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COMMUNITY PHARMACY

David Brown, Pharmacist

10249 Hurley Rd, Hurley, VA | 276.566.4488

hurleycommunitypharmacy.com

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TWO SECTIONS PLUS SUPPLEMENTS | \$2

Construction continues at Southern Gap High School



Construction continues in mid-May at Southern Gap High School as large work trucks and crews remain active in front of the building during ongoing site development.

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

Southern Gap High School construction superintendent Tim Burge updated the Buchanan County School Board on June 2, reporting steady progress across the new school campus.

Burge said the football field has been fully graded, and crews are expected to begin bringing in turf and starting installation on June 3. In the gymnasium, he said the floor has been laid, and work is set to continue next week with sanding beneath the bleachers before crews install the bleachers and return to finish sanding the rest of the floor.

Inside the building, work is continuing in the A and B sections, which include the cafeteria, main entrance and administration areas, among others, where crews are installing ceiling grid and ceiling tiles and beginning installation of sealed concrete floor-ing in some areas. Burge said sealed concrete has already be-gun in the shop areas, and additional flooring work is expected in the coming weeks.

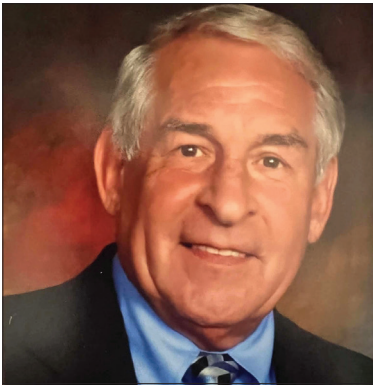
He also said crews have begun installing exhaust systems for the cosmetology area, a feature he said was new to him. Work is also moving forward in the second-floor casework,

SEE CONSTRUCTION CONTINUES | 2A



Softball and baseball fields at Southern Gap High School began to take shape in mid-May.

Photos courtesy of CTE students from the BCCTHLC



Tommy P Justus

HEMS was renamed in honor of longtime superintendent

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

One of Buchanan County’s schools will carry a new name beginning this fall after the Buchanan County School Board voted unanimously to honor one of the division’s most respected educational leaders.

During its June 2 meeting, the Buchanan County School Board approved a motion to rename Hurley Elementary/Middle School as Tommy P. Justus Elementary/Middle School, recognizing the late educator’s more than five decades of service to Buchanan County Public Schools.

The motion was made by Knox District School Board member Tommy Blankenship and seconded by Garden District representative Ray Blankenship. The measure passed unanimously.

Family members said the recognition is a fitting tribute to a man whose life was devoted to education and the children of Buchanan County.

“To us, he was Dad/Papaw – to generations of students and educators, he was a mentor, leader and friend,” Justus’s daughter Setema Justus said. “He dedicated more than 50 years serving the community in nearly every role imaginable-from teaching Biology, to Principal, Director of Instruction and then Superintendent. He was always so committed to helping young people succeed. We are incredibly humbled and grateful that this lifelong dedication to education will be remembered through a

SEE HEMS RENAMED | 2A

Wolford named principal at Tommy P. Justus Elem/Middle

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

The Buchanan County School Board unanimously approved the appointment of Angie Rife Wolford as principal of Tommy P. Justus Elementary/Middle School during its June 2 meeting.

Wolford will lead the Pre-K through seventh-grade school, formerly known as Hurley Elementary/Middle School, serving students in the Knox District.

“What becoming a principal means to me is having the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of the students, staff and families,” Wolford said.

The appointment was among several personnel recommendations presented by Buchanan County Public Schools Superintendent Sherry Fletcher following a recent round of interviews conducted by the school division’s personnel committee.

Wolford succeeds Brandon Davis, who is leaving the school to accept a position at Southern Gap High School, which is scheduled to open this fall. She is a 1995 graduate of Hurley High School and earned her associate’s degree from Southwest Virginia Community College in 1998. In 2021, she graduated from the University of Virginia’s College at Wise with a degree in Psychology with an endorsement in



Angie Rife Wolford has been named the new principal of Tommy P. Justus Elementary/Middle School, formerly Hurley Elementary/Middle School. The Buchanan County School Board unanimously approved her appointment during its June 2, 2026, meeting.

special education. In 2007, she earned her Master’s in School Leadership from Salem International University. Wolford has been em-

SEE WOLFORD NAMED | 2A

Boys and Girls Club of Central Appalachia adding chapter at SGHS

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

A new Boys & Girls Club of Central Appalachia chapter is coming to Southern Gap High School this fall.

The Buchanan County School Board approved the new chapter during its June 2 meeting following a motion by North Grundy school board member Angie McClanahan and seconds from Knox school board member Tommy Blankenship and Prater school board member Jack Compton.

Prior to the vote, Boys & Girls Club of Central Appalachia Chief Executive Officer Taylor Burgess requested the board’s approval and thanked school leaders for nearly two decades of partnership with Buchanan County Public Schools.

“Next year, 2027, will be 20 years of partnership with Buchanan County Public Schools and Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Appalachia,” Burgess said. “We started in 2007 at Hurley Elementary/Middle School, and we have grown exponentially.”

Burgess credited the partnership with the school division as a major reason for the organization’s success and growth throughout Buchanan County.

“We didn’t want to reinvent the wheel here,” Burgess noted. “We just used the schools with your all’s permission, and that’s been our blessing.

SEE BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB | 2A

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Buchanan County man charged after crash in Kentucky

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

A Buchanan County man was arrested Monday evening after allegedly fleeing the scene of a vehicle crash and leaving four children behind in the wrecked vehicle. According to the Kentucky State Police, troopers were dispatched to the Mouthcard community around 7 p.m. after a small child entered a local store and reported being involved in a crash. The child also told store employees that a man was bleeding. When troopers arrived, they located the crashed vehicle on South River Road and found four children inside. The driver, identified as Ryan Wilson, 37, of Maxie, had reportedly left the scene on foot following the crash.

Troopers later located Wilson walking approximately 1.5 miles from the accident site. Police said Wilson did not provide a clear explanation for leaving the scene but stated that he was nervous and wanted the children to be safe. After transporting Wilson back to the crash scene, troopers reportedly detected the odor of alcohol. According to police, Wilson admitted to consuming a 16-ounce Bud Light and a 12-ounce Twisted Tea. Wilson was arrested and charged with driving under the influence, failure to render aid, endangering the welfare of a minor, first-degree wanton endangerment and operating a vehicle without a license. The incident remains under investigation by the Kentucky State Police.

Looking for the oldest American Flag

The Levisa River Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution is asking the public for help locating the oldest American flag in the region. In honor of the 150th anniversary of Buchanan County and the nation's upcoming semiquincentennial, or 250th anniversary, the Levisa River DAR invites the public to submit a photo of themselves with their oldest American flag, along with the story behind it. "If you have an old flag, tell us its story," said Ola Clevinger, chairman of the flag committee for the Levisa River DAR. "Tell us how you came into possession of it

and what it means to you or your family. Also, please send a picture of the flag and identify everyone shown." Clevinger said the community may be home to a remarkable piece of history and that the group needs help finding it. The flag may be a personal possession or housed in a town or county building. The organization would like to know the flag's purpose, history, and what it means to those connected to it. The deadline for submissions is June 26, 2026, by 5 p.m. Send photos of the flag and its history by email to Clevinger at olaclevinger@hotmail.com. For more information, contact Clevinger at 276-210-5409.409.



Photos courtesy of CTE students from the BCCTHLC
An updated view of the gymnasium shows progress in mid-May at Southern Gap High School, where interior work continues ahead of final finishing touches.

CONSTRUCTION CONTINUES

FROM PAGE 1A

which Burge said is nearing completion. The auditorium remains an active work area, with sound pan-els and metal panels going in, while painting continues throughout parts of the building. Doors began going up in the stair areas in C and D (classroom wings and CTE areas of the building) on June 1, Burge said. The brick eagle sculpture designed by local artist Johnny Hagerman and CTE students from the Buchanan County Career, Technology and Higher Learning Center is now complete. Outside the building, crews are cleaning the brick and have poured sidewalks, including about 300 feet of sidewalk along the upper-level visitor-side bleachers. Burge said they are waiting for the pavers to come back which he plans to contact them to find out why they are not on site and grass is going to be

laid in front of the building to improve the school's appearance. Knox school board member Tommy Blankenship asked Burge who would be responsible in the event of a structural failure, such as a wall or floor collapse. Burge said he did not have a specific answer but said the issue would likely go back to the design team. He said the site team took every precaution, including undercutting four feet below the footers and placing compacted stone underneath, along with matting every foot to help stabilize the structure. Burge said the work now consists of many smaller finishing touches that will make a big difference when completed.

BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB

FROM PAGE 1A

The other successful venture has been the busing. We can't thank you, Jeremy (Buchanan County Public School's transportation supervisor Jeremy Ward), enough. Once we got the busing, we started seeing a huge increase in kids." Burgess said the opening of the county's new consolidated high school created an opportunity to establish the organization's first full-scale high school club. "As you know, we have had an after-school program at each of the elementary/middle schools, and we have had programming at each one of the high schools to a certain extent and some after-school programs, but we have never been a full-blown high school program. Now that we've got all four high schools under one roof, the Boys and Girls Club wants to start a club at Southern Gap High School." The chapter will serve students from Council, Grundy, Hurley and Twin Valley communities, all of which will be consolidated into Southern Gap High School when it opens this fall. Burgess said the chapter will operate as a team-centered club based in engineering teacher Kayla Cantrell's classroom and will continue many of the programs previously offered through the Buchanan County Career,

Technology and Higher Learning Center. "We just wanted you blessing here tonight and see if you all would be kind enough to let us start a team centered club at Southern Gap High School," Burgess asked the board. McClanahan responded enthusiastically, saying "yes" several times before making the motion to approve the request. Prior to Burgess' presentation, Buchanan County Public Schools Superintendent Sherry Fletcher praised his contributions to the school division and the impact the organization has had on local students. "I want to thank Taylor (Burgess) for all he does for our school division and the kids," Fletcher said. "He is the face behind Boys and Girls Club in our elementary schools but he also does many more things for our students with different programs within our school division. He has been the one behind us to want STEM in our elementary-middle schools and that is going to happen this year. I know he is going to be right behind helping us... We thank you for everything you do." The Southern Gap High School chapter is expected to open when the new school begins classes this fall.

HEMS RENAMED

FROM PAGE 1A

school in his hometown that will continue shaping future generations." Justus' son, Tom "Tom Boy" Justus, said the family is grateful for the honor. "It means a lot," Justus said. "We are very thankful and appreciative of those who made it happen. It is humbling to see dad's dedication to education and the school system honored in this way. He loved this county and it's people and invested his life in providing them the best opportunities for success." A 1959 graduate of Hurley High School, Justus earned a degree from Pikeville College in 1963 and later became a proud alumnus of University of Virginia. He began his career in Buchanan County as a teacher in the Hurley area before advancing to principal. In 1986, he moved to the school division's central office as direc-

tor of instruction, a position he held until Jan. 1, 1998, when he became division superintendent following the retirement of Paul Hatfield. Justus served as superintendent from Jan. 1, 1998, through June 30, 2012, and again from Feb. 19, 2015, through Jan. 18, 2016. In total, he spent more than 50 years working in Buchanan County's school system. His wife, Bonnie Sue Brown Justus, also devoted her career to education, serving as a teacher in the Hurley schools. Known for his sincerity, extensive vocabulary and unwavering support of students and educators, Justus was also an avid supporter of the University of Virginia's athletic programs and proudly identified as a "Wahoo." The Tommy P. Justus Elementary/Middle School is a feeder school for Southern Gap High School, which is scheduled to open this fall.

Courthouse News

MARRIAGE LICENSES

Trenton Chase Hicks, 21, of Raven and Makenna Leanne Dye, 19, of Swords Creek, May 30, 2026.

