

Peak leaf color expected 3rd week of Oct.

REGION » B1

HISTORY WITH HAYES: Castlewood's Jim and John Huff head list of area kickers who made it to collegiate level

SPORTS » C1



ETSU upends The Citadel, moves to 6-0

SPORTS » C1

BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

SUNDAY, October 10, 2021 HeraldCourier.com 149th Year | \$3.00

Southwest Virginia-Northeast Tennessee | The Birthplace of Country Music® | 2010 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service | 2018 Scripps Howard Award for Community Journalism

Taliban won't work with US to contain IS

BY KATHY GANNON
Associated Press

ISLAMABAD — The Taliban on Saturday ruled out cooperation with the United States to contain extremist groups in Afghanistan, staking out an uncompromising position on a key issue ahead of the first direct talks between the former foes since America withdrew from the country in August.

Senior Taliban officials and U.S. representatives are meeting this weekend in Doha, the capital of Qatar. Officials from both sides have said issues include reining in extremist groups and the evacuation of foreign citizens and Afghans from the country. The Taliban have signaled flexibility on evacuations.

However, Taliban political spokesman Suhail Shaheen told The Associated Press there would be no cooperation with Washington on containing the increasingly active Islamic State group in Afghanistan. IS has taken responsibility for a number of recent attacks, including a suicide bombing Friday that killed 46 minority Shiite Muslims and wounded dozens as they prayed in a mosque in the northern city of Kunduz.

"We are able to tackle Daesh independently," Shaheen said, when asked whether the Taliban would work with the U.S. to contain the Islamic State affiliate. He used an Arabic acronym for IS.

See **TALIBAN**, Page A6

WASHINGTON COUNTY CONFEDERATE MEMORIAL

Monument on the move



The monument to Confederate Soldiers of Washington County, Virginia. The statue was placed on May 30, 1907.

Courthouse construction to force statue to be moved

BY JOE TENNIS
BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

ABINGDON, Va. — Since the days of the Great Depression, a Confederate soldier monument has stood outside the Washington County Courthouse in Abingdon.

The concrete marker was moved to the site in 1936 from a spot at the middle of Main Street.

And, now, it has to go — but not because of the controversy surrounding such Civil War monuments, which some feel symbolize slavery, racism or hatred and others believe are part of history.

"It has to be moved because of construction," said county Supervisor Randy Pennington, a longtime member of the Courthouse Committee that oversees ongoing courthouse construction.

The 152-year-old courthouse on Main Street in Abingdon is currently being renovated and expanded.

See **MONUMENT**, Page A4

Upcoming

» **What:** Public Hearing on the future of the Confederate soldier statue and other monument at the Washington County Courthouse

» **When:** Nov. 9, 6:30 p.m.

» **Where:** 1 Government Place, Abingdon

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

LOCATION	#CASES	#DEATHS
Worldwide	237,505,900+	4,846,500+
United States	44,313,700+	712,900+
Virginia	888,159	13,075
Tennessee	1,249,333	15,558

% FULLY VACCINATED IN VA.: 61%
% FULLY VACCINATED IN TENN.: 47.2%
SOURCES: Johns Hopkins, Virginia and Tennessee Departments of Health, AP

School boards emerge as hot races in Nov. election

BY JULIE CARR SMYTH
and PATTY NIEBERG
Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — In a school district near the Ohio state capital, school board members up for reelection this year have been subjected to a steady stream of lawsuits and attacks, both in-person and online. In another, an incumbent up for reelection who supports student mask requirements received a letter from someone angered by her stance who warned: "We are coming after you."

A 15-year veteran board member in yet another Ohio district decided against running for reelection because of the escalating public attacks.

It's not just in Ohio. Across the U.S., local school board races have emerged as an intense political battleground in the Nov. 2 elections, with much at stake for students.

Parental protests over COVID-19-related mask mandates, gender-neutral bathrooms, and teachings about racial history,

sexuality and social-emotional learning are being leveraged into full-fledged board takeover campaigns that will get their first widespread test in just a few weeks.

"What's happening in 2021 is a prelude to some of the messaging, some of the issues we'll see going into the midterm elections," said Scott DiMauro, president of the Ohio Education Association, the state's largest teachers union.

Local school board elections typically have been relatively

quiet affairs where incumbents sail to reelection, often unopposed. This year, candidate training academies organized by national conservative groups and state-level recruitment efforts are encouraging challenges by right-leaning political newcomers. The results could have consequences for public education and coronavirus safety measures across the country.

The thousands of local school

See **SCHOOL**, Page A7

Thank you, **Kyle Oaks**, for subscribing to the Bristol Herald Courier.

76/54
Weather » A12

7 65161 10012 8

INSIDE: CLASSIFIED E1-8 | COMICS INSERT | DEATHS B2, B4 | OPINION A10 | SCOREBOARD C2 | TELEVISION INSERT

We help you hear what you've been missing.

Watauga Hearing In Affiliation With **EAR, NOSE & THROAT ASSOCIATES**

423-928-1901 423-929-9101
2340 Knob Creek Rd. • Johnson City, TN

Monument

From Page A1

What happens next with the soldier statue — and a monument honoring Confederate veterans that also stands on the courthouse lawn — will be the subject of an upcoming public hearing on Nov. 9 at 6:30 p.m. at the government center building during that night's meeting of the county Board of Supervisors.

The public hearing is necessary because state law now requires public input before such statues are moved, said County Administrator Jason Berry. "For Washington County, we're undertaking the new construction and renovations up at the courthouse," said county Attorney Lucy Phillips. "And our engineering firm has already advised that the two statues up there need to be removed for construction to proceed."

Likely, the statues can't be returned to the courthouse grounds once the construction is complete, Phillips said.

