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State of the Town address emphasizes Vinton has much to celebrate

Debbie Adams

dadams@ourvalley.org

The Town of Vinton and the Vinton Area Chamber of Commerce celebrated the town's continuing progress at the annual State of the Town Address at the Vinton War Memorial on March 10.

Angie Chewning, Executive Director of the Chamber, welcomed guests including members of Vinton Town Council, the Town leadership team and staff, Chamber officers and board members and local business owners, as well as representatives from Roanoke County, Roanoke City, and the City of Salem, along with regional partners.

Chewning said she recently came across an outdated Vinton sticker in her desk that proclaimed Vinton as "the best-kept secret in the Valley," noting that is certainly no longer the case.

She introduced Vinton Mayor Brad Grose, who delivered the address on the incredible growth the town has

made over the past several years with no slowdown in sight.

As he almost always does, Grose began by thanking God for blessing the Town of Vinton. He thanked the community "for your continued perseverance and positive outlook over the past two years that have been filled with many obstacles and challenges."

He praised the Leadership Team and every department in the town for their contributions to its success and professionalism, teamwork, and hard work. Those recognized included Town Manager Pete Peters, Town Clerk and Executive Assistant Susan Johnson, Chief of Police Fabricio Drumond, Human Resources and Risk Management Director Donna Collins, Assistant Town Manager Cody Sexton, Planning and Zoning Director Anita McMillan, Public Works Director Bo Herndon, Community Programs Director Chasity Barbour, and Treasurer/Finance Director Anne Cantrell.

See **Town Address**, page 5



PHOTO BY DEBBIE ADAMS

The Vinton Area Chamber of Commerce hosted the annual State of the Town address at the Vinton War Memorial on March 10. Members of the Chamber Board include (front row left to right): Executive Director Angie Chewning, Michelle Barklow, 1st Vice President Allison Finney, 2nd Vice President Page Stovall, Vinton Mayor Brad Grose, Paula Robbins, Executive Assistant Kathryn Sowers, Tim Nininger, and Director of Community Programs Chasity Barbour; back row, Town Manager Pete Peters, Dr. Richard Turner, Past President Justin Davison, Tim Greenway, Kat Pascal, Anthony Conner, Chamber President Jason Boothe, Donald Childress, John Conner, and Tyler Fisher.

Saunders named DAR Good Citizen for 2022

Debbie Adams

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Grace Saunders, a senior at William Byrd High School, has been named the DAR Good Citizen of the year for 2022. The announcement was made at the Roanoke Valley Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution meeting on March 12.

The DAR Good Citizen program is intended to encourage and reward the qualities of good citizenship. It is open to all senior class students. The award recognizes individuals who possess qualities of dependability, service, leadership, and patriotism to an outstanding degree in their homes, schools, and communities.

Each year, the faculty nominates the DAR Good Citizen; then, the senior class votes on the top three students. Only one student is chosen for this prestigious honor.

Once a student is chosen as the DAR Good Citizen, they are then invited to participate in the scholarship portion of the program and write an essay on a topic involving "Our American Heritage and Our Responsibility for Preserving It."

Students are given an hour to write their essay (limited to 550 words), responding to a prompt they receive sight unseen—those who win at the district level advance to the state competition.

In addition to the recognition, DAR Good Citizens receive a certificate, pin, and monetary award.

WBHS Principal Tammy Newcomb says Saunders is one of the school's top students—"she is kind to everyone and a very conscientious student."

Saunders will be receiving an Advanced Studies Diploma at graduation ceremonies in May 2022. In addition to being a student at WBHS, she has also attended the Burton Center for Arts and Technology (BCAT) STEM Academy for Engineering (in grades 9-12), studying in a specialized curriculum centered on engineering. She has gained Programming experience at BCAT using MATLAB and AutoCAD software systems. She has created and executed full programs and self-programmed laser-engraving, 3D-printing, and router technologies. Saunders also earned OSHA Certification at BCAT and completed a four-week

Toastmasters public speaking class as part of the STEM Academy.

Other academic honors include: serving as a Junior Marshall—based on grade point average and demonstration of "exemplary character" during the 2020-21 school year; being chosen as a member of the BETA Club for her GPA average of 3.5 or above; receiving Language Honors upon the completion of five years of Spanish in May, and being named as an AP Scholar for earning scores of 3 and above on 3+ AP tests.

During her high school years at WBHS, Saunders has been involved with many school and extracurricular activities. She was elected by her peers last year as the Class Council president and vice president this year. She participated in planning class-related activities such as homecoming and prom.

She has been a member of the SCA in her junior and senior years, serving as an officer during her senior year.

Saunders has been a member of the Academic Team in her junior and senior years

See **DAR Good Citizen**, page 3



PHOTO BY DEBBIE ADAMS

Vinton Wesleyan Church celebrated being "Paid in Full" with a mortgage burning ceremony on March 13. Shown left to right are Pastor Ricardo Rodriguez, member Darrell English, and District Superintendent Greg Reynolds.

Vinton Wesleyan rejoices in mortgage burning

Debbie Adams

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Vinton Wesleyan Church celebrated a momentous occasion on March 13 with the burning of their mortgage—having made the final payment on January 10.

This wasn't their first mortgage-burning ceremony.

The church had its beginnings almost 88 years ago in September 1934 at a tent revival in downtown

Vinton on Pollard Street—just a couple of blocks from its current location.

In 1936, the church bought the property where the church now stands on the corner of Jefferson and Poplar Streets. They constructed what was referred to as a "basement church," which was not underground but would serve as the foundation for the rest of the building.

That structure was dedicated in

See **Mortgage Burning**, page 6

Lighthouse Christian Academy to open in August in Vinton



PHOTO BY DEBBIE ADAMS

The new Lighthouse Christian Academy will be located within Lighthouse Bible Church on Washington Avenue just outside Vinton near William Byrd. They will be holding an Open House on March 21 from 6 to 8 p.m.

Debbie Adams

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Lighthouse Christian Academy (LHCA) will be opening in August 2022 at Lighthouse Bible Church in Vinton. The church is located at 2500 East Washington Avenue near William Byrd High School.

The private Christian school will be serving students from Pre-K through fifth grade this year, hoping to add another grade level

in each year of operation so that students who begin their education at the school will be able to continue through high school.

Kathy Barton is the School Administrator. She says the school is being established to provide Christian education and fulfill the Great Commission by "educating students in a Biblical worldview to become disciples of Jesus Christ. We desire to meet the needs of all students by helping them reach their fullest potential spiritually, academically, personally, and socially through partnering with parents and families to help them become productive citizens in our community and our world."

She says the mission of LHCA is JOY—Love Jesus; Serve Others; Shine Your Light to the world.

LHCA will be open to everyone. You need not be a member of Lighthouse Bible Church to attend.

Barton says the church housed a school several years ago, and the desire to include a school in their ministry "never really went away."

"I originally presented to our Elder Board back in September 2020 about restarting the school," Barton said. "They voted on this and approved it, and then in April of 2021, our church voted to have the school; 98% voted in favor. I think people see a real need in our community to share the love of Christ with children, starting at an early age."

A School Board was formed in the fall of 2021; they held their first meeting that December.

"I actually returned back to school to obtain my Master's degree in 2020 to become endorsed in Administration and Supervision for

See **Academy**, page 2

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"We are so grateful for the commitment and partnership through Rosie's Gives Back program and Habitat PGW. Rosie's Gives Back generous contribution will allow Habitat for Humanity PGW to continue to help families get out of substandard housing and achieve their dream of affordable homeownership."

Janet V. Green, CEO
Habitat for Humanity Peninsula & Greater Williamsburg



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Through the charitable program, Rosie's Gives Back, Colonial Downs Group has made **monetary and in-kind donations of more than \$1,975,000**, and has logged over 2,500 service hours in Virginia communities.



Academy from page 1

PreK-12th grades," Barton says. "It has been a blessing to see God work through our congregation and how people are excited to see and hear our hallways filled with the laughter of children throughout the day instead of sitting empty. We have been blessed with a beautiful facility, and that is only going to grow as we expand on up the road."

The school will be accredited through the Association of Christian Teachers and Schools (ACTS) and seek full accreditation within its first year of operation. ACTS establishes uniform standards among its member schools. To become accredited, schools complete a self-study evaluation and open their school to an on-site visit by a qualified team of educators who will examine its program to determine whether it is being operated within the published guidelines of the accrediting agency.

Teachers hired by LHCA must be ACTS certified. LHCA is currently accepting applications from prospective teachers.

The school's capacity will be up to 100 students, although they expect to open with about 30. Class sizes will be small and intimate so that children get lots of attention. LHCA expects to employ a total of six to eight teachers, to begin with, three of those at the preschool level to meet student/teacher ratio requirements. Barton anticipates the school will open with more students in the lower grade levels.

The school will be known as the Home of the Lighthouse Chariots, with the chariot wheel as their mascot. The inner workings of a lighthouse rely on a "chariot wheel" to rotate the lenses. This symbol will represent being the "light of the world."

Barton says the benefits of Christian education are that students focus on learning their purpose in life. She says that public schools do a great job academically, but a Christian education is able "to give peace and hope in a sometimes-chaotic world. A Christian education helps students know who they are in Christ."

The school is considered an outreach ministry of the church. Students will be attending weekly chapel services with the church's pastors and elders. LHCA has its own School Board—all nine are members of Lighthouse Bible who have a vested interest in Christian education.

The first day of school is planned for August 11. Hours will be 7:45 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. There will be no transportation provided in the first year. Parents/families will drop off and pick up. There will be an Afterschool program available from 2:45 to 6 p.m.

LHCA will be located in the two buildings that make up Lighthouse Bible Church. There is a gym, a playground, an outdoor pavilion, and a Chapel, in addition to classrooms. The kitchen area is limited at present, so students will be packing lunches.

The school will be teaching a standard

curriculum supplemented by materials from Christian publishers—BJU press and Purposeful Designs. These are PreK through 5th publications, rigorous academically, but supplemented with a Biblical foundation.

Students will learn to problem solve and think critically through direct instruction or small, cooperative learning groups and hands-on activities.

"It is important to me that all students are met right where they are, so they can get the individual attention they need to grow and succeed," Barton said.

A typical school day at LHCA will include a mixture of academics (reading, writing, spelling, math, social studies, and science) paired with STEM and STEAM learning activities, focusing on the arts, time for socialization, and physical education—all from a Christian perspective. There will be field trips and holiday celebrations.

"We stand for the pledge of allegiance to the Bible, the Christian flag, and the American flag. We honor diversity because God created us all with a purpose and a plan in His image."

Students in grades Kindergarten and up will be spending one to two hours a week completing Purpose Projects. Time will be devoted to working on projects they are interested in, in a structured process requiring research, in order to learn, "What is my purpose in life, what can I give back to my community?"

