

Specials On
B.O.G.O.
Inside

The Post

On The Trail
B4
For Talmadge
Warren,
education
was first.



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Protecting our children.
See insert.

POST
Scripts
BY GLENN GANNAWAY

Rita's Shoppe sale.
The next Rita's Shoppe sale will be held from 9:30-11:30 a.m. Friday and Saturday March 8-9. Shoppers can fill a large trash bag of quality clothes and other items for \$10. Rita's Shoppe is located near Payless Market, Appalachia.

Women's History Month. Judy Abbott, a long-time Wise County schools history teacher, is the guest speaker for AARP Chapter 4455's Monday, March 4 meeting at Heritage Church of God, 775 Wood Ave. E., Big Stone Gap. Abbott will speak on "Women's Influence on America." The social half-hour will start at 11:30 a.m., with Abbott's program to follow; guests are invited to attend and consider joining the chapter.

Community Lenten service. The Thursday, March 7 Community Lenten service will be hosted by Sacred Heart Catholic Church, with Ric Wright, East Stone Gap United Methodist Church, as speaker and Larry Rasnick providing special music. Today's (Feb. 28) service is at Powell Valley Presbyterian Church. The Rev. Terry Goodman of Trinity United Methodist Church is the speaker, with Diana Bloomer providing special music.

Coalfield cucurbits. Vegetable extension specialist Dr. R. Allen Straw will give a lecture on growing cucurbits — cucumbers, squash, pumpkins, melons, etc.) from 6-8 p.m. Monday, March 4 at Mountain Empire Community College's Goodloe Center. The workshop, part of the Coalfield Grower's School, is free, but pre-registration is preferred. Call the Wise County Extension Office, 276/328-6194.

RecoveryFest. Providers of services to people battling substance abuse and other community help providers are invited to share information at the third annual RecoveryFest in downtown Big Stone Gap. RecoveryFest is scheduled for 1-5 p.m. Saturday, April 20. Contact Shirley Smith at 276/523-7447 or hisministries@verizon.net for more information.

NHA support. Appalachia Town Council last Thursday passed a resolution supporting efforts to gain National Heritage Area status for the Crooked Road. The resolution notes the positive economic impact of Virginia's Music Trail on localities.

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Outing leaves youth mired in mud

BY GLENN GANNAWAY
NEWS EDITOR

A teen-ager out for some recreational four-wheeling ended up waist-deep in a dangerous situation last Thursday.

The 15-year-old became stuck in an abandoned surface mine settlement pond last Thursday afternoon and remained there for about two hours before Appalachia emergency personnel pulled him to safety.

"Three juveniles were basically looking for a place to go four-wheeling and looking for a mud-hole," Appalachia Fire Chief Robert Anderson Jr. said. "One

walked out to see how deep the mud was, and it was up to his waistline."

Anderson compared the mud to quicksand. Because there hadn't been any rain for several days before, the surface of the mud had caked up, he said. But when the youngster got about 75 feet from the bank, there was more moisture in the mud. "He sunk into it like quicksand," Anderson said.

The settlement pond was once part of an A&G Coal mine outside Andover. The pond had been drained after the company completed operations, Anderson said.

The 15-year-old's two companions called Wise dispatch at about

5 p.m. Thursday, then met Appalachia Fire and Rescue personnel at the top of Boggs Avenue to lead them to their friend, which took about 15 minutes.

At first, Anderson said, "we got a request that a vehicle had gotten stuck. Then we found out an individual was stuck, so that changed the response level."

The pond was located in a "really, really" remote area, Anderson said, that could only be accessed by four-wheel drive vehicles.

Reaching the teen-ager once they got to the settlement pond presented another challenge to res-

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Donald Edward Hennsey

Gap man faces rape charge

(The Post does not publish information that could identify the victim of an alleged sexual crime.)

BY GLENN GANNAWAY
NEWS EDITOR

A Big Stone Gap man will appear in Wise County District Court Tuesday, March 5 on a charge of rape.

Donald Edward Hennsey, no age available, of 2521 Fifth Ave. East, faces a felony charge for allegedly raping a woman who was either mentally incapacitated or physically helpless.