DEED RECORDED

May 1 – Tyler S. Justice to Steven Dewayne Justice, 0.65-acre Rock House Branch, Slate Creek, Levisa River, deed of gift.
May 6 – Jerrett Wilson to Kevin McLaughlin, 10 acres, Balls Fork, Buchanan County, \$40,900.00.
May 8 – Gary C. Davis, ETAL to Appalachian Power Company, tract at Grassy Creek, Levisa River, \$10.00.
May 8 – PSALM 25 Hope LLC., to Little Miracle Properties LLC., two tracts Slate Creek, Levisa River, Long Bottom, \$160,000.00.
May 8 – Hilary Rene Johnson, ETAL, to Daylyn Raeann Dotson, ETAL, 0.5 acre Slate Creek, Levisa River, North Grundy District, \$19,000.00.
May 8 – Austin Franklin Blankenship, to James Bryan Boyd, four tracts, Rock Lick District, Buchanan County, \$60,000.00.
May 11 – Rachel Ann Fuller, ETAL, to Jerry Dillo Jackson, ETAL, Lots 14 & 15 of Block 4 Subdivision of S.L. Ratliff Property, Little Prater Creek, Levisa River, \$1,500.00
May 11 – Russell Boyd, ETAL, to Roy Boyd, ETAL, tract Hurricane Creek, Russell Fork, Sandy River, Lish Field Branch, \$12,000.00.
May 11 – Kelter Viers, to Bernard Venters Stiltner, two tracts Big Prater Creek, South Grundy District, Lots 53 & 54 of G.W. Horn Land, \$10,000.00.
May 11 – Harriet Christine Matney, to Megan Hope Owsley, ETAL, two tracts Watkins Branch, Levisa River, Buchanan County, \$213, 250.00.
May 12 – Bobbie B. Ratliff, to Justin Leon Boyd, ETAL, 3.32 acres Little Fox Creek, Russell Fork River, \$6,000.00.
May 12 – Willie May Lane, to Roger Lee Looney, Sr., ETAL, 0.3 acre Right Hand Fork, Garden Creek, Levisa River, deed of gift.
May 12 – Lyndsay Stevens to Randy Allen Bazerol, ETAL, two-acre Fuller Branch, Russell Fork, Levisa River, deed of gift.
May 12 – Teresa Lynn Lowe, to Hiler Buffalo LLC., eight lots of the subdivision of T.D. Ward Property, Bill Young Branch, Dismal River, Buchanan County, \$75,000.00.
May 14 – Susan Loretta Smith, to Anita Diane Cook, ETAL, 10 acres Garden Creek, Levisa River Hurricane District, \$5,000.00.
May 14 – Tom's Rental Places LLC., to Buchanan County Board of Supervisors, 0.54 acre Levisa Fork River North Grundy District, \$77,600.00.
May 14 – Danny Darrell Justus, to Mellisa Justus, 10 acres, Guesses Fork, Knox Creek, \$125,000.00.
May 14 – Carol L. Keene, ETAL, to Carol L. Keene, two tracts Lick Branch, Slate Creek, Levisa River, \$1.00, deed of gift.
May 14 – Robert L. Elswick, to Commonwealth of Virginia Dept., tracts Levisa River, Town of Grundy, Buchanan County, \$4,000.00.
May 18 – Bernadine Cochran, to Wesley Jerome Conaway, 1.858 acres. Greenbrier, Big Prater Creek, Russell Fork River, \$12,000.00.
May 18 -Justin Allen Lester, ETAL, to Emilea Grace Scarberry, tract Long Branch, Garden Creek, Levisa River, \$24,000.00.
May 18 – Dennis Blankenship, ETAL, to Commonwealth of Virginia Department, tracts Buchanan County, \$1,167.00.

WOLFORD NAMED

FROM PAGE 1A

ployed with the Buchanan County Public Schools for 25 years as a special education teacher at Tommy P. Justus Elementary/Middle School (Hurley Elementary/Middle). In presenting the recommendations, Fletcher said the personnel committee also recommended Monica Billiter as a special education teacher at Council Elementary/Middle School; Kylie Blankenship and Brittany Davis as special education teachers at Riverview Elementary/Middle School; Brittany Justice as a special education teacher at Tommy P. Justus Elementary/Middle School; and Kyra Dotson, Shelby Harmon, Savannah McGlothlin, Amanda Shafer and Katie Stiltner as special education teachers at Southern Gap High School. Additional recommendations included Brooke Harris as behavioral interventionist at Southern Gap High School; Pamela Johnson as a paraprofessional at Council Elementary/Middle School; Haley Blackburn, Jennifer Rice and Miranda Stiltner as paraprofessionals at Riverview Elementary/Middle School; Lisa Lester as custodian at Council Elementary/Middle School; John Lark as custodian at Southern Gap High School; Dewayne Hurley as bus garage supervisor; and Jeff Hess as bus garage mechanic. The personnel committee also recommended transferring Riverview Elementary/Middle School Principal Kim Hess to a position in the central office at Southern Gap High School. Former Council High School Principal Melody O'Quinn was recommended to become principal at Riverview Elementary/Middle School, replacing Hess. Garden school board member Ray Blankenship moved to approve the personnel recommendations. Prater District representative Jack Compton seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. In other business, the board approved the naming of several facilities at Southern Gap High School. Rocklick District representative Bryan "Doc" Looney proposed naming the school's athletic facilities in honor of individuals who have contributed to education and athletics in Buchanan County. The motion, seconded by North Grundy District representative Angie McClanahan, passed unanimously. The newly named facilities include the F.D. Robertson Athletic Complex, Smiley Ratliff Football Field, Don Newberry Field House, Lloyd Combs Press Box, Travis Fiser Wrestling Room and Fowler Media Complex. Board members said plaques and other displays recognizing the namesakes will be installed at the respective facilities.



LOOKING BACK

From our files

By **CHAD COOPER**
coopkam@gmail.com

55 YEARS AGO

JUNE 10, 1971

One Grundy youngster, Kendall White, was a runner-up in the Major League Baseball Pitch, Hit and Throw competition held May 29 at Big Stone Gap. Kendall and three other players, Carol Coleman and Johnny Scott of Mountain Mission School and Larry Dale Patterson of Richlands won the local qualifying competition here on May 22.

F.D. Robertson was installed as president of the Grundy Lions Club at a Ladies Night Banquet last Thursday night at the Dixie Restaurant. Robertson was elected to a one-year term and will assume the duties on July 1, succeeding Charles Ratliff in the Office.

45 YEARS AGO

JUNE 11, 1981

Two students at Grundy Sr. High will be part of the Rising Seniors Summer Workshop in Creative Writing this summer at Berea College. For participation in the program, students received one college credit for the four-week study. Tammy Potter is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Burton Potter of Vansant. Kathy Rowe is the daughter of Mrs. Madge Ramey of Big Rock.

Clinch Valley College has announced its dean's list of distinguished students for the 1981 spring semester, including several from Buchanan County. On the list is first year student Kathy Lynn Osborne of Grundy; third-year students Jerry Wayne Rasnake of Bee and Martha Turner of Jewell Valley, and fourth-year students Bill Victor Anderson Jr., of Birchleaf, Kimberly Dawn Matney of Vansant and Janice Turner Taylor of Bandy.

35 YEARS AGO

JUNE 13, 1991

Judge Nicholas E. Persin and Thomas R. Scott, of Grundy, join 13 other attorneys and judges from Southwest Virginia who have been named to the Virginia State Bar Pro Bono Steering Committee by VSB President C. Flippo Hicks.

The Buchanan County Public Service Authority was awarded the "Water System of the Year" award by the Virginia Rural Water Association at a banquet in Roanoke, recently. According to Buchanan PSA Director Wayne Watts, the RWA also named Tim Hess, an employee of the Buchanan PSA, operator of the year for Region I, which includes all of Southwest Virginia. Standing from left are Executive Director of the Virginia Water Association Jerry Oakes, Buchanan PSA Maintenance Supervisor David Robbins, Watts and Hess.

25 YEARS AGO

JUNE 14, 2001

Brenda Joyce Owens was the recipient of the Ralph Hagy Memorial Scholarship Award for the class of 2001. Owens, a graduate of Grundy High School, plans to attend Virginia Tech this fall to pursue a career in the medical field. Presenting the award is Tivis O'Quinn, of the Grundy Lions Club.

Cass Harman, A 2001 graduate of Council High School, was recently selected as a member of the annual U.S. Navy Scholastic All-America Team. Each year, members of the National High School Athletic Coaches Association honor high school students who have excelled in athletics and academics at their schools. The list of athletes selected for the award appeared in an advertisement in the June issue of ESPN The Magazine. Harman was named to the second team among 22 students who received honors for baseball. A four-year starter at catcher for the Cobras, ended high school baseball career with a batting average of .434. He batted .500 for the 2001 season.



Hope Kent, a Hurley resident and self-taught artist, poses at the Southern Gap Visitor Center on June 2. Kent is currently ranked in the top five of The People's Artist, a nationwide public-voting art competition supporting The Art of Elysium, as she represents Buchanan County on a national stage.

Hurley artist climbs into top five of national competition, putting Buchanan County creativity in the spotlight

Local artist Hope Kent of Hurley is turning heads nationally as she remains in the top five of *The People's Artist* competition and has climbed as high as third place in the public voting. The nationwide contest, presented by Johnny Depp and operated by Colossal on behalf of AIT to benefit The Art of Elysium, is open to artists 18 and older and features visual work from creators across North America.

For Kent, the recognition is tied closely to the life she built after moving with her husband, Earl, to the Lester Fork section of Hurley a few years ago. What began as a retirement move quickly turned into a creative home base, where mountain scenery, wildlife and Appalachian life became the inspiration for her work. "It is so inspiring around here which might have really sparked our artistic interest," Kent said. "It is just so gorgeous."

Earl Kent, a retired computer software engineer turned blacksmith, creates knives, gardening tools, letter openers and other forged pieces, while Hope Kent paints and draws wildlife and landscapes in pencil, acrylic, watercolor and colored pencil. Their work is displayed at the Southern Gap Visitor Center, where visitors can view and purchase their handcrafted pieces.

The Kents met more than a decade ago in the Hampton Roads



A selection of artwork by Hurley artist Hope Kent showcases her detailed wildlife and landscape pieces created in pencil, acrylic, and watercolor. Kent is currently ranked among the top finalists in The People's Artist nationwide art competition supporting The Art of Elysium.

area after being matched on a dating website. After years of dating, they married more than five years ago. Earl spent much of his life moving around the world, while Hope was born in Michigan and lived in several states before retirement brought them together in Southwest Virginia.

Originally, the couple said they

were looking to settle in the Wise County area. A conversation with a realtor changed that plan and eventually led them to Buchanan County.

"We were looking and kind of basing ourselves out of the Norton area," Kent said. "Our realtor happened to mention she was from Grundy, and I said, 'Where's Grun-

dy?' So we went home, and I looked it up and found several houses. I said we are going to look in Grundy next."

Since settling in the mountains, Kent said her art has grown along with her confidence. She describes herself as self-taught, crediting online research, art groups and constant practice for helping her expand beyond acrylics into graphite, colored pencil and watercolor. "You can learn a lot if you want it bad enough," she said.

Her work often focuses on single subjects — birds, deer, foxes and people — with an eye toward fine detail. Kent said she likes the viewer's attention to settle on one focal point rather than a crowded scene, and she has developed techniques in graphite layering, erasing highlights and working on drafting film to add depth and precision.

More recently, Kent has embraced watercolor, experimenting with stronger color and delicate brushwork even while recovering from a recent tendon transfer surgery on her dominant hand. She said she is following medical instructions carefully and expects to return fully to painting once the hand heals.

The competition Kent is entered in uses public voting rather than a judge-only panel. According to the

SEE **HURLEY ARTIST** | 5A

GOOD OL DAYS



Miss Pam Cole proudly shows off "Zack's Black Satan," a talented 6-year-old racking horse owned by Bobby Shrader of Grundy. The horse is among the many outstanding entries expected to compete in the upcoming horse show on Friday, June 4, 1971 and Saturday, June 5, 1971. Pam, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Cole of Vansant, is an avid horse enthusiast and will be participating in the event herself. Her involvement reflects the strong tradition of horsemanship and equestrian competition found throughout the region.

File Photo | Virginia Mountaineer



Third Thursday returns with Seth McKay & The Moonshine Rivals at the Community Arts Mainstage (The CAM) on Thursday, June 18, 2026.

Spotlight on The CAM

By JODI REYNOLDS
Theatre Guild of Buchanan County

Third Thursday returns with Seth McKay & The Moonshine Rivals.

After a fantastic kickoff to our new summer concert series that we are calling Third Thursday, we're ready to rock The Courtyard once again!

