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## Mayberry sentenced to 41 years for sex crimes against 7-year-old

CHARLES CONRAD  
Times Virginian

On Thursday, Oct. 14, in Appomattox County Circuit Court, 35-year-old Concord resident Christopher Dustin Mayberry was sentenced to serve 41 years for sex crimes with a minor that were committed in 2019.

Mayberry had been found guilty by an Appomattox County jury at a Feb. 4 trial during which the victim, who was 7 years old at the time the incident occurred, appeared as a witness via closed circuit video feed.

Circuit Court Judge Andy Nelson followed the exact sentencing recommendation

of the jury back in February, which totaled 41 years. Mayberry was found guilty of four felony counts of indecent liberties with a child under age 15, one felony count of aggravated sexual battery of a victim under age 13, and one misdemeanor count of contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

The felony aggravated sexual battery charge carries a mandatory 20-year sentence. Five years of active prison time were handed down on each of the charges of indecent liberties with a child, with five additional years suspended on each count. Twelve months of active sentence was applied to the mis-

demeanor charge.

Mayberry's attorney, Jordan Davies, said that Mayberry admitted committing the crime and deserves punishment but requested a sentence of 10-12 years. Davies summarized that the jury's recommendation of 41 years



Mayberry

See **CRIME**, Page 7

### A gift certificate for teachers

Charles Conrad/  
Times Virginian

Pictured from left: Appomattox County Public Schools Director of Curriculum, Instruction & CTE Dr. Amy Huskin, Main Street Stylists co-owner Anita Hubbard, and Appomattox County Children's Service Act (CSA) Coordinator Ashley Sandman.



## Salon treats teachers to free haircut, styling

CHARLES CONRAD  
Times Virginian

The additional pressure on school teachers to adjust their teaching methods during the COVID-19 pandemic of the past year and a half has been well-documented. As a way to say "thank you" and recognize teachers in the Appomattox County school dis-

trict for their efforts, a local hair salon has offered a chance for them to have a time of self-pampering, free of charge.

Main Street Stylists, located at 201 Main Street in Appomattox, donated gift certificates for one free haircut and style to every teacher employed by Appomattox County Public Schools. In a special drawing held Sept. 28

— the same day all teachers received their certificates — two fortunate employees, a teacher and school nurse, won a drawing for a \$200 gift card to use at the salon.

Owned by the husband-and-wife team of Robert and Anita Hubbard, Main Street Stylists first opened its

See **TEACHERS**, Page 10

## Juvenile mental health concerns discussed

JEFFREY WESTBROOK  
Times Virginian

Appomattox County Sheriff Donald Simpson addressed a crucial and escalating problem on Monday evening while speaking to the board of supervisors at their regular monthly meeting.

"We have an untenable situation (involving) the mental health of teens in our county," he informed the board.

He explained that the Appomattox County Sheriff's Office sometimes receives two kinds of orders involving teens in the midst of a mental health crisis: Emergency Custody Order (ECO) and Temporary Detention Order (TDO). When the department receives one of these orders, deputies take the teen into custody and take them to a hospital and/or a mental health facility.

Simpson provided the case of one teen as an example of the problem that is becoming too frequent across the county and across the commonwealth. "A Temporary Detention Order was issued for an Appomattox County female juvenile on Oct. 10 at 0055 (12:55 a.m.)," he said.

A deputy took the youth to Lynchburg General Hospital and received an order to take the patient to a mental health facility in Staunton.

"It is the only state-run mental health facility

See **HEALTH**, Page 7

## Local Operation Christmas Child 'packing party' held

CHARLES CONRAD  
Times Virginian

For the second straight year, people from the Appomattox area gathered at the Courtland Festival Park pavilion for a "packing party" hosted by Operation Christmas Child for the purpose of impacting children throughout the world.

Operation Christmas Child is a project of Samaritan's Purse, a Christian humanitarian aid organization headquartered in Boone, North Carolina. The project gathers various gifts — donated by church or business groups and individuals — for impoverished children, packs the gifts in shoebox-style boxes and ships them to specified locations.

Around a dozen adults and four to six children came together Saturday in



Susanne Wood/Contributed

Three youngsters are shown with gift boxes they packed during the Operation Christmas Child "packing party" Saturday at Courtland Festival Park.

Appomattox and packed along with her husband 100 shoeboxes full of Wally, is the area coordinator for the Central Virginia necessities and school supplies. Susanne Wood, who

See **CHILD**, Page 10

## N. Creek Ridge B&B holds ribbon cutting

CHARLES CONRAD  
Times Virginian

North Creek Ridge Bed & Breakfast held a ribbon cutting ceremony Wednesday, Oct. 13, at approximately 1:30 p.m.

to officially become the newest small business venture in Appomattox County.

The venue is set to officially open its doors Friday, Oct. 15. North Creek Ridge Bed & Breakfast is

located at 4521 Oakville Road (State Route 26) about four miles past the Appomattox Walmart.

The owners of the new B&B, which is in a scenic

See **B&B**, Page 12



Charles Conrad/Times Virginian

Pictured at the North Creek Ridge Bed & Breakfast ribbon cutting ceremony are, from left: Owners Jim and Holly Conroy, Appomattox County Chamber of Commerce President John Redding and Appomattox County Chamber of Commerce Administrator Whitney Napier.



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# OBITUARIES

## Carolyn Anne Giles

Carolyn Anne Giles, 68, of Appomattox, died Sunday morning, October 17, 2021, in Lynchburg General Hospital.

Born February 13, 1953, in Richmond, she was a daughter of Anne Cabell Giles of Lynchburg, and the late Melvin Glenn Giles, Sr. She retired from the City of Lynchburg, working in Human Resources.

She is survived by two children, Christopher Maxwell (Lauren) of Roanoke and Whitney Maxwell

(Witt) of Charlotte, NC; three grandchildren, Sutter and Lane Maxwell and Ellery Sullivan; one brother, M. Glenn Giles, Jr. of Northern Virginia.

The family received friends Tuesday, October 19, 2021, from 6 until 8 p.m. at Robinson Funeral Home, Appomattox.

A private family graveside service will be held at a later date.

