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Pragmatist/Visionary Bonnie Chavez founds Building Beloved Communities



PHOTO BY DEBBIE ADAMS

Building Beloved Communities CEO Bonnie Chavez (right) won on the Gold Level in the 2021 Gauntlet Business Program and Competition.

Debbie Adams
dadams@ourvalley.org

Gauntlet winner Bonnie Chavez founded Building Beloved Communities in 2018 in her home state of New Mexico “to provide community-centered business solutions for small business owners and non-profits of all sizes.” In addition, she “provides executive coaching for those wanting to advance or deepen their leadership role.”

She established the business when she found herself unexpectedly unemployed after her prestigious and lucrative management position was eliminated in a business merger.

Her solution to the dilemma she faced included moving herself and her nationally based business across the country to Roanoke last year—in the midst of a pandemic—because she “loves the mountains and

being outdoors and has a great support system of friends here.”

In the time since, Chavez has firmly established herself as part of this community as she has grown her business. She entered the 2021 Gauntlet Business Program and Competition, winning on the gold level. She has devoted fundraising efforts to a venerable charity, the Roanoke Hospitality House (the Ronald McDonald House concept, but for adults), with benefits far beyond this community. She has bought a home in the Grandin Village area. She has hired her first employee; and to top it off, met the love of her life who was also a Gauntlet participant. And now her beloved parents are preparing to join her here in Roanoke.

Chavez based her new business on a speech delivered by Martin Luther King Jr. in which he en-

visioned “building The Beloved Community as our goal; to create a world in which poverty, hunger, homelessness, and bigotry will not be tolerated because international standards of human decency won’t allow it.”

While that sounds like a lofty goal, maybe even a head-in-the-clouds idea, Chavez has actual business credentials to use in building those communities. She is fiercely pragmatic and a visionary at the same time. When she asked herself how she could contribute to King’s vision, she took stock and came to the conclusion that what she had to offer was “I have really good business skills” that can be used to “keep the goodness going.” Pragmatism from the heart.

Chavez graduated from Okanagan University (now a University of British Columbia campus) with a degree in Business Management and earned her Master’s in Business Administration from the University of Phoenix.

She started out in 2004 in graphic design, creating business cards, wedding invitations (her favorite), flyers, and brochures, and assisted with marketing and sales. Her climb up the corporate ladder continued apace for the next several years.

She worked for the non-profit United Blood Services, cultivating public support for community-based blood drives; directing, training, and supervising blood drive coordinators; and managing blood drive logistics for a large segment of northern New Mexico and south-

See Chavez, page 3

Virginia Transformer celebrates 50th anniversary



PHOTO BY DEBBIE ADAMS

Virginia Transformer Corporation is celebrating its 50th anniversary. The plant is located just outside Vinton off of King Street in Roanoke City.

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Virginia Transformer Corporation (VTC) commemorated its 50th anniversary on June 23. The corporation designs and manufactures power transformers across every market—utility, industrial, commercial, alternative energy, marine/offshore, transit, and data centers. The state-of-the-art plant is headquartered in Roanoke City, just outside Vinton off King Street on Glade View Drive.

Employees and guests gathered outside for a celebration luncheon, followed by remarks from Roanoke City Councilman Joseph Cobb, Roanoke Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Joyce Waugh, and VTC CEO Prabhat Jain.

Waugh commented on the importance of Virginia Transformer to the local economy and its reach across the state, the United States, and beyond. She commended the company for its involvement with the community, its partnerships, and its contribution to the quality of life in the region.

“Thanks for putting your

See Transformer, page 5

Susan Lewis Music Studio students perform spring recital in person

Debbie Adams
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“Wow—how exciting it was to finally have an ‘in person’ recital with an audience of nearly 300 attentive, enthusiastic guests!” said Susan Lewis of the Susan Lewis Music Studio. “My heart is still overflowing with joy from all of my students’ incredible performances—from the numer-

ous beginners through the well-seasoned seniors and college students.”

Last year’s spring 2020 recital was held virtually with students filmed performing individually at Lewis’s home studio due to COVID-19 restrictions, with the recital made available for online viewing by families and friends.

This year over 40 students performed piano and/or vocal solos

during the recital at Vinton Baptist on June 27.

Each year at the Spring Recital, Lewis showcases her graduating seniors. This year was no different. Seniors Andrea Gonzalez and Abby Shelton each performed two pieces—Gonzalez on the piano and Shelton as a vocalist—and were introduced to the

See Spring Recital, page 10



PHOTO BY DEBBIE ADAMS

The Town of Vinton will celebrate the Fourth of July with fireworks, a patriotic program, and the band Low, Low Chariot on Sunday, July 4.

Vinton invites the community to celebrate the Fourth of July

The Town of Vinton will be returning to its annual tradition of fireworks on the Fourth of July on Sunday at the Vinton War Memorial.

Last year’s celebration was cancelled due to the pandemic, but with the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions, the event has been reinstated this year.

The fun gets underway at 6:30 p.m. on the lawn of the War Memorial with a patriotic program including a welcome from Vinton Mayor Brad Grose, a prayer, the national anthem, and

Pledge of Allegiance.

The always popular Low, Low Chariot will be the featured band for the evening, with the concert beginning at 7 p.m.

There will be food trucks—the Crusty Bark (with Smokin’ Good Meats for the Streets), Deb’s Lemonade, Delicia’s Gourmet Ice, Tinker Mountain Kettle Corn, and Duck Donuts.

The fireworks (by Grucci) go up at 9:30 from the back parking lot of the War Memorial.

An added attraction this July 4 will be the unveiling of the 2021 Vinton Magazine by the Vinton Area Chamber of Commerce and Leisure Publishing. Fourth of July attendees will get the first look at the cover and copies of the magazine will be distributed throughout the crowd.

The only remaining COVID restriction is—if you aren’t vaccinated, wear a mask out of consideration for others.



PHOTO BY DEBBIE ADAMS

Participants in the Susan Lewis Music Studio Spring Recital at Vinton Baptist included (from left): first row, Emily Hall, RJ McLennan, Addy McLennan, William Dodge, Lilla Clark, Xander Warf, Nolan Cranwell, Olivia Booth, Mara Roche, Pierce Franks, and music teacher Susan Lewis; second row, Nathan Gray, Deon Staunton, Nolan Ferguson, Petra Dodge, Lily Sealey, Enna Schofield, Skylar Thompson, Aubri Kessler, Ryleigh Woolwine, and Kathryn Dodson; third row, Emily Mower, Colter Dean, Kendall Dodson, Cary Jones, Sofia Gonzalez, Scottlyn Leonard, Sydney Thomas, and Allie Watson; fourth row, Kelly Rodan, Tes Smith, Madisa Sanchez, Paul Sealey, Latriva Pierce, and Andrea Gonzalez; fifth row, Amanda Morris, Lexi Williamson, Abby Booth, Simon Sealey, Gary Feazelle, and Abby Shelton. (Not pictured: Chloe Hopkins, Liam Cieraszynski, Carlyle Cieraszynski, and Landon Hodges)

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Troop 42 holds Spring Court of Honor/Crossover ceremony



Scoutmaster Hawk Hillberry presents the Special Needs Scouting Service Award to Chris Pugh.



Cub Scout Kingston Lees (on the bridge) makes the transition from Cub Scouts to BSA Scouts Troop 42 in a Crossover ceremony on June 22. He is shown with (left to right) his mother Janette Hunt, Senior Patrol Leader Logan Pugh, Senior Patrol Leader Jayden Sink, Daymien Manus, and Scoutmaster Hawk Hillberry.



Scout Jhorden Sink was recognized during the Troop 42 Court of Honor ceremony for earning his Star Rank, just two steps below Eagle Scout. He is shown with his mother Janette Hunt and Scoutmaster Hawk Hillberry.

Debbie Adams
dadams@ourvalley.org

Scout Troop 42 held the Spring 2021 Court of Honor and Cross-over Ceremony at Living Water Christian Church in Salem on June 22. The troop formed in the summer of 2019 with just five members and has now grown to a membership of 17. Many of their meetings and activities have been virtual in the past year due to the pandemic, but the Crossover and Court of Honor were held in person, now that COVID restrictions are being lifted.

