



## Town of Buchanan celebrates the holidays with parade and annual Festival of Lights



The James River High School marching band provides holiday music for paradegoers.



Members of the Buchanan Lions Club welcomed the crowd with a cheerful Christmas greeting.



The annual Buchanan Christmas parade stepped off last Saturday afternoon led by the Botetourt County Sheriff's Office.

PHOTOS BY LEIGH DOWNEY

**Matt de Simone**

mattdesimone@mainstreetnews.com

Holiday cheer filled Main Street last Saturday as the Town of Buchanan welcomed residents and visitors for its annual Christmas parade, bringing the community together for an afternoon of seasonal celebration. Floats, vehicles and walking groups moved through

downtown decorated in festive style, spreading good will and holiday spirit along the parade route.

Among the entries drawing attention were a season float from A Few Old Goats Brewery, decorated vehicles from the Night Crawlers VA Chapter, and members of the Buchanan Lions Club greeting spectators as they passed. One of the most "funnest" moments came from the Botetourt 4-H FRC Robotics Team, whose Jack

Skellington robot rolled along Main Street from a truck with a robot driver, adding a creative and technological flair that delighted parade-goers of all ages.

Parade entries included: A Few Old Goats Brewery; Bank of Botetourt; Blue Ridge Wrecker Service; Botetourt 4-H FRC Robotics Team; Botetourt County

See **Buchanan Parade**, page 5



BCPS November Employee of the Month Sally Bailey and Valley District School Board representative Tim Davidick



Read Mountain Middle School Principal Debbie Harris (left), BCPS Employee of the Month Brandy Rogers, and Blue Ridge School Board representative Matt East

## School Board recognizes outstanding educators and student athletes

**Matt de Simone**

Managing Editor

The Botetourt County School Board met in Fincastle last Thursday night, Dec. 11, and took time during the meeting to recognize employees, student athletes, and a board member

for their achievements and service. Superintendent Dr. Janet Womack read aloud the nominations and recognitions on behalf of the division.

Botetourt County Public Schools (BCPS) November Employee of the

See **BCPS**, page 10



Lord Botetourt Principal Beth Mast and Virginia Council on Economic Education's 2025 Outstanding Economic Educator Jonathan Cook and Tim Davidick

PHOTOS COURTESY OF BCPS

## Botetourt County Chamber of Commerce appoints new Executive Director

**Matt de Simone**

Managing Editor

The Botetourt County Chamber of Commerce announced in a press release last Wednesday that it has named Jacqui Sobieski as its new Executive Director, concluding what it described as an extensive, months-long search that included a background investigation, reference checks, multiple interviews, and a full evaluation by the Chamber's search committee. The board of directors approved her appointment on Dec. 9.

Sobieski, who steps into the role as the Chamber enters what board leadership called "a new chapter," said she is eager to help Botetourt businesses—especially small businesses—navigate both the opportunities and challenges of a fast-growing county. Her background includes three decades in financial services with Fannie Mae, Bank of America, and T. Rowe Price, as well as small-business ownership since 2018 as co-owner of Virginia Mountain Vineyards in Fincastle.

In an interview last



PHOTO COURTESY OF BOTETOURT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

New Chamber Executive Director Jacqui Sobieski

week, Sobieski said her experience in both large institutions and small business gives her a dual perspective she expects will guide her leadership.

"On the one hand, the business experience, working in financial services, working in environment, where I developed business skills around strategy, priorities, managing large scale endeavors, as well as particularly in financial industries, process, controls, transparency of information, all of those things, I think, prepared me well for the services that I think the board is looking for in this role," she said. "On the other hand, working a small business, I tell people it's the hardest job I've had because it certainly made me much more insightful

as to the challenges of small businesses... trying to juggle all of that as well as, I think, one of the biggest challenges we found was getting access to information for small businesses.

"There's a lot of it out there, but you don't necessarily have the time and capacity to be spending a lot of time, you know, just calling through all that information. So, trying to understand how the Chamber could provide services to make that much more efficient for small businesses, I think, could be really beneficial."

Sobieski said one of her early priorities will be understanding how Botetourt can manage growth while preserving

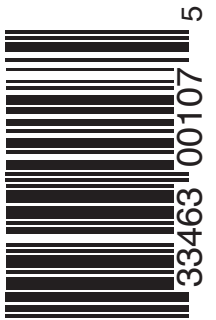
See **Chamber**, page 10



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# Botetourt County History

# Fincastle council approves 5% water and sewer rate increase for 2026

**Matt de Simone**  
mattdesimone@mainstreetnewspapers.com



FILE GRAPHIC

Fincastle Town Council voted unanimously last Thursday to approve a 5% increase to water and sewer rates, set to take effect January 1, 2026. The decision followed a public hearing and a detailed presentation by Town Manager Melanie McFadyen during the council's December meeting, held in the Fincastle Volunteer Fire Department Training Room.

Mayor Mary Bess Smith said the increase is both necessary and reasonable. She described the adjustment as "a smart move and a good move for the town," adding that she does not believe the added cost will be "burdensome" for residents.

McFadyen's presentation provided a multi-year breakdown of rising operating expenses for the town's water and wastewater systems, including increased costs for chemicals, electricity, plant operations, and maintenance. The town last increased water and sewer rates in 2020, and connection fees have not changed since 2019.

One reason the town initiated this year's study was the discovery that it had fallen five years behind on regular rate reviews—a delay council members agreed must not happen again. As part of Thursday's action, the council reaffirmed a commitment to conducting annual rate reviews moving forward.

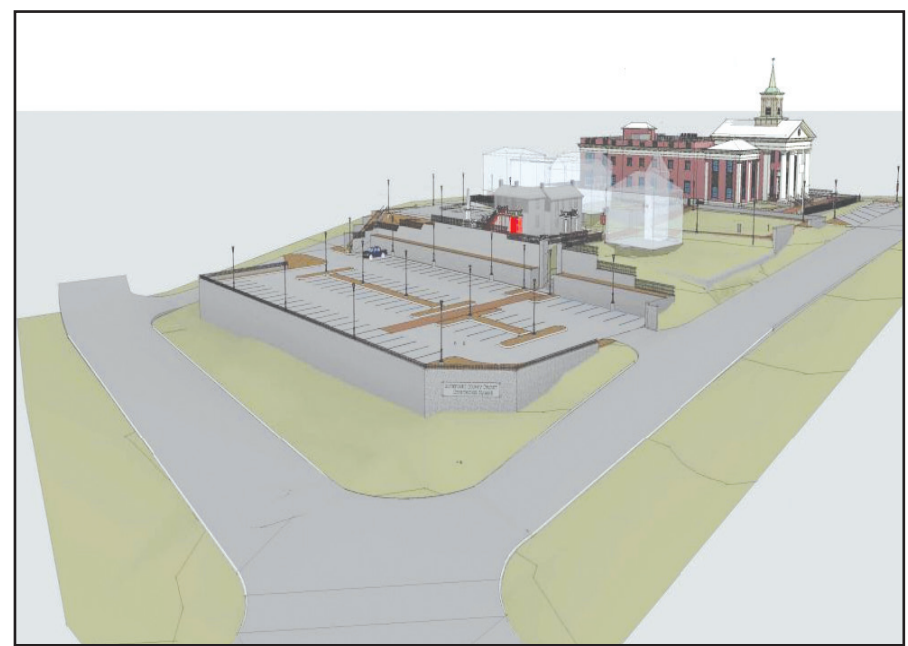
Comparisons with neighboring localities were also included in

McFadyen's analysis. While Fincastle's costs differ from other systems due to varying technology and plant demands, McFadyen noted that the town's rates remain generally in line with those of nearby communities.

Under the approved increase, most residential customers—who fall within the town's first usage tier—will see modest changes in their bills. For some average households, the adjustment amounts to roughly \$3 more per month, or around \$36 annually.

Smith emphasized that regular small adjustments are healthier than infrequent large increases, particularly as the town prepares for eventual major upgrades at its now 20-plus-year-old wastewater treatment plant. "Something big will hit eventually," Smith said, noting that past equipment

See Council, page 7



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF BOTETOURT CO.

A rendering for the Circuit Courthouse parking lot currently under construction along Route 220. Recently, a rumor began circulating around Fincastle that a parking garage was being constructed on site. Last week, County Capital Projects Manager Rich Evans confirmed the rumor to be "absolutely false."



PHOTO COURTESY OF BCMHC

This holiday tradition has somehow survived extinction in the digital age. Who would think they were making history by sending a personalized card? However, here is one wishing the recipient a "Merry Christmas."

It is a painted image showing a young child on a stick horse carrying a horn beside a tree with real lighted candles. He's looking at old Father Christmas in a blue coat carrying sticks, which traditionally bring good fortune. The Victorian man is symbolic of warmth and good will reflecting the era's focus on the charitable and spiritual aspects of the holiday season.

The cost of postage was 1 cent in 1909. Today, Americans send more than a billion holiday cards despite the cost. It is a valued human touch that connects families, colleagues and friends that no text message can match.

This postcard was sent to Mr. and Mrs. J.L. Williamson at Route 1, Buchanan, by Perry. There is a collection of nostalgic cards and presents on exhibit in the Botetourt Museum of History & Culture in Fincastle.