Robinson Funeral and Crematory is serving the family. An online con-



Carolyn Anne Giles

lence may be sent by visiting [www.robinsonfuneral.com](http://www.robinsonfuneral.com).

## Robert Hanes Gray, Jr.

Robert Hanes Gray, Jr., 83, of Lynchburg, Virginia passed away from a long illness on October 18, 2021, surrounded by his loving family. He was the son of the late Robert Hanes Gray, Sr. and Lois Dinger Gray (Mimi), and the husband of Kate Gray for 54 years.

Rob was born on August 7, 1938 in Lexington, VA. He attended The Lawrenceville School in Princeton New Jersey. At 18, Rob served his country as Military Police supporting intelligence operations in radio communications. In September 1962, he was deployed in support of the Federal protection program for James Meredith as the first black student admitted to University of Mississippi. This experience was one that largely influenced his life's work to promote social justice and protect the vulnerable.

On the GI Bill, Rob was later awarded a BA in Philosophy at Yale University and followed his father into the legal profession earning a J.D. from Washington and Lee University. As an attorney, Rob served throughout Central Virginia, primarily in Appomattox, where he had a law practice for over 30 years. He spent many hours on pro-bono work for the underrepresented and was committed to helping vulnerable communities receive fair representation, often by serving as interpreter for Spanish-speaking defendants and their families.

As a substitute circuit judge serving Southeast and Central Virginia, Rob was known by his colleagues for his jurisprudence and fairness and was remembered by many who appeared before him for his belief in the restorative benefits of giving second chances. Rob was a mem-

ber of the Virginia State Bar Association for more than 50 years.

After relocating to Lynchburg in 1993, Rob became an active volunteer in community theatre and the performing arts scene. His passion for the stage earned him leading roles in many plays, most notably those of Death of a Salesman, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, and The Seagull. He and his wife Kate have been devoted supporters of local performing arts and cultural community organizations, especially those of the Academy Center of the Arts, Opera on the James, and the Dante Alighieri Society.

Rob also volunteered for many local humanitarian, medical, and educational organizations including Meals on Wheels, Lynchburg General Hospital, Lynchburg College and Centra. He served as board member for Johnson Health Center and Riverviews Artspace. Rob enjoyed being both student and teacher throughout in his life with an insatiable curiosity about culture and languages and a strong drive to mentor lawyers new to the profession. He loved challenging medical students at the Lynchburg College School of PA Medicine as a Spanish-speaking patient in medical simulations and serving alongside his dear friend, Kern Lunsford as a Spanish interpreter for Centra.

Robert belonged to Holy Cross Catholic Church in Lynchburg and enjoyed his grandchildren, raising standard poodles, spoken languages, and brisk walks. He studied challenging languages such as Farsi and rode racing bikes. As a father, Rob brought light, hope, and humor to the toughest of situations and was tremendous source of



Robert Hanes Gray, Jr.

comfort, peace, inspiration and encouragement for his children, Robert III and Eliza. He also had ongoing conversations with them about existentialism, law, politics and religion. While a teenager in the Bahamas, young Robert was a hospital aid, had interest in becoming a doctor, and played maracas in a local band.

In addition to his wife Kate, Rob is lovingly remembered by his children, son Robert, III and daughter Eliza; daughter-in-law Carolyn Gray; grandchildren Laura, Anna, and Rebecca; sister Celie Rosenau; nephews William, John, and Edward Rosenau; dear friends Kern Lunsford, Alex Bell, Naomi Amos, and Laura Dupuy; and Dessi Dupuy, his goddaughter.

Robert is predeceased by his father Robert Hanes Gray Sr., his mother Lois Dinger Gray and his brother-in-law David Rosenau.

A funeral service will be held on October 25, 2021, at 2 p.m. at Holy Cross Catholic Church located at 710 Clay Street Lynchburg, VA 24504. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Meals on Wheels of Greater Lynchburg, Johnson Health Center, and Centra Volunteer Services at LGH.

Tharp Funeral Home, Lynchburg is assisting the family. To send condolences, please visit [www.tharp-funeralhome.com](http://www.tharp-funeralhome.com).

For information about placing an obituary, email [accounts@timesvirginian.com](mailto:accounts@timesvirginian.com).

## Festival

Continued from Page 3

Chair Susan Adams replied to the compliments, "Every good leader has a great team."

The festival committee expressed gratitude to "Susan Walton and her AVRS/DRT team, Sheriff Donnie Simpson and his law enforcement team, and Chief Jonathan Garrett and his AVFD team for their dedicated, professional assistance throughout the festival."

"Collaboratively, they maintain safety and security support for all of the festival attendees," the festival committee added.

A variety of music acts, food vendors of all types, carnival rides for the kids and an overall emphasis on the community marked the festival Oct. 8-10.

Throughout the weekend, a wide variety of musical acts performed on three different stages: Courtland Festival Park Stage, Abbitt Park Stage and Main Street Stage.

Hometown ensemble Southland Band kicked off

the music on Friday evening at Courtland Festival Park. They opened with "Sweet Home Appomattox," an apt variation on Lynyrd Skynyrd's southern rock classic, "Sweet Home Alabama."

On Saturday morning, Nashville recording artist Sarah Montgomery with Tim Teague put on a great performance of country and a little bit of rock-n-roll music. Other musicians performing Saturday included Ray Martin, BoCo, Apple Butter Soul, Karlee Raye Trio, New Beginnings Gospel Singers, Rare Form and Desiray Lorain Trio.

Battle of the Bands winners JusT Us delivered a blazing performance on the Main Street Stage in the late afternoon. The Bedford-based group played up-tempo classic rock and country rock tunes that pleased the audience.

A number of food trucks parked at the library parking lot (and dotted around the festival area) provided all sorts of delicious food, from funnel cakes, fried oreos, and kettle corn to barbecue, Asian cuisine, stew and more. The long lines indicated how popular these

food stands were. There also were various drinks such as freshly squeezed lemonade and soft drinks.

Vendors lined Main Street and the portion of Court Street up to the courthouse, offering wares from home decor to local honey. At the Good Ole Days in the courthouse area, the Appomattox County Historical Society offered kids' projects outside and a historic quilts exhibit and museum tours inside the Old Jail Museum.

