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# The Vinton Messenger

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## Introducing Gauntlet's youngest entrepreneur – Graham Fitzgerald

**Debbie Adams**  
[dadams@ourvalley.org](mailto:dadams@ourvalley.org)

Graham Knight Fitzgerald has some pretty profound thoughts and dreams for someone who just turned 6 years old. He is ready to take on the foster care system one T-shirt at a time. Graham has just completed this year's Gauntlet Business Program and Competition to find a way to reach his goal. He is the youngest entrepreneur enrolled in the Gauntlet this year. He was just 5 years old

when the sessions started in February – a kindergarten at Green Valley Elementary School in Roanoke County. His business is named GK's Dream; he is selling T-shirts to raise funds for foster children, "helping them secure their forever homes while spreading positivity." Current data indicates that there are approximately 424,000 children in the United States foster care system

and the average age of a foster child is 6 -1/2 years old. Graham stopped by the Vinton Municipal Building on April 19, right before the Town Council meeting, to be introduced to Mayor Brad Grose, Vice Mayor Sabrina McCarty, and Council members Laurie Mullins and Mike Stovall and to tell them about his dream to help foster kids. He brought along the T-shirts his business sells featuring



PHOTO BY DEBBIE ADAMS  
**Graham Fitzgerald is the youngest entrepreneur in this year's Gauntlet Business Program and Competition. His business makes T-shirts to benefit children in foster care. He was introduced to Vinton Town Council prior to the meeting on April 19. Shown left to right are Vinton Mayor Brad Grose, Graham Fitzgerald, and Councilman Mike Stovall.**

See **Entrepreneur**, page 6

## Lost WBHS Class Ring mystery solved

Sometime between 1977 and 1984, Michele Ann Weiss (now Walker) lost her 1977 William Byrd High School Class Ring at a rest stop along Interstate 81. She had been traveling to visit friends and family. Her ring was too large, so she took it off each time she washed her hands. Unfortunately, that time, she forgot to put it back on. A few miles down the highway she remembered and went back, but it was too late – the ring was gone. Here's the story she has shared: "My parents, sisters, and I moved to Vinton about 1975," Walker says. "I went to William Byrd my junior and senior years. When I was a student there, I was in DECA. I went to

school in the morning, was home in the afternoon, and worked evenings at Lendy's KFC in Vinton. "I can't say I remember a lot about school. I was only there for two years, and only half days, so it was hard to make friends. There were many nice people, some of whom gave me rides home because I had not gotten my license yet. "While employed there I met and dated a guy from Indiana. On several occasions we visited the state. The relationship failed, but my love for the Midwest did not. I met and married my husband of 33 years – Ed Walker. We have a daughter whom we live with and a son who lives and works in California.

"After high school graduation, I could not decide what to do with my life," said Walker. "I spent four or five years traveling to see family and friends. I lived in New Jersey (where I was born); my grandma and other family members lived there." As for the lost ring, it was found by Velma Merrifield, who had no way of knowing who it belonged to or where to return it – options were limited with no Internet, Facebook, or Googling. Her daughter-in-law Sue Merrifield says, "My late mother-in-law found the ring many years ago somewhere on a trip between New Hamp-

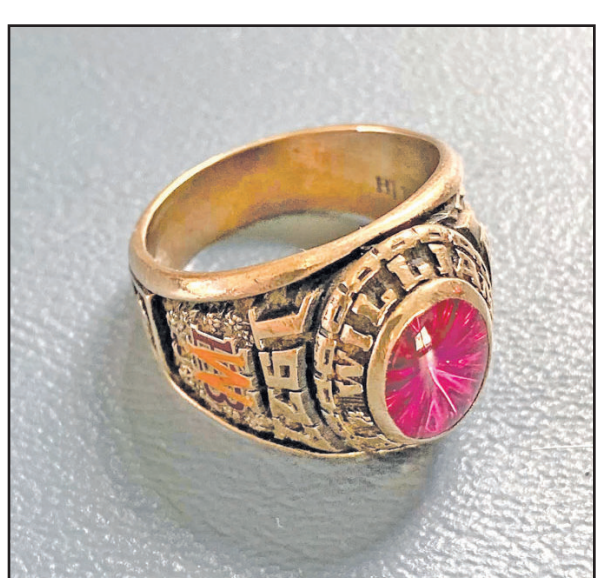


PHOTO BY SUE MERRIFIELD  
**Found: One William Byrd Class Ring, 1977, size 5 and 1/2.**