Students at LHCA will not be doing SOL testing, although they will be assessed to ensure they are progressing.

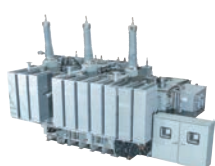
LHCA is hosting an Open House next Monday, March 21, from 6-8 p.m. Casual tours of the facilities will be available. There will be an opportunity to meet Barton and some of the School Board members and gain more information about the new school. Computers will be set up for parents who want to begin the application process.

Barton notes that Lighthouse Bible Church will be sponsoring the Kids Zone at the Dogwood Festival this year in the Vinton Farmers' Market area on April 30. There will be inflatables, crafts (including making Dogwood petals), and other activities.

The church is holding a Craft Show on May 14 with benefits solely benefitting LHCA. There will be art, artisans, craft ware, concessions, and baked goods in the parking lot at Lighthouse Bible from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

There are also plans in the works for a murder mystery meal in September to raise funds for the school.

For more information on Lighthouse Christian Academy, visit their website at <https://lhcvinton.org/> or their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/lhcvinton/>. Tuition rates and applications are available online. (LHCA tuition will be comparable to other Christian schools in the area.) You can also reach them by phone at 540-890-3304.



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Town Council adopts updated Zoning Ordinance

By Debbie Adams
The Town of Vinton Planning and Zoning Department, the Vinton Planning Commission, and Vinton Town Council has spent the past three years working on in-depth revisions to the Zoning Ordinance in the Town Code. The process got underway when the town received a grant from the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIP) in 2018 to propose revisions to the Town codes involving subdivisions and zoning.

The Zoning Ordinance covers topics such as Signage Regulations, Accessory Dwelling Units, Homestays (AirBnB, Vrbo, etc.), Off-Street Parking regulations, dimensional regulations (setbacks, building heights, etc.), and landscaping, buffering, and screening requirements.

After a public hearing at their meeting on March 15, council members repealed in its entirety the current zoning ordinance in effect since December 1995 and adopted by reference the amended ordinance. It will become law on April 1.

The public has had the opportunity to provide input on the revisions virtually and in person at a community meeting. Town Council has been briefed on proposed changes by Assistant Planning and Zoning

Director Nathan McClung in several work sessions.

The Planning Commission held their public hearing on the ordinance on February 24 and voted unanimously to recommend its adoption.

McClung, who has been the driving force behind the changes and facilitating the multitude of meetings necessary to completely review the current ordinance, says the ordinance is now much more “user friendly” with more visuals and in a new format. It has become a “customized document tailored specifically towards Vinton.”

The town chose to do the work on revising the ordinance “in-house” rather than hire a consultant to the tune of between \$100,000 and \$250,000, depending upon the scope of the project.

Eventually, the document will be available on the town’s website once codification is complete. Citizens and businesses will be informed of the revisions in a public education campaign.

Members of Town Council commended McClung, the Planning and Zoning Department, and the Planning Commission for the Herculean efforts they have put into the comprehensive review and revision of the ordinance.

In other council business, John Hull from the Roanoke Regional Partnership presented the annual update on the organization.

The Roanoke Regional Partnership, founded in 1983, works with businesses looking to relocate and expand in Alleghany, Botetourt, Franklin, and Roanoke counties, the cities of Covington, Roanoke, and Salem, and the Town of Vinton. The Partnership is a joint venture between those eight governments and over 200 private sector businesses focused on the growth of the region.

One of the economic development projects Hull touched on in his presentation was the recent expansion of Cardinal Glass in Vinton—an \$8 million, 26,000 sq. ft. expansion, which added 60 new jobs in Vinton to the company’s existing workforce of 200.

Community Programs Director Chasity Barbour updated the council on new and traditional special events coming up in the town, including:

- The annual Senior Expo at the Vinton War Memorial on March 22 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- The re-opening of the Vinton Farmers’ Market for the season on April 16

- The Monday Music Jam at the Charles R. Hill Community Center on 1st and 2nd Mondays from 3 to 5:30

- Senior Line Dancing classes at the Community Center at ten and 11:30 on Tuesdays
- Tai Chi and Cards at the Community Center on Thursdays (Tai Chi at 9 a.m., Cards at 10 a.m.)

- The HeRow Expo 2 Car Show fundraiser on April 9 from 5 to 9 p.m. on Lee Avenue

- The Dogwood Festival from April 28 to May 1, with a Friday night Concert, the return of the Carnival, the Crowning of the Dogwood Queen at the Municipal Building at noon on April 30, followed by the Dogwood Parade at 2:30

- The Vinton Palooza on May 14 from 1 to 6 p.m. on the Vinton War Memorial Lawn with the Jared Stout Band and The Kings

- The Ironman Triathlon on June 5

- The new “Four on the 4th” Boys and Girls Club fundraiser on the morning of July 4, followed that evening by the town’s 4th of July celebration and fireworks

- Fall Festival on October 8 throughout downtown Vinton

- Bourbon & Bubbly at

the Vinton War Memorial, details TBA

Attorney Jeremy Carroll briefed the council on a proposed cable franchise agreement between Vinton and Shentel. Shentel has requested a franchise to operate a cable television service within the Town of Vinton and use the public rights-of-way to expand their fiber to Town of Vinton residents. Bids will be opened, as advertised, at the April 5 council meeting when the council will be asked to approve the ten-year agreement. This agreement is similar to the one with Cox Communications.

Assistant Town Manager Cody Sexton briefed the council on the Virginia Water Facilities Revolving loan with the Virginia Resources Authority in the amount of \$710,808. This is the town’s share of the Western Virginia Water Authority’s Waste Water Treatment Plant project.

Sexton said it is anticipated that this debt will be transferred to the WVWA upon finalizing the Authority’s acquisition of the town’s utility system on July 1, 2022, but the town needs to go through the closing process. A public hearing will be held on April 5, and the council will take formal action to secure the loan.

DAR Good Citizen Essay by Grace Saunders, DAR Good Citizen for 2022

DAR Good Citizen Award winner for 2022, Grace Saunders, was required to write an essay to participate in the scholarship portion of the DAR Good Citizen process. The assigned topic (given sight unseen and limited to 550 words) was “Our American Heritage and Our Responsibility for Preserving It” with the prompt: “How do the qualities of a good citizen (dependability, service, leadership, and patriotism) help support our nation?”

Here is her essay:

Defining our American heritage begins with defining America’s citizens. Our nation sits upon a foundation of belief: belief in liberty, in unity, in public service, and in national pride. This foundation was built by the hands of our nation’s citizens and the values, beliefs, and qualities that they all share.

America’s democratic and patriotic core may be in its people, but the peoples’ core is in the characteristics of citizens and the values they support. In this way, the characteristics of each and every citizen have established our national heritage and have continued to support our nation.

Because of that dependability, commitment to service, capacity for leadership, and love of country that America’s citizens have continued to exhibit throughout history, America was allowed to grow and flourish. The significance of the

American people to the strength of the country is why the qualities of a good citizen are so integral to supporting our nation—when people demonstrate these characteristics, the foundation of the country is strengthened.

To begin, the democratic structure of our country would not function without the dependability of its citizens. Because our people can be relied upon to turn out to the polling place on Election Day, the democracy is strengthened through the sounds of peoples’ voices, melding together to make one great American sound.

Further, the people understand the necessity of dependability—in times of crisis, the American people will flood into where they are needed and can be trusted to do so without condition, as seen throughout history as American soldiers have continuously and dependably put their lives on the line so that our country may prosper.

Building upon our people’s dependability is the commitment to service. Our people will not only come when called but will come in service of their belief in the greater good. As we have seen time and time again, the American people have chosen to serve their country in more ways than can be counted. Whether through military service, supporting the nation’s economy, or through simply casting a ballot,

the American people always choose service in the name of the greater good.

Our people’s dependability and commitment to service build into a great capacity for leadership. Because they can be depended upon to serve the greater good, the American people have a unique capacity for leadership, further strengthening our nation’s democratic structure. Since our country’s inception, the citizens have stepped forward into positions of leadership so that our country may prosper under true American strength—strength built upon the people and spearheaded by the Americans they have chosen to represent their beliefs and values. Because of the American capacity for leadership, our country has continued to be led by individuals that the people can rally around.

Finally, the patriotism of America’s citizens combines all of these. Patriotism means the people can be depended upon to lead in service of the country. A true Patriot not only believes in the red, white, and blue, but also shows the characteristics that make a citizen strong.

Demonstrating the qualities of a good citizen uplifts the American people, and by extension, uplifts our nation. These qualities support the America that we know and will continue to strengthen our nation as we move forward into the next chapter of our history.

DAR Good Citizen from page 1

and a member of the Marching Terriers band in her freshman and sophomore years (playing trombone).

She was a member of the Outdoor Track and Field Team during her first and second years and the Indoor Track and Field Team in tenth grade. She has been a tennis team member in her junior and senior years.

Other activities include volunteering at Penn Forest Remedial Summer Camp in the summer of 2021, assisting elementary-age students with STEM activities, reading, and recess, including working with children with disabilities. She has been a member of St. Mark’s United Methodist Church since she was 11 years old, where she has served as an acolyte and usher.

Her hobbies include baking, reading, painting, and writing.

“In my life, I have always strived to make a positive impact on those around me, whether through simple acts of kindness or through continuous acts of service,” said Saunders. “I have continuously sought out membership and lead-

ership in organizations that I felt could help me make a difference: Girl Scouts in elementary and middle school, and student and class activities in high school.”

“Following my graduation from William Byrd High School, I plan to continue my studies (pending acceptance) at one of several institutions, including the University of Virginia, the College of William and Mary, or Duke University.”

Saunders says she would like to pursue a double-major as an undergraduate, possibly in chemistry, economics, and global relations or global business, with the possible inclusion of a minor in Spanish.

“I would like to study abroad, as I feel that living and studying in another country may widen my perspective on the world and allow me a better understanding of diversity and global interaction,” Saunders said.

Eventually, she would like to earn a graduate degree in the career field she ultimately selects.

Saunders is the daughter of Heath and Dawn Saunders.



PHOTO BY DEBBIE ADAMS

William Byrd High School senior Grace Saunders has been named as the DAR Good Citizen for 2022. The announcement was made at the Roanoke Valley Chapter DAR meeting on March 12. Shown left to right are Regent Cindy Higgins, Grace Saunders, and Treasurer/DAR Good Citizen Chair Shannon Campbell

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SPOTLIGHT ON TOWN OF VINTON STAFF

Director of Community Programs Chasity Barbour

The Town of Vinton Community Programs Department is responsible for Town of Vinton community events (one time and continuing), the Charles R. Hill Community Center, Vinton Senior Citizens' Program events, the Vinton Farmers' Market, the Vinton War Memorial, and the High Ground Veteran's Monument.

