



NFL: What does Burrow injury, Chiefs' 0-2 start mean?

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ELECTION 2025



Joseph Perry, left, and John Baber, the two candidates battling to become Staunton's next commonwealth's attorney, speak at a forum on Sept. 15 at Staunton City Hall. BRAD ZINN/THE NEWS LEADER

Baber, Perry face off in candidate forum

Brad Zinn Staunton News Leader | USA TODAY NETWORK

STAUNTON — With Election Day less than two months away, both candidates vying to become the city's top prosecutor were on hand Sept. 15 for a candidate forum at Staunton City Hall. • Staunton Chief Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney Joseph Perry and attorney John Baber are the two candidates hoping to become Staunton's next commonwealth's attorney. In April, Staunton Commonwealth's Attorney Jeff Gaines announced his retirement at the end of the year. • Perry and Baber, former colleagues, are running as independents. They were met with a packed crowd that was standing room only inside the Rita S. Wilson council chambers. See **FORUM, Page 2A**

'Evolution doesn't withstand good science'

Patrick Hite
Staunton News Leader
USA TODAY NETWORK

VERONA — An annual letter to families of secondary science students in Augusta County has some community members upset. And one school board member agrees with them.

The letter explains that Augusta County Public Schools will be teaching evolution. This doesn't appear to be a change in policy, only an explanation to families about what is being taught.

"Evolution is a unifying concept that underpins various scientific disciplines, including astronomy, geology, biology, and earth science," the letter reads in part. "It's importance lies in its ability to explain how the natural world has evolved over time. By teaching evolution, we aim to instill in students an understanding that the world around us is not static; it has a history and has undergone cumulative changes."

Harold Munson was one of two speakers to address the Augusta County School Board at its Sept. 4 meeting. Munson cited a poll showing 71% of people believe in a creator.

"Certainly the majority of scientists, by far, believe in evolution," Munson said. "Being in the majority can make you comfortable, but it doesn't make you right."

Heather Podgorki commented on a Facebook post about the discussion at the school board meeting, writing that the speakers were equating evolution to creation.

"Evolution is change over time," she wrote. "Evolution is not an explanation of how life came to be, only how life has changed over millions of years."

Luke Mays also spoke to the board, and seemed to have a greater issue with another part of the letter.

"It is crucial to note that at no point should teachers advocate or present any religious interpretations of the natural world," the letter reads. "Furthermore, they will not engage in discussions or pass judgment on the personal beliefs of their students."

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Bees take their place as sanctioned pollinators

Lyra Bordelon
Staunton News Leader
USA TODAY NETWORK

Staunton residents looking to take up bee keeping in the city will soon be able to thanks to a new ordinance passed by the Staunton City Council on Sept. 11.

The new ordinance would allow hobbyist beekeepers to keep bee hives in the city limits. The beekeepers would need to apply for a permit and meet the ordinance's requirement for safely keeping up with the hive.

The ordinance began when residents

"A health pollinator population is a requirement for a thriving urban tree canopy and ecosystem. This ordinance is a practical way to support that process."

Meggie Taylor
Staunton comprehensive planner

asked the city for permission to practice beekeeping in the city limits. It has now been in the works for about a year.

"I've learned so much about bees through this process," said Meggie Tay-

lor, Staunton comprehensive planner. Taylor presented an overview of the ordinance to the public and Staunton City Council on Sept. 11.

Before this ordinance, no resident has been officially allowed to have bees in the city. However, Councilmember Jeff Overholtzer said he has noticed what he thought were bee hives in the city that are "not officially sanctioned." The ordinance gives those currently keeping bees 60 days to comply with the new city ordinance and get their bees

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A bee clings to a buckwheat plant that attracts the flying pollinators to the Allegheny Mountain School's farm project at the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind in Staunton on June 23, 2014. GRIFFIN MOORES/THE NEWS LEADER

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