

Warren/Frederick County Report

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Recipe: Gourmet Fish and Chips



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BACK COVER:



Jeep RAM

INDICTMENTS



US Black History honored locally with outstanding events

President Gene Kilby says NAACP revitalized in Warren/Page Counties



Students and teachers from Skyline and Warren County High Schools, including Warren County High School's Principal Kenneth Knesch Jr., traveled by bus to the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington D.C. learning more about the history of Black Americans. Photo courtesy of Gene Kilby

By Carol Ballard
Warren/Frederick County Report

Local folks have been and are continuing to honor and celebrate Black History Month. When contacted, Warren/Page Counties NAACP President Gene Kilby agreed to share local happenings.

"Knocking Down Walls" film

The first event he highlighted was the upcoming special screening of the documentary film "Knocking Down Walls." The film and panel

discussion that followed took place on February 20 at the Royal Cinemas Theater on Main Street in Front Royal, narrated by the Reverend Harold Brown, pastor of Mount Vernon Baptist Church.

The media release described the film as, "A student led journey through the civil rights history in Virginia. It focuses on the historic decision of Harrisonburg's US District Judge, John Paul, in the integration of Virginia schools whose decision affected the African American students in Virginia, and among these were the 23 students who integrated Warren County

High School on February 18, 1959.

Trip to the Capital

Kilby added more events, mentioning that on February 18th, 37 students and 10 teachers, from Skyline and Warren County High Schools, including Warren's Principal Kenneth Knesch Jr., traveled by bus to the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington D.C. for a field trip to visit some of the Capital's memorials as well as the museum.

"The response was great," said Kilby. "A few students said they cried at some of it, but everyone said they had learned a lot."

sored by the NAACP. Last year's community-wide celebration was held in downtown Front Royal in the Gazebo area, with a big turnout.

"Even though last year was quite successful with attendance between 700 and 900 people, the hope is to build it up better than last year and we'd like to go over 1,000," said Kilby.

"Coming to the Table"

He added that on Saturday the 15th, the North Shenandoah Valley (Front Royal) "Coming to the Table" group met in Winchester at the Winchester

Public Schools Administrative Building for discussion and fellowship with this year's theme "African Americans and Labor," focusing on their significant contributions to the workforce across a variety of industries and labor conditions throughout history.

Middletown celebrates Black History Month

A service in celebration of Black History Month has been scheduled in Middletown at the Mount Zion Methodist Church on Main Street from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. on February 22 organized



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Second annual Juneteenth celebration-2025

In the planning stage is the second annual Juneteenth celebration spon-



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Folks can visit this serene Contemplation Pool at the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington D.C and read the immortal words of the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., “We are determined...to work and fight until Justice runs down-like water and righteousness like a mighty stream.”

by the Reverend Dr. Diane Newman. Middletown Heritage Society member Ellen Gant will sing a verse of the Black National Anthem, read an opening scripture and talk about her past family history and present activities. She will also highlight four outstanding pioneer African American Black inventors and doctors.

The Black National Anthem hymn was written as a poem by NAACP leader James Weldon Johnson in 1900 to celebrate President Abraham Lincoln's birthday.

The Black National Anthem

“Lift Every Voice and Sing”
Lift every voice and sing ‘til earth and heaven ring, Ring with the harmonies of Liberty.
Let our rejoicing rise High as the listening skies, let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us,
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun



The Warren/Page Counties NAACP President Gene Kilby, is shown here at the first annual Juneteenth Celebration in downtown Front Royal in 2024.

Let us march on ‘til victory is won.

Warren/Page Counties NAACP Membership drive

After discussing their activities, Kilby brought up some of the organization's present goals and concerns.

“Right now, we’re working on a membership drive. It’s going very well with about 100 members, but we want to have over 150.”

He mentioned that in Page County the NAACP was dormant for a few years but members have become more involved recently.

“We’re hoping they will get even more involved. It’s incumbent upon us to educate people. And even though the public knew that Juneteenth was a holiday, most didn’t know what it was. People need to know why these things are important,” he continued. “Both Black and white people should know this.”

During the conversation and related to the separate schooling for Black and white students historically, Kilby brought up a present concern about the proposal for “School Choice.”

“School Choice,” is defined as “The term for education options that allow students and families to select alternatives to public schools and which is the subject of debate in various state legislatures across the United States.

For more school choice information, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/School_choice

Kilby offered this opinion. “This community, because of our size, is too small for school choices. We can’t af-

ford to have money taken away,” he said. “I think kids who need it will not have services like those with special needs and children of color.

“The sad thing is that elected officials want to push school choice but what they need to do is to strengthen resources into the public schools and make public education better,” he said and added, “They want to segregate us again.”

Related to an attempt such as this, is the book titled “Wit, Will and Walls” that his sister Betty Kilby, one of the 23 African American children to integrate Warren County’s Public Schools in 1959, wrote about her experience.

She wrote this informative piece to introduce her history and the struggle they faced.

“I wrote the book to tell the story of how we forced compliance of the Brown vs. Board of Education decision outlawing segregation. I was thirteen years old when I sued the Warren County School Board in a fight to get an education beyond the seventh grade,” she said on her website <https://bettykilby.com>.

Described in the introduction to her book is her father, James Kilby’s, role.

“He took on Old Virginia’s deeply rooted apartheid system. James Kilby had been raised in what can only be called inter-generational semi-slavery on a farm in Rappahannock County. Like his father, he had worked at the owner’s beck and call essentially for room, board and the occasional dollar. Ultimately, James Kilby stood up and led his family on their journey through terror, isolation and repeated defeats toward educational opportunity equal to that of white society.”

Betty Kilby wrote the following that included her mother, Catherine Ausberry.

“My father is the reason I have a story that matters. Together, through their [both of her parents’] teachings, they gave me the strength, courage, love and forgiveness to endure and succeed.”

She later wrote another book “Cousins” along with her cousin Phoebe who was a descendant of slave owners.

“I am co-author of a second book, ‘Cousins.’ This book was written in alternating chapters with Phoebe Kilby, a descendant of the family that once owned and enslaved my family. We tell our story of how we reconciled the past and suggest a way to forge a healing path toward racial reconciliation for our family, friends and anyone who desires to live in a society of love and respect,” she wrote.

This endeavor reflects the beliefs of the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., who said, “Love is creative and redemptive. Love builds up and unites; hate tears down and destroys. The aftermath of the ‘fight with fire’ method ... is bitterness and chaos, the aftermath of the love method is reconciliation and creation of the beloved community.... Yes, love — which means understanding, creative, redemptive goodwill, even for one’s enemies — is the solution.”

For information about Warren-Page Branch NAACP 7125, contact info@warrenpaginaacp7125.org

Betty Kilby’s book can be found at: <https://bettykilby.com/shop/p/will-will-walls-by-betty-kilby-baldwin>

– crawford0905@gmail.com

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INDICTMENTS

January 2025 Indictments January Term

Alfredo Andreo Basile

The Warren County Va. Circuit Court Grand Jury charges that: on or about August 31, 2024, in the County of Warren, Alfredo Andreo Basile, 37, of the 100 block of Stonegate Ct., Front Royal, VA 22630, did unlawfully and feloniously by force, threat, intimidation, or deception and without legal justification or excuse, seize, take, transport, detain, or secrete Alex Basile (spouse), with the intent to

deprive her of her personal liberty.

Demond Alexander Lightfoot

The Warren County Va. Circuit Court Grand Jury charges that: on or about October 2, 2024, in the County of Warren, Demond Alexander Lightfoot, 27, of the 700 block of Parkview Dr., Front Royal, VA 22630, did unlawfully and feloniously knowingly fail to register or re-register with the Virginia State Police for placement on the Sex Offender and Crimes Against Minor Registry, after having been previously convicted of a sexually violent offense.

classified in Schedule I or Schedule II not obtained directly from, or pursuant to, a valid prescription or order of a practitioner while acting in the course of a professional practice or not authorized by the Drug Control Act.

Travis James Fleming

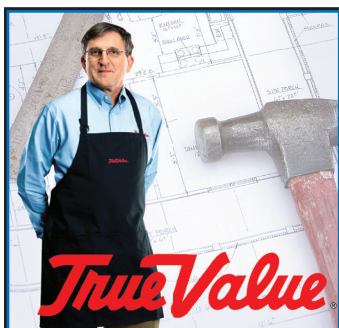
The Warren County Va. Circuit Court Grand Jury charges Travis James Fleming, 25, of the 100

block of Oregon Hollow Rd., Front Royal, VA 22630, with two counts: COUNT ONE: In the County of Warren, Travis James Fleming, while being a parent, guardian or another person responsible for the care of a child then under the age of eighteen years of age, did unlawfully and feloniously cause or permit serious bodily injury to the life or health of such child by a willful act, omission, or refusal to provide necessary care. COUNT TWO: did maliciously stab, cut or

wound a child then under the age of eighteen years of age with the intent to maim, disfigure, disable, or kill. Date of the offenses was on or about July 18, 2024.

