

CULPEPER STAR-EXPONENT

May movies on Mount Pony include the late Robert Duvall's Oscar-winning role



LOCAL, A2



Last week's freeze damaged grape vines statewide, including at Old House

WEATHER, A6

Thursday, April 30, 2026

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CULPEPER AGRIBUSINESS

MOONSHINERS RETURN TO BELMONT FARMS



ALLISON BROPHY CHAMPION PHOTOS, CULPEPER STAR-EXPONENT

Chuck and Jeanette Miller (left) with daughter, Crystal Durkee and son-in-law, Jay Durkee, inside the new beer pub at Belmont Farms Distillery in Mitchells. Check out photos from down on the farm in a gallery at starexponent.com

Culpeper distillery cultivates next generation, holding on to tradition

ALLISON BROPHY CHAMPION
Culpeper Star-Exponent

MITCHELLS — Culpeper's own favorite moonshiner Chuck Miller spins a smooth and spirited tale recounting the days when his grandfather ran illicit corn whiskey in an old Hudson into the Nation's Capital from his farm in Maryland.

"He always had people coming to the back door, handing out brown bags" and inside was "the good stuff," Miller said. A driver

would transport the good stuff to sell in Washington, D.C. until one day "the heat was on," Miller recalled in a recent interview at Belmont Farms Distillery, the family-run destination spot he's built with his wife, Jeannette.

"Nobody would take the trip so my grandfather said he would, loaded up, went across a bridge, they had a roadblock for him, went

Please see **MOONSHINERS**, Page A4



Belmont Farms Distillery is a 200-acre property in Culpeper County that grows its own corn and grains for making moonshine and other liquor. The destination site hosts various family-friendly events throughout the year.

Student brings airsoft gun to school

No one hurt. Sheriff to parents: check your kids' stuff before they leave in morning

ALLISON BROPHY CHAMPION
Culpeper Star-Exponent

Authorities found an airsoft gun in a child's backpack on Monday at Culpeper Middle School, leading the sheriff to issue a pointed statement advising parents to know what their kids are bringing with them when they leave the house in the morning.

The item turned out to be a replica weapon for airsoft games, but it lacked markings indicating it was not real, such as an orange tip, and it weighed the same as a real firearm, Sheriff Tim Chilton stated in a Facebook post Tuesday.

"Unfortunately, across the country, this is a decision that has to be made sometimes in a split second by law enforcement," according to the post. "We feel our schools and school resource officers are some of the best in the country, as well as the safest. We have an SRO at each school as well as armed security at our high and middle schools. Had they been confronted with this weapon, it could've been a horrible outcome."

Airsoft guns are replica firearms used for recreational purposes, such as sports, training, and military simulation games. The items use spring, gas, or electric power to propel non-lethal plastic BBs.

Chilton, in a video, holds the airsoft gun found in the school, putting it up and down, saying there is no way to tell if it is real or if it is fake.

The matter remains under investigation and will be presented to the commonwealth's attorney for any potential

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Check out all the latest Culpeper-area happenings in community briefs, **PAGE A3**

Weather

Partly sunny
High 69 • Low 40
Forecast • A6

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