The Crossover ceremony is a significant step which symbolizes the transition from Cub Scouts to Scouts BSA. The Scouts are crossing over from a pack to a troop and to a new chapter in their Scouting endeavors with many new experiences to come.

A Court of Honor recognizes Scouts who have moved up a rank or who have earned merit badges since the previous Court of Honor was held. This is a for-

mal recognition with families, friends, and the public in attendance.

The ceremony on June 22 was led by Scoutmaster Hawk Hillberry, Assistant Scoutmaster Janette Hunt, and Senior Patrol Leaders Jayden Sink and Logan Pugh. It opened with the presentation of flags, the Pledge of Allegiance, the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

During the ceremony, Cub Scout Kingston Lees crossed over a wooden bridge signifying his advancement to Scout Troop 42. Initially he and his mother, Janette Hunt, stood at one end of the bridge and advanced slowly across the bridge as the 12 points of Scout Law were read, to be greeted by the Scoutmaster on the other end. A fellow Scout was also waiting there, holding a rolled Troop neckerchief, which was presented to Lees.

Lizzy Hannon and Mikey Chisom joined as new members of Troop 42. All three—Lees, Hannon, and Chisom—earned their Scout Rank, the first rank in Scouting and were presented

with Scout Handbooks. Their mothers were presented with pins.

Next up was the Court of Honor, when several Scouts advanced in rank and received merit badges, with their mothers receiving pins as well.

Scoutmaster Hillberry commented that with the pandemic the scouts in Troop 42 have had extra time to work on merit badges and rank requirements.

Tenderfoot Scouts Joshua Crump, Nate Wainwright, Noah Weeks, Skylar Hunley, William Harding, and Joshua Harding completed the requirements to advance to Second Class Rank.

First Class Scouts Daymien Manus and Jhorden Sink achieved Star Rank, just two ranks away from Eagle Scout.

In addition to the Scouts, several adult leaders were recognized for their efforts in establishing Troop 42. Janette Hunt, Courtney Pugh, and Joe Ostronic received the William D. Boyce New Unit Organizer Award for their efforts in

founding the troop. The award is a square knot placed over the three colors representing the three phases of the Scouting program—Cub Scouting, Scouts BSA, and Venturing.

They were thanked by Scouts and families for serving the community by establishing a troop for scouts of all ability levels and spreading the ideal of inclusiveness—and being exemplary servants in the scouting program.

Chris Pugh was awarded the Special Needs Scouting Service Award, the third recipient of the award for Troop 42. The first year the award was presented to Gary and Heather Mason and the next to Tony Whitaker, with the Great Valley District Scouting organization.

Scouting guidelines say, “In order to be eligible for this honor, an individual must help youth with all abilities in a Pack or Troop setting, serve as a mentor or role model, facilitate a group discussion, lead, promote, or assist in an event, outing, demonstration for a rank requirement or one that pro-

motes awareness and acceptance for all youth with all abilities.”

The evening finished off with a birthday cake celebrating the 17th birthday of Senior Patrol Leader Jayden Sink who is working diligently on his Eagle Scout rank.

Scout Troop 42 is inclusive and open to scouts of all ability levels and those who live in all areas of the valley. Local scout leaders realized over two years ago that there was an unmet need locally in Scouting for children with special needs. That led to the formation of the Scout Abilities Committee—a group of individuals focused on inclusion of Scouts of all abilities to create an environment in which those with limited social, physical, cognitive, and communication skills could come together and work as a Scouting unit.”

Troop 42 welcomes children of all ability levels. Their email address is troop42roanoke@gmail.com. Their website is https://troop42roanoke.wixsite.com/troop42roanoke.



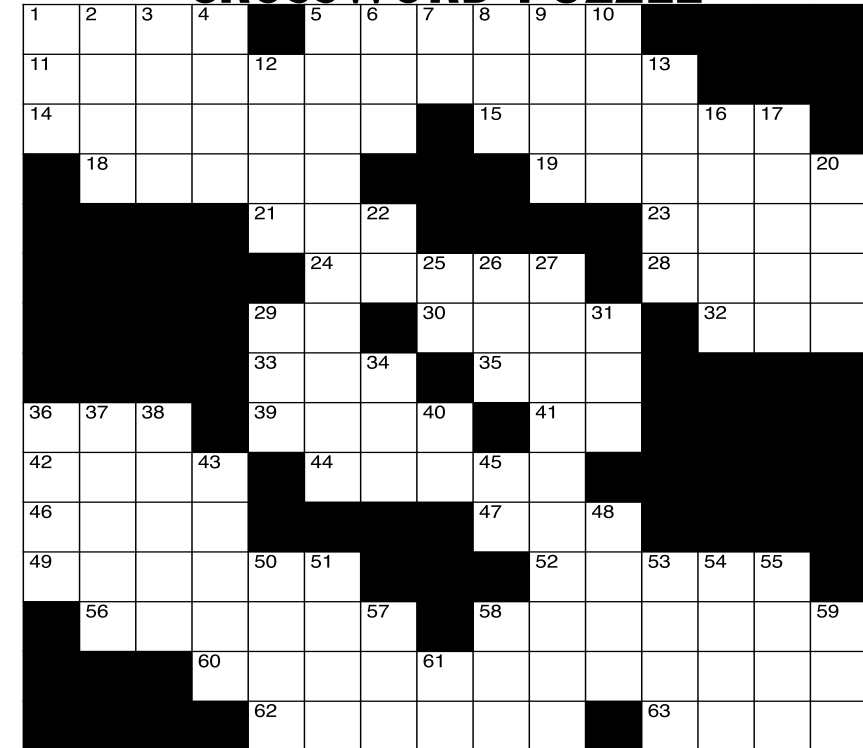
Scout Daymien Manus was recognized for earning his Star Rank during the Court of Honor Ceremony for Troop 42. He is shown with his mother, Stephanie, and Scoutmaster Hillberry.



PHOTO S BY DEBBIE ADAMS

Adult Scout leaders were also recognized during the Troop 42 Court of Honor Ceremony. Scoutmaster Hawk Hillberry (on left) presents the William D. Boyce New Unit Organizer Award to (left to right) Courtney Pugh, Janette Hunt, and Joe Ostronic.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| CLUES ACROSS | passports | 4. Sea eagle | 34. Brew |
| 1. Absence of difficulty | 39. Snakelike fishes | 5. Subdivision of cenospecies | 36. Mosque prayer leader |
| 5. Preserve a dead body | 41. Military flyers | 6. Dialect of Chinese | 37. Indigo bush |
| 11. Gratitude | 42. Raincoats | 7. Mr. T's character on "The A-Team" | 38. Burn with a hot liquid |
| 14. The act of coming together again | 44. Type of community | 8. Consumed | 40. Jr.'s father |
| 15. More cushy | 46. Feature of worm's anatomy | 9. Chinese dynasty | 43. Scad genus |
| 18. Visionaries | 47. In the center | 10. NFL great Randy | 45. Morning |
| 19. Fish-eating bird | 49. Laid back | 12. Ireland | 48. Length of a straight line (abbr.) |
| 21. Indicates near | 52. Jewelled headdress | 13. Palm trees | 50. Double curve |
| 23. NY Mets legend Tommie | 56. In slow tempo | 16. Fungal disease | 51. Small thin bunch |
| 24. Icelandic poems | 58. ___ Falls | 17. Willis and Jerry are two | 53. Worn by exposure to the weather |
| 28. Pop | 60. Saying things again | 20. Affirmative! | 54. Mars crater |
| 29. Hammer is one | 62. Periods in history | 22. Potato state | 55. Humanities |
| 30. Senses of self-esteem | 63. Hyphen | 25. "The First State" | 57. Of the ears |
| 32. Trigraph | CLUES DOWN | 26. A way to develop | 58. "To the ___ degree" |
| 33. Not around | 1. Body part | 27. Associations | 59. Residue |
| 35. Electronic data processing | 2. Mimics | 29. Woman (French) | 61. It keeps you cool |
| 36. Driver's licenses and | 3. Expel or eject | 31. Sunscreen rating | |

Volunteers needed at Mingle concerts



The Mingle at the Market concert on July 10 will feature the band Five Dollar Shake. Volunteers are needed for all Mingle concerts this summer and fall.