Especially popular with families with small children were the carnival rides at Courtland Festival Park. The giant slide, a train, and various other rides brought smiles to kids' faces. There was even a ride for the "big kids."

Next year's festival will take place Oct. 7-9, 2022. It is not too early to volunteer to help the committee for next year's Railroad Festival. Visit the festival website, [appomattoxrrfest.org](http://appomattoxrrfest.org), email [info@appomattoxR-Rfest.org](mailto:info@appomattoxR-Rfest.org), or send mail to P.O. Box 513 Appomattox, VA 24522 for more information.

## Crime

Continued from Page 1

is understandable based on natural outrage at sex crimes against children but argued that 10-12 years was more fitting for the facts of this particular case.

However, Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney Dana Smith argued for the full sentence recommended by the jury, citing that Mayberry still doesn't seem to grasp the seriousness of the offenses. In stating her conclusion, Smith referred to an official psychosexual evaluation that categorized Mayberry as an "average risk" for repeat behavior.

The victim's mother and father, who no longer reside together, both gave victim impact statements, speaking of the emotional damage and behavioral changes the victim has suffered since the incident took place.

"You have stolen my daughter's innocence," the victim's father said to Mayberry during his statement. "She has to suffer with this for the rest of her life, and she'll never be the same."

Mayberry made a statement before he was sentenced, offering an apology to the victim's family, while acknowledging, "I know that 'sorry' doesn't fix things." He also added, "But

I have a life to live as well."

Mayberry had resided with the victim in a stepfather role at the time of the illegal acts, a situation that Judge Nelson said put Mayberry in a position of trust, and that was broken.

As was reported in the Feb. 10 edition of the Times Virginian, testimony provided at trial revealed that the incident occurred March 27, 2019, in a vehicle at which Mayberry and the victim lived while the victim's mother was sleeping due to an illness.

The victim had gone outside and noticed Mayberry urinating behind his truck. Mayberry then asked the victim to help him clean a car, but while

inside the car Mayberry instead showed the victim pornographic videos on his cell phone and touched the victim inappropriately. He also caused the victim to touch him in an inappropriate manner before touching and relieving himself in front of the victim. The victim remained clothed during the ordeal.

Mayberry also showed the victim pornographic DVDs that were located in the car's glove compartment and suggested that they watch them sometime when the victim's mother isn't at home.

According to testimony at trial, Mayberry was reported to have attempted to silence the minor by warn-

ing that if the truth were known, they would both go to jail. However, the victim did notify an adult a few days later.

A trail camera on the property (which takes still photos triggered by a motion sensor and is primarily used by hunters or wildlife enthusiasts) showed that Mayberry was in the car with the minor for about 25 minutes.

Before sentencing Mayberry, Judge Nelson said he believes that "other than murder, (sex crimes against minors) are about as serious a crime as you can get."

Judge Nelson emphasized that he places great weight on sentencing recommendations by a jury, a

part of the judicial system that is now abolished by the Virginia General Assembly as of July 1 — the date of which does not affect the jury's decision in this case.

Aside from the 41-year sentence, Mayberry is subjected to 60 years of good behavior beginning immediately, and upon release five years supervised probation, registering as a sex offender, no contact with the victim along with a permanent protective order, no contact with a minor under age 18 or an incapacitated adult, no access to pornography or electronic devices to enable such access, and restitution of \$2,285.22 for the victim's psychological counseling treatment.

## Health

Continued from Page 1

for juveniles in Virginia," Simpson noted.

The Staunton facility was reporting that it was full and had no beds or space to take the patient.

That site is the Commonwealth Center for Children and Adolescents. According to its website, it is "an acute care, mental health facility for youth under the age of 18 years, operated by the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services." It also notes: "Admissions to the Center are based on referrals from a community mental health agency or juvenile court."

Simpson explained further in an interview with the Times Virginian, "The TDO is statutorily, and by opinion of the attorney general, a transportation order. We have 24 hours to serve the order and transport the individual to the facility named in the order, then the state has 72 hours (96 for juveniles) to evaluate the patient in a therapeutic setting."

The director of the Commonwealth Center refused admission to the patient.

"At approximately 2:40 p.m. on the 10th, I ordered the deputy to take the child to the center in Staunton as directed on the TDO; it was then we were refused. That refusal to accept the patient is what I argue is illegal."

The sheriff cites Virginia Code 16.1-340.1:1, which states, "Under no circumstances shall a state facility fail or refuse to admit a minor who meets the criteria for temporary detention pursuant to §16.1-340.1."

Simpson continued, "The juvenile was then brought back to the Lynchburg General Emergency Room, where she sat with the deputy in an emergency room bay for three more days. With no specific treatment, no access to outside, no recreation, in a manner in which criminally convicted inmates are not treated. We repeatedly pleaded with CSB and the Staunton facility to accept this patient as ordered and were told there were no beds available. On Oct. 13 at 11:54 p.m. the child was accepted at the Staunton

hospital as originally ordered on the TDO, literally an hour before the paper was to expire."

The sheriff showed the board a photo of a parking lot at Lynchburg General Hospital full of deputies' cars from various area jurisdictions waiting to take patients to mental health facilities, all of which are overflowing.

"The deputy watched her deteriorate during the time she was being held at the hospital. She had to stay in a bed in the emergency room and received no treatment for her mental health issues during the four days that she was there."

This patient was just one of too many cases.

"We had four juvenile TDOs in the past month," Simpson stated. "Two were delivered to Staunton, and despite there being no beds, they took them anyway. Another one was released early. This one was stuck in an ER bed at Lynchburg General Hospital for 94 hours while in the middle of a documented mental health crisis."

This kind of problem "ties up officers from other

duties, but most important, a child is not getting the treatment needed," Simpson explained.

County attorney Thomas Lacheney quoted for the board the relevant Commonwealth of Virginia regulation, "Under no circumstances shall a mental health facility refuse admission of a minor." And yet it happens.

Lacheney reported, "My office was on a conference call today with other jurisdictions; we're not the only ones dealing with this problem." He added, "A member of my staff volunteered to draft a lawsuit" against the state facility. While not all the jurisdictions were keen on pursuing that route, they agreed that the problem is serious and must be addressed.

