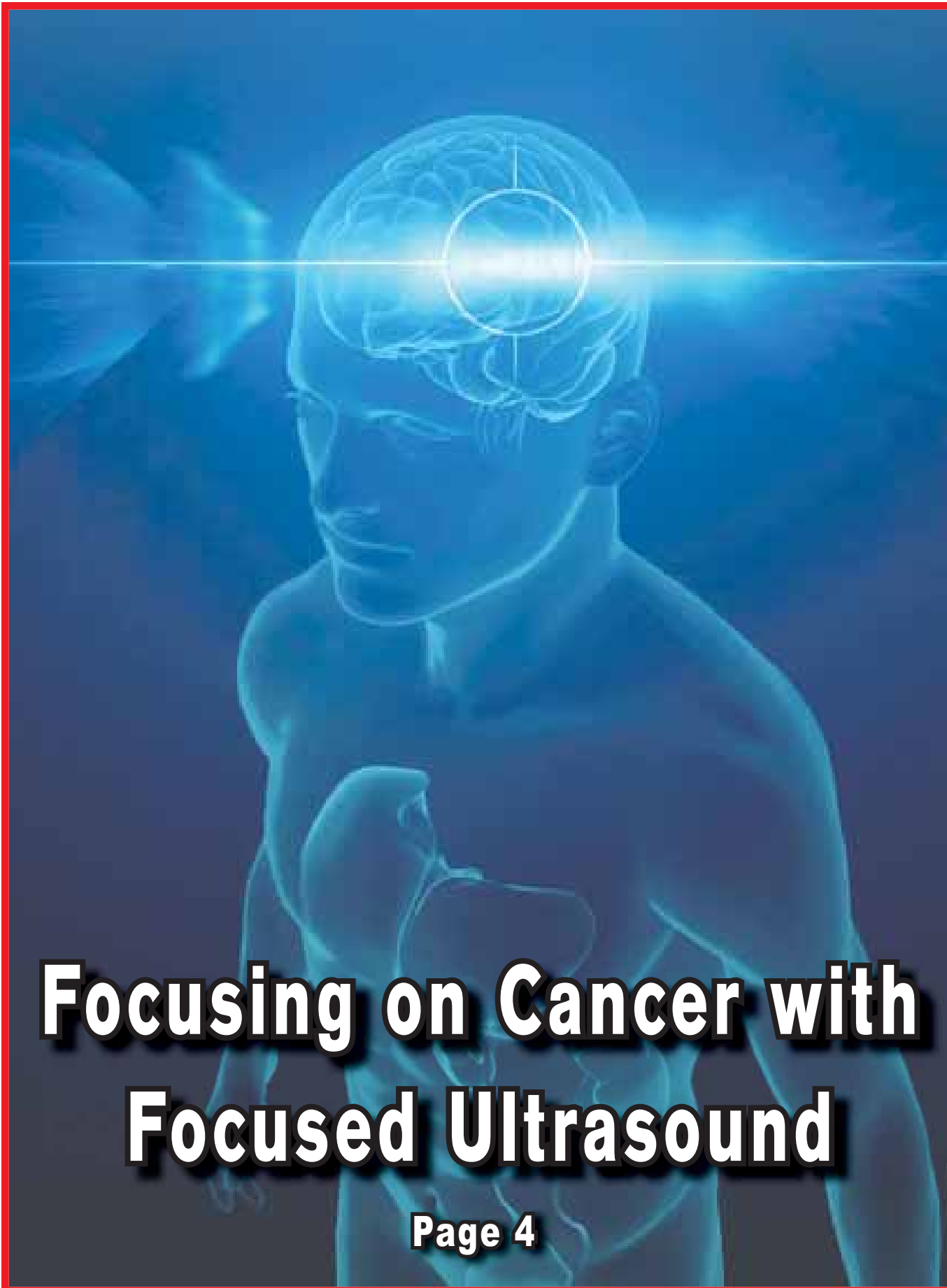


Happy New Year

MAGAZINE

January 10–February 6, 2020 • One Copy FREE

ORANGE COUNTY, VIRGINIA



Focusing on Cancer with Focused Ultrasound

Page 4



The Rescuers:

Cathy Collins and Chester
Page 3



Life on Mars:

Michael Lawson Returns From
Desert Research Station
Page 10



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****Coupon Only valid for January 2020 - Please call ahead to reserve your space!
Only 1 coupon per student* (Offer not valid for current students)***

A monthly publication

Publisher

C. M. Santos
valleyeditor1@gmail.com

Advertising Director

Judi Price
434-207-0223
judi.valleypublishing@gmail.com

Office Manager

Edee Povol
edee@fluvannareview.com

Graphic Production Designer

Marilyn Ellinger

Correspondents

Carol Barfield
Pat Wilson

Cocontributors

Heather Michon

Email: valleyeditor1@gmail.com

Advertising Sales:

judi.valleypublishing@gmail.com

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 59,
Palmyra, VA 22963.

Office Location: 106 Crofton Plaza, Suite 1,
Palmyra, VA 22963

Phone: (434) 591-1000

Fax: (434) 589-1704

General: OC Magazine is published monthly by Valley Publishing Corp. A total of 6,000 copies are circulated throughout Orange County. One copy is free, additional copies are \$1 each payable in advance to the publisher.

Display ad rates: For information including rates and deadlines call Judi Price at 434-207-0223.

Subscriptions: Copies will be mailed for the subscription price of \$40 per year. Please mail a check and a note with your name and address to: OC Magazine Subscriptions Dept., P.O. Box 59, Palmyra, VA 22963.

Submissions, tips, ideas, etc.: OC Magazine encourages submissions and tips on items of interest to Orange County citizens. However we reserve the right to edit submissions as deemed necessary and cannot guarantee they will be published. OC Magazine will not be responsible for returning submitted materials, please include S.A.S.E. if you would like items returned. Please keep Calendar submissions to fifty words or less, Letters to the Editor to 300 words or less and feature stories to 500 words or less. (Letters to the Editor, Community Calendar, etc.), E-mail valleyeditor1@gmail.com

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Next Advertising deadline: Wednesday,
January 29, 2020

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More Rescuers

By Pat Wilson
Correspondent

Over several future issues, compassionate animal lovers share stories of the pets they took into their homes and the joy and companionship that resulted from those additions to their lives.