Chasity Barbour, Director of Community Programs, has at least a hand in planning, organizing, coordinating, and/or facilitating just about every event in Vinton and several joint events with the Vinton Area Chamber of Commerce. She oversees a staff of four and works closely with the Public Works and Vinton Police Department in planning the host of activities that now take place in Vinton.

"Some say I have the best job because I get to plan the events for the best community," Barbour says. "You can find me at any town event, the Vinton War Memorial, or driving the coolest car in town." (She's the one in the Town of Vinton wrapped vehicle.)

Barbour has two daughters—a 12-year-old cheerleader and a 21-year-old West Virginia University student, along with her better half—Sean—and their dog Little Princess Kennedy. The family loves to "live, play, and eat Vinton."

Mayor Brad Grose says, "The Special Programs department is a very important part of the staff/team in the Town of Vinton. The members of the department are often the main contact that people have with our Town. The Special

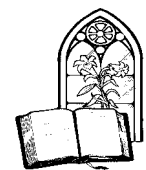
Programs staff does a wonderful job in representing our Town in a very positive manner. The department is always busy, but they take time to provide personal service for our special programs as well as private personal events. We are very fortunate to have highly qualified, dedicated individuals in the Community Programs Department that take pride in representing the Town of Vinton."

The Town of Vinton and the Vinton Messenger have united to "Spotlight the Town of Vinton Staff" during their respective birthday months. The Town is proud to have these employees on staff and wants the community to see who is behind the scenes making the Town look great and operate efficiently.



Chasity Barbour

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE TOWN OF VINTON



From the Pulpit: What makes you distinct?

"If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me before it hated you. If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own. Because you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world—therefore the world hates you (John 15:18-19)."

What is it that makes you distinct from everyone else? One of the distinctions I am best known for most of my life is my height. I have been asked my whole life: How tall are you? Why are you so tall? How did you get so tall? Do you play basketball? How's the weather up there? Though I pale in comparison to the height of college and professional basketball players, being tall has always been one of my distinguishing features. After 15 years of vocational ministry, rather than just being "the tall guy," I am referred to by some as "that tall preacher."

What are the things that make you distinct from every-

one else? Maybe it is your physical appearance—your height, hairstyle, or fashion choices? Maybe it is a favorite hobby or talent—you are a woodworker, golfer, artist, reader, or musician. Perhaps it is the college you attended or root for—you are a Hokie or Hoo, Blue Devil, Tarheel, or Wolfpack. Maybe it is your profession—you are a mechanic or doctor, small business owner or lawyer, police officer or firefighter, real estate agent or teacher. Maybe one of your most distinguishing characteristics is a certain behavior—you are a talker or listener, helper or giver. What is it that makes you distinct?

For the earliest Christians, their distinguishing characteristic above all else was connected to their faith in Christ. The term Christian was coined by outsiders, not followers of Christ. According to Luke, "It was at Antioch that the disciples were first called 'Christians' (Acts 11:26)."

The quality that separated them from everyone else, that which made them distinct, was their commitment to the way of Christ. The term "Christian" became the single, defining feature of those who consistently professed the name of Jesus, worshipped Jesus, cared for others like Jesus, and confidently faced persecution and death through their faith in Jesus and trust in his promises.

It was this distinction—living in the world, while not being of the world—that not only changed the lives of Christians but eventually transformed the entire Roman Empire as Emperor Constantine declared Christianity to be Rome's national religion.

As helpful as Constantine's edict was to converting the Roman Empire into a Christian nation, some downfalls were also. One, in particular, was the way Christianity became an official religion rather than an unof-

ficial way of life.

For the earliest Christians, their faith in Christ was not just some internal belief they held; it was a lifestyle they prioritized over all other physical, social, vocational, cultural, political, and national distinctions. It demanded their allegiance and loyalty over all other attachments to the world; it formed their identity, governed their decisions, and determined their purpose above all else. As a result, the world referred to this group with a distinct name that encompassed everything about them that set them apart—Christians, which literally means "little Christs."

The early survival of the Jesus movement depended upon his followers' distinctiveness to live in a way that was different from everyone else. They could not claim the name of Jesus yet continue to live within the same life patterns and rhythms as every other Roman citizen.

Their belief in Jesus did not change the world; the radical way of life they chose to live in response to that belief transformed a polytheistic Roman world. The power of the gospel is just as strong today as it was then. God's Spirit is just as active in our world today as it was then. The challenges of today are no greater than they were then. The question is, will Christians be as distinct today as they were then? Are Christians today willing to completely change their life patterns and decisions in response to the gospel? Will our identity in Christ be prioritized over all other social, vocational, cultural, political, and national distinctions?

What is it that makes you distinct from everyone else? What is it that needs to change in order for your identity in Christ to be your most distinguishing characteristic?

By Reverend 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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Vinton History Museum Updates

The Vinton History Museum will have a "Garage Sale" on Saturday, March 26, 2022, from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m. Lawn/landscaping items and various yard sale items will be available for sale.

The museum will be making Easter Baskets to sell as a fundraising activity. Items for the baskets

are appreciated. Drop them off at the museum during hours of operation from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. The museum is located at the corner of Maple Street and Jackson Avenue in downtown Vinton across from the Vinton Library. Internships (for high school and

college students) and Community Service Hours can be completed at the Vinton History Museum again this year. Please let students know about this opportunity.

Contact the museum at info@vintonhistorymuseum.org for more information or call 342-8634.

Submit your community news and photos

to vintonmessenger@ourvalley.org

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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Town Address from page 1

He thanked the Chamber for their dedication to restoring many programs and events that had been canceled or delayed by the pandemic and business owners for their devotion to the community.

"I certainly want to recognize and thank my fellow Council Members for their continued vision, leadership—Vice Mayor Sabrina McCarty, Council Member Keith Liles, Council Member Mike Stovall, and Council Member Laurie Mullins. You all care so deeply about Vinton, and I am extremely fortunate to serve alongside you."

"I want to express our sincere appreciation to the public safety and emergency service employees for your service to this community and the personal sacrifices you've made in taking care of your fellow citizens," Grose said.

He acknowledged the numerous regional partners who have worked so closely with the town, with special thanks to Roanoke County for their partnerships in numerous redevelopment initiatives in recent years—projects which would not have been feasible without the support of the Board of Supervisors and the County's Administration. He thanked the school system for updating school facilities in the Vinton area.

"Our local volunteer and non-profits continue to fill gaps in local services and play a special part in our community. Thanks to the Vinton Historical Society for operating the Vinton History Museum, the Advancement Foundation for hosting the HIVE and the annual Gauntlet Competition, and the Vinton Breakfast Lions Club for the new bus shelters coming soon to Lake Drive Plaza and near the PFG plant."

"New in 2021 was the addition of the Boys and Girls Club After-School Program at Vinton Baptist Church. I am very encouraged and excited by the positive influence this program is having on children of this community." Vinton will host the '4 on the 4th Run' event this July 4 as a primary fundraiser for the Club.

"We are very proud of our Police Department, under the leadership of Chief Drumond, that continues to represent the Town positively and attracts and retains some of the very best in talented officers to keep our community safe," Grose continued. "Our officers constantly engage with the citizens through their Community Policing Programs, school outreach, and neighborhood programs. The Chief has plans for an even more visible presence in 2022, such as the Coffee with a Cop program that will launch later this month in conjunction with our Chamber."

"In 2021, the Police Department completed the update of their entire fleet through a vehicle lease program," the mayor noted. "Recently, they began to implement body-worn cameras and updated in-car cameras, with the help of a law enforcement grant, and have started the process to continue the department's reaccreditation."

"The Planning and Zoning Staff oversees the Town's Code Enforcement, stormwater permitting and manages the construction permitting with Roanoke County," said Grose. "Perhaps their most important achievement over the last year was their effort, along with the Planning Commission, to complete the first comprehensive update of the town's zoning

and subdivision ordinances in more than 20 years. These important land-use policies protect property values and promote responsible residential and commercial development activities within the community.

"This department is also responsible for many transportation planning efforts. In the year ahead, citizens can look forward to the construction of the next phase of the Glade Creek Greenway, several new Bike & Pedestrian Improvements along Walnut Ave, and two new signalized crosswalks for Gus Nicks Blvd and Hardy Road. We plan to improve the walkability of our town by providing a safe connection from Vinton's perimeter neighborhoods to its blossoming downtown and public greenway amenities. This will help to promote healthy and active lifestyles and encourage new families to consider Vinton as the place to establish roots."

Grose commended the Finance/Treasurer's Office for their efforts on financial oversight, daily payment collection, attention to customer accounts, and handling the town's accounts payable and receivables. The department was again recognized in 2021 by GFOA for the Financial Audit and the Budget Document.

"Not every locality receives these awards, and they are a testament to our staff going above and beyond to promote transparency!" Grose continued. "The department will begin a much-needed software update to modernize our back-end office operations that will provide benefits to both our employees and to the citizens we serve."

Grose thanked Human Resources and Risk Management Director Donna Collins, "who successfully managed another year of pandemic guidelines, contact tracing, and safety protocols across all work areas. In addition, she assisted in converting the town's employees to a PTO system and creatively managed employee training via virtual or small workgroups, all while conducting her primary functions of recruitment in an ever-increasing competitive job market."

"In 2021, our Town Clerk and Executive Assistant to the Town Manager Susan Johnson was instrumental in facilitating the purchase and installation of equipment and the process to begin broadcasting our meetings on Facebook Live, which has been a welcomed addition to our goal to be more accessible to our citizens."

Grose recognized the Community Programs Department for their "great work and creative efforts in 2021 to reopen the Town's public facilities" to resume hosting meetings such as State of the Town, restoring rentals at the Charles R. Hill Community Center, and helping to return many of the beloved community events such as the Vinton Dogwood Festival, the July 4th Celebration, Fall Festival, the Christmas Parade and the second year of the Santa Crawl.

"Our largest single department, and perhaps the most visible, is Public Works," the mayor continued. "These professional men and women do an amazing job in providing many of the direct services that our citizens rely on almost daily. This includes the water and wastewater system (for now), stormwater facilities, refuse and recycling, and maintenance of our roads, alleys, and sidewalks to include street sweeping and snow plowing.