"I don't think there's going to be any room for the statue," she said. "They're trying to utilize every square footage, every inch that they can," Phillips said of the property. "They're trying to get as much use as they can and as much space as they can for the courthouse."

History

In recent years, Civil War monuments have been under attack across Virginia — in cities and towns like Richmond, Farmville, Charlottesville and Portsmouth.

Protesters say such markers should be removed from public squares and places like courthouses because they symbolize racism and hatred. Opponents argue that these markers should stand because they are part of this country's history.

On Aug. 12, 2017, the controversy boiled over in Charlottesville, where a white supremacist rally resulted in the death of one woman and the injury of 19 other counterprotesters.

Four years later, on July 10, statues of Confederate generals Robert E. Lee and Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson were removed in Charlottesville and have since been put in storage.

And in September, a prominent 21-foot statue of Lee was removed in Richmond, the former capital of the Confederacy.

Moving a monument

In 2020, state law regarding how war memorials can be moved, removed or contextualized changed.

For weeks, Phillips said she has consulted with other localities, including Richmond, Loudon County and Williamsburg, that have dealt with the new law.

"I was just looking to find out what people have had elsewhere," she said. "There's a state law that the county has to consider on whether to remove the statues."

Abingdon's Confederate soldier statue depicts a soldier holding a rifle. It was commissioned in 1906, unveiled in May 1907 and dedicated in June 1908 at the intersection of Court Street and Main Street, according to the Historical Society of Washington County.

Members of the United Daughters of the Confederacy helped donate the statue when it was placed at the center of Main Street.



The monument to Confederate Soldiers of Washington County will move due to construction work at the courthouse.

DAVID CRIGGER/BRISTOL HERALD COURIER



ABOVE: The Parson Cummings Cabin at Sinking Spring Cemetery in Abingdon. Suggestions on where to move the monuments include Sinking Spring Cemetery or the Veterans Memorial Park (below) — both owned by the town of Abingdon.

DAVID CRIGGER/BRISTOL HERALD COURIER



Part of the Confederate Soldiers of Washington County statue.

DAVID CRIGGER/BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

"The soldier's gun is pointed to the North to ward off the Yankees," said Washington County Treasurer Fred Parker. The soldier statue was moved to the courthouse lawn on May 14, 1936, because people kept hitting it with their cars, according to the historical society's files.

The other, much lesser known monument lists the names of five Civil War generals with ties to Washington County.

Monuments that have been removed from public places in Fairfax County

and Richmond have had groups willing to take them, Phillips said.

The attorney said the new state law requires that localities try to find a good location for monuments when they are moved.

"We'll do some outreach and, hopefully, something will pop up and say, 'We'd like to have the statues,'" Phillip said. "Hopefully, we'll get more than one offer."

Possibly, though, the monuments could be moved out of the county, she added.

Manager Jimmy Morani.

Additionally, Morani said he has not been involved in any discussion about moving the monuments.

"You don't deed statues, to my knowledge," said Parker. "But I think a statue on a piece of property — like that — may be considered a fixture or an improvement on a property."

County officials have claimed ownership since the monuments sit on county-owned grounds.

"Nobody has called us to welcome the statue at any location at this point," Berry said. "Nobody's called asking for the statue."

When the board decides to move the monuments, the county has to offer the pieces to museums, historical societies or military battlefields, according to the new state law, Phillips said.

Following the public hearing, a 30-day period is required before any action takes place, Phillips said.

Opinions of the statue

At this point, members of the Historical Society

of Washington County have not voiced a public opinion on the future of the monuments, said the society's president, Walter Jenny.

"It is obviously a controversial subject," Jenny said. "We have not addressed it at all."

There have been no public demonstrations against the presence of the Confederate monuments, according to Phillips.

However, 22 people spoke about the soldier monument — with 10 against the monument and 12 against moving it — at a Board of Supervisors meeting on July 14, 2020.

On that night, a presentation on the soldier statue was delivered by Heather Evans, a faculty member at the University of Virginia's College at Wise.

One of the speakers was Eric McReynolds, a county resident who has since addressed the board again.

McReynolds, 53, represents a group called American History Preservation, and he has tried to encourage the board to move both monuments to the Veterans Memorial Park — "or to the government building. Either way," said McReynolds, a barber in Abingdon. "Most citizens want the statues preserved where they're accessible to the public and to the next generation."

Berry said public comments are important.

"The board felt it was important to have both sides have their say — those who wanted to keep it and those who wanted to move it," Berry said.

Still, the board took no action.

But action must come in early December, following a second public hearing.

"We don't know where the board wants to move it," Berry said. "If there's not a home for it, we may have to board it up and put it somewhere on our property. It's going to move, even if it's a temporary move — for construction."

jtennis@bristolnews.com
@BHC_Tennis

HIT THE road with a USFCU auto loan

United Southeast Federal Credit Union

NCUA MEMBER LENDER



Rates as low as 1.89% APR*



No payments for up to 90 days



Discounted rate for bundling**

*APR-Annual Percentage Rate. Some restrictions may apply. Rates are subject to change without notice and loans are subject to approval. Offer applies to new loans only - current auto loans with USFCU are not eligible for promotional rate. Other rates and terms available. Payment per \$1,000 is \$28.59 based on 36 months at 1.89% APR for a 2021 model or newer.

**Open a checking account with direct deposit and save .25% on your auto loan APR. Contact USFCU for complete details.

MYSTERY MAN

Marion woman seeks help in search for father **REGION » B1**



BEARCAT VICTORY

Va. High takes 19-12 season-opener over Grundy **SPORTS » C1**

BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

SUNDAY, February 28, 2021

HeraldCourier.com

149th Year | \$3.00

Southwest Virginia-Northeast Tennessee | The Birthplace of Country Music® | 2010 Pulitzer Prize for Public Service | 2018 Scripps Howard Award for Community Journalism

Virginia leaders vote to legalize marijuana in 2024

BY DENISE LAVOIE and SARAH RANKIN
Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. — Virginia lawmakers gave final approval Saturday to a bill that will legalize marijuana for adult recreational use, but not until 2024, when retail sales of the drug would also begin.

