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THE NEW CASTLE RECORD



WE SELL LIVESTOCK FEED

5th Annual Church Community Chili Cook-Off deemed a success



COURTESY PHOTO

The winners of the 5th Annual Chili cook-off were elated. Andrew Durfee, of Saint John's Catholic, took home the third-place trophy. The second-place trophy went to Harper McKinley, of Craig Valley Baptist. The grand champion was Randy Stanley, of Grace Baptist.

Pam Dudding
Contributing writer

Many say that homemade chili creates a great atmosphere of fellowship and good food. This year, the Fifth Annual Church Community Chili Cook-off was hosted by Grace

Baptist Church. The previous four were held at Craig Valley Baptist Church, but they changed locations as they needed more space. All churches in Craig County were invited to enter as many chilis as they liked, and five churches took the plunge

and the judging commenced among 14 different chili recipes. This year the attendance multiplied, with almost 90 people attending the evening. There were free hotdogs and drinks for anyone who wished to eat.

Everyone was a judge. When participants came in, they were given ballots which were dropped in a cup where the chili they liked best was. Many people went back for a second try between their favorite two and three selections. There was homemade cornbread and desserts to enjoy as well. All shared that this was the toughest chili cook-off yet to judge as they were all so delicious. Some shared that they were just

wanting to get a little extra chili eating in, so they used that excuse, laughing. In all the votes, only three votes separated the top three chilis.

Andrew Durfee, of Saint John's Catholic, took home the third-place trophy. The second-place trophy went to Harper McKinley, of Craig Valley Baptist. The grand champion was Randy Stanley, of Grace Baptist. Rich Martindell, who has been one of the organizers since 2019, said that he was glad Grace Baptist Church offered to host the event this year. He added, "The Grace Baptist members were very gracious and helpful hosting the event."

See Chili, page 2

McCleary celebrates Dr. Seuss Day



COURTESY PHOTO

Little Cindy Lou Who (Hunter Moore) showed up at McCleary Elementary School's Dr. Seuss Day, looking as cute as ever as she joined many of her classmates in having a super Seuss day.

Derby drivers go out of town for demolitions



PHOTO COURTESY OF METAL CARNAGE TV

The derby drivers in Craig County get an itching for more than just a few demolitions in Craig, so a few went out of town for a fun weekend of crashing and smashing. Baby Grant Oliver enjoyed his night, proving that it's hard to keep a good man down, especially when he's determined to win. More derby coverage can be found in an upcoming issue of The New Castle Record.



CCHS Varsity Football
Spring Fling
Saturday April 1st
9 AM - 3 PM
CRAIG COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL
Craft & Vendor Show
FREE CRAFTS for Kids
Raffles - one FREE ticket per person. Additional tickets available for purchase!
Concessions
Vendor fees and raffle/concession proceeds go to the CCHS Football Team! Go Rockets!

COURTESY PHOTO

The Craig County Rockets football team is hosting a craft and vendor show on April 1 and encouraging community members to sign up and bring their goods to sell and to help the team raise funds for their upcoming season.

CCHS Varsity Football Spring Fling set for April 1

Pam Dudding
Contributing writer

Spring is definitely in the air with the warm weather days appearing so early and the Craig County High School football team is blooming with ideas to help fund its sports needs.

On April 1, the team will be hosting the CCHS Varsity Football Spring Fling at the high school. Crafters and vendors are invited to register for an eventful day, from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m.

Coach Jayke Dowdy shared that they have been working on this idea for a while and it seems to be coming together, just like a good football play does.

They will also have Easter-themed crafts for the younger kids, including pin the tail on the Easter bunny. Candy and small prizes will be

given to the kids. A fun photo booth will be available to take pictures in, which will have a backdrop and props. They have planned to have a "temporary" tattoo station as well.

Crafters and vendors interested in this event, can sign up on their Facebook page: Craig County Rockets Football. Upon sign up, they will be contacted with specific information about the reserved space.

The team is asking that each vendor and crafter donate one item to the team for their raffle.

People coming in will be given a ticket and they can place it in the container of the drawing of their choice from the ones donated. Extra raffle tickets will be available for purchase also.

The raffles will be drawn

See Spring Fling, page 2

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Spring Fling from page 1

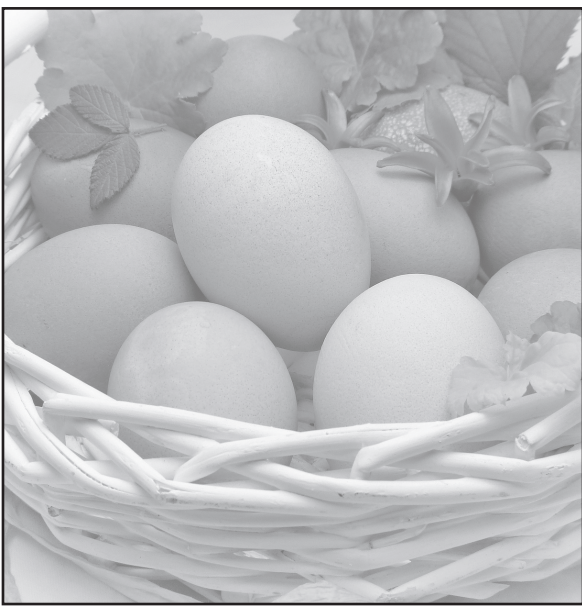


PHOTO BY PIXABAY

at the end of the day.

The football team will have concessions there as well, so those interested can bring their whole family to shop, the kids can play games and do crafts and the parents can enjoy a meal while supporting the local Rocket football team.

Booth fees are \$40 for a 10-by-10 space.

If those interested cannot go online to sign up, they are welcome to contact the school.

Currently 30 crafters and vendors have signed up. "And we are adding more every day!" Coach Dowdy said.

"We truly appreciate our local crafters and vendors as we try to raise funds for our CCHS Varsity Football Program," Dowdy shared. "We hope to have a great day for our community to enjoy as well as have a great fundraiser for our team."

Nelson Harris book talk and signing set for this Thursday



Harris COURTESY PHOTO

SALEM—The 1940s were tumultuous and life-changing, full of joys and sorrows, uncertainty and hope. Noted local historian Nelson Harris has collected stories

of events from this fascinating decade in his most recent book, "The Roanoke Valley in the 1940s."

On Thursday, March 9 at 7 p.m., Harris will give

a book talk as part of the Salem Museum's Speaker Series. Sign copies of his books will be available for purchase. The event is in-person at the Salem Museum and will also be on Zoom. The link will be posted on the museum's website, salemmuseum.org, on the morning of the talk.

In a six-year effort, Harris has meticulously documented the history of the Roanoke Valley from 1940-1949. By searching every edition of "The Roanoke Times" between Jan. 1, 1940 and January 1, 1950, Harris gleaned all things noteworthy for the decade—in sports, business, religion, entertainment, civil rights, politics, municipal projects, disasters, crime and medicine—plus an assortment of the odd and unusual.