- Botetourt County Museum of History & Culture

## The Fincastle Herald

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## December 1775 – The Point of No Return

### The United Colonies



FILE GRAPHIC

In response to King George's earlier declaration that the Colonies were in a state of open rebellion, on Dec. 6, Colonial Congress passed language declaring the Colonies' right to resist the usurping of their rights as English subjects. In turn, on Dec. 22, Parliament passed the Prohibitory Act, banning all trade with the Colonies as well as declaring an embargo of the Colonies as enemies. This was effectively a declaration of war against the Colonies by Great Britain.

In Canada, the forces of General Richard Montgomery and Colonel Benedict Arnold united and began a siege of Quebec. They launched an attack in a blizzard Dec. 30-31 which ended in defeat with approximately 100 Colonial casualties, including the death of General Montgomery and the serious wounding of Colonel Arnold, and 400 colonists being captured.

On Dec. 6, 1775, Henry Knox, a book seller who was recently appointed Washington's head of artillery, began an arduous winter journey. His mission was to transport 60 tons of artillery and supplies through winter weather conditions and difficult terrain from captured Fort Ticonderoga on sleds pulled by oxen for the fortifying of Dorchester Heights outside of Boston.

In South Carolina, battles were fought from Dec. 22-30, the first known as the Battle of Great Cane Break and the rest known as the Snow Campaign.

See BPP, page 7



INSPIRED LEARNING



The Roanoke Valley Governor's School for Science and Technology invites prospective students and parents to attend one of the 2026-2027 school year informational sessions listed below to learn about our school and obtain an application. RVGS is a public regional program serving high school students from Bedford, Botetourt, Craig, Franklin, Floyd, Roanoke City, Roanoke County, and Salem.

- Tuesday, January 6, 6:30 pm Application info meeting at RVGS
- Thursday, January 8, 6:30 pm Application info meeting at Franklin County High School
- Tuesday, January 13, 6:30 pm Application info meeting at RVGS
- Thursday, January 15, 6:30 pm Application info meeting at Staunton River High School
- Tuesday, January 20, 6:30 pm Application info meeting RVGS

Informational sessions & additional information available at [www.rvgs.k12.va.us](http://www.rvgs.k12.va.us)

All advertisements and community news for the DECEMBER 24 edition are due THIS FRIDAY, Dec. 19, no later than 10 a.m.

For inquiries:

advertise@mainstreetnewspapers.com or by calling 540-389-9355

# 'Austin & Friends' perform Christmas concert

"David Austin & Friends" presented a concert of Christmas music last Sunday at Buchanan Presbyterian Church. The group featured various styles of original and traditional Christmas music.

The "Friends" members were (from left): front, Kristen Smith, Hannah Snyder, and Elizabeth Holdren; back,

Keith Wood, Robert Smith, David Austin, Jacob Holdren, and Greg Honeycutt.

Admission was free; a love offering was received to support ministries in the Buchanan area.

- Fincastle Herald staff report



PHOTOS COURTESY OF DANETTE HEINLEIN

# Winter paints its way to Greenfield Elementary



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CAROLYN MCLUCAS

Greenfield kindergarten students turned the school's hallways into a festive Winter Wonderland last week, filling the space with Christmas cheer. Colorful student artwork featured snowflakes, Christmas trees, cheerful snowmen, and other seasonal designs that

celebrated both winter weather and the joy of the Christmas season. Lessons on seasons, weather, and Christmas traditions inspired the project, giving students an opportunity to combine creativity with classroom learning.

Greenfield will continue the winter celebration by hosting a winter-themed STEM Night on January 13.

- Fincastle Herald staff report

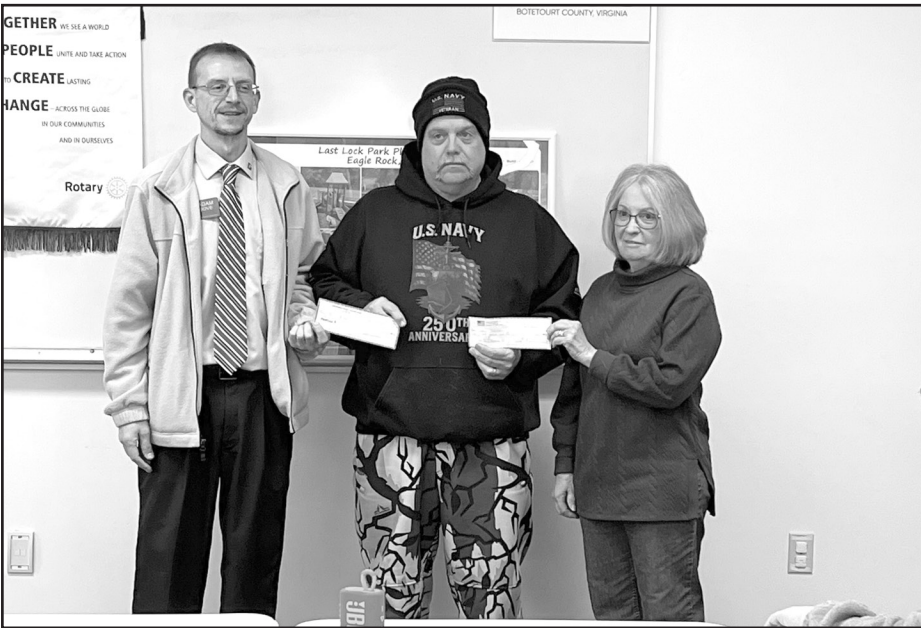


PHOTO COURTESY OF BOTETOURT ROTARY CLUB

From left are Botetourt Rotary President Adam Dove, Bill Price of Sirens and Salutes, and Cathie Ostermann from Quilted Hearts

# Botetourt Rotary donates to the Quilted Hearts Project

The Botetourt Rotary Club recently presented a \$500 check to Sirens and Salutes which, in turn, provided this funding to the Quilted Hearts Project. Cathie and Nathan Ostermann and Brenda Beckner,

three friends who make up the Quilted Hearts Project, have distributed approximately 30,000 quilted hearts over the past three-plus years to first responders, veterans, and active duty military personnel who are

stationed locally, in the states or overseas.

Some examples include, but are not limited to, Veterans Administration (VA) hospitals and nursing

See **Rotary**, page 4

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# Library BUZZ

All Botetourt County Library locations will be closed for the holidays. Libraries will close at 12 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 24 and will be closed Dec. 25-27. Libraries will reopen on Monday, Dec. 29.

County Parks & Recreation. Best for ages 18+  
 \*Registration required. Register at <https://botetourtva.libcal.com/> or call 540-928-2900 with questions.

## Needlecraft

Wed, Dec 17, 1 PM, Buchanan  
 Bring your project to work on, share tips, and learn from others in this informal gathering. All types of needlecrafts are welcome. Best for ages 18+

## Winter Clay Candle Creations

Fri, Dec 19, 12:30 PM, Blue Ridge  
 Join us for a bright and creative adventure as children explore the magic of light and dark! Kids will sculpt and decorate clay candleholders using fun cookie-cutter shapes and vibrant paints. Best for ages 5 - 12.

## American Girl Book Club

Thu, Dec 18, 4 PM, Fincastle  
 Discuss American Girl books, enjoy light refreshments, and complete a hands-on activity or craft related to the book. Best for ages 8-12.  
 \*Registration required. Register at <https://botetourtva.libcal.com/> or call 540-928-2900 with questions.

## Intro to Mahjong

Mon, Dec 22, 11 AM, Buchanan  
 Join fellow mahjong players on Mondays in December in the meeting room. Best for ages 18+ No registration required.

## Yoga for Beginners

Thu, Dec 18, 6:30 PM, Blue Ridge  
 Learn gentle yoga stretches. Mats and yoga blocks provided or bring your own. Instructor: Jaime Thrasher, Botetourt

## Eclectic Readers

Tues, Dec 23, 4 PM, Eagle Rock  
 Discuss books and authors with fellow readers while enjoying free coffee and social connection. December: "The Hunting Party" by Lucy Foley

# Learn more about Botetourt Libraries at [bocolibraries.info](http://bocolibraries.info)

## Rotary

from page 3

homes, Operation Gratitude, the Botetourt Sheriff's Department, Sirens and Salutes, various VA luncheons, non-VA nursing homes, and extended care facilities. Additionally, hearts were provided to the Troutville Fire Department before Santa and the firemen come through neighborhoods

the week of Dec. 15. Quilted Hearts doesn't charge for these items. "They are simply a token of appreciation to our veterans, active duty, and first responders for their service," a spokesman said. And patriotic hearts are not all they make. They also produce Christmas hearts as well as Valentine hearts for the

same cause. Quilted Hearts is always in need of supplies for the hearts, especially ribbon and buttons. If you would like to make a ribbon and button donation, or any other donation, to Quilted Hearts, contact Cathie Ostermann at (540) 354-5019.

- Submitted by Botetourt Rotary Club

# The Sheriff's Post

SHERIFF MATTHEW T. WARD

## Christmas cheer protected in Buchanan



The Grinch was at it again last Saturday as Sheriff Matt Ward (right) and the Botetourt County Sheriff's Office took action apprehending the mischievous menace from stealing Christmas from Buchanan.

Christmas cheer was officially saved in Botetourt County last weekend, thanks to the watchful eye and quick action of the Botetourt County Sheriff's Office. Parade-goers may remember that trouble first appeared the weekend prior at Fincastle's Christmas parade, when the Grinch made an unexpected appearance and was promptly "arrested" by BCSO deputies right in the middle of the festivities. Unfortunately, the green suspect proved slippery, managing to escape deputies—and spectators—wondering when he might strike again.