INSIDE
» Virginia lawmakers wind down this year's session. **A5**

With a compromise bill clearing the House and Senate, Virginia becomes the first Southern state to vote to legalize marijuana, joining 15 other states and the District of Columbia. The legislation now goes to Democratic Gov. Ralph Northam, who supports legalization.

The bill was a top priority for Democrats, who framed legalization as a necessary step to end the disparate treatment of people of color under current marijuana laws. But talks between Democrats in the House and Senate grew tense in recent days, and a compromise version of the massive bill did not emerge publicly until late Saturday afternoon.

"It's been a lot of work to get here, but I would say that we're on the path to an equitable law allowing responsible adults to use cannabis," said Sen. Adam Ebbin, the chief sponsor of the

See **MARIJUANA**, Page A5

WASHINGTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE



DAVID CRIGGER/BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

The Washington County Courthouse will be renovated, but county officials need permission to tear down the Elliott Building (far left) for a new structure.

ACTION NEEDED

Renovation/expansion at critical juncture for historic courthouse

BY JOE TENNIS
BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

ABINGDON, Va. — It's finally getting to be crunch time on Courthouse Hill in Abingdon.

More than 15 months ago, voters decided to keep the Washington County Courthouse where a courthouse has stood since the 1700s — on Main Street at the center of Abingdon — rather than move operations to a former Kmart building in a strip shopping center just off Interstate 81.

See **COURTHOUSE**, Page A4

BY THE NUMBERS

- \$19 million:** Cost estimate for courthouse renovation
- \$545,000:** Cost of new offices for commonwealth's attorney
- 82,733:** Square feet needed for courthouse, according to state Supreme Court standards
- 49,482:** Current amount of courthouse space
- 8,512:** Square footage of the Elliott Building, planned for demolition
- 6,391:** Square footage of newly acquired space for commonwealth's attorney office
- 66:** Current parking spaces at Washington County Courthouse

DAVID CRIGGER/BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

FOLLOW THE PROJECT: On Friday, the Washington County Board of Supervisors launched a courthouse renovation webpage where local residents can keep up with the project. It can be accessed on the homepage of the county's website at www.washcovva.com.



ONLINE

See video on the courthouse expansion at **HeraldCourier.com**. Also, find a collection from the attempt to move the courthouse.

INSIDE



Archaeologists find intact ceremonial chariot **» A10**

Thank you, **William Pickels**, for subscribing to the Bristol Herald Courier.

Weather **» A10**



COVID-19 PANDEMIC

LOCATION	#CASES	#DEATHS
Worldwide	113,745,000+	2,524,100+
United States	28,553,600+	511,900+
Virginia	574,314	8,382
Tennessee	773,887	11,393

#VACCINATED IN VIRGINIA: 1,239,435
#VACCINATED IN TENNESSEE: 1,347,871

SOURCES: Johns Hopkins, Virginia and Tennessee Departments of Health, AP

Hc Stay up to date with local and national coronavirus coverage

Resource center
heraldcourier.com/resources
» Find information on vaccinations and testing in your area.

Email
heraldcourier.com/newsletters
» Sign up to receive daily pandemic roundups.

Updates
heraldcourier.com/coronavirus
» Read the latest news about COVID-19 in your community.

FDA clears J&J's 1-dose shot

Move gives US 3rd vaccine

BY LAURAN NEERGAARD and MATTHEW PERRONE
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. is getting a third vaccine to prevent COVID-19, as the Food and Drug Administration on Saturday cleared a Johnson & Johnson shot that works with just one dose instead of two.

Health experts are anxiously awaiting a one-and-done option to help speed vaccinations, as they race against a virus that already has killed more than 510,000 people in the U.S.

and is mutating in increasingly worrisome ways.

The FDA said J&J's vaccine offers strong protection against what matters most: serious illness, hospitalizations and death. One dose was 85% protective against the most severe COVID-19 illness, in a massive study that spanned three continents — protection that remained strong even in countries such as South Africa, where the variants of most concern are spreading.

See **VACCINE**, Page A5

INSIDE: CLASSIFIED E1-8 | COMICS INSERT | DEATHS B2-5 | OPINION A8 | SCOREBOARD C2 | TELEVISION B6

We help you hear what you've been missing.

Watauga Hearing & ENT ASSOCIATES
www.WataugaHearing.com

423-928-1901 | 423-929-9101
2340 Knob Creek Rd. • Johnson City, TN

Courthouse

From Page A1

Yet there's been no construction or visible progress on Courthouse Hill as the Washington County Courthouse remains in "terrible, terrible shape," as Washington County Board of Supervisors Vice Chairman Randy Pennington puts it.

Action is needed, Pennington said.

"We've looked at everything known to man," he said. "We ran out of space, basically. We had to go from remodeling the courthouse to go and find more room."



Berry

The state Supreme Court guidelines say the courthouse needs to be more than 82,000 square feet — significantly more than the current space of about 55,000 square feet, according to County Administrator Jason Berry.

"The court basically has told us that this is what we have to do," Pennington said. "We're listening to the court and we're trying to come up with what best suits that court."

The Courthouse Committee is currently weighing options from two firms — BurWil Construction and J.A. Street — to determine which has the best plan and price to suit the needs of the courthouse for the coming decades, Berry said.

The courthouse has security issues, especially at entrances, according to Berry.

Also, multiple floors are "not in sync with other floors," said Berry. "It has accessibility issues. The plan is to align all the floors and renovate the courthouse, but also building new square footage on what we call the Elliott Building."

