



### 6 THINGS TO KNOW THIS WEEK



#### RALPH PEER'S SON SPEAKS ABOUT HISTORIC BRISTOL SESSIONS

In honor of the 95th anniversary of the 1927 Bristol Sessions, Ralph Peer II, the son of Ralph S. Peer, who was the Victor producer at those historic recordings, will speak via Zoom about his father's career, legacy and the Bristol Sessions. The virtual event at 7 p.m., July 18, will take place at the Birthplace of Country Music Museum in downtown Bristol. It is free and open to the public.

#### BRISTOL PUBLIC LIBRARY SETS SUMMER BOOK BINGO CHALLENGE

Summer Book Bingo is underway at the Bristol Public Library through Sept. 30. Participants can read a book or finish a task, mark off or stamp the corresponding square and write down the task on a form provided by the library. When five squares are marked off diagonally, horizontally or vertically, the card is returned to the library so the player can be entered for a prize.

#### COUNTRY ARTIST DOUG STONE TO PERFORM AT PARAMOUNT BRISTOL

Coming to Paramount Bristol at 7 tonight is a performance by Doug Stone, the singer of country hits "A Jukebox with a Country Song," "In a Different Light" and "I'd Be Better Off (In a Pine Box)". Tickets for the 7 p.m. show are \$28-\$52, plus taxes and fees.



CONTRIBUTED

#### BORDER BASH FEATURES CRAIG STREET AND SWIM IN THE WILD

Those attending Friday's Border Bash are in for a double treat, with two musical performances. The first at 6:30 p.m. will feature Craig Street, while the second at 7:30 brings Swim in the Wild. Activities begin at 6 p.m. in the 500 block of State Street in downtown Bristol.

#### FIRST HORIZON BANK HOSTS WORKSHOP TO IMPROVE CREDIT

Trying to improve your credit score? You may want to check out First Step to Building Credit at First Horizon Bank at 800 State St. in Bristol. It will be held June 20 from 9-11 a.m. Drop by and learn about credit factors and what drives your credit score, and pick up some tips to boost your score.

#### ANNABELLE'S CURSE PERFORMS AT SESSIONS HOTEL ON FRIDAY

If you're looking to end your week with some music, Annabelle's Curse will perform Friday, July 15, at the Lauderdale Stage at The Sessions Hotel in downtown Bristol. The alternative folk band will play from 6:30-9 p.m. as part of the Picnic on the Lawn Series.



CONTRIBUTED



MARINA WATERS/BRISTOL NOW

From left to right, The United Co. President and CEO Martin Kent, Par Ventures President Clyde Stacy, The United Co. Chairman Jim McGlothlin, Chairman of the Seminole Tribe of Florida Marcellus W. Osceola Jr., Hard Rock International Chief Operating Officer Jon Lucas and President of Hard Rock Hotel and Casino Bristol Allie Evangelista jointly cut the ribbon on the temporary casino facility in Bristol.

# Ready to Rock

## Bristol Casino opens temporary facility to public

By **MARINA WATERS** and **TESSA WORLEY**  
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tworley@bristolnow.news

BRISTOL, Va. — The Bristol Casino — Future Home of Hard Rock opened its temporary facility on Friday, July 8, welcoming locals and visitors to the first-ever casino in the state of Virginia.

In fact, it opened early. With the crowd of hundreds standing in line, casino officials decided to open about 90 minutes ahead of the scheduled

See **CASINO**, Page A8



MARINA WATERS/BRISTOL NOW

Slot machines make up the majority of the temporary casino floor, with 870 slots currently at the facility.

#### More from casino opening

23-year-old takes on night shift as table games dealer. **A2**

Readers describe their thoughts on new casino with one word. **A3**

Lottery continues to build revenue in Virginia and Tennessee. **A8**

Gray machines still in legal limbo in Virginia. **A9**

Glossary of gambling and gaming terms. **A9**

Hard Rock Bristol opens with sports betting. **A9**

Gallery of images from casino's opening day. **B6**

### A DAY OF GAMBLING

# The casino has a lot to offer — for me, it just wasn't money

BRISTOL, Va. — I've moved up from the fictional dollars my editor gave me last year.

