

Louisa Life

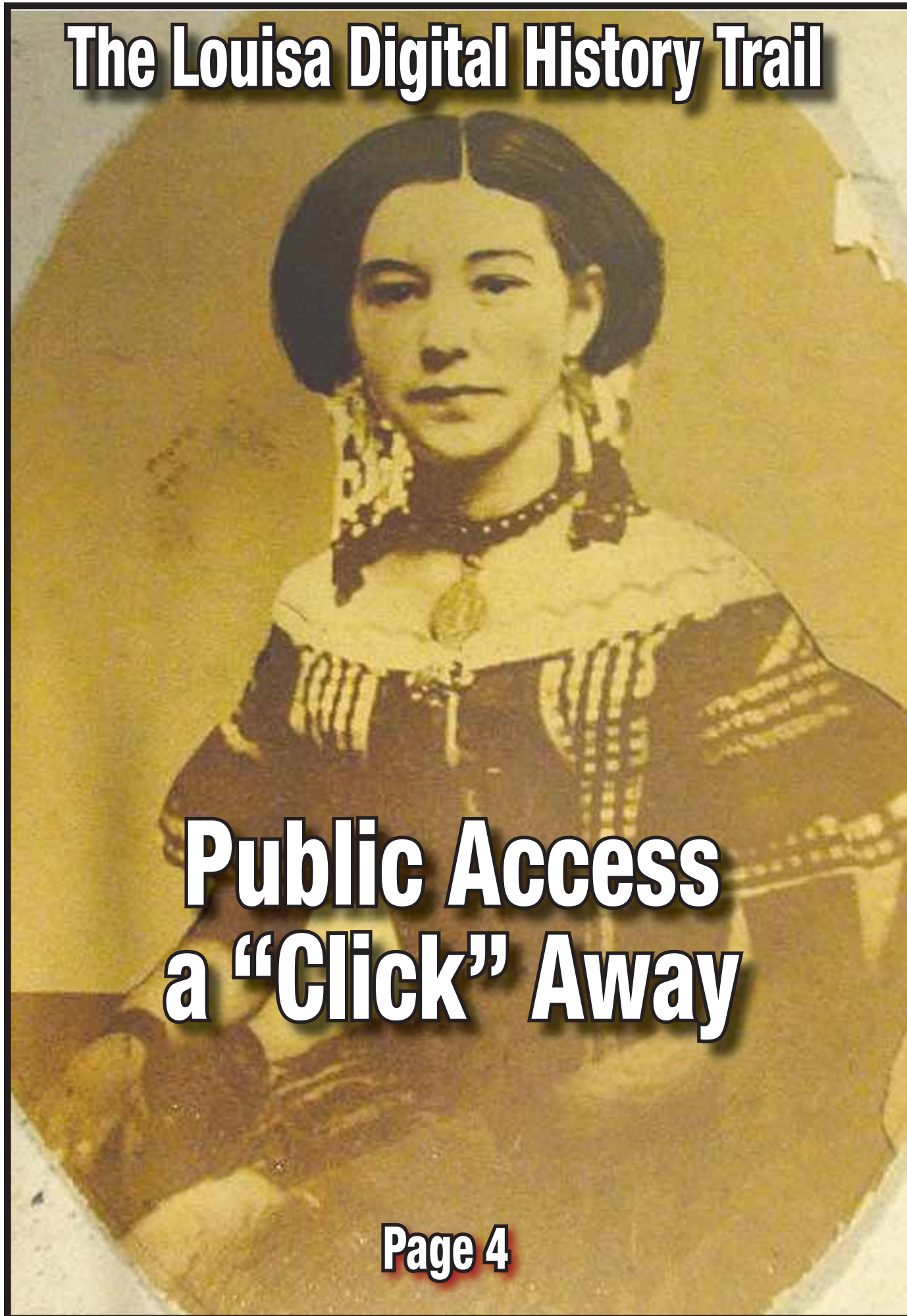
April 27 - May 24, 2018 • ONE COPY FREE

LOUISA COUNTY, VIRGINIA



Festival at Walton Park
Page 8

The Louisa Digital History Trail



**Public Access
a "Click" Away**

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BUSINESS

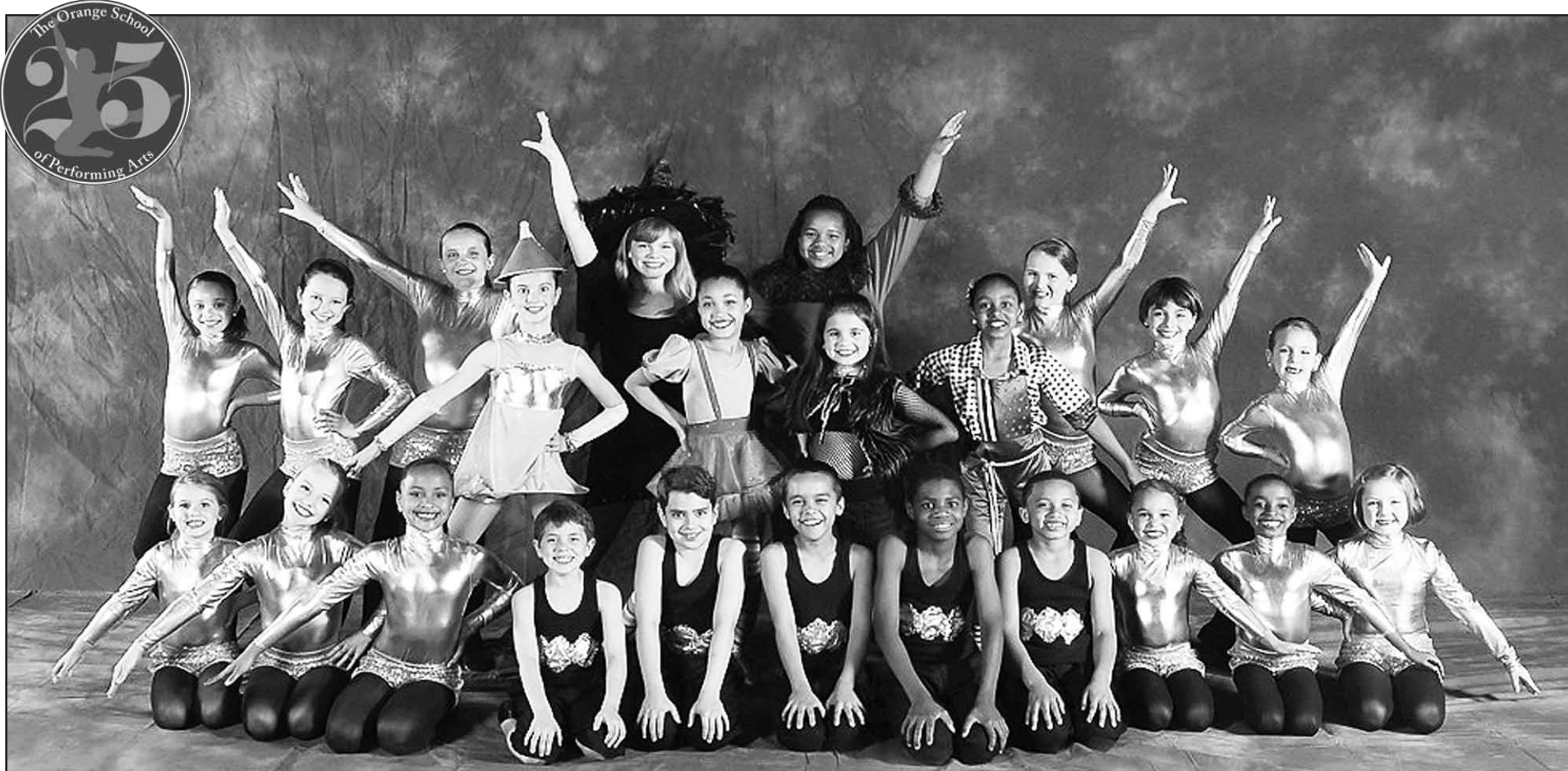
**Wesley Chiles
Enterprises
Named Lake Anna
Business of the Year
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SCHOOLS

**Louisa County
Public Schools
Celebrate Annual
Arts Festival
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PEOPLE

**Mike Gillespie:
Metal Man
Page 12**



ORANGE SCHOOL OF PERFORMING ARTS SPRING PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE:

★ Company Showcase:

May 6 - 2:00pm ... PVCC – Charlottesville, Va

★ Musical Theatre Showcase:

May 16 & 17 - 7:00pm ... OSPA Firehouse Theatre

★ Spring Recital:

June 2 - 12:00pm ... OCHS – Orange, Va

★ 25th Anniversary Showcase - Outdoor Performance:

June 2 - 7:30pm ... Taylor Park *Spotswood Pavilion* – Orange, Va

For Ticket Info Call: 540-672-9038 Or Email Us: orangeschoolofperformingarts@gmail.com

OSPA COMPANY AUDITIONS!!

FRIDAY - APRIL 27 (AGES 8-10) 5-8:00pm

SATURDAY - APRIL 28 (AGES 14-18) 9-12:00noon

SATURDAY - APRIL 28 (AGES 11-13) 1-4:00pm

Visit our website: www.ospa.net



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Next advertising deadline: May 16 for the May 25 - June 28, 2018 issue.

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In 1836 Mary Frances Hines, a Cherokee, was born in Louisa County. She is now part of the county's historical trail. (Photo provided by historical society) No 7

Cover designed by Marilyn Ellinger



Wesley Chiles stands next to a company truck parked at his Ellisville Drive office location. All photos by Linda Salisbury.