Dennis John Gorton

The Warren County Va. Circuit Court Grand Jury charges that: on or about September 22, 2024, in the County of Warren, Dennis John Gorton, 46, address unavailable, did unlawfully and feloniously, knowingly and intentionally pos-



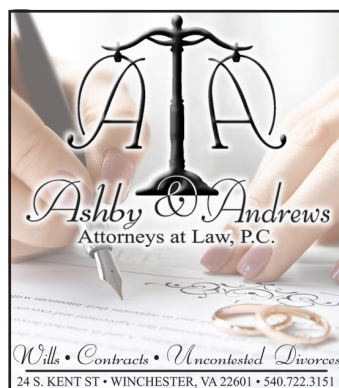
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Jennifer Marie Holborn

The Warren County Va. Circuit Court Grand Jury charges that: on or about October 2, 2024, in the County of Warren, Jennifer Marie Holborn, 44, of the 200 block of Short St., Front Royal, VA 22630, did knowingly and intentionally possess a controlled substance

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Upcoming events with Dan McDermott

Fri. Feb 21, 2025 Private FR Rotary Event at Shenandoah Valley Golf Club

Sat. Feb 22, 2025 (7:00-10:30pm) Karaoke/Music Bingo: Woodstock Moose*

Sat. Mar 1, 2025 (6-10pm) Music Bingo & Karaoke at Shenandoah Valley Axe Throwing Company **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**: 20 South St. Front Royal, VA

Fri. Mar 7, 2025 (7:30-11:30pm) Music Bingo/Karaoke: New Market Eagles*

Sat. Mar 8, 2025 (6-10pm) 80s Music Bingo & Karaoke at Shenandoah Valley Axe Throwing Company **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**: 20 South St. Front Royal

Fri. Mar 14, 2025 (7-10pm) Music Bingo & Karaoke at Box Office Brewery **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**: 177 E King St, Strasburg, VA 22657

Sat. Mar 15, 2025 (6-10pm) Music Bingo & Karaoke at Shenandoah Valley Axe Throwing Company **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**: 20 South St. Front Royal

Fri. Mar 21, 2024 (7-11pm) Music Bingo & Karaoke at Mt Jackson Moose*

Sat. Mar 22, 2025 (7:00-10:30pm) Karaoke/Music Bingo: Woodstock Moose*

Fri, Mar 28, 2025 (7-10pm) Bingo/Karaoke: James Charles Winery **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**: 4063 Middle Rd, Winchester, VA 22602

Sat. Mar 29, 2025 (6-10pm) Music Bingo & Karaoke at Shenandoah Valley Axe Throwing Company **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**: 20 South St. Front Royal

Fri. Apr 4, 2025 (7:30-11:30pm) Music Bingo/Karaoke at New Market Eagles*

Wed. Apr 9, 2025 (6-9pm)

Music Bingo & Karaoke at Box Office Brewery

*Private clubs open to members and properly invited guests

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sess a controlled substance listed in Schedule I or Schedule II of the Drug Control Act.

Joshua Montgomery Wood

The Warren County Va. Circuit Court Grand Jury charges Joshua Montgomery Wood, 26, of the 400 block of Columbia St., NE, Roanoke, VA 24019, with three counts. COUNT ONE In the County of Warren, Joshua Montgomery Wood did unlawfully and feloniously,

knowingly, intentionally, and feloniously possess or transport a firearm after having previously been convicted of a violent felony. COUNT TWO: did unlawfully and feloniously while unlawfully in possession of a controlled substance classified in Schedule I or II of the Drug Control Act, simultaneously with knowledge and intent possess a firearm on or about his person. COUNT THREE: did unlawfully and feloniously possess a Schedule

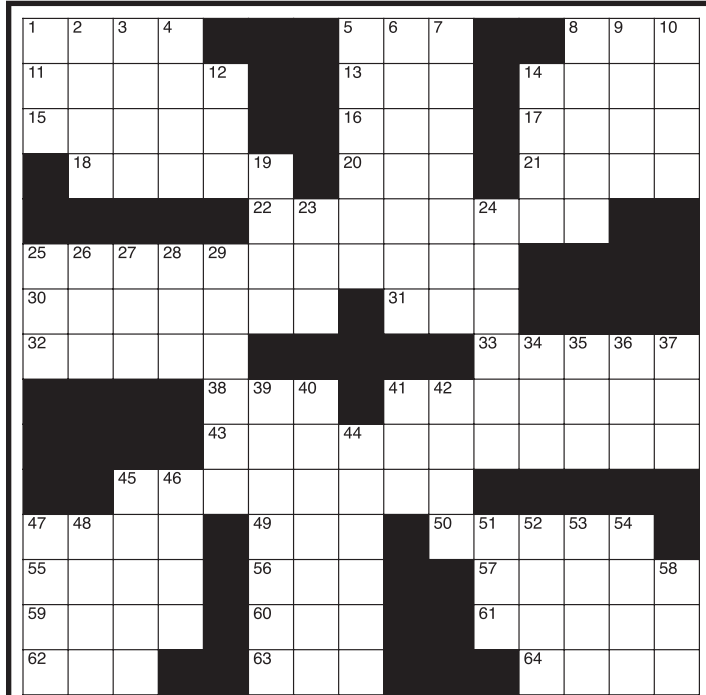
I or II controlled substance. Date of the offenses was on or about October 9, 2024.

Richard Allen Dean II

The Warren County Va. Circuit Court Grand Jury charges Richard Allen Dean II, 37, address unavailable, with twenty-five counts. COUNTS ONE through FIVE: In the County of Warren, Richard Allen Dean II did unlawfully and feloniously possess child pornography. COUNTS SIX through EIGHTEEN: did unlawfully and feloniously knowingly reproduce, sell, give away, distribute, electronically transmit, display purchase, or possess child pornography with the

intent to sell, give away, distribute, transmit, or display it. The accused previously has committed one or more such violations of the Code of Virginia. COUNTS NINETEEN through TWENTY-FIVE: did unlawfully and feloniously produce or make child pornography. The accused previously has committed one or more such violations of the Code of Virginia. Dates of the offenses were on or about January 1 through July 24, 2024.

A Grand Jury Indictment is only a charge and not evidence of guilt. The defendants are entitled to a fair trial with the burden on the government to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.
 - news@warrencountyreport.com



CLUES ACROSS

1. Greek mythological figure
5. Small amount
8. Play a role
11. River in Georgia and Alabama
13. Water in the solid state
14. Ancient Greek sophist
15. Having a strong sharp smell or taste
16. Fleece
17. Writer/actress Dunham
18. Behave in a way that belittles
20. Comedienne Gasteyer
21. Zoroastrian concept of holy fire
22. Conceits
25. Slowed down
30. Nourishment
31. Midway between east and southeast
32. Fights
33. Comedienne Tyler
38. Standing operating procedure
41. Locks
43. Old
45. Song sung to one's lover
47. Whale ship captain
49. Moved quickly on foot
50. Volcanic craters
55. Large musical instrument
56. Liquefied natural gas
57. Ethiopian town
59. Not closed
60. A team's best pitcher
61. Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation
62. Disfigure
63. Prefix denoting "in a"
64. Sleep

CLUES DOWN

2. Soul and calypso song
3. Fruit of the service tree
4. Continent
5. Albania's capital
6. Poisonous plant
7. Argues
8. Assists
9. Town in Galilee
10. Russian leader
12. Promotional materials
14. Wings
19. Not odd
23. Expression of creativity
24. Conceptualize
25. A digital tape recording of sound
26. Peyton's little brother
27. Cost, insurance and freight (abbr.)
28. Difference in potential
29. Owner
34. I (German)
35. Chinese conception of poetry
36. The world of the dead
37. Sign language
39. Coincide
40. Religious observance
41. Confined condition (abbr.)
42. Polite interruption sound
44. Texas ballplayer
45. Type of sword
46. Abba __, Israeli politician
47. Basic unit of a chemical element
48. Native American people in California
51. Swiss river
52. Hebrew calendar month
53. Easily swindled person
54. One point south of southwest
58. Small island (British)

CLUES DOWN

1. S. American plant

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HOROSCOPES

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20
 People are not mind readers, Aries. If you want others to know how you are feeling, you are going to have to give them some sort of indication this week.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21
 You may discover that you enjoy a great deal of support from other people right now, Taurus. This includes those who you didn't realize are on your side.

GEMINI – May 22/June 21
 Even though it can be challenging at certain times, try to see the positives in every situation, Gemini. This may make it easier to overlook some of their faults.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22
 Try to stretch beyond your comfort zone and limits this week, Cancer. This likely will involve meeting new people and asking a lot of questions along the way. You will develop and grow.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23
 Leo, this is a great time to communicate with friends and socialize. Put aside any worries and engage in lighthearted activities that will enable you to laugh and smile.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22
 The more peaceful and understanding you are this week, Virgo, the more you will get along with the other people in your life. Be the diplomat instead of a warrior this time around.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23
 Libra, this is a good week for cleaning up your space and devising a better organizational system at work. You might be so good at cleaning up that you forget where you put things.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22
 Scorpio, do not feel like you have to change your personality to fit certain situations this week. Just be yourself. Those who want to be around you will naturally gravitate to you.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21
 A great deal of information is available if you simply request it, Sagittarius. Word your request in a way that guarantees cooperation from others.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20
 Capricorn, you are so focused on a personal project that you may completely forget about the needs of others. Make a change this week to be more receptive to others' needs.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18
 Aquarius, take a look at the bigger picture to identify what you will need for the next few months. Then discuss your ideas with others to see if what you have planned is plausible.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20
 Your good mood will be elevated for much of the week, Pisces. Don't fret about a little hiccup along the way. You will bounce back quickly with a smile on your face.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

FEBRUARY 23
 Emily Blunt, Actress (42)

FEBRUARY 24
 O'Shea Jackson, Jr, Actor (34)

FEBRUARY 25
 Sean Astin, Actor (54)

FEBRUARY 26
 Teresa Palmer, Actress (39)

FEBRUARY 27
 Rozonda Thomas, Singer (54)

FEBRUARY 28
 Luka Doncic, Athlete (26)

MARCH 1
 Jensen Ackles, Actor (47)

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weather forecast

Friday, February 21, 2025: Sunny, with a high near 36. Northwest wind 11 to 13 mph, with gusts as high as 24 mph.

Friday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 15. Northwest wind around 5 mph becoming calm in the evening.

Saturday: Sunny, with a high near 45. Calm wind.

Saturday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 24. Calm wind.

Sunday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 49.

Sunday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 30.

Monday: Partly sunny, with a high near 56.

Monday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around 37.