"I've told our sheriff that he is not obligated to carry out a TDO when the facility refuses to take the patient. ... The Sheriff's department ends up being a babysitter for child in a mental health crisis."

Lacheney noted that case law supports that an officer cannot be required to carry out an order that is impos-

sible to fulfill.

"It needs to be addressed at the state level," he averred.

Supervisor John Hinkle (Falling River District) said that he would like to have a resolution about this crisis. Chairman Samuel Carter (Courthouse District) concurred. Lacheney volunteered to draft a resolution for the board.

Supervisor William Hogan remarked, "I feel for the sheriff. We went through this problem in the summer with adults .... Richmond needs to do something. We have children crying on the floor, begging for help. I know they're short staffed, but so is he (Sheriff Simpson), and yet he is expected to take the patient across the county."

Carter asked if Social Services is involved during the four-day wait. Simpson replied, "not unless there's a previous case." He added that he supports the attorney's advice.

Supervisor Watkins Abbitt Jr. — who attended the meeting virtually via conference call — pondered, "Should the sheriff ask our delegate or state senator to

contact the state attorney general? What should the sheriff do?"

Lacheney replied that a state senator had contacted Attorney General Mark Herring, who said that it is the sheriffs' responsibility to carry out the orders of a TDO or ECO. Such a stance raises the question: how can the sheriff's offices carry out the orders if the facilities are full and turning away people?

Simpson explained that Community Services Boards (CSB) comprised of mental health counselors determine where children in need of treatment go.

"They said there are no beds available in private facilities either," he noted.

Carter thanked the sheriff for bringing this crisis to the board's attention.

The sheriff told the Times Virginian, "I have reached out to lawyers, the media, judges, politicians and the public to bring awareness to this problem. Something must change with the mental health system, particularly juvenile mental health, in Virginia. It is fundamentally broken."



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## Vaccine effects close schools

### 30 employees were out sick

JEFFREY WESTBROOK  
*Times Virginian*

Appomattox County Public Schools closed Thursday after a significant number of staff members who had received their second round of COVID-19 vaccinations the day before were unable to come to work.

Superintendent Dr. Annette Bennett reported to the school board's regular monthly meeting Thursday night that 107 district employees received their second dosage of the vaccine Wednesday at the district's vaccination clinic. On Thursday morning, "about 30 of them were not feeling well enough to come to

work," she explained.

These absences proved enough to make opening the schools a logistical impossibility, with shortages of both bus drivers and in-school staff. Bennett noted that with only four substitute bus drivers and five bus drivers out sick, the district could not transport all the students. And

with 25 teachers and other staff out, there would not be enough hands on deck at the schools once the students got there.

"We're a small division, and we don't have a second string," she pointed out at the board meeting.

Yet the day was not an instructional loss. School in Appomattox County took place online Thursday.

"We have been committed to staying open as long

as we had enough personnel to serve the students," Bennett told the Times Virginian on Thursday. "Unfortunately, we were short bus drivers and other staff who weren't well enough to come, most of which were related to getting their second vaccine. We are hoping to open tomorrow."

School Board Chairman Gregory Smith pointed out that at his workplace at the Virginia State Police,

several employees experienced illness following the second round of the vaccine, but that it generally only lasted for a day. He commended Bennett for her work facilitating the vaccination clinics.

"You are doing a lot for the VDH," he said. "Kudos to you and all the people involved."

"It is a group effort," Bennett replied.

See **CLOSED**, Page A7

## Let the games begin!



Donna Brown/  
Contributed

Appomattox running back JaQuan Walker (#6) attempts to evade a tackle in Friday's season-opening win at Altavista.

## Raiders dominate Altavista Colonels in season opener

JASON DANIEL AND  
JEFFREY WESTBROOK  
*Womack Publishing News Service*

The Appomattox Raiders varsity football team returned to the gridiron Thursday night and dominated the Colonels in its season opener 42-6. The team had to carry on without coach Doug Smith at the helm due to his battle with cancer.

In the year of the coronavirus, Virginia high schools did not play fall sports in the fall, but are holding their "fall" season now, in March and April. Friday night football is finally back in the Commonwealth, and the state champions were able to get down to defending their title.

See **RAIDERS**, Page A13

**Inside**  
See article on  
coach Smith,  
Page A8

## Threat at AMS ruled false alarm

JEFFREY WESTBROOK  
*Times Virginian*

A threat that led to the evacuation of Appomattox Middle School last week turned out to be a hoax.

"A student made the staff aware of a threat written on a wall," reported Superintendent of Appomattox County Schools Dr. Annette Bennett. "Our protocol in such instances is to evacuate the building and contact the sheriff's office."

She explained that Ap-

pomattox County Sheriff Donald Simpson's staff subsequently called in the Virginia State Police.

"They are the ones with the resources to search the building (including a dog, which they brought to search for any signs of danger)," Bennett said. "Once they established that the building was safe and it had been a hoax, we were able to return the students safely to the building."

See **THREAT**, Page A13

## Departments request more county funds

MICHELLE PAYNE  
*Times Virginian*

The Appomattox County Board of Supervisors budget work session Feb. 23 featured requests from Commonwealth's Attorney Les Fleet and later from Appomattox Department of Social Services Director Brad Burdette.

The biggest expense request from Fleet had to do with a part-time person the county had previously al-

lowed him to hire. Fleet described her as a big asset to the office operations.

Fleet said his office wants a part-time person moved to full-time. His office manager has been out of the office due to a major health issue.

"I'm not sure when (the office manager) will be back full-time," said Fleet.

He noted that the office manager is beginning to do

See **FUNDS**, Page A13

## Fuel spills on U.S. Rt. 460 from tractor trailer wreck

CHARLES CONRAD  
*Times Virginian*

The site of a wreck that occurred on U.S. Route 460 West early Tuesday afternoon near Concord in Appomattox County was cleared by around 2 p.m. after traffic was temporarily delayed and reduced to one lane.

The accident involved

two commercial tractor trailer trucks near Stage Road. There were no injuries.