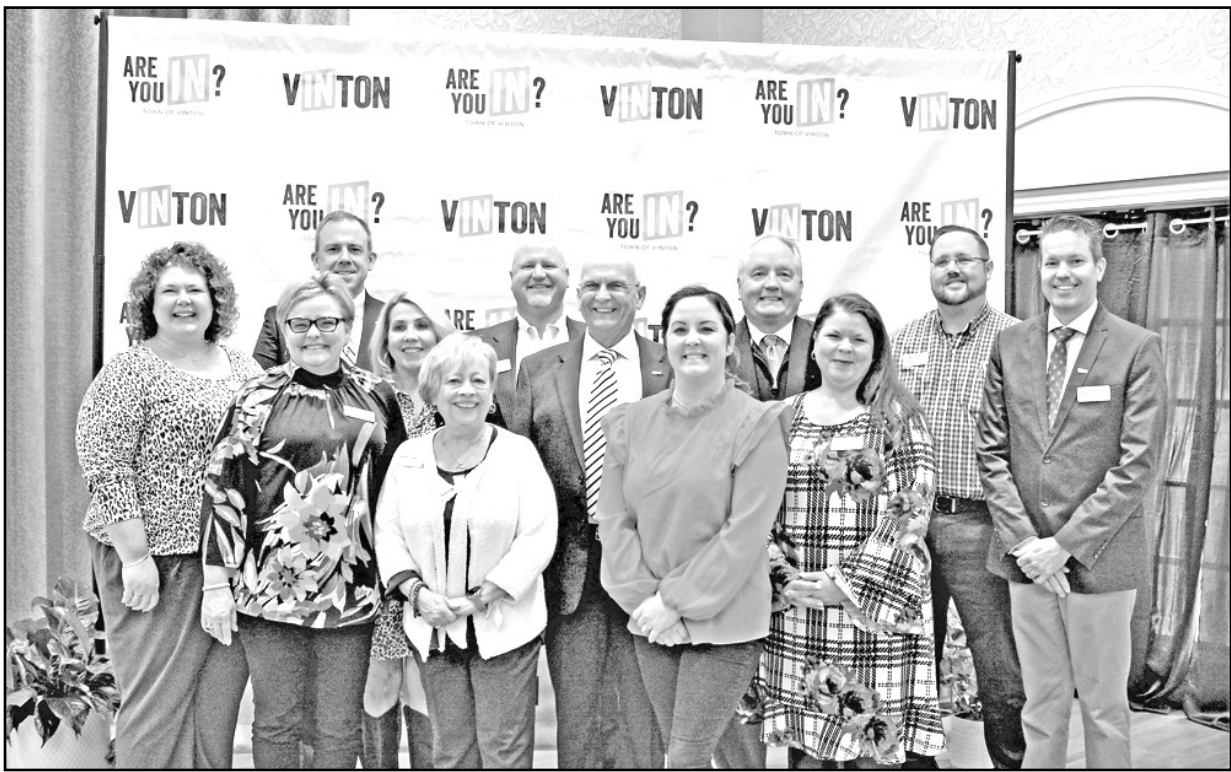


PHOTO BY DEBBIE ADAMS

Members of Vinton Town Council and Vinton Area Chamber of Commerce officers attending the annual State of the Town address included (front row left to right): Vice Mayor Sabrina McCarty, Chamber Executive Assistant Kathryn Sowers, 2nd Vice President Page Stovall, and Chamber Executive Director Angie Chewing; middle row: Council member Laurie Mullins, Chamber 1st Vice President Allison Finney, Mayor Brad Grose, Councilman Mike Stovall, Past President of the Chamber Justin Davison, and Councilman Keith Liles; and back row, Town Manager Pete Peters with Chamber President Jason Boothe.

"In 2021, several major stormwater facility replacement projects were completed and over \$750,000 of street paving. The department oversees two major projects--replacing all water meters and the 3rd Street Lift Station upgrade. In addition, the traffic signals at Clearview Drive, PFG, and 3rd Street were recently replaced."

"Projects to look forward to in 2022 include an additional \$800,000 of paving and the replacement of traffic signals at Vinyard Road, Niagara Road, and Hardy Road," the mayor said. "The new signals include technology that will allow the intersections to be synchronized for better flow of traffic. Town staff has also begun working with engineers to design the new roadbed for Mountain View Road. Maintenance will continue until construction can get underway."

Grose highlighted the transfer of the town's water and wastewater utility operations to the Western Virginia Water Authority effective July 1, 2022.

"The town has proudly provided this service for decades, but now the timing is right to make the leap to transfer own-

ership and operation of the system. By making this transfer now, our water customers can have peace of mind, knowing that the town's water supply and delivery will be protected at the lowest possible price through the economies of scale that the Water Authority can provide. We thank Roanoke County for their assistance in achieving this milestone and the Water Authority for their leadership and guidance through the many aspects of converting the system.

"The Town's economic outlook is extremely bright, as our financial conditions are in the best shape we have seen in many years! The town has begun to realize much-needed revenue growth as a result of recent economic development initiatives. It is imperative that the town invests in our public infrastructure through a restored and fully funded Capital Improvement Plan. We must also keep up with rising employee health care, maintain competitive salaries, and simply meet the higher cost of doing business."

"During 2021 alone, we celebrated many new businesses and expansions including Joe

Goodpies and RND Coffee at Vinyard Station, Our Daily Bread, BoomTown CrossFit, Bank of Botetourt, Big Lots, Tractor Supply at Lake Drive Plaza, and the 30,000 sq. ft. expansion of Rosie's, to name a few. This impressive private investment demonstrates that our initiatives and continued public investments are working!"

He went on to list what is on the immediate horizon for 2022. "We will see the next phase of the redevelopment of Gish's Mill, that will result in the preservation of the town's founding structure by its conversion into a restaurant, seasonal market, and overnight lodging. The Dogwood Restaurant is planning to open their expanded interior and exterior patio, and 107 South will get underway at the former Star City Playhouse in downtown."

"In addition, we have several new announcements in store for Vinyard Station and the former Rite Aid Building at Hardy and Clearview Road and the Vinton/East Roanoke County Hotel that is slated to break ground later this summer at the intersection of S. Pollard and Virginia Ave.

"We have a lot to celebrate in Vinton, and we have no plans to slow down. During the next several years, you will see a consistent wave of investment in our people and the community to maintain our position as a great place to live and do business and truly solidify Vinton as the place to be!"

Chewing announced during the meeting that the Chamber would be moving from the Charles R. Hill Community Center to a new location at 118 East Lee Avenue in downtown Vinton—closer to the center of the action.

She and Chamber Executive Assistant Kathryn Sowers presented a clock plaque to honor Chamber Past President Justin Davison, who has served the Chamber as president for five years.


"He has worked tirelessly and effortlessly," said Chewing. "I am not sure he has ever missed an event or meeting. He gives 100% to his job at Member One and his community. With his efforts, the Chamber has gained new members, sponsors, and great momentum."

Jerry's Restaurant and Mildred Scott catered the State of the Town breakfast with flowers by Creative Occasions.

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PEOPLE, PLACES AND THINGS

If you tuned in to American Idol this past Sunday, you might of recognized a familiar face. No, not Lionel, Katy or Luke! Our very own Mark Osbourne, a Vinton/ Bedford Co guy! Mark auditioned for AI and got a Golden Ticket to Hollywood!!! As Lionel Richie said to him "The mustache gets the cash!" Congratulations

Mark, we are so proud of you and can't wait to see you in Hollywood!

I was honored to accept a surprise grant for mom, Bootie, at The Park on Sunday night. Jason Gilmore and the Roanoke Pride's PRISM Foundation, awarded mom with the Rita Gilmore Enoch Angel Tree Grant. Mom has not been able

Angie Chewning

Filling in for Bootie

to get there in person, so I accepted on her behalf. Thank you all so much Bonnie Baile,

Last Stop Lounge, was honored by VFW Post 1264, with a Community Service Award for "Dedicated Service to Veterans and Our Community." Bonnie would like to thank all of their customers who contributed, and continue to give whatever they can, for every project that we do to raise awareness to our Veterans.

CORRECTION: A Celebration of Life will be held for Pete Kelly in Sat March 26 at 12:00 PM (noon) till 2:30 at the Veterans Monument and Community Center. If you knew Pete and the Kelly family please join us for full military honors service and a lunch to follow. Please dress casually.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Mortgage Burning from page 1

July 1938. The building was one big room, partitioned off with wires and curtains, with benches for seating. Longtime member Darrell English says that if you weren't enthralled with the Sunday School lesson in your class, you could lean against the curtain and hear the one next door.

In 1941, church members sold Bibles to raise money for a sanctuary above the basement church. In those difficult economic times, "a couple whose house mortgage was due at the end of the month would give what they had saved for their own mortgage to pay the church mortgage," which was due mid-month. The congregation would then "work hard to get them their payment before their own mortgage was due."

The church burned that original mortgage in just four short years by 1942.

In 1949 the church dedicated a new auditorium, complete with Hammond organ and chimes, and continued to grow steadily. The church purchased more property and, in the 1970s, added a new educational wing, which included a fellowship hall, kitchen, pastor's study, and Sunday School classrooms--and a new parking lot. In the 1980s, more property was purchased at the corner of Cleveland and Poplar.

In 1993, a new sanctuary was dedicated. The church sold pews, windows, benches, light fixtures, and even the sound system to congregation members to raise money for the construction. There was adversity to overcome with the collapse of the new sanctuary while under construction. When high winds felled the framework, "the congregation didn't give up; they pulled together and started over."

That's the mortgage the church was burning on March 13, 2022. The ceremony was joyous, with many prayers of thanks for "what God has done for us" and the generosity of present and past members. The service was filled with music from children, guest pianist Becky Reynolds, and music leader Joyce Rodriguez. There were guest speakers in person and via video.

Darrell English, age 95, the first and only building fund chairman for the church, said that "God has blessed us immensely." The church had 58 members when construction was proposed. The first bank turned them down. They asked for a loan because of their small membership; finally, one financial institution stepped up and approved a loan. The church has never missed even one payment in the years since. English said he had always hoped he would live long enough to see the loan paid off, and now he has. The church expressed their appreciation to him for his faithfulness and the prayer warrior he has been.

Sharon Perkins read notes from her mother, June, who was on the building committee, reminiscing about visiting other churches to design a Vinton Wesleyan sanctuary. She talked about how the emblems were selected for the stained-glass window--the lamb, fish, dove, and Bible--and watching the steeple going up.

Treasurer Susan Stump talked about times of "feast and famine," praying each month to come up with the funds for the mortgage payment based on pledges from the congregation, estate gifts, and small donations which added up.

Fran Brown, the wife of the late Dr. Flavy Brown, who pastored Vinton Wesleyan from 1985 to 1997, spoke about the church's growth over the years, the need for a new and more accessible sanctuary, and determining how to determine how to pay for it. She also recalled the windstorm which blew down the walls, but "God's people stayed faithful."

"God makes a way when we think there is no way," she said. "Many in the church sacrificed." She mentioned a 'tiny unassuming lady' from the congregation who lived up the street and never missed a service, summoning Dr. Brown to her home, reaching far back in a cabinet, and pulling out an old canning jar of coins which she donated to the church--"all that she had."