Cathy Collins and Chester

I had been retired from The Central Virginian for about a month when I got a frantic phone call on a January morning.

"You have to go to the animal shelter and pick up CV and her puppies. We have to get them and find homes for them," said a staff member in the advertising department.

At that point, I didn't even know that CV had had puppies. I also had no idea that I was starting an 11-year journey that would become so special! Louisa County Animal Control had picked up the yellow hound/lab mix that had gradually endeared herself to the employees of several businesses in the Louisa County Industrial Air Park. The newspaper was among the locations that fed the stray and staff had developed a relationship with her. So, they named her "CV." If she had other names, we never knew. Although she regularly ate the dog food and hot dogs left by a rear door, she never let us touch her.

One crisp morning while she was across the road sunning on top of a straw bale at Louisa Feed Service, CV was picked up by animal control.

See Chester, page 7

The Cover



The Focused Ultrasound man logo.
Logo courtesy of Carol Barfield

Cover designed by Marilyn Ellinger.



A youthful Chester shared the affection of the Collins family with Barney, an older Jack Russell Terrier.



CV, the mother of the nine puppies, lived out her days at Far Fetched Farm.

Focusing on Cancer with Focused Ultrasound

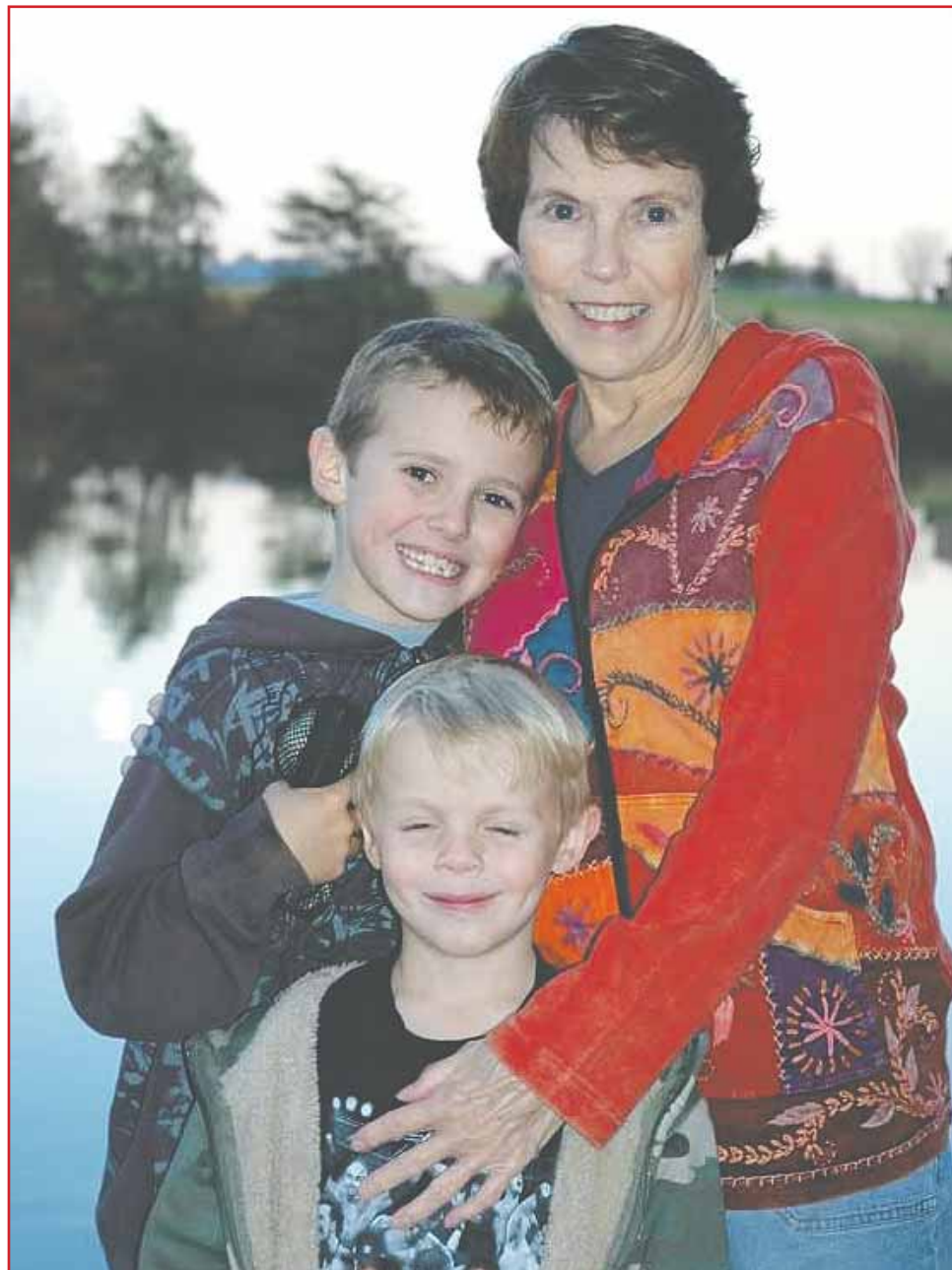
By Carol Barfield
Correspondent

I'd like to introduce you to a personal friend of mine, Joyce Palmer, of Orange County. Joyce Palmer: a great friend, a super-healthy, tiny, artistic dynamo—like a hummingbird in her mannerisms, active in her community, beloved wife, mother, grandmother.