See **Class Ring**, page 4



### Schedule of Events

The 67th annual Dogwood Festival gets underway on Thursday, April 28 and runs through Sunday, May 1. Highlights include:

**Thursday, April 28**

- Cole Carnival, 6 to 10 p.m., Billy Byrd Field, Highland Avenue

**Friday, April 29**

- Concert by PIZZAZ Band at the Vinton Farmers' Market, 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., band takes the stage at 7 p.m., \$5 admission, bring seating, ID for beverage garden, no pets
- Cole Carnival, 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.

**Saturday, April 30**

**Dogwood Festival Day**

- Business Showcase Vendors and Festival Food Vendors, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Lee Avenue
- Craft Vendors, Vinton Baptist Church parking lot, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Antique Car Show, Thrasher Memorial UMC parking lot, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Kids Zone, Vinton Farmers' Market, 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
- Teen Space, on Pollard Street, next to Municipal Building, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- William Byrd HS Jazz Band, Farmers' Market, 10 a.m.
- Tim Martin and Brian Wheeling, Farmers' Market, 11 a.m.
- The McFlies, Farmers' Market, 12:00 noon
- Defy Gravity Cheer Team, Farmers' Market, 1 p.m.
- The McFlies – Farmers' Market, 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
- Mason Creek Band, Vinton Baptist Stage, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- Crowning of the Dogwood Queen, Municipal Building, 12 noon
- Vinton Dogwood Festival Parade, 2:30 p.m.
- Cole Carnival, 12 noon to 10 p.m.

**Sunday, May 1**

- Cole Carnival, 12 noon to 6 p.m.

## Dogwood Festival introduces new 'Teen Space'



PHOTO COURTESY OF AAA ENTERTAINMENT  
**A main feature of the new Teen Space at this year's Vinton Dogwood Festival will be the 24-foot rock climbing wall.**

The Vinton Dogwood Festival is introducing a new activity during its 67th annual event – a "Teen Space," to be located in the area of the Municipal Building and the Farmburguesa restaurant on Pollard Street. Visitors are welcome from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on April 30. Mineral Springs Baptist Church is hosting the new attraction. The pastor, Joe Gault, says the "Wow!" feature that will draw the crowds is a 24-foot rock climbing wall rented from AAA Entertainment. The wall can accommodate three teens at a time (with harnesses). Plans are for the wall

to be located either in the grassy lot next to the Farmburguesa restaurant or in the other grassy area to the left of the Municipal Building, depending upon space requirements once it arrives. Mineral Springs Baptist members, who usually sponsor and facilitate the Kids Zone at the Dogwood Festival, have switched their focus this year from young children to the youth – at the request of the Dogwood Festival Committee who saw a need to engage this particular age group, who are often neglected at events of this type. "Teen Space" has become a cooperative ef-

fort between the Festival Committee and Mineral Springs Baptist. Both have participated in the planning and funding. Pastor Gault has taken the lead on the new concept, assisted by Associate Pastor Patrick Speight and Mary Beth Layman from the Dogwood Committee. Volunteers from Mineral Springs will be in charge on site on Festival Day. In addition to the enormous climbing wall, the Teen Space also includes an "Escape Room," a trendy new concept (there's one at Valley View Mall) and the brainchild of Gault. Members of the church

have built two walls at their church which will join the other two walls already in place in the alcove at the front of the Municipal Building to form the room. When teens enter the Escape Room, they will immerse themselves in the narrative and experience and use various clues to solve a murder mystery. Groups of five or six will enter the enclosure at one time and will receive scenarios, hints, clues, puzzles, riddles, and more to help them solve the mystery. There will be an actor stationed inside to assist. The murder mystery is geared toward teens. Parents will be able to observe from outside with a monitor. The experience will last about 15-20 minutes. Groups can register ahead of time and then will be given a 15-minute warning that their turn is coming up – like being on a Wait List. This will hopefully reduce congestion in the Municipal Building area. If that's not enough to draw a crowd, the Teen Space will also include game consoles (Nintendo, Sega, etc.) on tables in the drive-through area next to the Municipal Building. Youth can compete, even against parents. Scores will be recorded throughout the day with prizes at the end for the highest scores. Pastor Gault says Mineral Springs Baptist hopes to serve the community, especially its youth, with this year's new Teen Space. Members hope the teenagers have a thoroughly great time. He says this was not just a team effort, but a churchwide effort to plan, organize, and facilitate a special place for teens with a variety of interests.