The 650-page book

is thoroughly indexed and enhanced with 300 archival photographs from the collections of local museums, colleges, municipalities, organizations and individuals. Proceeds from the sale of the book will benefit the Salem Museum.

Harris is a native and former mayor of Roanoke. He has been the pastor of Heights Community Church since 1999 and is an adjunct faculty member at Virginia Western Community College. He holds degrees from Radford University and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is a past president of the Historical Society of Western Virginia and is the author of twelve books, including "Downtown Roanoke," "Roanoke Valley: Then and Now," "A History of Back Creek," "Aviation in Roanoke," and "Hidden History of Roanoke."

-The New Castle Record

Chili from page 1



Almost 100 community members attended the Fifth Annual Church Community Chili Cook-off and enjoyed the feast, fellowship and music.

Their fellowship hall and kitchen are large, and they couldn't have done a better job as hosts."

"The competition was tight, and no chili was more than 10 votes behind the winner," Martindell shared. "Organizers, cooks, and tasters came together in an atmosphere of fun, competition and camaraderie. Long tables were covered with mountains of corn bread, deserts and all of the accrements needed to accompany the various chilis."

The championship trophy will be engraved with the winning cook's information and presented at Grace

Baptist Church's Sunday service. There it will remain until next year's Church Community Chili Cook-Off when again, all churches in the Craig County/New Castle area are invited to participate.

There was also uplifting musical entertainment provided by Mike King, Rev. Randy Spencer and Rick and Joe Francisco.

"I had a great time picking at the chili cook-off," Rick Francisco said. "I didn't win but it was so much fun! Thanks to all who participated and to those who just came to eat some good chili."



COURTESY PHOTOS

This year, with more room to maneuver, Mike King, Rev. Randy Spencer and Rick and Joe Francisco got out the instruments and played music for the crowd. Some tapped their feet, some sang while others moved a bit in their seats, enjoying the great comradery and atmosphere that seemed to bring joy and peace.

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Carport Solicitation

Monroe Health Center is seeking to obtain sealed bids for the carports located at Forest Hill, Peterstown, and Craig County clinic locations. Your bid should include each carport that you wish to bid on. Each carport is made with 14 gauge metal, and measure 16'x20' with 10' legs. They each have one 36"x80" side door, one closed end, one open end, and four 24"x36" windows. Within each carport is an office that has insulation, wiring, framing and plywood that has been screwed together and is to be included in your bid. Monroe Health Center will remove electricity prior to removal. There is no reserve on any of the carports.

Bids must include the following:

1. The following should be enclosed within a sealed envelope.
2. Your name, address and phone number.
3. Your maximum bid for each carport you wish to bid on. Please list a US dollar amount and location of the carport you are bidding on.
4. Bids should be submitted to the following address:
Monroe Health Center
Attn: Carport Sealed Bid
PO Box 590, Union, WV 24983

Failure to include the required information listed above will disqualify bids. Successful bidder will be expected to pay by cash or certified check. Bids will be opened in public on March 31st, 2023 at the Union location in the large conference room at 2:00pm. Carports will go to the highest bidder. Bids must be received by March 31st, 2023, or may be presented by 2:00pm if attending in person. Successful bidders will be notified and it will be expected that all carports will be removed by June 1st, 2023. Bidder should have their own insurance, and will be expected to work on removal at times when the clinic is closed. Buildings must be removed entirely, and all screws and materials must be cleaned up leaving no opportunity for punctured tires or trip hazards. Steel rods have been driven into the pavement and must be removed or ground off even with the pavement. A \$500 deposit will also be submitted by the successful bidder and will be credited back to the bidder once the site is certified to have been cleared of all materials. To conduct a site visit and inspect a carport, please contact the office manager at any of the respective locations to schedule a visit. For any farther clarification, please contact Jim Nelson, CEO Monroe Health Center at 304-772-3064.

V DOT ROADWATCH

INTERSTATE 81

INTERSTATE 81 LANE WIDENING CONSTRUCTION PROJECT EXIT 137 TO EXIT 141 – A \$179 million design-build project to widen both directions of I-81 between mile markers 136.6 and 141.8 from two to three lanes is set to begin. Starting in February and continuing into the early summer, work will be performed on the inside and outside shoulders along a five mile section of both northbound and southbound Interstate 81 in Roanoke County and the city of Salem. The shoulders will be built up before barrier wall can be installed for road crews to work behind. Barrier wall will be installed along the shoulders in the spring and summer. Two lanes of I-81 traffic in each direction will remain open during the project with periodic lane closures scheduled during nighttime hours or outside of peak travel times as needed. Drivers can expect the following lane closures and upcoming impacts on northbound and southbound I-81:

TRAFFIC SHIFT ON WILDWOOD ROAD: Expect a traffic shift with narrow width on Wildwood road after exiting I-81 southbound heading towards Salem. Southbound and northbound I-81 exit and entrance ramp narrows possible at Route 311.

WORK ZONE SPEED: With narrow spacing in lanes due to barrier walls, lack of shoulders and lane shifts in various locations, drivers should adhere to posted 60 mph speed limits in the work zone and allow space when following a vehicle.

RAMP CLOSURES: Ramp closures are possible during nighttime hours, 12 a.m., to 5 a.m. Drivers should watch for message boards dates and times the ramp will be closed.

LANE CLOSURES: Alternating left and right lane and shoulder closures during nighttime hours between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m., Sunday through Thursday, are possible. Lane widths will be reduced to 11 feet.

Northbound lane closures from I-81 mile marker 136 to 141.

Southbound Lane closures from I-81 mile marker 141 to 136.

Nightly lane closures may be in place along the

right lane with possible nightly ramp narrows as needed for guardrail and shoulder strengthening.

Northbound I-81 lane closures from mile marker 138 to 142

The project also includes replacing six bridges, widening two bridges, installing approximately 2.6 miles of sound barrier walls along northbound I-81, improving the southbound exit 137 off-ramp intersection at Wildwood Road and adding interchange lighting at exits 137, 140 and 141 are also included in the project. Expected completion in early 2026.

I-81 NORTHBOUND AT EXIT 105 NEW RIVER BRIDGE REPLACEMENT IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY – Traffic on northbound I-81 has been switched onto the newly constructed bridge over the New River at the Montgomery/Pulaski County line. The old bridge is being demolished. Lane and shoulder closures may be in place near exit 105. Lane closure may be in effect during the week from 8 p.m. to 7 a.m. Shoulder closures may be in effect at any time during the week. Slow rolls may be performed on I-81 in the north and southbound lanes from mile marker 98 to 109. Speed limit is reduced to 60 miles per hour in the work zone. Shoulder closures will remain in place though the duration of the project. Project completion is estimated by summer 2023.

SLOW ROLLS: A slow roll operation may be in place daily, Monday through Friday, between mile marker 101 and 105 northbound and between mile marker 109 and 105 southbound, between the hours of 9 a.m. and 3 p.m.