Vinton Mayor Brad Grose attended the mortgage burning and thanked Vinton Wesleyan for "being a beacon in this community" and sending out disciples to spread the Word. He talked about the freedom that comes from being a Christian and the freedom that comes from being out of debt.

District Superintendent Greg Reynolds congratulated Vinton Wesleyan on their accomplishment and recalled singing at the dedication service in 1993. He described the continuing expansion of the church as "pleasing to God, expressing your love for God, and giving glory to Him."

Pastor Rodriguez, who has been the Senior Pastor at Vinton Wesleyan since 2004, delivered a brief message in which he shared the contents of a letter from Dr. Brown concerning the campaign to build the sanctuary in 1993 as "touching our community for Jesus Christ. We must arise and build--not with equal giving but with equal sacrifice."

He concluded by saying that God is not finished with Vinton Wesleyan. "Quitting is not on the radar. We have more ministries to do; people need to be reached; there is more Kingdom work to be done. Vinton Wesleyan needs to be at her best when the world is at her worst--for the glory of God."

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Chamber of Commerce hosts annual Senior Expo

The Vinton Area Chamber of Commerce will be hosting its annual Vinton Senior Expo on Tuesday, March 22, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Vinton War Memorial, located at 814 Washington Avenue.

This annual event will feature exhibits on retirement, assisted living, nursing care, health care, home care, hospice, health products, aging in place, medical equipment, insurance,

reverse mortgages, hearing and eye care, and health screenings.

There will be the ever-popular door prizes, goodie bags, vendor giveaways, screenings, and more.

Entertainment this year includes Tai Chi from 10 to 10:30 a.m. and the Steppin' in Time Dancers from 11 to 12:30.

Concessions will be available from the Food on the Go food truck. There

is free parking as always.

Presenting sponsor is Member One. Other sponsors include Fox Radio 910, Bank of Botetourt, Magnets USA, Carilion Clinic, Winter's Storage, Senior News magazine, HomeTrust Bank, Blue Ridge Beverage, Cox, the Town of Vinton, the Vinton Messenger, Roanoke County, and the Vinton Area Chamber of Commerce.

VINTON SENIOR Expo 2022

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Door prizes, goodie bags, vendor giveaways, screenings and more.

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Entertainment/Demos
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11:00 - 12:30 Steppin' In Time dancers
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WBHS announces 2nd nine weeks A and A/B honor rolls

William Byrd High School has announced the names of students whose good grades earned them a spot on the A and A/B Honor Rolls for the second nine weeks.

A Honor Roll for the second nine weeks:

12th Grade: Alyssa Allen, Chayton Bhrens, Emma Copening, Haley Day, Autymn Dillon, Ross Divers, Bronwyn Fenimore, Kaitlyn Ferguson, Haley Firebaugh, Riley Firebaugh, Emiliano Gonzalez, Corbin Graham, Neveah Guenther, Destiny Hewitt, Sean Hoey, Jackson Huff, Ashlynn Jamison, Devin Liu, Emilie McCaskill, Logan McDaniel, Ragan Moody, Steven Nguyen, Landon Niday, Austin Nielsen, Tori Nininger, Ana Nolasco, Shivani Patel, Joshua Roop, Daniel Sarver, Barbara Saunders, Jamie Small, Damien'chaos Smith, Bryce Sutphin, Hannah Sutton, Alex Theodor, Charles Trogdon, Jr., Lana Turner, Greta Walls, and Kassidy Wrye.

11th Grade: Addisyn Ackley, Ireland Aldrich, Jacob Archambo, Landon Barber, Aleyah Basham, Mikayla Belenger, Mikayla G. Blair, Emily'Anne Booher, Tristan Bunn, Casi Carawan, Alyssa Chocklett, Sophia Chrisley, Brandon Clark, Makayla Boothe, Case Crawford, Taylor Davis, Kara Defibaugh, Bailey Dollberg, Arianna English, Kristianna Fitzgerald, Chadwick Gaddy, Summer Garmon, Tabitha Giles, Sydney Haddox, Hannah Johnson, Logan Jones, Ashton Klein, Carsyn Kotz, Lily Kroese, Sage Kushman, Hailey Lascell, Tina Lin, Olivia Lyles, Martina Mihelcic, Holly Mills, Mason Nguyen, McKenna Paradis, Maggie Parkhurst, Dominc Pascoe, Katelin Patrick, Kristen Patrick, Brooklyn

Peters, Latriva Pierce, Xavier Preston, Rebecca Qiu, Tanner Sarver, Julie Sattah, Kaiden Schuder, Kathryn Toney, Haleigh Vaughan, Xavier Vaughn, Bailey Warden, and Aiden Williams.

10th Grade: Olaedo Anyanwu, Wyatt Bailey, Jaslyn Bibby, Natalie Blevins, Sydney Blewett, Eva Brown, Dillon Colgan, Emily Cook, Tyler Cottrell, Mandolin Draper, Dominic Dulak, Carter Dullaghan, Landon Dyess, Phoenix Eanes, Noah Franks, Dexter Gaines, Elliott Gaines, David Gaspar' Cabrera, Claire Glover, Joshua Hardy, Kaliyah Harris, Jack Hinkle, Donald Hodges, Makenna Jacobsen, Shiloh Markwith, Payton Martin, Emma Miller, Sean Minnix, Aiden Moore, Jenny Nguyen, Tracy Nguyen, Kallie Niday, Samantha Start, Addisyn St. Clair, Finley Stephens, Karli Stephenson, Kenny Trang, Emily Tuck, Alexis Ware, Griffin Jakob, and Elizabeth Young.

9th Grade: Ava Ashworth, Dawson Brinkley, Daniel Butterworth, Abigail Clyde, Michelle Cortez' Jimenez, Emma Craddock, Graysen Divers, Caleb Dogan, Camryn Dullaghan, Emily Fisher, Skylar Fitzgerald, Kendall Gordon, Aidan Hardy, Abigail Haroulakis, Sophie Holcomb, Hannah Janney, Jada Johnson, Lillian Johnson, Kristin Kochendarfr, Kendall Lecas, Kaylee Makuch, Elizabeth Maldonado, Ryan Markham, Eliza Otey, Ellawyn Pagan, Genevieve Paul, Madelyn Pitman, Isabella Posadas, Becca Radford, Meera Raichura, Elizabeth Reid, Elyse Rider, Reid Ruble, Gino Ruks, Emma Rupe, Vanessa Sattah, Gregory Stiltner, Kevin Stultz, William Thompson, and Grace Woodcock.

A/B Honor Roll for the sec-

ond nine weeks:

Grade 12 : Alexis Anderson, Alexa Aquino, Andrew Ballinger, Tyler Begasse, Chancellor Bruner, Isabel Burnett, Charleston Campbell, Sydney Carriker, John Cooley, Bryson Crawford, Abigail Dillon, Jade Fleitz, Elisha Gayles, Abigail Gunn, Ethan Hairston, Catherine Harless, Chloe Harrilla, Nathan Hendrick, Alejandra Hernandez, Jacob Hilliard, Nathan Hinkle, Kaiya Hoagland, Keely Hoal, Matthew Hoyos, Anya Hunter, Jocelyn Hunter, Carlee Hutchins, Alek Johnson, Hunter Keese, Mackenzie Kelley, Morgan Kelly, Micah Kiker, Daniel Letz, Nicholas Long, William Lucas, Melanie McMahan, Robert Miller, Anna Milliron, Natalee Mills, Carter Moore, Hunter Muddiman, Tanner Nininger, Timber Raines, Angel Reis, Dakota Ripley, Jaylen Rosser, Mya Rosser, Trevor Ruble, William Sayers, Kendal Seale, Samantha Shrader, Hunter Sipe, Faith Smith, Thoo' Lay Soe, Cole Spencer, Logan Stroop, Brandon Tuck, Victoria Watts, Travis West, Jasia Wheeler, Cadence Wilkerson, Janiya Williams, and Claire Wray.

Grade 11: Ella Ashworh, Calvin Bannister III, Bethany Beecher, Jacob Bell, Makayla Bell, James Berry III, Jacob Blevins, Reagan Booth, Nathaniel Bowles, Jonathan Brabham, Variah Bradac, Carter Bray, Madison Burks, Madilyn Cadd, Jaiden Childress, Gracie Clifton, Kyle Colvin, Jason Cox, Melissa Cruz' Quiroz, Paige Davis, Reagan Dillard, Elijah Dillon, Samuel Ferris, Ricardo Gaspar' Cabrera, Clayton Gilmore, Maci Glass, Emma Gordon, Madison Gray, Noah Hall, Anthony Harris, Christopher Haymaker, Shane Heldenbrand, Daniel Hiemstra, Bre-

anna Hodges, Dylan Hughes, Olivia Hurd, Katherine Johnson, Ashton Kanode, Jakob Kroese, Abby Lamonde, Peyton Leftwich, Madison' Grace Long, Alejandro Lopez, Julieth Maldonado' Melghem, Kaiden Mandakis, Mario Martinez, Thomas McGregor, Candace Morgan, Harley Morgan, Alexis Nelms, Alice Palmer, Lake Paul, Phillip Pham, Corinna Pittenger, Trace Poindexter, Brock Rader, Hailey Ramsey, Payton Ramsey, Kiefer Rea, Dustin Richards, Caleb Riley, Magdalene Rusinak, Kenna Sarver, Pari Shah, Macy Shepherd, Andrew Spencer, Nichollette Stiltner, Abigail Stoehr, Laney Stroop, Hayden Thomas, Xally Tzompaxtle, Sidney Walters, Allison Ward, Cole Wolters' argenio, Madeleine Wolters' argenio, and Madison Wright.

Grade 10: Dakota Adams, Erin Adkins, Brooklyn Arven, Noah Astin, Maddox Beaman, Ashley Begasse, Lillian Betterton, Caitlin Bishop, Kaylee Blackwell, Sydney Bunce, Adriana Burkhardt, Ian Burnett, Makynna Byrd, Cindel Camper, Nathan Carter, Karisma Carver, Herman Cataneo' Luna, Zachary Claybrook, Anastayzia Cook, Madelyn Davis, Anibeth Dixon, Elizabeth Dixon, Lee Doss, Leto Dowdy, Adam Dunbar, Aidan Eline, Kadence Fernatt, Samantha Flippen, Cadence Fralin, Marlee Francisco, Lance Freedle, Savannah Gibson, Bodie Gonzales, Israel Hairston, Reid Hanson, Sawyer Harris, Michael Hoyos, Zachary James, Emma Kageals, Matthew Kalb, Laina Keipe, Gretchen Kinney, Alexis Labarbera, Camden LaPrad, Harley Lecas, Andrew Lindsay, Allyson Mavredes, Adam Megdadi, Gracie Mick, Cooper Minnix, Abigail Moats, Tan-

ner Montgomery, Mackenzie Mook, Tyler Morrison, Taylor Nininger, Grace Owen, Karl Pierce, Nicole Posadas, Justin Rickard, Riley Roth, Montgomery Self, Lane Shoemaker, Emily Sowers, Parker Spradlin, Keller Spraker, Johnathan Teague, Kayli Thompson, Noah Thompson, Kendra Turner, Jovie Underwood, Chloe Varney, Nathaniel Vaughn, Ian Vest, Trenton West, Madison White, Emily Wilmer, Brenin Witcher, Maddox Wolfe, Thomas Wood, and Ashley Woods.