Chiles Wins Business of the Year

He picked the lawnmower over the go-cart

By Linda Salisbury
Correspondent

When Louisa native Wesley W. Chiles began mowing lawns at age 10 for an elderly woman his mother knew, it would have been hard to imagine that before he was old enough to drive, he would own a thriving business and would be hiring adults as subcontractors.

But not surprisingly, now at 26, his company was named the Lake Anna Business Partnership's "Business of the Year for 2018."

Chiles Enterprises LLC, employs 13 full-time team members off season, and another 10 or so seasonally. Chiles has major contracts for landscaping, lawn and tree services in Central Virginia, including at Dominion Energy's nuclear power plant at Lake Anna, and it provides services to residential customers as well. It's a major success for a small boy, who worked hard and overcame setbacks, such as when his first riding mower caught fire and was destroyed.

His family roots on both sides are deep within the area. Grandfather W.W. Chiles had a honey business and lawn service in nearby Gordonsville. He died when Wesley was three, but stories about him were an inspiration to the child.

Chile's first customer was Miss Ward, the grandmother of a classmate at Trevilians Elementary school. He rode his bike and used a big push-mower at her place every other week, earning \$35 per cut. He wanted to use the money to buy a go-kart (many of his friends had them), but his parents needed financial help, so he contributed his earnings to the household income. When their situation improved after two years, they gave him back what he had contributed for bills.



Businessman Wesley Chiles at age 12 next to his first riding lawn mower that caught fire two years later. He wears his Lawn Enforcement Officer cap. (Photo provided)

See Chiles page 7

Digital Trail Tells of Louisa's Rich History

By Linda Salisbury
Correspondent



A new trail through Louisa County is beckoning and will soon be accessible from the comfort of home, car, office or school in early summer.

It's the Louisa Digital History Trail, partially funded by a \$7,150 grant from the Virginia Tourism Commission, and is part of a new statewide program called "American Evolution." Locally, the trail, with 50 stops, is being organized by Elaine Taylor, program advisor with the Louisa County Historical Society's Sargeant Museum and an advisory committee. The 50 sites help tell Louisa's part in shaping our new democracy.

Taylor said that "2019 marks the 400th anniversary of some important milestones

The digital trail will showcase women, including these homemakers who were members of the Quail Home Demonstration Club in the 1940s. (Photo provided by historical society)



Program advisor Elaine Taylor works on the Louisa Digital History Trail project at the Sargeant Museum. Photo by Linda Salisbury.



A photo of a woman favoring women's right to vote is one of the pieces of history on Louisa's Digital History Trail. (Photo provided by historical society)

in Virginia's history; the first representative legislative assembly in the New World, the arrival of the first recorded Africans to English North America, the recruitment of English women in significant numbers, the first official English Thanksgiving in North America, and the entrepreneurial and innovative spirit of the Virginia colony." Called the "Give Me Liberty Trail," the digital trail through the county will recognize people, places and events, many of them not widely known, or no longer visible to the public. Among them, is the place where Patrick Henry lived in his home "Roundabout," John Mercer Langston's birthplace, the 1700s Quaker Meeting House, and an archaeological site where there is much evidence of an early Native American settlement.

See Digital page 6



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May 25th
June 29th
July 20th

Louisa County Parks, Recreation & Tourism presents

it's Finally Friday



concerts in the park

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Walton Park
623 Louisa Ave Mineral, VA 23117

FREE | 6:00 - 9:00PM
Check-out the list of bands playing at: VisitLouisa.com

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- Beer Garden (Mineral Fire Department Auxiliary)
- Dancing
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A photo of Barbara Tinsely, provided by the Louisa County Historical Society, is part of the digital trail's remembrance of contributions of African Americans.

Other sites will include the location of a the Melungeon Community (a tri-racial community (white, African-American and Indian) near what is now the Shenandoah Crossing resort; 11 highway marker stops that are relevant to the American Evolution theme; locations and information about the African-American schools; sites of several slave-holding plantations; sites of homes of several of Virginia's founding fathers, the museum, and more.

The trail will also include the familiar stories of Louisa County's rich history including Jack Jouett's ride to warn Founding Fathers of the British attempt to capture them; Garlandtown, representing a community of freed blacks before and after the Civil War; the birthplace of Henry "Box" Brown, mills, and the old Maddox store where the first women in the county registered to vote three months before the 19th amendment was ratified.

The Give Me Liberty Trail takes its name from Patrick Henry's famed 1775 speech in Richmond. He was once Louisa County's representative to the House of Burgess.

Two years ago, through the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, the historical society received another grant for a project titled "If it Takes a Hundred Years: the Journey of Women and African-Americans in Louisa County Virginia 1865-1970."

The digital trail will allow visitors to click on information and pictures of each site to help tell the story of Louisa County's past, which often fits into state and national history.