"One had its fuel tank damaged, causing fuel to spill out. But the leak was controlled and the spilled product was contained," Appomattox Fire Chief Jonathan Garrett said.

The Concord Volunteer Fire Department was at the

scene with its Rescue 13, Engine 13-1 and Command 13 with Hazmat Unit. Also assisting was the Appomattox Volunteer Fire Department, Appomattox Hazmat Unit, Appomattox Rescue Squad, WEL Inc. Environmental Services, VDOT, Appomattox County Sheriff's Office and Virginia State Police.



Concord Volunteer Fire Department/Contributed

One of two tractor trailer trucks is hitched to be towed following an accident Tuesday on U.S. 460 West.

# OBITUARIES

## Saint Joseph Chambers



**Saint Joseph Chambers**

28, 2021, at 4:00 p.m. at Jeffress Funeral Chapel in Brookneal with interment at Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church Cemetery in Pamplin. Condolences may be expressed at [www.JeffressFuneralHome.com](http://www.JeffressFuneralHome.com). Arrangements were by Jeffress Funeral Home and Cremation Service of Brookneal.

dren, Antonio Chambers (Selenia) of Buckingham, Ansionette Hix (Andre Thomas, Sr., fiancé) of Farmville, Vaylene Davis, Aaron Chambers, Quentin Chambers and Brittany Chambers, all of Appomattox; eight step-grandchildren; a host of great grandchildren including his special great grandchildren, Rayshaun Wheeler, Damien Chambers and Kia Chambers; one brother, Abraham Lincoln Chambers (Connie) of Meherrin; and a host of nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends, including family friends, Andre Thomas, Jr., D'Andrea Thomas, and Michael Thomas.

Funeral services were held on Sunday, February

## Walter Sidney Jennings



**Walter Sidney Jennings**

Mr. Walter Sidney Jennings, age 71 of Pamplin, passed away on February 21, 2021, at his residence. He was born to the late Mrs. Hazel J. Burrell Jennings and Mr. Sidney Jennings.

He was preceded in death by Nathaniel Burrell, Samuel Jennings, John Burrell and Thelma Kidd.

He leaves to cherish his memories Ruth Jennings of Petersburg, Shirley Wheeler, Rosa Baker (Jerry), Harriett Croner, Clara B. Jennings, and Jimmy Baker,

all of Pamplin, and Ollie Davis of Appomattox; two sisters-in-law, Ruth Burrell and Louise Burrell; special niece, Teresa Baker; his dog, Sadie; and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends.

Funeral services were held on Sunday, February 28, 2021, at 1:00 p.m. at Zion Baptist Church parking lot in Pamplin with interment in the church cemetery. Condolences may be expressed at [www.JeffressFuneralHome.com](http://www.JeffressFuneralHome.com).

Arrangements were by Jeffress Funeral Home of Charlotte Court House.

## Tiger

Continued from Page A3

According to the company website, "Tiger Fuel Company is Central Virginia's best and largest local distributor of petroleum energy products, including propane, heating oil and branded gasoline: Exxon, Texaco, Shell, BP, Citgo, Marathon and our own private label, EXCEL." The company is owned by the Sutton brothers: Gordon and Taylor.

Tiger Fuel has been around in Charlottesville since 1982 and has since expanded to include additional locations in Appomattox, Lovingson and Orange. The business entered Appomattox County in 2004 with the acquisition of "the assets of Appomattox Sevistar Oil and Propane Company." In 2007,

it added the Appomattox Oil Company to the fold. ("Many Appomattox Oil Company employees continue to work with us," the website states.)

The company also owns and operates a chain of nine convenience stores and gas stations, known as The Markets, in the greater Charlottesville area. They offer "Gourmet to Go" deli selections and even catering.

While Tiger Fuel offers petroleum products, including a complete line of fuels and home heating products, it is making a push toward more environmentally friendly energy options. As such, it specializes in propane, which is cleaner, better for the environment and more economical than other fuel and heating options.

Along the lines of environmental friendliness, Ayers noted that the busi-

ness recently bought a solar energy company. "We're working toward reducing our carbon footprint," he explained.

For more information about Tiger Fuel, visit online at [tigerfuel.com](http://tigerfuel.com) or call 434-352-5757.

### In Memory of Mr. Walter Sidney Jennings



Known as "Road Runner"

Friends and family acknowledge and deeply appreciate your kind expressions of sympathy through phone calls, text messages, and prayer.

## Budget

Continued from Page A3

"Minimum wage is going up; it already passed," McMillan said.

He added that the biggest impact will for on school nutrition employees. The nutrition budget, however, is separate from the main budget, and it is usually self-sustaining.

Superintendent of Appomattox County Public Schools Dr. Annette Bennett commented on other possible legislation under consideration in Richmond. The state wants all schools back open by March 15.

"That's right in line with what our goals are," she observed. There needs to be clarification about what

full in-person schooling will entail, she noted.

"What is full in-person? As much as the school has space for with social distancing? Or all students every day?"

McMillan pointed out that students have not been coming in person every day, but smaller class sizes hopefully have made instruction time more productive.

In other business, Bennett reported that the school district recently honored Ms. Jean Mayberry, a bus driver with a 48-year career who recently passed away. The district donated money to the Appomattox Education Foundation scholarship fund in her name.

February is VSBA (Vir-

ginia School Boards Association) School Board Appreciation Month. The theme this year is "115 years of providing leadership to schools." Bennett explained. She presented certificates of appreciation to the board members, the clerk and deputy clerk. She also recognized the Virginia State Police, as recommended by board chair Greg Smith, for their support of the school district.

The board voted unanimously to leave the out-of-county tuition rate the same. For the past three years, it has been \$1,000 per student, and it will remain so for 2021-22.

The next board meetings are scheduled for March 11 at 5 p.m. and March 25 at 4 p.m.

## NJROTC

Continued from Page A3

three primary areas of impact: community service, service to the United States and personal responsibility and sense of accomplishment (through the navy values of honor, courage and commitment).

Benefits of participating in such a program are numerous. In addition to the community service component, studies show that participating students have lower dropout rates and higher attendance rates. Two cadets per school per year have the opportunity to attend a leadership camp at Camp Pendleton in Virginia Beach.

