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Burge updates School Board on remaining work at Southern Gap

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

Construction Superintendent Tim Burge updated the Buchanan County School Board on remaining work at Southern Gap High School during its Oct. 20 meeting.

Burge said the project's punch list was down to about 100 items, with crews making progress on athletic facilities and career and technical education spaces.

"Everything's going well," Burge said. "So we are continuing to work off the punch list on the project. It's down to about a hundred items now, so it's getting knocked down quickly."

During his Skanska construction update, Burge said grass on the softball field was coming in nicely. Fencing at the baseball and softball fields had been installed except where the dugouts would go, with bleachers and dugouts scheduled for installation that week.

Crews were also preparing the ground for the track and placing stone before installing the curb and asphalt. Fencing around the soccer and track field would follow.

Inside the school, work was nearing completion in several career and technical education areas, including the welding lab, where students were expected to begin welding this past Monday.

Burge acknowledged that getting students into the welding lab had been a concern for some parents and others. Some equipment transferred from the former schools still needed electrical connections, but he said students would be able to begin welding while that remaining work was completed.

In the building trades area, a few unfinished items were expected to be completed the following week. The auto body paint booth was scheduled for completion by Oct. 30.

Work in the diesel lab included finishing installation of a lift and awaiting delivery of a gantry crane, which Burge said was expected that week.

"So I think most everything now is wrapping up as far as the CTE spaces," he said.

Rocklick school board member Brian "Doc" Looney

SEE **BURGE UPDATES | 5A**



Children take aim during an archery activity at Elk Fest, which offered opportunities for young visitors to try outdoor sports (Photo by Traci Evans).

Elk Fest brings campers, crowds and community spirit to Southern Gap

By CHAD COOPER
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Recreational vehicles and campers rolled into Southern Gap as Elk Fest brought three days of food, wildlife education, family activities and bluegrass music to Buchanan County Oct. 22-24.

The festival concluded Saturday following a weekend that celebrated the region's outdoor attractions and Appalachian traditions, beginning with a nearly 200-person gathering at the Buchanan County Chamber of Commerce's Wild Game Dinner.

Held Thursday evening at the Southern Gap Visitor Center, the dinner offered guests a chance to share a meal while helping kick off the festival.

The Shack, of Wise, catered the event with a

SEE **ELK FEST | 2A**

Woman killed, driver seriously injured in Buchanan County crash

By CHAD COOPER
cookam@gmail.com

A woman died, and a Hurley man suffered serious injuries in a single-vehicle crash Friday morning, Oct. 23, on Contrary Creek Road in Buchanan County, according to Virginia State Police.

Melissa N. Wolford, 44, was a passenger in a southbound 1993 Chevrolet GMT-400 when the vehicle ran off the right shoulder around 10 a.m. The driver overcorrected, and the vehicle crossed the road, ran off the left side, struck an embankment and overturned, police said.

Melissa Wolford was ejected from the vehicle and died from her injuries. Police said she was not wearing a seat belt.

The driver, Larry D. Wolford Jr., 50, of Hurley, suffered serious injuries. Police said he also was not wearing a seat belt.

The crash remains under investigation.

Southern Gap amphitheater nears first-phase completion; IDA seeks fencing grant

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

Construction on the first phase of Southern Gap's amphitheater could finish in November, bringing the outdoor music venue one step closer to hosting events in 2027.

Sunset Holler Director and President Asher McGlothlin updated the Buchanan County Industrial Development Authority during its Oct. 19 meeting at the Southern Gap Transportation and Logistics Center. He

SEE **SOUTHERN GAP | 5A**



Sunset Holler CEO Asher McGlothlin updates the Buchanan County Industrial Development Authority on construction progress at the Southern Gap amphitheater during its Oct. 19 meeting at the Southern Gap Transportation and Logistics Center. (Photo by Chad Cooper)

Energy proposal could bring jobs, new use to former Twin Valley campus

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

The former Twin Valley High School campus could host an energy project that generates electricity from methane, creates jobs and potentially gives the school building a new purpose.

Diversified Energy representatives outlined the proposal during an Oct. 20 meeting at the Whitewood Community Center, where nearly 50 people attended and asked about employment, utility costs and potential effects on neighboring homes.

Jeremey Ward, director of the Buchanan County Industrial Development Authority, said the proposed project would use coal bed methane to generate electricity. He described the operation as producing little to no emissions and offering an opportunity to bring a few career jobs to the property.

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Children concentrate on keeping their eggs balanced during an egg-carrying competition at Elk Fest, part of the festival's family activities (Photo by Traci Evans).



Children try their luck fishing during Elk Fest at Southern Gap. Participants were allowed to keep the fish they caught (Photo by Traci Evans).

ELK FEST

FROM PAGE 1A

menu featuring peppered bison flank steak, kangaroo and sweet potato mini pies, and Southern elk sliders. The sliders featured sharp cheddar, sweet bacon onion jam and chow chow, while the bison was rubbed with black pepper and garlic, seared in cast iron and thinly sliced.

"First, I want to thank SWVA Sportsmen for partnering with the Buchanan County Chamber of Commerce to host the Wild Game Dinner," Buchanan County Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Chad Cooper said. "Our Chamber and board of directors are grateful to be part of Elk Fest, which brings visitors to Buchanan County to experience our beautiful mountains, see the elk that have become such an important part of our county and meet the wonderful people who call this place home.

"I also want to thank the many volunteers who helped make the evening possible and The Shack for a wonderful meal. Southern Gap Outdoor Adventure at the Breaks was an outstanding host. I cannot think of a better setting for a Wild Game Dinner than the Southern Gap Visitor Center. Belle and her staff, along with Traci Bostic and Soiree, helped make it a special evening.

"A special thank-you goes to Traci Bostic and Buchanan County Tourism for promoting Elk Fest and showcasing everything our county has to offer. Traci deserves a great deal of credit for helping bring people here and giving them reasons to return.

"Seeing so many visitors enjoying themselves in Buchanan County and hearing that they want to come back means a lot to me. It reminds me how blessed I am to call this place home."

SWVA Sportsmen held its annual live auction during the evening, with High Hopes Auction conducting the bidding. Items included a rifle, a decorated feather, a shed elk antler featuring artwork and other handmade pieces.

The evening also included recognition of local conservationist Leon Boyd for his work with elk habitat.

Bobby Looney, representing the Big Sandy Soil and Water Conservation District, presented Boyd with a letter of appreciation from U.S. Rep. Morgan Griffith. Boyd also received a letter of appreciation from the conservation district.

The presentations placed a spotlight on the conservation work behind the wildlife that helped inspire the festival.

Friday's activities turned toward outdoor education, with Buchanan County seventh graders visiting for a day of learning. The program included a Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources canine officer and elk biologist, along with presentations from the Wildlife Center of Virginia.

Archery demonstrations gave participants an opportunity to learn about the sport and try hitting targets. Entries also opened for the Mountain Arts Showcase at the visitor center.

Appalachian storytelling and a community jam session rounded out Friday's activities, bringing the region's stories and music into the celebration.

Saturday offered a full day of activities for families, from hayrides and bounce houses to a Euro bungee trampoline, archery and fishing. Participants in the fishing activity were allowed to keep their catches.

Friendly competition brought another dimension to the festival, with a cornhole tournament, pie baking contest, Mountain Arts Showcase and Appalachian Games.

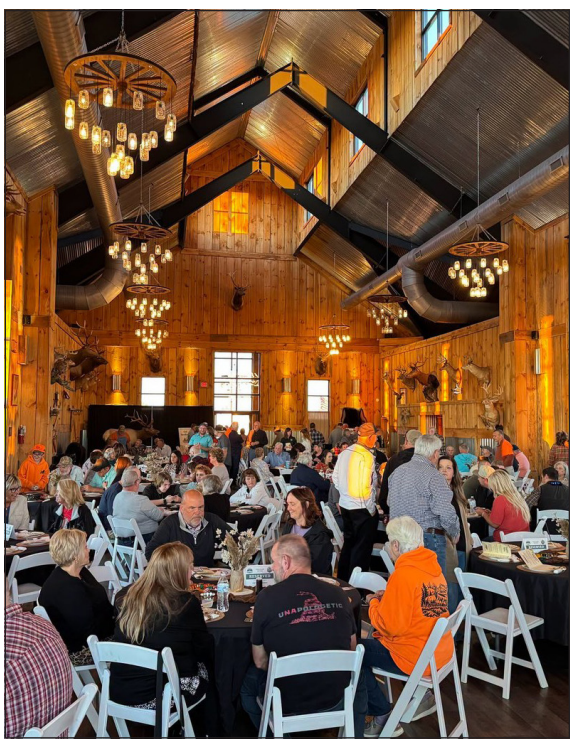
The games included an egg toss, sack race and Load the Coal Car competition. An ATV/Sasquatch Scavenger Hunt added another activity for festival participants.

An awards presentation Saturday afternoon recognized winners from the contests and games.

Vendors offered handmade goods, crafts and other merchandise, while food trucks served visitors throughout the day.

The festival's final evening featured three bluegrass acts at the Southern Gap Visitor Center, with performances free and open to the public.

Zoe Howard & Yellow Line Bluegrass opened the music lineup, followed by Cody Hagerman & Still Pickin'. Ralph Stanley II & The Clinch Mountain Boys closed the evening.



Nearly 200 guests gather at the Southern Gap Visitor Center for the Wild Game Dinner, hosted by the Buchanan County Chamber of Commerce in partnership with Southwest Virginia Sportsmen to kick off Elk Fest on Oct. 22 (Photo by SGOA).



Peppered bison flank steak, kangaroo and sweet potato pie, and Southern elk sliders highlight the Wild Game Dinner menu. The Shack, of Wise, catered the meal at the Southern Gap Visitor Center (Photo by Angel St. Clair).

PUBLIC NOTICE

PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT – QUESTION 1

To Be Voted On at the November 3, 2026, Election

BALLOT QUESTION

Should the Constitution of Virginia be amended to (i) protect the freedom to make personal decisions about prenatal care, childbirth, postpartum care, birth control, abortion, miscarriage management, and fertility care; (ii) protect doctors, nurses, and patients from being punished for these decisions; and (iii) allow for restrictions on access to abortion during the third trimester of pregnancy except when the patient's health is at risk or the pregnancy cannot survive?

EXPLANATION FOR VOTERS
QUESTION 1

Present Law

Currently, the Virginia Constitution does not explicitly provide to its citizens a right to reproductive freedom nor does it explicitly protect or prohibit certain kinds of health care procedures or decisions.

Proposed Amendment

The proposed amendment would add to the Virginia Constitution's Bill of Rights the fundamental right to make and carry out decisions about a person's own reproductive care with only certain, specific exceptions. The proposed amendment specifically allows the state government to pass laws to regulate abortion care in the third trimester of pregnancy, but requires any such law to allow for abortion care when it is medically needed to protect the life and health of the pregnant person or because the fetus is not viable.

FULL TEXT OF AMENDMENT

[Proposed new language is underlined. Deleted old language is ~~stricken~~.]

ARTICLE I

BILL OF RIGHTS

Section 11-A. Fundamental right to reproductive freedom.

That every individual has the fundamental right to reproductive freedom, including the ability to make and carry out decisions relating to one's own prenatal care, childbirth, postpartum care, contraception, abortion care, miscarriage management, and fertility care.

An individual's right to reproductive freedom shall not be, directly or indirectly, denied, burdened, or infringed upon unless justified by a compelling state interest achieved by the least restrictive means.

Notwithstanding the above, the Commonwealth may regulate the provision of abortion care in the third trimester, provided that in no circumstance shall the Commonwealth prohibit an abortion (i) that in the professional judgment of a physician is medically indicated to protect the life or physical or mental health of the pregnant individual or (ii) when in the professional judgment of a physician the fetus is not viable.

The Commonwealth shall not discriminate in the protection or enforcement of this fundamental right.

The Commonwealth shall not penalize, prosecute, or otherwise take adverse action against an individual based on such individual's own exercise of this fundamental right or such individual's own actual, potential, perceived, or alleged pregnancy outcomes, including miscarriage, stillbirth, or abortion. The Commonwealth shall not penalize, prosecute, or otherwise take adverse action against any individual for aiding or assisting another individual in exercising such other individual's right to reproductive freedom with such other individual's voluntary consent.

For the purposes of this section, a state interest is compelling only if it is for the limited purpose of maintaining or improving the health of an individual seeking care, consistent with accepted clinical standards of care and evidence-based medicine and does not infringe on that individual's autonomous decision making.

This section shall be self-executing. Any provision of this section held invalid shall be severable from the remaining portions of the section.

PUBLIC NOTICE

PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT – QUESTION 2

To Be Voted On at the November 3, 2026, Election

BALLOT QUESTION

Should the Constitution of Virginia be amended to (i) remove the ban on same-sex marriage; (ii) affirm that two adults may marry regardless of sex, gender, or race; and (iii) require all legally valid marriages to be treated equally under the law?

EXPLANATION FOR VOTERS
QUESTION 2

Present Law

Marriages, civil unions, and other legal relationships with the same rights, benefits, and effects of marriage between persons of the same sex or gender are prohibited under Virginia's Constitution. This prohibition is no longer enforceable as a result of the United States Supreme Court decision in *Obergefell v. Hodges* in 2015, but the prohibition on marriages between persons of the same sex or gender remains in the state's Constitution. If the Supreme Court were to overturn its previous decision, that prohibition would be enforceable again.

Proposed Amendment

The proposed amendment removes the prohibition on marriages between persons of the same sex or gender from the Virginia Constitution's Bill of Rights. It is replaced with the fundamental right to marry, requiring the state to recognize and treat equally under the law any lawful marriage between two adult persons, regardless of the sex, gender, or race of either person. The proposed amendment prohibits the state from denying a marriage license to two adult persons because of their sex, gender, or race.

FULL TEXT OF AMENDMENT

[Proposed new language is underlined. Deleted old language is ~~stricken~~.]