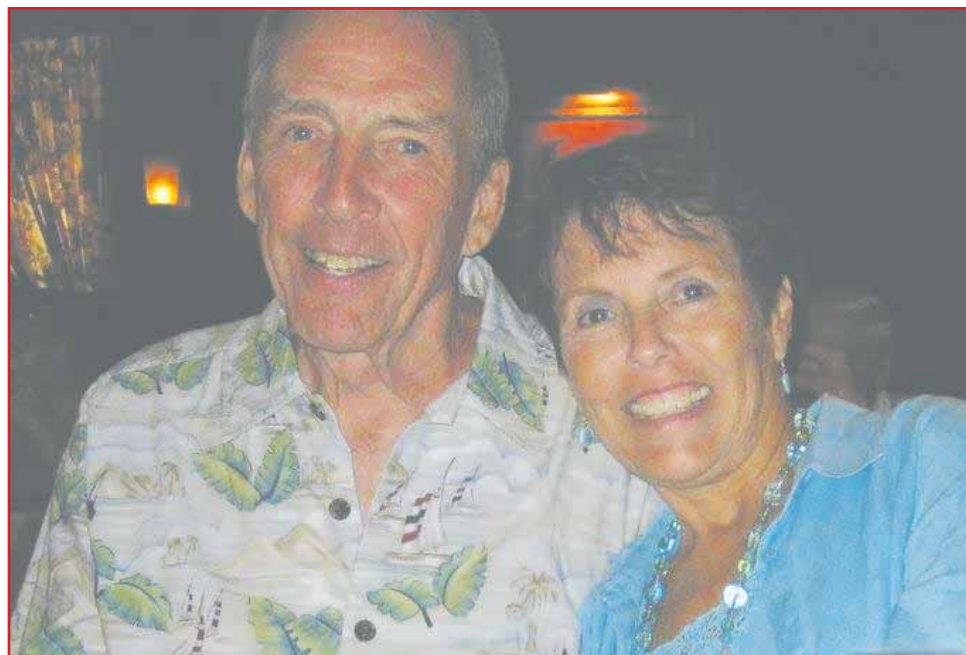
It is with great sadness that I say, you can never meet Joyce in person, because she numbers among those taken by cancer. Our Joyce, however, can never be thought of as a statistic; she cherished each day and faced it head on with energy and bravery, even when facing the dreaded diagnosis of pancreatic cancer with its bleak odds for survival. She was offered the standard medical treatment for the time – Whipple surgery, chemo and radiation – and was one of the six out of 100 patients who survived past five years after diagnosis. The loss of Joyce dimmed the world.

I am quite sure that you can name family members and friends who have been, or who are currently, in similarly unacceptable circumstances. I have a relative for whom surviving cancer has meant personal mutilation, dependence on medication, swelling lymph nodes, deep depression and lifelong debilitation. Quality of life matters, having choices matters, and being offered an avenue to return to health matters.

The great news – there is an exciting technology called focused ultrasound, which is already approved in the U.S. to treat essential tremor, uterine fibroids, as well as to destroy diseased prostate tissue and relieve the pain of cancer that has spread to the bone. The technology works by focusing intersecting beams of ultrasound on tissue deep within the body. At the point where the beams meet, the ultrasound energy causes a variety



Joyce Palmer with her grandsons Justin and Ryan Thoureen.



Syd and Joyce Palmer.



See Cancer page 6

LOUISA Arts CENTER PRESENTS:

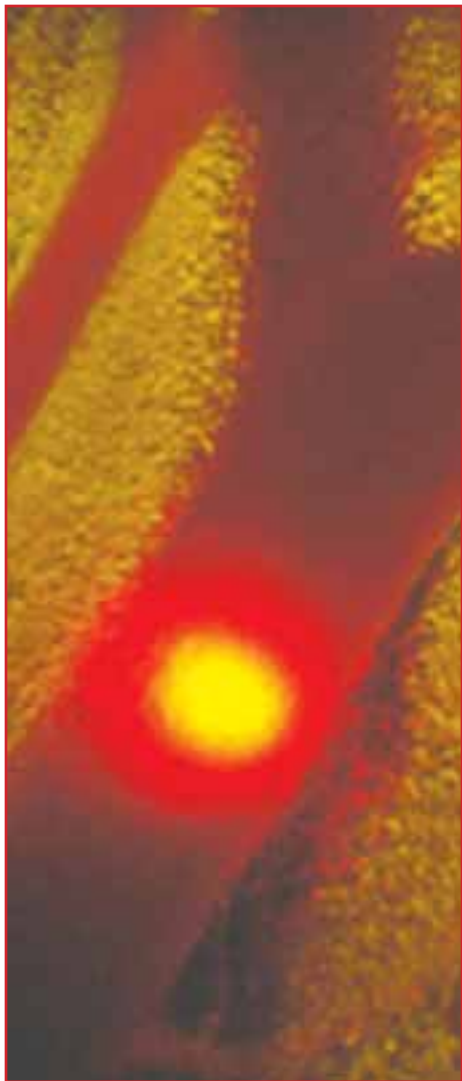
Wade Preston and the Movin' Out Band

**January 11, 7:30pm,
\$40 All Seats**

Direct from Broadway, the Movin' Out Band is the ultimate tribute to Billy Joel! The band is led by Wade Preston and includes musicians from the original Broadway ensemble. This five-piece band plays hits like "We Didn't Start The Fire," "Piano Man," and "Only the Good Die Young."



TICKETS ON SALE NOW! LouisaArts.org 540-967-5200



Laser detects tumor cells in bloodstream.

LOUISA *Arts* CENTER

212 Fredericksburg Ave, Louisa

Upcoming In the Gallery

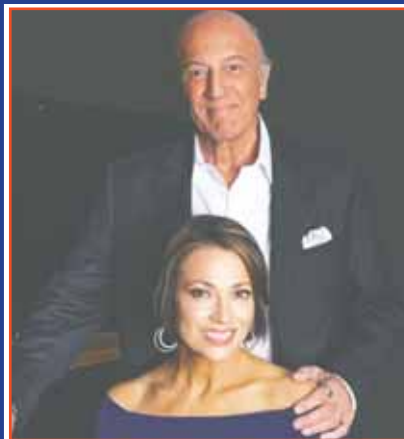


Student Art Show Now Through January 15, 2020

Celebrating young artists!
This exhibit showcases the
artwork of Louisa County
PublicSchool students
from K-12th grade,
curated by LCPS art teachers.