LANE CLOSURES: Nighttime alternating lane closures will be in place on I-81 northbound between mile markers 104-106 from 7 p.m. to 6 a.m. the following morning.

ROUTE 605: Alternating lane closures and flagging operations will be present on Route 605, located under the New River Bridge, for work overhead on the bridge.

SLOW ROLLS: Slow rolls may be utilized periodically on both the northbound and southbound lanes from mile marker 98-109 for structural steel deliveries and setting beams.

I-81 BRIDGE DECK

REPAIRS – Weather permitting, crews will repair bridge decks on Interstate 81. Between mile markers 170 to 95, right and left lane closures will be in place northbound and southbound during nighttime hours, 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. the following morning. Drivers should watch for signs and expect possible delays.

INTERSTATE 581

ROUTE 581 BRIDGE WORK OVER WILLIAMSON ROAD – Bridge work is underway on Route 11 (Williamson Road). Intermittent and alternating lane closures between the intersections with Rutherford Avenue and Wells Avenue are still possible. Intermittent daytime and nighttime lane closures between the intersections above may still be required utilizing flagging operations. Any impacts to I-581 will be minimal. Expected completion Spring 2023.

I-581/220 EXPRESSWAY PAVING OPERATIONS – Weather permitting, crews will pave, patch and repair pavement on various routes. Lane closures may be in place during nighttime hours, 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. the following morning. Drivers should watch for signs and expect possible delays.

I-581/220 LANE & RAMP CLOSURES FOR PAVING AND MAINTENANCE OPERATIONS IN ROANOKE COUNTY– Weather permitting, crews will be milling and paving along Interstate 81. Right and left lane closures will be in place along northbound and southbound lanes during nighttime hours. Drivers should expect possible delays.

ROANOKE CITY

13th STREET SE IMPROVEMENTS WITH DETOUR – A project to improve a portion of 13th Street SE in Roanoke is underway. Located in a residential neighborhood just east of downtown Roanoke, this project will improve traffic flow and connectivity along 13th Street SE from Tazewell Avenue to Norfolk Avenue. The project entails reconstructing about 0.2-mile of 13th Street as an improved, two-lane roadway with 10.5-foot-wide travel lane and a raised median.

A new roadway will extend 13th Street to Norfolk Avenue and the intersection at 13th Street and Wise Avenue will be reconfigured to include a roundabout. Bike lanes, sidewalks, crosswalks and curb and gutter will also be added. Southbound 13th Street traffic has a detour in place using Norfolk Avenue onto 12th Street to Tazewell Avenue. This detour will be in place throughout the duration of this project. Signs will be posted to designate the detour route. Northbound 13th Street will remain open to traffic. Flaggers may be possible and the speed limit through the work zone is 25 mph. Drivers should expect intermittent flagging operations on Wise Avenue when necessary. The project is expected to be completed in summer 2023.

TRAFFIC PATTERN CHANGE: Northbound traffic is switched to the northbound lane of 13th Street. Southbound traffic will still be detoured around the work zone.

ROANOKE COUNTY

STARKEY ROAD AND BUCK MOUNTAIN ROAD ROUNDABOUT – On Monday, March 13, a road project to construct a single-lane roundabout at the intersection of Route 904 (Starkey Road) and Route 679 (Buck Mountain Road) will begin. Drivers should be aware of a new three-way stop to be implemented in the work zone at the intersection. The new roundabout is expected to be open to traffic sometime this summer. Once the roundabout is open, drivers should still expect lane closures with flaggers controlling traffic for final paving, additional concrete pouring and pavement marking until the project is finished. Final completion expected in late spring 2024.

THREE WAY STOP: Stop signs will be in place on each road approaching the intersection. This means drivers on Buck Mountain Road who do not stop currently will be required to stop while the intersection is under construction.

FLAGGING OPERATIONS: Throughout the life of the project, flaggers may control traffic between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. daily so motorists should expect delays.

TRAFFIC SHIFTS: In addition, drivers should also be alert to traffic shifts and changing traffic patterns while the roundabout is under construction.

tain section of the Parkway will be in place. Traffic will be rerouted to Route 220 south to Route 419 north to Route 221 south. Traffic traveling north on the Parkway would be reversed. The detour is expected to be in place until 2023.

BOTETOURT COUNTY

ROUTE 43 CLOSURE DUE TO ROCKSLIDE – Route 43 in Eagle Rock is closed due to a rockslide located on Route 43 to left of bridge from Route 220 towards Clifton Forge. Route 43 is open heading towards the town of Eagle Rock and Buchanan. The area has been assessed and due to activity and upcoming weather impacts, the road will remain closed until next week. Work has been scheduled to begin on Monday, March 6, weather and activity pending.

DALEVILLE INTERSECTION PROJECT FOR FIELDSTONE DEVELOPMENT ACCESS – Lane closures northbound and southbound on Route 220 in Daleville will be in place for construction of a median with crossover, a right turn lane and a new traffic signal. This work is associated with construction of the Fieldstone Development. Lane closures will be set up on various days in early 2023.

ROUTE 11 BUCHANAN BRIDGE PROJECT – A construction project on the Route 11 Bridge in the Town of Buchanan is underway. Water Street is closed for the duration of the project and drivers should expect periodic lane closures with flagging operations to be in place during daytime hours. Message boards are present to alert and update drivers. Expected completion in summer 2023.

ROUTE 611 (GREYLEDGE ROAD) – A 1.5 mile section of Route 611 (Greylodge Road) is closed due to flooding that damaged the roadway. Extensive repairs will be needed and a detour will be in place. There is no estimated time for the road to reopen.

CARROLL COUNTY

ROUTE 645 CULVERT REPLACE- MENT – Partial removal and demolition of the existing culvert on Route 645 (Stone Mountain Road) is underway. The road will be closed for removal of existing culvert and installation of a new box culvert. A detour will be in place at the intersections of Route 645 and Route 618 and Route 645 and Route 638. Estimated completion is April 2023.

ROUTE 52 UTILITY WORK – APCO will be upgrading overhead power lines adjacent to Route 52

from the Town of Hillsville traveling northbound along Route 52. Shoulder and lane closures are possible.

CRAIG COUNTY

ROUTE 626 CLOSURE – On March 13 at 8 a.m., Route 626 (Bethel Church Road) will be closed to traffic for a bridge replacement with a concrete slab. The bridge is located between Route 624 Little Mountain Road) and Route 42 (Cumberland Gap Road). A detour will be in place. The bridge is scheduled to reopen by the end of the day on March 16, 2023.

ROUTE 311 BRIDGE REPLACEMENT OVER MEADOW CREEK – Temporary signals control traffic across the bridge and will be in place throughout the project. Construction will begin on the northbound side of the bridge and once completed, work will switch to the southbound side. In addition, a section of Route 646 (Allen Street) between Route 650 and Route 311 will be closed during construction and a signed detour will be in place. All traffic will be detoured to Marshall Street and Kanawha Street to access either 311 or the homes located off Allen Street. Speed limit will be reduced to 35 mph in the work zone with a width restriction of 9 feet. Drivers should expect delays and allow extra travel time through the work zone. Weather permitting, the bridge is expected to be open to traffic by the late spring 2023.