Mingle at the Market concerts are hosted by the Vinton Area Chamber of Commerce assisted by the Town of Vinton. The Chamber depends on help from volunteers to keep things operating smoothly at the concerts, which are held on the Vinton Farmers' Market downtown.

The Chamber could use some help in facilitating the concerts, which are scheduled for the second and fourth Saturdays through September—volunteers are needed. Individual volunteers are welcome. If you are a member of an organization which likes to do community service, they can use your group as well. Volunteers assist with checking in guests with their ID's, serving adult bev-

verages, mingling with the crowd, assisting with set-up and clean-up, and more.

Chamber Executive Director Angie Chewning expresses her gratitude to those who volunteered at the most recent Mingle on June 26—Page Stovall, Brian Lovern, Aaron Blankenship, Karen Hill, Tracy Powers, Allison Finney, Randall Waters, Mike and Patsy Stovall, MollyJo Milliner, Michele Barklow, Chris Craft, Justin Davison, Kayla Sutphin, Katie Thomas, and Kathryn Sowers.

The next Mingle at the Market is scheduled for July 10 featuring the band Five Dollar Shake.

Email Angie Chewning at angie@vintonchamber.com or call 343-1364 if you have some time to help with these events.

Be sure to "Like" the Vinton Messenger on Facebook.

PEOPLE, PLACES AND THINGS

Angie Chewing

Filling in for Bootie

Longboat Key was the perfect backdrop for the perfect day for a, or should I say a 10-day, celebration! Jennifer Crush and Scot Luke said “I do” surrounded by friends and family and the gorgeous Florida sky. Friend Don Halliwill, who is ordained for nuptials, married Jennifer and Scot on the beach on June 12 at 5:30 in the evening. A beach reception followed. Those celebrating with the couple were Jennifer’s son Matthew, Tammy, Don, Jack and Wills Halliwill, Garrett and Lacy Garrett, Peter and Brenda Campbell, Dylan Vess, Amy, Nate, Abby and Alison Stoehr, and Angela and Greg Groves, who live in Longboat. On Friday before the wedding, the girls had a bridal brunch and the guys played golf. What a way to get married!

What a night! Many, many, many thanks to Vinyl Nation for rocking it all night. To Blue Ridge Beverage for the cold drinks, Member One, HomeTrust Bank and all of our sponsors for supporting what we do, Mountain Grille—so happy to have a butter burger again! – and to our volunteers, Page Stovall, Brian Lovern, Aaron Blankenship, Karen Hill, Tracy Powers, Allison Finney, Randall Waters, Mike and Patsy Stovall, Molly Jo Milliner, Michelle Barklow, Chris Craft (for all the great pictures), Justin Davison, Kayla Sutphin, Katie Thomas and, of course, my sidekick Kathryn Sowers. And to all of YOU that come out to enjoy the night! Thank you – you are why we do what we do!

So glad to see so many people out, looking forward to July 10 with Five Dollar Shake and Finger Wingin’ Good!

Hope everyone will join us on July 4 on the lawn of the War Memorial. We will unveil our new Vinton Magazine! Hope to see everyone there !!



Chavez

from page 1

ern Colorado. That led her to a job as a Hospital Services manager for the same company, managing the blood and blood component inventory for the state of New Mexico.

Her next move was to Molina Healthcare, a Fortune 500 company focused exclusively on government-sponsored health care programs for families and individuals. Initially she worked as the director for Community Engagement, for the philanthropic arm of the health insurance company, directing their marketing efforts. Within a year, she had moved up to director of Government Contracts Marketplace and Medicare for Molina for the state of New Mexico.

She was headhunted by another healthcare company and became director of the Affiliate Network for the DaVita Medical Group of New Mexico. That job was hers for several months until DaVita was acquired by Optum health services company, and her position was eliminated, stalling her corporate climb.

Chavez says she loved the day-to-day impact she was making in the corporate world, but she also keenly felt the grind—what kept her going was the “big paycheck on Friday.” In her early 30s, she was “really kicking it” with a high six-figure salary,

a home, investments—a phenomenal lifestyle—especially as a second-generation American with English as a second language. She was the first in her family to get her bachelor’s and master’s degrees, fulfilling her parents’ dream to “have a successful kid.”

When she lost her job, she “wasn’t happy,” but because she had lived conservatively and been “smart with money,” she had time to ponder the future. She had business skills and felt a need to help her community. She had always been community-centered, believing “we all rise together,” and that “our mission should be to raise up the community we are in.”

So, she came up with Building Beloved Communities. She had just met with her financial planner who said she had enough cash and investments to fund her life for about six months. She was surviving on a diet of Ramen noodles when she was tempted to accept a job with a substantial salary, but ultimately turned it down and launched her company.

Chavez says it took a year to get on good financial footing with Building Beloved Communities. She made just \$50 from her first client. Her marketing at the time was word-of-mouth. She was down to “bare bones living” when her business “took off.” She was able to

juggle more than one client at a time, some online, some full-time, some part-time. She kept consuming Ramen but started “getting traction.”

Since she could work basically from anywhere with 90% of her contracts online, she made the decision to move to Roanoke, which has “cool places,” supports entrepreneurs, and is a tight-knit community. At about that time COVID hit. She took a leap of faith and continued with her plans.

Her Building Beloved Communities enterprise is multi-faceted and includes working with small businesses to help them grow and flourish, with non-profits to help them galvanize themselves to survive, and executive coaching to help individuals find more satisfying careers and lifestyles.

Chavez focuses on a community-centered business concept in which small businesses and non-profits are encouraged to use local suppliers, buy from non-profits, increase their influence in the local community, and make charitable donations to support the community. Collaboration and community have always been key.

Now her “business is booming,” in part because she is “reasonably priced,” and while most consultants charge by the job,

she has chosen to charge by the hour to give customers the best value.

Chavez seems to have a special talent for saving the organizations she works with money. She streamlined the operations of one company just by making changes to their photocopying system, saving \$5,000—and convinced the company to donate the old photocopier to a non-profit to boot. She had another client switch to a cash back rewards credit card and saved \$8,000 over time.

How do small businesses and non-profits afford a consultant? One non-profit client in Taos, N.M., can pay Chavez for her services because they received a grant to build up capacity. There are many grants available to help non-profits and hiring a consultant is a legitimate, and even encouraged, use of funds. Consultants like her come in and assist with “tightening the nuts and bolts,” scaling, solving business problems—increasing efficiency and saving time.

Chavez says she signed up for the 2021 Gauntlet with “zero expectations.” She wanted to network and meet entrepreneurs in the area and to understand business in Roanoke and the New River Valley. She gained far more from the Gauntlet than she anticipated.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Bonnie Chavez (right) and Kim Whiter met this winter at the Gauntlet Business Program and Competition. Chavez is the CEO of Building Beloved Communities. Whiter founded Eldercare Solutions.

She has hired her first employee—Shannon Dominguez, who directed the Gauntlet program for The Advancement Foundation (TAF) this year—to be her director of Operations.

At the Gauntlet, Chavez met the love of her life, Kim Whiter, another Gauntlet entrepreneur—and Platinum Level winner—who has just cut the ribbon for her Elder Care Solutions business at the HIVE Business Incubation Center in Vinton. Gauntlet classes met online this year, and they first got to

know one another by sitting at the same virtual discussion table.

Chavez says the Gauntlet 10-week business program “takes a lot of hard work and guts—it’s not called the ‘Gauntlet’ for nothing.”

For more information on Building Beloved Communities, call Bonnie Chavez at 505-702-3858. Talking to her will make you feel better about the world.

For more information on the Gauntlet, visit <https://theadvancementfoundation.org/thegauntlet>.

Baylor University celebrates local graduates

Baylor University celebrated more than 7,500 graduates of the Classes of 2020 and 2021 during six in-person commencement ceremonies May 6-8 at McLane Stadium on the banks of the Brazos River.