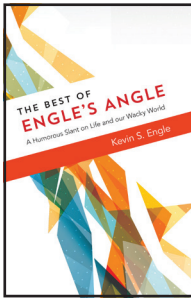
Tuesday: A chance of rain. Partly sunny, with a high near 58. Chance of precipitation is 30%.

Tuesday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 37.

Wednesday: Mostly sunny, with a high near 56.

Wednesday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 36.

Thursday: A chance of rain. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 54. Chance of precipitation is 50%.



ENGLE'S ANGLE: "Less Is More"

by Kevin S. Engle

We had a situation at our house. A mini-emergency. Toilet trouble. The flush handle broke.

Household repairs aren't my specialty, to say the least, and that's why my wife gets stuck with doing them. Plus, she's good at this stuff. She can figure things out.

Me? No.

She went online but couldn't find the part locally. Not one that matched the color we needed. The new handle would take 10 days to get here.

Ten days!

That's not good.

We have two other bathrooms, but this is the master bathroom.

And that's key, particularly in the middle of the night when you wake up and gotta go.

You know how it is.

My side of the bed is closest to the

master bath.

When my feet touch the floor, I'm there in only three steps.

But not when it was closed for repair.

The spare bathroom is 30 steps away.

I counted.

In elementary school, I learned that thirty is greater than three.

Not this time.

When you gotta go, three is a whole lot better than thirty.

Less is more.

My dad grew up on a farm in western MD.

His bathroom was an outhouse.

I can't even imagine that, particularly in the winter.

Who wants to grab a coat and gloves when you gotta go?

Back at our place, after ten long nights of midnight treks to the other side of the house, the much-anticipated box arrived.

Hallelujah!

My wife did her magic and we were back in business.

There were two flush handles in that box. She ordered an extra one. For the next time.

Smart lady.

Why do you think I married her?

The author often wonders what she got out of the deal?

– kevinengle456@comcast.net

The Best of Engle's Angle is available online or pick up a signed copy at a local bookstore.



Ask Stewart

Hey Stewart,

What's new with the Tree Stewards in 2025?

– Mary Ann

So glad you asked Mary Ann! We just held our 2025 planning meeting and are very excited about a number of initiatives this year.

First all we have now teamed up with the Front Royal Beautification Committee to better coordinate our efforts at making our community a great place to live and work. Joint meetings and events will help support Front Royal's Horticultural Plan, the most visible being The Hanging Baskets and Flower Planters in town.

Secondly, through our partnership with ACES (Advisory Committee for Environmental Sustainability) -- Justin Proctor is our representative -- we will be planting and giving away over a thousand trees the next 2 years. Projects include:

1. Planting 200 new trees on town, county and public properties. Those trees will represent a diverse suite of native drought tolerant and climate resilient species to be planted across high-priority locations in public parks,

road corridors, road medians, and river buffers.

2. Giving away 1,000 trees representing 8 native species (along with planting advice) to local community members during Front Royal's Arbor/Earth Day celebrations (on 27 April this year) that will bolster our community tree canopy on private landscapes.

3. Revitalization of the new Student Union's existing outdoor space into an outdoor conservation classroom, including:

a. Creation of a new pollinator meadow with at least 25 species of native forbs (broad leafed flowering plants) and grasses.

b. Installation of a "green screen" of evergreens that will dampen noise and block the view of the adjacent roadway, creating a more enjoyable ambiance for students to engage with their outdoor space.

c. Fortifying the Riparian Buffer along the property's section of Happy Creek.

And finally, we are looking at creating a comprehensive town tree inven-

tory using technology and community assistance. This is a huge project, but one which would be of great help in sustaining our community canopy.

It's going to be a TREE-mendous year!

Your Pal in the Trees,

– Stewart

The Front Royal/Warren County Tree Steward program began in 1997 with volunteers dedicated to improving the health of trees by providing educational programs, tree planting and care demonstrations, and tree maintenance throughout the community. The group now consists of over 30 active members with several interns working toward becoming certified tree stewards from our annual "All About Trees Class". Each month Stewart will answer a question from our readers. Please forward it to "Stewart" in care of:

frwctreestewards@comcast.net and we may publish it in a future issue. Please visit our website at:

www.treesfrontroyal.org



Chamber Events

As part of its "We See You, Warren County" program, Warren Coalition is coordinating "Warren County Unplugged," a Global Day of Unplugging event that will be held from 6:00 p.m. Friday, March 7th, to 6:00 p.m. Saturday, March 8th. Learn more and see how you can participate contact Celeste Brooks at celeste@warrencoalition.org or (540) 660-3367.

It's Pinewood Derby Time! Scouting America's Shenrapawa District Community Pinewood Derby will happen on Saturday, March 1st beginning at noon. Sponsorships are available. For more information, or to

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sponsor, contact (540) 662-2551 ext. 105, JonElliottatjon.elliott@scouting.org, or visit <https://communitypwd25.org>. All givesmart.com.

There's still space to sign up for the Concern Hotline 2025 Full Contact Ping Pong event on March 8th. All proceeds support Concern's commu-

nity training programs.

Registration is open for Phoenix Project's upcoming Healing Art Support Group for survivors of domestic and sexual violence. Join us to explore your emotions through guided art workshops and meet other survivors! No prior art experience is needed, and registration is free. This group will run for six sessions on Thursdays from 5:30-7:30 p.m. beginning 3/13 and ending 4/17. Location will be provided upon registration. Space is limited, so please RSVP by 3/10/25 to ensure your spot. To sign up or for more information, contact our office at (540)635-2302 or email aliyha@phoenix-project.org. Please share with any survivors you think might be interested!

Tickets and Sponsorship Opportunities are now available for the Front Royal Women's Resource Center 2025 Dare to Dream Breakfast to be held on March 27th at Shenandoah Valley Golf Club.

On Saturday, February 22 at 10 a.m.

at Shenandoah River State Park Visitor Center, discover the wonders of Phenology - the study of the seasonal and cyclical changes in nature, and create your own work of art. This program includes an easy one-mile hike on Overlook Trail. This program will also be repeated throughout the year to document the changes that we see in nature. For ages 7+.



Ongoing Crime Suppression Operations

From January 31 to February 7, 2025, the Virginia State Police, in partnership with supporting federal and local agencies, achieved significant criminal interdictions. Their ongoing efforts led to the recovery of firearms, the seizure of narcotics, and the investigation of multiple crimes, including human trafficking, throughout the Commonwealth.

Operation Highlights

Firearms Recovery:

A total of 36 firearms were recovered, valued at \$25,000.

Narcotics Seizures:

Total seized narcotics amounted to 260 pounds, along with 1,000 controlled substance pills.

Denied revenue from seized narcotics: \$2,777,811.83.

Breakdown of narcotics recovered:

Cocaine: 19.75 pounds.
Crack Cocaine: 1.25 ounces
Marijuana: 235.60 pounds
Heroin: 0.53 ounces
Fentanyl Pills: 1,000
Gaming Enforcement:
20 gaming-related tips received (1,335 total to date).

Human Trafficking Investigations:
67 new human trafficking tips received (592 total to date).

Investigations conducted:
Cases investigated or currently under investigation: 179

Individual investigative activities: 2,486

Victims identified and offered services: 60

The Virginia State Police remain steadfast in their mission to enhance public safety and uphold the laws throughout the Commonwealth while supporting the Governor's initiatives on violent crime. By working in close collaboration with local, state, and federal agencies, law enforcement continues to disrupt criminal enterprises and safeguard communities.



REC Warns of Email Scam

Rappahannock Electric Cooperative (REC) has become aware of a scam targeting its members, where criminals attempt to divert payments intended for REC into fraudulent accounts.

See NEWS, 8

CONTEMPORARY IN WARREN COUNTY

Lovely home on a nicely sized lot, featuring 1 bedroom and 2 full baths, with a beautiful covered deck overlooking your own piece of heaven! Step from the deck into a spacious living room. Wood beams, a ceiling fan, and wood crown molding give this home a cozy cabin feel. The kitchen boasts stainless steel appliances, perfect for cooking and cozy entertaining! A laundry area and a full bath are conveniently located off the kitchen. Upstairs, you'll find a large bedroom with an ensuite bath and a walk-in closet. All ceiling fans, mounted TVs, and the security cameras/system convey with the home! The partial basement offers lots of potential. Recent upgrades include a paved road leading right up to the house! Don't miss this listing—it won't last long!

Now Available!



\$350,000

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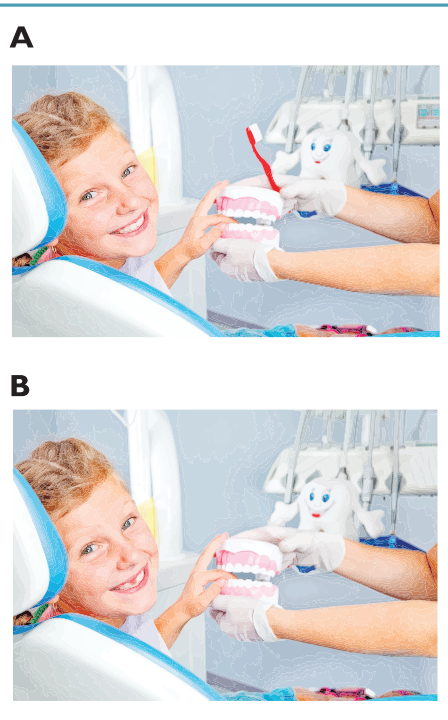
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What's the Difference?

Find the four difference between pictures.



Answers: 1. Missing tooth 2. Smile on tooth is bigger
3. Missing toothbrush 4. Missing controls on machine

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

FEBRUARY

26

1775: The British East India Company factory on Balam-bangan Island is destroyed by pirates.

1909: Kinemacolor, the first successful color motion picture process, is first shown to the public.

1995: Barings Bank in England collapses after a broker loses billions.