T R A F F I C SWITCH: Traffic is using the southbound lane to the northbound lane while work continues. Southbound lanes are closed. Temporary traffic signals will continue to direct traffic and message boards will notify drivers.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

ROUTE 8 PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS – On March 10, work will begin to construct pedestrian improvements on Route 8 in Riner. The work zone will begin at the intersection with Route 669 (Union Valley Road) and will end at the current site of the Atlantic Union Bank. Drivers should expect shoulder closures to be in place and flagging operations between the hours of 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. through the start of the project until May 24, end of the school year. Once the school year is complete, lane closures will expand in hours to 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Expected completion is summer 2023.

A single lane closure is planned for Wednesday, March 8 through Friday, March 10 between the hours of 9 a.m. and 3 p.m.

CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
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- CLUES ACROSS**
- European Common Market
 - Poetic go quickly
 - Parts per thousand (abbr.)
 - Pigeon pea
 - Sao __, city in Brazil
 - Longest division of geological time
 - __ Alto, California city
 - Small terrestrial viper
 - Coming after all others
 - Penetrate with a sharp fork
 - Still-hunt
 - Chinese frying pan
 - Cave-dwelling salamander
 - Any thick messy substance
 - About the moon
 - AKA Tao
 - Jet cabin requirement
 - Prince Hirobumi, 1841-1909
 - An easy return in a high arc
 - Italian commune
 - L. Comfort's illuminator
 - Foot digit
 - Minute tunicate genus
 - Green regions of desert
 - Direct a weapon
 - __ de Janeiro
 - Equestrian animals
 - Acress Tomei
 - Head of the RCC
 - Twines
 - Scientific workplace
 - Minerals
 - Hypothetical original substances
 - Hit with the open hand
 - Political action committee
 - Winged goddess of the dawn
 - W. states time zone
 - Electronic data processing
 - Man or boy (Br.)
 - W. African nation
 - Fault's incline from vertical
 - Method of birth control
 - City founded by Xenophanes
 - Legumes
 - Beckham's spice girl
 - Explosive
 - 1936 Nobel winner Otto
 - Greenbay teammate
 - Brass that looks like gold
 - School graduates
 - Lively, merry play
 - Make indistinct
 - Egyptian mythological figure associated with floods
 - Washing sponge
 - Old name for nitrogen
 - Impounds for lack of payment
 - Radiotelegraphic signal
 - MN 55731
 - Sun in spanish
 - Helps little firms
 - Cease living
 - Flames up
 - Egyptian sacred bull
 - To wit
 - Mire
 - Bring two objects together
 - Filths
 - Israeli dance
 - Oil cartel
 - A particular instance of selling
 - Microelectromechanical system
 - Var. of 45 across
 - Goat & camel hair fabrics
 - Soda
 - A firm's operational head
 - Seaport (abbr.)

Upcoming public meetings in Craig

Upcoming public meetings in Craig County:

March 15
A CPMT meeting at CPMT – Department of Social Services will be at 1 p.m.

March 20
The New Castle Town Council will meet from 7-8 p.m. at the New Castle Town Hall at 339 Market Street in New Castle.

March. 21
Rep. Morgan Griffith will hold a citizen comment period from 9-10:30 a.m. in the courthouse breakroom.

April 17
The New Castle Town Council will meet from 7-8 p.m. at the New Castle Town Hall at 339 Market Street in New Castle.

April 18
Rep. Morgan Griffith will hold a citizen

comment period from 9-10:30 a.m. in the courthouse breakroom.

April 19
A CPMT meeting at CPMT – Department of Social Services will be at 1 p.m.

May 15
The New Castle Town Council will meet from 7-8 p.m. at the New Castle Town Hall at 339 Market Street in New Castle.

May 16
Rep. Morgan Griffith will hold a citizen comment period from 9-10:30 a.m. in the courthouse breakroom.

May 17
A CPMT meeting at CPMT – Department of Social Services will be at 1 p.m.

OPINION

News from the 9th



Morgan Griffith
Representative

Several federal issues I am passionate about have been in the news lately.

First, in regards to the safety of unaccompanied minors who have crossed the border. Second, is the debate over whether COVID-19 originated from a bat or from a lab incident.

On the first matter, I visited Fort Bliss, Texas, in May of 2021. Part of my trip included visiting the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) facility there. ORR is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) tasked with placing unaccompanied minors

with a sponsor in the United States.

During my visit, I asked questions using my perspective as a lawyer who used to do custody cases and it became clear that ORR was not doing proper background checks on these sponsors. I also determined there was not significant collaboration with law enforcement when vetting sponsors and the "public records check" they were using was a type of widely available internet search engine. Unacceptable!

When HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra came before the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health in April 2022, I again expressed my concern over ORR's vetting process. As I said to the Secretary, if this was a typical custody case involving American citizens, someone would be in trouble for this level of disregard for the child's

safety. Either the attorneys, the department of social services, or the judge would be in hot water for not requiring a more complete background and home check.

Secretary Becerra disagreed with my characterization of ORR's vetting process.

Notwithstanding the Secretary's opinion, a September 2022 Inspector General study related to the operation at Fort Bliss solidified my concerns. They too raised issues of negligence.

At the E&C Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations field hearing I conducted in McAllen, Texas, on February 8th, I once again raised these issues.

Further, on February 25th, the New York Times published their investigation into a series of troubling examples of exploitation of unaccompanied minors.

It included many stories of middle and high schoolers placed with

sponsors looking to profit from their labor, forced to work long hours in poor and dangerous conditions.

The findings of the New York Times investigation is evidence of the results from ORR's negligent vetting process. This is what I feared when I first raised my concerns.

Unfortunately, until we slow or stop the flow of illegal unaccompanied minors, their exploitation will continue to be an issue.

It is critical we provide oversight to ensure the safety of children for which, rightly or wrongly, we have accepted responsibly.

As Chairman of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee on E&C, I will be pushing Secretary Becerra for more information and hope to have additional hearings on this subject.

The second matter is COVID-19 origins.

Since the onset of the pandemic and the search for its origins, I've stated

that we cannot rule out a lab incident. As time passed, in late 2020 or early 2021 I came to the conclusion there is substantial circumstantial evidence favoring a lab source.

In early February 2023, I held a hearing examining the federal response to COVID-19. National Institute of Health (NIH) Director Dr. Lawrence Tabak testified during the hearing that the coronavirus studied at the Wuhan Institute of Virology in Wuhan, China, bore no resemblance to that of COVID-19 and therefore, could not have been the source of the pandemic.

But how could they know? As I pointed out in the hearing, the NIH has years of missing coronavirus data from their grantee EcoHealth Alliance and EcoHealth's sub-award grantee, the Wuhan Institute.