According to an arrest warrant signed by Wise County Sheriff's Deputy Nathaniel Baker, he and another deputy were dispatched to Wellmont Lonesome Pine Hospital on Feb. 15 to speak with a woman who claimed she had been raped.

The woman told Baker that, either on Jan. 15 or Jan. 16, she was at her Wise County home, where her son and Hennsey had been drinking and watching television.

"She said that Mr. Hennsey had become very intoxicated and was allowed to sleep on the couch," Baker's report says. Later that evening, the woman claims, she woke up to find Hennsey naked in her bed. Hennsey then removed some of her clothing and raped her, the woman alleges.



PHOTO BY GLENN GANNAWAY

Virginia Department of Forestry volunteers set off on their two-mile walk with 25-pound vests or backpacks. From left are Vicky Eldridge, Brian Jennings of Scott County, and Michael Jones. Looking on are volunteers Jason Stanley, Dakota Webb and Eric Mabe, with Forestry technician Kenny Thomas at right. Volunteer firefighters must meet physical and classroom requirements.

Volunteers crucial to fighting forest fires

BY GLENN GANNAWAY
NEWS EDITOR

Volunteers are the heart and soul of the Virginia Department of Forestry's firefighting efforts.

In Kenny Thomas' four decades as a firefighter, including the first 11 as a volunteer, technological improvement has resulted in smaller fires because the response is usually quicker.

In addition to depending on such things as cell phones to communicate and better equipment to fight fires, Thomas, the technician who staffs the DOF's offices in the Southern section, depends on well-trained, focused volunteers.

Thomas has recently been making sure his volunteers can meet the physical requirements by sending them on a two-mile walk beginning at Bullitt Park and following the Greenbelt. Volunteers must make it back to Thomas within 30 minutes while carrying a 25-pound backpack or vest.

Volunteers also must complete an eight-hour class,

which includes using a protective fire shelter, and they must complete extensive paperwork.

"Volunteers do very much every bit of what's done" when fighting a fire, he said. "As far as when we get on the ground on the fire, the volunteer does all the labor. As the volunteers get a lot of experience they don't need my direction as much either."

Thomas currently has 26 qualified volunteers in Wise County, with about 90 percent drawn from town fire departments. Equipping each volunteer costs between \$800-900, he said. Personal protective equipment includes hardhat, fire shirt, gloves and goggles.

CARELESSNESS

And firefighters have access to an array of equipment when on the job. Reflecting on the changes over the course of his career, Thomas noted that when he started, firefighting "was done by hand with fire rakes, shovels — I can remember the first backpack leaf

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Museum to add to Walk of Fame

BY GLENN GANNAWAY
NEWS EDITOR

The Southwest Virginia Museum will celebrate its 65th anniversary this season, and one of the highlights of the year will be the induction of the second group of Southwest Virginia Walk of Fame honorees. The induction is scheduled to take place during the May 25 Gathering in the Gap.

The museum re-opens on March 1.

The Walk of Fame's first group, chosen in 2008, totaled 23 and included such luminaries as Dock Boggs, Daniel Boone, Ollan Cassell, Dr. Junius Griffin, Gov. Linwood Holton and Francis Gary Powers. This year's class will probably be smaller, Chief

Interpretive Ranger Aaron Davis said.

Students from the WiseJAMS classes now underway at the museum will perform as part of the induction ceremony. Forty-six public school students are participating in the program's first attempt, enough to fill two classes each for banjo, fiddle and guitar, Davis said. Students on each instrument will perform one song at the Gathering and the whole group will perform one song together, he said.

The JAMS program has been a success. The 46 is close to the limit of 50 set so instructors wouldn't be overwhelmed. Thanks to grant funding, the museum has been able to provide instruments to the young

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Ron Short works with a group of beginning fiddle students during a WiseJAMS class at Southwest Virginia Museum Historical State Park. (Photo courtesy of the museum.)



Grand jury indicts several

BY JEFF LESTER
COALFIELD PROGRESS
NEWS EDITOR

A Wise County grand jury last Wednesday indicted several local residents for a range of alleged offenses, from drug possession to check forgery.