NEW WORD

TARTAR

a hard deposit that forms on the teeth

Eckankar Presents -

Past Lives - Present Adventures



A Free Spiritual Discussion on:

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For more information – <https://eck-va.org>

Sat., March 29th
11:00 am – 12:00 pm

Bowman Library, 871 Tasker Rd.,
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Tuxedo rental available

235 Chester Street, Front Royal, Virginia
540-635-2815 • donahoesflorist.com

Body FACT!

Children are born with 20 of these, which will increase to 32 as they age.

Answer: Teeth

How they say that in...

English: Dental
Spanish: Dental
Italian: Dentale
French: Dentaire
German: Zahn

Did You Know?

It is important to visit the dentist at least twice per year for a thorough dental cleaning and examination of the mouth.



Get the PICTURE?



Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

Answer: Brushing teeth



FISH AND CHIPS IS AN IDEAL MEAL THROUGHOUT LENT



Lent is an important time of year for Christians across the globe. Lent is a season of sacrifice, and many practicing Christians abstain from consuming flesh meat on Fridays in the weeks preceding Easter. Abstaining from meat on Fridays throughout Lent does not require devoted Christians to avoid flavor. In fact, there are many flavorful non-meat dishes for Christians to choose from each Friday during Lent. One particularly flavorful option is this recipe for "Gourmet Fish and Chips" from Lines+Angles.

Gourmet Fish and Chips

Makes 4 servings

For the mushy peas:

- 12 ounces green dried peas, split
- 1 tablespoon baking soda
- 2 tablespoons butter, softened
- Salt
- Freshly ground black peppercorns

For the fries:

- 2 1/4 lbs. white potatoes, peeled
- 8 cups vegetable oil, for deep-frying
- 4 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1 teaspoon onion powder or onion salt

For the fish:

- 4 large white fish fillets, approximately 2 lbs., such as cod or haddock, skinless, pin-boned
- 1 cup flour
- 1 large egg, beaten
- 12 fluid ounces beer, chilled
- Salt to taste
- Pepper to taste

To serve:

- 2 gherkins pickles, sliced lengthwise
- 2 lemons
- Spring curly parsley

1. For the mushy peas: Combine the peas with the baking soda in a large saucepan. Cover with 8" water. Cover and chill overnight.

2. The next day, drain and rinse thoroughly with cold water.

3. Return the peas to a large saucepan and cover with about 0.5" water. Bring to a boil over a high heat before reducing to a simmer until tender to the bite, about 30 to 40 minutes; skim away any froth that rises to the surface and edges.

4. Remove from the heat and stir in the butter. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Cover and set aside until ready to serve.

5. For the chips/fries: Cut the potatoes into fries. Submerge in a large bowl of water as you heat the oil.

6. Heat the oil in a large, heavy-based saucepan to 285 F; use a thermometer to accurately measure the temperature.

7. Remove the potatoes from the water and pat dry with a paper towel. Place in a large mixing bowl and sprinkle over the corn starch, onion powder and some salt, tossing well to combine.

8. Deep-fry the potatoes until soft and starting to color, about 10 minutes. Drain on paper towel and cover loosely with aluminum foil to keep warm.

9. Increase the temperature of the oil to 355 F. Working in two batches, return the fries to the oil and fry until golden-brown and crisp all over.

10. Remove from the oil and drain on paper towels. Season with salt and cover loosely with aluminum foil to keep warm; reserve the oil.

11. For the fish: Return the frying oil to 355 F; use a kitchen thermometer to accurately gauge the temperature.

12. In the meantime, season the fish with salt and pepper

13. Combine the flour, egg, 1 teaspoon salt, and some freshly ground black pepper in a large mixing bowl. Whisk briefly to combine before slowly whisking in enough of the beer to make a thick, smooth batter.

14. Working one by one, drop the fish fillets into the batter, turning to coat evenly.

15. Let the excess batter drip off the fish before carefully lowering into the hot oil. Deep-fry until golden-brown and crisp, about 4 minutes. Remove from the hot oil and drain on paper towel, covering loosely with aluminum foil.

16. Repeat steps 14 and 15 for the remaining fish.

17. Reheat the fries in the hot oil if needed, draining well.

18. To serve: Divide the mushy peas between ramekins and place on plates. Divide the fries into individual serving baskets and arrange next to the fish on the plates.

19. Cut the lemons in half, scoring a zig-zag pattern into them with a paring knife. Serve alongside the fish and fries, garnishing the fish with gherkin slices and some parsley sprigs.

— wfcreport.com

NEWS, from 7

"The scams are sophisticated, with the criminal spoofing emails appearing to be from REC. Emails were conversational and associated with real account transactions, making them appear even more legitimate," explained Casey Hollins, Managing Director – Communications and Public Relations. "We want to remind our members to be diligent when they receive an email and never hesitate to contact us if they feel anything about a correspondence is suspicious."

Important details:

Attackers are impersonating REC, using a spoofed or lookalike email address.

The scammers are sending payment change requests.

At first glance, the emails appear to be legitimate and may reference real account details, but when looking closer, there may be red flags such as noticeable grammatical mistakes.

To stay safe:

If you have any doubt in the correspondence received as being from REC, call REC directly to verify: 1-800-552-3904.

If there is mention of a process being changed, or you're being asked to use a different payment system to make a payment, contact REC. REC will never email you to say we have changed a payment process or method.

Do not share personal or financial information, including your Social Security number or bank account information via email.

Do not make payments by gift cards, prepaid debit cards or wire transfers. Fraudsters favor those methods because they are difficult to trace

Serving more than 181,000 connections across 22 Virginia counties, REC is a pillar in its communities, with over 18,000 miles of power lines extending from the Blue Ridge Mountains to the Chesapeake Bay. For more information on REC's initiatives, visit www.myrec.coop

and follow REC on Facebook, X, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

Zachary Hicks Promoted to Director of Member Services and Community Relations at REC

Rappahannock Electric Cooperative (REC) is pleased to announce the promotion of Zachary Hicks to Director of Member Services and Community Relations for the Northern Region, based out of the Front Royal office.

In his new role, Hicks will oversee Member Services and field operations while serving as a key link between REC and Frederick, Clarke, and Warren counties. Additionally, Hicks serves as a liaison between the Cooperative and the county Boards of Supervisors and the regional Chamber of Commerce.

Hicks started his career at REC in August 2010 in the Member Services department as a Member Service Field Representative. In February 2016, he transitioned to the Distribution Design department.

"Mr. Hicks' well-rounded experience and years of service at REC will be invaluable in his new role," said Kris Sieber, Managing Director – Member Services. He has held previous positions at REC working in member services, field operations and distribution design.

Hicks is a graduate of the REC Leadership Engagement and Performance (LEAP) program and the Top of Virginia Regional Chamber's Community Leadership Program. Outside of work, Hicks is an active leader in his local church. He lives in Martinsburg, W.Va., with his wife, Zandy, and their daughter, Zayla.



VDOT Public Survey Focuses on Route 11 at Interstate 81 Exit 298

The public is invited to participate in an online survey, regarding a study near Interstate 81, exit 298 in Shenandoah County. The study area focuses on Route 11 (Old Valley Pike) from Radio Station Road/Route 825 (Hite Lane) in the Town of Strasburg to Route 629 (Oranda Road) at Route 850 (Quarry Lane) in Shenandoah County.

Here is the survey link: <https://publicinput.com/us11exit298>

Survey closes on February 27, 2025.

The study evaluates existing and future transportation conditions along the study corridor. Study data will focus on the locations and possible causes of travel delays and crashes. Recommendations to address safety issues and enhance mobility for all roadway users will be considered.

Route 11 is a minor arterial four-lane roadway with a posted speed limit of 45 miles per hour. In 2023 it had an average annual daily traffic count of 13,000 vehicles per day. The corridor

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attracts a high percentage of trucks from nearby industrial uses accessing I-81.

The I-81 exit 298 Strategically Targeted Affordable Roadway Solutions (STARS) study is a collaborative effort between the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), Shenandoah County, and the Town of Strasburg

to evaluate transportation needs and develop recommendations to improve the exit 298 interchange.

Upon survey completion, VDOT and its study partners will evaluate the data and develop potential recommendations for future improvements. Final study recommendations will be considered by VDOT, Shenandoah

County and the Town of Strasburg for advancement through state transportation funding programs.

VDOT is serving as the project manager for the study with JMT as a consulting partner for developing the study, supporting analysis, and improvement concepts.

arrested and charged on a felony warrant stemming from allegations of sending nude photographs to a 17 year-old FCPS student. Brian Patrick Sullivan of Winchester was located and arrested in Ross Township, Pa. on a charge of violating Virginia Code 18.2-374.3(D) alleging he used a communications device to transmit sexually explicit photos of himself to a minor.