While standing with the minority opinion for

years that a lab incident was the likely culprit, a few days prior to writing this column, multiple outlets reported the U.S. Energy Department had determined that the COVID-19 pandemic most likely arose from a laboratory leak. This follows a May 2020 report by the Department of Energy's Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory that a lab incident hypothesis was plausible and should be investigated further.

While we are still waiting on the declassification of Energy's reports, news reports cite new intelligence and analysis led the Department to switch their position from undecided to a lab incident.

Energy is now the second government agency, along with the FBI, to adopt this theory.

Over the next two years, I will do everything I can to get to the truth on COVID-19.

The issue of banning books

Library Corner
Raven Meadowbrook

It is said that one of the reasons human civilization has progressed so rapidly is because of the development of the written word. Documents could then be easily passed over long

distances and through the generations. In today's rapidly exploding information technology, the changes in our civilization are spiraling upward exponentially.

The idea of banning books puts a lid on the information in those books. How do you suppose it can be determined by one entity that someone else's information should be put in the dark? Who would be the entity? Parents of children? Schools? The government? Librarians?

We face this dilemma not just with books, but with other types of media such as the internet where battle lines are being drawn with social media giants, with religious entities, and political entities.

Should parents shield their children from damaging input from any source? I think we can all agree that yes, it is part of being a parent.

But should we create an artificial world for the children where they think everyone is blank. Plug in the blank with any word: white, black, Christian,

Muslim, heterosexual, racist, Democrat or Republican?

I think we can agree that a realistic world is a more honest approach. That is why we take children to museums, to travel on vacation, to school trips, to summer camp. There they can see and experience a little more of this big world.

Here is another point that I think we can all agree on. There are age-appropriate books that we entrust our teachers and librarians to select for their libraries.

In a public library that serves everyone of all ages equally, there must be books and media for all ages. People who are old enough to have a library card are allowed to choose their own materials. It is fair to say that input and book requests are considered by librarians in every library. Making wise choices is a skill learned from parents and it is practiced buy our children every day.

Giving so much attention to banned books fosters that curiosity about, "what could possibly be in

See Books, page 5

Overview of RCAHD reproductive health

As part of its role in community health, your local health department is committed to ensuring that all Virginians have access to reproductive health services. The Roanoke City and Alleghany Health Districts (RCAHD) offices employ a clinical team with doctors, physician assistants, nurses and skilled support staff who work together to provide a range of services to keep both adults and teens healthy.

The RCAHD Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) program aims to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted infections through education, outreach, and clinical services. STI clinics offer counseling, testing, treatment, and partner referral services for patients at risk of or currently experiencing STIs.

The RCAHD Family Planning program offers clinic services to provide individuals with the ability to decide if they want to have children and if so, how many and how far apart they want to space them.

A broad range of effective medical and educational services are available including:

- Access to many types of birth control methods
- Yearly sexual health exams, including breast exams and Pap smears
- Counseling
- Education about family planning and infertility

All services are confidential. We accept many insurance plans, and for those individuals who do not have insurance, costs for services are based on a sliding scale.

In addition to clinic services, RCAHD staff also work with the local Teen Pregnancy Prevention Collaborative to raise awareness about the importance of reducing teen pregnancies in the community. Teen pregnancies are a public health matter because adolescent mothers are more likely to drop out of school, have post-partum depression,

See RCAHD, page 5

THE NEW CASTLE RECORD

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The New Castle Record encourages letters from our readers on topics of general interest to the community and responses to our articles and columns. Letters must be signed and have a telephone number where you can be reached to be considered for publication. All letters will be verified before publication. The Record reserves the right to deny publication of any letter and edit letters for length content and style. News of public interest is solicited from all sections of the county.

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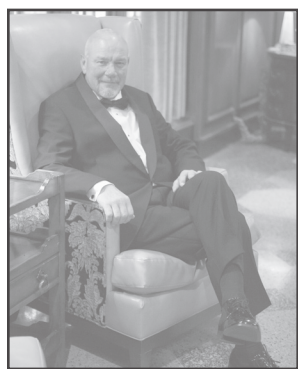
OBITUARIES

Whiting, Wesley 'Bud'

Born on April 1, 1958, Wesley "Bud" Whiting passed away peacefully surrounded by his family on Feb. 28, 2023.

Bud lived his entire life as a proud resident of Craig County, Virginia where he roamed the mountain sides and creek banks hunting and fishing throughout the majority of his life. He was a feisty and outspoken character who lived life to the fullest and loved his friends and family with all of his heart.

Bud met his beloved wife Melissa in 1985 and they married exactly one year from the day they met, on December 13, 1986, and started their family in Craig County where they proudly raised their two daughters, Rachel Leigh and Carly Austin. Bud was an amazing girl dad and took pride in the years he spent watching them grow up, play volleyball, and eventually get married and start families of their own. Bud was extremely proud that Melissa retired early from her position as the principal of Craig County High School to take care of him in the final years of his life.



Bud was a hard worker with an incredible work ethic and loved his co-workers at the U.S. Forest Service, Coca-Cola, and Norfolk Southern. The day he received his locomotive engineer license was one of the proudest moments of his life and he could reminisce about train stories "all the live-long day." More recently, he grew to love his National Pools family and their "work hard/play hard" way of life.

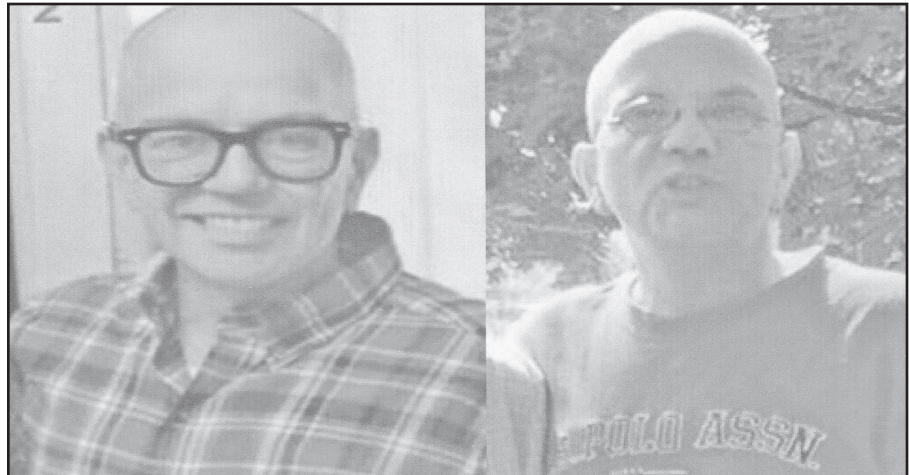
Bud was preceded in death by his father, Joe Parker Whiting, his brother-in-law Burch Harnack, and a multitude of close friends. He is survived by his mother, Patsy Whiting; wife, Melissa Whiting; daughter, Rachel Lower (Brandon); daughter, Carly Teller (Wyatt); grandchildren Charlotte,

Austin, and Brooks; sisters Diane Lugar (Alan), Loretta Keffer (Greg), Lisa Harnack, and baby brother Billy Joe Whiting (Cindy). He is also survived by many nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends.