ARTICLE I

BILL OF RIGHTS

Section 15-A. Marriage.

That ~~only a union between one man and one woman may be a marriage valid in or recognized by this Commonwealth and its political subdivisions~~ marriage is one of the vital personal rights essential to the orderly pursuit of happiness.

This Commonwealth and its political subdivisions shall not ~~create or recognize a legal status for relationships of unmarried individuals that intends to approximate the design, qualities, significance, or effects of marriage~~ deny the issuance of a marriage license to two adult persons seeking a lawful marriage on the basis of the sex, gender, or race of such persons. ~~Nor shall this Commonwealth or its political subdivisions create or recognize another union, partnership, or other legal status to which is assigned the rights, benefits, obligations, qualities, or effects of marriage~~ This Commonwealth and its political subdivisions shall recognize any lawful marriage between two adult persons and treat such marriages equally under the law, regardless of the sex, gender, or race of such persons.

QUESTIONS? Call
The Virginia Mountaineerat
(540) 389-9355

LOOKING BACK
From our files

By CHAD COOPER
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55 YEARS AGO

OCTOBER 28, 1971

William Clyde Dennis, who became a Master Mason in Sandy Valley Lodge No. 17 on September 19, 1921, recently received his 50-year Masonic Veterans Emblem as a gift from the Grand Lodge of Virginia. Mr. Dennis served as Master of Sandy Valley Lodge in 1934. He is the son of W. L. Dennis, a charter member of this Lodge and the second Worshipful Master of Sandy Valley.

Full details are now available to Buchanan County farmers on the upcoming election of ASC committeemen says A.B. Hess, Chairman of the Buchanan County ASC Committee. ASC community committeemen elections this year will be held December 1.

45 YEARS AGO

OCTOBER 29, 1981

Ricky Ashby gained 202 yards rushing on 30 carries and David Davis scored four touchdowns to raise his league leading total to 81 points as the Hurley Rebels thumped Jonesville Bulldogs 35-10 at Jonesville, Friday night. Brian Justus, Ledford Gibson and Richard Justus led a solid team defensive effort.

Visiting Grundy defeated Whitewood's Lady Indians Thursday night 72-40 in a non-district girls basketball clash. Tracy Fletcher led the way for Grundy with 40 points and 27 rebounds. For Whitewood Jane Mullins made 15 points.

35 YEARS AGO

OCTOBER 31, 1991

The Garden Green Lady Dragons clinched second place in the Black Diamond District standings with a 50-33 win over the Whitewood Lady Indians Thursday night at Garden. Garden outscored Whitewood 20-5 in the third quarter. Debra Rowe scored eight of the Lady Dragons' points in the decisive period and, combined with Monica Blankenship, who scored a game-high 17, for 31 points.

Garden's Chris Hagerman rushed 30 times for 225 yards and scored two touchdowns as the senior running back powered the Green Dragons to a 20-14 Black Diamond District win over Pocahontas Indians Friday night at Garden.

20 YEARS AGO

NOVEMBER 2, 2006

Voters in the North Grundy District will have a choice to make Tuesday when they go to the polls to elect a supervisor to represent them for the next year. James Carroll Branham, the Democratic incumbent, is seeking to be returned to the post he was appointed to fill in the wake of Joe Keene's tragic death while Keene was serving as the North Grundy District representative on the Buchanan County Board of Supervisors.

Grundy's depth helped the Lady Wave claim the Southwest District cross country title at Harris Hart Farm in Tazewell. Hailey Stiltner, Kasey Bowman, Ali Sutherland, Courtney Hibbitts and Corie Rife all finished in the top 15 as Grundy edged Carroll County 52-54 for team honors. Matt Baldwin finished ninth in the boys' meet to qualify for regional competition as an individual.



Southern Gap High School seniors celebrate their inaugural homecoming with a class float in the school's first homecoming parade Oct. 23. The parade featured the theme "Night in Rio." (Photo by Chad Cooper)

Southern Gap celebrates first homecoming with parade, Eagle spirit

By CHAD COOPERCOOPKAM@GMAIL.COM

Class floats, young athletes, homecoming court members and community organizations helped Southern Gap High School celebrate a new tradition Oct. 23 as its first homecoming parade made its way from Poplar Gap Athletic Park to the new school.

With the theme "Night in Rio," the parade brought students, families, local businesses and organizations together for an afternoon of Eagle spirit during the school's inaugural year.

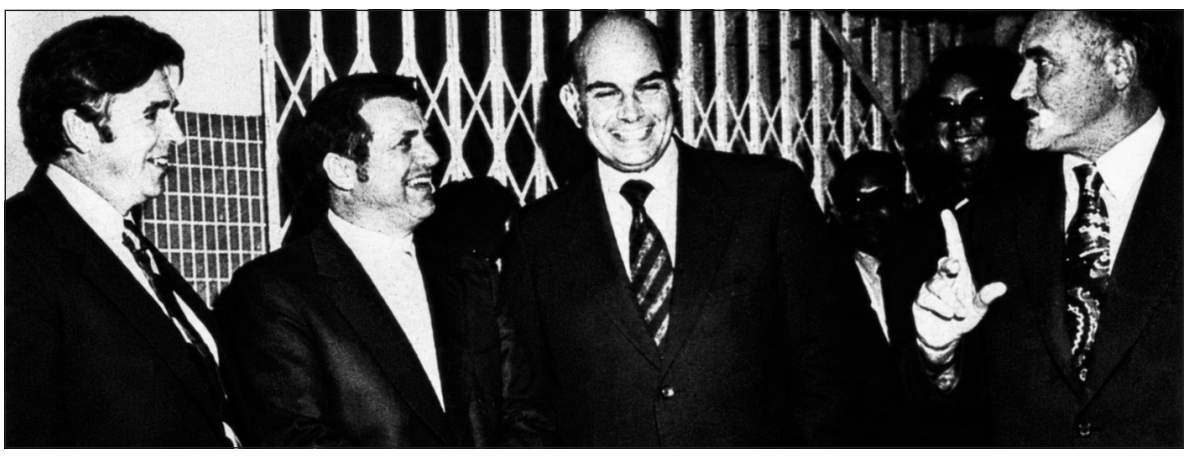
Crowds lined the roads along the parade route,

SEE **FIRST HOMECOMING | 6A**



The Southern Gap Golden Oldies join the celebration during Southern Gap High School's first homecoming parade Oct. 23. (Photo by Angel St. Clair)

GOOD OL DAYS



This photograph appeared in the Oct. 28, 1971, edition of The Virginia Mountaineer. Francis Gary Powers, famed U-2 pilot and former Buchanan County resident, addressed about 600 people at a Republican banquet at Grundy Senior High School. Also participating were Congressman William C. Wampler; Carl McAfee, a state Senate candidate who traveled to Russia with the Powers family and sought the pilot's release; House of Delegates candidates Harold Boyd of Whitewood and Douglas Hess of Tazewell; and Buchanan County GOP candidates. Wampler spoke on behalf of lieutenant governor candidate George Shaffner and local candidates.

PUBLIC NOTICE

PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT – QUESTION 3

To Be Voted On at the November 3, 2026, Election

BALLOT QUESTION

Should the Constitution of Virginia be amended (i) to provide for the fundamental right to vote in the Commonwealth, (ii) to revise the qualifications of voters so that a person convicted of a felony is not entitled to vote during his period of incarceration but is automatically invested with the right to vote upon release from incarceration, and (iii) to update the existing prohibition on voting by persons found to be mentally incompetent to instead apply to persons who have been found to lack the capacity to understand the act of voting?

EXPLANATION FOR VOTERS QUESTION 3

Present Law

Virginia's Constitution currently provides that a person who is convicted of any felony loses the right to vote for the rest of their life unless the Governor of Virginia takes administrative action to restore that specific person's right to vote. This is the only means of getting back the right to vote after a felony conviction.

The current constitutional provision also imposes a broad restriction, while using outdated terminology, on voting by persons found to be incapacitated. A person who is determined by a court to be incapacitated, regardless of the kind of incapacity, loses the right to vote, and only a court can restore the person's right to vote later.

Proposed Amendment

The proposed amendment enshrines in the Constitution the fundamental right of all qualified persons in the Commonwealth to vote. Two exceptions to this right are for persons who are serving a sentence of incarceration for a felony conviction and persons who are determined by a court to not understand the act of voting. Such right cannot otherwise be restricted by laws.

Under the proposed amendment, a person who is convicted of a felony loses the right to vote during their period of incarceration. Once released from incarceration, the person gets back the right to vote without needing to apply for restoration by the Governor.

The proposed amendment also requires a specific finding by a court that a person does not understand the act of voting in order for that person's right to vote to be taken away.

With the right to vote, a person also has the right to be a juror, the right to be elected to an office, and the right to be a notary public.

FULL TEXT OF AMENDMENT

[Proposed new language is underlined. Deleted old language is ~~stricken~~.]

ARTICLE II.

FRANCHISE AND OFFICERS.

Section 1. Qualifications of voters.

(a) In elections by the people, the qualifications of voters shall be as follows: Each voter shall be a citizen of the United States, shall be eighteen years of age, shall fulfill the residence requirements set forth in ~~this section~~ subsection (b), and shall be registered to vote pursuant to this article. Every person who meets these qualifications shall have the fundamental right to vote in the Commonwealth, and such right shall not be abridged by law, except that:

(1) No person who has been convicted of a felony shall be ~~qualified~~ entitled to vote ~~unless his civil rights have been restored by the Governor or other appropriate authority.~~ during any period of incarceration for such felony conviction, but every such person, upon release from incarceration for that felony conviction and without further action required of him, shall be invested with all political rights, including the right to vote; and

~~As prescribed by law, no~~ (2) No person who has been adjudicated ~~to be mentally incompetent~~ by a court of competent jurisdiction to lack the capacity to understand the act of voting shall be ~~qualified~~ entitled to vote during such period of incapacity until his ~~competency~~ capacity has been reestablished as prescribed by law.

(b) The residence requirements shall be that each voter shall be a resident of the Commonwealth and of the precinct where he votes. Residence, for all purposes of qualification to vote, requires both domicile and a place of abode. The General Assembly may provide for persons who are employed overseas, and their spouses and dependents residing with them, and who are qualified to vote except for relinquishing their place of abode in the Commonwealth while overseas, to vote in the Commonwealth subject to conditions and time limits defined by law. The General Assembly may provide for persons who are qualified to vote except for having moved their residence from one precinct to another within the Commonwealth to continue to vote in a former precinct subject to conditions and time limits defined by law. The General Assembly may also provide, in elections for President and Vice President of the United States, alternatives to registration for new residents of the Commonwealth.

(c) Any person who will be qualified with respect to age to vote at the next general election shall be permitted to register in advance and also to vote in any intervening primary or special election.

Congressman Griffith: Wagner



MORGAN **GRIFFITH**

WEEKLY REPORT FROM THE CAPITOL

Major League Baseball (MLB) will crown new champions this fall.

The Tampa Bay Rays and Milwaukee Brewers will compete for their first World Series championship in franchise history.

Just before Americans welcome a first-time baseball champion, Southwest Virginia welcomed a first-of-a-kind Hall of Famer to the region.

In October, Hall of Fame inductee Billy Wagner returned home for a dedication ceremony in downtown Tazewell.

Many in Southwest Virginia claim Billy Wagner as their own.

Wagner's place of birth is Marion. But when he was with his aunt and uncle in his high school years, he lived in Tannersville.

He attended Tazewell High School where he was a dual-sport athlete in football and baseball.

Because of multiple broken right arms he suffered as a kid, he converted to pitching left-handed. Playing for the late Tazewell High School coach Lou Peery, Wagner became a pitching sensation.

Following his high school success, he stayed close to home playing for Ferrum College in Franklin County. After a dominant performance in National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division III, where he set four records that stand to this day, Wagner was selected 12th overall in the 1993 MLB Draft.

To many MLB fans, Wagner is a legendary ballplayer. But to Virginians in our region, Wagner is more than that.

Wagner is a legendary human being who cares for Western Virginia.

On the day of the ceremony, I traveled to other events, including the Apple Dumpling Festival in Stuart and a fall festival thrown by the Radford Veterans of Foreign Wars.

When talking to constituents about my day's plans, I mentioned that I'd later be attending the dedication ceremony in Tazewell.

I heard numerous accounts from people that Wagner the man was an amazing person.

One lady told me she got to know Wagner through one of his roommates at Ferrum. She recounted to me that Wagner is one of the finest men she has ever met. He cares about people and he gives back to his communities.

Wagner has a history of supporting childhood initiatives. Through the Wagner Family Foundation, Wagner helped direct resources to literacy initiatives, homeless outreach programs and organizations serving at-risk youth.

In 2005, Wagner founded the Second Chance Learning Center in Bluefield, Virginia. This Center provided tutoring and counseling services for local underserved children.

During Wagner's 2025 Hall of Fame induction speech, he wore a Tazewell County pin and Ferrum College pin. Earlier this year, Wagner joined Ferrum baseball's coaching staff.

Despite a time-consuming career that spanned 16 seasons and forced him to move back and forth across the country, Wagner never failed to support his family and stay connected with our region.

Wagner raised his four kids alongside his wife, Sarah, who is also a standout athlete from Ferrum College. Following her collegiate basketball career, she was inducted into the Ferrum College Hall of Fame. The Wagners deeply love their kids, including a son who plays in the MLB.

With the feedback I received, I headed to the Tazewell dedication ceremony.

I focused my remarks on the human side of Wagner that I learned about. I shared my earlier conversations in the day to highlight the kind of positive impact that Wagner had on his many friends here in Virginia.

Those that attended the ceremony included elected officials and community leaders. Coach Peery's wife listened to Wagner comment about the role models that helped shape his life, and how her husband was almost like a father to Wagner.

The only thing that would have made the day better, according to Wagner, was if Peery was alive to celebrate this moment with him.