On 2/13/25, FCPS officials were alerted to accusations that Sullivan, the Athletic Director at James Wood High School since 2022, had sent a naked photo of himself, to include his exposed penis, to a James Wood student using a popular social media app. School officials immediately notified the Frederick County Sheriff's Office (FCSO) School Safety Division and a criminal investigation was initiated. In the course of the investigation, it was found that Sullivan had shared at least two (2) self-produced nude photos with the student between November



FCPS employee arrested for sending nude photos

Feb. 17—A Frederick County Public School (FCPS) employee has been

See NEWS, 10



Upcoming events with Dan McDermott

Fri. Feb 21, 2025
Private Event for Front Royal Rotary at Shenandoah Valley Golf Club

Sat. Feb 22, 2025 (7:00-10:30pm)
Karaoke/Music Bingo at Woodstock, Va. Moose*

Sat. Mar 1, 2025 (6-10pm)
Music Bingo & Karaoke at Shenandoah Valley Axe Throwing Company
OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: 20 South St. Front Royal, VA 22630

Fri. Mar 7, 2025 (7:30-11:30pm)
Music Bingo & Karaoke at New Market, Va. Eagles*

Sat. Mar 8, 2025 (6-10pm)
Music Bingo & Karaoke at Shenandoah Valley Axe Throwing Company
OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: 20 South St. Front Royal, VA 22630

Fri. Mar 14, 2025 (7-10pm)
Music Bingo & Karaoke at Box Office Brewery **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC:** 177 E King St, Strasburg, VA 22657

Sat. Mar 15, 2025 (6-10pm)
Music Bingo & Karaoke at Shenandoah Valley Axe Throwing Company
OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: 20 South St. Front Royal, VA 22630

Fri. Mar 21, 2024 (7-11pm)
Music Bingo & Karaoke at Mt Jackson Moose*

Sat. Mar 22, 2025 (7:00-10:30pm)
Karaoke/Music Bingo at Woodstock, Va. Moose*

Fri, Mar 28, 2025 (7-10pm)
Bingo/Karaoke: James Charles Winery

*Private clubs open to members and properly invited guests

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Limited dates remain. Book your event now: dan@route11dj.com

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WORDS

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AMALGAM
BRUSH
CAVITY
CHECKUP
CLEANING
CROWN
CURING LIGHT
DAM
ELEVATOR
EXPLORER
EXTRACTION
FILLINGS
FLUORIDE
GLOVES
IMAGES
MASK
MIRROR
PANORAMIC
RESIN
SEALANT
SPRAY
SUCTION
X-RAYS

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

Humane Society of Warren County

1245 Progress Dr, Front Royal, VA 22630 • (540) 635-4734

Daisy is a 3 year old petite lab mix who is extremely loving and loyal to her people. She is looking for a home where she can be the only pet. An adult home only would be best for Miss Daisy. She loves to play, cuddle and give kisses.

Roxy-Dane is an 8-year-old Great Dane mix with a gentle soul. Initially shy around new people, she warms up with patience and would thrive in a calm, cat-free home. Roxy-Dane prefers the company of laid-back dogs and enjoys peaceful coexistence. She walks well on a leash and is spayed, microchipped, and up-to-date on vaccinations.

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Roxy-Dane's ad sponsored by:

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540-635-8979

Zeke is a 1-2 yr old playful guy who's looking for his forever family! He will need help with his manners but loves walks, playing and being with people!! He's neutered, utd on shots, chipped and ready for your visit!!

Little Khloe is 7-9 year old Dachshund mix who is full of love to give. She is looking for a home where she can be the only dog but is okay with cat friends who leave her be. She would prefer older kids as she is old lady who doesn't want to be pulled and tugged on by children. She is great on leash and is quite a mellow girl.

Zeke's ad sponsored by:

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HotTubHeaven@yahoo.com
www.hthva.com

Khloe's ad sponsored by:

Music Bingo
at YOUR Business
Event/Party!
route11dj.com

With your help we have been able to place thousands of animals in good homes. Contact Alison @ 540-551-2072 if you would like to become a pet sponsor too!

NEWS, from 9

2024 and January 2025. Investigators confirmed that these photos appeared to have been taken off campus and shared after normal school hours.

Sullivan was reported to be visiting family in Pennsylvania over the weekend, when the felony warrant was issued, and the Ross Township Police Department was contacted and facilitated taking him into custody on the outstanding Virginia warrant. As of the time of this release, Sullivan is listed as still being in custody in Pennsylvania awaiting details of returning him to Virginia. Even with the announcement of this arrest, this remains an active and ongoing investigation and additional charges may be forthcoming. With that, no further details will be released at this time.



Guy Leon Louderback III

The Front Royal Police Department, with the assistance of the Shenandoah County Sheriff's Office, executed a search warrant on February 10, 2025, at a residence in Edinburg, Virginia,

resulting in the arrest of Guy Leon Louderback III. The arrest follows a two-month investigation into online child exploitation.

The investigation began in early December 2024 after a complaint was filed with the Front Royal Police Department regarding online sexual conversations with an individual believed to be under 15 years of age. Front Royal detectives conducted an undercover investigation, assumed the identity of a juvenile female, and engaged in online communication with the suspect, who attempted to conceal his identity. Through this investigation, Louderback was identified as the suspect.

Search and arrest warrants were obtained and executed on February 10, 2025. Louderback was arrested and transported to RSW Regional Jail, where he is being held without bail pending court proceedings.

The Front Royal Police Department extends its gratitude to the Shenandoah County Sheriff's Office, particularly their Criminal Investigations Division (CID) and Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team, for their invaluable assistance. Both agencies are members of the NOVA/DC ICAC Task Force.

This investigation is ongoing, and anyone with additional information is encouraged to contact Sergeant M. Gallagher at mgallagher@frontroyalva.com, or at (540)636-2208.

Warren Coalition Now Accepting Submissions for Annual Video Contest

Warren County youth ages 11-14 are invited to participate in the Warren Coalition's Health Video Contest,

running now through March 1st. To participate, youth need to create a 15-second or 30-second video promoting one of the following four healthy habits:

- Getting Quality Sleep
- Eating Healthy
- Exercising Regularly
- Drinking Water


Participants can submit their original video to warrencoalition.org/health-video-contest between now and March 1st. Winners from EACH category will receive a \$125 gift card!

Only residents of Warren County are eligible for this competition. All local students may participate, whether they are homeschooled or enrolled in public or private school. Music should be omitted from the video unless it is royalty-free music. By submitting a video, a contestant gives Warren Coalition to use the video in online or broadcast commercials to help promote healthy choices among youth.

This event is sponsored by the Warren Coalition, made possible by Project WAHOO (Working to Achieve

Healthy Opportunities and Outcomes), funded by Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth. For questions or more information, contact Celeste Brooks at celeste@warrencoalition.org

Warren Coalition is a nonprofit agency established in 1994 to help fill the gaps in health care and substance abuse awareness to the community. The Coalition began under the guidance of Warren Memorial Hospital as an outreach project, but it has since grown and was incorporated in 2001. The office is currently located in the



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WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to children's teeth.

V C A T Y I

--	--	--	--	--

Answer: Cavity

GUESS WHO ?

I am a boxer born in Michigan on February 24, 1977. I won a bronze medal as a featherweight in the 1996 Summer Olympics. I went on to be a five-division world champion boxer, winning 15 world titles. I was one of the highest paid athletes in the world at one point.


Answer: Floyd Mayweather, Jr.

Hamrick's Sudoku!

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle! (Answer in back.)



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

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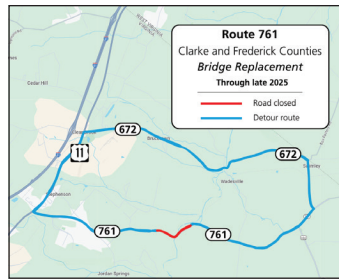


Walk for WATTS Feb. 22

On Saturday, February 22, 2025, the Winchester Area Temporary Transitional Shelter (WATTS) will hold their 3rd annual 'Coldest Night of the Year' fundraiser walk in Winchester, VA. The Walk is held in participating cities all over the U.S. and Canada that day, but funds raised stay local for WATTS and their mission to end homelessness for men and women in Winchester,

Frederick, and Clarke Counties. With options of a 2k or 5k walk, both routes go around downtown Winchester along the sidewalks and on the walking mall. The 5k offers a bit more of a terrain challenge by taking you through the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley trails. Check-in for the Walk is at 4:00 p.m. with special guest speaker, Virginia's 6th Congressional District representative, Ben Cline, giving send-off remarks prior to the 5:00 p.m. walk departure. Starting and ending location is Braddock Street UMC at 115 Wolfe Street. Participants can also enjoy a "soup kitchen" meal upon completion of the Walk, with free soups by local food vendor, Billy Sous. A fun, but meaningful event that everyone is welcome and invited to join! Registration is completely free and available online at cnoy.com/winchester or do same-day walk-up registration. Team up, walk, fundraise, or donate to help WATTS, because it's cold out there.

For more information on WATTS, visit watts-homelesshelter.org



Clarke and Frederick Counties - Route 761 Closing for Bridge Replacement

Part of Route 761 (Old Charles Town Road) in Clarke and Frederick counties is scheduled to be closed from Monday, February 3, through November 2025. This closure is for replacement of the Opequon Creek bridge at the county line.

During construction, Route 761 will be closed to through traffic between the intersections of Route 666 (Gun Club Road) and Route 661 (Wadesville Road).

Detour signs will guide traffic as follows:

Drivers coming from the west (Frederick County side) will go north on Route 11 (Martinsburg Pike), then east on Route 672 (Brucetown Road/Swimley Road), which eventually curves to the south and returns to Route 761.

Drivers coming from the east (Clarke County side) will go north Route 672 (Swimley Road/Brucetown

Road), which curves to the west and continues to Route 11 (Martinsburg Pike). Drivers will turn south on Route 11 to return to Route 761.

The current Route 761 bridge over Opequon Creek is nearly a century old and has reached the end of its service life. The bridge is a frequently flooded, low-water structure a single lane wide. The new bridge will be roughly 5 feet higher in elevation and will carry two lanes of traffic.

The Virginia Department of Transportation in November 2024 awarded a \$3.4 million construction contract to Fairfield-Echols, LLC of Fishersville,

Va. Final completion of the project is May 2026, but the bridge is scheduled to open to traffic in November 2025. Traffic and construction updates will be posted on the VDOT project page.

All work is weather permitting, and the project schedule is subject to change.



Samuels Library Director Ms. Erin Rooney [left] receiving Front Royal Elks Lodge donations from Mr. Dennis Henline [right]

Front Royal Elks Lodge No. 2382 Donates \$7,500 to Samuels Public Library Children's Department

In a generous act of community support and commitment to literacy, the Front Royal Elks Lodge has donated \$7,500 to Samuels Public Library. This donation will significantly benefit the community's youth by providing sponsorship for the Children's Summer Reading program in June 2025 and other programs and events that the Children's Department hosts.