Granddaddy Bud loved his three grandbabies immensely and was happiest when he was spending time with them. One of his most cherished pastimes was playing music to accompany his sweet Charlotte while she danced and frolicked around the house. The family trip to The Greenbrier in January to spend time with his first grandson, Brooks, and his youngest granddaughter, Austin Kate, made memories that his family will cherish for lifetimes.

Bud's family will forever be grateful for Nurse Sara and the staff at Lewis Gale's Medical Intensive Care Unit for the excellent care provided and the support offered.

Bud's memorial service will be held on Saturday, March 4, 2023 at 7 p.m. at Patsel Funeral Home. The family will receive friends from 5-7 p.m. prior to the service.



COURTESY PHOTO

Krippendorf

Body of John Krippendorf discovered by Salem police

Salem man had been missing since Feb. 9

Aila Boyd

aboyle@mainstreetnewspapers.com

The body of John Krippendorf was discovered on the afternoon of Thursday, March 2 by the Salem Police Department, according to a city news release. He was found in the southern quadrant of the city, just off Braeburn Drive.

The 57-year-old Salem resident was reported missing

by family members last month after he left LewisGale Medical Center in the early morning hours of Feb. 9.

Reports of his disappearance surfaced in mid-February and a variety of law enforcement agencies and citizen groups used various methods to locate him, according to the release.

On Thursday, the

Salem Police Department was again searching the area where Krippendorf was last seen when his remains were discovered at approximately 1:50 p.m.

The medical examiner's office positively identified the person in question as Krippendorf on Thursday, but an official cause of death has not been determined.

Currently, the Salem Police Department does not believe there is any evidence of foul play.

Books

from page 4

there?" The Library of VA celebrates Banned Books Week in October 2023 with readings from the most challenged books of the year. Banned books are becoming a celebrated thing. So maybe its wisest just to be a good parent or a good librarian and pick our battles elsewhere.

Many previously banned books like George Orwell's "1984" turn out to be required reading in some schools. You have heard the saying that "one mans trash is another man's treasure." That might apply to banned books!

Through reading we can experience infinite parts of the world we live in. With books, there are stories, based on truth or fantasy. Reading gives one a unique viewpoint to consider in these stories. A simple book like "A Walk across

America" had a profound impact on my life. Books can validate views, open new worlds, and teach life lessons.

With social media we have a much, much bigger problem, for this is where young minds can really be indoctrinated for good or for bad. Because it is not obvious to loved ones when some folks are "on their phones all the time", it is an insidious threat. The written word that appeals to some is enhanced with visual images and verbal information that is unfiltered. Wise choices ya'll. You have heard the saying: Garbage in-garbage out? Choose wisely what information goes into the brain and wisdom will follow. Personal choice is a freedom that most of us would rather not give up.

What do you think about book bans? Should

others regulate what librarians can put on the shelf? What do you think about books in public libraries vs books in a school library? Should a library board of trustees oversee the book and media collection in a public library or is a trained librarian a better choice?

The Craig Library's motto is "Empowering Individuals to build a stronger community." CCPL empowers you to make wise choices and to use your knowledge for the good of all.

Library news: There are over 300 DVDs available in the library to purchase for just a couple of dollars each. Come get a bag full for these wet spring nights!

Sign up for the Route 42 trash pickup with the library on March 25. Keep Craig Beautiful!

RCAHD

from page 4

and give birth to infants of low birth weight compared to women who have children later in life.

The goal of the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Collaborative is to support and empower teens to make the best choices for their own reproductive health. We work with partners who serve youth throughout the Roanoke Valley and Alleghany Highlands to improve communication and create systems to expand access to reproductive health services.

We need your input! To better understand the reproductive health needs and experiences of youth and their caregivers, this spring health department staff are conducting community listening sessions. We want to hear directly from teens and caregivers of teens on what is challenging, and what resources would be helpful.

Evening and weekend listening

sessions in small groups will be held through May in both the Roanoke and Alleghany Highlands areas. In exchange for about 90 minutes of your time, participants will be provided with a complimentary dinner and \$25 gift card. If you are a teen or caregiver of a teen (parent, grandparent, foster parent, or a coach, teacher, guidance counselor, etc) and would be willing to provide your input, please contact our Maternal and Child Health Coordinator at 540-759-2578.

The Virginia Department of Health's mission is to serve the community. Visit the VDH website (vdh.virginia.gov) for a variety

of health information, from general advice for parents on how to have The Talk with your teen, to specifics such as how to contact your local health department office for an appointment.

-Christie Willis, Communications officer, Roanoke City & Alleghany Health Districts

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CHESTNUT GROVE CHURCH
Duane Wente, Minister, Rt. 42, New Castle, 540-864-5692. Sunday: Worship 10:00 a.m.

CORNERSTONE CHURCH
Pastor Don Brown, Corner of Salem and Wagner, New Castle, 580-3228. Sunday Worship 10:30am (Children meet separately, Nursery provided). Bible Study - Wednesday 6p Teens - Wednesday 6p. Ministries: Men, Ladies, Young Adult, and Seniors. Times vary, call for details.

CRAIG HEALING SPRINGS CHRISTIAN CHURCH (Disciples of Christ)
Pastor - Kenneth W. Davis, Jr., 6 Grannys Branch Road (Johns Creek), New Castle, Phone: 864-6102. Sunday School at 10 am. Sunday Worship at 11 am every Sunday. Fellowship meal after Sunday Worship on second Sundays. Everyone is welcome!

CRAIG VALLEY BAPTIST
171 Salem Avenue, New Castle, 864-5667; Sunday School 10:00 a.m., Sunday worship 11:00 a.m., Wednesday: Prayer Service and Bible Study 7:00 p.m., Youth Group 6:30-8:00PM, Bible Buddies at 6:30-8:00PM. Transportation provided - call the church. Hearing devices also available. www.craigvalleybaptist.com

CRAIG VALLEY GOSPEL FELLOWSHIP
HWY 621, Pastor Roy Lee Law Jr., "Jay", 864-8984. Sunday School 10:00am; Worship 11:00am., Wednesday night Bible study 7pm, from HWY 311, up HWY 621, 8 miles on left.

CROSSROADS CHURCH
21892 Craigs Creek Road, New Castle. Pastor Gary Burch. 864-7520. Sunday School- 10-10:45AM, Sunday Worship - 11AM-Noon.

FIRST BAPTIST
Pastor Kevin Altizer, Corner of Main Street & Boyd Ave., New Castle. Church phone 864-5919. Sunday School 10:00AM, Sunday Worship 11:00AM and 6PM. Wednesday Evening Bible Study 7PM, Youth Group 7:00PM, Reformers Unanimous Addiction Recovery every Friday evening at 7PM.