The programs offer the students help in achieving

post high school goals, with opportunities such as SAT, ACT, and college preparation courses, a post-high school preparatory academy for helping students gain admission to college and an ROTC program, and scholarship opportunities. Students who decide to join the U.S. military after successfully completing four years in the program will enter at an E-3 pay grade, three grades above their peers.

Activities include classroom instruction, drill, color guard, marksmanship and orienteering. Competitive activities include drill, academic, orienteering, marksmanship and color guard teams, which compete at events throughout Virginia, Maryland and Washington, D.C.

Uniforms are an expense factor in the NNDCC program; schools must come up with the funds for the naval service uniforms. Once a program has been established, it will also require some dress blue uniforms for officers and the color guard. For hygienic reasons, students buy their own PTUs (physical training uniforms — shorts and T-shirts). Schools may use sponsorships and fundraisers to help offset the uniform costs.

The board did not discuss or take any action on the presentation at Thursday's meeting. Bennett suggested that they may discuss it at the next board meeting.

The next board meetings are scheduled for March 11 at 5 p.m. and March 25 at 4 p.m.

## Closed

Continued from Page A1

She acknowledged the rescue squad for their help in getting and delivering the vaccine, as well as school nurses, other school staff and numerous volunteers.

Smith commented that he saw the clinics, and he expressed his amazement at how efficiently they processed a large number of vaccines, moving hundreds of people in and out in a

timely manner.

In order to avoid this same problem following future vaccination clinics, Bennett said she wants to try to move the next clinic for school employees from Wednesday afternoon to Friday afternoon. She hoped that this change would prevent the problem of staff members feeling bad on a school day.

Bennett reported to the board that the division has held three clinics so far. At Wednesday's clinic, in addition to the 107 sec-

ond-round vaccinations, 210 school district staff received their first injection. Students in the CNA program are receiving vaccinations so they can continue their nursing training.

"We are also starting to vaccinate members of the community," she stated.

They include seniors 65 and over, day care and private school staff, and court employees.

"We want to be, even beyond our staff, a resource to our community," Bennett remarked.

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Jeffrey Westbrook/Times Virginian  
Still Breathing, an event remembering those lost to suicide and encouraging their families and survivors, took place Saturday, Nov. 6, at Courtland Festival Park in Appomattox.

Visit us online  
at Times  
Virginian.com

The family of Ruby Staton would like to thank everyone for their thoughts and prayers during this difficult time. Our family truly appreciates the visits, food, flowers, cards and kind words.

Your act of kindness will always be remembered.

Jerry Staton

# Event raises awareness of suicide, mental illness

JEFFREY WESTBROOK  
Times Virginian

Still Breathing, subtitled “a Walk for Those Who Have Survived and for Those Who Are Healing,” was held on a chilly Saturday at Courtland Festival Park and brought together families still grieving for members lost to suicide as well as those caring for people struggling with

mental health issues. The program included guest speakers, music, a walk around the park and the launching of paper lanterns. Raffle tickets helped raise funds for a scholarship for someone who will prepare for a career in mental health. For more about the scholarship and to apply, visit the Still Breathing group’s Facebook page. “We had a good turnout,”

remarked co-organizer Jane Thomas Allen of Appomattox. She, along with sisters Cindy Miller and Kelly McConnell, planned and hosted the event. The featured speakers included Appomattox County Sheriff Donnie Simpson, the Rev. Jonathan Watson, pastor of Bible Baptist Church, and local author Marcie Jones. Simpson reported on the

mental health crisis in the commonwealth and the lack of resources to care properly for people in the midst of a mental health breakdown. Patients — from young children to disabled senior citizens — spend days on end with a sheriff’s deputy, waiting in the emergency room to be admitted to a mental health

See **EVENT**, Page 7

## The Court Report

# Teenager sentenced for delinquency with a minor

CHARLES CONRAD  
Times Virginian

Malik Aaron Ferrell, 19, of Appomattox, received a 12-month suspended sentence to one misdemeanor charge of contributing to the delinquency

of a minor. The charge had been amended from an original felony charge of carnal knowledge with a 13-14-year-old without force. Ferrell had pleaded no contest at his Aug. 5 trial. According to evidence

presented in court, Ferrell knew the age of the female minor, who was age 14 when the incident occurred Feb. 23. Ferrell was age 18 at the time. Ferrell was with the minor in an automobile parked on a dead end street when a call to local police

was made in regard to a “suspicious” vehicle. Appomattox County Commonwealth’s Attorney Les Fleet said this was a “difficult case” in part because the intimacy in the

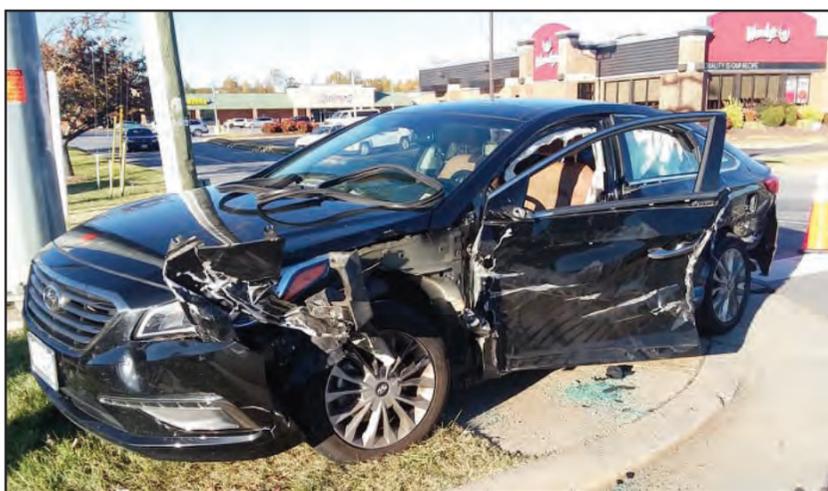
See **COURT**, Page 7

# At least one injured in wreck

CHARLES CONRAD  
Times Virginian

At approximately 3 p.m. Monday, a two-vehicle accident occurred on U.S. 460 in Appomattox across from the Express Lane 76 Convenience Store.