Our inaugural event in May featured former The Voice contestant Noah Spencer and drew a wonderful crowd to The CAM. Guests enjoyed an evening of live music, great company, and delicious food from The Cluck Truck. Seeing families, friends, and music lovers gathered together reminded us exactly why we launched this series in the first place.

Now we're excited to invite everyone back on Thursday, June 18 for our second installment of Third Thursday featuring Seth McKay and The Moonshine Rivals.

If you're looking for authentic regional talent with a sound that blends Appalachian roots and high-energy rock and roll, this is a show you won't want to miss. The band describes their music this way:

"If you want to hear what the intersection of Appalachian grit and Rock n' Roll sounds like, you need to be at the front of the stage for Seth McKay and the Moonshine Rivals. Hailing from the VA/TN line, this 5-piece powerhouse is a masterclass in Country Rock with a Southern edge that cuts deep."

As a venue dedicated to showcasing local and regional artists, we couldn't think of a better fit for a summer

evening at The CAM.

Adding to the experience will be Pig N Out, one of the area's favorite food trucks. Known for their barbecue specialties and loyal local following, they'll be serving up crowd-pleasing favorites throughout the evening. A cash bar will also be available inside the concession area.

The concert will take place outdoors on The Courtyard at The CAM, creating the perfect setting to enjoy live music under the summer sky. We have plenty of seating, but feel free to bring your own lawn chair. Mark your calendar, bring your friends, and settle in for an evening of great entertainment. If Mother Nature decides not to cooperate, we'll simply move the show inside to our Mainstage so the music can continue uninterrupted.

Third Thursday is quickly becoming one of our favorite new traditions. It's another step toward our vision of The CAM serving as a true community arts center, offering opportunities for people to gather, connect, and experience the arts in many different forms.

We hope you'll join us on June 18 as we continue building something special, one Third Thursday at a time.

Tickets for Third Thursday are available at www.seeyouatthecam.com. Tickets are also available for Disney's Jungle Book KIDS opening Thursday, June 11 and running through Sunday, June 14. While on our website, be sure to purchase your seat for Tuesday, June 23, when artist Debbie Jackson will be hosting a Paint With Purpose class featuring Painting With Joy. See you at The CAM!

The Watchman Fight for the Freedom of Religion

As we approach the 250th anniversary of the signing of the United States Declaration of Independence, the fight to preserve our constitutional republic and our freedom of religion continues.

President Ronald Reagan often said, "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction." Those words remain relevant today.

Many Americans believe our First Amendment right to freedom of religion was challenged during the COVID-19 pandemic. During that time, cannabis dispensaries, liquor stores and other businesses were allowed to remain open, while houses of worship were restricted or temporarily closed. To many believers, this felt like discrimination against the constitutional rights guaranteed to churches and people of faith.

As a result, many congregations struggled, and some churches never reopened. It was a difficult and painful chapter in our nation's history.

One lesson from the pandemic was that it caused many Americans to take a closer look at what was happening in our schools, communities and government institutions. It sparked conversations about education, parental involvement and the values being taught to future generations.

The battle for the future of our constitutional republic continues, and as Christians, we are called to "fight the good fight of faith" as instructed in 1 Timothy 6:12.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 13:11 that it is time to awake out of sleep. He encouraged believers to cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. COVID-19 was a dark season for our nation. We lost many precious lives during the pandemic, and the effects of that time continue to be felt today.

Isaiah 60:1-2 reminds us: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." Even in times of darkness, God calls His people to stand and reflect

THE WATCHMAN
JERRY WARD

His light.

In John 1:1-9, we read that Jesus Christ is the true Light of the world. Verse 5 declares, "And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."

Jesus also said in John 12:46, "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness."

Today, the Lord continues to call people out of darkness and into His marvelous light. The invitation remains open. Will you respond? Will you ask Jesus Christ to forgive your sins and place your faith in Him?

Jesus said in John 6:37, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

The Bible also tells us in Jude 1:3 to "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." We are living in challenging times, but believers are called to remain faithful.

Jesus warned in John 9:4, "The night cometh, when no man can work." Yet He also promised in Matthew 24:13, "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."

As we move forward, may we remain vigilant, faithful and committed to defending the freedoms we have been blessed to enjoy.

Remember to mark your calendars for Generations United Revival: Come Alive Virginia, Aug. 6-8 at the Southern Gap Outdoor Adventure Stage.

Featured speakers and guests include:

Thursday, Aug. 6: Joel Horn

Friday, Aug. 7: Steven and Lori Ward of The Living Room Program

Saturday, Aug. 8: JT Harmon, along with Jeremy and Amy Mickles

Many youth groups will also be ministering each evening.

Services begin nightly at 7 p.m.

Stay tuned to The Watchman for more information.

News from Rocklick: Celebrating Graduates, Holding Up the Hurting

Hello Readers!

Our church is celebrating our graduates this morning so Amelia went with me to church.

Brother Gene Miller brought the message, God is able. He read Luke 10:38-42. He had a good message and is still going strong at 87!!

A young man came up and cut our weeds and I finally got the yard mowed. It looks so much better!

The Buchanan County Band left Monday for their trip to the beach. Amelia got to go and they all had such a good time! Safe travels for all!

Wednesday morning we left early headed to Kingsport for a doctor's appointment. We stopped at Sam's and Krispy Kreme (!!) and got there way too early. We didn't have to wait too long and were on our way home before the actual appointment time.

We found out on the way to Kingsport we lost a friend and dear sister in our church. Pam Fields passed away at home this morning. Please keep her family and friends in your prayers.

Saturday morning finds me at Johnson City Medical Center with Ray. He had a bad fall and has eleven rib fractures, a nasty cut over one brow and two black eyes. We're waiting on the doctor to make his rounds.

Happy 56th wedding anniversary to Steve and Georgia Stiltner of Poplar Creek!!

Reminder, the mobile food truck, Feeding Southwest Virginia, an equal opportunity provider, will be at the Council Park on Thursday June 11th. The truck arrives about 9:00 and giveaway starts about 10:00. This is a drive thru event, stay in your car, we will come to you.

My prayer list is long: Shannon and Christine (needs urgent



DEBBIE FOSTER

ROCKLICK AREA NEWS
276-935-8296

prayers!), Sarah, Maranda, Shawne, Brad, Joann, Michelle, Linda, Alvin, Mac, Gary, Jerry and Vicki, Betty and Arlene, Leroy, Linda and James, Martha, Amelia, Teresa, Gary and Tammy, Jacob, Shawn, Charles, Eugene, Melinda, Stanley (fractured back) and Crystal, Steve, Scotty, Brother Kenny, Freddie and Sheila, Darrell and Vicki, Hudson, Amber, Dennis (urgent prayers needed!) and Kathy, Courtland, Amy, Brother Bruce's brother in law, Anthony, Henry, Jerry, Farley and family, Pastor Gene and Joyce Miller, Lilly, Clarence and Reba, Lona (shoulder surgery went

well), Matt, Brenda, Justin, Glenda (needs urgent prayers!), Shirley, JJ, Mike, Jack, Pastor Ronnie and Alma Sliger, Colton and family, Timmy, Riley, Darrell, Debbie (pray hard for my sweet friend!), Maryann (doing better, keep praying!), Brian, Miss Gertrude (keep praying for answers for this sweet lady!), Patty, Bill, Charles and Von, Ann, Jack and Annette, Curtis, Susie, Carol (blood clot), Ronnie and Carol, Mike, Thelma, Kim, Judy, Malva, Gary and Linda, Randy, Tyler, Miss Jean, Jerry, D.C., June, Freddie and Sheila, Rachel, Jason, Lonie, Dean, Ralph, Blakely, Ashleigh, Kenny, Jim, Brenda, Pam's sister, Barbara, Rodney, Chris and family, Lillian, Geraldine, Colin, Snoda, Judy, Mike and Dee, Bryan and Tina PPTA, Pam, Phillip, Peggy and Family, Renee, Melissa, Charlie, Linda, Gordon, Miss Irene, Elmo, Teresa, Chris, Anthony, Miss Pauline, Henson (keep praying!),

Margie, Melinda, Archie and Cathy, Martha, Colton, Ira, Jennifer, Daniel, Tracy, Glenda, Anderson, Nicole, Dave, Hope, Liz, Tony and Pam, Barbara, Danny, Brenda, Nancy, Joe and Sherry, Gail, Bobby, Christie, Kenny, Baby Weston, Sandy, Buck and Harriet, Raymond, Mary, Wanda, Hazel and Sammy, Lois, Darrell, Sue, Jeff, Shirley, little Zach (keep praying!), Bobby, Jerry, Mary Lou, Dreama (holding her own, keep praying!), and Ray and I. God knows every need...

If any of my Rocklick neighbors have anything they want me to share please call me at 935-8296 or email me at dfoster_59@yahoo.com

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

1 John 4:4 KJV

Until next week...

Love Like Jesus!!

THE VIRGINIA MOUNTAINEER

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STAFF

MICHAEL SHOWELL: President, Virginia Media, LLC
AILA BOYD: Executive Editor, Virginia Media, LLC
WENDI CRAIG: Advertising
CHAD COOPER: Editor
ANOTHY STEVENS: Sports Reporter

CONTACT

THE VIRGINIA MOUNTAINEER
Telephone: (540) 389-9355
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Some Days, Birdsong Saves Me

My son-in-law bought me a bird feeder/camera for my birthday in January. It's actually pretty snazzy.

After I charged it and set it up, my adventures began. There have been numerous visits by familiar birds, cardinals, the tufted titmouse, chickadees, doves, the woodpecker, and my all- time favorite, the grackle.

But birds are showing up that I have never known to grace my feeders. The eastern phoebe, common starling, the bobolink, grey catbird, cliff swallow, Stellar's jay, the bushtit, housefinch, and verdin have all come for seed, millet, and grubworms.

The camera takes a ten-second shot, sends an alert to my phone, and awaits the next bird. We joked when I set the camera up that I'd be the first person fired from Russell Co. Schools for birdwatching.

I have refrained from checking on who shows up at the feeder while I am at work, but that is the first app I open when the workday is done. Priorities!

The cardinal is always the first to show up in the morning. Sometimes alone, but often in pairs, they crack the sunflower seeds, feed each other, and captivate my heart every time.

Next come the fat-bottomed girls, the doves. They are the seed scatterers, and I found myself talking to them the other morning, asking why they have to make such a mess with their poor table manners.

Then the iridescent grackles arrive, and I swear I could watch them all day. The grackles appear black at first, but let the newborn sun hit their feathers and that golden eye, and it's a psychedelic, oil slick of purple, green, gold, and blue. The golden eye! Handsome, I tell you, handsome!

I am uncertain when I became a bird watcher. Gary jokes with me and calls me "Miss Jane," from The Beverly Hillbillies, but so far, I haven't seen any California condors. I do, however, wear knee socks and have short hair.

There was a time in my life when I paid no attention to what was flying around me unless it was a mosquito. I think it must have been the long hours of dishwashing at the kitchen sink. Then my husband moved the sink to a new island, created a back door where the window was, allowing access to the back porch, and here I am watching birds all day.

As I sat in the sun to warm my bones the other day, I downloaded another program called Merlin that identifies birds by their calls. I fear I have created a monster. The birds sing, and the program tells you what you are hearing. So far, the wren is the loudest, and when I say loud, I mean LOUD! The tufted titmouse sounds like he's stuck on a note, the chipping sparrow sounds like a cricket, the pewee cracks me up with its "Hey girl!" whistle, and the blue-gray gnatcatcher sounds like old bed springs squeaking. Now, not only will I know what the birds look like, but I am also learning their songs. I'll be lethal by the time I leave this world.

There is much to be said for slowing down, observing nature, and co-existing with the creatures that choose to reside in the same place we hang our hat. This world is full of beauty, and we are surrounded by sounds that we take for granted.

When things become stressful and harried, there must be a place we can go to in order to reorient ourselves. For if I am honest, the day-to-day living requirements wear me out. I can only take so much news. I can only answer so many demands. I recognize my own weariness, and nature offers me the remedy.

Some days, I simply need a bird. I need to hear its song. I need to focus less on the stressors of life and just sink into an "all is right in the world" moment.

Some days, birdsong saves me.

Some days, birdsong inspires me.

Some days, birdsong heals me.

Some days, I just need a little bird to let me know everything is going to be all right.