The Children's Summer Reading program is a cornerstone of the Li-

See NEWS, 12

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NEWS, from 11

brary's efforts to encourage reading and learning among children during the months of summer break. The funding will help ensure that the program continues to provide engaging, educational services and resources for young readers. This ongoing support plays a crucial role in maintaining and expanding the Library's offerings for children throughout the year.

Samuels Public Library Director Erin Rooney expressed gratitude for the donation, stating, "We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the Front Royal Elks Lodge No. 2382 for their generous donation in support of our upcoming youth Summer Reading Program. Their contribution helps us provide an enriching experience for young readers in our community, fostering a love of books and learning that will last a lifetime."

The Front Royal Elks Lodge continues to be an impactful partner of Samuels Public Library, consistently supporting initiatives that promote literacy and education. Their previous contributions have included funding the Children's Summer Reading program, as well as sponsorship of the Library's major fundraising event, A Taste for Books.

Youth Department Manager Michal Ashby provided insight on the long-standing partnership between the Children's Department and the Front Royal Elks Lodge by stating, "The Front Royal Elks Lodge has made

such a huge contribution to the children's department for over a decade! They have helped us engage the community by sponsoring Summer Reading and Winter Reading programs and have even contributed to our general programs that we have throughout the year. Their dedication to literacy and this community is outstanding!"

Mark your calendar for Samuels Library's A Taste for Books: **Movie Magic fundraising event on Saturday, April 26, 2025!** Tickets are on sale now.

About Samuels Public Library: Originally founded in 1799 and renamed Samuels Public Library in 1952, it became the second library in the state to receive a charter and has served the citizens of Front Royal and Warren County for more than two centuries. In the past fiscal year, the library has added 2,204 new cardholders and held 542 in-person and virtual

programs hosting 19,194 attendees. Attracting more than 127,000 visitors annually, the library logged 401,859 total checkouts last year. For more information on Samuels Public Library, go to: www.samuelslibrary.net



More Than a Dozen Organizations Will Help Warren County Unplug

FRONT ROYAL, VA— Plans for Warren County's second year of participation in the Global Day of Unplugging are well under way, with businesses and organizations around the community jumping on board to help individuals disconnect from their phones for a while and reconnect with themselves, each other, the community at large, and nature!

On average, people check their phones 205 times per day—nearly once every five minutes. Led by Warren Coalition, "Warren County Unplugged" is a local event held in observance of the Global Day of Unplugging, from 6:00 pm Friday, March 7th, to 6:00 pm Saturday, March 8th. This event encourages people to establish some protected time to disconnect—whether that is for a few hours or the full 24 hours.

Warren County Unplugged will provide in-person activities throughout the area to make it easy to meet up with friends and enjoy time without a smartphone or other device. The fun begins on Friday evening, March 7th, at 5:45 pm, with a Youth Unplugged Party being held at the Health & Human Services Complex. Youth of all ages will have the opportunity to meet up at the gym for free pizza provided by Warren County Parks & Recreation

(while supplies last). The first 225 people will receive a free "smartphone nap-sack," with wiki stix for elementary school-aged children. There will be a countdown to 6:00 pm, when people will turn off their phones (or at least drop them into the nap-sack and put them away).

Beginning at 6 pm, the activities will be split by ages. Warren County Parks and Recreation and Young Life will host middle school and high school students at the gym, with volleyball and cornhole tournaments, arts and crafts, and backyard games such as spike ball and can jam. Elementary school students and their parents will head over to Diversified Minds, where they will enjoy Resilience Bingo (with PRIZES!), Affirmations Jenga, archery, inflatable bowling, and more. (There are unconfirmed rumors of Uno games...) Warren Coalition, Warren County Sheriff's Office, and Scouting America are hosting this section. There will also be a parent information session to provide education about the impact smartphones have on our children and how parents can set healthy boundaries. Door prizes will be awarded!

Later Friday evening, Royal Family Bowling (which is also an Event Sponsor!) will host a Hyper Bowl Party.

On Saturday, downtown Front Royal will be hopping with a Backyard Games party hosted by Habitat for Humanity at the gazebo. Explore Art & Clay is offering 20% off Paint Your Own Pottery and wood kits. Main Street Geek customers will receive a free comic book and 10% off throughout their store. C & C Frozen Treats, which always provides a variety of free fun activities for kids, will also host some special story times.

Off Main Street, Play Favorites is bringing back the free-all-day unplugged arcade (video games are disconnected, but everything else is free to play all day!), sidewalk chalk, board games, and will offer 10% off everything in the store. The Northern Virginia 4-H Educational and Conference Center is encouraging people to hike the Appalachian Trail, which is accessible from their property, and complete a nature scavenger hunt.

For those who want a little more unplugged time on Saturday evening, Shenandoah River State Park will offer "Nighttime Vernal Pool Expedition" 6pm to 8 pm.

In addition to all of this, Phoenix Project will host a community art exhibit. Submissions from grades K-12 will be accepted prior to the Global Day of Unplugging, and placed on display at a surprise location that will be announced later in February.

An online schedule is available the Warren Coalition website (<https://warrencoalition.org/wc-gdu-schedule/>) and posted to the Facebook event. Events and activities may be added through February 21st. Businesses and organizations that would like to join in should email Celeste Brooks at celeste@warrencoalition.org or call 540-660-3367.

Warren Coalition is grateful to the many sponsors who have stepped up to make this event possible, including the Title Sponsors: Mountain Laurel Montessori School, Angel's Korner Daycare and Learning Center, Mom's Country Kitchen, and Melting Pot. Event sponsors include Dusty's Country Store, Edward Jones (Bret Hrbek), L'Dee's Pancake House, and Royal Cinemas.



Samuels Public Library Adult Programming – March, 2025

You can find and register for all library events on our website, www.samuelslibrary.net.

One-Time Events:

Learning to Machine Bind Quilts - Tuesday, March 4th from 10:30 AM to 12:30 PM - In person. Learn techniques for machine binding a quilt in this Studio 330 workshop! For this class, participants must bring with them a smaller quilted piece (as compared to a huge, full-sized quilt) that is

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ready for binding to use to learn techniques to fully bind a quilted piece, and either fabric to be cut for the binding in the class, or pre-cut 2-1/2" strips enough for the binding. Additionally, please bring whatever thread you want to use to top stitch the binding and a bobbin for whatever you want the bottom stitch color to be. Thread is available in Studio 330, but it may not be the color(s) you want to use. There are sewing machines and tools available for use in Studio 330, but participants may bring their own machine if they would like. Participants can also bring their own sewing tools (pins, scissors, etc.) if desired. Please plan to arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the start of the class. No food or drinks are allowed in Studio 330 and patrons between 13-17 must be accompanied by an adult.

Job Fair - Thursday, March 6th from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM - In person. Come prepared to meet employers looking for people to hire! Need help reviewing your resume beforehand? Email winchester@virginiaworks.gov! Any questions? Contact 540-678-7079 Option 8

The Global Day of Unplugging - Saturday, March 8th from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM - In person. Join us for a day to disconnect from technology and reconnect with the people and places around you! Come to Studio 330 and play with paper crafts, journaling, cardmaking, origami, or other artistic expressions. Join the Fiber Arts Club from 2pm-4pm to explore knitting, crochet, or weaving. Bring your own supplies or use ours!

Studio 330: Sewing 201 Hemming - Wednesday, March 5th from 5:00 PM to 6:30 PM - In person. Have the basics of sewing under your belt? This workshop will introduce you to hemming using a sewing machine. Bring your project to learn hemming techniques for pants, skirts, or other hemmed material. (Must have completed Sewing 101 or have a basic working knowledge of using a sewing machine.)

Studio 330: Sewing 101 Parts 1 and 2 - Wednesday, March 19th & 26th from 5:00 PM to 6:30 PM - In person. New to sewing? This two part workshop will introduce you to the very basics of using a sewing machine to create a simple project. Sessions will be held on March 19th and March 26th.

1st Annual Studio 330 Craft Swap - Saturday, March 22nd from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM - In person. 10AM - 12PM: Early access for those who donated during the month of February. **12PM-2PM:** Open to everyone - come shop our stash for free! Refresh your Craft Stash with new finds! We've been collecting craft supply donations all February, and now it's time to share the crafting creativity! Discover a variety of crafting supplies and find creativity for your next project. Stop in Studio 330 and check out all our equipment to put your creative inspiration to work!

Gaeilge! The Irish Language: A First Lesson - Saturday, March 22nd from 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM - In person. Take an introductory lesson on the Irish language taught by author Connie Marshner. All ages welcome!

Ongoing Programs:

General Education Development (GED) Class - Every Tuesday & Thursday from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM - In person. Samuels Public Library is proud to host Laurel Ridge Community College's General Education Development course. This course is completely free. Let this course be the stepping stone to your success. More information on registration dates and deadlines can be found on the LRCC website - <https://laurelridge.edu/adult-education>

What the Tech! - Every Tuesday from 2:00 PM to 3:30 PM - In person.

Need help with technology? Come by the library's Meeting Room B where we will be going over computers and other technology basics. Having trouble with your phone, tablet, laptop, or other device? Bring it in, and we'll help!

Studio 330: Embroidery Club - Every Thursday from 10:00 PM to 12:00 PM - In person. Join us for Hand Embroidery Stitchers every Thursday morning! Bring your own needlework project to work on for a morning of crafting and socializing.

Studio 330 Walk-in Hours - Every Thursday from 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM - In person. Come tour Studio 330 or bring your project to work on. Walk-In hours are provided on a first come, first serve basis.*Glowforge is not available during walk-in hours. No food or drinks allowed in the studio and patrons between 13-17 must be accompanied by an adult.