After opening by thanking God, Wagner's emotional remarks praised Tazewell: "It was you guys that inspired me. The town of Tazewell means more to me than words can express…This is the hardest speech I have ever had to give, because you are my family and I love you."

After the speeches, he threw a pitch to one of his former Tazewell teammates, who caught it on behalf of all of Wagner's Tazewell and Ferrum teammates. It was a heater!

A new downtown park in Tazewell, "Billy Wagner Park," features a statue of Wagner and a plaque noting his membership in the National Baseball Hall of Fame, something no other D-III athlete has ever done.

It was an honor for me to be there in person and celebrate with the community.

Wagner's words and actions not only inspire athletes and athletic programs in our region. They inspire the human heart.

That is what Southwest Virginia is all about.

If you have questions, concerns, or comments, feel free to contact my office. You can call my Abingdon office at 276-525-1405 or my Christiansburg office at 540-381-5671. To reach my office via email, please visit my website at https://morgangriffith.house.gov/.

Savvy Senior: Why Women Lose Hair as They Age – and What Can Be Done About It

BY JIM MILLER



JIM **MILLER**

SAVVY SENIOR

Dear Savvy Senior,

I'm a 68-year-old woman and over the past few years my hair has become noticeably thinner, especially on top. Is this just part of aging, or could it be a sign of a health problem? And are there treatments that really help women with hair loss?

--Thinning Thelma

Dear Thelma,

Hair thinning is a common concern for women as they age, especially after menopause, but it's not something you should automatically dismiss as getting older. While some hair loss is a normal part of aging, it can also be linked to underlying health conditions, medications, nutritional deficiencies, stress, or other treatable issues. The good news is that in many cases, the cause can be identified and sometimes successfully treated.

Aging changes

One of the most common causes of thinning hair in older women is female pattern hair loss, also called androgenetic alopecia. It usually appears as gradual thinning on the top of the scalp or a widening part, rather than bald patches. After menopause, declining estrogen levels can affect the hair growth cycle, causing strands to become finer, grow more slowly, and shed more easily over time.

Possible causes

But hormones and aging aren't the only explanations. Hair loss can also follow a major illness, surgery, COVID infection, or a period of significant stress. In these cases, shedding often begins a few months later and may improve on its own.

Other possible causes include thyroid disorders, iron deficiency, poor nutrition, autoimmune conditions, and scalp disorders. Medications can also play a role.

Drugs such as blood thinners, antidepressants, beta blockers, cholesterol medications, thyroid treatments, arthritis drugs, and some hormone therapies have all been linked to hair loss in some people. If you suspect a medication may be involved, don't stop it on your own – ask your doctor about alternatives.

Get checked

Because there are so many possible causes, the first step is getting a proper evaluation. See your doctor or a dermatologist if you notice sudden shedding, rapid thinning, bald patches, or scalp itching or pain. They may review your medications, examine your scalp, and order simple blood tests to check for problems such as thyroid imbalance or iron deficiency.

What helps

Treatment depends on the cause. If an underlying condition such as thyroid disease, iron deficiency, medication side effects, or poor nutrition is identified, treating it may help restore hair growth.

For older women with age-related female pattern hair loss, the treatment with the best evidence is topical minoxidil (Rogaine), available over the counter. It can help slow thinning and stimulate some regrowth, but results take several months and continued use is needed to maintain any benefit. Some women who don't respond may be candidates for low-dose oral minoxidil, which is an off-label treatment and requires medical supervision because of possible side effects.

Be cautious with hair-growth supplements. Unless you have a true deficiency, products such as biotin usually provide little benefit and can interfere with certain lab tests, including thyroid and some heart tests.

Gentle hair care and cosmetic options can also help. Avoid harsh chemical treatments, tight hairstyles that pull on the hair, and excessive heat from blow dryers or styling tools. A fuller haircut, thickening styling products, hair-building fibers that reduce the appearance of thinning spots, or lightweight hairpieces and wigs can also improve appearance and confidence.

Hair thinning in older women is common, but it isn't always just a normal part of aging. Because it can sometimes signal an underlying medical issue, it's worth getting checked – especially if it comes on suddenly or worsens quickly. While not every type of hair loss can be reversed, treatment and practical strategies can often slow it down and help you feel better about how your hair looks.

Send your questions or comments to questions@savvysenior.org, or to Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070.



DEBBIE **FOSTER**
ROCKLICK AREA NEWS
276-935-8296

Hello, Readers

God woke me up this morning, and I went to church. Brother Scotty Coleman brought the message, Believe in God. The devil is a liar. He read Mark 5:22-42, Luke 8:11-12 and 2 Timothy 1:7.

I went to Walmart afterward and got my shopping done, and visited with some friends I hadn't seen since Ray passed away.

I was busy Monday; things have piled up around here, and I tried to make a dent in everything. It turned out to be a very small dent, but it was something.

I finally picked up my crochet needles and tried making something Monday night while watching Food Network. I haven't felt like making anything for a while. As it turned out, I still don't feel like making anything, so I put it up without finishing anything.

Up early Tuesday morning, headed to Bristol for my endocrinologist appointment. This will be the first appointment by myself. Ray and I always went in together and tattled on each other's bad eating and snacking habits.

I stopped at Sam's and stocked up on essentials. I filled up with gas; it was $3.77 a gallon.

I worked at the Humane Society Thursday at our yard sale. I've got some things to do tomorrow, but some of the volunteers will be here for Friday.

Friday was spent dealing with paperwork. I am making small progress though.

Reminder: the mobile food truck, Feeding Southwest Virginia, an equal opportunity provider, will be at the Grundy Community Center on Wednesday, Oct. 28. The truck arrives about 9 a.m., and the giveaway starts about 10 a.m. This is a drive-thru event; stay in your car. Someone will come to you.

Prayer warriors, please join me in praying for Myself, I'm lost without my better half. Stanley and Crystal, Amelia, Buck and Harriet, Zach, Brother Dennis and Sister Kathy, Pastor Kenny, Pastor Ronnie and Alma Sliger, James and Linda, Shannon and Christine, Charles and Von, Jack and Annette, Ann, Waylon, Timothy, Harold, Randy and Craig. God knows every need.

And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

Colossians 3:23 KJV

Until next week…

I am OK…I am Blessed…

YOUR HOMETOWN NEWS IS JUST A CLICK AWAY

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www.VirginiaMountaineer.com

THE VIRGINIA MOUNTAINEER

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The Watchman: Kings are coming



JERRY **WARD**

THE WATCHMAN:

In June, a mass No Kings movement started. It is more than a slogan.

Four months later, the movement roared back stronger on October 18, when over 7 million Americans joined 2,700-plus events in all 50 states. This is a nationwide uprising against no kings.

They have no clue what is about to come upon this world. The reason I say this is that the Bible tells us what is coming. Luke chapter 21, verses 34 through 36 and verse 35, tell of a snare coming upon the Earth. A snare is a trap, a lure that brings harm to those who are trapped.

The Bible warns us of the wicked snares and traps that our enemy, the devil, is trying to set for the people of the world. That's why I felt led to write this article about the coming Kings, which must come before the little horn, the antichrist. According to the Bible, the church will be taken from the Earth before the antichrist comes.

We are going to look into these events that must take place because the scripture tells us so. To start, we must look at the book of Daniel, chapter 7, verses seven through eight. It tells us about these coming kings in this chapter. They are called ten horns in Revelation 17:12. They are called kings.

The 10 horns which thou sawest are 10 kings, which have received no kingdom yet, but receive power as kings for one hour with the beast. The beast's kingdom is coming because the Bible tells us so. This is the antichrist's kingdom.

Look at Revelation chapter 12, verse 3, where it says, "And another wonder appeared in heaven, and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and 10 horns and seven crowns upon his head."

What are his heads? This is all explained in the book of Revelation, chapter 17, verses 10 through 18. To get the full picture, we also need to look at Daniel chapter 8, verses 8 through 27. This chapter tells us a lot about where the antichrist comes from, how he comes to power, when he will come to power, and the condition of humanity at that time.

Let's look at Daniel chapter 8, verses 16 through 23, to understand the time and the condition of the world at that time. In Daniel chapter 8:16, the angel Gabriel is sent to give Daniel understanding of the vision he had just received from the Lord. Verses 17 and 19 tell us it will be in the last days (verse 23).

It tells us when transgressions have come to their full. This is deep. It means when our sins and transgressions reach their fullest, to the breaking point.

In chapter 15 of Genesis, God makes an everlasting covenant with Abram before God changes his name to Abraham. God let him know that his seed or people would go into affliction or bondage for 400 years. But in verse 16, he tells Abraham that in the fourth generation, after 400 years, they would come out and receive the promised land.

At that time, the Amorites possessed the land promised to Abraham. God tells Abraham that the time for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full, for they were not yet at the breaking point.

Deuteronomy chapter 9 verses four through five tell why God allowed the Amorites to lose their land. Their iniquity was full, though they repented not. Verses 4 and 5 say that for the weakness of these nations, the Lord drives them out from before thee.

Let's look at Ezekiel chapter 16 verses 49 through 50. It tells us the sins and why God judged Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities of the plain in Genesis chapter 19. Ezekiel 16:48 says, Behold, this was the inequity of the sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness were in her and in her daughter; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.

Verse 50 says they were haughty and committed abomination before me. Therefore, I took them away as I saw fit. If these sins are not repented of, they will bring severe consequences on the nation.

Isaiah chapter 24, verses 19 through 23, tells us what's coming on the Earth, and verse 21 describes what will happen to the kings of the Earth who do not serve him. Isaiah 24:19 says the Earth is utterly broken down.

The Earth is cleansed and dissolved. The Earth is moved exceedingly; verse 20: the Earth shall roll to and fro like a cottage, and the transgressions there shall be heavy upon it, and it shall fall and not rise again.

The time this takes place is just before Christ returns to set up his kingdom on earth, verse 23, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before his ancient glory.

As I am writing today, historic buildings are burning in France as riots sweep the country. Psalm 2, verses one through seven, tell us of the heat and rage just before God sets his king on the holy Hill of Zion.

Verse two says the kings of the Earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, verse three, let us break their bands asunder and cast their cords from us. But verse four says he who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision.

Psalm 129, verse four, says the Lord is righteous; he has cut the cords of the wicked asunder. Isaiah 54, verse seven, says no weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper. Romans 8:31 says, if God is for you, who can be against you?

We are in a battle, but remember what the Lord said to Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 20:15: "Thus says the Lord unto you, be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but it is God's."

We are in a battle. One way we can fight is by voting on Election Day, Nov. 3. If you have not voted yet, get out and vote. Vote no on all amendments if you are for what the Bible says. It's time to pray.

The Watchman

Adult education connection

By BEVERLY PRATER ASHBY



BEVERLY **PRATER ASHBY**

Education can provide many beneficial returns, such as a greater lifetime income, increased personal fulfillment, expanded social skills, and more. However, it can be easy for adult students to lose sight of these outcomes while in an educational program due to the financial costs, decreased time spent with friends and family, and the stress of balancing coursework with one's other responsibilities.

For programs to retain their adult learners, it is important that they incorporate support strategies throughout the student journey that keep these students engaged and remind them about the future payoffs of their commitments and sacrifices.

Southwest Regional Adult Education (SRAE) takes key factors into account and strives to make all their adult programs as conveniently accessible as possible. Also, there is never any cost associated with the courses.

The faculty and staff members of SRAE are there for students to provide as much support and encouragement as they can, but there are some things that adult students and their families and friends can do to keep motivation up as well. For instance, students should never feel alone.

It is important for them to feel they have others to support them along their educational path. This includes friends and family who can pitch in to cook meals, watch kids so a student can put in extra hours into studying, or help students recover from an emotional setback such as a low test score.

Adult students can also benefit from having intrinsic motivation, which means that one needs to find motivation within themselves to develop pride and confidence, attach meaning to their work, and persist despite challenges. This motivation can come from the desire to acquire new job skills, to obtain a diploma or a certification, or to gain personal growth. No matter what the motivating factor may be, the bottom line is that persistence is key. If you are an adult student, do not give up on accomplishing your goals. If you are a friend or family member of someone who is in an educational program, please provide as much support as you can. Sometimes it only takes a few words of encouragement or a dropped-off meal or a couple of hours of childcare to make an enormous difference to someone who is struggling to make ends meet. Having a good support system is oftentimes crucial to helping someone successfully accomplish their goals.

Any adult who is looking for an education program to fit their needs and schedule can call the SRAE office at 276-889-5424. Let the staff help you build your confidence and accomplish your educational goals by finding a class that works for you while providing the support and assistance you need.

BURGE UPDATES

FROM PAGE 1A

raised concerns about the gym locker room arrangement as basketball season approaches.

Looney said dates with junior varsity and varsity boys' and girls' games would require locker room space for several Southern Gap and visiting teams. He asked whether the school could install doors to better separate the locker room sections from shared bathroom areas.

While the arrangement had not presented the same concern during volleyball season, Looney said having boys and girls teams in the building for basketball would create additional challenges.

He expressed concern about placing home and visiting teams in adjoining sections without separation, as well as an alternative that would put Southern Gap's boys and girls teams on the same side with a common bathroom.

Looney asked Burge to look into installing four doors to better separate the spaces.

Burge agreed to check the dimensions and determine how additional doors could work.

North Grundy school board member Angie McClanahan also asked about ventilation equipment in the welding area. Burge said the equipment was scheduled to be started that week, allowing students to begin welding Monday morning.

SOUTHERN GAP

FROM PAGE 1A

also requested $275,000 to cover increased construction costs and improvements, including a perimeter fence.

Following a closed session, the board voted unanimously to apply for a $100,000 grant to install fencing around the amphitheater property to deter vandalism and keep elk out.

McGlothlin showed drone photographs of the construction progress taken by Terra Tech Engineering, including the nearly finished parking area, terraced seating covered with sod and the concrete stage poured in late September.

"Getting very close to finished with this first phase," McGlothlin said.