Unless, of course, it's that hollering wren. Then I have to have a conversation about why she's up so early and squawking at me like I stole one of her babies from the nest she built under the porch roof. Tone it down, girl. Everything is OK.

P.S. I just bought a cuckoo clock.



VDOT announces traffic alerts for Buchanan County

By **CHAD COOPER**
coopkam@gmail.com

The Virginia Department of Transportation released traffic alerts for Buchanan and the surrounding counties.

To keep motorists informed, VDOT provides weekly updates on highway construction and maintenance projects throughout Southwest Virginia.

The following are current VDOT projects in Buchanan, Dickenson and Tazewell Counties that may cause traffic delays from June 8 through June 14, 2026:

Buchanan County

Route 460/121 Poplar Creek Phase B: Be alert to a new traffic pattern on Route 460 at Grundy due to the construction of Route 460/121 Poplar Creek Phase B. The switch is approximately 1.1 miles west of the Route 460/Route 83 (Riverside Drive/Edgewater Drive) intersection in Grundy. Motorists should be alert to flaggers in the area. (Completion: Late 2027)

Dickenson County

Route 83 roundabout at Route 637: Construction continues for a roundabout and a new park and ride lot at the intersection of Route 83 and Route 637 in Dickenson County. Be alert to lane shifts and closures. Pay attention to flaggers, signs, and message boards in the area. (Completion: October 2026)

Route 619 (Skeetrock Road) bridge repairs: Repairs are underway on the Route 619 (Skeetrock Road) bridge over Pound River in Dickenson County, between Routes 607 and 695. The project includes using temporary traffic signals to control one-way traffic. Pay close attention to temporary construction signs. (Completion: June 2026)

Russell County

Route 600 (Ivy Ridge Road) bridge replacement: A portion of Route 600 (Ivy Ridge Road) is closed due to a bridge replacement project in Russell County. The closure is located 0.6 miles north of the intersection of Route 600 and Route 664 (Carbo Road) and 1.3 miles south of the intersection of Route 600 and Route 725 (Egg Farm Road). A detour is

available using Routes 600, 664, 616, and 615. Be alert to signs and message boards. (Completion: July 2026)

Route 19 safety improvements: Safety improvements are underway on Route 19 northbound in the Rosedale area of Russell County. Lane closures will be in place starting 0.8 miles west of Route 80. The right lane is restricted to a width of 11 feet. Watch for signs and message boards. (Completion: November 2026)

Tazewell County

(NEW) Route 16 pavement patching: Be alert to pavement patching on Route 16 between Roaring Fork Road and the Smyth County line in Tazewell County. The work will take place June 8 – 12. Motorists should be alert to flaggers and possible delays in the area.

Route 19/460 and Route 610 intersection improvements: An intersection improvement project is underway on Route 19/460, from the intersection of Route 19 with Route 460 at Adair Drive, to the intersection of Route 19/460 with Route 610 in the Claypool Hill area of Tazewell County. Anticipate shoulder and lane closures in the area. (Completion: December 2026)

Several interstate projects are also going on during this time on Interstate 81 and Interstate 77, including the following:

Interstate 81 – Exit 50 and mile marker 52 bridge rehabilitations (Smyth County): A project that includes bridge rehabilitation work on six bridges north and southbound at exit 50 and mile marker 52 in Smyth County is coming soon. Be alert to construction crews mobilizing in the area. Nighttime lane closures will be in place for the duration of the project. Also, Be alert to flaggers and/or lane closures on Kiawana Road and Nick's Creek Road. Pay attention to signs and message boards. (Completion: November 2027)

Interstate 81 – Exit 45 deceleration lane extension (Smyth County): A project to extend the deceleration lane at exit 45 northbound in the Marion area of Smyth County is underway. The project includes replacing the northbound I-81 bridge over Matson Drive. Be alert to periodic

nighttime lane closures and shifted traffic over Matson Drive. (Completion: December 2027)

Interstate 81 – Bridge rehabilitation at mile marker 68 (Wythe County) – Due to a bridge rehabilitation project on I-81 north and southbound over Reed Creek at mile marker 68 in Wythe County, be alert to periodic extended lane closures and a width restriction of 14 feet. Pay attention to signs and message boards. (Completion: September 2027)

Interstate 81 – Roadway improvements (Wythe County): A project is underway to construct an auxiliary lane southbound between exits 73 and 72. Be alert to periodic lane closures in this area. (Completion: Fall 2026)

Interstate 81/77 interchange at Wytheville: Due to improvements on I-81 and I-77 at the interchange at Wytheville, pay close attention to signs and message boards. Be alert to possible lane restrictions and traffic shifts due to drainage work. (Completion: Summer 2027)

Interstates 81 and 77 maintenance activities — be alert to the following lane closures:

Interstate 81

Daytime survey work northbound from Bristol to the Wythe County line.

Nighttime paving operations northbound near mile marker 30 in Washington County.

Nighttime paving operations southbound near exit 32, exit 39 and mile marker 38 in Washington and Smyth counties.

Nighttime paving operations southbound between mile marker 4 and exit 3 in Bristol.

Nighttime bridge deck repairs northbound Monday – Thursday between exit 67 and mile marker 69 in Wythe County.

Nighttime herbicide spraying north and southbound between exit 54 and mile marker 87 in Smyth and Wythe counties.

Interstate 77

Nighttime herbicide spraying north and southbound from exit 24 to mile marker 67 in Wythe and Bland counties.

HURLEY ARTIST

FROM PAGE 3A

contest's official rules, voters receive one free vote every 24 hours, and additional votes can be cast through donations. The fundraiser supports The Art of Elysium, which says it uses creativity as a catalyst for healing and connection through art programs in hospitals, schools, senior-care facilities and other community settings.

The official contest site says the winner will receive \$25,000, a feature in *Artforum Magazine* and an exclusive

exhibit at The Art of Elysium's Art Salon in Los Angeles. The contest is currently in the group-finalist phase, with voting for that round scheduled to end June 11 at 7 p.m. PDT.

Kent said she hopes the attention does more than recognize her own work. She sees it as a chance to spotlight the creative talent already present in Buchanan County and to encourage more support for local artists, makers

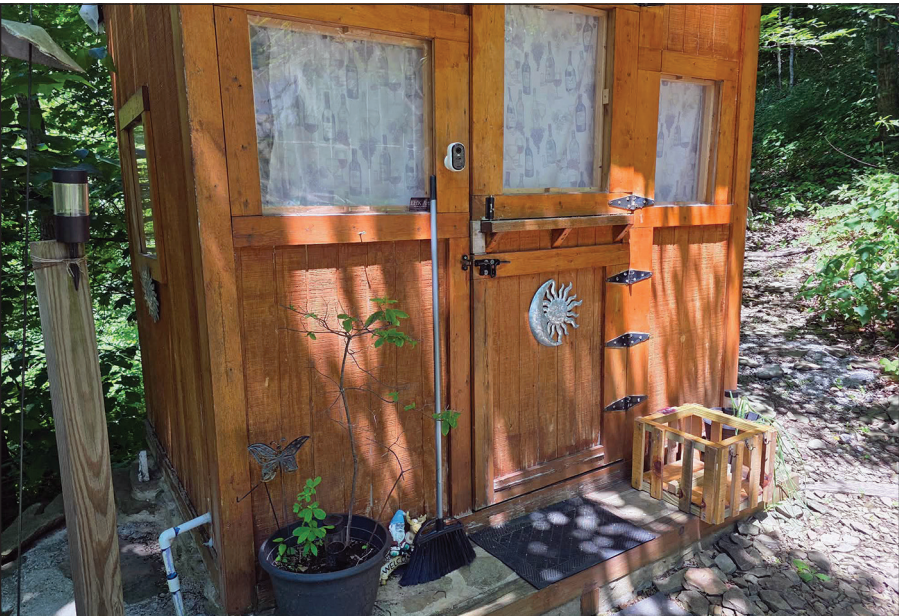
and young people exploring the arts.

"There's so much talent here," she said. "If people could see it, it would bring more people in. It could bring everything back to life."

For Kent, the competition has become more than a national contest. It is also a way to show that a small Appalachian community can produce art worthy of a much bigger stage.



Hurley artist Hope Kent ranks among the top finalists in the nationwide People's Artist competition, which supports The Art of Elysium. Her detailed wildlife and landscape work spans pencil, acrylic, and watercolor.



Hope Kent's art studio inside her Hurley home serves as the creative workspace where she produces much of her wildlife and landscape artwork. Kent, a self-taught artist and finalist in The People's Artist national competition, draws inspiration from the mountains and wildlife of Buchanan County.

Local girls track and field standouts shine at state

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

As Buchanan County's era of separate high school track programs came to a close, Council senior Ella Rasnake provided one final state-meet highlight with a top-10 finish at the VHSL Class 1 Track and Field Championships held June 5-6 at James Madison University.

Rasnake placed seventh in the girls 800-meter run with a time of 2:34.00, capping her high school career on the state's biggest stage. The Council standout finished in a competitive field led by Eastside's Shelby Stanley, who won the event in 2:21.25. Riverheads' Verity Jordan was second in 2:22.01, followed by Lancaster's Rory Lally in 2:26.39, George Wythe's Alana Malavolti in 2:29.47 and Luray's Brylee Painter in 2:30.32.

Rasnake crossed the finish line less than

four seconds behind sixth-place finisher Allie Salyer of Eastside and ahead of Chincoteague's Jenna Daisy, Galileo's Ava Garcia and Brunswick's Jada Seaborn in the top 10.

The meet marked the final state championship appearance for athletes competing under the Council and Grundy banners. Both schools, along with Hurley and Twin Valley, will combine this fall to form Southern Gap High School.

Grundy's girls relay teams also turned in solid performances in their final state meet before the transition.

The Lady Wave's 4x400-meter relay team finished 10th in the state with a time of 4:35.04. Narrows captured the championship in 4:13.98, followed by Chilhowie (4:17.42), Eastside (4:22.52), Brunswick (4:24.12) and Riverheads (4:27.30) in the top



From left, Kelly Ratliff, Ava Ward, Destany Armendariz and Aliyah Armendariz celebrate a fifth-place finish in the 4x800-meter relay at the VHSL Class 1 Outdoor Track and Field Championships on June 6 at James Madison University. The Lady Wave clocked a season-best 11:07.90 and moved to No. 2 all-time in Grundy High School history.

SEE LOCAL GIRLS TRACK | 2B

Hartford closes career with two top five finishes at state

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

Grundy's all-American distance runner Keyston Hartford closed out his high school career with a pair of podium finishes, earning a runner-up finish in the 1,600-meter run and a third-place finish in the 800 at the VHSL Class 1 Track and Field Championships held June 5-6 at James Madison University.

Hartford, competing in his final meet in a Grundy uniform, turned in one of the most consistent distance performances of the championship, finishing second in the 1,600 in 4:26.10. He was narrowly edged by Parry McCluer's Kebryl Chandler, who won in 4:22.45, while Eastern Montgomery's Calvin Wilbon placed third in 4:26.13 in a tightly packed finish.

Earlier in the meet, Hartford added a third-place showing in the 800, crossing in 2:01.59. Luray's Azmani Jackson won the event in 1:56.29, with Eastern Montgomery's Grayson Welcher taking second in 1:59.19.

The strong finishes capped a standout high school career for Hartford, who has been among the state's top distance runners in Class 1 competition.



Keyston Hartford of Grundy capped his high school track career with a runner-up finish in the 1,600-meter run and a third-place finish in the 800 at the VHSL Class 1 Track and Field Championships at James Madison University.

Across the meet, several athletes delivered standout championship performances. Rappahannock's Michael Ball highlighted the sprint events, winning the 100 meters in 11.04 and later capturing the 400 in 48.83. Rural Retreat's Trey Ward added a sprint title of his own, winning the 200 in 22.66 while also helping set the tone for a strong overall showing in the shorter races.

In the distance events, Parry McCluer's Kebryl Chandler dominated the longer races, winning both the 1,600 (4:22.45) and the 3,200 (9:36.11). Eastern Montgomery also made its mark in the mid-distance races, highlighted by Azmani Jackson's victory in the 800.

Field events were controlled largely by Auburn athletes, who racked up multiple championships and podium finishes. Gideon Mear cleared 6-foot-6 to win the high jump, while Kobi Bonds and Colton Honaker led a sweep-like performance in the shot put and discus. Bonds captured the shot put title with a throw of 62-1, while Honaker won the discus at 157-6.