Elliott Building

What's at stake is what the walls will look like on Main Street at the present site of what's called the Elliott Building, which stands on the south side of the courthouse structure.

"It's a very promising project," said Betsy White, vice chairwoman of the Abingdon's Historic Preservation Review Board.

The Washington County Board of Supervisors has hired Taff and Frye Co. to tear down the two-story structure as soon as county officials receive a certificate of appropriateness from the review board.

What will rise in its place is not yet known.

"I don't think we can go as much as four stories," Pennington said. "What we're looking at is three stories basically. And I think that will gain what we have to have for the amount of space we need for the courthouse."

Owned by the county since the mid-1900s, the Elliott Building is a structure for offices and is connected to the main courthouse building. It was originally a store on Main Street and was, in more recent years, used for the Washington County Chamber of Commerce and the commonwealth's attorney.

Taking down the circa-1949 building is not exactly drawing tears from anybody. Both historians and county officials say the structure does not fit the historic look of the town.

"It's removing an inappropriate, new construction in the historic district," White said.

Still, county officials have not yet gained permission from the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) to rip down the building — namely because they have not yet presented illustrations of what's to take the building's place.

County officials are slated to return to the board March 3, first seeking permission to tear down the building and then approval for the construction, said Board of Supervisors Chairman Dwayne Ball.

No to Kmart building

County officials launched a campaign to convince voters to approve moving the courthouse to the former Kmart building, but in a November 2019 referendum, voters turned down the proposal by a 2-to-1 margin, with 12,080 voting against the



DAVID CRIGGER/BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

Owned by the county since the mid-1900s, the Elliott Building (left) is a structure for offices and is connected to the main courthouse building.



ARTIST'S RENDERING

This is a JA Street artist's rendering of the Washington County Courthouse after renovations and expansion.

What They're Saying

What town and county officials are saying about the plan to renovate and expand the Washington County Courthouse:

"It is going to be a nice project. It has the potential to be extremely good for both the county and the town."

— **Betsy White, vice chairwoman, Abingdon's Historic Preservation Review Board**

"2020 was a lost year. But we got active again. And I think maybe we're moving in the right direction."

— **Randy Pennington, vice chairman, Washington County Board of Supervisors and member of the Courthouse Committee**

"The work at hand to do is to get everybody on the same page about timelines and expenditure resources."

— **Mike Rush, Washington County supervisor**

"The county and the town have good working rela-

tions and they're providing us information necessary to properly review the project."

— **Jimmy Morani, Abingdon town manager**

"We're terribly excited about having the historic courthouse to be expanded and used. It's one of the most significant, if not the most significant, buildings in the historic district. And making sure that it's done correctly is extremely important."

— **Byrum Geisler, chairman of Abingdon's Historic Preservation Review Board and member of the Courthouse Committee**

"I would like to see something that would blend in with the downtown."

— **Dwayne Ball, chairman of the county Board of Supervisors**

"We're committed to building something in downtown Abingdon that would be aesthetically pleasing to the downtown historic district and something that the town and county would be proud of."

— **Jason Berry, Washington County administrator**



DAVID CRIGGER/BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

There is only one public entrance to the Washington County Courthouse.

move and 5,271 voting in favor.

Today, Ball still thinks that might have been a good solution.

"For me, the deal of the courthouse being moved to Kmart was we could have gone in there and had plenty of extra space for growth and plenty of parking," Ball said.

Today, too, that Kmart building remains for sale and is awaiting adaptive reuse, said Stephen Spangler, vice president of real estate and site development for K-VA-T Food Stores.

Two attorneys — Byrum Geisler and Emmitt Yearly — stood at the forefront of the 2019 courthouse controversy, each making arguments against the move.

Long after voters made a decision, both attorneys are still in the thick of the courthouse story.

Geisler, 57, is a member of the county's Courthouse Committee, representing the Washington County Bar Association. He is also the chairman of the HPRB, now charged with approving the final plans for what's to be built on Courthouse Hill.

The HPRB turned down the county's request to demolish the Elliott Building at a meeting in February.

"Our guidelines say that before we allow you to demolish a building, we need to see what's going back there," Geisler explained.

"We couldn't initially approve demolition, but we asked to see preliminary plans as to what's going to be built there," he added.

"We don't feel like the Elliott Building is a contributing structure in the historic district so we don't have a concern about it being demolished," Geisler said. "But our concern is what is going back in its place is going to be done correctly and is consistent with the Department of Interior's guidelines for adding a building to a historic building."

The town's Old and Historic District is a series of streets and blocks at the center of Abingdon. The HPRB governs projects, updates and renovations to historic structures. Making changes or demolishing structures requires a certificate of appropriateness.

Yearly, 79, owns a home next door to the Elliott Building at East Main Street. He's concerned, at present, with what could happen when the Elliott Building comes tumbling down.

That's why Yearly persuaded the county to spend more than \$2,600

on an upcoming engineering study of demolition plans.

"I think the structures beside any structure that's being demolished, the person should be concerned about what it might do to the adjoining structures," Yearly said.

"I suggested before they did that to get someone in there with wrecking balls and cranes and bulldozers and study from a structural engineer. Find out what would be the best method of demolishing without damaging the adjoining structures. In this case, it would be the house I own as well as the courthouse."

Too little space

Soon after the 2019 vote, county officials alleviated some space problems by moving the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office to a former health department building on nearby Valley Street.

"That was kind of like our first move, really, post-referendum," Berry said. "That was our first move to free up space."

For \$545,000, the county bought that building, which totals 6,391 square feet and has 18 parking spaces, according to Berry.

Ball said, "The health department building was in fairly good condition — as far as security and office space."

Moving these offices helped with space problems inside the courthouse, Berry said.

"We can renovate that space that's vacant right now," he said. "It allows some swing space in the existing building."

Now, according to Berry, the courthouse has 66 parking spaces — not counting the 18 at the Commonwealth's Attorney's Office.