Additional improvements would follow as funding becomes available, with the goal of making the venue more comfortable and functional for performers and audiences.

McGlothlin said Sunset Holler is in discussions with an experienced venue operator who manages about six facilities across Virginia and North Carolina. The operator visited Southern Gap to tour the area and discuss plans for next year's events.

That experience could help with booking performers, planning concerts and determining staffing and security needs, McGlothlin said. Connections with artists already performing elsewhere in the region could also make Southern Gap a convenient stop between shows.

The proposed fencing would surround approximately 5 to 6 acres and cost about $100,000. Beyond controlling admission during concerts, the fence would help protect the grounds from elk and motorcycle and ATV riders, a concern IDA Chairman Pete Stiltner raised.

McGlothlin said construction costs have increased because of changes related to Virginia Department of Environmental Quality permitting and stormwater requirements. Discussions with the prospective operator also prompted a proposed adjustment to the food truck area to better accommodate attendees and a backstage space for performers.

Restrooms were another topic of discussion. In response to questions from IDA member Brenda Ward, McGlothlin said portable toilets would serve the venue during its first phase.

Permanent restrooms remain a future goal, but connecting them to sewer service could be costly. One option would require extending sewer service and installing a pump station, with an estimated cost of roughly $500,000. Another could require an easement across neighboring property.

For now, the focus remains on completing the first phase and preparing the amphitheater to welcome performers and audiences next year.

SUPERVISORS APPROVE

FROM PAGE 1A

Ward said Diversified also expressed interest in repurposing the former school building.

Twin Valley closed when its students joined those from Grundy, Hurley and Council high schools at Southern Gap High School, which opened this year.

The initial proposal calls for a fuel cell on the athletic fields and flat land surrounding the former school. Company representatives said the equipment would be roughly the size of two tractor-trailer box trailers and capable of generating 1.6 megawatts of electricity.

Jonathan Hess, a project engineer for Diversified, said the property's proximity to Coronado's mining operation in Oakwood would provide access to gas for the development.

Hess said the project could create 10 to 20 jobs and offer industrial customers lower electricity costs. Potential customers have not been identified, and the ultimate destination of the electricity remains unsettled.

Jeff Cooper, a Buchanan County supervisor who also works as a production manager for Diversified, said nearby mines or a future business at the former school could potentially use the electricity.

Company representatives said the generating operation could expand. If Diversified acquires the campus, Hess said the company would consider possible uses for the school building.

Residents living near the property in Pilgrim's Knob questioned how the development would benefit local households, particularly those without access to the county's natural gas resources.

Christine Cole, who lives near the proposed site, asked whether families would receive benefits comparable to the lower electricity costs discussed for industrial customers.

Cooper said he recently asked the Buchanan County Public Service Authority to explore expanding its responsibilities to include natural gas and electricity. The authority currently provides water and sewer services.

Providing residential gas service would require state approval and infrastructure to process and deliver the gas, Cooper said. No timetable for residential service was announced.

Residents also raised questions about noise, lighting, emissions and property values.

Hess said the company would address sound and lighting concerns in its planning. He also said water infrastructure would need improvements to meet the development's demands.

Company representatives cited construction work, permanent employment and potential tax revenue as benefits for Buchanan County. Cooper said the county would not invest money in the project.

Hess said Diversified has applied for a federal grant to help finance the development, but funding has not been awarded.

A public hearing on conveying the former Twin Valley property to the Buchanan County Industrial Development Authority is scheduled for Nov. 3 at 6 p.m. at the Buchanan County Government Center in Grundy.



Southern Gap High School freshmen celebrate homecoming aboard their class float during the school's inaugural parade Oct. 23. (Photo by Chad Cooper)

FIRST HOMECOMING

FROM PAGE 3A

greeting participants and collecting candy handed out from passing entries. Children gathered treats as families and friends shared in the excitement of the school's first homecoming celebration.

Beginning at 2 p.m., the procession traveled from the park along Park Road before turning right onto westbound Southern Gap Road, Rte. 604. Participants then turned right onto Ruffed Grouse Lane, which becomes Eagle Drive, and continued through the roundabout to Southern Gap High School.

Class floats gave students an opportunity to show their creativity and school pride, while local businesses and organizations added their own entries to the celebration.

Beauty queens and members of the homecoming court joined the procession, along with youth football players, cheerleaders, volleyball players, first responders and many others.

The parade gave some of the community's youngest athletes a chance to share in the excitement alongside high school students. It also gave families and supporters an opportunity to help establish a tradition for the new school.

The school spirit carried into Friday night, when a huge crowd gathered at Smiley Ratliff Field at the Red Robertson Sports Complex for the Eagles' first homecoming football game.

Southern Gap capped the celebration with a 40-6 victory over West Virginia rival River View, improving to 6-2.

Here are scenes from Southern Gap's first homecoming parade.



Southern Gap High School juniors show their Eagle spirit with a class float during the school's first homecoming parade Oct. 23. (Photo by Chad Cooper)



Southern Gap High School eighth graders join the homecoming festivities with a class float during the school's first parade Oct. 23. (Photo by Chad Cooper)



Southern Gap High School sophomores take part in the school's first homecoming parade Oct. 23, joining classmates and community groups for the "Night in Rio" celebration. (Photo by Chad Cooper)



Members of the Southern Gap Smurfs team show their Eagle spirit during Southern Gap High School's inaugural homecoming parade Oct. 23. (Photo by Ashley Boyd)



Courthouse News

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

Marriage licenses

Dustin Ray Fleming, 25, of Haysi and Jenna Lashay Carol Ramey, 20, of Vansant, October 10, 2026.

Joshua Donald Justice, 44, and Mary Beth Jerman, 52, both of Oakwood, October 16, 2026.

Lacy Brian Musick, 48, of Swords Creek, and Kandi Renee Campbell, 49, of Honaker, October 17, 2026.

Michael Lee Graham, 49, and Drema Michelle Nash, 48, both of Honaker, October 18, 2026.

Adam Glenn Wilson, 48, and Lena Katherine Wilson, both of Pilgrims Knob, October 21, 2026.

Deeds recorded

Changes in the Buchanan County Circuit Court record-keeping system have resulted in the weekly electronic deed report being unavailable at the present time. Deed transfer information for the prior month will be provided monthly during the second week of every month.

Grundy Woman's Club to host Holidays in the Hills Nov. 7

By CHAD COOPER
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Shoppers looking to get an early start on their Christmas lists will have an opportunity to shop local while supporting the community when the Grundy Woman's Club hosts Holidays in the Hills on Saturday, Nov. 7.

The event will take place from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on the second floor of the Appalachian School of Law's Booth Center, located at 1195 Edgewater Drive in Grundy.

Local vendors will offer handmade gifts, seasonal decorations and treats, giving shoppers a chance to find something special for those on their Christmas lists.

The event also supports the Grundy Woman's Club's efforts to give back to the community.

Admission is $5, with children younger than 5 admitted free.



Several northern bobwhite quail await release near the Southern Gap elk preserve. Local Scouts helped the Big Sandy Soil & Water Conservation District release 12 quail, including two named in memory of Dr. Arthur Mullins and Dr. Maxine Mullins (Contributed photo).

Scouts help release 12 quail near Southern Gap elk preserve

By CHAD COOPER
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Local Scouts released 12 northern bobwhite quail near the Southern Gap elk preserve on Oct. 22, joining the Big Sandy Soil & Water Conservation District for a wildlife activity that also honored two longtime Scouting volunteers.

Cub Scout Pack 752 of Whitewood, Cub Scout Pack 740 of Grundy and Scout Troop 749 assisted with the release at Bob Blankenship's property. It marked the Scouts' second quail release in the area.

The Scouts named and released one male and one female quail in memory of Dr. Arthur Mullins and Dr. Maxine Mullins, who devoted more than 60 years to volunteering in the Scouting community.

For the Scouts, the tribute offered an opportunity to help keep the couple's memory alive while taking part in an outdoor learning experience.

Darrell Owens of the Southwest Virginia Bird Watching Club shared information about northern bobwhite quail and demonstrated their calls for those attending.

The Big Sandy Soil & Water Conservation District sponsored the release, with U.S. Rep. Morgan Griffith helping pay for the birds.

Wolford races into history as Eagles' first district champion

By CHAD COOPER
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Katelyn Wolford may be only a freshman, but she already has a place in Southern Gap High School history that no one can take away.

Wolford pulled away from the Southwest District field Oct. 21 at Cavitts Creek Park, winning the girls' cross country championship and becoming the first Southwest District cross country champion in school history.

And she did it convincingly.

Wolford completed the 5,000-meter course in 21:34.77, finishing more than a minute ahead of Tazewell freshman Charlee French, who crossed in 22:41.92.

Her championship performance helped Southern Gap's girls finish second in the team standings, giving the Eagles plenty to celebrate in their inaugural season.

For Wolford, the victory reflected the work she put into her first high school season and the faith and support that helped her along the way.

"Winning as a freshman meant a lot to me because I've worked really hard to get to this point. I give all the glory to God because I know He's given me the ability to run, and I trusted Him throughout this season," Wolford said.

"I'm also really thankful for my coaches for pushing

SEE **WOLFORD RACES INTO HISTORY | 2B**



Southern Gap freshman Katelyn Wolford displays her first-place medal following the Southwest District cross country championships Oct. 21 at Cavitts Creek Park. Wolford became the first Southwest District cross country champion in school history, winning the girls' race in 21:34.77 (Photo courtesy of SGHS athletics).



Southern Gap freshman Carson Blankenship (6), left, receives a commemorative football from head coach Greg Tester after becoming the school's first 1,000-yard rusher during the Eagles' homecoming victory over River View on Oct. 23. Tester was a 2,000-yard rusher during his high school career at now-defunct Hurley High School (Photo by Chad Cooper).

Blankenship makes history as Eagles roll on HOCO

By CHAD COOPER
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Carson Blankenship ran into the school record book, and Southern Gap gave a packed homecoming crowd plenty to celebrate Friday night.

The freshman became the first 1,000-yard rusher in school history and scored three touchdowns as the Eagles defeated River View, West Virginia, 40-6 in their first homecoming game at Smiley Ratliff Field at the Red Robertson Sports Complex.

Blankenship reached the milestone on his second carry of the opening possession and finished with 109 yards on 11 attempts, helping Southern Gap improve to 6-2 with its fifth straight victory.

"It feels great, but I wouldn't be able to do it without the O-line," Blankenship said.

On a beautiful evening at Southern Gap, fans packed the home stands and gathered with chairs and blankets along the concourse. A fired-up student section added to the atmosphere as the Eagles took the field in all-white uniforms and helmets.

But before Southern Gap could get its offense rolling, the Eagles needed their defense to make a stand.

River View quarterback Jeremih Delong came out throwing, finding receivers on quick screens and slants as the Raiders drove inside Southern Gap's 10-yard line.

With the visitors threatening to score first, Delong connected with a receiver in the flat. As the receiver turned upfield toward the goal line, freshman defensive back Mason Rife delivered a hard hit that knocked the football loose inside the Eagles' three-yard line.

Senior defensive back Brayden White recovered, ending the threat and giving Southern Gap its first possession.

The Eagles made it count.

After reaching the 1,000-yard mark, Blankenship finished the drive with a 13-yard touchdown run. White added a two-point conversion on a quarterback keeper for an 8-0 lead.

Southern Gap head coach Greg Tester said the Eagles took time to settle in.

"I thought we started off a little slow, you

SEE **BLAKENSHIP MAKES HISTORY | 2B**

Conaway, Deel crowned Southern Gap's first homecoming queen and king

By CHAD COOPER
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Seniors Anna Conaway and Jackson Deel made Southern Gap High School history Oct. 23 when they were crowned the school's first homecoming queen and king.

Principal Mark Cooper crowned the pair during halftime of the Eagles' 40-6 victory over Riverview, W.Va., adding another first to Southern Gap's inaugural school year.

The ceremony honored a homecoming court representing students from eighth grade through the senior class, beginning a new tradition for the school.

"Being chosen as the first Homecoming Queen in SGHS history means so much to me. I'm so grateful and blessed to be a part of something so special," Conaway said. "Knowing that I'll forever be a part of my school's history is something I'll always cherish. This is a moment I'll never forget, and I'm so thankful for everyone who made it happen."

Conaway is the daughter of Chad and Amanda Conaway. She serves as senior class vice president and secretary of the National Honor Society. Her school ac-

SEE **CONAWAY, DEEL CROWNED | 3B**



Jackson Deel (left) and Anna Conaway (right) are crowned Southern Gap High School's first homecoming king and queen by Principal Mark Cooper during halftime of the Eagles' 40-6 win over River View, West Virginia, on Oct. 23. (Photo by Chad Cooper)

IN THE LOCKER ROOM

Eagles making memories in their first season

By CHAD COOPER
cookam@gmail.com

There are some nights you know people will talk about for years to come.

Last Friday night at Smiley Ratliff Field at the Red Robertson Sports Complex felt like one of those nights.



IN THE LOCKER ROOM

Southern Gap celebrated its first homecoming with a 40-6 victory over River View, improving to 6-2 and giving an outstanding crowd another reason to be proud of this Eagle football team.

Before going any further, congratulations to freshman running back Carson Blankenship on becoming Southern Gap's first 1,000-yard rusher. It was great to see his grandfather, Johnny Estep, an outstanding athlete in his day from Hurley, there to watch his grandson reach the 1,000-yard mark. With two games remaining, Blankenship's total will be the school record to beat.

That is an outstanding accomplishment for any running back. To reach that milestone as a freshman, during the school's inaugural season, makes it even more special.

Blankenship has given Eagle fans plenty to cheer about this fall, and he has a bright future ahead of him. He also has an offensive line that deserves its share of the credit. The War Pigs have helped open the way for a Southern Gap running game that has been difficult to stop.

Years from now, other backs will reach that mark. But Blankenship will always be the first.

Friday night gave us plenty of those moments to appreciate.