The outdoor ceremonies that honored nearly 2,800 spring 2021 Baylor graduates, as well as more than 4,700 May, August and December 2020 graduates, whose ceremonies were canceled or held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The

commencement ceremonies also were the first held outdoors at Baylor since May 27, 1955.

This year’s local graduates include:

Mac Carter Paine, who earned his Bachelor of Science in Education, Exercise Physiology, from the Robbins College of Health & Human Sciences, May 2021

Wesley Oliver Cook, Master of Social Work, Social Work, May 2021

Diana R. Garland, School of Social Work, May 2021

Smiths earn degrees

Tes Smith and Michael Smith have earned college degrees. Tes received an Associate Degree in General Studies at Virginia Western Community College. Michael earned a BS Degree in Mass Communications

from Virginia Commonwealth University.

Both are graduates of William Byrd High School; Tes in 2019 and Michael in 2016. Their parents are Bob and Dawn Smith of Bonsack.

Vinton Town Council resumes in-person meetings

Vinton Town Council has been meeting virtually via Zoom for well over a year. That changes on Tuesday, July 6, when the regularly scheduled council meeting will once again be in-person in Council Chambers in

the Vinton Municipal Building on Pollard Street.

There is another change with council meetings—they will now begin at 6 p.m. on the first and third Tuesdays of each month. (Council meet-

ings previously began at 7 p.m.) This is a permanent time change approved by council.

The Town of Vinton will continue to live stream the council

meetings via Facebook Live and have those recordings available for future use to continue to make council meetings as open and available as possible.

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La La's Piano Players present Spring Piano Recital



Carol McCulloch with Sofie Ingraham, senior piano student.



Sisters Maddie (left) and Abigail Dooley were awesome performers at the spring recital. They are shown with piano teacher Carol McCulloch. Abigail Dooley (right) was named as this year's Star Piano Student.



Chukie Elechi attends Blue Ridge Autism and Achievement Center and has taken lessons from La La for 11 years. His mom, Uche, is his biggest fan and supporter.

Students of Carol McCulloch, also known as La La, presented their Spring Piano Recital on Sunday, June 6, hosted by Belmont Church of Roanoke. The first in-person performance since 2019 was a welcome experience for the pianists and all others in attendance.

Twenty-four of her 30 students participated playing pop, classical and religious selections, as well as some unique and beautiful individual arrangements.

La La's mission is "to teach the love of music to both typical and special needs students," and every recital is inclusive in that regard.

"I've thoroughly enjoyed and learned from my special needs students over the

years; they are an integral part of our piano family," McCulloch said. "The dedication and progress we've seen and heard has been a joy."

She continues to teach some students virtually but looks forward to sharing even more personal time with her students as 2021 proceeds.

Named as this year's Star Piano Student was Abigail Dooley of Roanoke. Abbie just completed eighth grade at William Byrd and has studied with La La since early elementary. She also plays guitar and serves as keyboardist for her church youth group at Mount Pleasant Baptist.

In addition, Sofie Ingraham

of Vinton was recognized as La La's only senior this year. McCulloch shared with everyone that "this young lady is super talented and should reach any goal, musically or otherwise, she sets her mind to."

Sofie presented her Senior Recital on June 19 at her home church, Blue Ridge Baptist, where she played some of her favorite classical pieces, plus lovely arrangements of several treasured hymns.

According to La La, "My pianists just keep practicing what Hans Christian Andersen said a long, long time ago, 'When words fail, music speaks.'"

Playing the recital prelude this year was Frank Stiff,

who set a beautiful tone for the rest of the afternoon.

Students performing included:

- Elizabeth Martinez: "For Good" and "The Old Rugged Cross"
- Kristen Neal: "Polovetian Dance # 17" and Solo, "Spring" Lyrics by Kirsten (music, Braham's Lullaby)
- Brody Parrish: "Rockin' Song"
- Matt Graybill: "Let It Be" and "Just a Closer Walk with Thee"
- Courtney Walls: "Princess Waltz" Duet
- Abbie Dooley: "Musetta's Waltz" and "This is Me"

- Chukie Elechi: "Patherique Sonata # 8" and "Radetsky March"
- Julia Russ: "Indian Dance"
- Carter Walls: "When the Saints Go Marching In"
- Levi Laughinghouse: "Lean on Me"
- Kennedy Bentley: "Ocean Waves"
- Shay Kiedrowski: "Beauty and the Beast"
- Logan Jones: "In the Mood"
- Teresa Nester: "Theme from Ice Castles"
- Margaret Bryant: "Others"
- Natalie Peters: "Can Can"
- Norah Laughinghouse: "Tomorrow"
- Maddie Dooley: "It Is Well" and "Bingo" Duet
- Kendall Adams: "This

- Land is Your Land" and "Little Prayer"
- Maggie Laughinghouse: "How Great Is Our God" and "Fly Me to the Moon"
- Alyssa Walker: "The Entertainer" and "Sonne"
- Sofie Ingraham: "Nocturne in E Minor" and "Schindler's List"

Peter Anderson and Stephanie O'Donnell participated in the recital remotely—Anderson due to an out-of-town commitment, and O'Donnell, who lives in San Diego, started lessons with McCulloch in Roanoke, but now continues virtually.

For more information, visit McCulloch's website at www.lalaspianoplayers.com or her La's Piano Page on Facebook. The entire recital will be available for viewing online this week.

From the Pulpit

"Making Adjustments"

2 The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 The gate-keeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear

his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the

sheep follow him because they know his voice (John 10:2-4)."

For the past couple of weeks, Parker has been taking swim lessons. Before getting started he could swim a few yards under water but could not keep his head above water long enough to take another breath. He knew how to move forward in the water but did not know how to stay above the water. Thus, one of his biggest goals for swim lessons has been learning how to float. As his instructor shared, when it comes to water safety, learning how to float is more important than learning how to swim. If children know how to float, they can survive in water for however long is needed until help arrives.

This has been a challenge for Parker. Lying down in the water with his head and body facing up has not come easily. Throughout his lessons, his instructor was constantly reminding him to keep his head back so that his body could lie flat on top of the water. Every time he

would lift his head from the water, the rest of his body would begin to sink. It was only by hearing his teacher's instructions, feeling her hand gently on his back, and adjusting his body in response that Parker's position on top of the water could be restored. Floating required both listening to his instructor and making adjustments based on her instructions.

Jesus once used the image of a shepherd to help his listeners understand who he was and what was required of them. Just as sheep need a shepherd to instruct and guide them to find pasture, Jesus wanted his earliest followers to understand their need for a shepherd.

Like sheep, they too needed someone to instruct and guide them to discover all that God had prepared for them. "I have come that you might have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10)." Just as sheep must hear their shepherd's voice and make adjustments in their direction in order to follow him, Jesus wanted his followers to understand the same was re-

quired of them.

Hearing God's voice in our lives is only the first step; receiving the abundant life he has prepared for us requires that we are consistently making adjustments based on his instructions.

If sheep do not make adjustments in their direction based on their shepherd's voice, they will not find the pasture their shepherd has prepared for them. Unable to find pasture, sheep quickly become lost and in danger of falling prey to the wolves that abound. If Parker did not make adjustments to his body position in the water based on his teacher's instructions, he would be unable to float. Without the ability to float, he would quickly begin to sink and discover the danger of water.

The same is true for us as we seek to follow Christ today. Our Good Shepherd has promised that if we will follow him, we will find the pasture he has prepared for us. Our Teacher has promised that if we will listen to him, he will help us remain afloat even when the storms

of life crash and we find ourselves adrift. He has promised that he has come "so that we might have life and have it abundantly." However, receiving what God has prepared for us in Christ requires both listening and making adjustments based on his instructions. Each requires the other.

If we are not taking the time to stop and listen for God's voice, we will not hear him. And yet, hearing his voice will only get us so far; if we are not consistently making adjustments based on his instructions, then our position in life will not change. If we feel lost and unable to find the gate that leads to the life Jesus promised—if we feel like we are drowning, beating the water and gasping for air, yet getting nowhere—it may be time to stop, listen, and make some adjustments. Help has arrived. Our Good Shepherd is calling. The hand of our Teacher is gently resting upon us.