Grade 9: Kassius Ayres, Christian Barrette, Jisse Beckner, Carson Bivens, Isaiah Board, Wyatt Bowles, Carson Bramble, Daniel Britts, Hunter Butterworth, Barry Cheatwood, Alexandria Cook, Erika Coon, Lily Cornett, Madeline Cunningham, Anthony Davis, Abigail Day, Gabriel Dixon, Hayden Eads, McKinley Figgart, Devin Freeman, Bailey Gibson, Lacie Gibson, Emily Glass, Landon Haithcock, Payton Hall, Ethan Haston, Nathan Hiemstra, Megan Higgins, Allie Jamison, Mallory Johnson, Raelyn Lancaster, Sara Lang, Max Livingston, Nathaniel Lynn, Zoey Mann, Emma Matthews, Taelor McPherson, Madison Miller, Alexander Montgomery, Grace Onwi, Sean Overbay, Christian Parker, Spencer Peters, Marcayla Poindexter, Ethan Powell, Savannah Powell, Blake Richardson, Sean Rickman, Vanessa Ricks, Nathan Rogers, Johnathan Rozenboom, Jr., Landon Sarver, Jerrett Shepherd, Nathan Short, Luke Skelton, Zhenlyia Staples, Josephine Taylor, George Thomas, Lucas Thomas, Stephen Underwood, Chloe Underwood' Agee, Camden West, Sarah Wilcox, Carson Wood, Dakota Woznik, Mary Wray, and Virginia Yonce.

Rosie's hosts Chamber Lunch and Learn program

Rosie's Gaming Emporium hosted the March "Lunch and Learn" program presented by the

Vinton Area Chamber of Commerce for its members.

Rosie's Marketing Di-

rector Jeff Spaugh and Regional Manager Ernie Dellaverson shared basic information about Rosie's

history, what it offers to customers, and what it gives back to the community and

addressed questions from Chamber members.

Spaugh explained that Rosie's opened in Vinton on May 9, 2019, with 150 Historical Horse Racing (HHR) machines. Colonial Downs made an initial investment of \$18 million in renovating the building.

With business booming, Rosie's expanded in 2021, in the midst of the pandemic, celebrating the completion of the project on December 8, 2021—a \$28 million investment this time, adding an additional 350 HHR machines for a total of 500.

A new bar and entertainment area were added (that's where the Lunch and Learn program was held), along with a new High Limit gaming room and Vinton's first parking garage.

Spaugh said that average attendance during the week has been approximately 4000 customers, with a high of 1300 one day on a recent weekend. "The numbers just keep going up."

Rosie's is finding success with its new emphasis on entertainment, and this year drew 700 guests for a performance by Parmalee. Other acts have included Vegas McGraw, Tim "E" as Elvis, and Las Vegas entertainer T'Fox.

They focus on local bands booked by Big Lick Entertainment, with audi-

ences enjoying 30 different local bands thus far, including Low, Low Charriot, Mended Fences, Soulacoustix, and the Jared Stout Band.

Each year Rosie's has made its presence felt in the community with significant charitable contributions of \$100,000 to local organizations. In 2021 they added "Project 52," giving away \$1000 each week for designated organizations.

Large donations have been made to the Vinton First Aid Crew, the Vinton Historical Society and History Museum, and the Breakfast Lions Club in Vinton.

Rosie's also give about \$2000 each quarter to selected charities, like the Mill Mountain Zoo, through "bin donations," leftovers when tickets are cashed in.

Rosie's has undertaken a new "Point Partners" program with local businesses so that Rosie's patrons can earn points that can be used at local businesses. Any interested business may contact Jeff Spaugh at Rosie's.

Rosie's and their parent company, Colonial Downs, were recently purchased by the "goliath" of the horseracing business—Churchill Downs. Dellaverson expects few changes on the local level.



PHOTOS BY DEBBIE ADAMS

The Vinton Area Chamber of Commerce held its March "Lunch and Learn" program for members at Rosie's Gaming Emporium in Vinton. The group of mostly business owners met at the new bar for lunch and information on Rosie's operations provided by Marketing Manager Jeff Spaugh. Shown left to right are: Vinton Area Chamber of Commerce President Jason Boothe, Chamber 1st Vice President Allison Finney, Past President Justin Davison, Executive Director Angie Chewning, Rosie's Regional Manager Ernie Dellaverson, and the Vinton Rosie's Marketing Director Jeff Spaugh.



Rosie's Gaming Emporium hosted the Vinton Area Chamber of Commerce March Lunch and Learn program in the new bar area.

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Give Light ~ Sad Tales ~

[This is a memory from the many decades the author has been privileged to write for daily and weekly newspapers circulating in Western Virginia.]

Cleaning out recently some books I once loved but will not read again, I came upon three for reflection. When I have occasionally done a review in these columns of some favorite novels of the past, readers have responded that they too remembered.

These three, "This Above All," "The Cruel Sea" and "The Confessions of Nat Turner," have the common theme of endings, sad but realistic for their times. Being Lent, a time of penitence and reflection observed in some denominations, it may be appropriate to learn of these tales of a somber mood.

Their settings of World War II in England and on the high seas and in pre-Civil War Southside Virginia draw them into our own times of fears about a possible war in Europe and a reminder of a frightening event from the days when slavery was a way of life in the settled parts of the United States south of the

Potomac River and east of the Mississippi.

I first read them in three eras of my own life: early teens in Orange, Virginia; early married life in Petersburg, Virginia, and late mid-life in Salem, Virginia.

Here's a bit about the three.

In my childhood in the Piedmont, the sole means for my single mother and me to learn of world happenings was the daily newspaper. An early edition of "The Richmond Times-Dispatch" arrived in our RFD mailbox each weekday morning. It often contained a serialized popular book of the times.

There, I first read a contemporary novel, "This Above All" by a British writer, Eric Knight. Later, I bought the book with a 1941 copyright date. It was one of my first adult novels; the sex scenes were largely lost on me at the time, but later the power of the story returns even today.

It covers about four months of the spring of 1940 when London was under the blitz of Nazi Germany, and Adolph Hitler sought to break the will of the British people never conquered for more than 1,000 years. The

Frances Stebbins Correspondent

scene is set with people living on the English Channel coast hearing the guns in France some 30-miles away.

The reader then meets a young English woman, Prudence Cathaway, who is newly enrolled as a female soldier. She's the daughter of a famous London surgeon and accustomed to her place in the upper-middle class.

Near London she meets Clive Briggs, a deserter from the British Expeditionary Force, which has been conveyed home across the Channel after the defeat at Dunkirk. Drawn together in the dark, the inevitable takes place; Prue tells her new lover that she has a week's leave, and they decide to take it at a Channel hotel.

During the days and nights they spend there, Clive tells Prue at length of his experiences as the British Army retreated to escape

at Dunkirk. He also reveals his working-class childhood to her as they make love.

Back in London by telephone, Prue informs Clive that she's pregnant; he tells her he's going back to the Army. Before this can happen, Clive is seriously hurt as a bombing raid causes a wall to collapse on him. Prue's father cannot save him.

To complete this tragedy, the author Knight was himself killed in the war.

The second book, "The Cruel Sea," I gave to new husband Charlie when we were in our first year of marriage in a Petersburg apartment. He had served more than two years in the North Atlantic and had told me of his love of the sea even in the fearful storms that often ravaged the area near Iceland when he handled torpedoes in the U.S. Navy.

This book by British author Nicholas Monsarrat is about a group of seamen on the H.M.S. Compass Rose and their years of fighting the Atlantic and the Germans. It draws well the characters of young seamen and toughened officers and has its own love story with the focus on

Lockhart; he's gone to sea after a fading marriage. The promise of a new life with Julie Hallam is lost when at war's end, he returns home to find that she has died.

And finally, in "The Confessions of Nat Turner," Newport News writer William Styron offers a fictionalized account of a frightening historical event that took place in 1831. An educated slave, Nat Turner, maintained that he received a message from God to lead an effort to free his people.

Turner and his band of brothers succeeded in stabbing and axing to death dozens of Southampton County white slave owners; after raping and then murdering a young white woman in a cornfield, he and other leaders were captured and hanged. Styron's limited records reveal that Turner's body was mutilated for souvenirs.

This horrifying tale dates from 1966. In a preface, Styron explains that he drew heavily on Nat Turner's own account of why and how the rebellion came about. As Turner predicted, the event inspired terror of whites for Blacks.

Prepare your garden for spring with an expert-approved checklist

Spring is just around the corner, and now is a great time to plan what to grow and how to prepare your garden for the planting season.

Mark Viette, horticulturist and host of "In the Garden" on Virginia Farm Bureau's Real Virginia television program, said his first word of advice is "Always wear gloves." This will help gardeners avoid getting splinters or cuts when working in the dirt.

He also advised never working the soil when it's too wet, as this will cause it to compact, preventing it from absorbing air and water.

Viette suggested home gardeners use the following checklist to spruce things up for spring:

Do a late-winter cleanup by removing dead foliage and fallen leaves from the garden. Throw away anything that's had insect or disease problems. Other debris can be added to the compost pile for nutrients.

Cut back ornamental grasses. They're great to leave for much of the win-

ter to shelter wildlife but should be pruned to about 3 inches from the ground to encourage new growth. For an easy way to cut ornamental grasses, visit bit.ly/33csUHo.

Prune dead or diseased portions of shrubs and evergreens like boxwood or cypress. Remember not to prune healthy growth until it gets warmer.

Feed your garden with organic fertilizers. This ideally should be done after the garden cleanup and before mulching.

For vegetable gardens, get rid of plant debris such as old tomato vines. If you have fruit trees, throw away old fruit and leaves, as they often have fungi spores that can re-infect the trees.

If planning to grow tomatoes in a vegetable garden, now is a good time to add dolomitic limestone and gypsum to the surface of the vegetable garden to help prevent blossom end rot issues.

If using compost in your garden, add 1-3 inches of compost, and work it into



PHOTO BY MARKUS SPISEK

the ground using a garden fork or tiller.

Spray your fruit trees with an all-season horticultural oil spray to help mitigate pest and disease issues. Be sure to follow

the label instructions.