Yes, you read that right, fictional. He gave me 200 imaginary dollars to galivant through Bristol for a column describing just how I would spend \$200 on the Tennessee side of State Street. It was a good time — but my luck seems to have gotten even better (well, mostly).

I was given real, actual, tangible money to gamble at the brand-new Bristol Casino in Bristol, Virginia, during its first Saturday in business. I

was given \$100 to try my luck at the new temporary casino, a first for our reporters. (I know this because I asked the employee who asked me to sign my receipt if she had ever had given a reporter money for gambling. She said "nope" with her eyebrows raised. I don't know that she was confident in my ability to return any money.)

Neither was I, and for good reason.

Until the media tour Friday morning at the Bristol Casino, I had never stepped foot onto an actual gaming floor. I know nothing about casinos or poker or even slot machines.

Yet I thought I had a strange sort of family history on my side.

My grandmother would flip her lid to know it was my job on Saturday to go gamble and write a story about it for the newspaper. My grandmother, who we all called "Nona," (she always said "Grandma" sounded too old to her), loved gambling, smoking and drinking and was married six different times. She was most excited about the birth of my older sister because she weighed 7 pounds, 11 ounces, and was 21 inches long (lucky gambling numbers, apparently).

She owned a liquor store in Albany, Georgia, and was even shot in the back twice at a poker game. (Somewhere in the

See **DAY**, Page A3



Marina Waters

**INSIDE**

Best Bets.....	A5
Bridge.....	B5
Crossword.....	B5
Horoscope.....	B5
Jumble.....	B5
Music.....	B4

**WEATHER**

Pets.....	B10
Region.....	A4
Sports.....	B1
Sudoku.....	B5
Tastes.....	B8

High Low  
**87 65**  
Scattered thunderstorms



#### Music

Lita Ford shakes the stage of Paramount Bristol with heavy metal show. **B4**



#### Television

New PBS Appalachia station will focus on streaming local stories. **A4**



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Luke Patterson fills his Abingdon eatery, Luke's Café, with eclectic art, music and gourmet recipes

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#### THE CADILLAC THREE SET TO BRING 'COUNTRY FUZZ' TO SIDETRACKS OCT. 7

Mix Tabasco with sweet tea, and you get The Cadillac Three — according to the country trio's latest album, "Tabasco & Sweet Tea," that is. The band, made up of true Nashville natives will perform at SideTracks, 3080 W. State St., in Bristol, Tennessee, on Friday, Oct. 7, at 9 p.m. Tickets are \$20. For more information, go to <https://sidetracksbristol.com/event/the-cadillac-three/>.

#### ANNUAL WILDLIFE WEEKEND SET FOR OCT. 7-8

Bristol, Tennessee's 25th annual Wildlife Weekend on Oct. 7-8 will offer educational events within Steele Creek Park. The weekend will begin at 6 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 7. Wildlife Weekend activities will continue on Saturday, Oct. 8. All Wildlife Weekend activities are free with park admission of \$2 per vehicle. For more information, contact Nature Center Director Jeremy Stout at [jstout@bristoltn.org](mailto:jstout@bristoltn.org) or (423) 989-5616.

#### CROOKED ROAD SONGWRITING CONTEST INVITES LISTENERS

On Oct. 6, music lovers are invited to listen to musicians and songwriters in The Crooked Road's Songwriting Workshop and Showcase at Mountain Empire Community College. Tickets are \$50 for the workshop (10 a.m. to 2 p.m.) and showcase (3 to 5 p.m.). Tickets are \$5 for general admission to the showcase only. For more information, go to [www.thecrookedroadva.com](http://www.thecrookedroadva.com).