It will also highlight places that tourists might eat or visit, such as galleries, shops or the county's arts center, if they drive to Louisa County to physically follow the trail. The digital sites will link to the historical society's digital archive, and according to the grant application, "will educate visitors about the stirrings of self-government." It will focus on how tribal identities were lost through intermarriage and will deal with tough topics such as slavery and segregation, and bring facts to light. For example, "By 1860, 60 percent of the population (of Louisa County) was enslaved, and 62 percent of the households were slave-owning," according to the historical society.

Taylor said that grants were given to localities to "try to encourage each to pull together their story of local history." And new stories keep coming as volunteers search records, court cases and deeds. One recently uncovered snippet of history involves Thomas Jefferson's attempted defense of "Indian Ben" to gain his freedom from the Belsches when the law changed and make enslaving Indians illegal. By law Indians were not allowed to be enslaved. Jefferson notes that Ben's grandmother was an Indian, probably about 6 or 7 when she was purchased, and at the time of the court case was about 68. Jefferson wanted to know "whether an old act making Indians slaves was in force when the grandmother was sold. If there should be an appeal in this case I am to appear for pl. (plaintiff)."

She said that there has been a broad base of community support and assistance for the project. The advisory committee includes Chris Peterson, president of the Louisa County Historical Society, Regina Cook, executive director of the Louisa County Chamber of Commerce; Greg Jones, president of Louisa County NAACP; plus Tabetia Chiles, tourism and special events coordinator, and James Smith, director, both of the Louisa County Louisa County Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism.

In addition to various promotional events and activities by the chamber, the NAACP plans to have materials about the digital trail available at its first African-American Culture Awareness Festival to be held Saturday, Aug. 25, at Moss-Nuckols School.

Louisa County will no longer as a place to just drive through. This rural community's rich history and contemporary offerings will be easily accessible. For more information www.louisacounty.com/ToursTrails

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Elaine Taylor, LCHS program advisor talks about the Michie House located on the grounds of the Sargeant Museum.

At 12 he bought a Cub Cadet riding mower from Lowe's. With it, Chiles was able to pick up additional clients and his income continued to rise. But disaster struck when the mower caught fire while he was bagging leaves on the property of a fireman, who had just left for work. Although the fire department quickly arrived, it was too late, and Chiles, then 14, remember standing there in tears "seeing my hopes and dreams go up in flames."

The father of a classmate, who had an engine repair shop in Zion Crossroads, came to the rescue. The mower couldn't be repaired, but Mr. Whitely thought it was the fault of the manufacturer and was able to get a store credit for a replacement. Thanks to this man's help, Chiles was able to replace the equipment with a zero-turn mower and an 18-foot landscape trailer. He had his eyes on a truck to pull the trailer, but he was only 14 and didn't have his learner's permit; a friend test drove it for him. He had to take an \$8,000-\$9,000 loan, through his father. But he paid it off as promised, and at 16, when he got his driver's license, he bought a 34-horsepower tractor with a bush-hog attachment. Friends and teachers worked for him, including Mike Hopkins, his ag teacher, as a subcontractor for excavating.

A senior at Louisa High School in 2010, Chiles was in a quandary. He excelled academically but wasn't sure he wanted to go to college. He had a growing business and loved it. Fortunately, a representative of Virginia Tech's two-year Agricultural Technology program in turf and landscape management encouraged him to apply. To stay on top of his business, he came home every weekend, and applied what he was learning about turf, landscaping, horticulture, business and technology.

As part of his internship, he worked with a landscaping supply wholesaler, and became familiar with products such as fertilizers. Later, as customers asked him what they should use in their yards, he opened a retail side of his enterprise.

After finishing his two-year course, he continued his education at Piedmont Virginia Community College.

As his business continues to grow and expand, Chiles said he plans to open a second site on the Louisa side of Lake Anna. He is outgrowing his Ellisville Drive location just outside of the town of Louisa.

He also realized in recent years that he needed learn to delegate responsibility rather than take it all on himself. He wanted to be able to spend time with his wife, Tabethia, whom he married in March 2017. Delegating was difficult. He had always been in charge, ever since he was 10 and having to prove himself to adults. But he has a good team and works closely with them to set high standards based on his deep Christian faith. Each week begins with a team meeting involving prayer and setting goals for the week. It involves treating people well, based on Christ's example.

Community is also important. Chiles is a member of LABP, and always buys an auction item at the county Ag Fair to support the Future Farmers of America (he was a member as a youngster); and his church, Louisa Baptist. He and his wife are on the board of Young Life, and he serves on the advisory board of Louisa High School's Career and Technical Education. He's proud that he had a major role in funding and hiring of the CTE coordinator and assistant coordinator and will soon have one of the students working with him.

He's also on the board of the Louisa County Chamber of Commerce.

In 2014, he was named Virginia Tech's "Outstanding Recent Alumnus."

If he weren't busy enough, he's taking online classes at Liberty University, where his wife earned two degrees, to prepare for the Christian ministry.