Depending on your planting zone, February, March, and April are a good time to divide and transplant plants like hostas, daylilies, liriope, Solo-

mon's seal and groundcovers like sedum.

Clean out bird houses before spring nesting season begins. Keep your feathered friends comfortable by emptying old de-

bris once a year, checking for mold and mildew and cleaning with a gentle diluted dish soap and warm water solution if needed.

From the Virginia Farm Bureau

BBB offers advice on how to give wisely to Ukrainian relief efforts

As the Russian invasion of Ukraine has begun, concerns have grown about the current and potential emergency needs of the Ukrainian people. Generous donors want to help by supporting charities that are raising funds for assistance.

BBB Serving Western VA and BBB Wise Giving Alliance offer the following tips for donors to consider along with a list of BBB Accredited Charities that have announced Ukraine-related activities or plans on their websites.

We certainly encourage generosity to help the people in Ukraine but caution donors to avoid questionable appeals. Here are some tips to keep in mind when you're opening your heart and your wallet.

Can the charity get to the impacted area? Not all relief organizations will be positioned to provide relief quickly. See if the charity already has a presence in Ukraine.

Should you send clothing and food? Local drives to collect clothing and food to send overseas may not be practical as the logistics and timing to deliver and disperse such items will be challenging. Relief organizations are better equipped

to obtain what is needed, distribute it effectively and avoid duplication of effort.

Does the relief charity meet BBB Charity Standards? You can verify a charity's trustworthiness by viewing an evaluative report completed by BBB Wise Giving Alliance. See the list provided below of charities that are soliciting for relief assistance for Ukraine and that also meet the BBB Standards for Charity Accountability.

Is the charity experienced in providing emergency relief? Experienced disaster relief charities are the best bet to help deliver aid as soon as possible. New entrants may have difficulty in following through even if they have the best of intentions.

Are you considering crowdfunding appeals? If engaging in crowdfunding, it is safest to give to someone you personally know and trust and review the platform's policies regarding fees and distribution of collected funds. If the crowdfunding request is from a charity, check out the group by visiting Give.org. Keep in mind that some crowdfunding sites do very little vetting of individuals or organizations that decide to post for relief assistance.

Sites that take security measures will usually provide descriptions of these procedures.

Does the appeal make exaggerated financial claims such as "100% will be spent on relief." Charities have fundraising and administrative expenses. Any charity claiming otherwise is potentially misleading the donating public. Even a credit card donation will have a processing fee.

BBB has listed several accredited charities with BBB Wise Giving Alliance that have started raising funds for assistance efforts in Ukraine or are preparing for needs that could arise if conflict results in population displacement:

Catholic Relief Services
Direct Relief
GlobalGiving
International Rescue Committee
Save the Children

If you come across a charity and you're unsure of its authenticity, you can always verify by viewing an evaluative report completed by BBB Wise Giving Alliance at Give.org.

If you happen to come across a scam, report it to BBB Scam Tracker to help prevent others from falling victim to scams.



PHOTO BY YURA KHOMITSKYI

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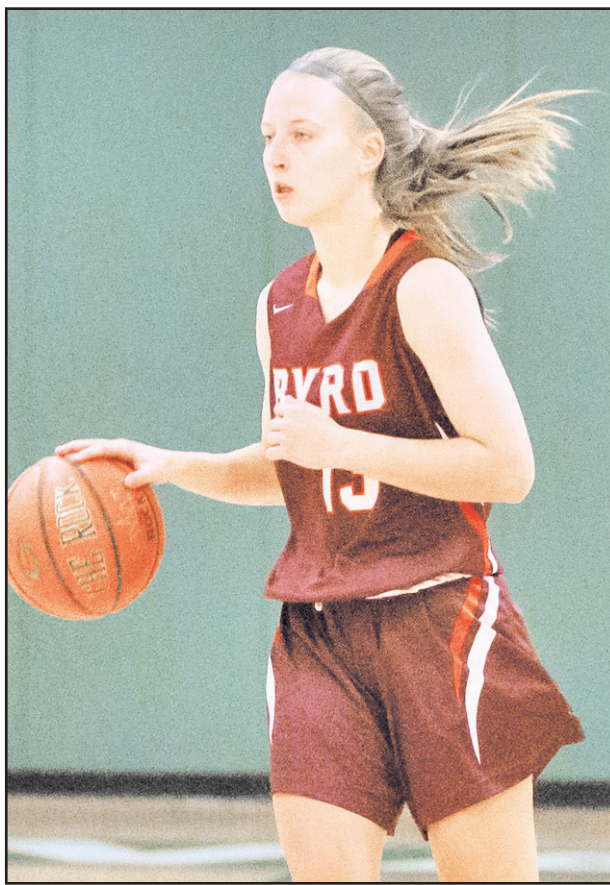


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Terriers named to All-District, All-Region basketball teams

The high school basketball season is now officially over so the all-district and all-region basketball teams can be announced. William Byrd was represented on both the girls and boys All-District and All-Region teams.

For the girls, senior Emilee McCaskill was named

to the All-Region 3D first team while junior Sophia Chrisley was named to the second team. Both girls were named to the first team in the Blue Ridge District while Jeni Levine of Staunton River was selected Player of the Year in both the district and the region.

For the boys, senior Cam Richardson was a first team All-Blue Ridge choice and made Honorable Mention in Region 3D. Seniors Ethan Hairston and Trevor Ruble were both second team All-BRD. Ayrior Journette of Northside was Player of the Year in both the district and region.



The William Byrd boys scrimmaged William Fleming in lacrosse last Thursday at Patterson Stadium. Left, Gavin Dorsey(#22) handles the ball for the Terriers. Middle, Carter Moore(#34) defends while John Sandzimier holds his ground in the goal. Right, Conner McCarthy wins a faceoff for the Byrdmen.

PHOTOS BY JIM & REGINA DEVINNEY

Lacrosse teams host doubleheader against Blacksburg tonight

The William Byrd lacrosse teams will host Blacksburg tonight for a St. Patrick's Day doubleheader at Robert A. Patterson Stadium. The girls will face off at 5:30 pm with the boys to follow.

The boys' team had their opener on Tuesday against a very strong E.C. Glass team in Lynchburg. The host

Hilltoppers took an 18-1 win in the debut of new Byrd head coach Will Satterfield.

"We played tough," said Satterfield. "We're a younger team, learning the game, but we have great guys and are progressing every day."

Kaden West had Byrd's goal and John Sandzimier had 17 saves in the

cage on a busy night for him, keeping the game from getting out of hand.

"I'm looking forward to growing our program and instilling a culture of hard work, respect and success for William Byrd High School boys' lacrosse," said Satterfield. "We are excited about the creation of a middle school lacrosse program this year as well."

Tonight will be the first game for the girls. The girls looked good in a scrimmage against Lord Botetourt High School's new club program last week.

"This year will be challenging, as the team is very young and we have a couple of key players out with injuries," said Byrd coach Dan Eberhardt.



The William Byrd girls' lacrosse team scrimmaged the new Lord Botetourt team at Patterson Stadium last week. Left, Makayla Price blows by a Cavalier defender. Middle, Ashlyn Stover brings the ball up the field and, right, goalie Haley Firebaugh makes a save for the Terriers.

PHOTOS BY JIM & REGINA DEVINNEY

Softball team will play at CS Friday

The William Byrd softball team will be at Cave Spring Friday to take on the Knights in a non-district game. Byrd was scheduled to open the season Wednesday at Patrick Henry.

The Terriers will be led by three seniors who were key members of the 2019 state championship team, Maddy Tuck, Logan Pekala and Keely Hoal. Other seniors are Amber Vaughn, Verity Watkins and Elyssa Kitts.

Juniors who were All-Region last year are Haleigh Vaughn and Brooklyn Peters, and Sydney Blewitt is a sophomore with experience. Chloe Varney will be the ace on the mound, backed up by junior Olivia Lyle.

The Terriers' home opener will be next Tuesday, March 22, when the Terriers host Bassett.



Left to right; seniors Maddy Tuck, Logan Pekala and Keely Hoal are the last members of Byrd's 2019 state championship team still playing for the Terriers.

VM FILE PHOTOS

Titans too much for Byrd tennis teams in season openers

The William Byrd tennis teams were thrown right into the fire Tuesday when both the girls and boys took on traditionally strong Hidden Valley.

The girls lost 8-1 to the Titans. Byrd's number three doubles team of Timber Raines and Ashley Begasse pulled out the win.

"We played a few solid games, but we couldn't finish a match," said coach Kayla Mitchell-McCroskey. "We're hoping to keep playing good competition and getting better."

The boys were shut out by the Titans, 9-0. Alexandra Gunn is the new boys' tennis coach at Byrd.

Both teams are back in action Friday against Bassett, with the boys at home and the girls on the road.

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"New Look" Terriers open with a win over Carroll

You needed a program to know the players but there were none to be had when the William Byrd baseball team opened the season at Walthall Park Tuesday. Still, the more things change the more they remain the same as Byrd took a 5-3 win over Carroll County.

The game was the debut of new baseball coach Jason Taylor, who is also the school athletic director. Taylor replaces Neil Zimmerman, who was recognized prior to the game, and when the first pitch opened the season it was hard to recognize many of the players after the team graduated 11 seniors in the spring.

"The loss of 11 seniors will be hard to replace and experience is at a minimum," said Taylor. "We have two meaningful at bats and four innings pitched returning at the varsity level."

Taylor has been through more challenging times. He was the first baseball coach when Hidden Valley High School opened and everything was new. In fact, the first Titan team played on a sandlot field while the high school field was being constructed.

"My first year coaching I had zero varsity experience, zero seniors and no field," he said. "So, I am looking forward to this challenge. The pieces are here to have a successful season and the coaching staff will work hard to put it together."

Things got off to a great start Tuesday with an opening night win. Senior Trenton Sayers got the start on the mound and pitched the first three innings, fanning eight and allowing just two hits. Senior lefty Hunter Sipe pitched the next three, shutting out the Cavaliers with four strikeouts, and senior Ross Divers pitched the seventh, giving up three unearned runs.