By Pastor Travis Russell, Vinton Baptist Church

The Vinton Messenger

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The Vinton Messenger encourages letters from our readers on topics of general interest to the community and responses to our articles and columns. Letters must be signed and have a telephone number where you can be reached to be considered for publication. All letters will be verified by telephone before publication. The Messenger reserves the right to deny publication of any letter and edit letters for length content and style.

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Celebrating The Town of VINTON!

The Town of Vinton, a community nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains, welcomes you to our community. Vinton, a town rich with history, has over the years found itself to be one of a few communities that continue to relish the past by offering an environment of a comfortable lifestyle with the feeling of being a part of a large community family. The town, with its proximity to the Blue Ridge Parkway and Smith Mountain Lake, provides many opportunities for those who wish to stop and shop at our local farmers market or one of our unique specialty shops.

If festivals are your interest, the Vinton area hosts several festivals throughout the year from the Vinton Dogwood Festival to the Vinton Fall Festival. Each festival offers its own unique atmosphere. When you are away from home it's always nice to feel as if you never left.

The Town of Vinton provides small town character with urban services and amenities located nearby. The small town atmosphere is characterized by a low crime rate; small, locally, and regionally owned businesses; and moderately priced homes. Views of the mountains and Blue Ridge Parkway abound.

Vinton represents the ideal type of community, small enough to provide a feeling

of belonging, yet progressive enough to provide the facilities, services, and conveniences that are necessary to make a community feel like home to its citizens.

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Transformer from page 1

skills and talents to work here," Waugh said.

Cobb read a proclamation from Roanoke City Council declaring June 23 as Virginia Transformer Day in the city. He thanked the manufacturer for its contribution to the economy, to national security, to grid independence, and to reducing imports of transformers.

In introducing Jain, VTC President Anoop Nanda said that he "works with a terrific team and stands in awe of the leadership of Mr. Jain, the longest-serving CEO in the transformer industry. He is passionate in the pursuit of perfection."

Jain thanked the "dedicated team of technicians and engineers" at VTC. "Fifty years is a long time, and rare. Our company is strong, financially viable, and holds a leadership position in the industry. We have a long life ahead of us.

"As we celebrate our 50th anniversary, I want to reflect back on the last 50 years and recognize how we have traversed obstacles and reached industry-leading milestones," said Jain. "In my 39 years as CEO here, I've realized that it's the people, the focus on the customer, and the technology that brings us continued success, and I'm proud of what we've accomplished."

Jain shared some of the history of Virginia Transformer from its first location in 1979 on Cleveland Avenue in Roanoke (in the flood plain), to its move to Statesman Industrial Park in 1979 and then to the present facility in 1989, where it has continued to grow—now occupying 120,000 square feet.

In 1995 VTC built a second plant in Chihuahua, Mexico, and acquired a third in Idaho in 2003. In 2013, it opened another plant nearby in Troutville for tank fabrication, sandblasting, and paint.

The corporation has gone from producing small power transformers (its earliest customers were



Virginia Transformer is the largest producer of power transformers in the United States. The transformers are built start to finish in the Roanoke Valley.

mining companies) to become the largest United States-based power transformer OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) with the largest engineering team in the industry. The transformers are built start to finish at the local plant in a process that takes four to five months.

Jain joined the company in 1982, hired by a board "who saw value in me." Previously he had worked for GE in Salem as an engineer.

When Jain joined the company, VTC was mired in debt and still a minor player in the industry. "I came with one expectation — to lead a business," Jain said.

Under Jain's leadership, VTC began to broaden and diversify its customer base and product line, developing new technologies and delivering high-reliability transformers with a 60-year service life—the longest in the industry, eventually becoming the market leader that it is today.

"Virginia Transformer was born

here, grew up here, and now has a national footprint," Jain said. "We are proud to be a part of Roanoke and are bursting at the seams," he commented.

He named several local companies Virginia Transformer has been affiliated with, including PFG in Vinton, since 1984.

The bulk of their transformers are used in distribution and transmission substation applications to bring power from generation plants to homes and industry. They serve heavy industries, hospitals, universities, government installations, the military, pipelines and refineries, transit, and utilities.

Virginia Transformer has powered some of the nation's most notable customers including Walt Disney World (think Tower of Terror), FermiLab, the Washington and New York City Metro, and NASA. Its customers have included Fortune 500 companies such as Tesla, Chevron, Duke Energy, Edison International, and Siemens. In 2003, VTC came to the aid of the Army Corps of Engineers by de-



PHOTOS BY DEBBIE ADAMS

Prabhat Jain has been CEO of Virginia Transformer since 1982 and offered his perspective on the growth of the business in the past 50 years at the anniversary celebration on June 23.

signing, building, and shipping six 15-MVA transformers in just six weeks for the Gulf War rebuilding projects.

The corporation is now working with the solar and wind industry as it matures, as well as data centers and the electric vehicle industry.

"We are shifting and positioning to supply the offshore wind, large solar/wind power transformers, and pad-mount transformers custom-designed for harmonics mitigation—ensuring reliability to the national grid," Jain said.

Jain noted that COVID-19 "turned our lives upside down," although as an "essential industry" they were able to keep working. Currently 80% of their workforce has been vaccinated. He thanked them and the HR and safety personnel at the plant for this achievement.

At the anniversary celebration, Jain announced that as a result of the pandemic, Virginia Transformer has established two initiatives—an employee support fund and a scholarship fund for the children

of employees.

"Education is the most important source of strength of any society," Jain commented.

The local VTC workforce has grown over five decades from 30 to more than 400, with 1,500 employees across five North American plants.

Jain informed those gathered that VTC has singlehandedly reduced international imports of power transformers by 10 percent. It has contributed more than \$100 million in annual economic impact to the Roanoke region. The goal is a 15 percent expansion each year for the next five years.

"Going forward, transformers will continue to be at the heart and soul of transforming energy from sources of creation to sources of consumption," said President Anoop Nanda. "The United States' aging energy infrastructure requires many assets to be replaced to enhance grid reliability and security, and Virginia Transformer is a key player in getting that done with 50 years of expertise and innovation."

Quams celebrate 60th anniversary



Bobby and Linda McGuire Quam of Vinton celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on June 24, 2021. They were married on June 24, 1961 at White Rock Baptist Church. They have two daughters and sons-in-law, Alisa and Jim Cooper and Sherry and Joe Greene. They have four grandchildren, Allison Cooper Clark and her husband, Andrew, Jenna Greene, Joseph Greene and Ethan Cooper. The Quams give thanks to the Lord for giving them 60 wonderful years. A trip to Kiawah Island is planned.

Upcoming Free COVID Vaccines in Vinton in July and August

The Town of Vinton is partnering again with the Virginia Department of Health and the Roanoke City and Alleghany Health Districts to host free COVID-19 vaccine clinics. Clinics are scheduled for:

July 8, 4-6 p.m., Vinton War Memorial,

Pfizer vaccine July 29, 4-6 p.m., Vinton War Memorial, Pfizer vaccine

August 4, 4-6 p.m., Vinton's Charles R. Hill Community Center, Moderna vaccine

Preregister for the day and time you would like to attend on the website at <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/roanoke/covid-vaccine/> or by calling 540-613-6597 between the hours of 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Walk-ins are welcome while vaccine supplies last.