GRACE ASSEMBLY OF GOD
5530 Catawba Valley Drive, Catawba, VA, 540-384-7075. Pastor Lorraine Taylor, agladypastor@msn.com. Sunday service begins at 10:30 a.m.; Wednesday Evening service at 7:00 p.m.; Youth (ages 13-18) & Super Church (ages 4-12) Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. You can also watch on Facebook Live at 10:30 a.m. www.graceassemblycatawaba.org

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159 Old Railroad Ave, New Castle, 540-864-PRAY, Sunday School 9:30AM, Sunday Worship Service 10:00AM, Wednesday Night Services 7:00PM.

HEBRON UNITED METHODIST
Pastor Rodney Longmire, Rt. 606, 1981 Caldwell Mt. Rd., New Castle, 540-400-3419. Worship 11:15AM. LIGHTHOUSE BAPTIST
Rev. Lee Looney, Rt. 311 N., New Castle. Sunday: Sunday School 10AM, 11AM, & 6PM. Wednesday Bible Study 7PM.

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Pastor Lee Looney, Rt. 311 N., New Castle, 540-525-7662. Sunday: Sunday School 10AM, 11AM, & 6PM. Wednesday Bible Study 7PM.

MOUNTAIN VIEW CHRISTIAN
4199 Craig Valley Drive, New Castle, Jonathan Lee, pastor, 864-6622. Sunday: Worship Service 9:00 a.m., Children's Church 9:15 a.m., Sunday School 10:30 a.m.

NEW CASTLE CHRISTIAN CHURCH
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282 Salem Ave., New Castle; 864-5212; Pastor Bill Frazier. Sunday Service: 10 A.M.; Wednesday night Bible study at 6:00 P.M. for K-5; If you need a ride to church, please contact Calvin Duncan by 8 P.M. on Saturday at 864-5321; www.nc-cc.org.

NEW CANTERBURY PENTECOSTAL FELLOWSHIP
Pastor John D. Abbott, Hwy 621 (10 miles), phone: 864-8242, Sunday Prayer 10:00-10:30 a.m.; Sunday Worship 10:45 a.m.; Wednesday Service 6:00 pm.

PAXTON CHAPEL
Pastor Kenny Davis, 17 Sage Brush Lane, New Castle; "Presenting God's Word Faithfully"; Sunday School 10:00 AM; Sunday Worship Service 11:15 AM; visit us on the web at www.paxtonchapelchurch.com; email at paxtonchapel@yahoo.com.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST
118 Main Street, New Castle. Service Times: Sunday, Bible classes-10 a.m., Worship-11:00 a.m., Evening Worship-6 p.m.; Wednesday, Bible classes - 7 p.m.

NEW CASTLE UNITED METHODIST
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Legals - City of Radford

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Legals - City of Salem

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given to all interested persons that the Board of Zoning Appeals of the City of Salem, Virginia will hold a public hearing, in accordance with the provisions of Sections 15.2-2204 and 15.2-2309 of the 1950 Code of Virginia, as amended, on March 23, 2023, at 4:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 114 North Broad Street, in the City of Salem, Virginia, to consider the following applications.

Request of the City of Salem, property owner, and Roanoke County, project administrator, for a variance from Section 106-226.7 of the Code of the City of Salem, to allow construction of the greenway trail, extending from the existing trail on Salem City owned property (Tax Map # 178-4-1) near Kingsmill Drive to the Roanoke County owned property (Parcel ID # 056.01-01-17.00-0000) near Riverside Nursery. Section 106-226.7(A) states that no new construction shall be permitted, except where the effect of such development on flood heights is fully offset.

Request of the City of Salem, property owner, for a variance from Section 106-226.7 of the Code of the City of Salem, to allow the bridge widening of Apperson Drive Bridge along with incidental greenway trail work on and near the 1600 block East Riverside Drive (Tax Map # 259-2-1). Section 106-226.7(A) states that no new construction shall be permitted, except where the effect of such development on flood heights is fully offset.

At this hearing, all parties in interest will be given an opportunity to be heard, present evidence, and show cause why such requests should or should not be granted. For additional information, contact the Office of the Zoning Administrator, 21 South Bruffey Street, Salem, Virginia (Phone 3753032).

THE BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS OF THE CITY OF SALEM

BY: Mary Ellen H. Wines, CZ, CFM
Zoning Administrator

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Legals - City of Salem

Notice is hereby given to all interested persons that the City of Salem

Planning Commission, at its regular meeting on March 15, 2023, at 7:00 p.m., in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 114 N. Broad Street, in the City of Salem, Virginia, will hold a public hearing, pursuant to Sections 15.2-2204 and 15.2-2285 of the Code of Virginia, as amended, to consider approval of the following requests relative to the CODE OF THE CITY OF SALEM, VIRGINIA:
1. Consider the request of Michael O. Garst and Alan L. Garst, property owners, for rezoning the property located at 907 Florida Street (Tax Map # 185-5-9) from HBD Highway Business District to RSF Residential Single Family.
2. Consider the request of Daniel N. Suggs Excavating & Grading, Inc., property owner, and AM Transportation of Roanoke, LLC, contract purchaser, for the issuance of a Special Exception Permit to allow a truck parking facility on the property located at 2730 West Main Street, (Tax Map # 174-5-1).

Copies of the proposed plans, ordinances or amendments may be examined in the Office of Community Development, 21 South Bruffey Street, Salem, Virginia. At said hearing, parties in interest and citizens shall have an opportunity to be heard relative to the said requests.

THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SALEM, VIRGINIA
BY: James E. Taliaferro, II
Executive Secretary

Notice

is hereby given to all interested persons that the Council of the City of Salem, at its regular meeting on Monday, March 27, 2023, at 6:30 p.m., in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 114 N. Broad Street, in the City of Salem, Virginia, will hold a public hearing, pursuant to Sections 15.2-2204 and 15.2-2285 of the Code of Virginia, as amended, to consider approval of the following requests relative to the CODE OF THE CITY OF SALEM, VIRGINIA:
1. Consider the request of Michael O. Garst and Alan L. Garst, property owners, for rezoning the property located at 907 Florida Street (Tax Map # 185-5-9) from HBD Highway Business District to RSF Residential Single Family.
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Copies of the proposed plans, ordinances or amendments may be examined in the Office of Community Development, 21 South Bruffey Street, Salem, Virginia. At said hearing, parties in interest and citizens shall have an opportunity to be heard relative to the said requests.