Yet it will likely lose another 12 spaces when the Elliott Building is demolished and a new structure is built on the site as well as the parking area behind the building on Plumb Alley, Berry said.

"My main concern, at the end of the day, is parking," Pennington said. "No matter what we do there, we're still going to have a parking problem."

Getting along

Berry pledges to work with town officials on parking issues and reconstruction of the courthouse.

Such sentiment was also shared by members of the Board of Supervisors at the Feb. 23 meeting, when several members said they wanted the process to be "transparent" to the public and town officials.

For weeks in 2019, tensions ran high in Abingdon between town and county officials as county leaders campaigned for the courthouse to move to Kmart while the Abingdon Town Council voted against the move, saying the courthouse must remain in the town's Old and Historic District.

The election caused a rift — for a while.

"It happened. We've moved on," said Abingdon Town Manager Jimmy Morani. "I think both sides have moved on and we're just going to try to work with the county and make it a successful project."

Abingdon Mayor Derek Webb promised progress between town and county officials.

"Dwayne Ball has been very proactive in calling me," Webb said. "We have a

very good relationship working together. And we've got a lot of mutual respect for one another. And I don't see any kind of negativity at all."

In 2020, after Webb made an in-person financial request, the Washington County Board of Supervisors made a move toward easing any lingering tensions by offering what Supervisor Mike Rush noted was an olive branch — a \$100,000 contribution to the town for its construction of the long-awaited Abingdon Sports Complex.

"I think it was kind of a goodwill gesture," Webb said.

In turn, Rush said, "I was interested in having the goodwill between the two groups. We cannot forget the towns are in the county. They're not adversaries. They're our partners."

Construction future

Working together on the project has been a vow by both town and county officials.

Still, progress has been slower than Ball would have liked.

"COVID killed us," Ball said. "We've only had like three or four Courthouse Committee meetings last year. That kind of hurt it, too."

In recent months, a consulting firm called Skanska has been hired to oversee the project while county officials weigh bond options to obtain as much as \$19 million for the project, Berry said.

With final plans still to be decided, it could be as long as two years — or more — until the courthouse project is completed, Berry estimated.

Pennington said county officials want to make the courthouse "the best piece of property we possibly can. It will be a brick structure. And that facade itself, I think, everyone will be real happy."



Webb

Elizabethton man arrested following pursuit

BRISTOL HERALD COURIER
An Elizabethton, Tennessee, man faces multiple charges following a Friday night pursuit in Sullivan County.

Robert Jacob Ray, 29, was also charged with driving under the influence, open container law, driving while license is suspended or revoked, financial respon-

sibility law, improper display of registration, aggravated assault, reckless endangerment, unlawful carrying or possession of a weapon, drug paraphernalia, evading arrest and resisting stop, arrest.

He was also wanted on a warrant charging him with attempted first degree murder, aggravated

assault and possession of drug paraphernalia.

Authorities said the Carter County Sheriff's Office pursued the vehicle which had struck one of their own cruisers, according to a news release. Deputies from Sullivan County pursued the vehicle on state Route 394 until it ended at the BP gas station in

Blountville.

Deputies forcefully stopped the vehicle in the parking lot before endangering any residents, the release states.

As Ray was removed from his vehicle, deputies said a handgun and holster fell onto the ground. He's being held at the Sullivan County Jail on \$20,000 bail.

Facing physical pain

Neuropathy in my right foot (two toes are permanently numb), large bunions on both big toes, arthritis in



Ben Talley

Education Beat

right ankle, gout damage in right foot, bad ligaments in left knee, degenerative disc disease, torn rotator cuff in left shoulder, cyst on neck vertebrae causing pinched nerves and fairly constant pain.

Yes, I realize that many of my friends have more serious health problems than me. Nagging and constant pains have I aplenty, but none will kill me. I've got friends who are blind, wheelchair bound and/or suffering from deadly diseases. What all I've listed above I count as "little" things. I've been blessed.

My heart and lungs and arms and legs are all in good shape (if my feet hang in there). I'm very blessed to be able to hike in the nearby woods every day. And the good Lord willin' and the creek don't rise, I will hike 'til I can hike no more.

Children handle pain in as many different ways as there are children under the sun. Each child has his or her own unique universe of physical pain response and tolerance (as do we adults, of course).

Johnny ran up to me on the playground — smiling, as Johnny always did. "I think I may have broke my arm yesterday playin' at the apartment," he told me, just as calmly as if he were to tell me that two plus two equals four.

"I didn't want to tell anybody. But I couldn't sleep much last night, and then I couldn't hardly hold a pencil this mornin'. That's why my hand writin' was so bad on the paper I handed in. So I thought maybe I should tell you about it right now." Johnny never cried. He never even winced. Only smiled.

A short time later Johnny was in the Bristol ER where it was confirmed that he had suffered a compound fracture of his right arm.

Megan was an ex-student of mine dying from leukemia. When I visited this little girl in her hospital room in another city far away, she was so filled with joy I thought she'd burst up from her bed and through the ceiling. "Being bald is not so bad, is it, Mr. T.?" She smiled at me as she pulled off her wig when I took off my hat. "Dying is not so bad, either. A lot of people never even got to live. And I did."

Bridget called me one summer. "I'm blind, Mr. T.," were her first words. Since Bridget liked to joke, I replied, "Then open your eyes." "No, Mr. T., I am really blind." I won't go into the how's and why's of her blindness here. But I will tell you that she is one of the most courageous souls I've ever known (and I've known a lot). When she became an adult, I invited Bridget to my class every year to speak to my students about how to live well and joyfully with a disability.

Julie had a tiny papercut on her finger. It didn't even break the skin. But the way she hollered and yodeled and carried on, you'd have thought someone had just cut her finger completely off with a machete. "I want to go home!"