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OBITUARY

Marion Steven Bartley

Marion Steven "Steve" Bartley, 73, went to be with the Lord on Tuesday, June 22, 2021. He was a devoted family man and resident of Vinton. Steve is survived by his wife, Sara Angle Bartley; his children, Stefie Bartley and Matt Bartley; his sister, Paula Bartley; his brother, Bill Bartley; his daughter-in-law, Shannon Bartley; and his two grandchildren, Marek and Faye. He was preceded in death by his parents, Marion Schley Bartley and Dorothy Virginia Locke. Steve was born on November 11, 1947, in Roanoke, and was the middle of three siblings. He attended Northside High School in 1965 and received a business degree from Roanoke College. He met his wife, Sara, at a 15th anniversary high school reunion. They recently celebrated their 39th wedding anniversary together on June 19. He and Sara had two beautiful children; he would never stop talking about how proud he was of Stefie and Matt. Steve was a devoted father and avid



boater. He and his wife, Sara, frequented numerous concerts and recitals in which his kids performed. Many of his favorite family memories were created at Smith Mountain Lake. He loved to pull his daughter, Stefie, on a ski or his son, Matt, on a wakeboard. He was equally happy taking his wife, Sara, on a Sea-Doo or boat ride. One of Steve's more recent pastimes included watching his grandson, Marek, grow and develop for nearly two years. He often said he didn't know how much he wanted to be a grandfather until he had a grandchild of his own. Marek learned how to say his name, "Papaw," before he learned any other names. Steve also got to enjoy six weeks with his granddaughter, Faye. Arrangements were made available to the immediate family. Oakey's Funeral Service – Vinton Chapel handled the arrangements. Online condolences may be shared with the family at www.oakeys.com.



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Vinton Breakfast Lions award scholarships

Debbie Adams
dadams@ourvalley.org

The Vinton Breakfast Lions have continued their tradition of awarding scholarships to local students at both William Byrd High School and Staunton River High School.

At their June 9 meeting, they presented the Ryan Chambers Memorial Scholarships to two Staunton River High School students—Emily Duncan and Emma Jackson. Duncan will be attending Liberty University; Jackson will attend Black Hawk College.

The Ryan Chambers Memorial Scholarship was first presented in 2020 and is designated for students who are active in church ministry or missions.

Ryan Chambers passed away in December 2018 in an accident on an icy road in Bedford County at age 24. He was a graduate of Staunton River High School and Piedmont International University, with a degree in Church Ministries and a member of Goodview Baptist Church. Chambers played soccer at SRHS and basketball at Piedmont International.

His family said, "His love for the Lord took him to Guatemala, Mexico, Uganda, Tokyo, and Spain to spread the gospel. Ryan had a desire to reach those who had never heard the name of Jesus and share the saving news of the gospel with as many as he could. He loved people wholeheartedly and passionately."

Lions Club President Chris McCarty said that Ryan went to work for him at Grand Rental in Vinton when he got out of college. McCarty knew his father Otis Chambers from sandlot coaching days when Otis was a referee. McCarty and Ryan became close friends when they worked together. They both liked sports.

"Ryan was big into missions and just liked to serve people," so McCarty recruited him to join the Breakfast Lions Club. "The members really liked him, and he helped a lot with all of their projects."

"We decided to give the scholarships through the Breakfast Lions Club since Ryan was a member and the club helped so much in raising the funds," McCarty said. "The club will continue to build on what we did the first year and make the scholarship program bigger and better in the years to come."

Ryan Chambers' parents, Otis and Michelle, attended the presentation of the scholarships.

The Breakfast Lions presented six more scholarships at their meeting on June 23—this time to graduates of William Byrd High School. Recipients of Wallace Cundiff Scholarships are Kasey McKee, who will be attending Virginia Tech to study Human Nutrition, Foods, and Exercise; Elizabeth Recktenwald, who will major in Arts and Sciences at the University of Virginia; and Megan Thomas and Katie Wheeler, who will be studying Nursing at Radford University.

The Leo Scholarship (the Lions sponsor the Leo Club at WBHS) was presented to Natalie Mullins and Keaton Band, who was named Best All Around Male at William Byrd. Mullins was also named the Best All Around Female at WBHS and received a scholarship from the GFWC Vinton Woman's Club. Both Mullins and Band will be attending Virginia Tech in the fall.

Also at the June 23 meeting, the Breakfast Lions inducted Travis Anderson, Assistant Principal at William Byrd High School, into the club. His sponsor was Lion Tammy Newcomb, WBHS Principal.



The Vinton Breakfast Lions Club made its second annual presentation of Ryan Chambers Memorial Scholarships on June 6. Recipients were Emily Duncan (second from left) and Emma Jackson. They are shown with Breakfast Lions Club President Chris McCarty (on left) and Otis and Michelle Chambers, Ryan's parents.



Six students from William Byrd High School received scholarships from the Vinton Breakfast Lions Club. Shown left to right are Megan Thomas, Katie Wheeler, Keaton Band, Natalie Mullins, Elizabeth Recktenwald, and Kasey McKee.



Travis Anderson (right), Assistant Principal at William Byrd High School, was inducted into the Vinton Breakfast Lions Club at the meeting on June 23. His sponsor was Lion Tammy Newcomb. They are shown with Vinton Breakfast Lions Club President Chris McCarty (left).

ANGLICAN

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BAPTIST (SOUTHERN)

MINERAL SPRINGS BAPTIST CHURCH & CHRISTIAN SCHOOL - 1030 Bible Lane, Vinton, Va. 24179. Church Phone 890-4465. Rev. Jason Gault. Sunday Services: Traditional Service, 8:45 AM, Sunday School, 10:00 AM, Contemporary Service, 11:00 AM, Evening Worship 6:00 PM, Wednesday Services: AWANA 6:30 PM, Bible Study 7:00 PM

BAPTIST (COOPERATIVE)

VINTON BAPTIST CHURCH - 219 Washington Ave., Vinton, Virginia. 343-7685. Rev. Travis Russell. Sunday Services: Contemporary Service 8:45 a.m., Sunday School 9:50 a.m., Traditional Service 11:00 a.m., Wednesday Services: Family Dinner: 5:30 p.m., Bible Study 6:15 p.m., Children's Ministries 6:15 p.m., Youth Ministry 6:30 p.m. www.vintonbaptistchurch.org.

CHRISTIAN CHURCH

BELMONT CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST), 1101 Jamison Ave. SE, Roanoke, VA 24013, 540-343-7502, Worship Services every Sunday at 11:00AM, Pastor Terry Brace. We look forward to seeing you this Sunday!

CHURCH OF CHRIST

CHURCH OF CHRIST VINTON - 2107 Feather Road, Vinton. Terry Hodge, Minister, 540-890-1170. Sunday Bible Study 9:45 a.m., Sunday Morning Service 10:45 a.m., Wednesday Bible Study 10 a.m.

ECKANKAR

Eckankar, the Path of Spiritual Freedom, is located at 1420 3rd St. SW, Roanoke, VA 24016. However, due to COVID-19, the Light & Sound Services and other ECK programs are currently available online through Zoom. Visit www.eck-va.org for program listings, www.meetup.com/Roanoke-Spiritual-Experiences-Group, or call 540-353-5365 and leave a message. We will return your call. Also visit www.eckankar.org for more information about how the teachings of Eckankar lead you to spiritual freedom.

FOURSQUARE

EVANGEL CHURCH - 2360 Hardy Road, Vinton, (corner of Hardy Road and Feather Road), 982-3694. Pastor-Tim Wright. Sunday, 10 AM - Worship Service, SuperChurch for Children; Wednesday 6:30-8PM - AWANA Clubs for ages 3-5th grade, Adult Bible Study.

LUTHERAN

ST. TIMOTHY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, "The Church Under The Cross", 1201 Hardy Rd, Vinton VA 24179, Pastor, Rev. Dr. James B. Davis (540) 342- 1715, Sunday School 10:00am, Worship 11:00am, sttimothy1201@verizon.net.

NAZARENE

FIRST CHURCH OF NAZARENE, 728 Highland Ave., SE, Roanoke, Virginia. 342-4003. Sunday Morning Worship 10:30 a.m., Sunday School 9:30 a.m., Wednesday Night Bible Study 7 p.m.

PRESBYTERIAN

CAMPBELL MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 1130 Hardy Rd, Vinton, VA, 540-343-1842; cmpc2verizon.net Sunday school 9:45am, Worship 11:00am; Communion 1st Sundays; 2nd Sunday Session; Monday Noon Bible School; Tuesdays & Thursdays Yoga 9:00am; 1st Tuesdays Deacons; Tuesdays Evening Bible Study 6:45pm; Wednesday Choir 7:00pm; Thursday Girl Scouts 7:00pm; 2nd Monday Supper with Rev. Skip at Fa-

mous Anthony's 6:30pm; 2nd Tuesday Luncheon with Rev. Skip at Famous Anthony's; 3rd Saturday Men's Breakfast 8:00am. Rev. Skip Hastings-Interim Pastor.