According to a Virginia State Police officer at the scene, a passenger car and tractor trailer collided when the car, traveling west on U.S. 460, attempted to merge into the left lane to make a U-turn to get onto U.S. 460 East and struck the side of the tractor trailer.



Charles Conrad/Times Virginian  
A damaged black Hyundai sedan sits along U.S. 460 after a wreck with a tractor trailer Monday afternoon in Appomattox.

See **WRECK**, Page 7

# Appomattox County Warrants Served

\*\*\*All individuals are innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.\*\*\*

Date Served	Last, First Middle Name	Age	Charges
10/31/21	BLANKENSHIP, RICHARD	25	16.1-253.2(A) - PROTECTIVE ORDER: VIOLATION - Misdemeanor
11/04/21	CORBETT, MARY BRYANT	30	18.2-266 - DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ALCOHOL - Misdemeanor
11/04/21	CORBETT, MARY BRYANT	30	18.2-36.1(B) - INVOLUNTARY MANSLAUGHTER -DUI RECKLESS DISREGARD -
11/06/21	MCCOY, JODIE LEIGH	30	18.2-427 - PROFANE, THREATENING LANGUAGE OVER PUBLIC AIRWAY -
11/02/21	MILLER, JAMES RAY III	32	18.2-456 - CONTEMPT OF COURT - Misdemeanor



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# OBITUARY

## Eugene Kennedy

Eugene Kennedy, 66, of Appomattox, died Thursday, November 4, 2021, at Lynchburg General Hospital. He was the husband of Susan P. Kennedy.

Born in Albany, New York on April 8, 1955, he was the son of the late Stephen Michael Kennedy and Lillian Rose Franke Kennedy.

He was formerly employed by GLTC, LSC Communications, and Bee Line Towing Inc. in Lynchburg.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by his daughter, Christina Lynn Grishaw

and husband, Dennis of Spout Spring; brother, Kevin Kennedy of Norfolk; six sisters, Pat Rivera of Spout Spring, Geraldine Ermo of Leland, NC, Carol Kennedy of New York, Joyce Dunphy of Canada, Margaret Ciucci of Pennsylvania, and Teresa Macdiarmid of Spout Spring; three grandchildren, Kaitlyn Kennedy, Christian Kennedy, and Taylor Grishaw and Gerran; three great-grandchildren, Kyrie Kennedy, Bryson Kennedy, and Skylar Kennedy; and numerous nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his two brothers, Robert Kennedy, and Billy Kennedy.

The family received friends Saturday, November 6, 2021, from 2:00 p.m.- 4:00 p.m., at the funeral home and other times at the home of his daughter Christina Grishaw.

A memorial service was held 4:30 p.m., Sunday, at Robinson Funeral Home, with Father Jim Gallagher officiating.

Robinson Funeral Home and Crematory is serving the family. An online condolence may be made by visiting [www.robinsonfuneral.com](http://www.robinsonfuneral.com).

For information about placing an obituary, contact the Times Virginian at: [news@timesvirginian.com](mailto:news@timesvirginian.com).

## Wreck

Continued from Page 3

One person was trapped in the car and rescued by members of the Appomattox Volunteer Fire Department (AVFD). The injured person was transported to Lynchburg General Hospital. A second individual who had been in the car was being treated at the scene by medics. The driver of the

tractor trailer was uninjured.

The car was moderately damaged in the wreck, but the driver's side door had to be cut by AVFD to remove the entrapped driver. The tractor trailer sustained minor damage.

Charges are pending.

Other departments at the scene were the Appomattox County Rescue Squad, Delta Response Team and the Appomattox County Sheriff's Office.

## Event

Continued from Page 3

facility and to receive the treatment they need. During the wait, they get no treatment or care for the mental health problem that brought them there.

"The excuse is that there are no hospital beds available in the mental health facilities," Simpson stated.

"Virginia got \$3.1 billion in CARES Act funding. How much of that did they give to mental health?" Simpson pondered.

He also noted that in a state of eight million people, there is only one juvenile mental health facility and crisis center across the entire commonwealth.

"They're always full," he said.

"(Meanwhile) the children are sitting in the ER and getting worse, not better," Simpson said. "I have deputies calling me saying, 'These children are in tears. What do I do?'"

The children get poorer treatment than inmates in Virginia's correctional facilities, he observed.

"No outside time, no treatment, no recreation, sometimes handcuffs for days," Simpson said. "These are children who are screaming for help, and this is our answer."

"(On any given night) there are at least six or seven police officers ... at the ER sitting there with someone who is going through a mental health crisis (from the greater Lynchburg area)," Simpson told the audience. "Officers are pulled from their other duties to spend days at the ER."

"It impacts everybody. If you think mental health doesn't impact you, it does. It affects everybody," the sheriff said. "This is the biggest public safety crisis that I've seen in my career."

Just from Appomattox County alone, this scenario plays out at least two or

## Court

Continued from Page 3

vehicle was consensual. Fleet and Ferrell's defense attorney Jordan Davies both stated that Ferrell was cooperative during the investigation and never contested the charges.

Ferrell had spent six months in jail without bond after his arrest on the same date as the incident.

Circuit Court judge Andy Nelson expressed concern about Ferrell's behavior, and told Ferrell that he is responsible for his actions and that there are consequences to those actions.

Conditions of the sus-

## Award

Continued from Page 1

Tidewater area, Lynch moved to Appomattox 10 years ago "to get away from the city," he said. He runs a landscaping company called Horticultural Services but focuses the majority of his off time on his music. He and his band, The Blue Moon Boys, often play events in Appomattox and the surrounding areas.

"I play guitar, harmonica and I'm a song writer. I've always been a singer, and I picked up guitar when I was 17 or 18. I've been playing ever since," according to Lynch.

Lynch has played on live TV as well.

"I loved it," he said. "I also have a YouTube channel and broadcast live shows on Thursday nights as Russell Lynch and

Friends on taterpatchradio.com."

He said the show is a variety of music including outlaw country and rock-ability.

Bringing more local music to the area is one of Lynch's long-term goals.