540-967-5200 LouisaArts.org

LOUISA *Arts* CENTER PRESENTS:



Emile Pandolfi and Dana Russell

February 8, 7:30pm, \$29 All Seats

Join us for a special concert with Steinway Artist Emile Pandolfi and Broadway vocalist Dana Russell, as they perform lush arrangements of popular standards and classical favorites. Whether it's The Great American Songbook, singer/songwriter selections, Broadway or classical pieces, their artistic combination is sure to be a hit!

TICKETS ON SALE NOW! LouisaArts.org 540-967-5200

Join us for the Superbowl!



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The Orange Music Society and the Eckhart Ensemble present

Meng-Chieh Liu, James Wilson
and Gustav Highstein in concert



**St. Thomas Episcopal Church
Downtown Orange
Free musical event!**



Sunday, January 19, 2020 at 4 PM



Jaime Mata, PhD, Associate Professor of Radiology and Medical Imaging, to study using FUS on patients suffering from lung cancer.

of biological effects while avoiding damage to surrounding tissue. Focused ultrasound (FUS) is an early-stage, noninvasive therapeutic technology that has the potential to transform the treatment and management of many serious medical disorders. FUS could one day be a less expensive alternative or complement to surgery, radiation therapy, chemotherapy and immunotherapy.

Magnetic resonance (MRI) or ultrasound imaging is used to guide and control the focused ultrasound treatment. Unbelievably, the treatment can be performed on an outpatient basis, requires no incisions or general anesthesia (only mild sedation is used), and greatly reduces discomfort and complications, allowing for rapid recovery.

Clinical trials using focused ultrasound are

currently underway locally at the University of Virginia; one was awarded to Jaime Mata, PhD, Associate Professor of Radiology and Medical Imaging, to study using FUS on patients suffering from lung cancer; another study is underway for using FUS to treat advanced solid tumors.

Outside the United States, FUS is approved to treat more than 15 conditions

including breast cancer, pancreatic cancer and Parkinson's disease. The technology is being studied on neurological conditions, cancers, cardiovascular and musculoskeletal disease, as well as depression and many other conditions.

Unfortunately, as the world speeds up, the one thing that doesn't is approval for new medical treatments and procedures. Innovative research must vault over high bars and years of trials, while patients are offered painful, costly and indifferently effective treatments.

We should insist on balancing caution with daring. If we can change the coordinates of the magnetic poles ahead of schedule because the drift was causing a crisis in navigation and mapping, we can certainly speed up implementation of groundbreaking medical advances. There is a "crisis in navigation and mapping" in the medical community. The hoops to jump through are too severe. We need to encourage organizations like the Focused Ultrasound Foundation that are trying to ensure that focused ultrasound becomes a mainstream therapy for a range of conditions within years, not decades. The Focused Ultrasound Foundation shares all its research and is not funded by the government. This allows the Foundation to serve as a trusted resource for the focused ultrasound community, with no motive other than to hasten the end of pain and suffering in the human community. As Foundation chairman Neal Kassell, MD, puts it, "We believe that the highest purpose in life is to help other people."

There will come a day soon when Joyce, had she sat in the consulting room, would never be presented with an option as barbaric as the one she was forced to take. She pulled seven years out of it anyway, because she was that determined. But in another scenario, she would sit in the chair and be offered a clean, focused solution that would not do damage to her body chemistry, her pocketbook, or her sense of dignity and self; one that her physician could be proud of offering, as well.

Local bestselling author John Grisham, who serves on the Board of Directors for the Focused Ultrasound Foundation, has written a book, *The Tumor*, which he says is "the most important book I've ever written." Visit the website www.fusfoundation.org to download your free electronic copy, and investigate the website for more information on these exciting medical advancements. You can find the Focused Ultrasound Foundation on Facebook or Twitter to learn more about the groundbreaking strides being made in the focused ultrasound field.

If you are facing a devastating cancer diagnosis, visit the Focused Ultrasound Foundation's patient information webpage at www.fusfoundation.org/for-patients to find out if you or your loved one can be helped by focused ultrasound.

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Joyce Palmer holding my granddaughter Cora Rice. Photo by Carol Barfield

Meanwhile her nine recently born puppies, who called the hedges in front of the Virginia Community Bank Corporate Center their home, were hungry and looking for their mom. A call to the animal shelter by a VCB employee brought an officer to pick up the puppies and take them to the shelter where the family was reunited. All of us feared the outcome for the stray we had become fond of as well as the fate of her pups.

So, I grabbed a blanket and laid it in the back of our brand-new Jeep Cherokee and then told my husband, Bill, that we were going on a rescue mission. I really can't say that he was enthusiastic about the prospect of CV and her litter in his new Jeep, but he didn't fuss too much. His big question was, "Where are we taking them once we get them?"

Anticipating that they probably weren't coming to our Weathersfield Farm for a temporary stay in our horse barn, I had already alerted my longtime friend, Pat Wilson, a former newspaper staff writer. Her reluctance was evident, but, of course, she didn't say no.

Pat had the perfect place at Far Fetched Farm - a temporarily vacant stall in the horse barn that's right near her backyard. I knew that Pat would have crafted a plan by the time we arrived with these beautiful furry babies and their mom. And I was right on target. I also remember her words.

"I will keep them for six weeks," she said. "After that they are out of here."

So while CV and her pups meshed into life around the farm, the newspaper staff set out to find permanent homes and happy endings. On one of my visits, I remember looking at those precious fluff balls, some mixed colors of tan, black and/or white but one standout, different from the rest. I said those life changing words, "I'll take the little yellow one."

I wasn't looking for another dog, but there was something about this little runt - his puppy breath and the way he cuddled up against me that won me over. "Chester" would fall into the routine at Weathersfield with Barney, our Jack Russell, Little Pup, a Jack Russell/Norwich Terrier mix and two cats, Midnight and Tiger Lily, who appeared at the barn just before Chester arrived.

The newspaper staff met another "deadline" and found homes in the community for the rest of the pups. By this time, Pat had formed a bond with the now touchable CV, even getting her to lead and obey basic commands. CV would live out her life on the Wilson farm. Homes for a dog and nine puppies in less than six weeks in the middle of winter was a big accomplishment.