#### SECOND ANNUAL BRISTOL IN BLOOM ART FESTIVAL SET FOR SATURDAY

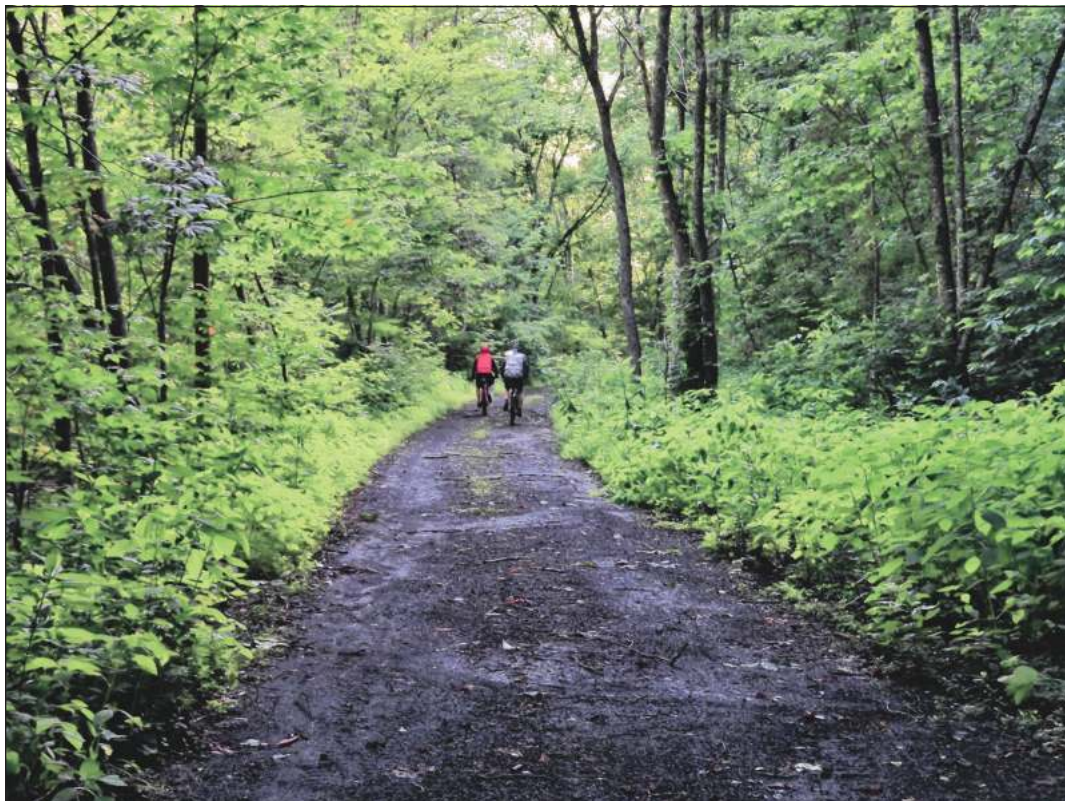
Bristol, Virginia, will come alive with art on Saturday, Oct. 8, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. with the second-ever Bristol in Bloom Art Festival in Cumberland Square Park. The event is free and celebrates Appalachian artists and will include art vendors, food trucks, live music, demos and more.

#### BARTER THEATRE PRESENTS 'TUCK EVERLASTING' AT SMITH THEATRE

The Barter Theatre's Barter Players present "Tuck Everlasting," based on the novel by Natalie Babbitt. In the play, Winnie Foster becomes entwined with the never-aging Tuck family. The shows run from Oct. 4 through Nov. 4. Tickets are \$16. For more information, go to [www.bartertheatre.com](http://www.bartertheatre.com).

#### ROCKY MOUNT TO HOST HARVEST FESTIVAL OCT. 8-9

Join the Cobb family and friends as they celebrate the harvest on Oct. 8-9. Living history tours of the Cobb farm will take place all day. Demonstrations will include blacksmithing, fireplace cooking, apple butter making, apple cider pressing and more. Local craft artisans and food trucks will also be on-site. For more information, go to [www.rockymountmuseum.com](http://www.rockymountmuseum.com).



CONTRIBUTED/MENDOTA TRAIL CONSERVANCY INC.

The restoration of five trestles added 2.5 miles to the Mendota Trail.