He also helps prep the garden plots for Louisa's Downtown Garden, and his company planted one.

It's probably not a life that the young boy envisioned, but in the end, the lawnmower turned out to be a better investment than the go-kart.



Chiles Enterprises LLC also provides snowplowing services. Chiles checks equipment.



Chiles stands in front of his office and a storage barn.



A Chiles Enterprises LLC driver is ready to haul a load of mulch.

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



Mineral Beautification Festival

We organized the festival to bring attention to and show pride for the Town of Mineral and its surrounding areas.

April 28, 2018

9AM – 1PM (Rain or Shine)

Mineral Farmer's Market Field

Through education and advocacy, we hope to encourage stewardship of the Town and community. By supporting local growers and craftspeople, we're creating a new income opportunity for area growers and craftspeople and offering consumers top-quality locally grown plants, produce and local craft work at a convenient location.

Walk to End Alzheimer's

May 12 2018 9 am to 1 pm Walton Park



Heritage Day Set for April 28

Contributed by Tabetia Chiles, Louisa County Parks, Recreation and Tourism

Louisa County Historical Society in partnership with Louisa County Parks, Recreation & Tourism (LCPRT) proudly presents the annual Heritage Day event scheduled on **Saturday, April 28th from 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. at the Sargeant Museum in Louisa.**

Join the Historical Society as they bring Louisa County history to life by celebrating our culturally diverse past, present and future! Spectators will see what life in Louisa County was once like as they step back in time through live demonstrations of a School Marm, Tobacconist, Spinster, Weaver, Woodworker, 18th Century Hunter/Storyteller, Draft Horses, Hearth Cooks, a Buffalo Solider and Horse, Duelists, Native American Basket Weaver, Wilderness Hide Tanner, Blacksmiths, Herbalists: natural dyeing, Gardener, and the Palas Athena Civil War Sanitary Commission. Special interactive fun for the children will include: Making Corn Husk Dolls, Basket and Bracelet Weaving, Playing Period Games, a Barrel Train Ride, Spinning and Carding Wool, Learning about a Telegraph and Needle Work.

There will also be craft/artisan and food vendors on-site selling some wonderful homemade items! If you are interested in becoming a vendor please contact, Tabetia Chiles at Louisa County Parks, Recreation and Tourism for more information. This family event is free to the public! For more information, please contact Louisa County Historical Society at Louisahistory@verizon.net

The Spring Thing

April 28-29

The Lake Anna Business Partnership will host The Spring Thing **April 28-29, from 10 a.m.-3 p.m.** in front the New Bridge Landing Food Lion at Lake Anna. The Spring Thing event includes vendor tables, a food collection drive, and on Sunday, a town hall discussion with county supervisors and a popular, annual corn-



GUESTS WELCOME

Sunday, May 6 -- Wednesday, May 9



SUNDAY MORNING & REVIVAL SPEAKER: Rev. Roger Roller
of the Roger Roller Evangelistic Association
www.rroller.org

Unity Service

Sunday, May 6 at 10:30 a.m.

Luncheon to follow Service

Gospel Music Concert

with Billy Hodges
to follow luncheon

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6:30 pm

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hole tournament.

LAPD also begins its monthly **Sunset Concert Series on April 28 from 5-9:30 p.m.** at the Anna Point Pavilion. For information <http://www.visitlakeanna.org>
Both events are free to the public.



20th Annual Mother-Son Dance

LCPRT invites the moms of Louisa to spend the day with their son! Our 20th Annual Mother-Son Dance is the Saturday after Mother's Day so you can celebrate this special holiday with your favorite little man! Go out to dinner or do whatever you choose to make this an extra-special day just for the two of you. Then, join us for this memorable Mother-Son Dance. Sons, grandsons, and nephews can treat the special ladies in their lives to an evening of fun and dancing.

Sorry, NO DADS allowed at this event! Boys must be between the ages of 5 and 13. Refreshments will be served.

Professional photographs will be taken at 7 p.m. by TSS Photography. Packages available to pick-up that night. Purchases by cash or credit card only.

Reservations are required by May 17th.

\$12/couple and \$5/each additional son with the same mother.

Saturday, May 19, 2018

7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Betty Queen Center
522 Industrial Drive
Louisa, VA 23093



It's Finally Friday: Concerts in the Park Series

It may not seem like it right now, but we promise warm weather is on it's way; before you know it, Summer will be here! As usual, we have some great music events planned for you and your family to enjoy. These family-friendly concerts are FREE and will feature a variety of musical styles as well as local talent. Not only do we have great music scheduled at these events, but we have lots of activities to keep the kids entertained. Everyone is sure to have a great time!

If you are a band who is interested in performing at either our May 25th or June 29th dates, please contact us at tourism@louisa.org with your band's information. Series: May 25th, June 29th & July 20th 6:00 - 9:00 p.m. Walton Park in Mineral.