HIRAM DOOLEY HOUSE (FRALEY HOUSE)



JOE TENNIS/BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

The Hiram Dooley House (Fraley House) in Abingdon, built in 1849, is slated for demolition. Sinking Spring Presbyterian Church can be seen at the right.

This old house

Historic Abingdon home on Pecan Street slated for demolition, but historians appeal for preservation

BY JOE TENNIS
BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

ABINGDON, Va. — Leaders of the Historical Society of Washington County are urging a prominent church in Abingdon to reconsider tearing down a historic house on Pecan Street.

Sinking Spring Presbyterian Church officials recently obtained a town permit to destroy the 172-year-old Fraley House, also known as the Hiram Dooley House, at 123 Pecan St.

The church wants to build a picnic pavilion at the site.

Church officials obtained a demolition permit Jan. 13, said Jason Boswell, the town's director of community development.

But historians like Walter Jenny, president of the Abingdon-based Historical Society of Washington County, want to put the brakes on the wrecking ball.

"I think we prefer that it remains where it is because it has been there longer than Sinking Spring Presbyterian Church has been at the corner of Main Street and Pecan Street," he said.

Picnic pavilion

A woman answering the church telephone Tuesday said the church is no longer taking phone calls about the house, but did she say the structure "is coming down."

Kevin Campbell, the church's interim minister, returned a phone call to the Bristol Herald Courier on Tuesday and said he was "surprised" by the community's reaction to the house's planned demolition.

Campbell refused to answer any questions

Hiram Dooley House (Fraley House)

Built in 1849, originally named for furniture-maker Hiram Dooley

Want more?

» **Sinking Spring Presbyterian Church:** 136 E. Main St., Abingdon, Virginia
www.sinkingspring.org, 276-628-3361

about the house but said the church would issue a statement on its website.

Jim Bunn and Dany Wilson were identified as co-chairs of the church's stewardship team when addressing members of Sinking Spring Presbyterian Church in a letter dated Dec. 7.

"The Fraley House has fallen into disrepair and is being used only as a storage building. The church is paying insurance, utilities, and other expenses on a piece of property that is no longer an asset but a liability," the letter states.

That same letter notes that an anonymous donor has committed to funding the complete removal of the Fraley House and the construction of a picnic pavilion on the property.

This house was built in 1849 by furniture-maker Hiram Dooley and acquired in 1856 by Dr. Edward McDonald Campbell, who became a surgeon for the Confederacy during the Civil War, Jenny said.

In 2007, the church obtained the home from the estate of the late Irene Fraley, according to Jenny.

Saving History

Longtime Abingdon historian Rick Humphreys, 66, a former member of the Abingdon Town Council, mentioned the home's destruction on Facebook on Jan. 11 — two days before the church obtained the demolition permit.

Humphreys counts the home among the top 30 oldest structures in Abingdon — and one of less than 45 that survived the Civil War, which included the burning of the nearby Washington County Courthouse in 1864.

Dooley, according to Humphreys, built the home about a half-block off Main Street in 1849 — two years before Sinking Spring Presbyterian Church was built and seven years before the nearby railroad arrived in 1856.



JOE TENNIS/BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

Sinking Spring Presbyterian Church officials recently obtained a town permit to destroy the 172-year-old Fraley House, also known as the Hiram Dooley House, at 123 Pecan St.

"This is a house that needs to be preserved and loved," Humphreys said.

"It is my hope that the church will reconsider tearing down the house and look at other options," Humphreys said. "Besides an obligation to church members, I hope they will feel the obligation to the community as a whole and the historic district as a part to save this important house."

Civil matter

The house is not part of the town's Old and Historic District. It is also not part of the Historic Overlay District, which covers arterial roads leading to the heart of Abingdon, Boswell said.

"There's no protection from the government side of things. It's just like any other single-family dwelling in any of our residential neighborhoods," Boswell said. The church now has until July 12 to act on the demolition permit, Boswell added. "It's an unfortunate situation," Boswell said. "Obviously, the town would like to keep the structure standing. But we can't get involved in a civil matter/private property issue. ... We can't legally step in and we won't."

Society resolution

On Tuesday, the board of directors of the historical society issued a resolution asking

Obituaries

From Page B2

Amy Kathryn Vance

August 2, 1956 - January 18, 2021



Amy Kathryn Vance, 64, of Bluff City, Tenn., passed away suddenly on Monday, January 18, 2021, at Bristol Regional Medical Center. She was born on August 2, 1956, to the late Daphne Marshall Vance Lowry and JC Vance Jr. Along with her parents, she was preceded in death by her loving stepfather, Charles J. Lowry Sr.; and brother, John Robert Vance.

Amy was a graduate of Tennessee High School and V.I. College, where she studied dance which she deeply loved. She was an accomplished ballerina and ballet instructor in the area. She opened Branson Ballet Studio and starred in many performances over the course of her career. She was a loving mother and devoted daughter.

She is survived by her partner of over 20 years, local musician HB Beverly; her two sons, David Branson and Nicholas Branson; her daughter, Kristy Branson; and several loving grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Due to COVID-19, the family will not be having a service. Instead, a memorial video will be made available digitally through Oakley-Cook Funeral Home & Crematory. As per her wishes, a party in celebration of her life will be arranged at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorial donations be made to the Humane Society of the United States or the Boy Scouts of America in her name.

Condolences and memories may be shared with the family and viewed by visiting www.oakley-cook.com. Arrangements especially for Amy and her family have been made through Oakley-Cook Funeral Home & Crematory.



Nita Jean Adams

February 2, 1929 - January 26, 2021



Nita Jean Adams, 91, passed away on Tuesday, January 26, 2021. She was born on February 2, 1929, in Bristol, Tenn. She graduated from Kings College with a degree in Biology. Jean was a lifelong member of First Presbyterian Church where she was a Deacon Community Volunteer. She was a local business owner of the Jean Machine for 10 years, Jean worked as a realtor for Town & Country for over three decades.