## Five restored trestles add 2.5 miles to Mendota Trail

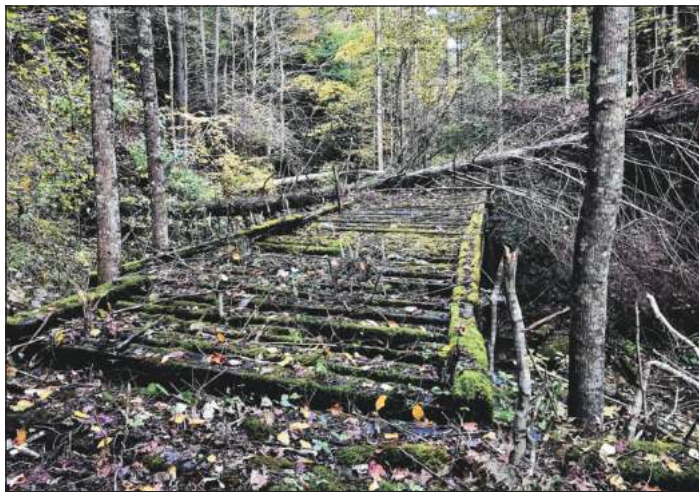
By ROBERT SORRELL  
FOR BRISTOL NOW

BRISTOL, Va. — Work is complete on the restoration of five trestles on the Mendota Trail, which will add 2.5 miles to the foot and bicycle path.

The public is invited to attend a grand opening and ribbon cutting on Oct. 14 at the Mendota trailhead in Mendota, Virginia. The event is related to the completed restoration of five trestles on the Mendota Trail, according to a news release.

This portion of the 12.5-mile trail, which stretches between Bristol and Mendota, will showcase lush woodlands and multiple crossings.

Engineering firm Tysinger, Hampton &



CONTRIBUTED/MENDOTA TRAIL CONSERVANCY INC.

An overgrown bridge is pictured before the trail restorations were complete.

Partners Inc. out of Johnson City, Tennessee, designed the project. The Mendota Trail Conservancy Inc., which owns the trail, contracted

with Inland Construction out of Abingdon for construction services. This remote section of

See TRAIL, Page A3



## Bristol Now launches first Readers' Choice Awards

By MARINA WATERS  
[mwaters@bristolnow.news](mailto:mwaters@bristolnow.news)

If you've ever wanted to share your favorite restaurant, jewelry store, veterinary clinic or other local business in either of the two Bristols, now is your chance to make your voice heard.

Bristol Now will launch its first Readers' Choice Awards starting Oct. 10. The first-ever competition will feature the top establishments within Bristol, Tennessee, and Bristol, Virginia, in over 150 categories — from roofers and auto dealers to churches and boutiques.

"There are a lot of great businesses in Bristol that our readers need to know about," Six Rivers Media Vice President Billy Kirk said, "and who is the best in the area."

Readers' Choice is new to Bristol Now. However, the competition appears in Six

See READERS, Page A3

## Bristol in Bloom celebrates Appalachian artists

By EMILY STEWART  
[estewart@bristolnow.news](mailto:estewart@bristolnow.news)

On Saturday, Bristol's Cumberland Square Park will blossom with art and color for this year's annual Bristol in Bloom Art Festival.

Founded by artist Marcy Parks, Bristol in Bloom is an Appalachian regional art event featuring all local artists, craftsmen and small business owners. More than 60 artists will be in attendance, each with unique pieces, stories and passions for art. The original Bristol in Bloom Art Festival was set to take place in 2020 but endured COVID-related delays until 2021.

"Growing up as an artist here, I watched so many of my peers move away because there just wasn't a strong arts

community at the time," Parks said. "I created Bristol in Bloom to not only create opportunities for Appalachian artists to share their work and tell their stories but also to strengthen the community and connections within the arts community and encourage artists to dig their roots deeper into Appalachia."

The event will include kids and community art activities, interactive installations, including an all-new, mystery-themed project, live demonstrations and more. There will also be a Beer and Wine Garden and two locally loved food trucks, the Pakalachian Food Truck and Bristol Berry Bowls.

Bristol in Bloom is a free admission event and will be held in



CONTRIBUTED/MARCY PARKS

Dozens of local artists gather at Cumberland Park to share their creations and their stories at the first Bristol in Bloom Art Festival in 2021.

Cumberland Square Park from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

"Several artists participating in last year's event set new single-day

sales records at Bristol in Bloom," Parks said.

"This event, and others like it, only serve to strengthen the bonds in our community, helping

it to grow and flourish."