Save the Date

Spring Creek Yard Sale

**Sat, May 5th
8 am - 12:00 Noon**

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**Saturday
May 5th
8 am-2 pm**

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Christ Episcopal Church

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(corner of N. High and
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Gordonsville

ANNUAL HERITAGE DAY
Saturday, April 28, 2018
10:00 AM TO 4:00 PM

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AT THE SARGEANT MUSEUM
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School Marm, Tobacconist, Spinster, Weaver, Woodworker, 18th Century hunter/storyteller, Draft Horses, Hearth Cooks, Buffalo Solider and Horse, Duelists, Wilderness Hide Tanner, Blacksmiths, Herbalists: Natural Dyeing, Gardener, Palas Athena Sanitary Commission

Hands-On Activities:

- Make corn husks dolls
- Spin & card wool
- Weave a bracelet & basket
- Learn about a Telegraph
- Play period games
- Needle work
- Ride a barrel train
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The Louisa County High School Musical Ensemble gave a preview of two songs from the upcoming performances of *Fiddler on the Roof* to be held in the schools' Alan Jackson Theater on Friday, April 27 and Saturday, April 28 at 7 p.m. with a matinee on Sunday, April 29 at 3 p.m. Tickets are \$15 (reserved seating) or \$10 (general admission). Tickets will be available at the door prior to all performances.



At the face painting booth, sports fan Wyatt Ritchie, a first grader at Trevilians ES, sat quietly while LCHS senior Taylor Wendell paints footballs.

Inspired By Nature

By Pat Wilson
Correspondent

The projects of middle school art teacher Gail Carlin were among the work displayed in the gymnasium and hallways as Louisa County Public Schools celebrated its annual Arts Festival on Saturday, April 14. Visitors enjoyed hands-on activities including wilderness weaving and paper bird construction as well as relaxed in the forum to watch various chorus, instrumental and theater arts performances. The annual event, organized by the school system's seven art teachers, is an outgrowth of Youth Art Month and Music in Our Schools, both national endeavors. The countywide effort promotes art education with this year's emphasis on creating awareness and sensitivity to nature and the environment.

Carlin took a unique approach to the theme. On an early spring day that she admits was still a bit chilly, Carlin took her eighth-grade art students into the fields behind the school to photograph nature.

"We had been studying the work of Andy Goldsworthy who uses natural materials found in the environment in his art," she said. "Inspired by him, the students collected and arranged tree cones, dried grasses, berries, leaves and other items then photographed their arrangements. I emphasized that nature would eventually destroy their work, but the photographs would capture memories."

In a separate project, Carlin had her seventh-grade student research Photo Ark, a Joel Santore documentary project centering on capturing photographs of approximately 8,000 endangered species before each might become extinct. The instructor then had her students draw specific animals or birds that appealed to their hopes for needed preservation. Results displayed in a hallway ranged from tropical birds and wolves to pandas and elephants.



Winnie Massie seems fascinated as her father Sam attaches wings and a tail to a red bird.



Andie MacDougall, a seventh grade LCMS art student, selected pandas after the class studied the work of an endangered species, photographer.



Benjamin and Scarlett Ramierz posed in front of the Gnome house and garden, created by Jouett ES staff under the direction of art teacher April Lee.

Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

ACROSS

- 1 Snide remark
- 5 Waikiki wiggle
- 9 Small sample
- 14 Burn soother
- 15 Part of CPU
- 16 Rack up, as debt
- 17 Fireplace fodder
- 18 Unwritten reminder
- 20 Vile smile
- 22 NAREB member
- 23 See eye to eye
- 24 Staircase part
- 25 School session
- 28 Disparage
- 30 Chocolate source
- 31 Dog-scolding word
- 34 Pickup shtick
- 35 Eye site
- 36 Putting up with
- 38 Abandons
- 39 Cease and

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54	55							56		57		
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61						62				63		

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- 40 Cheesy sandwich
- 41 Turn red, maybe
- 42 Full range
- 43 Phony sort
- 45 Mideast bigwig
- 46 Tropical tuber
- 47 In the ___ of (amongst)
- 51 More than a few
- 53 Geologic period
- 54 Haitian, for one
- 57 Folklore fiend
- 58 "Not ___!"
- 59 Knowing about
- 60 Feudal estate

- 61 Gabbana's partner
 - 62 Must-have
 - 63 Pedal pushers
- DOWN**
- 1 Modeler's wood
 - 2 Word with tag or string
 - 3 Daltrey of The Who
 - 4 Be suitable for, old-style
 - 5 Droning sound
 - 6 Precise
 - 7 Family history
 - 8 Reach, as a goal

- 9 Pinball error
- 10 Mark up
- 11 Golfer's tally
- 12 Egyptian boy king
- 13 Before, to a sonneteer
- 19 "Is that ___?"
- 21 Pragmatic one
- 26 Threadbare
- 27 Bullwinkle, e.g.
- 29 Fabric fuzz
- 30 Halloween wear
- 31 Policeman's shield
- 32 At right angles to ship's keel