Sure enough, at the start of Saturday's Buchanan Christmas Parade, the Grinch resurfaced. After being briefly detained, he once again slipped away, much to the amusement of the crowd. But his reign of holiday mischief didn't last long. During the parade, deputies received reports that the Grinch intended to steal Christmas cheer



PHOTOS BY LEIGH DOWNEY

from parade-goers. Acting quickly, BCSO personnel moved in and successfully apprehended him—this time for good. "Thanks to quick action by our deputies, the Grinch was apprehended in Buchanan before any Christmas cheer could be stolen," said Sheriff Matt Ward. "He's now in custody and will be closely supervised to ensure Christmas remains safe and joyful for everyone." The Botetourt County Sheriff's Office confirmed

that no presents, decorations, or holiday spirit were harmed during the incident, and the arrest was made without incident.

"While the Grinch may have had mischievous intentions, our deputies ensured the parade continued safely and that the holiday spirit remained intact," the Sheriff's Office said in a statement. "We're pleased to say Buchanan's (and Botetourt County's)

See Grinch, page 10

# ARRESTS

December 9-14, 2025

- The Botetourt County Sheriff's Office reported the following arrests Dec. 9-14:
- Sean P. Burke, 42, of Blue Ridge, petit larceny, Dec. 9
  - Jason P. Quackenbush Sr., 44, of Troutville, property damage, Dec. 11
  - Maria N. Ugaide, 53, of Troutville, driving under the influence, refusing breath test, Dec. 13
  - Dustin L. Williams, 34, of Buchanan, contempt of court, Dec. 14
  - Austin S. Gibson, 30, of Buchanan, domestic assault, assault and battery, attempted 2nd degree murder, strangulation, possession of a firearm by a felon, use of a firearm in the commission of a felony, unlawful use of a telephone to obstruct messages, abduction, Dec. 14

## League for Animal Protection's Waif of the Week



### Kitty

Kitty came to LAP from Bedford County. He is a neutered male, up to date on vaccines, combo tested and ready for a family who likes to play and snuggle.

The LAP Shelter is open from 8-11 and 3-5; 540-473-3853. Send donations to LAP, P.O. Box 561, Fincastle, 24090.

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  - Covered with gold
  - Residual oil
  - Signs up for school
  - Furniture for daily meals
  - Extinct flightless bird of New Zealand
  - Lower limb
  - Guy (slang)
  - Get free of structure
  - Snakelike fish
  - Adult female bird
  - Formal window coverings
  - Break into small pieces
  - "1836 siege" of U.S.
  - Made violet-red
  - Food chopper
  - Removes writing
  - Ethiopian monetary unit
  - Wine bottle
  - Containers
  - English prelate
  - Wm. Ralph
  - Small storage
  - A jelly-like substance
  - CLUES DOWN
  - A brief comment
  - Sultanate of NW Borneo
  - Importune
  - Forelimb
  - Models of ethical behavior
  - Harangues
  - This (Spanish)
  - Springfield Area Mobile Intensive Care
  - Sang at Christmas door to door
  - Partly or nearly blind
  - Posterior pituitary gland hormone
  - American Nurses Association (abbr.)
  - The 7th Greek letter
  - Strives to equal
  - Toff
  - Coleoptera insects
  - The color of blood
  - Slipped by
  - Of she
  - A short musical passage
  - CNN's founder Turner
  - Radioactivity unit
  - Exculation defense
  - Walking back and forth
  - Come forth from
  - Oxalis
  - A soft twilled fabric of silk
  - The two large chest muscles

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**Rental Family**  
 Thursday, Dec. 18 7 p.m.

**David**  
 (2025) From his mother's songs to his clash with Goliath, David's journey from humble shepherd to anointed king tests the limits of faith, courage, and love — culminating in a battle for the soul of a kingdom.  
 (1 hour, 55 minutes)  
**Friday, Dec. 19 7 p.m.**  
**Saturday, Dec. 20 7 p.m.**  
**Sunday, Dec. 21 3 p.m.**  
**Thursday, Dec. 25 CLOSED**

See Answers, page 10

**Subscribe!**  
 389-9355

# Buchanan Parade

from page 1



Santa and Mrs. Claus arrive in Buchanan.



A Few Old Goats Brewery put together a festive float for this year's parade.



The Virginia chapter of the Night Crawlers jeep club was well-represented.



Botetourt County's fleet of fire trucks made it in for the festive fun.



Botetourt 4-H Robotics brought along their Jack Skellington and Sally robot for the holiday festivities.

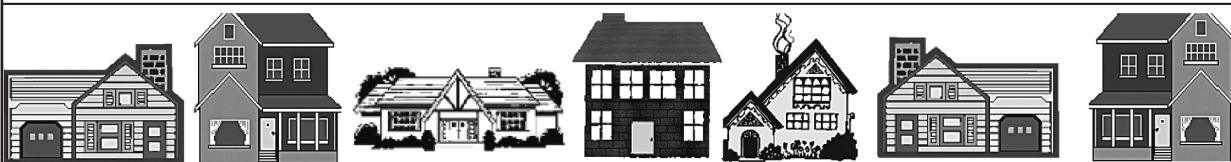


PHOTOS BY LEIGH DOWNEY  
Pictured above are some of the pre-lit décor found at this year's Festival of Lights at Buchanan Town Park.

Sheriff's Office; Botetourt County 4-H Livestock Club; Buchanan Lions Club; Farm View B&B; Fincastle Baptist Church; Jeffery's Funny Farm; Jelly Stone Natural Bridge; Kelly Beasley; Michael Lee Carter; Night Crawlers VA Chapter; Old School Racing Arnold Williams; Rhudy Williams; Rockbridge Farmers Co-op; Self-Cora Moorman; Sharin' Flowers + The Country Crate; Sean Bowers; Sink's Septic & Drain; Sirens and Salutes Inc.; The Best Place Antiques; Twin River Outfitters; and VDOT Safety Service.

Buchanan Town Manager Tim Mack praised the event, saying, "The parade was a huge success with a great turnout!"

The holiday festivities continue in Buchanan with the Festival of Lights at Buchanan Town Park, where displays are illuminated nightly from 6 p.m. to 11 p.m. through Jan. 3, offering families and visitors a festive destination to enjoy throughout the remainder of the season.



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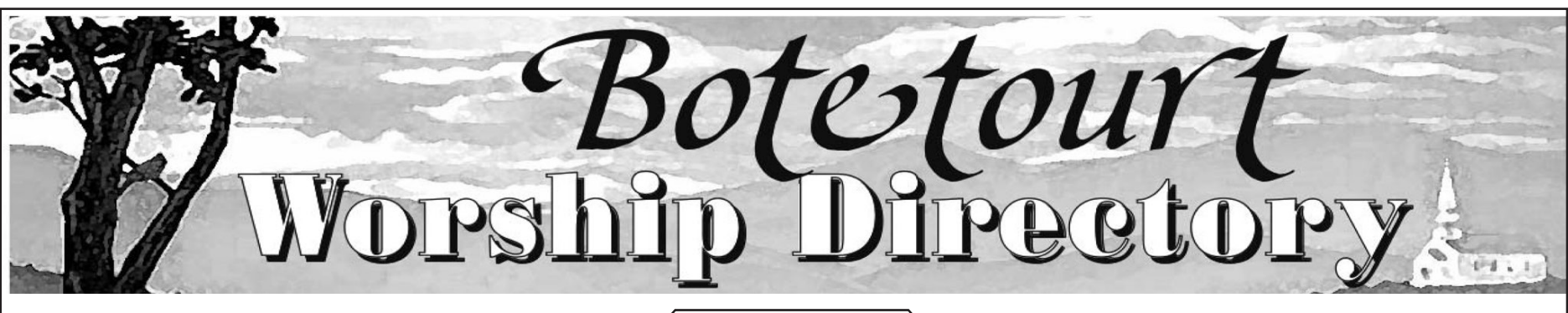
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# Botetourt Worship Directory

**ANGLICAN**  
**Orchard Hills Church** - 6032 Cloverdale Rd. next to Read Mountain Fire Station. Worship at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Sundays. Home group Bible studies available throughout the week. Pastor Scott McClucas, 977-6800. To find out more about Orchard Hills Church go to the website at [www.orchardhillschurch.org](http://www.orchardhillschurch.org).

**ASSEMBLIES OF GOD**  
**New Beginnings Assembly of God**, 1317 Narrow Passage Rd., 43 North. Sunday School, 10:00a.m.; Worship, 11a.m.; Wednesday Prayer & Bible Study, 6:00p.m., Pastor Steve Tremblay, email: [pastorstevetremblay@gmail.com](mailto:pastorstevetremblay@gmail.com). Everyone welcome.

**Troutville Assembly of God**, 118 Conner Lane, P.O. Box 728, Troutville, VA 24175, Pastor Dennis Carroll, 540-960-1224, Sunday Morning Worship 10:30 a.m., Children's Church 11:00 a.m., Wednesday Bible Study 7:00 p.m., Everyone welcome.

**INDEPENDENT BAPTIST**  
**Crossroads Baptist Church** - 1128 Wheatland Rd., Buchanan, Pastor Elmer Clemons, (540)761-5074 Home, Sunday School 10:00 A.M., Morning Worship, 11:00 A.M., Sunday Evening 5:30 P.M., Wednesday Prayer & Bible Study 5:30 P.M.