For more information, visit the Bristol in Bloom Art Festival Facebook page or [bristolinbloom.com](http://bristolinbloom.com).

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Pets .....B8  
Sports .....B1-B2  
Sudoku .....B5  
Tastes .....B6

#### WEATHER

High Low  
**74 44**  
Sunny all day



#### Sports

Former John Battle cross-country coach Randy Smith honored at 50th Sugar Hollow meet **B1**



#### Music

Jack Greene dominated the first ever Country Music Association Awards **A5**



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#### CHRISTMAS PARADE SET FOR DEC. 1

Christmas will come alive downtown with the Bristol Christmas Parade on Thursday, Dec. 1, at 7 p.m. The parade will start on Bob Morrison Boulevard and make its way through the center of town before finishing up at the Bristol Train Station. As always, Jolly Ole Saint Nick will make his presence known, riding in the final float.

#### CHRIS ISAAK TO PLAY AT PARAMOUNT

The singer, songwriter and actor Chris Isaak will take to the



CONTRIBUTED

Paramount Theatre stage on Sunday, Dec. 4. In the course of Chris Isaak's career, he has released nine albums and 12 singles, been nominated for two Grammy awards, acted in several motion pictures and starred in his own critically acclaimed TV series. For more information, go to <https://paramountbristol.org/event/chris-isaak/>.

#### BCM RINGS IN CHRISTMAS WITH RIDERS IN THE SKY

Riders in the Sky will rope in Christmas cheer at the Birthplace of Country Music's "A BCM Christmas." The Grammy Award-winning Western band will perform at the museum on Dec. 2 starting at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$100 and include a sit-down dinner in the special exhibits gallery. Tickets to "A BCM Christmas" are currently on sale through the events page at [BirthplaceOfCountryMusic.org](http://BirthplaceOfCountryMusic.org).



CONTRIBUTED

#### ANDY SANFORD'S ATLANTA INVASION ARRIVES IN BRISTOL

Andy Sanford invaded Atlanta, and now he's headed to Bristol, Tennessee's Blue Ridge Comedy Club on Dec. 2 and 3 at 8 p.m. His hourlong special, "Shameful Information," is currently featured on Amazon Prime. He will also bring Gabbie Watts and Gilbert Lawand along for the ride. For more information, go to <https://www.blueridgecomedy.com/events/>.

#### STICKLEY FARM TO HOST BRUNCH WITH THE GRINCH

Brunch with the Grinch? You can't cancel that again! Stickley Farm will host its Brunch with the Grinch on Sunday, Dec. 4, from 1 to 4 p.m. The event is \$15 per person and will include brunch and a movie with the Grinch. Limited seats are available. Reserve your spot today by texting (423) 444-3494.

#### BLOUNTVILLE TREE LIGHTING SET FOR DEC. 8

Blountville will continue the tradition of "One Special Town ... Two Special Trees," which includes the lighting of the 30-foot Douglas fir on the courthouse lawn at 6 p.m. and a second tree lighting by the Hope for Victims Support and Advocacy Group in remembrance of victims of violence. The Appalachian Express Chorus will also perform.

## Riders' Roundup: Cowboy group set for BCM performance

BRISTOL NOW

BRISTOL, Va. — Not every vocal group earns multiple Grammy Awards, becomes members of the Western Music Hall of Fame and touts a song in a Pixar classic over a 40-year span. And very few do so in cowboy garb with gallon hats to match — yet Riders in the Sky keeps trucking after decades of music.

The band will play its country and western music with a hint of humor at "A BCM Christmas" with Riders in the Sky at the Birthplace of Country Music Museum on Dec. 2.

"Radio Bristol is proud to bring Riders in the Sky to the museum for this very special holiday celebration," said WBCM Program Director and host Kris Truelsen in a press release from the Birthplace of Country Music. "The evening will be filled with lots of laughs and the very best in classic western music."

Riders in the Sky has tallied over 7,200 appearances, 35 years on the Grand Ole Opry, 40 albums and tours in each of the



CONTRIBUTED/RIDERS IN THE SKY

Riders in the Sky will bring its cowboy and western charm to Bristol on Dec. 2.