Relay races saw Rural Retreat, Rappahannock, and Eastern Montgomery among the top performers, with Rappahannock winning the 4x400-meter relay in 3:24.43 and Eastern Montgomery taking the 4x800 in 8:09.02.

BOYS

100-METER DASH

Michael Ball, Rappahannock, 11.04; 2. Harrison Washington, Sussex Central, 11.10; 3. Trey Ward, Rural Retreat, 11.14; 4. Isayah Hamann, Auburn, 11.27; 5. Nate Woods, Riverheads, 11.35; 6. Zeyon Owens, Northumberland, 11.36; 7. Jaden Holmes, Essex, 11.39; 8. Mikah Busquets, Chincoteague, 11.41; 9. Makoa Busquets, Chincoteague, 11.42.

200-METER DASH

Trey Ward, Rural Retreat, 22.66; 2. Jah'nell Mer-

SEE HARTFORD CLOSURES | 4B

IN THE LOCKER ROOM

The NBA Finals have opened with a surprise twist, as Jalen Brunson's New York Knicks have jumped out to an early 2-0 lead over a talented young San Antonio Spurs team led by 7-foot-5 phenom Victor Wembanyama.

So far, the biggest key to New York's success has been its ability to make life miserable for Wembanyama. Karl-Anthony Towns has been especially effective defending the Spurs star, using his mobility to chase him around the perimeter and disrupt San Antonio's offensive rhythm. In Game 1, Wembanyama still managed 26 points, 12 rebounds and three blocked shots, but he shot just 29 percent from the field and 22 percent from 3-point range in a 105-95 Knicks victory.

Wembanyama was much more efficient in Game 2, finishing with 29 points on 51 percent shooting while adding nine rebounds and four blocks. Even then, New York found a way to escape with a 105-104 win after Wembanyama missed a potential game-winning shot at the buzzer.

The Knicks' depth inside has also made a difference. With veteran center Mitchell Robinson back in the lineup, New York has multiple big bodies to throw at Wembanyama, which has helped keep the Spurs from settling into any kind of offensive comfort zone.

At this point, New York's run through the



IN THE LOCKER ROOM

postseason has been relentless. The Knicks have not lost since April 23, when they dropped Game 1 of their opening-round series against the Hawks. They responded by winning that series 4-2, then swept the 76ers in the Eastern Conference semifinals before taking care of the Cavaliers in the Eastern Conference finals.

For a franchise with just two championships, both coming in the 1970s, this moment carries a special weight. The 1970 Knicks, led by Willis Reed, Walt Frazier and Dave DeBusschere, captured the title with a 4-1 victory over the Lakers. Reed, who was the league's MVP that season, was named Finals MVP after powering New York through the postseason. Three years later, the Knicks were back on top, again defeating Los Angeles to win their second championship.

San Antonio, meanwhile, brings a far richer title history to the series, with five banners hanging in the rafters. The Spurs won championships in 1999, 2003, 2005, 2007 and 2014, building a model of consistency that became the envy of the league. Those early title teams

SEE LOCKER ROOM | 4B



The inaugural Southern Gap High School junior varsity football cheerleading squad has been announced following tryouts held Friday, June 5, at the Roger and Susie Rife Park Gymnasium, formerly the Poplar Gap Park Gym. Selected to the inaugural roster are Kylie Cline, Ashlyn Scammell, captain Tayleigh Adams, co-captain Madisyn Yates, Alyssa Wright, Alivia Ly, Brooklyn Osborne, Autumn Yates, Chasity Farmer, Aleigha Reynolds, Jayma Stacy, Carissa Hurley, Izzy Blankenship, Olivia Waychoff and Bayleigh Justice. The inaugural Southern Gap High School junior varsity football cheerleading squad is pictured following tryouts Friday, June 5, at the Roger and Susie Rife Park Gymnasium. Front row, from left, Kylie Cline, Ashlyn Scammell, Tayleigh Adams (captain), Madisyn Yates (co-captain), Alyssa Wright and Alivia Ly. Back row, from left, Brooklyn Osborne, Autumn Yates, Chasity Farmer, Aleigha Reynolds, Jayma Stacy, Carissa Hurley, Izzy Blankenship, Olivia Waychoff and Bayleigh Justice.

New Peoples Bank

PLAYER OF THE WEEK





Jailey Yates

Totaled two hits, drove in two runs, and made a spectacular diving catch in center field to help the Tigers defeat Rye Cove and advance to the Class 1 state softball tournament for the first time in 13 years.


www.NewPeoples.Bank

CONGRATULATIONS!




Southern Gap Middle School football cheerleaders have been announced following tryouts held Friday, June 5 at the Roger and Susie Rife Park gymnasium (Poplar Gap Park). This year's squad includes captain Gracie Viers and co-captain Madi Mays, Brynn Webb, Averie Bell, Sadie Broyles, Karman Bostic, Taylor Matney, Emmy Viers, Kylee Keene, Addison Brown, Josie McCoy, Warner Robertson, Shyanne Lowry, Ariana Swiney, Bella Justus, Kate Robinson, Claire McClanahan, Jailyn Criswell, Cecilia Potter and Ava Thomas. The squad is coached by head coach Ashlee Miller and assistant coach Emily Lester. The Southern Gap Middle School football cheer squad for the 2026 season includes from left (front row) Gracie Viers (captain), Madi Mays (co-captain), (middle row) Brynn Webb, Averie Bell, Sadie Broyles, Karman Bostic, Taylor Matney, Emmy Viers, Kylee Keene, Addison Brown; (back row) Josie McCoy, Warner Robertson, Shyanne Lowry, Ariana Swiney, Bella Justus, Kate Robinson, Claire McClanahan, Jailyn Criswell, Cecilia Potter and Ava Thomas.

LOCAL GIRLS TRACK

FROM PAGE 1B

five. The Grundy quartet consisted of Sierra Lowry, Ava Ward, Destany Armendariz and Kelly Ratliff.

Grundy's strongest showing came in the 4x800-meter relay, where the Lady Wave earned a fifth-place state finish in 11:07.90, moving into the No. 2 all-time mark in program history.

The relay team of Kelly Ratliff, Ava Ward, Destany Armendariz and Aliyah Armendariz delivered a season-best performance on the state stage. Ratliff opened with a 2:38.80 personal record, Ward split 2:51.50, Destany Armendariz added a 2:47.66 season best, and Aliyah Armendariz anchored in 2:49.96.

The effort placed Grundy behind only Eastside, George Wythe, Auburn and Luray in the final standings, while marking one of the top relay performances in program history.

Eastside claimed the title in 10:02.23, while George Wythe (10:15.91), Auburn (10:45.17) and Luray (10:55.63) rounded out the top four. Grundy's team of Ratliff, Lester, Ward and Armendariz finished ahead of Eastern Montgomery, Rappahannock, Giles, Middlesex and Galileo in the final standings.

Freshman Emma Davis added another top-10 finish for the Lady Wave in the discus competition. Davis placed eighth with a throw of 94 feet, 2 inches.

Riverheads' Sarah Piner won the event with a toss of 125-3/4, while Auburn's Allyson Harris was second at 114-9/2 and Cumberland's Daryn Woodson-Trent finished third at 112-8/2. Castle-

wood's Anna Summers (109-9) and Patrick Henry's Andie Jarboe (109-2) completed the top five.

Davis finished ahead of Narrows' Rebekah Farmer and King & Queen's Melanie Holmes in the state finals and secured one of Grundy's final individual top-10 finishes before the school's athletic programs become part of Southern Gap.

GIRLS 100-METER DASH

Arnesia Dews, William Campbell, 12.46; 2. Rylee Coates, Northampton, 12.63; 3. Zyleigh Hayden, Holston, 12.68; 4. Ivanna Jones, Northumberland, 12.79; 5. Ayarni Benn, Franklin, 12.82; 6. Allyson Teitelbaum, Grayson County, 12.87; 7. Nevaeha Hobson, Cumberland, 12.96; 8. Makayla Drew, Surry County, 12.96; 9. Zoey Childers, George Wythe (Wytheville), 13.01.

200-METER DASH

Arnesia Dews, William Campbell, 25.66; 2. Zyleigh Hayden, Holston, 25.89; 3. Ayarni Benn, Franklin, 26.51; 4. Nevaeha Hobson, Cumberland, 26.54; 5. Makiya Hawkins, Cumberland, 26.95; 6. Talia Graham, Rappahannock, 27.28; 7. Brooke Williams, Highland, 27.33; 8. Allyson Teitelbaum, Grayson County, 27.44.

400-METER DASH

Arnesia Dews, William Campbell, 57.01; 2. Zyleigh Hayden, Holston, 57.82; 3. Caelyn Buracker, Narrows, 1:00.29; 4. Makiya Hawkins, Cumberland, 1:00.67; 5. Alivia Dickison, Chilhowie, 1:00.69; 6. Ellyn Bowles, Narrows, 1:01.80; 7. Jada Seaborn, Brunswick, 1:02.46; 8. Lamani Corbin, Rappahannock, 1:03.24; 9. Katie

Williams, Eastside, 1:03.61; 10. Rylee Buck, Middlesex, 1:03.62.

800-METER RUN

Shelby Stanley, Eastside, 2:21.25; 2. Verity Jordan, Riverheads, 2:22.01; 3. Rory Lally, Lancaster, 2:26.39; 4. Alana Malavolti, George Wythe (Wytheville), 2:29.47; 5. Brylee Painter, Luray, 2:30.32; 6. Allie Salyer, Eastside, 2:33.37; 7. Ella Rasnake, Council, 2:34.00; 8. Jenna Daisy, Chincoteague, 2:34.78; 9. Ava Garcia, Galileo, 2:38.09; 10. Jada Seaborn, Brunswick, 2:38.43.

1,600-METER RUN

Shelby Stanley, Eastside, 5:20.61; 2. Headley Bowis, West Point, 5:25.52; 3. Beverly Warner, Auburn, 5:30.05; 4. Alyson Funk, Auburn, 5:30.38; 5. Emma Faulkner, George Wythe (Wytheville), 5:32.66; 6. Brylee Painter, Luray, 5:34.46; 7. Ava Garcia, Galileo, 5:43.02; 8. Allie Salyer, Eastside, 5:52.26; 9. Amelia Lewis, Thomas Walker, 5:53.70; 10. Sania Little, Altavista Combined, 5:58.77.

3,200-METER RUN

Emma Faulkner, George Wythe (Wytheville), 11:33.02; 2. Alyson Funk, Auburn, 11:41.68; 3. Beverly Warner, Auburn, 11:43.58; 4. Headley Bowis, West Point, 11:58.76; 5. Amelia Lewis, Thomas Walker, 12:37.51; 6. Bella Ozmar, George Wythe (Wytheville), 12:47.47; 7. Elizabeth Moore, Mathews, 13:06.74; 8. Charlee Songer, Auburn, 13:08.31; 9. Gabrielle Huffman, Giles, 13:20.45; 10. Hailey Mays, Eastside, 13:22.80.

100-METER HURDLES

Destnee Bullock, Brunswick, 15.26; 2. Derequa Johnson, Charles City County, 16.42; 3. Rylee Coates, Northampton, 16.44; 4. Isabella Anderson, Essex, 17.07; 5. Jazlynn Miller, Patrick Henry (Glade Spring), 17.21; 6. Fiorella Leon, George Wythe (Wytheville), 17.53; 7. Channing Waldie, Northwood, 17.79; 8. Brooklyn Firman, Brunswick, 18.42; 9. Isabella Dingus, Twin Springs, 18.98.

300-METER HURDLES

Raegan Jones, Chilhowie, 45.68; 2. Destnee Bullock, Brunswick, 45.85; 3. Rylee Coates, Northampton, 47.67; 4. Nevaeha Hobson, Cumberland, 47.92; 5. Allyson Teitelbaum, Grayson County, 48.79; 6. Channing Waldie, Northwood, 49.44; 7. Isabella Anderson, Essex, 49.59; 8. Johnnie Gaynor, Auburn, 50.18; 9. Isabella Dingus, Twin Springs, 50.88; 10. Sha'Kyla Holman, Brunswick, 50.89.