"I'm wanting to help bring more events and artists to the Appomattox area. We're looking at down the line maybe having some fundraising and working on having a more consistent platform for local artist to showcase their talents, and have people come out and enjoy them," said Lynch.

Currently, Lynch said he "has also been helping Keith 'Hillbilly' Witt launch a new internet station called The Home of The Hillbilly that will feature live and streamed music 24 hours a day." The station is still a work in progress, but it can be

accessed through <https://live365.com/station/CKF5-a38957>.

Lynch has a solid fan base.

"I have heard him a lot," local resident Margaret Nethercutt said. "He does a great job every time. Looks like he loves playing and singing. Always asks the people what they want to hear. The only group that does that."

Lynch has released two albums including his newest album Outlaw Country's Comin' Back, featuring his award winning single Southern Voodoo Woman. The single won Outlaw Country Song of the Year in 2019. He can be contacted for information on his music, upcoming shows or booking opportunities through his website at [RussellLynchMusic.com](http://RussellLynchMusic.com), and his music can be found on Spotify.

goods less than \$200.

According to evidence in court, on June 13, 2019, an Appomattox County Sheriff's Office was working a larceny case for a stolen generator. Lester was in possession of the generator at his home that he had received in exchange for methamphetamine. A gun and methamphetamine was also found at the home.

On April 4, 2020, an Appomattox County Sheriff's Office deputy pulled over a vehicle in which Lester was traveling. He admitted to having meth and a meth pipe in the vehicle. A .22 caliber pistol was other contraband found in the car.

Lester is scheduled for sentencing Feb. 10.

## Man guilty of probation violation

Moses Lee Gibson, 40, of Farmville, is guilty of a probation violation and had a prior two-year and 11-month suspended sentence revoked and suspended.

According to court records, Moses has a lengthy criminal history dating back to 2001 in Appomattox County, the latest being a possession of a controlled substance conviction in 2019.

Records also show that on Sept. 14, Gibson was found guilty of a failure to appear charge in Prince Edward County and sentenced to serve 10 days.

three times each week.

"We can do better," he said.

He noted that he and other law enforcement officers plan to communicate with the new governor and attorney general about the severity of this problem.

The Rev. Watson preached from the Book of Acts, the account of Peter taking the time to notice and heal a crippled man.

"I wonder how often we stop to really care about the people around us who are suffering silently," Watson said.

Peter said he could not help the man's financial needs, but he was able to deal directly with the man's root problem.

He shared some sobering statistics: "15 million alcoholics in the U.S., 10 million addicted to an illegal drug, five million addicted to prescription medication. Every drug and alcohol addict directly impacts at least five other people. 30 million times five — that's

150 million Americans."

Watson also commented that various government agencies report that in the U.S. "every year, 5,000 teenagers take their own lives, and for every one that succeeds, four others try."

Jones shared with the audience the heartbreaking saga her family faced when one of her sons went through a psychotic episode while living in Hawaii. After he had come home to Appomattox, he listened to voices in his head and attempted suicide by jumping into the path of an oncoming vehicle.

She recounted the "maze of going through a mental health journey" that her whole family endured. He has been diagnosed with bipolar disorder, and because of the suicide attempt, he is now paralyzed and suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder.

"I'm blessed to still have my son," she related.

He lives with his sister

now; "she's very helpful to him," Jones recounted. For her full story, read Jones' book, "Shattering" (Redemption Press, 2019).

In addition to the speakers, the walk and the paper lantern launching provided a meaningful experience to the attendees. Signs posted around the park proclaimed messages of encouragement. Several of the families who had lost a loved one to suicide brought a framed portrait of their departed family member.

"We placed about 50 rocks around the Courtland field prior to the event for participants to take away and rehide in the community or to use as a way to start a conversation with someone about mental illness and suicide," explained Allen. "Each rock had a positive message or statistic about mental health. And on the back was the number for the suicide prevention hotline, 1-800-273-TALK."

Shaunna Brown of Ap-

pomattox attended the event together with several of her extended family members. The family lost her son, Caleb Purcell, to suicide at the age of 19 in January 2018.

Asked what the event and the chance to memorialize her son meant to her family, she replied, "It means everything to us. It reminds us that it's okay to be not okay. It's a time for people to come together to stop the stigma surrounding mental health issues and also to remember the people who lost the fight."

Attendees wore various colored strings of beads, each color representing the relationship to the wearer of the person lost to suicide (such as parents, children and siblings of suicide victims).

For more about the Still Breathing group and resources for helping loved ones facing mental health issues, visit the Still Breathing Facebook page.

## Murder

Continued from Page 1

The Appomattox County Sheriff's Office stated in a July 21 press release that deputies responded to the residence at approximately 12:01 p.m. to investigate a reported shooting.

Upon arrival, deputies discovered a male outside of the residence suffering from a gunshot wound and immediately initiated CPR, but the victim did not survive and was pronounced dead at the scene.

Abbitt requested a jury trial. The trial has been scheduled for March 3-4, 2022.

## Robbery

Continued from Page 1

right after the store closed. They ordered two employees and one customer to get behind the counter and stole \$1,700 from the safe and cash register, along with items from one of the victims. The firearm that was used in the robbery turned out to be a pellet gun but appeared to be authentic to the victims.

Both suspects were apprehended quickly by Appomattox County Sheriff's Office deputies. Robinson was cooperative and showed where he had tossed the gun into the woods after the robbery.

Robinson apologized to the victims, who were not present in court, before his sentence was read.

"Every day I try to pray and ask that they forgive me one day, that they find it

in their hearts. I'm just truly sorry, your honor, I truly am. I can't even express how sorry I am," he said.

In speaking of the trauma caused to the victims by the robbery, Circuit Court Judge Andy Nelson told Robinson that even though the gun was not a genuine firearm, "They don't know that it's not a gun, and it puts them in fear for their life." Nelson also stated that Robinson is fortunate that the victims were not armed or else he could have lost his own life if he had been fired upon.

Conditions of Robinson's suspended portion of the sentence are 40 years good behavior, five years supervised probation, payment of restitution and staying off the Pamlin Dollar General property.

Wade entered an Alford Plea in court for his charges Feb. 11 and is scheduled to be sentenced Dec. 14.

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