

Hello,  
Elsie Dawson  
of Ringgold.

Thanks for subscribing  
to the Star-Tribune!

# STAR-TRIBUNE

Graduate  
of Merit  
page 3A

Wednesday, May 27, 2009

Single Copy 75¢

©2009 Womack Publishing Company, Inc.

Serving Pittsylvania County Since 1869

Volume 141 — No. 10

Chatham, Virginia

26 Pages-Two Sections



Susie Lambert of Chatham and daughter, Chloe, 3, enjoy a hot dog and music at Chatham Rotary Club's Festival in the Parking Lot Thursday. (More photos are on page 14A.)



Chatham's second Cruise-In attracted 219 cars and trucks and hundreds of visitors Saturday. The event is sponsored by Chatham First and the Virginia-Carolina Classic Chevy Club. (More photos on page 12A.)

## Marshall helps laid-off workers

By RUSSELL CARTER  
Star-Tribune Staff Writer

DANVILLE — Thanks to Del. Danny Marshall, help is on the way for more than 150 former Yorktowne Cabinetry employees ordered to repay extra unemployment benefits. The Virginia Employment Commission mistakenly paid more than \$222,000.

See WORKERS, page 2A

# Study: safety first

## State panel OKs study on uranium mining

By TIM DAVIS  
Star-Tribune Editor

The Virginia Commission on Coal and Energy's Subcommittee on Uranium Mining moved forward on a study of uranium mining Thursday.

Following a two-hour meeting in Richmond, the subcommittee voted 8-2 to amend a list of recommendations from the National Academy of Sciences and approve a final framework for the study.

The panel, chaired by

Del. Lee Ware of Powhatan, voted unanimously to make public safety a top priority.

"Moving health considerations to number one was done simply to ensure that the federal agency understands that safety is the subcommittee's principal interest," said Ware.

The chairman pointed out the listing of topics in the study draft assigned no particular order of priority.

"Indeed, each item is a priority. But the change adds the emphasis," said Ware.

See STUDY, page 10A

## Remembering veterans



Russell Carter/Star-Tribune

Members of several local veteran organizations post the colors during Sunday's Memorial Day Service in Lee Street National Cemetery in Danville.

## Communities mark Memorial Day

By SUSAN WORLEY  
Star-Tribune Staff Writer

GRETTNA — The solemn announcement of names, visitors clutching white wooden crosses overlaid with red poppies, and buglers playing *Taps* offered

Memorial Day remembrance Sunday at Gretna Bureal Park.

American Legion Post 232 organized the annual event to remember area servicemen, now deceased.

Memorial Day may be traced to 1868 when flowers were placed on graves of union and confederate soldiers buried at

Arlington National Cemetery.

All states recognized Memorial Day at the end of World War II, but it was in 1971 when Congress and the president signed into law the Monday Memorial Day holiday.

See MEMORIAL, page 10A

## Democrat to challenge Merricks for House seat

By RUSSELL CARTER  
Star-Tribune Staff Writer

Democratic hopeful Shawn Palmer, 27, formally announced his candidacy for the House of Delegates Friday in Chatham.

Palmer will square off with incumbent Del. Don Merricks for the 16th District, which includes most of Pittsylvania County and a part of Henry County and Martinsville.

"I seek this office, not just as another job, but as a job representing the people of this district," Palmer said from the courthouse steps.

"The issues we face here are many: unemployment, job security, education, and right here in our own back yards, uranium mining.

"The resolution to these matters will not be reached over night, but let us begin the process of solving these problems that

plague our district.

"I'm not saying that I am the final solution," Palmer said, "but if we pull together we can find solutions to these issues and more."

Palmer, who moved to Java from New Jersey in 2005, was nominated as the Democratic candidate on May 13.

He plans to set up campaign headquarters in Chatham.

Palmer, a newcomer to politics, hopes

his campaign will bring about change.

"My main platform basically is bringing old politics and the old tricks to a new light," he said.

"The solutions that we've seen in the past obviously aren't working. Let's bring new solutions to the table."

Palmer said he would also like the district to be bi-partisan.

See PALMER, page 15A



Palmer

## Church hopes to repair home damaged by fire

By TIM DAVIS  
Star-Tribune Editor

After fire damaged his home in January, Melvin Hodnett moved into a small tool shed behind his house on Hickory Road just outside Chatham.

A gasoline-powered generator provides electricity to the shed, and, Hodnett, 60, has a small wood heater to warm the building.

He doesn't have any plumbing, though,

and has to carry water in buckets from a neighbor's house several hundred yards away.

He cooks over an open fire using a steel grate suspended on a couple of cinder blocks.

Hodnett doesn't own a car, but friends carry him to the store for groceries and gasoline for his generator.

If he can't get a ride, he walks even

See REPAIRS, page 15A



Tim Davis/Star-Tribune

Melvin Hodnett has been living in a small tool shed ever since his house was damaged by fire in January.

## Readers can pick favorites

Do you have a favorite restaurant? What about a favorite grocery store, bank, dry cleaner, auto repair shop, doctor or dentist?

Everyone does, and now you can vote for your favorite in the Star-Tribune's third annual 2009 Reader's Choice Awards.

You might even win a prize just for voting. After all the ballots are in, random drawings will be held for a variety of prizes, including gift certificates to some

See READERS, page 2A



Pittsylvania County's  
Weather Forecast

Source:  
National Weather Service

Wednesday



Chance T'storms  
Low: 60's  
High: 80's  
50% Chance

Thursday



Chance T'storms  
Low: 60's  
High: 80's  
40% Chance

Friday



Chance T'storms  
Low: 60's  
High: 80's  
30% Chance

Saturday



Mostly Sunny  
Low: 50's  
High: 70's

Sunday



Mostly Sunny  
Low: 50's  
High: 80's

INSIDE:

Food Lion  
Avada Audiology  
Food Land (zoned)