4X100-METER RELAY

Franklin, 50.30; 2. Northumberland, 50.64; 3. Chilhowie, 50.76; 4. Rappahannock, 51.82; 5. Brunswick, 51.93; 6. Patrick Henry (Glade Spring), 51.94; 7. Riverheads, 51.94; 8. Essex, 51.97; 9. Highland, 52.22; 10. Lancaster, 52.41.

4X400-METER RELAY

Narrows, 4:13.98; 2. Chilhowie, 4:17.42; 3. Eastside, 4:22.52; 4. Brunswick, 4:24.12; 5. Riverheads, 4:27.30; 6. Rappahannock, 4:30.62; 7. Altavista Combined, 4:30.68; 8. Patrick Henry (Glade Spring), 4:33.06; 9. George Wythe



Grundy senior Emma Davis placed eighth in the discus at the VHSL Class 1 Outdoor Track and Field Championships on June 6 at James Madison University, finishing with a throw of 94 feet, 2 inches to close out her high school career with a top-10 state finish.

(Wytheville), 4:33.29; 10. Grundy, 4:35.04.

4X800-METER RELAY

Eastside, 10:02.23; 2. George Wythe (Wytheville), 10:15.91; 3. Auburn, 10:45.17; 4. Luray, 10:55.63; 5. Grundy, 11:07.90; 6. Eastern Montgomery, 11:21.95; 7. Rappahannock, 11:36.91; 8. Giles, 11:47.05; 9. Middlesex, 11:49.73; 10. Galileo, 11:50.85.

HIGH JUMP

Rylee Coates, Northampton, 5-0; 2. Jalynn Rogers, Rye Cove, 5-0; 3. Madie Burke, Thomas Walker, 5-0; 4. Ada Anderson, Middlesex, 4-10; 5. Alivia Dickison, Chilhowie, 4-10; 6. Arnesia Dews, William Campbell, 4-10; 7. Bailly Bagby, Middlesex, 4-8; 8. Aaliyah Wilkins, Sussex Central, 4-8; 8. Nyvaeh Cooke, Sussex Central, 4-8; 10. Kalee Gilbert, Thomas Walker, 4-8; 10. Aaliyah Tucker, Brunswick, 4-8.

LONG JUMP

Rylee Coates, Northampton, 18-1; 2. Zoey Childers, George Wythe (Wytheville), 16-7/4; 3. Makiya Hawkins, Cumberland, 16-7/4; 4. Paytyn Fulton, Patrick Henry (Glade Spring), 16-6; 5. Adelaide Baxter, Highland, 16-6; 6. Emma Stiltner, George Wythe (Wytheville), 16-4/4; 7. Brooke Williams, Highland, 16-4/2; 8. Ellyn Bowles, Narrows, 16-2/4; 9. Cameryn Reder, Rappahannock County, 16-2; 10. Destnee Bullock, Brunswick, 16-1/4.

TRIPLE JUMP

Arnesia Dews, William Campbell, 38-0; 2. Destnee Bullock, Brunswick, 36-10; 3. Nevaeha Hobson, Cumberland, 36-4; 4. Ellyn Bowles, Narrows, 35-4/2; 5. Derequa Johnson, Charles City

County, 35-2; 6. Alanna Billups, Middlesex, 34-9; 7. Emma Stiltner, George Wythe (Wytheville), 34-6; 8. Rylee Coates, Northampton, 34-5; 9. Nora Suthard, Mathews, 34-3/2; 10. Channing Waldie, Northwood, 34-0.

POLE VAULT

Rylee Coates, Northampton, 11-2; 2. Makiya Hawkins, Cumberland, 9-6; 3. Olivia Keller, Riverheads, 9-0; 4. Rory Lally, Lancaster, 7-6; 5. Alexis Sacra, Riverheads, 7-6; 6. Lucy Stone, Cumberland, 7-0; 7. Sam Lewis, Auburn, 6-6; 7. Ava Garcia, Galileo, 6-6; 7. Piper Boike, Auburn, 6-6; 10. Kyleigh Akers, Auburn, 6-0; 10. Jenna Grimmer, Riverheads, 6-0.

DISCUS

Sarah Piner, Riverheads, 125-3/4; 2. Allyson Harris, Auburn, 114-9/2; 3. Daryn Woodson-Trent, Cumberland, 112-8/2; 4. Anna Summers, Castlewood, 109-9; 5. Andie Jarboe, Patrick Henry (Glade Spring), 109-2; 6. Karadee Anderson, Middlesex, 97-11; 7. Reagan Freeman, Narrows, 96-6/2; 8. Emma Davis, Grundy, 94-2; 9. Rebekah Farmer, Narrows, 93-9; 10. Melanie Holmes, King & Queen, 89-2.

SHOT PUT

Jayla Augustin, Cumberland, 36-5; 2. Karadee Anderson, Middlesex, 35-8/4; 3. Sarah Piner, Riverheads, 35-4/2; 4. Andie Jarboe, Patrick Henry (Glade Spring), 34-9; 5. Allyson Harris, Auburn, 34-8; 6. Kaleigh McManus, Auburn, 34-6/2; 7. Autumn Surber, Holston, 32-6; 8. Reagan Freeman, Narrows, 31-8/2; 9. London Williams, Northumberland, 30-2/4; 10. Melanie Holmes, King & Queen, 29-11.



Council senior Ella Rasnake capped her high school career with a seventh-place finish in the 800-meter run at the VHSL Class 1 Outdoor Track and Field Championships on June 6 at James Madison University, clocking 2:34.00 to earn a top-10 finish in her final state meet.

GREAT OUTDOORS WORD SEARCH

D U C V V S E M T F M V F G H G I P F Y
B V B C A N Y O N R D A E H L I A R T T
W D N A L R E T N I H O Y S C M I R L W
A R A A Y N R E T R V A L L E Y Y S C A
F H I U L D F E F Y R T N U O C K C A B
U H P D M P K N E T U E W O O D L A N D
C P F U G C D C I S A L P I N E E V S E
A A M Y I E I B M G K G D V A Y I G F G
S W S H U P G R S V C O D P P W R R I A
D U T C I E O T D K P E V L R P F I P I
M D M C A L R U H V O E V E O G B B U L
F V E M W D G K Y D F B N E R V I B H O
E R L O I L E M E A D O W I R L N I G F
P U S U L T S A B B I L I H V G O K R K
U A E T A L P K A B T K B L N A R O B N
F D I D Y L F G T T E R R A I N R E K M
M P I N D C U N V I V R M G E A M S E A
E W I L D E R N E S S E G B H H U V O N
S R A Y M H U L M B V V T S Y O E S I E
A E C A R G N E L O R V C G L A C I E R

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

WORDS

ALPINE
BACKCOUNTRY
CANYON
CASCADE
CRAG
EVERGREEN
FOLIAGE
GLACIER
GORGE
HINTERLAND
MEADOW
MESA
OVERLOOK
PLATEAU
PRECIPICE
RAVINE
RIDGE
SUMMIT
TERRAIN
THICKET
TRAILHEAD
VALLEY
WILDERNESS
WOODLAND



Curb your habits and declutter your space. Getting into a routine that makes your life easier will result in peace of mind and bring about changes that offer health benefits. Invest more time and money in looking and feeling your best.

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

Collaboration is your secret weapon this week, Aries. Putting two heads together will be better than one. Take a walk or exercise to get away and gain perspective.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

Taurus, you may find yourself getting a small bonus or increase in pay, proving your financial luck is looking up this week. Enjoy the surprise and treat yourself to something.

GEMINI – May 22/June 21

Gemini, this is a great week for writing or presentations since you will have creativity flowing through you. A fun text message can be a catalyst for a great weekend.

CANCER – June 22/July 22

Your nesting instincts are in full swing right now, Cancer. You might be inspired to turn your space into a peaceful sanctuary. A family-related piece of news can bring peace.

LEO – July 23/Aug 23

Courage may come naturally this week, Leo. Speak your truth right when it is needed. Your warmth can be a magnet for others and new friendships may develop.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

Virgo, learning a new skill will be easy for you right now. Take pride in your progress. You are becoming more versatile and vital.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Share your heart and listen closely to what a partner has to say, Libra. A romantic or platonic relationship will reach a high point. The connection built will be exciting.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

You're at peak productivity right now as you tackle your to-do list with great focus, Scorpio. By the end of the week you'll be ready to dive into a mysterious or fun hobby.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

A sense of humor will be a great asset this week, helping to diffuse any tension by laughing, Sagittarius. Start looking ahead to travel plans.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

Wisdom is flowing through you and you may find you are the go-to person for solid advice, Capricorn. Your grounded nature helps everyone around you.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

Aquarius, innovation will help you find clever shortcuts for problems that have proven tough to solve. Your unique style may start earning you praise, but remain humble.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

Empathy allows you to connect with others on a deep level, Pisces. A creative project that you have been building finally starts to bloom in unexpected ways.

SUDOKU

9	2	1				5		
		3			5			
6	7			4		9		1
4			8	5				7
	3			2	6			
		8					9	
	8	4		1				
				8	7	6		5
7	6				9			4

Level: Beginner

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to the great outdoors.

IRBSD

Answer: Birds

GUESS WHO ?

I am an actor born in Boston on June 13, 1981. I studied acting at the Lee Strasberg Theatre and Film Institute. I starred on a TV series in 2000, but I'm better known as a movie actor. I've played leading roles in various films based on comic books.

Answer: Chris Evans

CRYPTO FUN

Solve the code to discover words related to the great outdoors. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 16 = I)

- A. 21 23 13 3 22 11 16 3
Clue: Large natural elevation
- B. 10 7 5 6 1
Clue: Clean
- C. 6 13 3 6 1 16 3 5
Clue: Bright light
- D. 8 16 24 20 24 16 10 5
Clue: Animals

Answer: A. mountain B. fresh C. sunshine D. wildlife

SUDOKU SOLUTION

9	2	1	7	6	8	5	4	3
8	4	3	1	9	5	7	6	2
6	7	5	2	4	3	9	8	1
4	9	6	8	5	1	2	3	7
1	3	7	9	2	6	4	5	8
2	5	8	3	7	4	1	9	6
5	8	4	6	1	2	3	7	9
3	1	9	4	8	7	6	2	5
7	6	2	5	3	9	8	1	4

CLUES ACROSS

1. Sealed with a kiss
5. Large sandwich
8. Swiss city
12. Japanese persimmons
14. When you hope to get somewhere
15. Wings
16. A name of God
18. Elected official (informal)
19. Abnormal breathing
20. "Seinfeld" character
21. Yearly tonnage (abbr.)
22. Something for sale
23. Gets rid of
26. One who touts
30. Blemished
31. Less than exciting
32. Born of
33. N. German town
34. Notes
39. Move away from land
42. Vulcanite
44. More ignoble
46. Child actor Kirk
47. Written works
49. Sea vessel
50. Residue
51. Engraved
56. Having sufficient skill
57. One and only
58. Erase
59. Broad inlets
60. Nightmarish street
61. Play again
62. Formerly (archaic)
63. Add a color to change the color
64. Move swiftly and lightly

CLUES DOWN

1. Scottish island
2. River in the Netherlands
3. Asian people
4. Fuzzy fruit
5. Ninth month (abbr.)
6. An idealistic social reformer
7. What you owe
8. Colorless mineral
9. Overjoyed
10. Rattling breaths
11. Tropical Old World tree
13. A citizen of Senegal
17. Greek mythological beauty
24. Wrath
25. Instrument to measure wind speed
26. Luxury carmaker
27. Bitterly regret
28. Not or
29. Google certification
35. Midway between northeast and east
36. Space station
37. Relating to the ears
38. Congressman
40. Yelled at
41. Rudely assertive
42. Defunct European money
43. Shared one's soul
44. Onion rolls
45. A way to state clearly
47. Relating to a lobe
48. Underlying message
49. Hollywood pig
52. Indicates pitch
53. Filament of a feather
54. Small ornamental ladies' bag for small articles
55. Diminish