Jean was preceded in death by her husband, John Adams; and her parents, Earl Edward and Nellie Gray.

She is survived by her sons, Gilmer Adams and wife, Maureen, Mark Adams and wife, Lindy, and Ches Adams and wife, Kristi; grandchildren, Wade, Robin, John, Parker and Henry Adams; and great-grandchildren, Quincy, Laine, Huntley and Alice Adams.

Graveside services will be at 1 p.m. on Saturday, February 6, 2021, at Glenwood Cemetery with Dr. William M. Shelton officiating.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to American Cancer Society, 508 Princeton Rd #102, Johnson City, TN 37601.

HAMLETT DOBSON FUNERAL HOME

Kingsport, Tennessee



Frank Gibson

October 6, 1944 - January 17, 2021



Frank Gibson of Bristol, Tenn., died early Sunday morning, January 17, 2021, at his home. He was born in Bluefield, West Virginia, on October 6, 1944, to parents, Zulu and Clarence Gibson.

Frank was a proud member of the Bluefield High School 1963 West Virginia High School Triple A Championship Football Team. He attended Concord College and graduated from Bluefield State College. He then continued his love for football by teaching and coaching at Fairview Junior High in Bluefield, and then moving to Bristol, Tenn., to teach and coach football at Holston Valley Junior High and East High School.

Frank was preceded in death by his parents; a brother, James Gibson; and two sisters, Eleanor Harry and Gladys Lawrence.

He is survived by his longtime partner, Sharon Hale; and his two daughters, Ashley Gibson (pictured) of Bristol and Amy Gibson Alex (Dave) of Chicago; brothers, Gene Gibson (Lois) of Bluefield and Bobby Gibson (Sharon) of Salem, Va.; sister, Ruby Hamlin of Bluefield; two grandchildren and many nieces and nephews.

In his retirement years, he loved working with Volunteer Animal Clinic and was a very devoted to helping all the pets entrusted to the care of the clinic.

Honoring the request of Frank, there will be no funeral service.

Any donations may be made to the charity of your choice in memory of Frank Gibson.

WEAVER FUNERAL HOME & CREMATION SERVICES

630 Locust Street, Bristol, TN 37620



Alfred Garrett

December 5, 1935 - January 29, 2021



LEBANON, Va.

Alfred Leonard Garrett, age 85, went to be with the Lord on Friday, January 29, 2021. Born on December 5, 1935, he was the son of the late Ethel Maude Fields Garrett and James Randel Garrett.

He enjoyed singing and playing the guitar. He enjoyed working on cars. He was the owner of Garet 5 cleaning service and he also worked at Southern Motors in Bristol and Marion Bottling Company. He attended Lebanon Community Fellowship.



In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by one sister, Carolyn Combs; and several aunts and uncles.

He is survived by his wife of 57 years, Neva Anderson Garrett; one daughter, Leanne Marie Snead and special friend, Brian Roller; two sons, Edward Lewis Garrett and wife, Melissa, Duane Courtney Garrett and wife, Terri; grandchildren, Blake Michael Snead and wife, Ashley, Jacob Edward Garrett, Alicia Kitchens, Jaylen Kitchens, Luke Jackson Garrett, and Hazel Garrett; great-granddaughter, Maia Williams; one sister, Betty Kegley and husband, Hassel; one brother, Eddie Garrett; several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services will be on Monday, February 1, 2021,

Margaret L. "Peggy" Duff

March 7, 1937 - January 29, 2021



Margaret L. "Peggy" Duff, age 83, of Bristol, Va., went to be with the Lord on Friday, January 29, 2021. She was born March 7, 1937, in Bristol, Va., a daughter of the late Clarence Vernon and Maude Mae Worley Jessee.

Peggy was a lifelong resident of the Bristol area and was owner/operator of Evergreen Specialty. She was a member of North Star Baptist Church.

Survivors include her loving husband of 63 years, Roger L. Duff; three sons, Eric S. Duff, Tim R. Duff and Chris S. Duff; three granddaughters, Darbie Duff, Caroline Duff and Kristin Duff; two great-grandsons; two sisters, Gennelle Combs and Doris Carr; two brothers, Riley Jessee and wife, Wilma, and David Jessee; several nieces and nephews.

The funeral service will be held at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, February 2, 2021, in the Weaver Funeral Home Chapel with Dr. Bill Houck officiating. The family will receive friends from 12:30 until 1:45 p.m. prior to the service. Entombment will follow the service at Forest Hills Memory Gardens. Pallbearers will be Danny Stanley, Donnie Campbell, Phillip Campbell, Cecil Ayers, Brad Carr and Doug Meade.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105.

The funeral service may be viewed by livestreaming at www.onerestreaming.com, Event ID: WeaverFH Password: UQWXNI

Online condolences may be registered at www.weaverfuneralhome.net. Arrangements have been made with Weaver Funeral Home and Cremation Services.

WEAVER FUNERAL HOME

630 Locust Street, Bristol, TN 37620



Richard "Ray" Phillips

October 15, 1935 - January 29, 2021

Richard "Ray" Phillips, born on October 15, 1935, passed away on Friday, January 29, 2021. He was raised in Bristol, Tenn., and graduated from Holston Valley High School in 1958. Shortly after, he entered the United States Army and served in the 8th Army Honor guard in Seoul, Korea, for two years. After the Army, he entered the electrical field working 17 years out of the IBEW local 934. In 1972, he began his teaching career, first with the Bristol, TN School System and then from there he taught the Electrical Apprentice program for the TVA. Ray then went to Northeast State Community College as an Electrical Instructor and retired in 2001. During those years he taught night classes for the IBEW.