**Faith Baptist Church**- 4258 Botetourt Rd., Fincastle, VA. 24090, Pastor, Dr. John W. Reynolds, Phone; 540-473-2325, Email: [jwr56fbc@yahoo.com](mailto:jwr56fbc@yahoo.com), Church website: [fincastlefaith.com](http://fincastlefaith.com), Services: 10 A.M. Bible Expositions, 11 A.M. Worship & Children's Church, 7 P.M. Wednesday Bible Study & Prayer, Messages at [www.youtube.com/@faithbaptistchurch9219](http://www.youtube.com/@faithbaptistchurch9219). We look forward to meeting you.

**Lapsleys Run Baptist Church**- 608 Zion Hill Road, Fincastle. 540-556-3504. Worship: 2nd & 4th Sundays at 11:00a.m.

**New Hope Baptist Church**- 2315 Blue Ridge Blvd. (US 460), 977-6610, Pastor David McNeill; Sunday School, 9:45AM; Worship, 10:45AM, 7PM; Wed., Bible Study 7PM; Kings Kids, 7PM; Daycare and Preschool, Mon-Fri. 6:30AM-6PM.

**Valley View Baptist Church**- 17471 Main St., Buchanan; Rev. Daniel Boone, 254-2760 (church), 254-2570 (H). Sunday School, 10 AM; worship, 11 AM, Sunday Evening, 6:30 PM; Wednesday: Prayer and Youth Ministries, 7 PM, Word Of Life youth ministry for 4 year olds-12th grade Wednesdays at 7 p.m.

**SOUTHERN BAPTIST**  
**Bonsack Baptist Church** - 4845 Cloverdale Rd. (Alt. 220) Dr. Chris Cadenhead, 977-5701, Sunday School, 8:30a.m. and 11a.m.; Worship 9:45a.m.; Wed. Bible study, 6 p.m.

**Buchanan Baptist Church** - 19730 Main Street, Buchanan, Sunday Bible Study for all ages 9:45 a.m.; Worship at 11 a.m. Wednesday Fellowship Meal at 6 p.m. followed by Bible Study and activities for all ages. Facebook - Buchanan Baptist Church; Web Site - [buchananbaptist.com](http://buchananbaptist.com); Phone - 254-2253, Minister of Music - Stephen Harris

**Daleville Baptist Church**- Corner of Valley Rd. and Orchard Dr., 992-1570;

Senior Pastor Wes Belcher; Sunday School 9:15 AM, Worship 10:30 AM; Wednesday: Prayer & Bible Study - 6:30 PM, Youth - 6:30 PM

**Fincastle Baptist Church**- Located at 7330 Roanoke Rd., Fincastle, Rt. 220, 1 mile south of Fincastle, 540-473-2861; [www.fincastlebaptist.org](http://www.fincastlebaptist.org); Sr. Pastor Kevin B. Cummings. Sunday Mornings, we offer a dual Bible Study/Worship Service at both 9:00 am and 10:45 am. On Wednesday evenings, we offer events for the entire family: Kids Club (3 years-5th grade) 6:15-7:30 pm; Middle School Ignite (Grades 6-8) 6:15-7:15 pm; Adult Bible Study 6:30-7:30 pm; Ignite High School Group (Grades 9-12) 7:45-8:45 pm; and childcare (birth-36 months).

**Forest Grove Baptist Church**- 693 Mt. Moriah Rd. (Rt. 681), Eagle Rock, Rev. Jerry Marsh, Pastor. Sunday School, 9:30 a.m., Worship 10:35 a.m., Wed., Bible Study 7 p.m.

**Glade Creek Baptist Church** - 3148 Webster Road, Blue Ridge, Virginia 24064. Pastor Steve McChesney. Phone 540-977-1686 or 540-798-7462. Sunday School 9:45 a.m., Sunday Worship Service 11:00 a.m., to include Children's Church. Wednesday evening Worship and Bible study begins with a meal at 6:30 p.m.

**Mill Creek Baptist Church** -11475 Lee Hwy., Fincastle, 992-3474. Danny Quirin, Pastor. Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; Worship 8:30 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.; Wednesday night activities begin at 6pm: Bible study, children and youth activities, choir and handbell rehearsals follow. [office@millcreekbc.com](mailto:office@millcreekbc.com)

**Pleasant Hill Baptist Church**- 4930 Country Club Road (corner of Country Club & Haymakertown Roads), 540-992-5556. Pastor Danny Barham. Sunday School, 10 a.m.; Worship Service, 11 a.m. Worship can also be viewed online at the PHBC Facebook page or on Youtube (PHBCtube). Other activities and schedules can be found at [www.phbcweb.com](http://www.phbcweb.com).

**Springwood Baptist Church** - 88 Copps Hill Rd., Buchanan; Rev. Mike Anderson, 540-819-4616, Email [pmike09@outlook.com](mailto:pmike09@outlook.com). Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship 11 a.m.; Wednesday night bible study will be held every first and third Wednesday of the month from 6:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m.

**Troutville Baptist Church** -P.O. Box 309, Troutville, VA 24175; 992-1026, Rev. Carol Johnston. Sunday School 9:45 AM; Worship 11 AM. Wednesday: Adult Prayer & Bible Study, 6:30PM; Youth & Children Activities 6:30PM.

**Zion Hill Baptist Church**- Intersection of Zion Hill Road and Old Fincastle Road. Pastor Donald Goforth (540) 884-2285. Sunday School -10 AM Worship 11AM. Youth Activities (grades 6-12) and Kingdom Kids (preschool-grade 5) Wednesdays at 5:30 PM.

**CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN**  
**Cloverdale Church of the Brethren**- 4708 Read Mtn. Rd., 992-1060; Sunday School, 9:15 a.m., worship, 10:30 a.m.; Wed. (Sept.-

**ONLY ONE WAY**

"I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." John 14:6

In our culture, almost anything goes. The overwhelming idea is: whatever works for you. It's okay to believe in God, but it's not acceptable to suggest there is only one way to know Him. The problem is that if you believe in Christ, you must also believe His words. He did not say, "I am a way." He said, "I am THE way." Think about it. If anything would work, why suffer? If anything else could save us, why would God send His son? Read Isaiah 43:10-11. First, understand that God does want us to know Him. It's why He sent His son in the first place. Second, recognize that there is only one Savior and put your trust in Him. Perhaps you have long since accepted that only Christ can save you, but have you really accepted that only He can save somebody else? Knowing how much others need Christ motivates us to tell them about Him. After all, "how, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?" (Romans 10:14) Tell someone about the Savior today!

Worship: Today, thank God for sending the Savior. Pray for those who do not know Him, those who live and work right around you as well as those in foreign lands. Read Romans 10:14-15. Pray that God will send His people to preach good news and ask Him to give you opportunities today to share His love with someone.

May), Family Dinner, 6 p.m., Bible study, 6:45 p.m. Preschool, after-school care & summer day camp for preschool and elementary age children. Patrick Starkey, Pastor; Shawna Burkhart, preschool director.

**Mt. Bethel Church of the Brethren**- 10603 Narrow Passage Rd., Eagle Rock. PO Box. 183 Eagle Rock, VA 24085. Interim Pastor Dreama Osborne. 884-2292 (church), 540-597-8272 (cell). Sunday School, 10 AM; worship, 11 AM; Ladies' Aid meets 2nd Thurs. monthly.

**Mt. Joy Church of the Brethren**- 2565 Buffalo Rd., 10 miles N of Buchanan, 254-2298. Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m. Pastor Michael Tabor, (540) 309-7595.

**Pleasant Dale Church of the Brethren**, 3732 Breckinridge Mill Rd, Fincastle, Rev. Dr. David A. Tozar - pastor, Sunday worship at 11am, preceded by coffee fellowship at 10:30, Bible Study Sunday at 4pm, 5th Sunday Potluck luncheon, Handicap Accessible, Contact Pastor Davd at [dtozar9@yahoo.com](mailto:dtozar9@yahoo.com). Follow on Facebook, Sunday worship and Bible study stream live.

**Troutville Church of the Brethren** - 5133 Lee Hwy., 992-1571; Terry R. Johnson, Pastor; Don Obenshain, Choir Director. Sunday Morning Services: Sunday School, 10 am; Worship Service, 11 am. Sunday Night Meetings: Rainbows, 5:30 pm; Christ Seekers, 6:00 pm. Wednesday Night Meetings: Bible Study, 6:30 pm, Choir practice, 7:00 pm. Family Fellowship Time will be held each 3rd Sunday of the month. Handicap Accessible. Our email address is: [Troutvillecob@hotmail.com](mailto:Troutvillecob@hotmail.com).

**ECKANKAR**  
**Eckankar, The Path of Spiritual Freedom**, is a simple teaching that focuses

on the Light and Sound of God to help people find more love in their life. We offer a Spiritual Event on the 2nd. Sunday of each month. The program may be a Light and Sound Service, a Spiritual video and discussion, or other topics and techniques to help Raise Your Spiritual IQ. The Roanoke ECK Center is located at 1420 3rd. St. SW, Roanoke, VA 24016. For more information visit [www.eck-va.org](http://www.eck-va.org) or call 540-353-5365. People of all faiths are welcome.