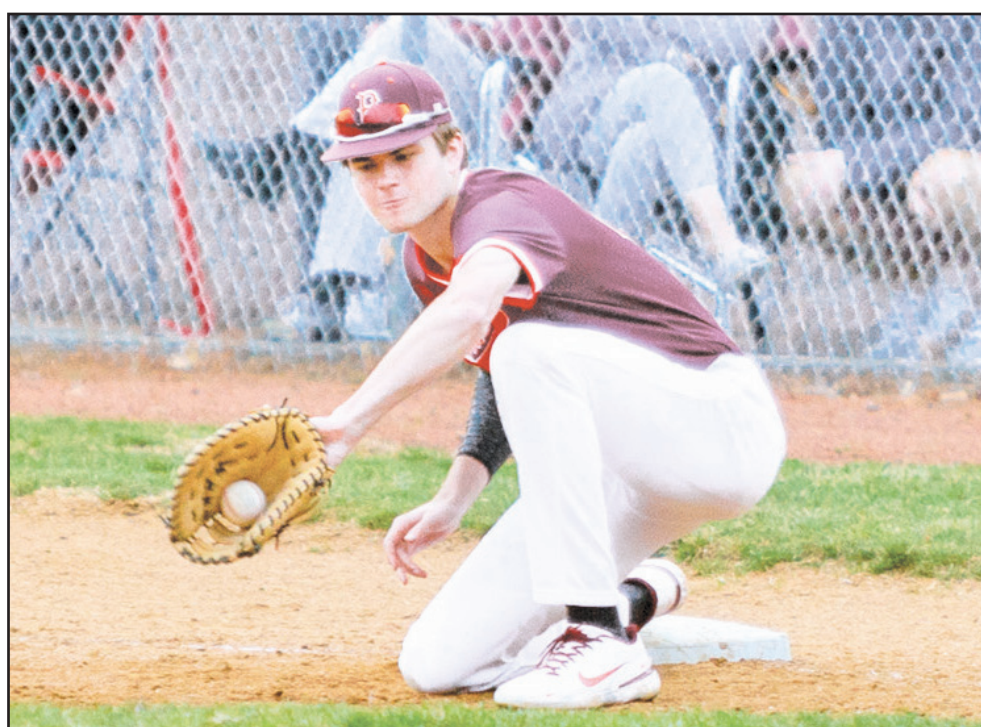
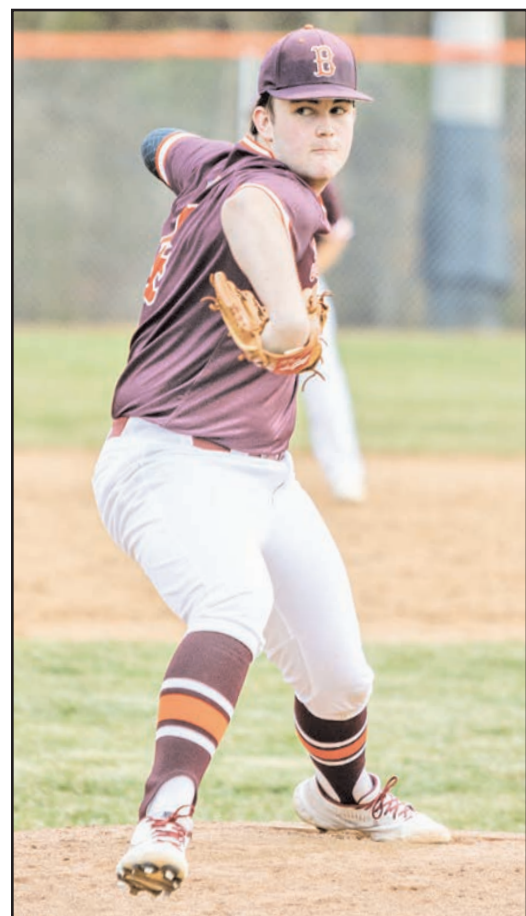
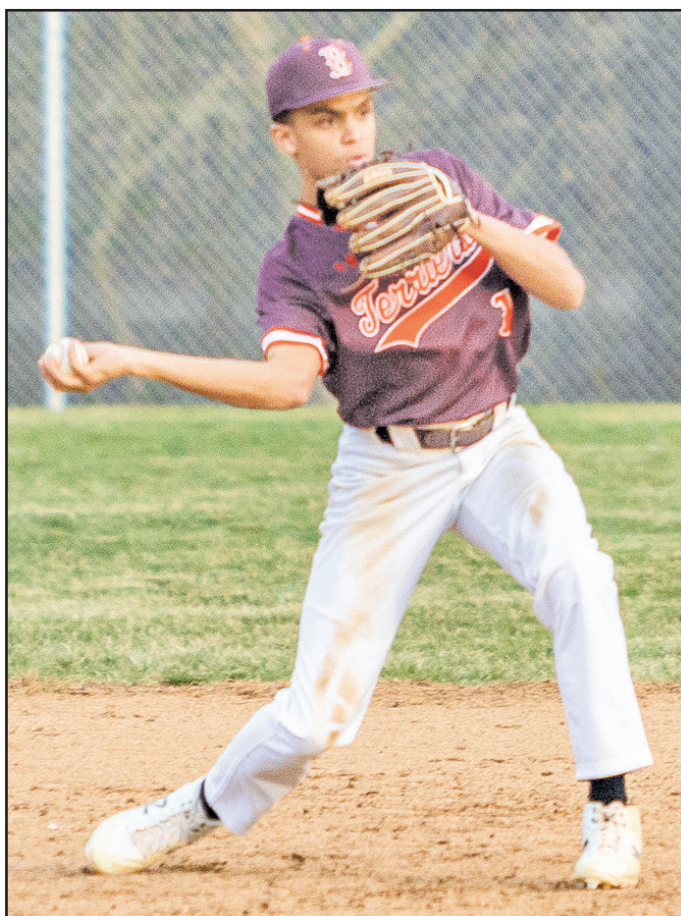
At the plate, junior James Purcell had three hits and two runs batted in to lead the Terriers. Junior Evan Mullen had two hits and an RBI and Ethan Hairston, Israel Hairston and Matthew Scavelli all had hits for Byrd.

"We have work to do and the players have done what we have asked so far," said Taylor. "Personally, I think it is most important to get a lot of at bats early in the year for a lot of players. That will be my philosophy for the first couple of weeks."

The Terriers will be back home Friday to host Cave Spring at 5 pm. Next Tuesday, March 22, they hit the road for the first time to play Bassett.

"The players are getting used to a little different coaching style," said Taylor. "I have high expectations for this group, as I've had for every team that I have ever coached."

"In the end it is just a baseball. It has 108 stitches and normally weighs five ounces. I am grateful and humbled to be coaching again. The game itself has been a big part of my life because of the people that I have crossed paths with. They make it special."



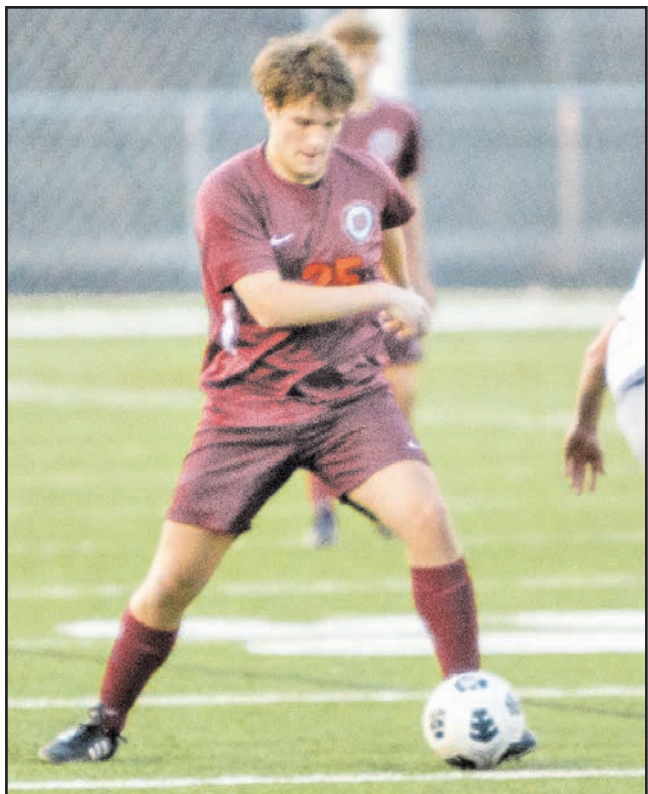
Top left, Wm. Byrd second baseman Ethan Hairston throws out a Carroll County runner. Above right, Hunter Sipe unwinds on the mound and, left, Ross Divers goes low to take a throw at first in Tuesday's opening day win at Walthall park.

PHOTOS BY JIM & REGINA DEVINNEY



Above, Byrd teammates congratulate Daniel Britts(#5) after his first half goal gave the Terriers an early lead in Tuesday's soccer win over Hidden Valley. Below left, Josh Roop controls the ball for the Byrdmen and, below right, Braden Crossan does some fancy footwork to create some space.

PHOTOS BY JIM & REGINA DEVINNEY



Boys soccer wins opener over HV

The William Byrd boys got off to a great start with a 5-1 win over Hidden Valley at Patterson Stadium Tuesday.

"It was great to get the season officially started," said coach Russell Dishman. "We had a solid week last week with the scrimmages and the boys have been doing well to adjust to new positions as we were making some moves and trying new things out. Even with all the experimentation last week, we are still trying a few things and seeing what works best for the group."

Daniel Britts got the Terriers on the scoreboard first with a solid shot from 25 yards out but Hidden Valley was able to tie the game before intermission. The second half was all Byrd after some adjustments at intermission.

"At half time we discussed that we needed to stick with what suited our style as we got a bit stagnant in the attack," said Dishman. "The guys were just waiting for balls to be played in to runs as opposed to creating opportunities."

About five minutes into the second half Ian Sigmon had a shot from about 25 yards out that hit the bottom of the crossbar and went in to get Byrd back on top. Landon Niday then scored nine minutes later after combining with Braden Crossan. Braden scored himself six minutes later after picking off a pass as Hidden Valley tried to build out. Finishing out the scoring was Elliott Gaines with about four minutes left as he was able to hammer the ball that had been played out after Krenar Siani had made a run into the box.

Bricen Lancaster had five saves in the goal for Byrd as the Terriers look to keep up the momentum Friday with a home game against Cave Spring.

"We have a solid core of returners as well as some new players who are making everyone better," said Dishman. "We are still trying to figure out the right combinations for players and the best system to put them in, but they are pushing themselves and each other and I think that is good for the group and the program."

Titans edge girls, 1-0

The Hidden Valley girls managed just one goal against William Byrd Tuesday but that was enough as the host Titans took a 1-0 win at Bruce Mahan Field.

The Titans scored a first half goal and made it hold up. Byrd had some chances but couldn't put one into the cage.

"We had a lot of chances and played well as a team, but unfortunately couldn't find the back of the net," said coach Molly Cox.

Kadence Fernatt had seven saves in goal Byrd. The jayvee

team took a 3-0 win in the first game of the jayvee-varsity doubleheader, and Cox has high hopes for the varsity.

"We only lost three seniors last year and are returning the majority of our starting lineup," she said. "We are hoping to have a strong showing in our out of district play to prepare for our district games."

The Terriers will be back in action Friday with a trip to Cave Spring. The home opener is next Tuesday, March 22, against Alleghany.