Chester moved in at Weathersfield in Mineral. When I told my granddaughter in Denver about the new addition to our family, she had a suggestion.

"Grammie," said five-year-old Katy, "People in the South have two first names (Betty Sue, Mary Jo, etc.). Chester needs another name. I think his name should be Chester Stanley."

So, the runt of the litter, who was beginning to start a growth spurt, acquired the longest name. Chester Stanley led a busy life around the farm, checking on the goats and learning that you do not chase a kid when its mom, the doe, is nearby, or run after a horse or pony. When we were bottle feeding newborn kids, who needed a little extra boost, he was right there, too. If I was working in the barn, cleaning stalls or brushing the pony, he was my work partner and companion. And a great mouser, too!

Sometimes, Chester would go off on his own and run into the woods after a deer. These adventures always raised my blood pressure because we could never find him. We had to wait until he decided to come home, usually completely exhausted, ready for a rehydration treatment.

Chester loved snow and even more than a few inches couldn't stop his favorite pastime - playing ball. He had tennis balls everywhere, even in lots of special places that Bill and I are still finding.

Inside the house, he had several favorite areas- under the kitchen table waiting for food to hit the ground while he rested his head on my lap, on the hardwood floor in a doorway when it was hot outside and in front of the fireplaces on the bricks where it was cool in the summer and warm in the winter.

Chester and I went to dog obedience classes, and I can proudly say that he sailed through beginning puppy training. But it was downhill after that. He became my "Marley" who was so distracted by other scents in the pet shop where the classes were conducted, so much so that he couldn't focus. I would give the "Stay" command and walk away, and he would be excellent. But the second part, "Chester, Come" would be anyone's guess. He was so mesmerized by the dog food along the back wall that he took forever to respond to the command. But he always did! He really was the best dog, but some things just had to be done "his way."

Chester participated in pet shows, was a regular at the Louisa County Ag Fair, walked with me at the LCHS track and wouldn't miss a trip to town if it involved going to a drive thru where they handed out treats. He was smart and he knew the word "bank."

He kept growing and growing and his trips to the vet usually reflected how much he liked to eat and how much I fed him. He did not like getting on the scales and I could relate to that completely!

As Chester was getting closer to his 11th birthday, he gained a lot of gray hair around his muzzle, his gait was slowing and climbing upstairs to the second-floor bedroom was becoming more difficult. He had always followed me around the house and the farm, but I began to notice that he was becoming more selective about what he did. He was even giving a break to the family of groundhogs who had made a home under a small building in the backyard.

In the early hours of January 29, 2019, I woke up and heard Chester whimpering. He was sprawled out on the rug in his usual place by Bill's side of the bed, and he was in distress. As I cradled his head in my arms, I knew that my story with Chester was ending. I was losing "my bear" who always seemed to be able to read me. He came into my life and made retirement anything but dull. And, he brought so much joy and unconditional love.

No, he wasn't registered and we don't know much about his parentage, but he was the best dog and I'm positive that he knew it. That morning, I told Chester that he was the "Best Dog" one last time as he took a couple of final breaths and closed his eyes. He understood.



Since Cathy and Bill Collins raised goats, Chester often made friends with them.



An older Chester enjoyed relaxing on the back porch at Weathersfield Farm.

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EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS



Friday, January 17, 2020

Palettes at the Players at Four County Players

We invite you to sip Barboursville wine and support YOUR new backstage. We provide the supplies, a beverage of your choice, and an expert art instructor. Hours: 7:00 pm-10:00 pm



Western Albemarle Boys Varsity Basketball

@ Orange County

Tue, Jan 28, 7:30 – 8:45 PM

Orange County High School
 201 Selma Rd, Orange



Saturday, January 25, 2020

Free Last Saturday Art for Kids at the Arts Center in Orange

The Arts Center In Orange
 129 E Main St, Orange,

On the last Saturday of each month, the Arts Center In Orange offers a free one-hour art class for children! Please register by calling the Arts Center so we have enough supplies for all! Hours: 10:00am–11:00am



Montpelier Closed for Annual Restoration

January 2 - 17, 2020

Every historic home needs a little TLC. Montpelier's house and grounds will be closed from January 2-17, 2020, for annual maintenance. We look forward to welcoming you back on January 18!

HAPPY HOUR

Monday to Friday

3:30-6:30

Football Sundays

12-9



\$5 DRILLAS

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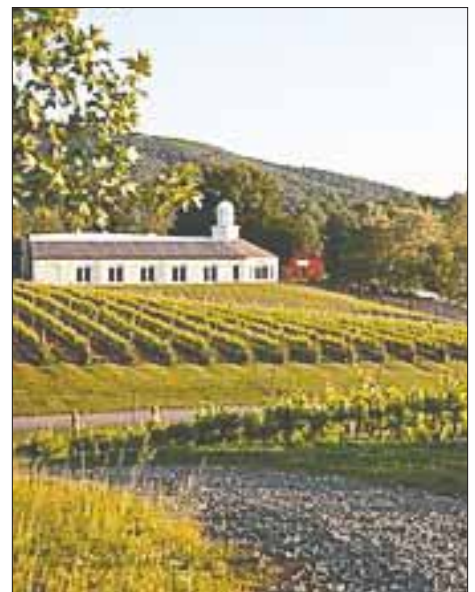
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Valentine's Day Celebration

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Date Friday, 14 Feb 2020 @ 7:00pm

Enjoy a four course feast paired with Barboursville wines prepared by Chef Spencer Crawford.

\$320 per couple, all inclusive.

Reservation required. 540-832-7848

Location: 17655 Winery Road, Barboursville.