PUZZLE SOLUTION

S	W	A	K			S	U	B			B	E	R	N		
K	A	K	I	S			E	T	A			A	L	A	E	
Y	A	H	W	E	H			P	O	L			R	A	L	E
E	L	A	I	N	E			T	P	A			I	T	E	M
				E	L	I	M	I	N	A	T	E	S			
B	R	A	G	G	E	R			A	C	N	E	D			
M	U	N	D	A	N	E			N	E	E					
W	E	D	E	L							M	E	M	O	S	
					E	B	B			E	B	O	N	I	T	E
		B	A	S	E	R			C	A	M	E	R	O	N	
	L	I	T	E	R	A	T	U	R	E						
B	O	A	T			A	S	H			E	T	C	H	E	D
A	B	L	E			T	H	E			D	E	L	E	T	E
B	A	Y	S			E	L	M				R	E	R	U	N
E	R	S	T			D	Y	E					F	L	I	T

D U C V V S E M T F M V F G H G I P F Y
B V B C A N Y O N R D A E H L I A R T T
W D N A L R E T N I H O Y S C M I R L W
A R A A Y N R E T R V A L L E Y Y S C A
F H I U L D F E F Y R T N U O C K C A B
U H P D M P K N E T U E W O O D L A N D
C P F U G C D C I S A L P I N E E V S E
A A M Y I E I B M G K G D V A Y I G F G
S W S H U P G R S V C O D P P W R R I A
D U T C I E O T D K P E V L R P F I P I
M D M C A L R U H V O E V E O G B B U L
F V E M W D G K Y D F B N E R V I B H O
E R L O I L E M E A D O W I R L N I G F
P U S U L T S A B B I L I H V G O K R K
U A E T A L P K A B T K B L N A R O B N
F D I D Y L F G T T E R R A I N R E K M
M P I N D C U N V I V R M G E A M S E A
E W I L D E R N E S S E G B H H U V O N
S R A Y M H U L M B V V T S Y O E S I E
A E C A R G N E L O R V C G L A C I E R

HARTFORD CLOSES

FROM PAGE 1B

edith, Brunswick, 22.78; 3. Harrison Washington, Sussex Central, 22.82; 4. Kentrez Rice, Northumberland, 22.99; 5. Jaeden Weeden, King & Queen, 23.06; 6. Makoa Busquets, Chincoteague, 23.14; 7. Dallas Harner, Patrick Henry (Glade Spring), 23.20; 8. Mikah Busquets, Chincoteague, 23.21; 9. Jamari Slayton, Altavista Combined, 23.76.

400-METER DASH

Michael Ball, Rappahannock, 48.83; 2. Azmani Jackson, Luray, 49.01; 3. Jeremy Lanier, Rappahannock, 50.52; 4. Garrett Dickison, Chilhowie, 51.23; 5. Daniel Hill, Essex, 51.60; 6. Cooper Helvey, Narrows, 51.89; 7. Dallas Harner, Patrick Henry (Glade Spring), 52.25; 8. Kevin Turner, Middlesex, 52.36; 9. James King, Auburn, 52.61; 10. Bradley Kell, Chilhowie, 52.62.

800-METER RUN

Azmani Jackson, Luray, 1:56.29; 2. Grayson Welcher, Eastern Montgomery, 1:59.19; 3. Keyston Hartford, Grundy, 2:01.59; 4. Jaden Turner, Brunswick, 2:01.71; 5. Josh Cooper, Parry McCluer, 2:01.88; 6. Gunnar Marston, Middlesex, 2:02.09; 7. Mason West, Chilhowie, 2:03.32; 8. Luke Baxter, Highland, 2:03.58; 9. TJ. Hines, Sussex Central, 2:03.64; 10. Cy Jarvis, Riverheads, 2:03.67.

1,600-METER RUN

Kebryl Chandler, Parry McCluer, 4:22.45; 2. Keyston Hartford,

Grundy, 4:26.10; 3. Calvin Wilbon, Eastern Montgomery, 4:26.13; 4. Will Gosnell, Eastern Montgomery, 4:36.53; 5. Blake Brown, Auburn, 4:38.24; 6. Caleb Cooper, Parry McCluer, 4:40.22; 7. Spencer Sisson, Eastern Montgomery, 4:40.56; 8. Logan Wheelock, Parry McCluer, 4:41.55; 9. Darius Jones, Middlesex, 4:42.60; 10. Caleb Sampson, Eastern Montgomery, 4:45.13.

3,200-METER RUN

Kebryl Chandler, Parry McCluer, 9:36.11; 2. Calvin Wilbon, Eastern Montgomery, 9:40.97; 3. Caleb Cooper, Parry McCluer, 9:46.55; 4. Blake Brown, Auburn, 9:49.06; 5. Spencer Sisson, Eastern Montgomery, 9:59.75; 6. Logan Wheelock, Parry McCluer, 10:03.07; 7. Courtland Jones, George Wythe (Wytheville), 10:06.49; 8. Jaxon Mayer, Giles, 10:38.23; 9. Calan Parks, Bland County, 10:40.55; 10. Drew Robinson, Rappahannock County, 10:48.69.

110-METER HURDLES

Jayden Bullock, Sussex Central, 14.83; 2. Jorden Ross, Brunswick, 14.85; 3. Isayah Hamann, Auburn, 15.18; 4. Storm Parker, Riverheads, 15.86; 5. Ryder Wilson, Sussex Central, 16.10; 6. Jamir Roberts, Brunswick, 16.18; 7. Daniel Frey, Luray, 16.35; 8. Payton Welch, John I. Burton, 16.38; 9. Mark Tankard, Northampton, 16.99.

300-METER HURDLES

Storm Parker, Riverheads, 39.45; 2. Gabe Rouse, Chilhowie, 40.20; 3. Isayah Hamann, Auburn, 40.27; 4. Daniel Frey, Luray, 41.56; 5. Ryder Wilson, Sussex Central, 41.60; 6. Jayden Bullock, Sussex Central, 41.70; 7. Jamir Roberts, Brunswick, 41.93; 8. Tripp Moncure, Rappahannock, 42.21; 9. Achilles Axline, Auburn, 42.34; 10. Abdullah Fulani, Cumberland, 42.77.

4X100-METER RELAY

Rural Retreat, 43.09; 2. Riverheads, 43.13; 3. Northumberland, 43.59; 4. Cumberland, 43.80; 5. Brunswick, 43.96; 6. Rappahannock, 44.15; 7. Narrows, 44.40; 8. Chilhowie, 44.45; 9. Altavista Combined, 44.71; 10. Essex, 44.74.

4X400-METER RELAY

Rappahannock, 3:24.43; 2. Chilhowie, 3:26.58; 3. Cumberland, 3:33.29; 4. Auburn, 3:33.95; 5. Patrick Henry (Glade Spring), 3:34.23; 6. Luray, 3:34.36; 7. Northampton, 3:34.44; 8. Rappahannock County, 3:35.25; 9. Sussex Central, 3:35.58; 10. Buffalo Gap, 3:35.61.

4X800-METER RELAY

Eastern Montgomery, 8:09.02; 2. Parry McCluer, 8:11.28; 3. Middlesex, 8:28.12; 4. Chilhowie, 8:29.68; 5. Auburn, 8:38.13; 6. Mathews, 8:44.86; 7. Rappahannock County, 8:46.95; 8. Riverheads, 8:48.35; 9. Buffalo Gap,

8:53.21; 10. Rappahannock, 8:55.91.

HIGH JUMP

Gideon Miear, Auburn, 6-6; 2. Davonte Griffin, Middlesex, 6-4; 3. Marshall Tate, Eastern Montgomery, 6-2; 4. Maverick Cress, Rye Cove, 6-2; 5. Cy Jarvis, Riverheads, 6-0; 6. Christian Destin, Rappahannock, 6-0; 6. Jamar Hammond, Middlesex, 6-0; 8. Kevin Turner, Middlesex, 6-0; 8. Xavier Stuart, Riverheads, 6-0; 10. Caleb Cregger, Craig County, 5-10.

LONG JUMP

Skyler McBride, George Wythe (Wytheville), 22-2¼; 2. Jah'nell Meredith, Brunswick, 21-8; 3. Eli Martin, Fort Chiswell, 21-3¼; 4. Davonte Griffin, Middlesex, 21-3¼; 5. Demure Palmer, Northumberland, 21-1¼; 6. Maverick Cress, Rye Cove, 21-0; 7. Nate Woods, Riverheads, 20-11; 8. Malcolm Bivens, Sussex Central, 20-9¼; 9. Jaeden Weeden, King & Queen, 20-8¾; 10. Ethan Brunk, Auburn, 20-4½.

TRIPLE JUMP

Mark Tankard, Northampton, 44-9¾; 2. Davonte Griffin, Middlesex, 44-7½; 3. Marshall Tate, Eastern Montgomery, 43-4; 4. Deonta Barte, Cumberland, 42-8¼; 5. Azzari Patterson, Cumberland, 41-10; 6. Arek Ashlock, Essex, 41-9¼; 7. Jah'nell Meredith, Brunswick, 41-9¼; 8. Ethan Brunk, Auburn, 40-11; 9. Kameron Keen, Honaker, 40-10¼; 10. Ryder

Wilson, Sussex Central, 40-¾.

POLE VAULT

Thomas Hungarland, Galileo, 12-6; 2. Danton McClellan, Auburn, 12-0; 3. Haze Williams, Riverheads, 12-0; 4. Luke Bryant, Galileo, 11-6; 5. Micah Richards, Auburn, 11-0; 6. William Ball, Lancaster, 10-6; 7. Kendrick Collins, Northampton, 10-6; 8. Dallas Harner, Patrick Henry (Glade Spring), 10-6; 9. Kolby Morris, Galileo, 10-0; 10. Trevin Mower, Auburn, 9-6.

DISCUS

Colton Honaker, Auburn, 157-6; 2. Kobi Bonds, Auburn, 156-3; 3. Raleigh Brown, Auburn, 146-6; 4. Aidan Broughman, Chilhowie, 139-6; 5. Griffin Harlow, Parry McCluer, 136-1; 6. Jackson Holbrook, Chilhowie, 134-1; 7. Jonathan Worley, Giles, 133-9; 8. Remington Houck, Rappahannock, 128-10; 9. Arnell Tucker, Galileo, 126-11; 10. Noah Steele, Giles, 118-7.

SHOT PUT

Kobi Bonds, Auburn, 62-1; 2. Raleigh Brown, Auburn, 53-6¼; 3. Colton Honaker, Auburn, 53-3; 4. Griffin Harlow, Parry McCluer, 51-3½; 5. Ethan Lawson, Rye Cove, 49-7; 6. Kavion Brown-Jackson, George Wythe (Wytheville), 48-7½; 7. Taivian Holmes, Essex, 47-2; 8. Jackson Holbrook, Chilhowie, 46-2½; 9. Remington Houck, Rappahannock, 45-1; 10. Zion Graham, Rappahannock, 44-1.

LOCKER ROOM

FROM PAGE 1B

were anchored by the twin towers of Tim Duncan and David Robinson, while Tony Parker and Manu Ginóbili gave the Spurs the kind of guard play that helped define their dynasty. By 2014, a young Kawhi Leonard had emerged as the face of another championship run.

Now, the torch has been passed to Wembanyama, and the Spurs' future remains bright. But through two games, it has been Brunson, Towns and a relentless Knicks defense that have controlled the Finals and put New York in prime position to chase another championship. If they do win, we will never hear the end of it from Stephen A. Smith.

Red Cross recruitment

By EMILY LOVE

The American Red Cross, in partnership with the Buchanan County Board of Supervisors, will host community town hall meetings in two districts later this month in a continuing search for volunteers.

Next Tuesday (June 16) at 6 p.m., recruiters will be at the Whitewood Volunteer Fire Department, where the growing need for Disaster Action Team (DAT) volunteers in the county and the surrounding area will be discussed.

A similar meeting will take place at 7 p.m. Tuesday, June 23, at the Prater Volunteer Fire Department. These are the second and third of planned meetings in each of the county's seven districts, as the Red Cross launches its drive to seek helpers.

The first meeting was held in May at the Trey Adkins Athletic Center in Hurley.

Sherri Dillow, ARC recruiter for Buchanan County, asked supervisors in April for help in finding places in each of the county's seven districts to house open houses — “to speak to your communities and ask them to join us so that they can become a part of our team and stand in the gap when we don't have volunteers who can get here fast enough to supply what your community needs.” Community members are encouraged to attend, learn more about local disaster response efforts, and explore ways they can make a meaningful difference.

Disaster Action Team volunteers play a critical role, Dillow says, in providing immediate assistance to individuals and families impacted by local emergencies such as home fires, flooding and other unexpected disasters.