UNITED METHODIST

THREE OAKS FELLOWSHIP UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - 1026 Gravel Hill Road, Vinton, Va. 540-512-8070. Pastor: Rev. Dr. Rob Colwell. Sunday School - 9:45 a.m., Worship 11 a.m.

WESLEYAN

VINTON WESLEYAN CHURCH - 246 E. Jefferson Ave. Pastor Ricardo Rodriguez, 345-3385; Sunday Worship Service 11:00 AM and 6:00 PM. Sunday School for all ages, 10:00 AM, Wednesday Night Life Ministries - Children - Awana; G-5 Youth Ministry; Adult Bible Study 6:30 PM.

Vinton Worship Directory

Wits' End Corner

Read Psalms 106:1 through 109:31

Life can be like riding a ship rolling in the midst of a stormy sea: up one second reaching for the stars, the next second plummeting to the depths. The Psalmist wrote about those who "went out on the sea in ships."

They reeled and staggered like drunkards; they were at their wits' end. Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress (Psalm 107:27-28).

A. G. Ward wrote in the Pentecostal Evangel eighty-three years ago, "We have passed through many tests in the

past twenty-four years, often we have been at 'wits' end corner' but again and again we have found ourselves singing."

Are you at the end of your rope? Cry out to the Lord. Your prayer life will be different. Your praise life will open up.

Your prayer should be like that of Jehoshaphat as he led God's people when they were under attack: "We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you" (2Chronicles 20:12).

Prayer Suggestion: Lord, I trust You to still the storms in my life.

Quicklook: Psalm 107:23-32

If you would like to see your church services listed here in the Vinton Messenger contact Tucker Frye at 540-473-2741 or email tfrye@ourvalley.org

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SPORTS

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Terriers receive post-season honors; Fix is Blue Ridge Pitcher of the Year

Post-season honors for Blue Ridge District baseball, softball and soccer teams have been announced in the past week and William Byrd was well-represented.

In baseball, William Byrd's Isaac Fix was named the "Pitcher of the Year" in the Blue Ridge District and was also a first team selection as a pitcher in Region 3D. Tyler Dean was first team on the mound in both the district and region while other All-Region selections included second teamers Luke Taylor at third base and Joey Johnson in the outfield.

Hayden Lyle, at designated hitter, and Dylan Hatfield, as an at-large selection, also received first team All-BRD honors. Second team went to Johnson in the outfield, Taylor at third and Dean was also chosen on the second team as a shortstop.

In softball Byrd's Logan Pekela and Haleigh Vaughan were first team all-region, Logan at second base and Haleigh as an "at large" selection. Brooklyn Peters was named to the second team in the outfield.

Pekela, Vaughan and Peters were all named to the All-Blue Ridge District first team as well as Hallie Cox at pitcher. Sydney Blewitt is a second team all-BRD choice in the outfield.

Byrd had two first teamers on the All-Region 3D girls' soccer team, goalie Sophia Chrisley and at large Maddie Simmons. Midfielder Anna Milliron and defender Maci Glass are second team all-region.

Christley, Simmons, Milliron and Glass are all first team all-district, as well as forward Hanna Chappell. Second teamers included midfielder Riley Firebaugh and defenders Madeleine Wolters-Argenio and Annie Stevens.

For boys' soccer William Byrd's Landon Niday made first team All-Region 3D and was also selected to the All-Blue Ridge District first team. Nic Clements is a first team at large All-BRD choice and second team honors went to Braden Crossan at forward and Dylan Hughes as an at large.



ISAAC FIX PHOTO BY BRIAN HOFFMAN



Austin Nielsen swims for VAST. PHOTO BY CANDACE HOYOS

Vinton swimmers 2nd at Ashley

The Vinton Area Swim team finished second in a three team meet at the Ashley Plantation on Monday. The host Stingrays won the Roanoke Valley Aquatic Association meet with 994 points while Vinton was second with 580 and the Elks Club took third with 477.

Winning swimmers with gold times in the 50 Breaststroke men's division included Evan Copening(13-14), Bryce Woodford(11-12) and Scott Hannah(19-24). Silver winners were Russell Fisher(9-10), Morgan Chandler(15-16), Matthew Hoyos(17-18) and Jayden Glass(19-24).

Women's gold winners in the 50 Breast included Jocelyn Stark(11-12) and Emma Copening(17-18). Silver winners were Elyse Johnston(11-12), Emma Gray(17-18) and Peggy Dubose(70-over).

Colton Cunningham(7-8) was a winner in the 50 Freestyle event and men's 100 Freestyle Gold winners were Evan Copening(13-14) and Austin Nielsen(17-18). Silver winners from Vinton included Kieran Wilhelm(7-8) in the 50 Free and 100 Free winners Christopher Hurd(11-12), Michael Hoyos(15-16) and Blake Richardson(13-14).

Women's gold winners in the 100 Free were Taly Kwaramba(11-12), Emma Copening(17-18) and Laura Schneider(19-24). Jaylen Smith took first silver in the 7-8 50 Free and Jocelyn Stark took first silver in the 11-12 100 Free.

Next week's meet will be held on Tuesday, July 6th, due to 4th of July vacations on Monday. Vinton will be at the Roanoke Country Club to swim against the host team and Spring Run.

Brian Hoffman



Sportswriter unmasked

I'm taking the mask off. I'm fully vaccinated and it's time.

Ever since the coronavirus struck back in March of 2020 I've been counting the days since all sports shut down as we knew them. You remember. It was the second week of March last year and Rudy Gobert of the Utah Jazz tested positive for COVID 19. Shortly thereafter the NCAA basketball tournament was cancelled and the NBA and Major League Baseball spring training was put on hold. NASCAR followed, and before you could say "Doctor Anthony Fauci" there was nothing going on in the sports world.

At that point everyone and the Lone Ranger was ex-

pected to wear a mask. My wife bought some cool material and broke out our old sewing machine and started making masks for our extended family members. I had my picture taken in a Philadelphia Phillies "powder blue" mask and I've been using that for my column head for well over a year.

Well, this week will be 476 days AG, or "After Gobert," and we're not totally back to normal, but we're close. The Major League Baseball stadiums and Haley-Toyota Field in Salem are back to 100 percent capacity again, and the big leagues are playing all 162 games. The NFL and college football are on pace to have normal seasons with normal fans, if painting your face maroon and orange is a normal thing.

You can eat inside without a mask, you can go to the movies again and I just passed the two week mark where I didn't wear a mask in the grocery store, and thought nothing of it.

I'm not saying we're totally normal. The little stickers on the floor at the drugstore are still telling me to stay six feet back, but at least no one gives you a dirty look if you don't. And if I get a peanut stuck in my throat and cough people still back away. But that's nothing compared to last year at this time.

I've been busy here at the paper. For over a year I had little sports news to cover, writing features and columns and taking whatever photos I could find. Since the high school sports returned in January I've not only been busy, but swamped. As you know they stuck the fall high school sports, football, volleyball, golf and cross country, between the winter and spring sports. And Roanoke College did the same. You know, in a two week span in March every single sports team at Roanoke College played some kind of game or scrimmage.

And I love it. I'd much rather be busy than sitting at home on the porch reading magazines and watching the birds. It took 476 days but I'm actually feeling normal enough to take the mask off the column head.

But let me warn you, don't get too comfortable. I'm hearing about this Delta strain and how it's worse and spreads faster, and you're at serious risk if you don't get vaccinated. I don't want to go back to sitting on the porch and watching the birds again, so please consider getting the shot if you haven't done so. If you believe the experts it's the best chance we have to keep things "normal" again.

And then if someone asks, "who was that masked man?," it probably WAS the Lone Ranger.



Dixie O-Zone

The Mount Pleasant O-Zone All-Stars competed in the Dixie League District 7 tournament at Green Hill Park in west Roanoke County last weekend. The O-Zone double elimination tournament is for 11 and 12 year olds, and the locals were eliminated with losses to Glenvar and North Roanoke, the eventual winner. Above left, Carter Nelson takes a rip. Above, Tyler Minnix takes a throw at third. Left, coach Nick Williamson talks to the team, and right Jack Mills pitches for the All-Stars.