Larnell Starkey & The Spiritual Seven

Hosted by PVCC Fine Arts & Performance and Piedmont Virginia Community College

Saturday, January 18, 2020 at 7:30 PM – 9:30 PM

Piedmont Virginia Community College

**501 College Dr, Charlottesville
Tickets: v6.click4tix.com**

Known by many as the "Gospel Temptations," Larnell Starkey & The Spiritual Seven Gospel Singers is made up of brothers, sons and cousins who are all members of the Chestnut Grove Missionary Baptist Church in Wirtz, Virginia. Their music, a zestful blend of traditional gospel with a twist of contemporary soul, showcases the group's amazing vocal harmonies from high-flying falsettos to the deep rich sounds of the low bass. For 50 years, this award-winning ensemble has moved the spirit of people of all ages and denominations.

Takes place in the Main Stage Theatre in the V. Earl Dickinson Building, located on Piedmont Virginia Community College's Main Campus in Charlottesville.

LOUISA Arts CENTER

212 Fredericksburg Ave, Louisa



Virginia Repertory Theatre Presents, "I Have a Dream" - February 21, 7:30pm, \$20 Adults & \$10 Youth

The phenomenal impact of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is chronicled in this compelling dramatization of the life and times of one of the most influential and charismatic leaders of the "American Century." Dr. King gained national recognition and became the dominant force in the Civil Rights movement during its decade of greatest achievement. Audiences will be inspired by the story of this great leader!

540-967-5200 LouisaArts.org



A TEEN ARTS PROJECT PRODUCTION

DEAR EDWINA

Music by Zina Goldrich
Book and Lyrics by Marcy Heisler



Dear Edwina is a heartwarming musical about the joys of growing up, from the creators of Junie B. Jones The Musical. The show's heroine is an advice-giver extraordinaire, like a spunky, singing version of Dear Abby.

Thirteen-year-old Edwina Spoonapple would do just about anything to be a part of the Kalamazoo Advice-a-Palooza Festival. While her siblings both have proof of their accomplishments, poor Edwina has nothing. When a talent scout from the convention visits her hometown, she trots out her musical advice, giving shows live from the family garage in hopes of finding her place in the spotlight. She is assisted by her older siblings, quirky friends and neighbors. Together, they set out to tackle the world's problems in number after hysterical number about everything from birthday party etiquette to proper table settings.

DEAR EDWINA, directed by Geri Carlson Sauls, with music direction by Austin Robey and choreography by Michelle Cooper, opens January 31, 2020 in the Cellar at Four County Players.



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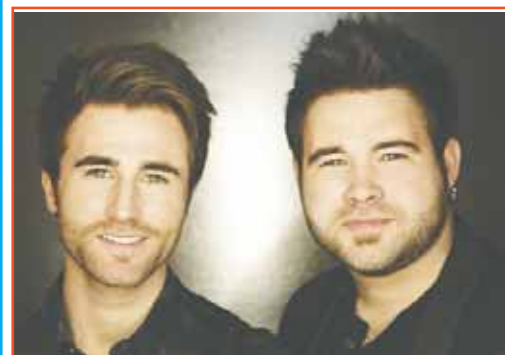
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2253 Thomas Jefferson Parkway,
Palmyra
layzsranchevents@gmail.com
(434) 591-0898



LOUISA Arts CENTER PRESENTS:

The Swon Brothers

**January 25, 7:30pm,
\$37 All Seats**



Coming from the hit TV show, The Voice, The Swon Brothers became the first country duo to make it to the season finale with the help of their coach, Blake Shelton. They have since received a nomination for CMA "Vocal Duo of the Year," and spent a year touring with Carrie Underwood. With hits like "Later On," "This Side of Heaven," and "Pretty Beautiful," this is a country show you won't want to miss!

TICKETS ON SALE NOW! LouisaArts.org 540-967-5200

**DON'T WAIT TO BUY!
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OCPR Outdoor Crafts: DIY Antler Mount

Monday, January 27

Time: 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Time Details: Registration deadline: 1/10/2020 (or when class fills)

Have you (or your child) enjoyed a successful hunting season? Do you want to create something to conjure up memories of that outing, but don't want to break the bank with a full shoulder mount? Then, register for our D.I.Y. Antler Mount program! For just a \$15 registration fee, this is great way to memorialize a child's first deer harvest, or to honor an animal that might not be considered a "trophy" in the traditional sense. Class will be held the evening of Monday, Jan. 27, 2020 at the OCPR office building. Pre-registration is required. Registration will close on 1/10/20 or when class fills.

Participants must provide a CLEAN skull plate with antlers (clean means boiled, with hide and tissue fully removed). A small wooden plaque will be provided, which makes even small antlers look impressive. Additional provided items include: hardware, jute twine, and brown felt material to cover the skull plate (you may bring your own material if you prefer, cloth from old camo or flannel clothes work well).

Location: OCPR Office

Address: 146 North Madison Road Orange

Contact: (540) 67-25435

Cost: \$15 registration fee (reduced from \$25)



OC

Magazine

NEEDS A PART-TIME REPORTER

OC Magazine is currently seeking a part-time reporter to write about Orange County's rich history and interesting people.

Work from home

All you need is a computer, internet, phone and ability to take quality photographs. You must be detail oriented and work within the monthly deadlines.

Please email resume with samples of writing, to: valleyeditor1@gmail.com

Carlos Santos, Publisher

OC Magazine is published Monthly.



Acrylic Painting Workshop with Lou Messa

The Arts Center In Orange

129 E Main St, Orange, Virginia

Saturday, January 18, 2020

at 10 AM - 4 PM

SAT, FEB 8, 2020 • 10:00 AM

SAT, MAR 21, 2020 • 10:00 AM

Acclaimed artist Lou Messa will offer a workshop including demonstrations and individual hands-on coaching and assistance. "If you get into trouble, Lou can get you out!"

You will work from your landscape photos; Lou will provide the painting surface. Bring your own acrylic paints and brushes and a desire to improve your painting skills. (Registration & Payment made directly with artist)

THE
MARKET
at Grelen

The Market at Grelen

is closed for the season and will re-open

March 4, 2020

The Grelen Nursey is open year around and by appointment only. Call: 540-672-5462

Grelen Trails are oopen Mon-Friday 9-4 while the Market is closed. 15091 Yager Rd, Somerset, VA



Orange Town Offices Closed for Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Town Offices will be closed on Monday, January 20th for Martin Luther King Jr. Day. There will be no trash collection on this day. A town wide collection will take place on Tuesday, January 21st.