Studio 330: String Theory- A Fiber Arts Club - Every Saturday from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM - In person. Welcome to a fiber arts community for experienced, novice, or first-time artists 13 and up looking to meet other artists, relax, and/or share their expertise! Bring your own knitting, crochet, weaving, or other project to Studio 330 on Saturdays 2pm to 4pm *No food or drinks allowed in the studio and patrons between 13-17 must be accompanied by an adult.

Bad Romance - Wednesday, March 5th from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM - First Wednesday of every month. In person. Do you consider yourself a hopeless romantic? Are bad romances a guilty pleasure of yours? Then you should join us for Bad Romance, where Samuels Public Library will have a themed discussion for the romance genre every month. The theme for the month of March is British Isles! Indulge us with your favorite romance books, movies, music or other media related to the topic, and possibly discover a new treat in this awesome informal discussion! New members are always welcome!

Studio 330: Genealogy Club - Wednesday, March 12th from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM - Second Wednesday of every month. - In person. Join us in

preserving old family recipes by digitizing them using our Epson Expression 13000XL Archival Scanner! We will also be using this as a time to do genealogy research (laptops are provided). Make sure to come so you can also use our preservation resources such as VHS, VHS C, audio cassette, 8mm, and super 8 digitization equipment offered in Studio 330!

Books & Beyond - Thursday, March 13th from 6:00 PM to 7:45 PM - Second Thursday of every month. In person. Do you love books and sharing them as much as we do? Join us to delve into new worlds of conversation about new books at your community's public library! The theme this month is MYTHOLOGY: traditional or modern retelling of what shaped cultures and history.

Phoenix Project - Hope for New Beginnings - Tuesday, March 18th from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM - Third Tuesday of every month. In person. Serving all members of the Front Royal/Warren County community who have experienced or are currently experiencing domestic violence or sexual assault, Phoenix Project Advocates are available to provide crisis intervention, supportive counseling, safety planning, information, education, and more. Their services are free, confidential, and trauma-informed. Hope. Help. Healing.



Serioplast to Open Manufacturing Site in Shenandoah County

International manufacturer of plastic packaging to invest \$25.7 million, creating 45 new jobs

Governor Glenn Youngkin today announced that Serioplast, a global

manufacturer of rigid plastic packaging, will invest \$25,725,000 to occupy a 140,000-square-foot industrial facility in Shenandoah County. The company is headquartered in Seriate, Italy, and provides packaging for companies like Procter&Gamble, Unilever, Reckitt Benckiser, and more. The project will create 45 new jobs.

"I am thrilled that Serioplast has chosen the Commonwealth of Virginia to build a new industrial facility for their plastic packaging," said Governor Glenn Youngkin. "I also applaud Serioplast for strengthening their workforce by participating in the Virginia Talent Accelerator Program, which will bring customized training services to this robust, international company."

"Global manufacturers like Serioplast are recognizing Virginia is the top choice for doing business," said Secretary of Commerce and Trade Caren Merrick. "We are proud that the Commonwealth attracted Serioplast into the Shenandoah Valley where their packaging products will go hand-in-hand with the manufacturing mecca that the valley has grown to encompass."

"Serioplast stands out not only for its excellence in manufacturing but also for its commitment to sustainability," said CEO of Serioplast Group Paolo Bergamini. "Our vision for the future is clear: to drive growth and innovation while maintaining a strong commitment to sustainability. With our growth in North America, Serioplast is ready to write a new chapter of success. We believe Virginia, with its robust economy, highly skilled workforce, and favorable business environment, is the ideal location for our expansion and long-term success."

Since its founding in 1974, Serioplast's packaging has been used by companies in the consumer goods industry, including home care and laundry, food, personal care, and pharmaceuticals. The company has grown into a global leader in rigid plastic packaging, operating 33 production facilities across 16 countries with a workforce of over 2,000 employees. In recent

See NEWS, 14

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NEWS, from 13

years, Serioplast has expanded its presence in North America, with a key production site in St. Louis, Missouri. Committed to sustainability, Serioplast integrates recycled materials into its production processes, reinforcing its dedication to the circular economy while driving innovation in packaging solutions.

"We are very pleased to work with and welcome a respected international company that strengthens the manufacturing sector in Shenandoah County and the region," said Shenandoah Valley Partnership Executive Director Jay Langston.

"Shenandoah County is always a place that welcomes new businesses and industries when they align with the vision of our county's future and ones that will be great places for our citizens to work," said Shenandoah County Board of Supervisors Chairman Josh Stephens. "We are excited that Serioplast has chosen Shenandoah County for their latest expansion. The fact they will breathe new life into an existing industrial building already housed within the county is something to be commended for as well."

"I am delighted that Serioplast has selected Shenandoah County as the site of its next manufacturing facility," said Senator Timmy French. "Serioplast is investing in our region and our people by bringing 45 new jobs to the county."

"I appreciate the work of the Shenandoah Valley Partnership, VEDP, and Governor Youngkin to help bring this substantial industrial investment to Shenandoah County," said Delegate C. Todd Gilbert.

The Virginia Economic Development Partnership worked with the Shenandoah Valley Partnership and Shenandoah County to secure the project for Virginia. Governor Youngkin approved a \$180,000 grant from the Commonwealth's Opportunity Fund to assist Shenandoah County with this project.

Support for Serioplast's job creation will be provided through the Virginia Talent Accelerator Program, ranked the No. 1 Customized Workforce Training Program in the United States by Business Facilities in 2024. The program, created by VEDP in collaboration with higher education partners, accelerates new facility startups through the direct delivery of recruitment and training services that are fully customized to a company's unique products, processes, equip-

ment, standards and culture. All program services are provided at no cost to qualified new and expanding companies as an incentive for job creation.



Cultivate Your Agribusiness Conference on 2/27

The Laurel Ridge Small Business Development Center (SBDC) is providing a chance for those aspiring to develop an agribusiness to connect and learn from those already in the industry. The half-day 2025 Agribusiness Conference begins at 8 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 27, in the Corron Community Development Center on Laurel Ridge's Middletown Campus.

Attendees can select to attend sessions covering various topics, including risk management, land preservation tools, rules and regulations, business plans and recordkeeping, and public funding and cost-sharing opportunities. Representatives from the Lord Fairfax Soil and Water Conservation District, the Virginia Department of Forestry, the Virginia Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services, farm owners, attorneys and accountants are among the presenters.

Shane Waller with Star in the Valley Estate Winery, Janel Louk with Nana's Blue Greenhouse, Scott Johnson with Shawnee Springs Market & Cannery, Dayna Geraghty with Geraghty's Micro Farm and Tyler Wegmeyer with Wegmeyer Farms will share their growth stories and the lessons they've learned in the closing keynote.

The conference, which is sponsored by Horizon Farm Credit and TWG Insurance, is free to attend. Lunch will be

provided by Jordan Springs Market. "This is the second year we are putting this event together to support our local agricultural businesses," said Laurel Ridge SBDC Director Andy Gyuris. "We are honored to provide this opportunity to anyone thinking of starting an agribusiness, as well as those seasoned entrepreneurs."

To register, please visit <https://laurelridgesbdc.org/conference/2025-agribusiness-conference/>.



Howard B. Jenkins, 43

Manassas resident arrested after investigation by the Blue Ridge Narcotics and Gang Task Force

The Blue Ridge Narcotics and Gang Task Force has concluded a lengthy investigation with the arrest of a Manassas, VA resident. Howard B. Jenkins, 43, was arrested and charged with two felony counts of possession with intent to distribute I/II narcotics, one misdemeanor count of fleeing from law enforcement, and a traffic offense for failing to display a license plate.

On Monday (Jan. 29), the Culpeper Sheriff's Office and task force officers conducted a traffic stop on a Chevrolet Tahoe on Route 3 near Yellow Bottom Road in Culpeper County. The violation was failing to display a license plate. During the traffic stop, the driver of the Chevrolet, Jenkins, attempted to flee the scene on foot but was quickly apprehended and taken into custody without further incident. Officers located and seized 400 grams of cocaine (street value of \$40,000), 19.2 grams of fentanyl (street value of \$1,900) along with \$980 in U.S. currency from the Chevrolet.

Jenkins was transported to the Culpeper County Jail, where he is being held without bond.

The Blue Ridge Narcotics and Gang Task Force (BRNGTF) is composed of law enforcement personnel from the Culpeper, Fauquier, Orange, Madison, and Rappahannock Sheriff's Offices, Culpeper, Warrenton, Orange Police Departments, and the Virginia State Police Bureau of Criminal Investigation, Culpeper Field Office.



Chance J. Bowman, 28

ICAC arrest

On Tuesday, January 21, 2025, the investigative team at the Warren County Sheriff's Office launched a proactive undercover chat operation regarding the online solicitation of minors within the Warren County/Front Royal area. These investigative efforts highlight our continued commitment to protecting minors in our community and bringing those who prey on them to justice.

During the operation, an adult male contacted one of our investigators acting in an undercover capacity as a juvenile under the age of 15-years-old. During the chat exchange the suspect proceeded to request sexually explicit photos and content from who he believed was a juvenile female. The male also transmitted several sexually explicit photos of himself to the investigator acting as a minor. A meeting was arranged, and the suspect traveled to Warren County, where he met the undercover investigator posing as an underage girl for sexual purposes. The investigation revealed that the male was previously convicted of a similar crime in Pennsylvania and was already registered as a sex offender in that state.

Chance J. Bowman, a 28-year-old resident of Sharpsburg, MD was arrested and transported to the Rappahannock Shenandoah Warren (RSW) Regional Jail. Bowman appeared before the magistrate and was ordered to be

held in custody without bond. Bowman's court date for the listed offenses is set for February 20, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. in Warren County Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court.