- Misti Raechell Hubbard, 35, 227 Garland Loop, Big Stone Gap: One count of possessing a Schedule I or II drug with intent to sell or distribute, punishable by up to 40 years and a \$500,000 fine; one count of selling or distributing a Schedule III drug, punishable by up to

10 years.

- Jon Luke Church, 20, 368 Cullhee Dr. and 1015 Main Ave. W., Big Stone Gap: One count of possessing more than one-half ounce but less than five pounds of marijuana, punishable by up to 10 years.

- Donald Matthew Whitt, 53, 3935 Stewart St., East Stone Gap: Failure to re-register as a sex offender, punishable by up to five years.

- Dora Ann Vanover, 36, care of Duffield regional jail: One count of perjury, punishable by up to 10 years.

- Priscilla Maddux, 31,

927 Second Ave. W., Big Stone Gap: Six counts of making a false statement to apply for medical assistance, each punishable by up to 20 years; six counts of making a false application for public assistance, each punishable by up to 10 years.

- Kyle Blaine Church Jr., 33, 153 Dogwood Terrace, Big Stone Gap: 10 counts of check forgery, each punishable by up to 10 years; 10 counts of uttering a forged check, each punishable by up to 10 years; 10 counts of petit larceny, each punishable by up to a year in jail and a \$2,500 fine.

Pre-K registration opens

Primary and elementary schools in Wise County with kindergarten classes are now taking applications for the 2013-14 Pre-K program.

Parents should apply at the nearest school during the application period, which began Monday, Feb. 25 and runs through the last school day for the current year.

Students must be 4 years old on or before Sept. 30, 2013, to be eligible for the program. Parents should bring the child's birth certificate or other proof of birth date and Social Security card with them to the school.

Students are required to be potty trained. Children of the Wise County School Division's employees are not

given special consideration of any kind, but are welcome to apply through the regular procedures.

The Pre-K program offers academic and enrichment experiences for 4-year-old children to help prepare them for success in kindergarten.

Children who are accepted for the program will be attending school for the full school day each day school is in session beginning in August. Transportation is furnished by Wise County's regular school buses.

Additional information is available by calling the principal or guidance counselor of the nearest primary or elementary school, or call the Wise County School Board's Title I office at 276/328-6220.

Museum

From Page A1

musicians who needed them. They take the instruments home with them to practice, Davis said. The expectation is that the local JAMS program will meet the goal of having two classes a year, with the next likely to start in September and run through December. Students who wish to return would comprise an intermediate class, Davis said, with available spots for beginners being filled by the school system.

Davis said the program would like to eventually have intermediate and advanced students with the goal of starting a string band to perform at such venues as schools and festivals. "That may be a couple of years down the road," he said while noting that the instructors all have students who are progressing quickly.

The 2013 Gathering in the Gap will feature a diverse group of musicians. Popular cellist Dave Eggar will return with his genre-crossing virtuosity. Also on the schedule is Mountain Heart, a bluegrass band that hosts its own show on storied

Nashville radio station WSM. And John Carter Cash and wife Laura will join Dale Jett to evoke the spirit of the Carter Family when they perform as the Carter Family III. Cash and Jett will also play separate sets. "They come together for a show you really can't see anywhere else," Davis said. "We thought that would go well with the 65th anniversary."

The museum is expanding its series of bus tours this year. A tour of sites related to Melungeon history is planned. "With all the interest in Melungeon research, we thought it would be an interesting bus tour to add in along with all the tours we already have," Davis said. The tour will probably visit sites in both southwestern Virginia and eastern Tennessee. Last July, the museum was host to the Melungeon Heritage Association's 16th union.

The museum is also planning a bus tour to the Civil War saltworks at Saltville. Dr. Lawrence Fleenor will lead the tour, which is tentatively set for autumn.

The museum occupies the house built for coal baron Rufus Ayers at the end of the 19th century and bought by C. Bascom Slemp in 1929. The commonwealth of Virginia purchased the house in 1946, with the Slemp Foundation donating the contents. The museum was dedicated in 1948.

Chamber seeks citizen nominations

The Wise County Chamber of Commerce is now accepting nominations for the 2012 Outstanding Citizen of the Year Award, which will be presented at the chamber's annual dinner and gala on Saturday, April 13.

The deadline for nominations is Monday, March 4.