Should you have a water emergency during this

time, please call 672-1234.

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STOP CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN





Research station. All photos courtesy of Michael Lawson

A Fluvanna man just returned from Mars

By Heather Michon
Correspondent

Or at least a close approximation. Michael Lawson of Troy spent two weeks at the Mars Desert Research Station (MDRS), a facility in the high desert of Southern Utah which simulates the type of habitat humans might one day build on the Martian plains. MDRS is one of three such simulations built and maintained by the Mars Society, a Colorado-based nonprofit founded in 1998 to advocate for the settlement and exploration of the Red Planet.

It's a goal that Lawson supports.

"I was not quite ten when we landed [on the Moon]," he says. "And if you told me that, 50 years later, we would never have again left low-Earth orbit, I would have been highly, highly surprised."

Lawson, a retired Army officer who now runs his own home inspection business, has had a passion for astronomy since childhood and took his first college-level astronomy course at the age of 15. More recently, he was a Community Scholar at the University of Virginia in the graduate astronomy program. He's also had a long-time fascination with Mars. "I've read extensively and I've devoured fiction and non-fiction," he says. A rotation at the MDRS seemed like it might provide some good challenges.

The first challenge was getting into the program. "Most of the crews are reserved for organizations or institutions," he explains, and there is heavy competition for the few spots open each year to individuals. "I was very fortunate to be accepted."

He arrived in Utah in late November as part of Crew 216. MDRS is located just outside Hanksville, an isolated town of around 100 people, three hours or more from the nearest hospital or airport.

Crew 216 was a diverse lot, including a Russian documentary filmmaker, a teacher from Singapore, a dentist, a PhD in comparative literature, and a graduate student in aerospace engineering. Their crew commander had spent a year at Antarctica South Polar Station, and his experience with that kind of isolation assured that "he knew where the pressure points were and was able to massage that through."

See Mars Page 12

Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

ACROSS

- 1 Targeted, with "in on"
- 6 Tub toy
- 10 Gold medalist Lipinski
- 14 Immature egg
- 15 Heavy drinker
- 16 Desktop feature
- 17 Merchandise movers
- 19 Reunion attendee
- 20 Mournful
- 21 Actresses Ralston and Rolle
- 23 Guggenheim display
- 24 Not moving
- 25 Like Steve Austin of WCW
- 29 Lookout point
- 33 Sword handle
- 34 Hole-making tool
- 35 Mall attraction
- 36 Well-worn
- 37 Kristen or Patrick
- 39 Something to check
- 40 Loathsome
- 42 Indignation
- 43 Massive
- 44 H.S. students
- 45 Harvard or Columbia, for Obama
- 47 Move like a top
- 49 Cookie container
- 50 Salad ingredient
- 53 Street surface
- 57 Wrapped up
- 58 Emphasize
- 60 Gardener's spring purchase

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- 9 This one and this one
- 10 Use a torque wrench
- 11 One to grow on?
- 12 Engine sound
- 13 "No ifs, ___ ..."
- 18 Tycoons, slangily
- 22 Blue eyes or baldness, e.g.
- 24 Bitter feeling
- 25 Photo session
- 26 Diacritical mark
- 27 Any Platters platter
- 28 "I ___ you one"
- 30 Contradict
- 31 Likeness
- 32 Raring to go
- 35 Brahma, in Hinduism
- 37 Raw fish dish
- 38 Hand holder?
- 41 Moving ahead
- 43 Trackman's transit
- 45 Combat zones
- 46 Bad atmosphere
- 48 Condition
- 50 Civil Rights figure Parks
- 51 Chef's need
- 52 Get together
- 53 Trust, with "on"
- 54 007
- 55 Hence
- 56 Bucks and does
- 59 Party bowlful

Crossword Answers page 15



Michael Lawson in his space suit.



The desert station representing the red planet Mars. All photos courtesy of Micahael Lawson

Despite differing backgrounds, ages, and nationalities, Lawson says the group bonded almost instantly. "We hit the lottery on this," he adds. Some crews never gel; in fact, the previous crew had gotten along so poorly, they wouldn't even sit for a group photo at the end of their rotation.

The campus is spartan: a few small structures connected by closed walk-

ways, set in a valley surrounded by low hills. To replicate the conditions colonists will face on Mars -- where temperatures might go up to 70 degrees on a summer day and plummet to minus 100 at night -- crew members must put on simulated spacesuits whenever they leave the buildings.

The living quarters, called the Hab, are small. Crew members are assigned

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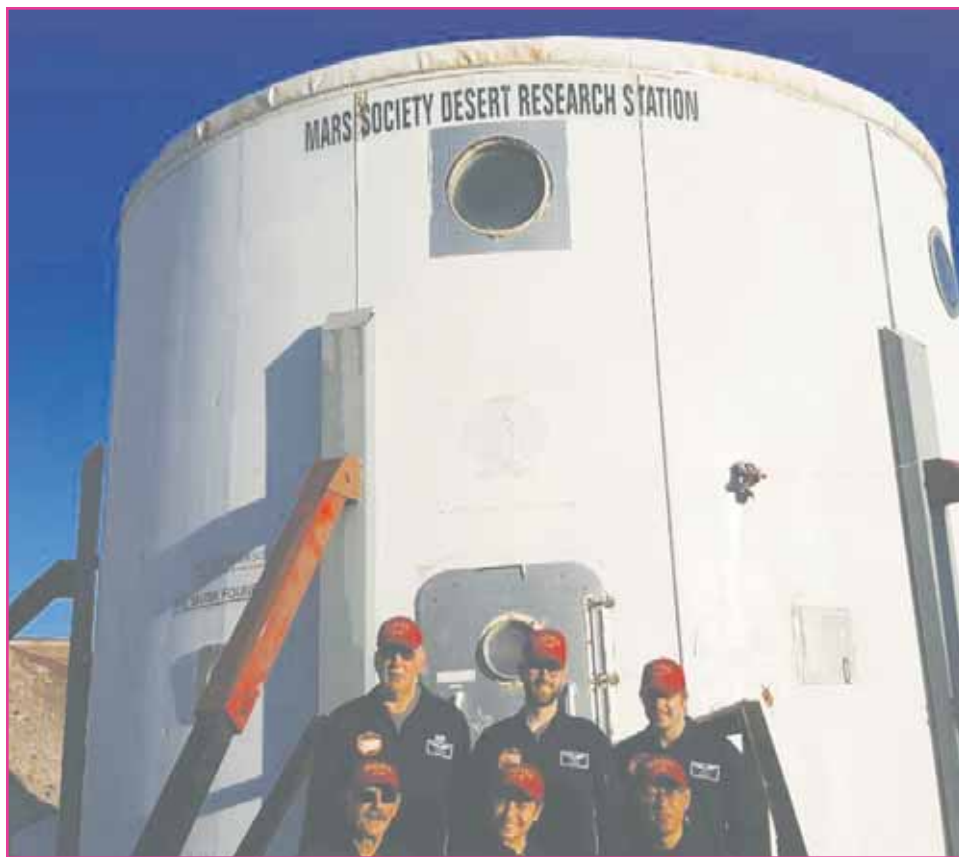
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The Mars Society Desert Research Station.