The Warren County Sheriff's Office is an active member of the Northern Virginia/DC Metro (NOVA/DC) Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force, which is coordinated by the Virginia State Police. We request anyone with information regarding the solicitation or exploitation of any minor to contact Warren County Sheriff's Office. Additionally, anyone with further information regarding this case is urged to contact Criminal Investigator C.M. McDaniel at (540) 635-7100 or via email at cmcdaniel@warrencountysheriff.org



Illustration by Dustin Elliott

Problem Solved: "Hey Sears, where's the refund for the Master Protection on my washer?"

By Christopher Elliott

When Danny Gardner cancels his Sears Master Protection, a representative tells him to be patient and that the bank is slow to process refunds. But it's been four months.

Q: I'm trying to get a refund from Sears Master Protection and I'm hoping you can help. I canceled two Master Protection Agreements recently. The same clerk processed both cancellations.

I received a refund for the first cancellation, which was for my dryer, two days later. But I never received the \$89 back for the Master Protection on my washer.

I have spoken to various clerks, and no supervisor would take responsibility for processing the second refund. Sears has transcripts for every external

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telephone call from us. They also have written internal chats with the finance department that prove the clerks never processed the second refund correctly.

Sears has told me "the bank is slow" and I should keep waiting. But it's been four months. Can you help?

-- Danny Gardner,
Hoffman Estates, Ill.

A: Sears should have processed both of your refunds at the same time. I don't think "the bank is slow" is a valid excuse when an employee handled the refunds at the same time. It's far more likely someone at Sears made a clerical error and that your refund was missing in action.

That said, it appears Sears was trying to refund the Master Protection fee to your credit card, which you had used to purchase the warranty. Sears' policy is in line with most other businesses -- it always processes the refund back to the original form of payment.

The paper trail between you and Sears (and indeed, between me and Sears) shows that it made a good faith effort to refund the Master Protection for your washer. But the money never appeared on your statement.

When that happens, the back and forth with the customer service department is minimally helpful. You need to get the attention of someone higher up. I recommend appealing to one of the Sears customer service managers I list on my consumer advocacy site, Elliott.org.

I think it's a poor excuse when a company blames the bank for a slow refund. But clearly something happened between Sears and your bank, and it's hard to know who was to blame.

I contacted Sears on your behalf. The company decided to try an alternate form of payment for your refund -- an old-fashioned paper check.

"The check from my Sears reimbursement arrived yesterday," you reported. "I have deposited the \$85 online, and it has cleared my bank. Thank you very much for all of your attention

to this matter. Blessings to you."

Christopher Elliott is the founder of Elliott Advocacy (<https://elliottadvocacy.org>), a nonprofit organization that helps consumers solve their problems. Email him at chris@elliott.org or get help by contacting him at <https://elliottadvocacy.org/help/>

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Illustration by Christopher Elliott

A SIM swapping nightmare leads to a \$3,809 bill from Best Buy. Can Chase help?

By Christopher Elliott

Chun Ai Deng considers herself a careful banking customer. So when she noticed a transaction on her Chase debit card for \$3,809 at Best Buy, a store she'd never visited, she knew something was wrong.

Deng immediately contacted Chase to report the fraudulent charge. She was confident that the bank would swiftly reverse the bogus payments. Little did she know she was about to embark on a frustrating four-month journey to reclaim her money.

Chase swiftly denied Deng's claim. The bank insisted the transaction was authorized, citing a record of authorization via a text message sent to Deng's phone. But Deng had a solid alibi: She says her identity had been stolen.

Deng's case raises some important questions:

What's SIM swapping and how do I prevent it?

How can I prove my identity was stolen?

What can I do if the company refuses to provide documentation of a crime?

But first, let's have a look at Deng's case.

How did her identity get stolen?

Deng immediately contacted her phone carrier, Lyca Mobile, and discovered that her number had been ported out without her consent just three days before the fraudulent Best Buy purchase.

This unauthorized SIM swap meant that anyone with Deng's phone number could receive her calls and messages, including any one-time passcodes or authorizations sent by her bank.

"I found out about this transaction when I called Chase about some email alerts sent by Chase regarding a request for a replacement Chase Sapphire Reserve credit card, which I did not apply for, and a \$2,000 Zelle payment sent from my account to someone that I did not recognize," she says.

But Chase hadn't emailed her about the Best Buy transaction.

"While Chase returned me the Zelle payment, the unauthorized debit card transaction of \$3,809 with Best Buy was declined," she says.

What's SIM swapping and how do I prevent it?

SIM swapping is a growing problem,

and it can happen without you even realizing it. This sneaky tactic allows cybercriminals to take control of your phone number, which they can then use to access your online accounts.

Here's how it works: a scammer gathers personal information about you, and tricks your mobile carrier into transferring your number to a SIM card they control. Suddenly, all your calls and texts are rerouted to them.

How can you protect yourself? Use strong and unique passwords. Make sure your passwords are complex and unique for each account. You might want to use a password manager to keep track of them.

Enable two-factor authentication (2FA). Opt for authentication apps instead of SMS-based codes. Apps like Google Authenticator provide an extra layer of security that isn't vulnerable to SIM swaps.

Set up account PINs. Many carriers allow you to create a separate PIN for your account. This adds an additional layer of verification when making changes.

Monitor your accounts. Keep an eye on your phone and bank statements for any unusual activity. If you notice your phone suddenly loses service or starts acting weird, act fast.

Limit personal information sharing. Be cautious about what you post online. Scammers often use social engineering techniques to gather information needed to impersonate you.

Switch to eSIM. If your device supports it, eSIMs are less susceptible to theft since they're embedded in the device and can't be physically swapped. (eSIMs aren't entirely invulnerable to SIM swapping, but it's harder to pull off a SIM swap with an eSIM.)

These steps can significantly reduce the risk of falling victim to SIM swapping and safeguard your personal information.

How can you prove your identity was stolen?

Proving you've had your ID stolen is a paperwork-intensive task.

Document everything. In cases of identity theft or account hacking, providing detailed documentation is key. Start by filing a police report, which creates a formal record of the crime.

Contact your bank. Report the fraud, making note of the date, time, and representative you spoke with.

File a complaint with the FTC. You can do that at IdentityTheft.gov, which will guide you through steps to recover from identity theft and provide you with an identity theft report and a recovery plan.

Contact one or all of the three major credit bureaus (Experian, Equifax, TransUnion). Place a fraud alert on your credit reports, which will make it harder for thieves to open new accounts in your name.

MOST IMPORTANT: Maintain detailed records of all correspondence. That includes emails, letters, phone call logs, and any supporting documentation like police reports or credit card statements. This paper trail can be invaluable when dealing with companies or pursuing legal action.

An unfortunate twist makes this case harder to crack

Deng furnished Chase with proof that her ID had been stolen, but it wasn't enough. Chase also demanded evidence that Deng's phone service had been interrupted at the time of the transaction and required documentation of her contract ownership of the phone number.

But that was easier said than done. Deng was on a prepaid phone plan from Lyca Mobile. Prepaid plans don't typically involve signed contracts, making it impossible for Deng to meet Chase's demands.

Adding insult to injury, Lyca Mobile refused to provide a formal letter or report confirming the unauthorized port-out, stating that their email correspondence confirming the port-out was sufficient.

Deng found herself stuck between a bank that refused to acknowledge her claim without specific documentation and a phone company unwilling to provide that documentation.

Next stop: the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB), where Deng filed a complaint. She submitted all the evidence she had: a police report, the Lyca Mobile email chain, a reference number from the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) for identity theft, and documentation of a fraud alert filed with credit reporting agencies.

Chase still refused to help her. The bank sent a letter reiterating its initial stance. It pointed to the text message authorization as proof of a legitimate transaction. Chase also refused to ac-

cept Lyca Mobile's email correspondence as sufficient evidence, claiming it didn't meet its requirements for proof of interrupted phone service.

What can I do if the company refuses to provide documentation?

If a company refuses to provide documentation, there are several steps you can take.

Start by escalating the issue to a supervisor or manager within the company. I list the names, phone numbers and email addresses on our company contact page. We list the Lyca Mobile executive contacts on the site.

Don't forget to make your requests in writing -- and keep copies for your records.

If an internal escalation fails, consider filing a complaint with the appropriate regulatory agency. The CFPB handles complaints about financial institutions, while the FCC handles complaints about telecommunications companies.

In some instances, public pressure can be effective. Share your story on social media or reach out to consumer advocacy groups or news outlets for assistance. Our advocacy team is always happy to help, of course.

Bottom line: A business must furnish you with proof of a crime, and with a little persistence, you should be able to get it.

But what about Deng's case?

I asked Chase to take another look at Deng's case. It seemed strange that they would reverse her Zelle transaction but would not address a fraudulent purchase from Best Buy. It appeared as if the decision had been made by an algorithm rather than a person -- a common problem these days.

A few days later, our team got some good news.

"I wanted to provide you with an update on my case," she wrote in an email. "The Chase executive office did a second review of my documents, reversed his decision, and returned the money to my bank account. Without you and your organization's help, I may never have gotten Chase to look at my supporting documents seriously. Thank you for everything!"

Christopher Elliott is an author, consumer advocate, and journalist. He founded Elliott Advocacy, a nonprofit organization that helps solve consumer problems. He publishes Elliott Confidential, a travel newsletter, and the Elliott Report, a news site about customer service. If you need help with a consumer problem, you can reach him here or email him at chris@elliott.org.

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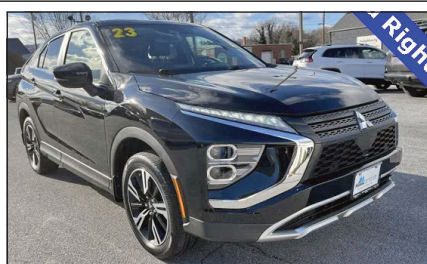
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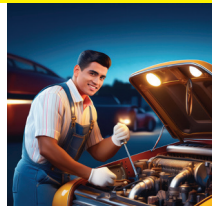
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