- 33 Ouster
- 35 Brazilian soccer legend
- 37 Water pill
- 38 Barren
- 40 Glacial deposit
- 43 Presidential grant
- 44 Sucker deal
- 46 Gymnast's goal
- 48 Stray calf
- 49 Rock fragments
- 50 Shrinkage, to a retailer
- 52 Wall climber
- 54 Bunch of bills
- 55 It may be inflated
- 56 Sign of approval



Presents:

Avenue



The Musical

AVENUE Q

CONTAINS EXPLICIT CONTENT. ADULTS ONLY

MUSIC & LYRICS BY JEFF MARX & ROBERT LOPEZ / BOOK BY JEFF WHITTY
Based on an Original Concept by Robert Lopez and Jeff Marx

MAY 4 – 20, 2018
MAINSTAGE

Directed by EDWARD WARWICK WHITE
Vocal Direction by KATE LAMBERT
Musical Direction by KRISTIN BALTES
Choreography by HEATHER POWELL



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This musical comedy tells the story of a recent college grad named Princeton, who moves into a shabby New York apartment all the way out on Avenue Q. A tale any adult can relate to, Princeton and his newfound friends struggle to find jobs, dates, and their ever-elusive purpose in life. Filled with naughty, gut-busting humor and a witty, catchy score, Avenue Q is a truly unique show that has quickly become a favorite for audiences everywhere. Winner of the Tony "Triple Crown" for Best Musical, Best Score, and Best Book, Avenue Q is part flesh, part felt, and a whole lot of heart.

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People



Mike Gillespie combines metals and techniques in the steps to create a large flower garden ornament which he will secure to a rebar stake. Photos by Pat Wilson.

Giving Metals a Different Twist

By Pat Wilson
Correspondent

Mike Gillespie credits the members of the Central Virginia Blacksmith Guild for perking his interest in shaping iron into intricate designs for practical or ornamental use. But, the metal-smith has honed his skills to working with other metals, for the most part steel, copper and aluminum.

"The guild welcomed me and members were always willing to show me different techniques. They don't hide their secrets and share knowledge and openly demonstrate," he said. "I began working with my few tools and added equipment when I could afford to."

The artisan took several blacksmithing and metalworks courses. At one weekend class while using various chisels, punches and other specially designed tools, Gillespie sent 15 hours to complete a six-inch fish. He emphasized that although he worked with a two-dollar piece of metal, the time to complete the one-of-a-kind item was extensive and limited sales potential.

"It's not an item you would usually sell at a farmers' market," he said with a grin. But, as he watched and listened, Gillespie learned to duplicate the items which the blacksmiths were fashioning, such as various style hooks and flag holders. He then returned to his home east of the Yanceyville community and added his personal touch. Next, the artisan expanded his heated workshop and purchased more equipment. Over the past two decades Gillespie has turned what was once a hobby into a business, Expert Metalworks. He was first attracted to specializing in a diversity of metals because of the hands-on quality of the personalized workmanship.

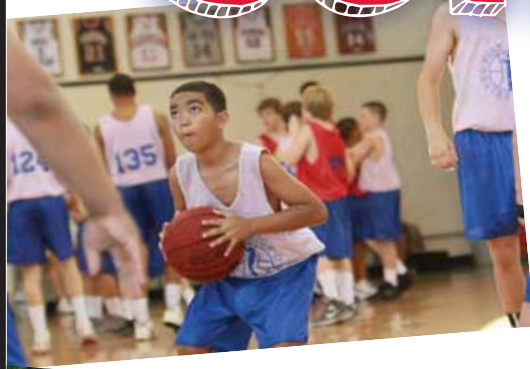


Wall hangings featuring water scenes with cranes are popular at arts and craft shows.

See Metal Man page 14



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"I knew I wanted to step outside my comfort zone and create my own designs and techniques. I never wanted to just make what I saw someone else do," he said. "A lot of the work can't be done by large machines, but simply by using a hammer, forge or other small equipment or tools. I often call on my welding experience."

Gillespie's entrepreneur skills came from past experiences operating a business that made small animal cages as well as owning a nursery that sold plants, both of which he wholesaled.

"It was hard to compete against bigger businesses, but some of the supplies and tools I had acquired I can use with the metals," he said.

A recent addition to his workshop is a computer-based plasma cutter. Gillespie can program the outline he desires, such as petals for a flower, and then adjust the shape, size and number of the items to be cut. He even built a separate room within the workshop to house the steel plate and cutting device as well as isolate the dust byproduct.

Painting presented another challenge. He employs various methods from spray cans to airbrushing with acrylics, enamels, high density enamel stains, patina finishes and other special formulas. For intricate work, Gillespie has used Q-tips. Paints or finishing coatings must be adjusted with solvents to

apply smoothly and prevent running or buckling. Air temperature must be within a certain range. He admits to being self-taught and to an assortment of small sample pieces of metal that are "messed up" but provided a learning situation.

