted conflict with his superior, Bishop of Richmond Barry Knestout, about posts on his popular blog that were critical of the church hierarchy's handling of sexual abuse. Knestout told White to cease publishing the blog or lose his job. White stopped for a few months but resumed — after seeking permission without reply — during the pandemic.

White has blamed the church's hierarchy of keeping sexual abuse within the church hushed as "the fundamental source of scandal," and an "inexplicable reticence to share information."

PHOTO SUBMITTED

Cardinal Theodore McCarrick ordains Father Mark White in 2003.

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Attendees greet Father Mark White after he discusses his new book.

First chapter

White's book is titled "Ordained by a Predator," and the first chapter is "The Summer of 2018."

"The summer of '18 is when the story began," White said.

White told the audience that this is when he learned Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, the man who had ordained him in 2003, had been suspended for sexually abusing a minor.

"That was hard for me to take in," White said. "I started to see things from the victim's view and believe that the time for beginning a quest for justice and healing had come."

White said he had been blogging for several years, and the content was mostly homilies and maybe a comment about his favorite sports teams.

"I wrote an open letter to McCarrick," White said. "He had gone into hiding — to this day no one knows exactly where he is."

Without an address, White decided to publish the letter on his blog.

"That's when it [the blog] started getting attention," White said. "Then I wrote an open letter to the Pope, and that's what really got me in trouble."

Spotlight on the church

Knestout, White's superior, had shared an apartment with McCarrick and was his personal secretary in Washington D.C., when White was ordained by McCarrick.

It was just the year before, in 2002, that the Boston Globe had published results of an investigation that led to the criminal prosecutions of five Roman Catholic priests and put the problem of sexual abuse of minors by Catholic clergy in the national headlines. The paper won a Pulitzer Prize for the reporting, which was documented in the Academy Award-winning movie "Spotlight."

"It [the report] produced very intense anti-Catholic sentiment all over the country, and there was a lot of anger vented against the Catholic Church — anti-Catholic bigotry," White said.

In 2002, White said he had the same attitude as the church hierarchy, but in 2018 he realized that that was wrong.

"No one was looking at it from the victim's point of view, and the bureaucrats of the church have crookedly tried to protect their power," White said.

McCarrick incident

Chapter 2 is titled "What I Think Happened with McCarrick" and Chapter 3 is called "The Cronies vs. the Church We Believe In."

"This is where I get into the mafia," White said. "There is something crooked going on. There is no other real explanation."

White said he has had the privilege of discussing this at length with what he described as "a network of whistle-blowing priests" who have opened up to him.

"I am not alone," White said. "Same thing with nuns that have been suspended and marginalized. It has helped me to understand the whole thing better."

The second anniversary of an announcement by the Holy See regarding a comprehensive report on the misdeeds of McCarrick has come and gone, and yet the Vatican has not officially released it.

"The McCarrick report is about 300 pages long and has been circulating for months, but it doesn't even exist," White said. "Chapter 2 may be the closet thing to the McCarrick report that we're going to get."

The pope

Chapter 4 is titled "The Bishop Knestout Affair" and details White's recall of Bishop Knestout's demanding that White remove his blog from the internet. The two have argued about the blog — and White's right to add content to it — since November of last year.

Knestout sent an email to the parishioners of St. Francis and St. Joseph's, advising them that White had been removed in April.

"I lost my job, my home and my [church] family by one man who was mad at me and for no good reason," White said.

White hired a canon lawyer and appealed Knestout's actions to the Vatican, twice. The first appeal was denied because it failed to name White's attorney as the Procurator, and the second appeal was denied because the time allowed for filing an appeal had expired.

White did not mince words Sunday afternoon when speaking about the highest authority of the Catholic Church.

"Do I want to say the Vatican is crooked?" White asked. "Catholics love the Pope. That's what makes you Catholic, but that's where we are.

"We cannot trust the Pope.

"Corruption is a painful word, but that is the only word to use."

Final justice

The final chapter is called "Justice for Father Mark."

"Knestout has vast resources of the entire Richmond Diocese, and Father Mark only has us," St. Francis of Assisi parishioner Joe Kernan said. "If we do nothing, that's what will happen."

St. Francis of Assisi parishioner Judy Rogers said she wanted her church life back like it was.

"I miss him [White] so much," Rogers said. "I miss the life we had."

White said he intends to complete his book in about two weeks.

"Good Lord willing, this will be a book, and God will send a publisher," White said. "This book will have a lot of information — we need facts and evidence to build up the movement. We have to find a path where we hold faith and act out of love."

White began and ended his discussion with prayer.

"The truth has power," White said. "What will win the day is patience, kindness and doggedly seeking out the truth."

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