As much as I enjoyed what happened on the field, I found myself looking around and taking in everything happening around it.

The home stands were packed. Up on the concourse, people brought chairs and blankets and settled in to enjoy an evening of football, fellowship and school spirit.

It was the kind of scene we hoped we would see when Southern Gap opened its doors.

People coming together. Families making memories. A community getting behind its Eagles.

Head coach Greg Tester and his staff deserves a lot of credit for what he and his staff have accomplished. Bringing players together in a school's first season takes work. Building trust, establishing expectations and getting everyone moving in the same direction does not happen just because the jerseys match.

This team has come together, and the results speak

SEE **IN THE LOCKER ROOM | 2B**



WOLFORD RACES INTO HISTORY

FROM PAGE 1B



Southern Gap freshman Katelyn Wolford crosses the finish line as the clock marks her championship performance Oct. 21 at Cavitts Creek Park. Wolford won the Southwest District girls' cross-country title in 21:34.77, finishing more than a minute ahead of the runner-up and helping the Eagles place second as a team (Contributed photo).

me, believing in me, and helping me become a better runner. I couldn't have done it without God and the people who have supported me along the way."

The district title added to a standout freshman season marked by victories and top-five or top-10 finishes. At the district meet, Wolford left little doubt about who would finish first, winning by 1:07.15.

With three more high school seasons ahead after this fall, her performance offers plenty of reason to be excited about her future.

Whatever comes next, she will always be Southern Gap's first Southwest District cross country champion.

Wolford also had plenty of help putting the Eagles near the top of the district standings.

Senior Kelly Ratliff finished 10th in 24:56.59, giving Southern Gap two runners in the top 10.

Sophomore Vieronika Silishchenko followed in 12th at 25:37.37, while senior Ava Ward placed 13th in 25:49.82.

Senior Madison Lester completed Southern Gap's five-runner scoring group with a 16th-place finish in 27:35.26.

Juniors Sierra Lowry and Ella Robinson rounded out the Eagles' lineup. Lowry finished 25th in 30:20.38, followed by Robinson in 26th at 30:42.55.

Tazewell used five finishes among the top 14 to claim the team championship with 30 points. Southern Gap finished second with 44, holding off Virginia High, which placed third with 49.

French led the Bulldogs, followed by sophomore Warner Pyott in fourth at 23:11.37. Freshman Emily Baker finished seventh in 24:22.19, junior Zoey Woods-Abdullah placed eighth in 24:33.87 and freshman Raylen Gerhard took 14th in 25:58.21 to complete Tazewell's scoring group.

Lebanon sophomore Jalyn Osborne placed third overall in 22:55.15.

Virginia High freshman Caroline Harper finished fifth in 23:39.36, followed by senior teammate Mandi Regin in sixth at 23:56.58. Marion freshman Willow Weaver placed ninth in 24:50.42.

Lebanon, Marion and Graham also had individual runners compete but did not record team scores.

Wolford and the Eagles will now represent Southern Gap in regional competition Oct. 28 at Sugar Hollow Park in Bristol. The meet is scheduled for 2 p.m.

SOUTHWEST DISTRICT CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS
Oct. 21 — Cavitts Creek Park, North Tazewell

Girls — 5,000 meters

Team scores: 1. Tazewell 30; 2. Southern Gap 44; 3. Virginia High 49. Lebanon, Marion and Graham did not record team scores.

Individual results: 1. Katelyn Wolford (Southern Gap, Fr.) 21:34.77; 2. Charlee French (Tazewell, Fr.) 22:41.92; 3. Jalyn Osborne (Lebanon, So.) 22:55.15; 4. Warner Pyott (Tazewell, So.) 23:11.37; 5. Caroline Harper (Virginia High, Fr.) 23:39.36; 6. Mandi Regin (Virginia High, Sr.) 23:56.58; 7. Emily Baker (Tazewell, Fr.) 24:22.19; 8. Zoey Woods-Abdullah (Tazewell, Jr.) 24:33.87; 9. Willow Weaver (Marion, Fr.) 24:50.42; 10. Kelly Ratliff (Southern Gap, Sr.) 24:56.59; 11. Harmony McCoy (Virginia High, Fr.) 25:25.65; 12. Vieronika Silishchenko (Southern Gap, So.) 25:37.37; 13. Ava Ward (Southern Gap, Sr.) 25:49.82; 14. Raylen Gerhard (Tazewell, Fr.) 25:58.21; 15. Elizaveta Sakaly (Tazewell, Sr.) 27:06.47; 16. Madison Lester (Southern Gap, Sr.) 27:35.26; 17. Chloe Ratliff (Lebanon, Fr.) 27:39.41; 18. Eleanor Peterson (Virginia High, Fr.) 27:55.81; 19. Brooklyn Peak (Marion, Fr.) 27:59.36; 20. Olivia DeBord (Virginia High, Jr.) 28:26.44; 21. Ember Wohlford (Virginia High, Jr.) 28:30.27; 22. Jocelyn Wohlford (Virginia High, Fr.) 28:48.59; 23. Mia Porter (Graham, Fr.) 28:59.80; 24. Kortnie Peak (Marion, Jr.) 29:44.66; 25. Sierra Lowry (Southern Gap, Jr.) 30:20.38; 26. Ella Robinson (Southern Gap, Jr.) 30:42.55; 27. Eme Corell (Tazewell, Jr.) 30:48.52; 28. Lila Williams (Graham, Sr.) 30:59.28.

BLANKENSHIP MAKES HISTORY

FROM PAGE 1B



Southern Gap quarterback Brayden White (4) hands off to freshman Carson Blankenship (6) during the Eagles' 40-6 homecoming victory over River View on Oct. 23. Blankenship rushed for 109 yards and became the first 1,000-yard rusher in school history (Photo by Chad Cooper).

know, a little sluggish at first on defense," Tester said.

Once Southern Gap found its rhythm, the Eagles turned to a running game that featured several players capable of breaking a big play.

"We got some playmakers we can hand it to, and they had everybody up in the box on us," Tester said. "And it took us a minute, but we got them."

Senior lineman Chase Baker said the Eagles began wearing on the Raiders as the game progressed.

"Well, we come out slow, you know, and I guess we underestimated them," Baker said. "But after we got rolling and got the ball rolling, I feel like it was just constant, just weighing on them."

Blankenship helped Southern Gap pull away late in the first half.

With 2:21 remaining in the second quarter, he broke loose for a 59-yard touchdown run. A two-point pass to Kanan Justice extended the lead to 16-0.

The Eagles struck again with just two seconds left before halftime when White found Blankenship for a 26-yard touchdown. A successful two-point run sent Southern Gap into the locker room ahead 24-0.

Blankenship finished the night with two rushing touchdowns and one receiving score, adding another accomplishment to his standout freshman season.

"Carson is an exceptional athlete who is having a tremendous season for us," Tester said. "Honestly, I'm not surprised by what Carson is doing. I've always believed in his ability and knew what he was capable of."

The Eagles continued to find the end zone after halftime.

Junior Aidan Baker scored on a 41-yard run with 36 seconds remaining in the third quarter. A two-point pass to Ayden Whited pushed the advantage to 32-0.

Whited then supplied Southern Gap's longest touchdown run of the evening, racing 65 yards with 8:29 remaining in the fourth quarter. Another two-point pass to Justice made it 40-0.

Southern Gap finished with 355 rushing yards on 39 carries. Aidan Baker gained 75 yards on seven attempts, while Gunner Baker added 58 yards on six carries. Whited scored on his lone rushing attempt.

White completed six of 12 passes for 82 yards and a touchdown, with one interception.

Chase Baker credited the offensive line's ability to play low and move defenders off the line of scrimmage.

"We just get low, drive them off the ball, and that is what we do," Baker said.

River View head coach James Sparks said his team entered the game knowing it would have to match Southern Gap's physical approach.

"You know, the goal was to match their physicality, because we knew coming in that Southern Gap was a very physical, tight, run-heavy offense," Sparks said. "So we knew that we had to match that on both sides of the ball."

The Raiders moved the ball through the air, but the Eagles kept them out of the end zone until the final play.

Blake Payne and Reid Stiltner led Southern Gap's defense with five solo tackles apiece.

River View finished with 54 rushing yards on 24 attempts and completed 17 of 33 passes for 195 yards. Delong threw a 30-yard touchdown pass as time expired for the Raiders' only score.

Sparks praised Delong's performance against the Eagles.

"He makes right reads. He has a strong arm, very accurate, and, you know, he made some tough throws tonight and made some plays for us, which I'm always pleased with that," Sparks said.

Southern Gap finished with 13 first downs to River View's nine.

The Eagles now turn their attention to two road games to close the regular season. Southern Gap visits Eastside, which enters at 5-3, on Friday, Oct. 30, at Carl McConnell Stadium in Coeburn before traveling to Wise Central on Nov. 6.

"We got two big ones, man," Tester said. "A big one against Eastside and a big one after against Wise Central."

For Blankenship, reaching 1,000 yards was a moment to appreciate, but his attention already was turning toward what comes next.

"Oh yeah, it's a great achievement. It feels great," he said. "But we got two more games, and we're going to let them know we're coming."

SOUTHERN GAP 40, RIVER VIEW 6

River View	0	0	0	6	–6
Southern Gap	8	16	8	8	–40

First quarter

SG — Carson Blankenship 13 run (Brayden White run).

Second quarter

SG — Blankenship 59 run (Kanan Justice pass from White), 2:21.

SG — Blankenship 26 pass from White (run good), :02.

Third quarter

SG — Aidan Baker 41 run (Ayden Whited pass from White), :36.

Fourth quarter

SG — Whited 65 run (Justice pass from White), 8:29.

RV — 30 pass from Jeremih Delong (conversion failed), :00.

IN THE LOCKER ROOM

FROM PAGE 1B

for themselves.

The Eagles have won five straight games, and Friday's homecoming victory added another first to a season already filled with them.

The atmosphere certainly matched the occasion.

The Southern Gap Eagle Marching Band was outstanding as usual. Those students put a tremendous amount of work into what they do, and they contribute so much to the experience of a Friday night.

Then there is the voice of the Eagles, Rodney Davis.

I will put Rodney up against just about anybody behind a microphone. In my opinion, he could be one of the better public address announcers in the state. His delivery and enthusiasm help make the evening feel special.

Loni Webb and Christina Bane also deserve recognition for keeping the crowd entertained with their playlist. There is a lot that goes into keeping an atmosphere lively, and they do an outstanding job.

The Eagle spirit carried throughout homecoming week. The parade was a huge success, and it was good to see so many people taking part in something these students will remember long after graduation.

At halftime, seniors Anna Conaway and Jackson Deel were crowned homecoming queen and king. Congratulations to both on an honor that will always connect them to Southern Gap's first homecoming celebration.

From the parade to the packed stands to the final score, it was a good week to be an Eagle.

Now comes another challenge.

Southern Gap travels to Eastside this Friday, and there is plenty riding on the final two weeks of the regular season.

As of Oct. 24, the Eagles were fifth in the Region 2D ratings with a 20.50 average, behind Graham, Union, Ridgeview and Gate City. Graham led at 24.75, followed by Union at 23.38, Ridgeview at 21.88 and Gate City at 21.75.

According to HarpCrate's unofficial playoff predictor, Southern Gap had a 99% chance of making the postseason. The model gave the Eagles a 54% chance of finishing fifth and a 35% chance of finishing fourth.

Those are projections, and there is still football to play. But they show how much the Eagles have put themselves in position to accomplish.

A strong finish could make a difference in where Southern Gap opens the playoffs.

Eastside will have plenty of motivation of its own. The injury-plagued Spartans are 5-3 after beating Thomas Walker 48-8 and sit fourth in Region 1D.

Southern Gap then closes the regular season Nov. 6 at Wise Central, which is sixth in Region 2D after a 14-13 loss to Lee.

Neither trip figures to be easy.

Elsewhere in Region 2D, Graham continued to look the part of the team to beat with a 61-7 victory over Lebanon. Ridgeview made a statement of its own by beating Class 3 Abingdon 62-14.

Richlands picked up its first win with a 14-7 overtime victory over Tazewell, while Marion also broke into the win column by defeating Fort Chiswell 56-19. I am glad my guy Richlands head coach Bubba Edwards got a win after having such a tough season.

The race around the final playoff spots remains interesting. Virginia High is seventh in the ratings, followed by Lee, Tazewell and Lebanon. HarpCrate's model gave Lee and Tazewell each a 46% chance of reaching the postseason, with Lebanon at 15%.

That makes games such as Lebanon at Virginia High and Gate City at Wise Central this Friday worth watching.

Over in Region 1D, Chilhowie remained unbeaten with an impressive 42-6 victory over Rye Cove. The Warriors are for real and lead the regional ratings at 8-0, with Rye Cove second and Patrick Henry third.

Patrick Henry's 21-14 victory over Honaker also gave me a couple of plays to talk about with my nephew, Austin Cooper.

Austin called two gutsy plays that proved important in that win.

One was a fake punt from Patrick Henry's own end zone that produced a first down. That is a call that takes confidence in your players.

The other was a 99-yard scoring play that began with a handoff to the wingback on a jet sweep. He pulled up in the end zone and threw a running back pass that turned into a key touchdown.

Those are the kinds of calls that can change a game. I was proud of my nephew and the Patrick Henry Rebels on the close victory.

The Rebels are 6-2 and remain firmly in the Region 1D playoff picture.

Honaker, despite falling to 2-6, is eighth in the current ratings, and HarpCrate's model still gave the Tigers a 96% chance of reaching the playoffs. They travel to Northwood this Friday.

Northwood improved to 6-2 with a 49-35 victory over Rural Retreat. Eastside, Northwood, Holston and J.I. Burton occupy the fourth through seventh spots in the regional ratings behind Chilhowie, Rye Cove and Patrick Henry.

There should be plenty of movement and scoreboard watching before everything is settled.

Before I close, I want to recognize another Eagle who made school history last week.