**EPISCOPAL**  
**St. Mark's Episcopal Church** - 111 S. Roanoke St., Fincastle. P.O. Box 277 Fincastle, VA 24090. The Rev. G. Willis Logan, Rector. 473-2370. Worship in the sanctuary and by Zoom on Sunday mornings at 10:00am, with Adult Education on Sunday mornings from 9:00 to 9:50am. Evening Prayer is Wednesday evenings at 7:30pm by Zoom. Brown Bag Bible Study on Thursdays at 12 noon in the Ministry Center and by Zoom. Links for Zoom can be found on our website, [www.stmarksfincastle.org](http://www.stmarksfincastle.org).

**LUTHERAN**  
**Our Savior Evangelical Lutheran Church (WELS)** - 9068 Cloverdale Road, Troutville, VA; Paul Workentine, Pastor; Worship Sunday at 10:00 AM. Sunday School at 11:30 AM. Info and calendar at [osloanoke.com](http://osloanoke.com). Phone: 540-977-4888. **Wheatland Evangelical Lutheran Church**- 1560 Wheatland Road, Buchanan, 24066; 540-254-1605. Sunday worship service, 10:30 a.m. (in person or parking lot, tune car radio to 88.9 FM). The Rev. Chuck Miller, 540-589-7553. Facebook, <http://www.wheatlandlutheran.org>; [teemwheatland@gmail.com](mailto:teemwheatland@gmail.com)

**NON-DENOMINATIONAL**  
**Grace Bible Church of Botetourt** - 148 Amsterdam Rd. (beside the south lane of 220 in Amsterdam, 1.5 miles north of LBHS). Sunday Worship, 10 a.m. Pastor Jay Robinette - 855-4620.

**Mt. Carmel Church**, 6 miles south of Eagle Rock at intersection of Rt. 43 and 688; pastor, Richard Ronk; phone # (540) 884-3653; Sunday School at 10:00 A.M., Worship at 11:00 A.M., Wed. Prayer Meeting at 7:00 P.M.

**Woodland Church-A Place Where You Can Grow** - 45 Woodland Rd. Troutville, VA. Corner of Blacksville/Country Club Rds., 3.5 miles W. of Fincastle; 992-1008. Sunday School, 10AM; Worship, 11AM, Wed. Prayer Meeting 6:30PM. Website: [woodlandchurchbc.com](http://woodlandchurchbc.com). E-mail address: [woodlandchurchbc@gmail.com](mailto:woodlandchurchbc@gmail.com).

**PRESBYTERIAN**  
**Buchanan Presbyterian Church** - 19559 Main St. Buchanan. 540-254-1390. Donna Hopkins Britt, Pastor. Choir rehearsal at 9:00 am. Sunday School at 10:00 am. Worship at 11:00 am. Videotaped services can be viewed on YouTube. The Food Pantry is open from 9-11 a.m. on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of each month. Handicap accessible. Facebook page or website: [www.buchananpresbyterian.org](http://www.buchananpresbyterian.org). Contact [www.admin@buchananpresbyterian.org](mailto:www.admin@buchananpresbyterian.org)

**Fincastle Presbyterian Church** - 108 E. Back Street, Fincastle, VA 24090. The Rev. Dr. David Dickerson, Supply Minister, Lori Turner, Music Director. Worship service in the Sanctuary and via Live Streaming (<https://www.facebook.com/fincastlepresbyterianchurch>) at 10:30 AM. Adult Sunday School offered at 9:30 AM. Fellowship time in the Fellowship Hall immediately following morning service. Bell choir practices after Sunday Fellowship, often providing special music in our services. For more information please email [fincastlepresbyterianchurch@gmail.com](mailto:fincastlepresbyterianchurch@gmail.com) or call 540.473.2042.

**Galatia Evangelical Presbyterian Church** - 78 Gala Loop Road, Eagle Rock, VA 24085. Rev. Emily B. Hook, pastor, 804-516-6552. Sunday School at 10 a.m. each Sunday. Morning Worship & Praise at 11a.m. each Sunday. Communion once each quarter.

**Virginia Presbyterian Church** - 918 Pico Road, Buchanan, 24066. Worship 9:30 a.m. (nursery provided), Sunday School, 10:30 a.m.

**ROMAN CATHOLIC**  
**Church of the Transfiguration**- 7624 Roanoke Rd., Fincastle, VA 24090; Fr. Zaverio "Xavier" Banasula. 473-2656. Saturday Mass at 4:30pm & Sunday at 8:30am; Christian formation after Mass on Sunday.

**UNITED METHODIST**  
**Andrew Chapel United Methodist Church** - 3936 Beaver Dam Road, just off Springwood Road, Springwood. Rev. Morris A. Bennett. Sunday School, 9:15 a.m. followed by Worship, 10 a.m.

**Eagle Rock United Methodist Church** - 14565 Church St., Eagle Rock, 10:15 AM; Glen Wilton UMC, Main St., Glen Wilton, 9:00 AM; Shiloh UMC, Shiloh Rd, Eagle Rock, 11:15 AM. Pastor Ray Sandifer (540) 525-0258. Mail donations for the building fund to P.O. Box 85, Eagle Rock.

**Fincastle United Methodist Church** - Sunday School at 9 a.m. in the Family Life Center. In person services Sunday, 10 a.m. in the sanctuary, 136 S. Church St., Fincastle. Service is also live streamed on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/@FincastleUMCMedia> or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100068517955699>. Reverend Jim Bollinger, office, 473-3001. E-mail: [office@fincastleumc.org](mailto:office@fincastleumc.org).

**St. Mark's United Methodist Church** - 19 Cedar Ridge Drive, Daleville. Pastor Samuel Plymale, 992-3030. We have one service on Sundays at 10:00am, with Sunday School for children, youth, and adults following at 11:00am. Shipyard Youth meets every Sunday from 4:00 to 6:00pm, unless there is a special monthly mission event. Frogs and Tadpoles Children's Ministry meets on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month, September through April, from 4:00 to 6:00pm.

**Trinity United Methodist Church** - 19637 Main St., Buchanan; Rev. Doug Mitchell, 254-2475 (O). Worship, 9:45AM, Sunday School 10:30 AM.

# OBITUARIES

## Bailey, Stephen Randolph

Stephen "Beaver" Randolph Bailey, 65, passed away at his home on October 12, 2025.

He was a beloved husband, stepfather, brother, uncle, and friend who will be deeply missed. Steve had a tremendous heart for giving and leaves behind a legacy of love, laughter, and adventure.

A proud graduate of Virginia Tech, Steve went on to enjoy a distinguished 33-year career as an airline pilot. He flew for several airlines and ultimately retired from JetBlue, where he was known for his professionalism, calm demeanor, deep passion for aviation, and prided himself on making each landing better than the last one.

Steve had a lifelong love of sports. At Lord Botetourt, he was a standout athlete, excelling in football and pole vaulting. He was also a founding member of the original Botetourt motorcycle gang, the Daleville Dirt Diggers where membership simply required a helmet—even if it was a football helmet. Later in life, he found joy in fly-fishing and golf, pursuits that combined his appreciation for nature with his love of challenge and focus. Whether casting a line on a quiet stream or golfing with friends, Steve was in his element outdoors in his daily uniform of T-shirt, shorts, boots, and ever-present ball cap, no matter the season.

After retirement, Steve enjoyed playing golf with his regular group of friends at Blue Hills, doing tractor work, and starting every day with his shotgun rider, Lakyn, scouting the neighborhoods for wildlife, doing farm checks to count cattle, and running errands. His love for animals extended to his other pup, Harper, his kitties, Bailey and Tortie, as well as the deer, birds, and any other wildlife that had the good fortune of wandering into the yard.



Steve was generous beyond measure and gave selflessly. Whether mowing lawns for friends and neighbors, buying "closer drinks" for the serving staff at his favorite local restaurant, Tizzzone, or even helping a random stranger on a chance encounter, he never expected anything in return.

Steve never met a stranger and as a result he cultivated countless cherished friendships, many dating back to his childhood growing up in Daleville. His warmth, humor, and steady presence will be missed beyond measure. He lived fully, loved deeply, and left the world better than he found it.

Steve was preceded in death by his parents, Dewey James Bailey, Jr. and Nancy Casey Bailey, and stepmother, Patty Bailey. He is survived by his devoted wife, Andrea Stetson; his stepchildren, Matthew Sweeney (wife Madeline) and Meredith Craven (husband Brian); grandchildren, Ruby, Park, and Lillian; and his brothers, Richard Bailey (wife Kelly), Michael Bailey (wife Sally), Dewey Bailey (wife Susan), Hal Bailey (wife Cindy), and Bobby Bailey. He also leaves behind his cherished nieces and nephews: Kyle, Marshall, Anne, Paige, Tyler, Carrington, Lizzie, Julia, Hal, Jack, Emma, and Sophie.

You are invited to share memories and stories through the Forced Joy Project: <https://bookofstories.com/contribute/90>. If you would like to make a donation in honor of Steve, his favorite charities were St. Jude's Children Hospital, Tunnels2Towers, and Angels of Assisi in Roanoke.

The family will host a Celebration of Life open house on December 19, 2025, 6-8 p.m. at the home of his brother and sister-in-law, Hal and Cindy, 3564 Catawba Road, Troutville.

## DuVall, Juanita Lee

Juanita Lee DuVall, born October 6, 1929 in Virginia, passed away on December 2, 2025.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Amos Watkins Lee and Lillie Irene Barnett Lee, as well as her husband, Jack Roy DuVall.

Left to cherish her memory are her daughter, Patricia Dean; her son, Kenneth DuVall and his wife Sheryl;

and her grandson, Jake Ivanovych DuVall.