“These volunteers are often the first line of support — offering comfort, emergency financial assistance, and guidance during times of crisis,” she said.

Attendees will hear from Dillow and Sharon Dixon, community disaster program manager with the Red Cross, as well as current Disaster Action Team volunteers who will share firsthand experiences and insights into how DAT volunteers support neighbors in need and strengthen the community's ability to respond to emergencies. Educational materials will be provided, and on-site volunteer sign-ups will be available for those ready to be involved.

Residents of all backgrounds are encouraged to attend, learn about this important volunteer opportunity, and consider becoming part of a team that, Dillow said, “brings help and hope when it's needed most.”

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TRUSTEE'S SALE OF 5367 GARDEN CREEK ROAD, ROWE, VA 24646

In execution of a Deed of Trust in the original principal amount of \$37,800.00, with an annual interest rate of 9.875000% dated June 30, 2006, recorded among the land records of the Circuit Court for the Buchanan as Deed Instrument Number 060002302, the under-signed appointed Substitute Trustee will offer for sale at public auction all that property located in the Buchanan, on the Court House steps 1012 Walnut Street, Grundy, Virginia on July 6, 2026 at 1:00 PM, the property with improvements to wit: RT624 GARDEN CRK 0 0 AC 1.668 HORNE, KENNITH & PATTY Tax Map No. 2HH124070 THIS COMMUNICATION IS FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR. TERMS OF SALE: ALL CASH. A bidder's deposit of 10% of the sale price, will be required in cash, certified or cashier's check. Settlement within fifteen (15) days of sale, otherwise Trustees may forfeit deposit. Additional terms to be announced at sale. Loan type: Conventional. Reference Number 25-300380. PROFESSIONAL FORECLOSURE CORPORATION OF VIRGINIA, Substitute Trustees, C/O LOGS LEGAL GROUP LLP, Mail-ing Address: 8520 Cliff Cameron Dr., Suite 330, Charlotte, North Carolina 28269 (703) 449-5800. VM-453859 05-07;2026 06-04,11;2026

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Cumberland Plateau Regional Waste Management Authority (Buchanan, Dickenson and Russell Counties) is seeking proposals from qualified Attorney or Law firms to 1) provide legal services and 2) to provide consultation for contracts and legal documents at the request of the Board of Directors and their Executive Director. For any interested firm wishing to respond, a copy of the 2026 CPRWMA Request For Proposal (RFP), can be obtained by requesting a Cumberland Plateau Regional Waste Management Authority RFP at tobyedwards@cprwma.com or picking up a copy at 135 Highland Drive, Suite C, Lebanon, VA 24266 between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Monday thru Friday. Evaluation Criteria for indi-

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viduals or firms responding include but not limited to: 1.Experience of firm with similar projects and working with local government. 2.Consulting experience with public and private agencies (local, regional, state and federal). 3.Similar projects with local, state and federal agencies. 4.Ability to begin and complete projects quickly. 5.Cost for case-by-case basis. Submit 2 copies: Toby Edwards, Executive Director Cumberland Plateau Regional Waste Management Authority Attention: Legal Services 2026 135 Highland Drive, Suite C Lebanon, VA 24266 Phone: 276-883-5403 Cell: 276-698-9414 Deadline for submission is 4:00 p.m., Wednesday, June 17, 2026. The CPRWMA will be conducting Competitive Negotiation in accordance with 2.2-4300 of the Code of Virginia (as amended) (The Virginia Public Procurement Act) and reserves the right to reject any and all proposals. The Cumberland Plateau Regional Waste Authority is an Equal Opportunity Employer and will not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, national origin, age, handicap or faith based organization. Minority and female-owned firms and local firms are encouraged to participate. All responding firms should comply with Executive Order 11246. VAM-466011 06-04,11;2026

REQUEST FOR GRAVEL PROPOSALS

The Buchanan County Public Service Authority will receive proposals for a gravel contractor for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027. Bids will be received until 3:00 p.m., Friday June 26, 2026, and then at said office publicly opened and read aloud. Proposals will not be accepted by fax. Bidding documents may be obtained by contacting the Buchanan County Public Service Authority, P. O. Box 30, Vansant, VA 24656, Phone (276)935-5827. VAM-466547 06-04,11;2026

REQUEST FOR BID PROPOSALS

The Buchanan County Public Service Authority will receive proposals for a contractor to work on as,

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needed basis installing and repairing pump station, telemetry, electrical, etc. Cost shall be evaluated on a price per hour for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027. Bid packages may be picked up at the Authority office located in Vansant, Virginia. No proposals will be accepted by fax. Proposals will be received until 2:15 p.m. on Friday, June 26, 2026, then at said office opened and read aloud. Further questions pertaining to this proposal may be directed to Mr. Tim Hess, Executive Director (276) 935-5827. VAM-466521 06-04,11;2026

REQUEST FOR GRAVEL HAUL PROPOSALS

The Buchanan County Public Service Authority will receive proposals for a gravel haul contractor for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027. Bids will be received until 2:45 p.m., Friday, June 6, 2026. And then at said office publicly opened and read aloud. Proposals will not be accepted by fax.

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Bidding documents may be obtained by contacting the Buchanan County Public Service Authority, P. O. Box 30, Vansant, VA 24656, Phone (276) 935-5827. VAM-466506 06-04,11;2026

REQUEST FOR BID PROPOSALS

The Buchanan County Public Service Authority will receive proposals for a contractor to work on as needed basis installing water and sewer supply lines at a price per foot and various other tasks at a price per hour for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027. Bid packages may be picked up at the Authority office located in Vansant, Virginia. No proposals will be accepted by fax. Proposals will be received until 2:30 p.m. on Friday, June 26, 2026. Then at said office opened and read aloud. Further questions pertaining to this proposal may be directed to Mr. Tim Hess, Executive Director (276) 935-5827. VAM-466543 06-04,11;2026

Notice or Advertisement

The Buchanan County School Board is accepting proposals for the following contracted services:

- Hearing Impaired Services
- Occupational Therapy Services
- Physical Therapy Services
- School Psychologist Services
- Counseling Services

Proposals Due: June 19, 2026 at 8:00 a.m.

Please submit proposals for the 2026-2027 school year to Tabby Cline at the School Board Office located at 4447 Slate Creek Road, Suite 100, Grundy, VA 24614.

Buchanan County Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

The Buchanan County Public School System is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Dr. Hammons named ACP Director of Rural Health Advancement

By **CHAD COOPER**
coopkam@gmail.com

Appalachian College of Pharmacy Alumna Dr. Jennifer Hammons, who earned both her Doctor of Pharmacy degree (2018) and her Doctor of Public Health degree (2025) from ACP has been named the Director of Rural Health Advancement at the college.

“We are pleased to welcome Dr. Hammons as the ACP director of rural health advancement,” said ACP Provost and Dean Susan Mayhew. “Not only was she the first ACP student to graduate from our new Doctor of Public Health program, but she also double majored in the program, earning her DrPH in rural health and in integrative and preventative health.

“In her new role at ACP, she will not only be teaching our students, but she will also be overseeing rural health access programming and advocating for pharmacists’ roles in underserved communities like ours,” Mayhew added.

“This position is a natural extension of both my PharmD and DrPH training, combining clinical pharmacy, public health leadership, workforce development and rural health advocacy,” Hammons said. “Much of my focus will center on helping prepare the next generation of pharmacists and public health practitioners to better understand healthcare access, prevention, chronic disease management and the social determinants of health in rural Appalachia.”

At ACP, Hammons will teach pharmacy practice and public health while overseeing pharmacist-led interventions connecting clinical care, prevention and rural health access, while continuing to advocate for pharmacist provider status and the expansion of pharmacists’ roles in underserved communities.

Hammons first chose ACP because of what she said was its deep commitment to serving rural and underserved populations, aligning perfectly with her own calling to bring equitable, compassionate care to the communities she calls home.

Hammons completed her undergrad requirements through Southwest Virginia Community College to begin studying at ACP and went on to successfully earn her PharmD degree in 2018.

While pursuing her degrees through ACP, Hammons has also been a full-time mother and wife. Married to Shane Hammons, they have three daughters, Azzy, age 20, Mia, age 18; and Camille, age 15.

“As a pharmacist, I’ve always believed pharmacy extends far beyond dispensing and this role allows me to help build programs, partnerships and educational experiences that strengthen the future of rural healthcare,” Hammons said. “My DrPH background allows me to approach these challenges from a systems and population health perspective, helping bridge clinical care with broader public health initiatives. The DrPH degree is designed to develop public health leaders who can translate knowledge into real-world community impact, systems change and policy-driven solutions. ACP gave



Photo courtesy of Appalachian College of Pharmacy
Dr. Jennifer Hammons, a two-time graduate of the Appalachian College of Pharmacy, has been named the college’s director of rural health advancement. Hammons earned her Doctor of Pharmacy degree in 2018 and became the first graduate of ACP’s Doctor of Public Health program in 2025.

me the opportunity to become both.”

Hammons said ACP’s role in educating the next generation of pharmacists is critical.

“Appalachian College of Pharmacy (ACP) represents more than just a place of learning, it is a mission-driven institution rooted in the heart of Central Appalachia,” Hammons said. “ACP is building pharmacists who not only understand medications and patient care, but also the broader social, economic and public health factors that impact entire communities.

“The future of healthcare is interconnected,” she added. “Recognizing that pharmacy and public health are no longer separate conversations, especially in rural and underserved communities where healthcare professionals are often the frontline connection between patient care and broader community health outcomes. Building and developing that interconnection is essential to the future of rural healthcare.”

“ACP is home,” Hammons said. “I am so happy to be here.”



Multiple area students attending Radford University were named to the 2026 spring Dean’s List.

Local students named to Spring Dean’s List at Radford U.

By **CHAD COOPER**
coopkam@gmail.com

Several students from Buchanan and surrounding counties have been recognized for their academic achievement after being named to the Spring 2026 Dean’s List at Radford University.

Appearing on the Dean’s List is the highest academic recognition students can receive at Radford University for their performance during a semester.

To qualify for the Dean’s List, students must complete at least 12 semester hours of coursework graded on an A-F scale, earn a grade-point average of at least 3.4 in courses not graded on a pass-fail basis, receive no grade lower than a C and have no incomplete grades.

Local students earning Dean’s List honors for the Spring 2026 semester include:

Eryan Blankenship of Hurley
Hannah Carter of Honaker
Lillyan Porter of Grundy
Jacob Matney of Grundy
Caleb Shortt of Pilgrims Knob
Heather Underwood of Jewell Ridge
Kendrick Matney of Raven
Evan Brown of Vansant
Emily O’Quinn of Vansant
Elijah Altizer of Honaker
Adam Campechano of Grundy

VA250 Mobile Museum brings history to life in Lebanon

By **SHAWN STREET**
sstreet@hdmidiallc.com

To celebrate America’s 250th anniversary and to honor the rich history of Virginia, the VA250 Mobile Museum made a stop in Russell County last week.

Supported by a partnership between Food City and Virginia’s America Revolution 250 Commission, the museum made a stop at the Lebanon Food City on June 4.

The VA250 Mobile Museum Experience tells the story of Virginia’s pivotal role in the American Revolution. From Patrick Henry’s 1775 cry, “Give me Liberty, or Give

me Death” to General George Washington’s victory at the Siege of Yorktown in 1781, all Virginians played critical roles in the sacrifice, strife, and ultimate earning of American independence.

A touch screen device provided information about the battles Virginia fought in throughout the American Revolution.

“Out of Many, One: The VA250 Mobile Museum Experience” tells their stories – and America’s history, made in Virginia.

The newly built VA250 Mobile Museum was specifically designed to include pertinent content relative to Southwest Virginia’s rich heritage.

ADOPT A PET



Never adventure alone

This adventure ally is a ten-week-old male Labrador Retriever mix. His short coat is colored muted white. He has kind eyes and a lonely expression. His personality is friendly, gentle and affectionate. He is super sweet and loves lap time. The animal shelter is located at 1191 Dogpound Road. For more information about these animals, please call the shelter at (276) 935-4067.



Also available for adoption is this seven-month-old female kitten. Her shiny coat is colored black and white. She has bright gold eyes and long white whiskers. Her temperament is calm and low-key. She shares her kennel at the shelter with two adorable sisters. The animal shelter is located at 1191 Dogpound Road. For more information about these animals, please call the shelter at (276) 935-4067.

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