Freshman Katelyn Wolford won the Southwest District girls cross country championship, completing the course at Cavitts Creek Park in 21:34.77.

She finished more than a minute ahead of the runner-up.

Think about that for a moment. A freshman, competing in her school's first season, went out and won a district championship in convincing fashion.

Wolford is Southern Gap's first Southwest District cross country champion. Years from now, when people look back through the school's records, her name will still be there.

Her teammates deserve recognition, too. Southern Gap finished second in the girls team standings, giving the Eagles another accomplishment to build on heading into regional competition Oct. 28 at Sugar Hollow Park in Bristol.

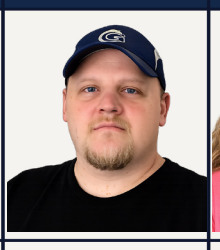
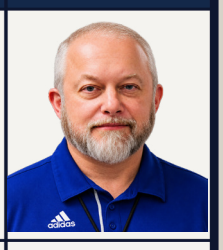
What impressed me just as much as Wolford's time was the way she spoke afterward, giving glory to God and thanking her coaches and the people who supported her.

That is a young athlete worth cheering for.

Between Wolford's district championship and Blankenship's rushing milestone, two freshmen have already made sure their names will be remembered in Southern Gap history.

Thanks for joining me In the Locker Room. Until next week, let's keep celebrating the victories, learning from the defeats, and always standing behind Buchanan County's athletes.

VIRGINIA MOUNTAINEER PIGSKIN PROGNOSTICATORS

	THIS WEEK'S GAMES	CHAD COOPER	SAM BARTLEY	RYAN KEENE	TERESA MATNEY	MARK COOPER	BRIAN MOORE
							
1	Southern Gap at Eastside	Southern Gap	Southern Gap	Southern Gap	Southern Gap	Southern Gap	Southern Gap
2	Marion at Richlands	Richlands	Richlands	Richlands	Richlands	Richlands	Richlands
3	Lebanon at Virginia High	Virginia High	Lebanon	Virginia High	Virginia High	Lebanon	Virginia High
4	Gate City at Wise Central	Gate City	Gate City	Gate City	Gate City	Gate City	Gate City
5	Honaker at Northwood	Honaker	Northwood	Northwood	Northwood	Honaker	Honaker
6	Patrick Henry at Chilhowie	Chilhowie	Chilhowie	Chilhowie	Chilhowie	Patrick Henry	Chilhowie
7	Lenoir-Rhyne at Emory & Henry	Emory & Henry	Emory & Henry	Lenoir-Rhyne	Lenoir-Rhyne	Emory & Henry	Lenoir-Rhyne
8	Mars Hill at UVA-Wise	Mars Hill	Mars Hill	Mars Hill	Mars Hill	Mars Hill	Mars Hill
9	Ohio State at USC	Ohio State	Ohio State	Ohio State	Ohio State	Ohio State	Ohio State
10	Florida at Georgia	Georgia	Georgia	Georgia	Georgia	Georgia	Georgia
11	Clemson at Florida State	Florida State	Clemson	Florida State	Florida State	Clemson	Clemson
12	Panthers at Packers	Packers	Packers	Packers	Packers	Packers	Packers
	OVERALL RECORDS	74-34	71-37	72-36	73-35	74-34	68-40

Deel leads Eagles in first Southwest District championship meet

By CHAD COOPERCOOPKAM@GMAIL.COM

Southern Gap's boys' cross country team added another first to the school's inaugural season Oct. 21, competing in the Southwest District championships at Cavitts Creek Park.

With a lineup made up entirely of freshmen and sophomores, the Eagles finished fourth in the team standings, led by a top-10 performance from sophomore Ethan Deel.

Deel completed the 5,000-meter course in 19:58.50 to place 10th overall. He edged Lebanon's Landin Litttrell by less than a tenth of a second, giving Southern Gap its first finisher in a field of 27 runners.

Freshman Kyler Lester followed in 13th place at 20:12.16, while sophomore Bentley Jackson finished 15th in 20:33.66.

Sophomore Wyatt Street crossed in 21:12.04 to take 17th, giving the Eagles four runners among the top 17. Freshman Oliver Breeding completed Southern Gap's scoring lineup with a 23rd-place finish in 22:34.29.

The Eagles finished with 77 points, nine behind third-place Tazewell.

While Southern Gap is still establishing its program, the district meet gave its young runners experience they can carry into future seasons. All five members of the Eagles' district lineup are freshmen or sophomores, giving the team a foundation to build on.

Lebanon claimed the team championship with 26 points, placing all five scoring runners among the top eight. Virginia High finished second with 52 points, followed by Tazewell with 68.

Virginia High junior Liam Pratt won the individual championship in 17:39.48. Lebanon junior Elliott Breeding finished second in 17:57.29, and Virginia High freshman Timothe Regin placed third in 18:32.23.

Lebanon's depth made the difference in the team race. Behind Breeding, freshman Aybrum Hammond finished fourth in 18:40.00 and sophomore Asher Taylor took fifth in 19:13.46.

Junior Jack Garland placed seventh in 19:18.45 and freshman Clayton Brown finished eighth in 19:31.16.

Freshman Seth Nunley led Tazewell with a sixth-place finish in 19:17.92.

Graham and host Richlands also had individual runners compete but did not record team scores.

For Southern Gap, the meet marked another step in a season of firsts, with Deel's top-10 finish leading a young group of Eagles through their first district championship appearance.

SOUTHWEST DISTRICT CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPSOct. 21 — Cavitts Creek Park, North TazewellBoys — 5,000 meters

Team scores: 1. Lebanon 26; 2. Virginia High 52; 3. Tazewell 68; 4. Southern Gap 77. Graham and Richlands did not record team scores.

Individual results: 1. Liam Pratt (Virginia High, Jr.) 17:39.48; 2. Elliott Breeding (Lebanon, Jr.) 17:57.29; 3. Timothe Regin (Virginia High, Fr.) 18:32.23; 4. Aybrum Hammond (Lebanon, Fr.) 18:40.00; 5. Asher Taylor (Lebanon, So.) 19:13.46; 6. Seth Nunley (Tazewell, Fr.) 19:17.92; 7. Jack Garland (Lebanon, Jr.) 19:18.45; 8. Clayton Brown (Lebanon, Fr.) 19:31.16; 9. Ethan Baker (Tazewell, Jr.) 19:33.42; 10. Ethan Deel (Southern Gap, So.) 19:58.50; 11. Landin Litttrell (Lebanon, Fr.) 19:58.59; 12. Daniel Corell (Tazewell, Fr.) 20:11.30; 13. Kyler Lester (Southern Gap, Fr.) 20:12.16; 14. Josh DeBusk (Virginia High, Fr.) 20:26.13; 15. Bentley Jackson (Southern Gap, So.) 20:33.66; 16. Alex Kariuki (Virginia High, Jr.) 21:04.82; 17. Wyatt Street (Southern Gap, So.) 21:12.04; 18. Wesley Jones (Graham, Sr.) 21:14.99; 19. Dylan Kellog (Virginia High, Sr.) 22:02.07; 20. Thomas Caldwell (Virginia High, Fr.) 22:14.58; 21. Gavin McCann (Tazewell, Fr.) 22:19.41; 22. Asa Rodeheaver (Tazewell, Fr.) 22:28.61; 23. Oliver Breeding (Southern Gap, Fr.) 22:34.29; 24. Oscar Peterson (Virginia High, Jr.) 23:37.25; 25. Noah Takach (Tazewell, So.) 26:45.82; 26. Brayden Blankenship (Richlands, Fr.) 27:50.19; 27. Isaac Williams (Graham, Fr.) 33:24.26.

Virginia Mountaineer Week 10 Football Scoreboard

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

Southern Gap 40, River View 6
Chilhowie 42, Rye Cove 6
Eastside 48, Thomas Walker 8
George Wythe 51, Galax 7
Graham 61, Lebanon 7
J.I. Burton 50, Castlewood 13
Lee High 14, Central (Wise) 13
Marion 56, Fort Chiswell 19
Northwood 49, Rural Retreat 35
Patrick Henry 21, Honaker 14
Richlands 14, Tazewell 7 (OT)
Ridgeview 62, Abingdon 14



Preston Hibbitts was named transportation director for Buchanan County Public Schools during the School Board's Oct. 20 meeting.

Hibbitts named school transportation director

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

The Buchanan County School Board named Preston Hibbitts transportation director during its Oct. 20 meeting at the Government Center on Slate Creek.

Following a recommendation from the hiring committee, North Grundy school board member Angie McClanahan made a motion, seconded by Knox school board member Tommy Blankenship, and those in attendance approved it unanimously. Garden school board member Ray Blankenship was absent.

Hibbitts' first request to the board was to hire Robert Rife at $30 an hour to train bus drivers. Hibbitts said a certified trainer is required, and he is currently one of the only ones around.

McClanahan moved to approve hiring Rife as the school system's certified bus driver trainer. Rocklick school board member Brian "Doc" Looney seconded the motion, and the board approved it unanimously.

The board also approved a $34,185 sprinkler system for Tommy P. Justice Hurley Elementary School, a trademark licensing agreement and seasonal stipends for building engineers.

Tommy Blankenship moved to approve the sprinkler system for Tommy P. Justice Elementary/Middle School, located in the Knox District, and McClanahan seconded. All six members present voted in favor.

The building engineer proposal called for a $1,800 stipend for each of five engineers to cover callout duties from October through March, replacing time sheets for that work.

The building engineer proposal called for a $1,800 stipend for each of five engineers to cover callout duties from October through March, replacing time sheets for that work.

During discussion, the payments were described as equivalent to $300 per month for checking on schools during the six-month period. Administrators said the expense was included in the budget and would represent a small savings compared with the previous year. Tommy Blankenship made the motion, and McClanahan seconded it; those in attendance approved it unanimously.

The board also approved the division's payables.

South Grundy school board member and board chairman David Thornbury read the agenda item and noted the code required the board to review and approve the division's warrants, payables and payroll. He asked whether each member had an opportunity to review the records, question administrators and obtain information.

"Any information from the administration being withheld from a member of the governing body?" Thornbury asked.

No member responded during the exchange. Prater school board member Jack Compton then moved to approve the payables. North Grundy school board member Angie McClanahan seconded the motion.

Looney, Compton, Thompson and McClanahan voted yes. Tommy Blankenship voted yes "with the exception of Southern," while Thornbury voted no. Thornbury did not state a reason for his opposing vote during the exchange.

In other business, the board accepted the resignations of Louise Thomas, John Lark and Dustin Payne, along with Hibbitts' resignation as scholastic coach.

Administrators said Lark would return as a timesheet employee.

CONAWAY, DEEL CROWNED

FROM PAGE 1B

tivities include cheerleading, tennis, student organizations and serving as volleyball team manager. She also received the school's first Soaring Eagle Award, recognizing dedication to the school community.

For Deel, the honor carried meaning beyond the halftime ceremony.

"Being selected as the first Homecoming King in SGHS history means more to me than just receiving a crown. It's an honor to be part of something that will be remembered as a piece of our school's history," Deel said. "I'm grateful for the support, and I'm proud to represent SGHS as the first."

Deel is the son of David and Aleisha Deel. He participates in Beta Club, National Honor Society, Key Club, the prom committee, football, basketball, golf and the fishing team.

Joining Conaway and Deel as senior attendants were Brayden White and Claire Griffey, Chase Baker and Karissa Hurley, and Colton Clevinger and Emily Justice.

White is the son of Ryan and Tina White, and Griffey is the daughter of Jimmy and Staci Griffey. Baker is the son of Johnny and Desiray Baker, and Hurley is the daughter of Jonathan and Ashley Hurley. Clevinger is the son of Greg and Amanda Clevinger, and Justice is the daughter of Shane and Marianne Justice.

Junior attendants were Reid Stiltner and Bree Looney. Stiltner is the son of Joey and Terene Stiltner, and Looney is the daughter of Anthony and Brooke Looney.

Sophomore attendants were Jacob Smeltzer and Emma Davis. Smeltzer is the son of Joey and Tiffany Smeltzer, and Davis is the daughter of Brandon Davis and Amelia Ward.

Freshman attendants were Carson Blankenship and Jennilee Deel. Blankenship is the son of Andrea Estep and Timothy Blankenship, and Deel is the daughter of Jonathan and Rochelle Deel.

Eighth grade attendants were Walker Robertson and Ashlyn Scammell. Robertson is the son of B.D. and Reece Robertson, and Scammell is the daughter of Chris and Charity Scammell.

Halloween events continue with haunted houses, trunk-or-treat celebrations

By CHAD COOPER | COOKAM@GMAIL.COM

Halloween is this Saturday, and Buchanan County families still have several opportunities to enjoy scares, sweets and community celebrations, including a haunted house helping a local boy receive a diabetic alert dog.

The haunted house at Grundy High School will return Friday, Oct. 30, for its final scheduled night, raising money for 10-year-old Luke Hensley.

Luke has lived with Type 1 diabetes since he was 3. His family is raising more than $25,000 to purchase a specially trained dog they hope will provide another layer of safety, comfort and independence by helping alert them to dangerous changes in his blood sugar.

Located at 1300 Golden Wave Drive, the haunted house will offer a kid-friendly hour from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m., with admission of $3 per person. Those looking for a bigger scare can attend from 8 to 11 p.m., when admission will be $5 per person.

Those unable to attend can contribute online at paypal.me/PawsforLuke.

The Grundy Flea Market's haunted house will also offer several more opportunities for Halloween scares this weekend.

Located in the former Magic Mart and Cowboy Jim's building at 19407 Anchorage Circle, the haunted house will be open from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Friday, Oct. 30; noon to 9 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 31; and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 1. Admission is $5 per person.

For families looking for treats, Heritage Hall Grundy will host a trunk-or-treat event Thursday, Oct. 29, from 5 to 8 p.m. The evening will include free candy and inflatables.