Not content with just painting his pieces, Gillespie has added a scarred metal effect to his talents. The texturing, using a sander or torch, forms his desired pattern to emphasize such details as veins on a petal or scales on a fish. Additionally, a 155-pound power hammer can save the arm fatigue of using the blacksmith's typical anvil and hammer when a distressed look is desired.

"Combined with paint, texturing makes the metals appear softer and shinier," he said.

Gillespie's work is diverse to meet the sales potential to his customers. But, it was perhaps attending flower and garden shows that led him to concentrate on floral designs. Taking his skills from two to three dimensions has resulted in garden stakes with numerous sized flowers that whirl in a breeze. An additional part of his stock is colorful textured steel flowers. Each is set on a rod and attached to a base that will allow it to be placed in a garden or by a water feature. Larger flowers will be attached to rebar posts for stability

when inserted in the ground. Other garden pieces range from whimsical flying pigs and intricate bees to welcome signs featuring waterfowl or birds. He still does hooks but adds hand-painted birds for a unique look.

A separate interest finds Gillespie digging through a friend's scrap metal lot. Calling the finished products "junk yard art," Gillespie has used his imagination to create pumpkins out of horseshoes, robots out of car parts, a praying mantis from fragmented metals and a cat face incorporated in a farm implement. Again, these are examples of his preference to do three dimensional and one-of-a-kind work.

Although Gillespie has a website (www.expertmetalworks.com), his predominant sales are at arts and craft shows, garden shows and other festivals. From late April through December, he and his wife, Linda, will travel throughout Virginia and intermittently into adjoining states to attend high-end juried events which can last from one to four days. Occasionally, they attend local activities and will open the season with a booth at the **Mineral Beautification Festival scheduled for Saturday, April 28, at Walton Park.**

Gillespie attempts to select events that do not feature an abundance of vendors selling "cookie-cutter" metal items. Spring and prior to the Christmas

holidays are the strongest times for sales. His biggest concern is committing to a show and then having the weekend ruined with rain or extreme cold weather.

The couple's truck tows a trailer filled with pieces that Gillespie has created over the winter months. Setting up his tent, tables and display takes several hours, so if the show is more than an hour or two away, he likes to arrive the day prior to the event.

"I return to shows where I have done well in past years and select other events that are often suggested by other vendors," he said. "One of my best shows is a garden and plant show in Alexandria."

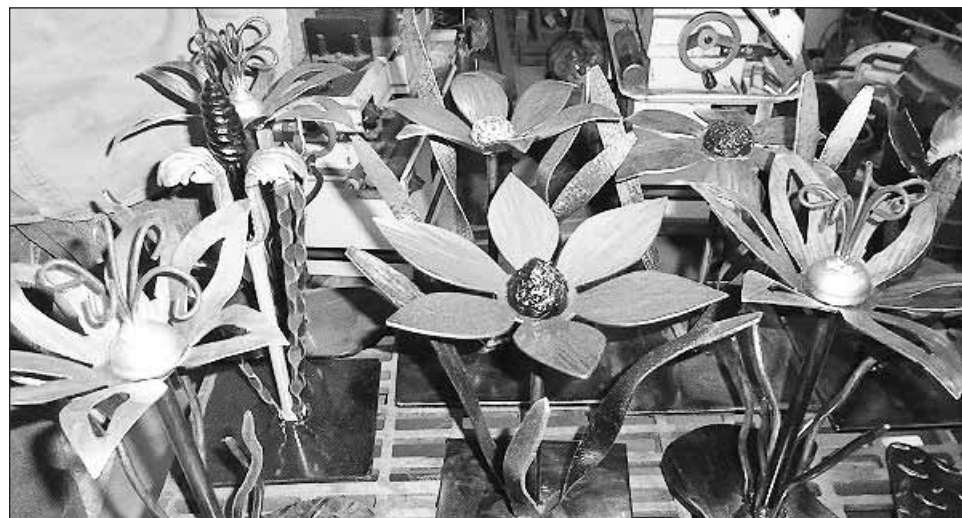
Attention to detail and pride in his finished work contribute to Gillespie's desire to search out new items and perfect their appearance.

"I want my work to be something that makes a person smile," he said then added with a grin. "The downside of my business is that the pieces clientele buy don't wear out. So, I have to come up with new ideas."

The artisan is willing to discuss customized commission work and can be contacted at sales@expert-metalworks.com.



A power hammer gives a piece a distressed look as well as eases the physical work normally done by hammer on anvil.



A former nurseryman, Mike Gillespie still has a passion for flowers including textured steel ones in a myriad of colors.



Three-dimensional bugs are created out of scrap metal.

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Answers to the Crossword Puzzle from page 11

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