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SALEM, VIRGINIA
BY: H. Robert Light
Clerk of Council

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Legals - Montgomery County

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Virginia Department of Transportation and the Board of Supervisors of Montgomery County, in accordance with Section 33.1-70.01 of the Code of Virginia, will conduct a joint public hearing in the Montgomery County Government Center, 755 Roanoke Street, Christiansburg, Virginia at 7:15 p.m. on Monday, March 13, 2023. The purpose of this public hearing is to receive public comment on the proposed Secondary Six-Year Plan for Fiscal Years 2023/2024 through 2028/29 in Montgomery County and on the Secondary System Construction Budget for Fiscal Year 2023/24. Copies of the proposed Plan and Budget may be reviewed at the Christiansburg Residency Office of the Virginia Department of Transportation, located at 105 Cambria Street, Christiansburg, Virginia or at the Montgomery County Government Center located at 755 Roanoke Street, Christiansburg, Virginia. All projects in the Secondary Six-Year Plan that are eligible for federal funds will be included in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), which documents how Virginia will obligate federal transportation funds. Persons requiring special assistance to attend and participate in this hearing should contact the Virginia Department of Transportation at (540) 381-7201. Persons wishing to speak at this public hearing should contact the Montgomery County Government Center at (540) 382-6954.

Legals Town of Vinton

INVITATION FOR BIDS

The Town of Vinton is accepting SEALED BIDS from interested landscaping contractors to perform mowing, general landscaping and snow removal services for the Vinton War Memorial. The term of the mowing contract shall be for one year, with the option to renew for an additional four (4) one-year term. Sealed bids must be submitted to the Vinton War Memorial, C/O Chasity Barbour, 814 E. Washington Ave, Vinton, VA 24179, on or before Monday, April 3, 2023, at 3 p.m. Bids must contain the Bidder's company name and address, and be signed by the appropriate company representative. No bids will be accepted after said time and date. Bid opening will occur after 3 p.m. at the Vinton War Memorial, 814 East Washington Ave, Vinton, VA. Bid information can be acquired by contacting the Town Manager at (540) 343-1508. The Town of Vinton reserves the right to reject any and all bids. The Town also reserves the right to award an individual or company who is not the low bidder if in its judgment, it would be in the best interest of the Town to do so.

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New Roanoke College poll from Feb. 12-21 released

The Institute for Policy and Opinion Research (IPOR) at Roanoke College interviewed 680 adult residents of Virginia between Feb. 12 and Feb. 21 in a survey addressing topics such as approval and favorability ratings for Gov. Glenn Youngkin and other political figures and the most important issues facing the commonwealth. The survey has a margin of error of 4.23%.

Approval/favorability of political figures and direction of Virginia and country

Youngkin's approval rating is up five points from November with 57% of Virginians reporting that they approve of the way he is handling his job as governor (from 52% in November). His disapproval is also down six points from November (41% in November, 35% now). While Youngkin's favorability rating is statistically unchanged, his unfavorable rating dropped five points to 35% (from 40% in November). These numbers mark Youngkin's highest approval rating and lowest unfavorable rating recorded by the Roanoke College Poll during his time in office. Additionally, significant partisan gaps are evident in Youngkin's approval and favorability ratings, including a 54-point gap in approval (35% of Democrats, 87% of Republicans) and 56-point gap in favor-

ability (29% of Democrats and 85% of Republicans). Virginians' approval of the General Assembly is up four points from a year ago with 48% approving of the way the General Assembly is handling its job (from 44% last February). There is also an 11-point partisan gap in approval of the General Assembly (57% Democrats, 46% Republicans).

At the national level, President Joe Biden's approval rating is down slightly to 38% (from 41% in November), though that is within the survey's statistical margin of error. Similarly, Biden's favorability rating is down four points to 40% and his unfavorable rating is up four points to 55% from 44% and 51% in November, respectively. Former President Donald Trump's favorability and unfavorable ratings are statistically unchanged from Roanoke College's November 2022 poll. There are substantial partisan gaps in favorability ratings for both Biden and Trump, including a 75-point gap for Biden (79% of Democrats, 4% of Republicans) and 60-point gap for Trump (10% of Democrats, 70% of Republicans). As for the U.S. Congress, Virginians' approval rating is down four points to 23% (from 27% in November).

When respondents were asked about whether things in the commonwealth

are going in the right direction or have gotten off on the wrong track, there has been an 8-point increase to 55% who think things are going in the right direction and 9-point decrease to 39% who think things have gotten off on the wrong track (from 47% and 48% in November, respectively). There is a modest partisan gap with 48% of Democrats and 63% of Republicans thinking things in Virginia are going in the right direction. At the national level, 27% think things are going in the right direction in the country and 69% think things have gotten off on the wrong track, which is statistically unchanged from the last poll (28% and 68% in November, respectively). There is a 44-point gap in attitudes about whether things are going in the right direction in the country (50% of Democrats and 6% of Republicans).

Most important issues in Virginia

The Roanoke College Poll again asked Virginians what they feel is the most important issue facing Virginia today. A plurality (46%) of Virginians cited the economy, jobs or inflation as the most important issue in the commonwealth, though the percentage citing inflation has dropped five points to 22% (from 27% in November). (See full report on Virginia Consumer Senti-

ment here.) We found additional drops in concern about issues related to abortion (9% in November, 5% now) and climate change (8% in November, 4% now). The percentage of Virginians who feel that crime is the most important issue in the commonwealth increased five points to 13% (from 8% in November). The percentage of Virginians who think other issues are most important remained relatively constant at 10% for gun policy, 4% for immigration, 5% for voting/elections, 4% for race issues and 1% for COVID-19.

Analysis

"The story from this poll is that Virginians are more optimistic about the direction things are going in Virginia, though that sentiment does not translate to their feelings about the direction of the country," said Bryan Parsons, senior political analyst at IPOR and the Roanoke College Poll. "While we see an eight-point increase in the percentage of Virginians who believe things are going in the right direction in Virginia, the poll also shows that Virginians remain pessimistic about the direction of the country with nearly seven in 10 saying they think things are on the wrong track."

-The New Castle Record

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RECREATION CHAMPIONS ARE CROWNED



Hotshots versus Sparkling Unicorns



The Craig County recreation basketball leagues had their championship games last weekend at Craig County High School and big crowds showed up to watch the kids play.

On Saturday champions were crowned in the 10-12 year old leagues. In the boys final the Hornets beat the Bricklayers, 37-31, and the Basket Chicks downed the Girl Trotters, 27-5, in the girls' 10-12 championship.

There were also three semifinal games on Saturday in three divisions. The Sparkling Unicorns beat the Bobcats in 6-7 girls, the Rockettes beat the Cyclones in

8-9 girls and the Outlaws downed the Wildcats in 6-9 boys' action.

On Sunday the three teams that won semifinal games went up against the top seeds in their divisions and there were some exciting finals. It started off with the Sparkling Unicorns defeating the Hotshots, 14-12, in 6-7 action, followed by the LadyBallerz topping the Rockettes, 13-9, in the 8-9 girls' championship game.

The day concluded with a thriller between the top-seeded Warriors and Outlaws. When the dust settled the Warriors came out on top, 33-32.



Lady Ballerz vs Rockettes



Warriors vs Outlaws



PHOTOS BY BRIAN HOFFMAN