To qualify for the award, a nominee must be a living person and must have been a resident of Wise County or the city of

Norton sometime during 2012. The nominee must have made contributions or accomplishments, either personally or professionally, benefiting the entire county. Contributions of prior years and the immediate past year will be considered.

All citizens, except those who have received the award in previous years, are eligible for consideration. Nominations for groups will not be considered.

Nomination forms are available at the Wise County Chamber of Commerce, 765 Park Avenue in Norton, or online at www.wisecounty-chamber.org.

A letter of nomination which describes in your own words the person's family life, activities, and demonstrations of community service and citizenship must accompany the nomination form.

For more information, call 276/679-0961.

HEARING LOSS



Mountain Empire Hearing and Balance founder and audiologist Fredia Helbert, flanked by speech pathologist Nancy Wampler, left, and audiologist Tiffany Hammonds.

WHAT ARE YOU MISSING ?

People experiencing hearing loss need to think about what they are missing. The voices of children or grandchildren? The speaker at the lodge or a club meeting? Sunday school teacher or the pastor at the church?

Audiologists, Dr. Fredia Helbert and Dr. Tiffany Hammonds at Mountain Empire Hearing and Balance know hearing loss can have serious consequences. It should not be dismissed by those growing older as something that comes naturally with age, or something you just live with because there is little you can do. With so many options now available, they know that no one has to live their life that way.

At Mountain Empire Hearing and Balance, diagnosing the problems and helping plot the solutions are what they do.

One patient, a musician, could hear music again with hearing aids. "Being able to give that ability back to him/her with clarity was pretty exciting," says Dr. Helbert.

Another patient reported that he hadn't been able to hear prayer requests at church. In his first

visit to church he reported back, "I was on the prayer list and didn't even know it."

But hearing loss that goes undiagnosed or unaddressed can cause people over time to withdraw and stop going places, like church and the movies, because they can't hear. "They are missing sounds and misunderstanding words," Dr. Hammonds explains. They can get confused and embarrassed. Around the dinner table, they are not a part of the conversation anymore. They can become isolated, not hearing well enough to be involved.

New research from Johns Hopkins about the connection between hearing loss and dementia reinforces the importance of testing and the risks that can come with hearing loss, Dr. Helbert explains. The study found that seniors who have hearing loss are significantly

more likely to develop dementia, the more hearing loss, the higher the likelihood of developing dementia. She cautioned that they don't know why nor exactly how the two correlate.

Hearing loss and dementia may share a common unknown cause, she said, or people with hearing problems may have extra difficulty coping with mental decline. It may be that social isolation and loneliness fuel a decline in cognitive function.

Research on the effects of hearing loss in children is even more critical. It is important that children with hearing loss be treated as soon as possible.

Even a mild degree of hearing loss can affect speech and language development. Children are tested at Mountain Empire Hearing as newborns, and we have several very young children we have fit successfully with hearing aids. Children are never too young, too active, or too fussy for a hearing test.

It is more essential than ever that people of all ages stop ignoring hearing loss, Dr. Hammonds stresses, and start with testing and diagnosis. "If we can find out what is causing the problems, we can try to get the very best treatment possible depending on the diagnosis."



At left, Office Manager Virginia Baker with receptionist Karen Collins, center, and billing specialist Teresa Wendle.

Hearing Aids: Computer on your ear

One option is hearing aids, Dr. Helbert says, "but they're not what your father or grandfather probably had. Hearing aids have changed because technology has changed." No longer clunky hardware, today's digital hearing aids are smaller, less conspicuous, more comfortable and waterproof. They work better in noisy environments by reducing background noise.

"It's like having a mini computer on your ear adapting to voice and environment," she says. The newest out has a remote that sends the phone signal to your hearing aid and can live stream from your iPod or MP3 player to your hearing aid.

"It's exciting to be on the cusp of that technology," Dr. Helbert says, and with such an opportunity available, she urges people to address a potential hearing problem and experience what they've been missing. "People can become part of the conversation with family, friends and caregivers again," she says, "They are more in tune to the conversations around them, and that helps them stay a part of that community."

results in language that you can understand and send reports to your primary care physician.

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(WHAT DOES HEARING LOSS SOUND LIKE?)

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