On Saturday, the Buchanan County Chamber of Commerce will host its annual trunk-or-treat event on Walnut Street in downtown Grundy.

Scheduled from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., the Halloween night celebration will give children and families an opportunity to show off their costumes, collect candy and enjoy an evening together.

CLASSIFIEDS

Two Cemetery Plots together in Richlands Va.

Call 276-791-0650

AUCTIONS

PUBLIC AUCTION! Richmond Steel, Inc. No Reserve Auction. CNC Fabrication Equipment, Welders, Materials, & More. Nov 4, 10am. Online Only. Richmond, Va. www.MotleysIndustrial.com. VAAL#16.

LEGAL NOTICES

Public Notice
Application for
Bond Reduction
Under Chapter
19, Title 45.2
Code of Virginia'
PUBLICATION NUMBER:
APPLICATION NUMBER:1011947

Jewell Valley Mining LLC is applying for a phase I bond reduction on Permit No.1202298 located in Buchanan County 2.6 miles Northeast of Whitewood on Slate Creek This permit consists of 31.06 acres bonded under Cost Estimate. As provided by 4VAC25-130-800.40 of the Virginia Coal Surface Mining Reclamation Regulations, the Applicant is requesting that the current total bond amount of $352,200.00 in the form of insurance surety posted for this permit be reduced by $211,300.00. This bond reduction request is based on the following Phase I reclamation: All backfill and re-grading completed per approved settlement agreement.

Any person with a valid legal interest which might be adversely affected by this proposal, or an officer or head of any federal, state or local government agency or authority, may within 30 days of November 26, 2026, submit written comments or objections concerning this bond reduction, and may also request, in writing, that the Mined Land Repurposing Program hold an Informal Conference concerning this application. A copy of the application materials is available electronically for public inspection at https://www.energy.virginia.gov/dmlrinquiry/frmMain.aspx?ctl=4.

All correspondence concerning this application should be submitted to the Mined Land Repurposing Program (Attention: Permit Section), 3405 Mountain Empire Road, Big Stone Gap, Virginia 24219. Telephone (276) 523-8160. Written comments and a request for informal conference may be e-mailed to repurposingpublicnotice@energy.virginia.gov.

VAM 10-29,
11-5,12,19;2026

EMPLOYMENT

The Buchanan County Public Library
Library Director

The Buchanan County Public Library is accepting resumes for the position of **Library Director.**

The basic requirements are listed as follows:

Candidates must demonstrate expertise in public library operations including, administration, personnel, and fiscal and facility management. Critical skills needed include: community services, budgeting, financial planning, grant writing, and outreach services. The library director will report to a governing board of trustees.

Candidates must have the ability to effectively and positively represent the library before community groups and the public, consistent with the library's vision, mission, and strategic plan. They must have the ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with staff, library board of trustees, the Friends of the Buchanan County Public Library, community leaders, public officials, leaders of educational and civic organizations, and the general public.

Candidates must be reliable with satisfactory attendance and be able to communicate by phone, email, text, and instant message. They must be able to sit at a desk or stand for prolonged periods of time. They must be able to use a computer which requires repetitive wrist, hand and finger motion and extensive screen time. They must be able to lift 35lbs and push up to 150 lbs. on wheels. They must be able to travel independently to off-site meetings, workshops and community events.

Educational Requirements: Master of Library Science degree from an American Library Association accredited program and be eligible for a Librarian's Professional Certificate issued by the Library of Virginia. The duties, responsibilities and requirements listed above should not be interpreted as a comprehensive list. Additional duties and responsibilities may be assigned as deemed appropriate and may change at any time with or without notice.□

Successful candidates will be required to reside in Buchanan County within 6 months of employment.

Salary: To be based upon experience, anticipated to be between $50,000-$60,000. Health, dental, vacation, and retirement benefits will be provided by the county.

To Apply: Submit a cover letter, resume, and three work related references by Nov. 1, 2026.

Submit applications to: Chairperson Board of Trustees, Buchanan County Public Library, 1185 Poe Town ST, Grundy, VA 24614.

Inquiries may be addressed to Teresa Matney, acting Director at 276-935-5721.

Buchanan County Public Library is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

LEGAL NOTICES

VIRGINIA: IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE COUNTY OF BUCHANAN COUNTY OF BUCHANAN, VIRGINIA,
a Political Subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia,
Complainant,
v.
EDNA B. TAYLOR ESTATE, ET AL.
Respondent(s).
Case No. CL26-705
ORDER OF PUBLICATION

The object of this suit is to enforce the lien of the Complainant, County of Buchanan, Virginia, for delinquent real estate taxes against certain real property located in the County of Buchanan, Virginia, described as follows:

Tax Map No. 2HH009058,2HH009059,2HH009060
Account No. 16557,16556, 16558

All those certain tracts or parcels of land situate, lying and being in Buchanan County, Virginia and more particularly described as follows:

Tract No. 1 Beginning at a large tree near the edge of State Route No. 629; thence N 00 in a straight line 180 feet to a steel stake; thence W 00 in a straight line 200 feet to a steel stake; thence S 00 in a straight line 180 feet to a steel stake; thence E 00 in a straight line 200 feet back to the Beginning.

Tract No. 2- Beginning at a large oak tree near the edge of State Route 629, a common corner with Tract No. 1; thence S 00 in a straight line 50 feet to a steel stake; thence E 00 in a straight line 350 feet to a steel stake; thence N 00 in a straight line 400 feet to a steel stake; thence W 00 in a straight line 350 feet to a steel stake; thence with the line of the aforesaid mentioned tract E 00 in a straight line 180 feet to a steel stake; thence continuing with said line S 00 in a straight line 200 feet to a steel stake; thence continuing with said lines W 00 in a straight line 180 feet to the beginning.

Tract No. 3- Beginning at a locust in the edge of State Highway Route 629; thence down the hillside in a straight line 260 feet to a stake in the edge of a private road, now or formerly owned by Squire Bill Keen; thence running with said private road approximately 700 feet to a stake in the edge of said private road; thence up the hill in a straight line 370 feet to a locust located in or on an old strip road; thence with the line of said strip road, continuing up said hill, approximately 280 feet to a small walnut; thence in a straight line approximately 50 feet passing a power pole to a point in a two (2) acre tract, thence continuing with the line of said two (2) acre tract back to the point of beginning.

Being the same parcel conveyed to Edna Taylor by Deed of Gift from Gerald C. Taylor and Edna B. Taylor, husband and wife, dated January 26, 1993 and recorded among the land records of the Circuit Court of Buchanan County, Virginia on April 5, 1994 in Deed Book 420 at Page 463.

This description is made subject to all easements, conditions, agreements, restrictions, and reservations of record which affect the property herein described.

IT APPEARING that an Affidavit has been made and filed stating that due diligence has been used, without effect, to ascertain the identity and location of certain parties to be served, that the last known addresses for the Respondents herein are as follows: Edna B. Taylor, who is believed to be deceased and whose last known address is unknown; and that any officers, heirs, devisees, and successors in title of the Respondent named herein are made parties Respondent to this action individually and/or by the general description of Parties Unknown, it is hereby

ORDERED that the parties herein and all Parties Unknown and/or whose location cannot be ascertained appear on or before December 3, 2026 in the Clerk s Office of the Circuit Court of the County of Buchanan, Virginia, and do what may be necessary to protect their interests in this cause.

Entered on the 20th day of October, 2026.

Beverly S. Tiller
Clerk
I Ask For This:
Andrew M. Neville, Esq. (VSB No. 86372)
Taxing Authority Consulting Services, PC
P.O. Box 31800
Henrico, Virginia 23294-1800
Phone: (804) 506-3102
Facsimile: (804) 545-2378
TACS No.: 761856
VAM-10-29;11-5,12,19;2026

VIRGINIA: IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE COUNTY OF BUCHANAN COUNTY OF BUCHANAN, VIRGINIA,
a Political Subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia,
Complainant,
v.
EDDIE MATNEY AND DELORES C. MATNEY, ET AL.
Respondent(s).
Case No. CL26-785
ORDER OF PUBLICATION

The object of this suit is to enforce the lien of the Complainant, County of Buchanan, Virginia, for delinquent real estate taxes against certain real property located in the County of Buchanan, Virginia, described as follows:

Tax Map No. 2HH086026
Account No. 10451

All that certain lot piece or parcel of land, containing One (1) acres, more or less, situate on Main Knox Creek, in Buchanan County, Virginia, and being more particularly described as follows, to-wit:

Beginning at an iron pin on the right hand side of Knox Creek, ascending, in the line of lands now or formerly owned by Annon Blankenship; thence across the bottom with said Blankenship line 300 feet to an iron pin; thence leaving said Blankenship line up the creek at or near the foot of the hill 150 feet to an iron pin: thence across the bottom 900 feet to an iron pin on the bank of Knox Creek; thence running down Knox Creek 150 feet to the point of beginning.

Being the same property conveyed to Eddie Matney and Delores C. Matney, husband and wife, by Deed from Vestle Matney and Minda R. Matney, his wife, dated March 14, 1974 and recorded among the land records of the Circuit Court of Buchanan County, Virginia on May 7, 1974 in Deed Book 220 at Page 581.

This description is made subject to all easements, conditions, agreements, restrictions, and reservations of record which affect the property herein described including but not limited to those recorded in Deed Book 149 at Page 77, Deed Book 557 at Page 510.

Tax Map No. 2HH086027
Account No. 10450

All that certain lot, piece or parcel of land, containing 6 acres, more or less, situate on Knox Creek (1/2 mile below the mouth of Blackey s Fork), in Buchanan County, Virginia.

Less and Except for that certain portion conveyed to Teddy Ray Matney and Connie R. Matney, by Deed dated October 13, 1980 and recorded among the land records of the Circuit Court of Buchanan County, Virginia on November 5, 1980 in Deed Book 276 at Page 656.

Less and Except for that certain portion conveyed to Eddie Matney and Delores C. Matney by Deed dated March 14, 1974 and recorded among the land records of the Circuit Court of Buchanan County, Virginia, on May 22, 1974 in Deed Book 220 at Page 581.

Being a portion of the same property conveyed to Eddie Matney and Delores C. Matney, as tenants by the entirety with the right of survivorship by Deed from Vestle Matney and Minda R. Matney, his wife, dated October 13, 1980 and recorded among the land records of the Circuit Court of Buchanan County, Virginia on November 5, 1980 in Deed Book 276 at Page 651.

Less and Except for that certain portion conveyed to Diana Lynn (Matney) Shelton by Deed from Delores C. Matney, dated September 7, 1994, and recorded among the land records of the Circuit Court of Buchanan County, Virginia on October 24, 1994 in Deed Book 428 at Page 748. The said Delores C. Matney retained a life estate interest in the property conveyed by this conveyance, which was extinguished upon her death on March 4, 2022.

This description is made subject to all easements, conditions, agreements, restrictions, and reservations of record which affect the property herein described including but not limited to those recorded in Deed Book 149 at Page 77, Deed Book 557 at Page 510.

IT APPEARING that an Affidavit has been made and filed stating that due diligence has been used, without effect, to ascertain the identity and location of certain parties to be served, that the last known addresses for the Respondents herein are as follows: Eddie Matney also known as Edmon Matney, who is believed to be deceased and whose last known address is unknown; Delores C. Matney, who is believed to be deceased and whose last known address is unknown; and that any officers, heirs, devisees, and successors in title of the Respondent named herein are made parties Respondent to this action individually and/or by the general description of Parties Unknown, it is hereby

ORDERED that the parties herein and all Parties Unknown and/or whose location cannot be ascertained appear on or before December 7, 2026 in the Clerk s Office of the Circuit Court of the County of Buchanan, Virginia, and do what may be necessary to protect their interests in this cause.

Entered on the 20th day of October,2026.

Beverly S. Tiller
Clerk
I Ask For This:
Seth R. Konopasek, Esq. (VSB No. 97065)
Taxing Authority Consulting Services, PC
P.O. Box 31800
Henrico, Virginia 23294-1800
Phone: (804) 223-8451
Facsimile: (804) 545-2378
RelitBuchananCounty@tax-va.com
TACS No.: 1195078
VAM 10-29;11-5,12,19;2026

VA ABC NOTICE

Full Name of owner: Jasmine Sales, Inc.
Trading as: Sonny's Quick Stop
1063 Contrary Creek Road, Raven, Buchanan County, VA 24639-8408

The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) AUTHORITY for a convenience grocery store, beer, wine, off premises license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages.

Eshaq Alashmali and Ibrahim Mosleh , Owners.