In keeping with her wishes, there will be no service or viewing. Those who knew Juanita are encouraged to remember her in their own personal way. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Good Samaritan Hospice, 4751 Cove Road, Roanoke, 24017.

## CHURCH NEWS

### Candlelight Christmas Eve Service at Galatia

All are welcome to the Candlelight Christmas Eve Service at 6:30 p.m. on Dec. 24 at Galatia Presbyterian Church. The church is located at 78 Gala Loop Road, Eagle Rock.

### Buchanan Food Pantry open Saturday

The last Buchanan Presbyterian Church Food Pantry distribution for 2025 will be held Saturday, Dec. 20, from 9:30 till 11 a.m. The church is located at 19559 Main Street, Buchanan. Volunteers from the church will be distributing meat, milk, cereal, crackers, and canned goods to anyone who needs food.

The next food distribution will be January 10, 2026.

### Healing service at Fincastle Presbyterian

Fincastle Presbyterian Church will

host a Wholeness and Healing service on Wednesday, Dec. 17. All are invited. This is a short prayer service of quiet, music, and prayer followed by a time of fellowship with a light supper. Meet in the Fellowship Hall at 5 p.m., 108 E. Back Street in Fincastle.

### FUMC Clothes Closet open Saturday

Fincastle United Methodist's Clothes Closet will be open on Saturday, Dec. 20, from 10 a.m.-1 p.m., in the Family Life Center, 137 S. Church Street. Donations of gently worn, clean clothing and shoes also will be accepted.

### Cloverdale Thrift Store Bag Sale

The Bag Sale is back! On the first three Saturdays in December, fill a bag with clothes and shoes for \$5. Christmas items are priced separately. Gently used donations are welcome. The store is open Saturdays, 9 to 12.

## Craft, Ernest Wayne

Ernest "Wayne" Craft, 82, of Troutville, passed away peacefully at his home on Tuesday, December 9, 2025.

His life was in Botetourt County with wife, Darlene C. Craft.

The family will receive family and friends on Friday, December 19, 2025, at Oakey's North Chapel from 1 to 2 p.m. to celebrate his

life. The family will hold a graveside service at Blue Ridge Memorial Gardens following visitation. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that you make a donation to your favorite charity.

Condolences may be shared by visiting [www.Oakeys.com](http://www.Oakeys.com). Arrangements are by Oakey's North Chapel, (540) 362-1237.

Share Church news today!  
[fincastle@ourvalley.org](mailto:fincastle@ourvalley.org)

## Council from page 2

failures have cost tens of thousands of dollars.

No members of the public spoke in opposition to the proposal during the hearing. Town Planner Scott Critzer, however, voiced support—encouraging the town to stay on schedule with rate reviews. Council then voted 7-0 to adopt the increase and the necessary ordinance.

In her monthly report, McFadyen announced that a well-pump replacement was completed at a lower-than-expected cost. The pump and installation totaled about \$8,900. A planned hazard mitigation presentation, originally scheduled for December, has been postponed to January due to questions still being addressed by the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission.

McFadyen also highlighted recent holiday events. She praised the town's Christmas parade, calling it "excellent," and commended volunteers and local partners for help with the seasonal Tinsel

Trail decorations, which she said looked "beautiful" throughout town, especially after the recent snowfall.

Residents are encouraged to attend the January 8 council meeting, where County Capital Projects Manager Rich Evans is scheduled to provide a public update on courthouse construction, including renderings of the new retaining wall designs and signage.

A rumor has recently circulated in Fincastle claiming that a parking garage is being built at the renovated Circuit Courthouse site. When asked about it, Evans stated that the claim is "absolutely false," explaining, "There is going to be a large parking lot along 220 and a small one on Back Street."

For updates on the courthouse project—including design images and answers to frequently asked questions—visit the county website at [www.botetourtva.gov/707/Circuit-Courthouse-in-Fincastle](http://www.botetourtva.gov/707/Circuit-Courthouse-in-Fincastle).

## BPP from page 2

### Virginia

The first major battle of the Revolution in Virginia was fought Dec. 9 at the Great Bridge over the Elizabeth River, a critical point through the Dismal Swamp for land access to Norfolk. The British forces, composed of Regular British Army troops, Loyalist Militia and the recently formed Ethiopian Brigade of slaves, attacked the entrenched Patriot force of 900 commanded by Colonel William Woodford on the south side of the bridge. The British suffered an estimated 80 casualties before withdrawing. Only one Patriot casualty was recorded. William "Billy" Flora, a free black man, was the advanced Colonial sentry and was cited for his bravery in standing his ground and repeatedly loading and firing, which alerted the Virginians to the assault.

Colonel Woodford occupied Norfolk on Dec. 14, driving the British into ships in the harbor.

The Fourth Virginia Convention met in Richmond on Dec. 1, adjourning to

Williamsburg on Dec. 5. Edmund Pendleton, president of the Committee of Safety, was elected president of the Convention, thus becoming the de facto equivalent of both Governor and Speaker of the House today. The Fourth Convention focused on the defense of the colony, forming seven additional regiments and began formation of a Virginia Navy. The Fourth Convention also passed a resolution making English common law prior to 1607 the basis of Virginia law.

The trial was to take place the second Tuesday of December 1775 in Williamsburg. John Neely, David Chadwell, Robert Perryman and William Mann were called to appear and testify at that trial and were ordered to post 200 pounds bail to the King which would be returned after they appeared in Williamsburg to testify in this case.

Unfortunately, I could not find records from the meeting of the General Court in Williamsburg on this case.

- Submitted by Ed Holt, for the Botetourt Preservation Partnership

### Botetourt

As mentioned in an earlier article, there is a dearth of court records in December 1775, as the court met three times in November.

One item of note from the county court's meeting of Nov. 27, with George Skillern, Richard May and Andrew Woods presiding, was referral of the case of David Halley, Jr. to the General Court in Williamsburg for trial on charges of breaking and entering the home of William Mason and theft of property therefrom.

## Botetourt Funeral Home 1x3

**Congratulations to Karen Kessler from Gentiva Hospice,**  
Oakey's October 2025, Hospice Caregivers Award winner.  
Thank you, Karen for all you do. To nominate a special hospice caregiver, visit [oakeys.com/hospice-caregiver-award](http://oakeys.com/hospice-caregiver-award).

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From left: Jeff Wright, Manager, North Chapel | Wanda Boblett, Hospice Caregivers Coordinator | Karen Kessler | Joshua Dama, Oakey's General Manager

**Join us for a Christmas Day Service!**  
*For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a child who is Christ the Lord*  
**Service at 11am**  
**ALL ARE WELCOME!!**

**PLEASANT DALE CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN**  
3732 Breckinridge Mill Rd,  
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# Knights at the hockey game

Sink's Septic treated members of the James River football, girls' basketball and cheerleading team to a night of hockey at the Berglund Center Saturday night as the Roanoke Rail Yard Dawgs hosted Macon. Here, Dawgs' mascot Daisy poses for a group shot with River cheerleaders. The only downside of the night was a 3-1 win by Macon. Sitting in front is Khloe Peters.

Front row, left to right are Danikka Seaman, Harleigh Masters, Paisley Kitt, Kaylee Gill, Hadleigh Breeden, Reagan Peterson, Bri Huthwaite and Caroline Church. Back row, left to right; Coach Rebecca Yandrick, Coach Katie Kitt, Adeline Hanna, Mascot Daisy, Coach Abby Austin, Caitlyn Downey, Andi Kreklow, Amiah Sandidge, Ryleigh Scott and Bri Lowe.

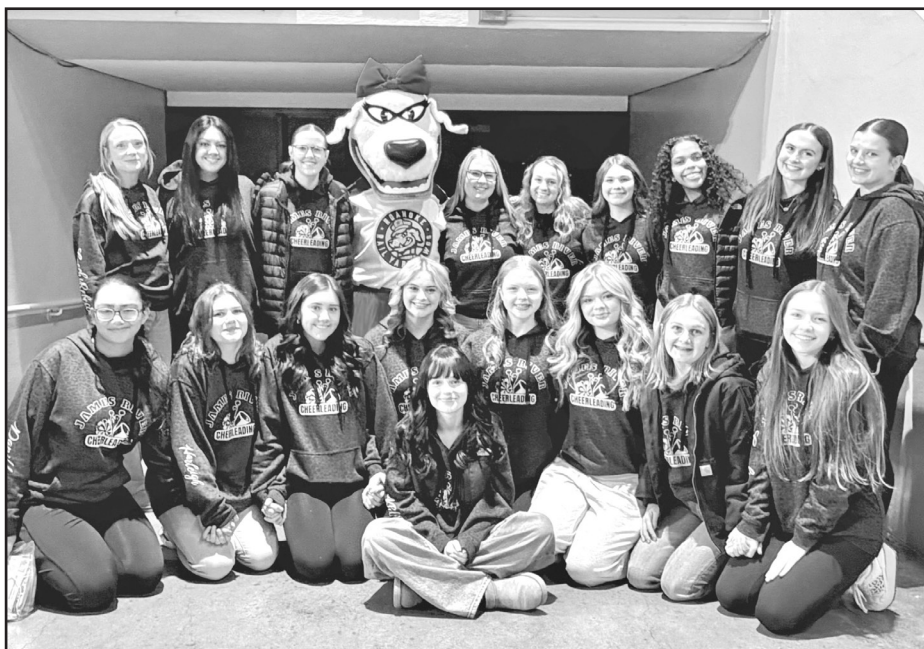


PHOTO COURTESY ROANOKE RAILYARD DAWGS

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## BCPS from page 1



James River All-State golfer Mason Gilliland and Buchanan School Board representative Jenny Wilson



Lord Botetourt Cross Country coach Noel Preece (left) and BCPS School Board Chair Anna Weddle (right) with 2025 VHSL Class 3 Cross Country State Champion Ethan Thorne (center, left photo), and Lord Botetourt All-State in 2025 VHSL Class 3 Cross Country team member Eric Duncan.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF BCPS

Month Sally Bailey, an instructional assistant at Troutville Elementary School, was honored for her dedication and impact on students and staff. Reading from one of Bailey's nominations, Womack said, "(Bailey) is a phenomenal employee. She wears so many hats and is practically like another teacher in our classrooms. On top of that, the students love her—going with Mrs. Bailey feels like a reward for them. She has a great attitude and is so knowledgeable all subjects and content area. Our school couldn't run without her."