PHOTOS BY BRIAN HOFFMAN

Spring Recital from page 1



Teacher Susan Lewis recognized graduating seniors Andrea Gonzalez (left) and Abby Shelton. Gonzalez is a pianist; Shelton, a vocalist.



Preschooler Nolan Cranwell opens the recital.



PHOTOS BY DEBBIE ADAMS

Lexi Williamson shared her original songs at the Susan Lewis Music Studio Spring Recital. Here, she accompanies herself on the piano while singing "Falling Out."

audience at the conclusion of the recital.

"Senior Abby Shelton is a homeschool graduate who has been my voice student for the past two years, making incredible progress," said Lewis. "Her future plans include beginning with an online musical theatre conservatory as well as working as a teaching artist in local theatre, including performing in more shows herself—continuing a path towards a musical/theatrical career (music to my ears). And Abby plans to continue her private voice lessons with me, so I get to keep her for another year!"

"Abby performed 'Pulled' from 'The Addams Family,' which was so fun and entertaining. Her second piece was 'Queen of the Night' in German from Mozart's opera, 'The Magic Flute.' This is an incredibly difficult piece, even for a music major or professional. She delivered an impressive performance with her gorgeous soprano voice."

Shelton won first place this spring in the 2021 Lions Club Bland Foundation Music Scholarship Competition at the local level and second place in the regional competition.

"Senior Andrea Gonzalez is a graduate and valedictorian of William Byrd High School as well as the Center for Visual Arts at the Burton Center for Arts & Technology," Lewis noted. "Andrea has been a dedicated piano student for six years and a marching band and symphonic band member her entire high school career. She has won awards in both music and art, including a silver medal in the National Scholastic Art and Writing Awards program."

"Future plans for Andrea include attending Virginia Commonwealth University this fall to pursue a degree in Communication Arts. She hopes to join one of the music ensembles while attending college."

"Andrea performed Burgmuller's 'The Storm,' Op. 109, No. 13, which is the song she played which won her first place in the 2020 Bland Music Foundation Scholarship Competition. She ended the piano portion of the recital with the energetic, rhythmic 'He's A Pirate' from 'Pirates of the Caribbean.'"

"Having three college students continu-

ing their lessons with me has been thoroughly rewarding— Tes Smith (voice), Madison Saunders (piano and voice), and Allie Watson (piano)," Lewis said.

"A recital 'surprise' (not printed in the program) was a beautiful vocal duet by two best friends, Madison and Tes, entitled 'Driver's License.' The timbre of each of their voices produced a beautiful blend which enabled them to bless their family members as well as myself (all of us who have been encouraging them to sing a duet together for some time)."

"Having adult students who choose to share their talents with others is always a real treat," Lewis said. "Of course, the recitals are optional for the adult students—but 'kudos' to piano student Amanda Morris and voice students, Gary Feazelle and Kelly Ronan, for their special contributions to the 2021 Spring Recital."

"Another highlight of the recital was the original songs shared by Lexi Williamson. Taking both piano and voice lessons, Lexi's piano solo, 'Rain Before Thunder,' definitely created imag-

ery as she played. Her vocal piece 'Falling Out' was another original of hers accompanied by herself at the piano—a true gift!

"Seeing former students in the audience (such as Oliver Sealey and Eva Pierce) who were there in support of their siblings who are my current students, was very heartwarming," Lewis added.

As is always the case, the recital was more of a concert than a recital with such talented students.

Students performing piano solos included:

Nolan Cranwell with "Raindrops"

Addy McLennan, "The B-I-B-L-E"

RJ McLennan, "Deep and Wide"

Pierce Franks: "Three Pigs"

William Dodge: "Yankee Doodle"

Petra Dodge: "Groove Tune"

Mara Roche: "Alouette"

Aubri Kessler: "I Just Can't Wait to Be King"

Skylar Thompson: "Part of Your World"

Deon Staunton: "Rocky Top"

Kathryn Dodson: "Beauty and the Beast"

Nathan Gray: "Supercali" (Mary Poppins)

Lilla Clark: "Puff the Magic Dragon"

Emily Hall: "Boom Boom"

Ryleigh Woolwine: "How Great Thou Art"

Nolan Ferguson: "This is the Day"

Emily Mower: "Music Box Dancer"

Enna Schofield: "Für Elise" (Theme)

Scotlyn Leonard: "Lean on Me"

Kendall Dodson: "Roar"

Lily Sealey: "William Tell Overture"

Colter Dean: "Moonlight Sonata—Op. 27, No. 2 (1st Movement)"

Abby Booth: "Overture—The Barber of Seville"

Sydney Thomas: "Your Song"

Amanda Morris (adult student): "The Wind Beneath My Wings"

Cary Jones: "The Entertainer"

Lexi Williamson: "Rain Before Thunder"

Allie Watson (college student): "Larger Than Life" (Backstreet Boys)

Madison Saunders (college student): "Can't Help Falling in Love"

Latriva Pierce: "My Lie" (Your Lie in April)

Andrea Gonzalez (graduating senior): "The Storm—Op.109, No. 13" and "He's a Pirate" (Pirates of the Caribbean)

Voice students performing included:

Olivia Booth: "ABC Song"

Xander Warf: "Jesus Loves Me"

Petra Dodge: "I Wonder How It Felt"

Skylar Thompson: "Set It All Free" (Sing)

Nolan Ferguson: "Truth Be Told"

Aubri Kessler: "Girl on Fire"

Ryleigh Woolwine: "Sayonara" (How to Eat Like a Child)

Emily Mower: "My New Philosophy" (You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown)

Sofia Gonzalez: "Some Things Never Change" (Frozen 2)

Latriva Pierce: "Audition—The Fools Who Dream" (La La Land)

Lexi Williamson: "Falling Out", accompanied herself on piano

Paul Sealey: "Irish Blessing"

Kelly Ronan (adult student): "My Lullaby" (Lion King 2)

Gary Feazelle (adult student): "The Trumpet Shall Sound" (The Messiah)

Madison Saunders (college student): "Lost Without You"

Simon Sealey: "Panis Angelicus"

Tes Smith (college student): "Secret Love Song"

Madison Saunders and Tes Smith: a surprise duet for their families of "Driver's License"

Abby Shelton (graduating senior): "Pulled" (The Addams Family) and "Queen of the Night aria" (in German)

Lewis has been teaching music in the Roanoke Valley since 1990. She has taken the time to answer some questions parents often have about how to determine if a child is ready for piano or voice lessons. She speaks from the perspective of about 40 total years of teaching experience since she was in college, "having taught easily over a thou-

sand students not only through private lessons, but through various ages in church choirs as well."

"It is never too soon to expose your child to music," Lewis said. "The goal is to foster a love of music that will last them the rest of their lives. Especially for preschoolers and young students, lessons must be fun and innovative. To accomplish this, preschool students need to focus on different activities in short time spans throughout the lesson—any age is ideal to have fun with music by playing and experimenting with musical sounds. Also, age-appropriate materials and games build awareness of musical concepts like rhythm and pitch."

"A parent should ask themselves, 'Should I encourage my child to experience the joy of music?' Take advantage of a child's enthusiasm and let them ignite their passion for music as well. A child who is motivated will progress at a faster rate and have more success. An introductory lesson is a way to gauge a student's interest in music. Studying music at any age is good for body, mind, and spirit, and something to enjoy for a lifetime!"

"I cannot thank Vinton Baptist Church enough for the use of their facility, beautiful piano, and sound system—as well as Chris Monroe for assisting with the booking of our recital, Greg Mason for running sound, and Jamie Archual (Enoch Creek Productions) for videography," Lewis added.

Videos of each piano and vocal performance (produced by Jamie Archual) will be uploaded soon to Susan's YouTube Channel: Susan Lewis Music Studio. She can be contacted by email: pianoandvoice@cox.net, on Facebook at Susan Lewis Music Studio, or by calling 540-890-3400.

Spring semester ended with the recital on June 27. Summer lessons are beginning the week of July 6. Fall semester starts on August 18.

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