Mr. Phillips was preceded in death by his parents, William Phillips and Nannie Cox Phillips; two brothers, William "Bill" and C.E. "Red" Phillips; and a sister, Virginia Brown.

He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Catherine "Toodle" Phillips; sons, Gregory Phillips and wife, Kathleen, Allen Phillips and wife, Mary; daughters, Vickie Phillips and Cathy Phillips; six grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.

A graveside service will be held at 11 a.m. on Tuesday, February 2, 2021, at Glenwood Cemetery with Pastor Cynthia Frye officiating. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Weaver Union Church, 132 Peoples Road, Bristol, TN 37620, or a charity of your choice.

Online condolences may be registered at www.weaverfuneralhome.net. Arrangements have been made with Weaver Funeral Home and Cremation Services.

WEAVER FUNERAL HOME

630 Locust Street, Bristol, TN 37620



at 7 p.m. in the Combs-Hess Funeral Service Chapel with Pastor Justin Honaker and the Rev. Woody Scott officiating. Burial will be held on Tuesday, February 2, 2021, at 11 a.m. at Ketrion Memorial Gardens. Military rites will be conducted by Lebanon V.F.W. Post # 9864. Family will receive friends from 5:30 to 7 p.m. prior to the funeral service.

Honorary pallbearers will be Phillip Puckett, Blake Michael Snead, Jacob Edward Garrett, Luke Garrett, Brian Roller, Hazel Garrett, Jimmy Fields, Smokey Fields, Chris Anderson, David Kegley, Leonard Kegley, and all his friends from the Army.

Special thanks to Dr. Michael Ulrich, Dr. Brian Easton and the staff at Russell County Medical Center and the staff at Johnston Memorial Hospital.

In Lieu of flowers donations can be made to Lebanon Community Fellowship or Morning Star Church.

In consideration of the health and safety of all those attending the service, Combs - Hess Funeral Service and the family strongly encourages all CDC guidelines be followed, including the use of a face mask.

Expressions of sympathy may be made to the family online at www.combsfuneralservice.com. Combs - Hess Funeral Service, 291 Highway 71 Fincastle Road, Lebanon, VA 24266 (276) 889-4444 is serving the Garrett family.



Janie Louise Pope Norris

ABINGDON, Va.

Janie Louise Pope Norris, age 82, passed away on Friday, January 29, 2021, in Johnston Memorial Hospital. Janie was a member of Spoon Gap Freewill Baptist Church. She was preceded in death by her parents, Kerman and Hallie Largen Pope; husband, Herman Norris; brother, Homer Pope; and sisters, Edith Price, Icie Graybeal, Zephia Huff, and Lillie Roark.

She is survived by her daughter, Linda Lewis; son, Gary Norris; grandson, Mark (Angel) Lewis; sister, Nona (Garland) Graybeal; and several nieces and nephews.

Graveside services will be conducted at 2 p.m. on Sunday, January 31, 2021, in Mt. View United Methodist Church Cemetery with the Rev. Herbert Bailey officiating.

Those wishing to share memories or messages of sympathy may do so online by visiting www.farrisfuneralservice.com.

The family of Janie Louise Pope Norris is in the care of the Main Street Chapel of Farris Funeral Service, 427 East Main Street, Abingdon, VA 24210 (276-623-2700).



Pain

From Page B1

she yelled. (I got in trouble for not allowing her to call her mom, but ... if I could go back in time right now, I still would not let her call her mom.)

Jacob fell and lightly skinned his knee while on a hike with me deep in the woods. If the ancient Assyrians had reincarnated and dragged him by their chariots through the desert for a day he couldn't have cried any louder. I dabbed a little antibiotic on his barely visible wound and told him I was going to leave him for

the coyotes if he didn't come on. (Yes, I got in trouble for that, too. Yes, I'd do and say the same again.)

We do well when we teach children how best to face physical pain, my friends. And as with all things regarding children, teaching is not done best by mere words. But by example.

My friends, I hope we are all teaching our children and grandchildren to be more like Johnny and Bridget and Megan, facing life's pains with a joyful heart.

Ben Talley is an inductee into the National Teachers Hall of Fame, a former Virginia Teacher of the Year, and a McGlothlin Award Winner for Teaching Excellence

House

From Page B1

the congregation to not tear down the house and to work with the community to find a solution to keep the house in existence, Jenny said.

One idea: It could be moved, both Humphreys and Jenny suggested.

"Whatever works," Jenny said. "It could be moved. It could be sold. It could be restored by the church for another use."

Moving the house within a half-mile of its present site might cost about \$100,000, said Robert Sauder, a salesman at the Bernville, Pennsylvania-based Wolfe House and Building Movers, which moves structures across the Mid-Atlantic region.

"We can definitely move it," Sauder said. "Where we move it might be a little more of a challenge. The biggest challenge is getting power lines sorted out."

Landmark register

Keeping the structure where it stands would be preferred by Mike Pulice, the architectural historian for the western regional office of the Department of Historic Resources in Virginia.

Pulice called the house "an important contributing building in the historic district."

Additionally, Pulice said the Hiram Dooley House is considered part of why downtown Abingdon is listed on state and national historic landmark registers.

"It's an important house to the historic district," Pulice said.

"There's a very finite number of antebellum houses left in Southwest Virginia. ... And brick houses are all the more rare."

Pulice considered the situation from both sides.

"The church, they're the owners. And they can do as they please," Pulice said.

State and national historic landmark registers place no restrictions or obligations on property owners or local governments, Pulice said.

"The idea of moving it, I think it's a good one, especially if they can keep it in town, which could keep other costs of the move down," Pulice said. "And they could potentially use tax credits to rehab the building," Pulice said. "I would support it being moved-over instead of being torn down."

jtennis@btistolnews.com
276-791-0709
@BHC_Tennis