School, was also named a November Employee of the Month. Womack noted Rogers' leadership roles and contributions, saying, "Rogers serves as seventh grade department lead as well as history department chair. She planned, organized, and emceed a wonderful Veterans Day assembly at Read Mountain this year."

a commitment to preparing students with essential economic and financial literacy skills. Several student athletes from Botetourt County high schools were acknowledged for their accomplishments at the state level. From Lord Botetourt High School, Ethan Thorne was recognized as the 2025 VHSL Class 3 Cross Country State Champion and Eric Duncan was named All-State in 2025 VHSL Class 3 Cross Country. Alisa Davidova, a junior at Lord Botetourt High School, was recognized as All-State in 2025 VHSL Class 3 Golf and noted as being

committed to the University of Missouri. From James River High School, Mason Gilliland, a junior, was recognized as All-State and a member of the 2025 VHSL First Team 2A Golf. The board also recognized Blue Ridge District School Board representative Matt East, who was awarded a certificate of recognition for his participation in the Virginia School Boards Association Delegate Assembly. The annual assembly brings together school board delegates from across the Commonwealth to discuss key issues, elect VSBA officers, amend bylaws, and establish legislative



PHOTOS COURTESY OF BCPS  
BCPS Assistant Superintendent Jordan Pinkard and School Board member Matt East, who was recognized his participation in the Virginia School Boards Association Delegate Assembly.

priorities for the upcoming year. Womack shared, "We (BCPS) extend our sincere gratitude to Mr. East's for his dedication and service to education in Botetourt County for our students through his role as delegate with the VSBA Delegate Assembly."

## Chamber from page 1

the rural character that residents value. "I think that'll be one of the things that I will work to understand first and foremost, which is really understanding what's unique about Botetourt, what the community wants to retain, about its character, how it sees itself in the future, and then balancing that with, okay, growth is here and it's coming, but how can that growth be managed?" Sobieski said. "Every step of the way, you need to consider what you're evolving to... I've lived in other areas where growth seemed to be, at least it seemed to be unmanaged. And you do, you lose the character of why people were attracted there in the first place. So, I absolutely believe there's the way to balance that."

a way to create more collaboration, which would attract many more customers, I think." Sobieski said she was drawn to the job in part because she remembered the challenges of being a new business owner seeking support. "We immediately joined the Chamber and we were looking for more access to, you know, help understanding the business community. And we struggled, really, to get that help," she said. She later saw changes within the Chamber that aligned with what she had once hoped to find. "When I saw the changes in the Chamber and the new leadership and what they were trying to do, I said, boy, that's what we needed in 2018... in a growing county like Botetourt with all the new businesses coming in, you really have to run it more professionally and you have to have management in place that knows how to really be responsive to the members as well as really accountable." The Chamber's emphasis on partnership also appealed to her. "I thought, boy, that combination really could be powerfully powerful and impactful in the ways that I was looking for when we first got here," she said, adding later, "And then, of course, I thought I could help."

As she begins her tenure, Sobieski said she plans to spend significant time listening to businesses of all sizes. "I think I have a lot of listening ahead of me in this initial period so that I can be truly sensitized to what the members see as priorities," she said. Larger employers, she noted, may focus on workforce needs, while small businesses often have more varied challenges. "The last thing we want to do is just, you know, bring them in and talk to them and not fully understand what's going to make the difference for them," she said. "How do we create help them, enable them to create partnerships with people who could really benefit expand their business... I need some more input to make sure we dial it and focus on the right things to have an impact quickly." Board President William Nelms said the Chamber is confident in her ability to guide the organization forward, calling her "the right leader for our members and the broader business community." Sobieski, for her part, said she is honored to step into the role and looks forward to working closely with the county's business community to support growth and opportunity across Botetourt County.

### Stockyard Report

**Monday's sale at the Roanoke-Hollins Stockyard:**  
**226 Head**  
 Hogs per lb \$87.00  
 Sheep \$276.00-\$360.00  
 Goats \$265.00  
 Bottle Calves \$680.00-\$890.00

**Graded Steers**  
 400-499 \$420.00  
 500-599 \$393.00  
 600-699 \$360.00  
 700-799 \$316.50-\$324.00

**Graded Bulls**  
 300-399 \$460.00  
 400-499 \$400.00-\$416.00  
 500-599 \$303.00-\$360.00

**Graded Heifers**  
 300-399 \$339.00  
 400-499 \$344.00-\$366.00  
 500-599 \$321.00-\$332.00  
 600-699 \$311.00

**Kill Cows**  
 \$43.00-\$168.00

## Grinch from page 3

Christmas remains fully intact. We appreciate the community's cooperation and hope everyone enjoys a safe and festive Christmas season."

The playful pursuit drew plenty of laughter

### NOTICE - HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

Botetourt County governmental offices and libraries will close at noon on Wednesday, Dec. 24 and be closed Thursday and Friday, Dec. 25-26.

They also will be closed on Thursday, Jan. 1 in observance of New Year's.

The Botetourt County Landfill will close at noon on Wednesday, Dec. 24, and Friday, Dec. 26., and will be closed Thursday, Dec. 25, and Thursday, Jan. 1

and cheers from parade-goers of all ages and served as a reminder that BCSO deputies are always on duty—even when protecting Christmas cheer.

From our families to yours, the Botetourt

### CROSSWORD ANSWERS

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County Sheriff's Office wishes everyone a Merry Christmas and a joyful holiday season.

- Fincastle Herald staff report

From all of us at The Fincastle Herald, thank you for making 2025 such a memorable year. Your readership, support, and community spirit continue to inspire our newsroom and remind us why local journalism matters.

As we close out the year, our next two editions will take a special look back at 2025—revisiting the stories, milestones, and moments that shaped our community. We look forward to reflecting together and celebrating another remarkable year with you.

Happy Holidays!

## BOTETOURT

## Sports

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# Cavaliers are in Basketball Invitational at Hidden Valley

The Lord Botetourt boys will be playing in the four-team Titan Basketball Invitational at Hidden Valley High School this weekend.

LB will play Abingdon Friday at 5:30 p.m. preceding a 7 p.m. game between host Hidden Valley and Bassett. The winners will play at 4 p.m. Saturday following a 2 p.m. consolation game. There will also be a J.V. bracket.

Botetourt played in the Alleghany Cougar Classic this past weekend against Rocktown from Harrisonburg and Parry McCluer. The Cavaliers lost to Rocktown, 77-66,

on Friday night. LB trailed by one point, 35-34, at the half before losing the third quarter with turnovers proving to be the downfall.

"On nights when we are shooting the ball well, we need to make sure we get as many opportunities at our basket as we can," said LB coach Josh Aliveto. "I liked how hard the kids played, and we improved in some areas."

Landon Hayes led the way with 24 points, with 15 of those coming from behind the arc.

On Saturday the Cavs picked up their first win of the

season with a 74-68 victory over Parry McCluer.

"We played our most complete game of the year thus far," said Aliveto. "We had a lot of different players contribute to give us a good team win."

Jairdan Pennix had 24 points to go along with 10 rebounds. Hayes chipped in with 16 points and Landon Gray scored 14 points with eight rebounds. Hayes was selected to the All-Tournament Team.

Botetourt was scheduled to play Salem at home on Tuesday but results were too late for publication.



Audrey Benson goes to the hoop for the Knights.

## James River girls hosting Holiday Classic this weekend

The balls will be bouncing in Springwood this weekend when the James River girls host the third annual Knights Winter Classic. The tournament for girls includes varsity and jayvee brackets and will be a three-day affair, with games on Friday, Saturday and Monday.

Action begins Friday at 2:30 p.m. with Western Albemarle taking on Jefferson Forest. Staunton River and Alleghany are next at 4:30 p.m., followed by Carlisle against Christiansburg at 6:30 p.m. and the host Knights against Brookville to wrap up a big day at 8 p.m.

Losers' bracket games will be at noon and 2 p.m. Saturday followed by winners' bracket games at 4 and 6 p.m. On Monday the championship is at 7:30 p.m. following a third place game at 4 p.m. There will also be seventh and fifth place games at noon and 2 p.m., and the jayvees have a seven-team tournament with River, Brookville, Alleghany, Jefferson Forest, Western Albemarle, Christiansburg and Staunton River junior varsity teams. The jayvee tournament will be held on the same days in the auxiliary gym at James River High.