small rooms “wide enough for your bunk and a little workspace,” he says. To simulate the water scarcity on Mars, each crew member was rationed to about five gallons per day drinking, food preparation, hygiene, and sanitation. “We all brought copious amounts of baby wipes” to stay fresh, he adds.

Food was mostly freeze-dried, and

the crew had to figure out how to turn, say, a can of desiccated chicken into a palatable meal. Planning those nightly meals as a team turned out to be “an important thing for bonding.”

Their days were filled with tasks. “There’s no such thing as deferred maintenance in space,” Lawson explains. “So a lot of your time is devot-



ed to housekeeping tasks, because if something goes wrong -- you die.”

Excursions outside took planning and preparation. Their spacesuits, which included full helmet and breathing apparatus, weigh between 30-40 pounds. Trudging the hillsides around in heavy gear at high altitude burned the calories. Lawson says he lost 16 pounds in 14 days.

Each member also had some sort of project to complete during the mission. Mining for new minerals and metals is likely to be an important part of Mars exploration, so Lawson tested out a faster way to survey the terrain for mineral deposits using ultraviolet light. He plans to write a scientific paper on his findings over the holidays.

Lawson is clear-eyed about the limitations of the simulation. “There’s artificialities involved, but they’re doing the best they can with the money they’ve got.” In reality, the first crew to colonize Mars will be carefully chosen and rigorously trained for the nine-month, 153-million-mile journey; they will bring with them living facilities designed for long-term habitation on an often hostile planet.

When will that happen? Hard to say, but it will likely be several more years before a project comes together, at a cost of billions of dollars.

Lawson says his trip to MDRS was mostly for “self-actualization,” but now that he’s home, he’s hoping to “spark young minds” about the potentials in space and the importance of studying science, technology, and engineering. He’s already reaching out to local groups who might want to hear about his experiences.

In all, Lawson found his journey to be a positive, interesting couple of weeks -- but he did come home to one major complaint. His children informed him that “parents aren’t supposed to be cooler than their kids.”

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- January 21, 2020
- February 18, 2020
- March 17, 2020
- April 21, 2020
- May 19, 2020
- June 16, 2020
- July 21, 2020
- August 18, 2020
- September 15, 2020
- October 20, 2020
- November 17, 2020
- December 15, 2020

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January 18 - 20, 2020

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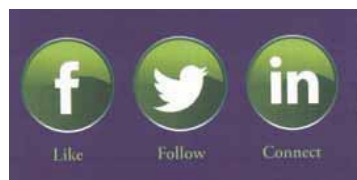
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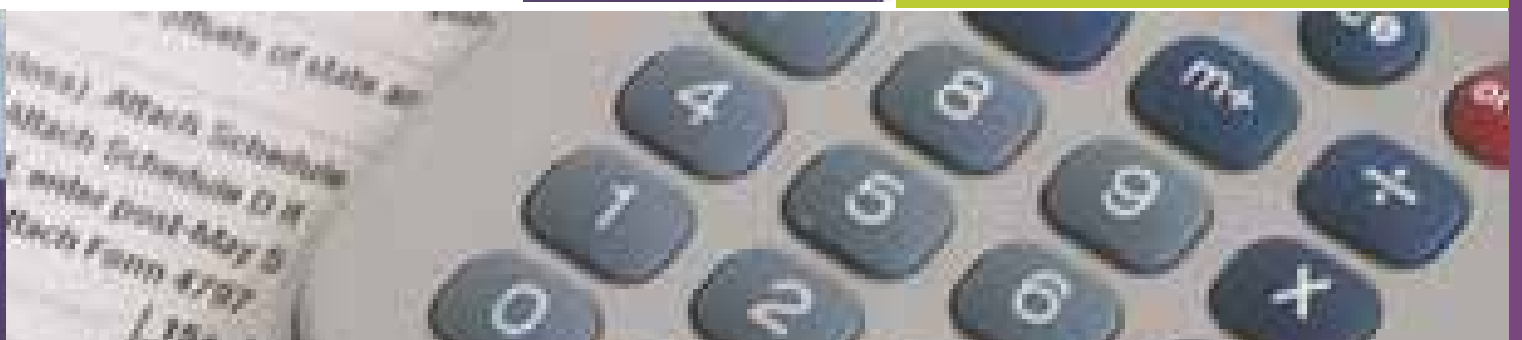
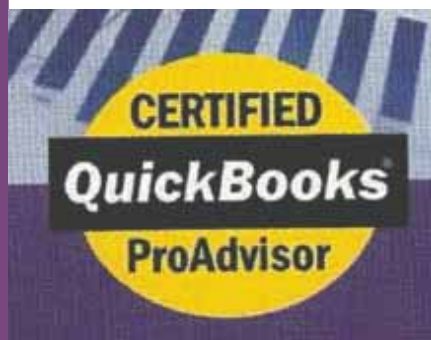
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