Note: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

VAM 10-22,29;2026

SERVICES

DIVORCE-Uncontested, $525.00 + $89.00 court cost. WILLS-$295.00. No court appearance. Estimated completion time twenty-one days. Hilton Oliver, Attorney (Facebook). 757-490-0126. Se Habla Espanol. BBB Member. https://hiltonoliverattorney-va.com

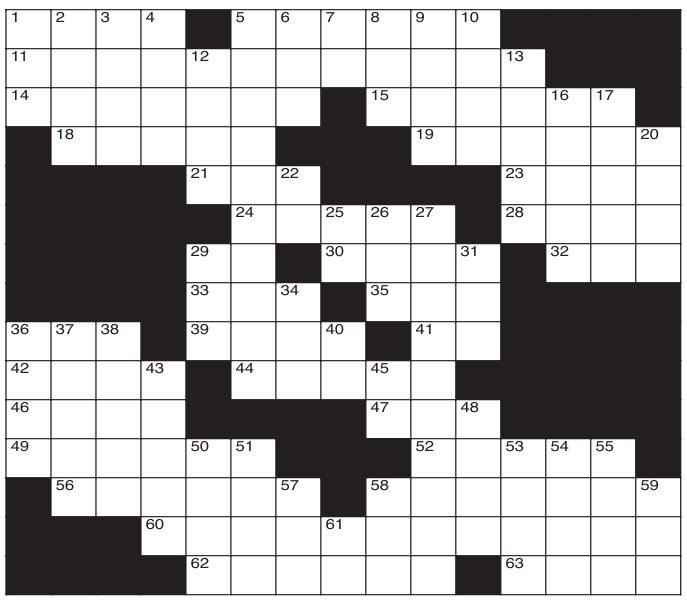
PRESCRIPTIONS WORD SEARCH

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

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

WORDS

AUTHORIZATION
BRANDS
COATED
COMPOUNDING
CONTRAINDICATION
COPAY
DISPENSE
FORMULARY
GENERIC
MEDICATION
MOUTH
OTC
PHARMACY
PRESCRIPTION
PRO RE NATA
REFILL
SIDE EFFECT
SIGNA
STATIM
SUBLINGUAL
TOPICAL



CLUES ACROSS

1. El Dorado High School
5. A sculpture representing a human or animal
11. A type of return
14. Tie the knot again
15. Washington city
18. Hairlike structures
19. Mark used over a vowel
21. Explosive
23. Popular 500 car race
24. Pile up
28. Currency
29. Commercial
30. A minute amount (Scottish)
32. Mass of fish eggs
33. Baseball stat
35. Licensed accountant
36. Japanese classical theater
39. Gasteyer and de Armas are two
41. Blood group
42. Assist in wrongdoing
44. Language of Cameroon
46. Grayish-white
47. A woolen cap of Scottish origin
49. Microorganism
52. Strong social customs
56. Calm and dependable
58. Congressman
60. Force
62. As a result of this document
63. A main branch of Islam

CLUES DOWN

1. Make a mistake
2. American DJ Rick
3. Fictional Asimov planet
4. Coughed out
5. Singing to one's lover
6. Scotland's longest river
7. One of the six noble gases
8. Body art
9. Two-toed sloth
10. Electronic counter-countermeasures
12. A foolish person
13. Of the wind
16. Mansion
17. Sound
20. English river
22. Business symbol
25. Exclamation of surprise
26. Pouch
27. Individually
29. Satisfaction
31. The bill in a restaurant
34. Japanese delicacy
36. Port in southern Japan
37. Double-reed instruments
38. Center
40. "The Mount Rushmore State"
43. Soldier
45. Indicates position
48. Beauty treatment: __-pedi
50. Nonsense (slang)
51. Republic of Ireland
53. Ballplayers' tools
54. American state
55. Clusters of a fern frond
57. Patriotic women's group
58. A person's brother or sister
59. Breed of sheep
61. Of I

SUDOKU

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

Level: Intermediate

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to prescriptions.

S L P L I

Answer: Pills

GUESS WHO?

I am a singer born in California on October 25, 1984. I grew up listening to gospel music, but eventually pursued a career in pop music. I have been nominated for 13 Grammy Awards, and have five Billboard Music Awards. I have many hits and I performed during the Super Bowl halftime show in 2015.

Answer: Katy Perry

CRYPTO FUN

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

Solve the code to discover words related to prescriptions.
Each number corresponds to a letter.
(Hint: 21 = A)

A. 19 5 14 15 2 21 1 15 13 6
Clue: Treatment

B. 14 13 2 1 13 7
Clue: Physician

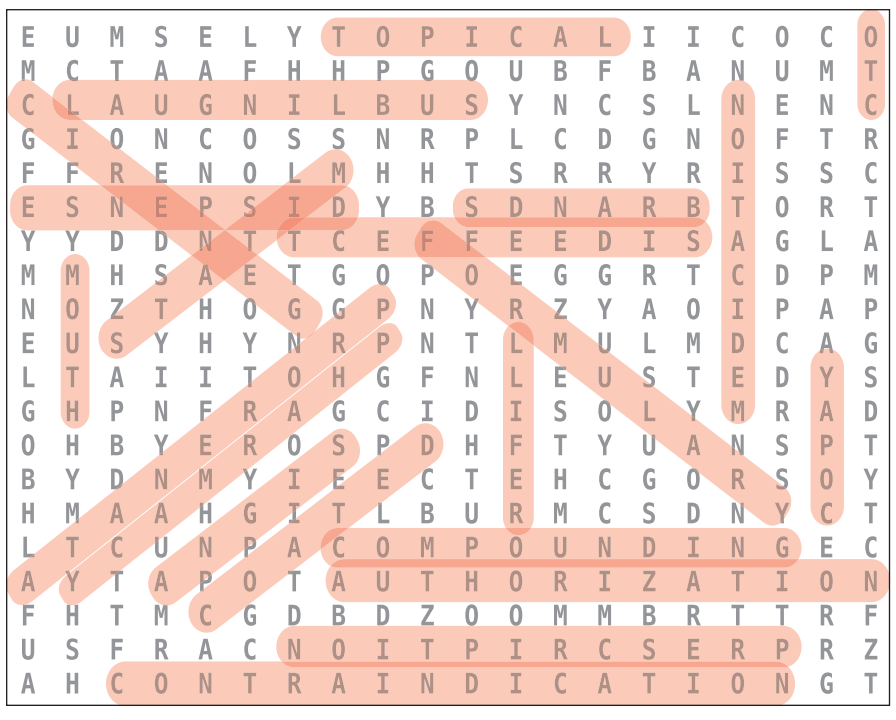
C. 10 3 21 7 19 21 2 22
Clue: Fills prescriptions

D. 7 5 24 15 8 8
Clue: Renew a prescription

Answers: A. medication B. doctor C. pharmacy D. refill

PUZZLE SOLUTION

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



SUDOKU SOLUTION

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

Levisa River DAR to host Veterans Appreciation Dinner

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

Area veterans and their families are invited to gather for fellowship and recognition during the Levisa River NSDAR Chapter's annual Veterans Appreciation Dinner on Saturday, Nov. 14, at Twin Valley Elementary/Middle School.

Registration will begin at 10 a.m., followed by the program at 11 a.m. The event honors local men and women who have served in the military and provides an opportunity for veterans to reconnect, share memories and visit with friends and fellow service members.

The Appalachian School of Pharmacy will provide free medical screenings for those attending.

For more information, contact Brenda Ward at 276-259-7224 or Frannie Minton at 276-698-5354.

Waste collection event set for Friday in Grundy

By CHAD COOPER
cookam@gmail.com

Buchanan County residents looking to clear unwanted paint, pesticides and household chemicals out of their garages and basements can bring those materials to Environmental Waste Collection Day this Friday, Oct. 30.

The event will take place from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Walmart parking lot in Grundy. Office paper shredding, tire drop-off and electronics collection will also be available.

Sponsored by Buchanan County and the Cumberland Plateau Regional Waste Management Authority, the collection provides a designated place for residents to dispose of household products that require special handling.

According to the event announcement, improperly discarded chemicals and other hazardous materials can endanger people and animals and pollute creeks, streams and wooded areas.

Accepted materials include paint, polishes, varnishes, paint-related materials, turpentine, aerosol cans and adhesives. Nickel-cadmium, alkaline and dry-cell batteries will also be accepted.

Residents may bring antifreeze, fuel additives, gasoline, mercury, pesticides, transmission fluid, bleach and pool chemicals.

The collection is for household materials. Commercial and industrial waste will not be accepted. Radioactive materials, explosives, bullets and all tank cylinders are also prohibited.

Organizers ask residents to take used motor oil to Advance Auto or another designated recycling location.

Residents bringing tires, electronics or documents for shredding should contact the Buchanan County Litter Control Office beforehand for information about limits or preparation requirements. Anyone unsure whether a household product will be accepted should also call before bringing it.

For more information, contact the Litter Control Office at 276-935-6106.



Spotlight on The CAM

By JODI REYNOLDS
Theatre Guild of Buchanan County

They say laughter is the best medicine, and if that's true, The CAM delivered a healthy dose earlier this month. Our first-ever stand-up comedy show, featuring comedian Trav Stevenson, brought a new kind of entertainment to our stage. It was awesome. There was a large crowd and lots of laughter. My cheeks actually hurt from laughing so much.

Stevenson, originally from Richlands and known for his relatable Appalachian humor, brought his unique comedic style to The CAM on Oct. 3. His performance marked another exciting first for our venue as we continue exploring new ways to entertain our community. The success of the evening reinforced something we've been discovering throughout the year: our audiences are eager for fresh experiences, and The CAM is uniquely equipped to offer much more than traditional theatrical productions.

Building on that enthusiasm, we're excited to introduce another addition to our growing lineup of entertainment — monthly Open Mic nights at The CAM.

While our recent comedy show featured a professional stand-up comedian, Open Mic nights will turn the spotlight toward the incredible talent found right here in Southwest Virginia and throughout our surrounding region. These evenings will provide a welcoming stage for performers of all kinds to share their talents with an appreciative audience.

One of the most exciting things about Open Mic is its unpredictability. Unlike a traditional concert or theatrical production, where the audience knows what to expect, an Open Mic evening can take on a personality all its own. You might hear an original song from a local songwriter, listen to a talented young musician, enjoy a few minutes of stand-up comedy, or be moved by a dramatic reading. No two evenings will be exactly alike, and that's part of the fun.

Open Mic events aren't just about providing entertainment. We want to create opportunities. Our Appalachian region has a rich tradition of storytelling, music, and artistic expression. Some of the most talented individuals you'll ever meet are people who have never had the opportunity, or perhaps the confidence, to perform on a public stage. By offering a regular Open Mic night, we hope to provide a platform where those talents can be discovered, encouraged, and celebrated.

We also hope these evenings will become a gathering place for our community. Not every visit to The CAM needs to involve purchasing a ticket to a major production or committing to a full evening of scheduled entertainment. Sometimes it's simply about meeting friends, enjoying some popcorn and a drink, and supporting the people who make our region special.

Admission to our Open Mic nights will typically be free, making these events an accessible and affordable evening out. Our full concession stand will be open, along with a cash bar, so guests can enjoy refreshments while taking in the performances. Whether you come to participate or simply to sit back and enjoy the show, everyone is welcome.

Introducing monthly Open Mic nights represents another step toward fulfilling our vision of becoming a true community arts center. Theatre will always be at the heart of what we do, but the arts encompass so much more. We want to see you on our stage. Who knows? The next great singer, songwriter, comedian, or storyteller might be you or someone else who gets their start right here on our stage.

Reach out to our Executive Director, Colin Dailey, with questions, suggestions for events, and to sign up for Open Mic night. Colin is available at 276-244-7121 or by email at cdailey@seeyouatthecam.com. You can also stop by The CAM during his office hours Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Don't miss out on our full calendar of events at The CAM. Keep up with us through our social media and check our new website for daily updates at www.seeyouatthecam.com.

The stage is yours. See you at The CAM.



Local officials, community representatives and McDonald's employees gather with Grimace for the official grand opening and ribbon-cutting celebration at the rebuilt Vansant McDonald's on Oct. 20. The event also included a $1,000 donation to Southern Gap High School.

Vansant McDonald's celebrates grand opening, ribbon cutting

By CHAD COOPER
coopkam@gmail.com

The rebuilt Vansant McDonald's celebrated its official grand opening Oct. 20 with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, tours of the new restaurant, a donation to Southern Gap High School and an appearance by Grimace.

Local officials, community representatives and restaurant employees gathered for the celebration at the location, which reopened in September after the previous building was demolished.

Jake Ferris, representing the Ferris family franchise owners, welcomed guests and thanked Buchanan County residents for supporting the restaurant.

"You know, we're in so many communities, and everybody has been so supportive of us, and we're really proud to be here in Buchanan County," Ferris said.

Guests toured the new facility, getting a look at its equipment and features designed to make ordering and picking up meals more convenient. Improvements include self-service kiosks that accept cash, a McDelivery window and a third drive-thru window.

"This is a massive investment for the area, and we've made some improvements that we're really proud of," Ferris said.

The Vansant restaurant is the newest location in the family's franchise operation, which includes restaurants stretching from West Virginia to Knoxville, Tennessee.

McDonald's character Grimace also joined the celebration, greeting guests and adding to the festivities as community members toured the restaurant and visited with employees.

The event included a $1,000 donation to Southern Gap High School, accepted by Principal Mark Cooper.

"And while the building and the technology are new, our commitment to giving back to our local areas remains the same," Ferris said.

Attendees included Buchanan County supervisors Lee Dotson and David Rose, Grundy Mayor Chris Mitchell, Grundy Town Manager Dennis Ramey, Buchanan County Chamber of Commerce executive director Chad Cooper, and Traci Evans with Buchanan County Tourism.

Ferris also announced a community appreciation effort for Oct. 27, when teachers, first responders and firefighters will be offered a free breakfast sandwich. He also announced complimentary coffee in the lobby for senior citizens and police officers.

"It's just a way to say thank you for all that you do in accepting us," he said.

Ferris thanked the restaurant's management team and employees for their work throughout the rebuilding and reopening process.

"I know it was quite the endeavor, but we're so thankful for you and really proud of our team here in Vansant," he said.

The ribbon cutting formally marked the restaurant's grand opening, with Ferris expressing the family's commitment to serving Buchanan County.

"We are glad to have our forever McDonald's here, and we look forward to serving you for many years to come," Ferris said.

Adopt a Pet

Virginia Mountaineer



I am the right choice, elect me your next best friend! This cute canine candidate is a twelve-week-old male Kangal mix. His thick coat is colored harvest gold. He has a black muzzle and white markings. His eyes are soulful and his expression longing. He has a large and strong build. His personality is friendly, playful and pleasant. He shares his kennel at the shelter with three handsome brothers. These nonpartisan pups will be available for adoption at the Buchanan County Animal Shelter until Monday, Nov. 2, 2026.



Also available for adoption is this seven-week-old female Brittany Spaniel mix. Her silky coat is colored auburn and white. She has gentle eyes and a kind countenance. Her temperament is sweet and affectionate. She shares her kennel at the shelter with her adorable sister. The Buchanan County Animal Shelter is located at 1191 Dogpound Road. For more information about these animals, please call the shelter at 276-935-4067.