Admission is \$10 and it will be good for all games on a given day. Varsity and jayvee championship teams will receive a trophy and a 10-girl all-tournament team will be announced.

The Knights are undefeated after three games. They won back-to-back games on Wednesday and Thursday of last week, beginning with a 48-39 win over Rockbridge in Springwood. The Knights had balanced scoring with 10 points from Jalen Thompson, Audrey Benson with nine, Siera Davis and Kelsi Maydian with seven each, and Keira Crawford and Samaya



Kelsi Maydian brings the ball up the court for River.



Keira Crawford is in a hurry against Rockbridge last week.

Osborne with half a dozen each. Benson had four assists and Osborne had nine rebounds.

"It was a close game until the fourth quarter," said River coach Donald Eggleston. "We stepped up defensively, which led to easy offensive scoring."

A night later the girls made up a previous postponed game at Northside and pulled out a 45-44 win. River trailed 34-31 after three quarters but Benson scored 11 of her 16

points in the fourth period to pace the win. Thompson also had 16, Davis had seven points and Crawford had five. Thompson and Osborne led the team in rebounding with eight and seven.

The girls were scheduled to play at Parry McCluer Tuesday of this week but results were too late for publication. After this weekend's tournament they're off for Christmas next week, returning Dec. 30 to host Cave Spring.

## Lord Botetourt is site of girls' wrestling tournament

Lord Botetourt High School will host the all-girls "Feats of Strength" wrestling tournament next Tuesday, Dec. 23. The tournament will begin at 9 a.m. in the main gym at Lord Botetourt High with doors opening to spectators at 8 a.m.

"With the growing popularity of girls wrestling, Lord Botetourt will be the first school to host a girls' VHSL-sanctioned tournament in the Roanoke Valley," said LB coach Paul Craft. "Offering a girls' tournament will help advance the sport of girls' wrestling along with showing the public how far the skill level has developed."

This is Lord Botetourt's first hosted tournament event in nearly 20 years. The tournament was capped at 80 girls.

"It is our hope to expand the tournament next year and have both a boys' division and girls' division at the



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF LB WRESTLING

same time," said Craft.

There are 16 schools anticipated to participate from the Roanoke Valley, Southwest Virginia, West Virginia, the Shenandoah Valley and Northern Virginia. The top four girls in each of the 12 weight classes will be medalists.

## LB welcomes LCA and Bassett in wrestling tonight

The Lord Botetourt wrestlers are scheduled to host Liberty Christian Academy and Bassett High tonight at 5:45 in Daleville. The Cavaliers have a busy week before breaking for Christmas with wrestlers scheduled to travel to tournaments at Turner Ashby Friday and Saturday and Radford on Saturday.

Last weekend the Cavaliers' A Team was in Lewisburg, W.Va., and the B team was at Cave Spring. Botetourt's "Red Team," or starters, wrestled at the Morse Reece Memorial Duals Tournament at Greenbrier East in Lewisburg on Saturday. LB defeated several top ranked teams out of West Virginia before falling to powerhouse Independence in a close second place.

"We wrestled really well in West Virginia," said Botetourt coach Paul Craft. "It gave us a good look at some quality teams from a new area

we haven't previously wrestled."

Botetourt was the underdog in their first match but defeated Woodrow Wilson, 41-40. Woodrow Wilson was region champion last year and has traditionally been a strong program.

"I thought we turned a corner on Saturday and showed we're capable of competing with anyone," said Craft.

The Cavaliers then defeated St. Albans, Elkins and Greenbrier East to get into the finals before falling to Independence in the championship match.

"The Independence match was close and I think it goes our way if that match was wrestled in January with our final starting lineup," said Craft. "We're still waiting on some football guys to get back."

Jackson Dean, a freshman at 120 pounds, had some quality wins over region champions and state placers. His brother James Dean

(senior, 126 pounds) won a huge come from behind match against Independence. Morgan Parr (senior, 150 pounds) went 5-0 on the day and bumped up a weight class to get a victory over a very good wrestler from Elkins.

"Overall we wrestled well up and down the lineup," said Craft.

Here in the valley the Lord Botetourt "Gray Team" wrestled in the Knights of the Round Table duals tournament. LB finished in eighth place out of a dozen teams.

"This was a great opportunity for our young guys and first year wrestlers to get some mat time," said Craft. "We're right on schedule to progress over the season."

James River wrestlers are scheduled to compete in the Bobby Bates Classic at UVA-Wise this Friday and Saturday. As of the start of this season, River had just four spots of the lineup filled.

## River, LB swimmers will break for holidays after Tuesday meets

The James River and Lord Botetourt swimmers were scheduled to be in the pool Tuesday before taking a break for Christmas. The Cavs were slated to be at the Botetourt YMCA and the Knights were at Hargrave to swim against Martinsville.

Tuesday's meet will be the first in two weeks for Lord Botetourt but the James River swimmers have been busy. Last Wednesday the River girls defeated Alleghany, 58-41, Northside, 65-27, and William Fleming, 68-0. The Knight boys defeated Alleghany, 58-26, Northside, 56-32, and William Fleming, 57-11. Joel Barber added a state cut time in the 200 IM.

Last Thursday at their home meet

the girls defeated Carroll, 268-63, and Giles, 259-202. The boys lost to Carroll, 461-213, but defeated Giles, 226-202. Barber made another state cut time in the 100 freestyle.

On Friday night in Wytheville the girls narrowly lost to Glenvar, 8579, but beat George Wythe, Patrick Henry Glade Springs and Rural Retreat. The boys were also defeated by Glenvar, 113-34, but defeated George Wythe and Patrick Henry. Riley Persinger made her first state cut in the 100 backstroke.

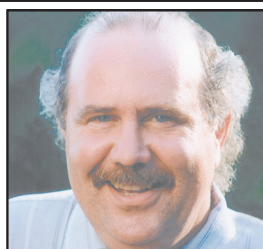
"We are looking forward to continuing to drop time and to work toward more state cuts," said River coach Kit Williams.

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# BOTETOURT Sports

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**Brian Hoffman**

Sports Editor

## Knights named to All-District, All-Region volleyball



PHOTOS BY REGINA DEVINNEY

Ayden Jennings (left) and Ashby Wilkes of the James River volleyball team were recently named to the All-Three Rivers District first team, and Wilkes was also named second team on the All-Region 2C team. Sydnee Breeding was a second team selection on the All-3RD team.



PHOTO BY REGINA DEVINNEY

## Clark is second team All-State

Gracelynn Clark, a senior on the Lord Botetourt volleyball team, was recently named to the Class 3 All-State team. Christiansburg dominated the team with three girls on the first team and one on the second. Ela Shepherd of the Blue Demons was Player of the Year and Christiansburg's Morgan Taylor was named Coach of the Year.

## LB girls' basketball team off to good start of three-game week

The Lord Botetourt girls opened a three-game week with a 57-32 basketball win over Eastern Montgomery Monday, evening their record at 2-2 for the season.

Botetourt will have a busy schedule prior to Christmas. The Cavaliers were scheduled to play at Salem on Tuesday, and that was expected to be a challenge. The Spartans were the Class 4 state runners-up last year and return four of five starters from that team.

On Saturday LB is at Greenbrier East, followed by a home game against Blacksburg next Monday, Dec. 22. They'll take a break for Christmas before returning to the court Dec. 30 for a home game against Abingdon.

On Monday in Daleville all nine Cavaliers scored against East Mont. Maggie Hoover led the way with 17 points and Addison Naff had 10.

Botetourt split two games last week. On Wednesday they hammered Blacksburg, 78-29, on the road. Hoover had a dream night for fantasy basketball leagues with 28 points, 10 rebounds, seven steals and six assists. Natalee Bowling added 14 points, seven boards and four assists and freshman Jady Deaner scored 10 points.

The girls played Turner Ashby on Friday and dropped a 35-29 decision to a strong Knights team. LB was down 21-8 at the half but battled back to make it a close game.

"They are a veteran team with two college signees," said LB coach Renee Favaro. "We just need to find a way to put together four quarters, especially against these experienced teams. We are going to continue to face strong and senior-laden teams in our non-district schedule. Although the result is not what we want, the fight is there and we are learning a lot about ourselves playing in these type of games."



Lord Botetourt's Jady Deaner shoots from the three-point line against Blacksburg. Deaner scored 13 points on the night for the Cavaliers.



Natalee Bowling contributed 14 points in a 78-29 win over Blacksburg.

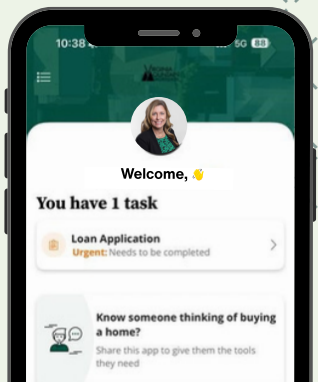


Lord Botetourt's Layla McGavock drives toward the basket against Blacksburg.

PHOTOS BY JON FLEMING

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## James River boys' basketball will stay busy prior to Christmas

The James River boys were snowed out of a couple basketball games last week but, before the holidays set in, River was scheduled to host Bath County on Tuesday of this week, followed by a trip to Craig County this Friday. Next week the Knights are at Faith Christian on Monday and at Parry McCluer on Tuesday before taking a short Christmas break. They're scheduled to play in a tournament at Riverheads on December 29 and 30.

Prior to this week the Knights had played just one game, a win over Riverheads.



River's Maddox Pichay

FILE PHOTO