50 states in the U.S. and all over the world, the release said. In addition to two Grammy Awards, the band has received numerous awards from the Western Music Association and Wrangler Awards from the

Cowboy Hall of Fame and Western Heritage Museum. The group has also earned awards from the Academy of Western Artists and is enshrined in the

See **RIDERS**, Page A3

## Status hearing set next month for 'Killer Clown' case

By **ROBERT SORRELL**  
FOR BRISTOL NOW

ABINGDON, Va. — An Abingdon, Virginia, woman accused of



Keen-Warren

dressing up as a clown and fatally shooting the wife of a man she later married is expected to return to court before Christmas in Florida.

Shelia Keen-Warren, who was arrested near her home in Southwest Virginia in 2017 — 27 years after Marlene Warren, 40, was shot at her home in Florida — remains incarcerated.

Recently, Keen-Warren's attorneys asked prosecutors to release a "clown sighting file." After learning about the file, defense attorneys in a motion asked for a delay in the first-degree murder trial, which was scheduled to start this fall. The jury trial was canceled, and a status hearing is scheduled for Dec. 22.

The "clown sighting file" contains information about other clown sighting leads at the time in 1990, the year Marlene Warren was gunned down at her front door in Palm Beach County. The file consists of names, addresses or phone numbers of 40 leads, according to the motion.

"Needless to say, this will take the defense considerable time and resources to investigate," the defense attorneys said.

Due to her extended stay in a Florida jail, which has resulted from numerous delays since her arrest, defense attorneys also asked the judge for a pre-trial release. The judge ultimately denied that request.

Back in May 1990, Marlene Warren was shot in the face by someone wearing an orange wig, red nose and white face paint, who handed her carnations and foil balloons after she answered the door.

Keen-Warren, an employee of Marlene Warren's husband, Michael, was considered a person of interest early on, authorities said. The two later married in Las Vegas, police said.

In 2017, detectives said advances in DNA technology, combined with evidence gathered in 1990, showed Keen-Warren was the killer in what has been

See **CLOWN**, Page A2

## The sauce is boss

### Burg'N Yolk food truck spices up breakfast

By **CAROLYN R. WILSON**  
FOR BRISTOL NOW

BRISTOL, Va. — It's all about the sauces at one of Bristol's newest food truck businesses.

Customers are raving about the burgers and breakfast sandwiches at Burg'N Yolk, all topped with homemade sauces that can transform any meal into an explosion of flavors.

You can thank Jocelynn Gingrich, manager of the operation, for that.

She's always enjoyed cooking and experimenting with flavors.



This series spotlights the region's unique food trucks.

Now that she's manager of the business, she's using her culinary skills to attract customers.

"We opened in October. We've been killing it ever since.

People love the food, especially

the breakfasts," said Gingrich.

The food truck business, located at Bristol's Food Truck Park at 21484 Travalite Drive, is branching out to offer their Brekky Sandwiches, Brunch Burgs and tots at other local businesses, such as Rural King in Bristol, Virginia. Gingrich said to watch for them to eventually sell their food in the parking lots of Bristol Regional Medical Center and the Amazon distribution center in town.

See **FOOD**, Page A2



Jocelynn Gingrich, manager of Burg'N Yolk, and Brayden Alexander, in window, serve as many as 30 customers each day at Bristol's Food Truck Park.



CAROLYN R. WILSON/FOR BRISTOL NOW

This smash burger is topped with cheese, bacon and egg.



CAROLYN R. WILSON/FOR BRISTOL NOW

Burg'N Yolk food truck operates from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Bristol's Food Truck Park at 21484 Travalite Drive in Bristol, Virginia. Check their Facebook and Instagram pages for additional scheduled locations.

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Outdoors ..... C9  
Pets ..... A7  
Region ..... B5  
Sports ..... B1-B2  
Sudoku ..... A9

#### WEATHER

High Low  
**61 25**  
Mostly cloudy, 85% of showers, clear skies overnight



#### Sports

Creed Musick reunites with Michael McMeans, his previous coach at Sullivan South, at Tennessee High. Both are ready for another shot at the state basketball tournament after COVID-19 interfered two seasons ago. **B1**



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