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# Vinton Dogwood Festival Committee thanks sponsors for support

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**• Mountain View Real Estate (Tim Greenway) • Musselwhite & Associates**  
**• Vinton Appliance • Cornerstone Antiques • Don's Cab-inns**

The Vinton Dogwood Festival has endured and flourished since 1956 due to support from the community – whether through monetary support, in-kind services, or volunteering of time.

The very first Dogwood Festival was funded by a donation of \$500 from Vinton Town Council, \$750 from the Vinton Chamber of Commerce, and \$100 from the Vinton Woman's Club, plus some smaller donations from individuals. That community support has increased through the years to include many local businesses,

organizations, and generous Vintonites.

“On behalf of the Vinton Dogwood Festival Board, I would like to say thank you to the following businesses for their continued support and generosity this year,” said Karen Obenchain, Dogwood Fundraising and Sponsorship Committee Chair. “As the saying goes, ‘It takes a village.’ Well, it takes a village to put on the Dogwood Festival. We could not do it without the support from our local businesses. We are sincerely grateful and look forward to continuing

this tradition for years to come. It gives us the opportunity to bring visitors to the Town of Vinton and showcase our town and the businesses we are so proud of.”

Heartfelt thanks go to those who have contributed monetarily as well as in-kind services:

- Community Sponsors – Platinum Level:**
- Town of Vinton
  - Roanoke County
  - Community Foundation Serving Western Virginia Melva P. Jones Fund
  - WFXR Fox TV

• HomeTrust Bank

- Community Sponsors – Gold Level:**
- Cross, Lavinder, Quinn & Park Family Dentistry
  - Oakey's
  - Food Lion
  - Jeff and Susan Teass
  - The Vinton Messenger

- Community Sponsors – Silver Level:**
- The Hemp Mill
  - Freedom First
  - Bank of Botetourt
  - Evergreen Memorial (Mountain View Cemetery)

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- Mountain View Real Estate (Tim Greenway)
- Vinton Appliance
- Cornerstone Antiques
- Donald Harrison, Don's Cab-Inns
- Mayor Brad Grose and Mrs. Debby Grose

## Dogwood Festival receives generous donation from Melva P. Jones fund

**Debbie Adams**  
dadams@ourvalley.org

The Vinton Dogwood Festival happens each year only due to the generosity of its sponsors. The festival is funded entirely by donations, sponsorships, and fundraising events, along with the fees from concessions, vendors, and the carnival.

This year the Community Foundation Serving Western Virginia Melva P. Jones Fund contributed over \$2,100 to the Dogwood Festival for the purpose of funding the Kids' Zone at the Vinton Farmers' Market on April 30.

The check was presented to Dogwood Festival President Beth Abbott and Karen Obenchain,

chair of the Vinton Dogwood Fundraising and Sponsorship Committee by Community Foundation President and CEO Alan Ronk at the Vinton Farmers' Market on April 25.

According to the Community Foundation, “Melva Payne Jones was a long-time resident of Vinton. She was a 50-year

member of the Thursday Morning Music Club, having joined in 1942. She taught piano and organ and directed music in the Roanoke Valley for more than fifty years.

“Melva received her training and education at William Byrd High School, in the Class of 1941. She then attended the Shenandoah Conservatory of Music and later studied at such prestigious places as the Peabody Conservatory of Music, the Pius Conservatory of Liturgical Music, Northwestern University, and the St. Louis Institute of Music at Washington University.

“Melva was president of the Thursday Morning Music Club for two terms in the 1970s. She also was active with the Strings and Bows and youth groups of the club. In 1987, Melva received the Perry F. Kendig Award from Roanoke College, which was sponsored by the Roanoke Valley Arts Council.”

According to “Vinton History 1884-1984,” Jones lived in a historic home on Washington Avenue in Vinton. Ronk says the Community Foundation donated her baby grand piano to the Vinton War Memorial for its ballroom many years ago, where it is still in use.

“Melva's love for music and the arts and her strong interest in helping and teaching others will be perpetuated forever through the Melva P. Jones Fund for Music and Art,” said Ronk, who has been the first and only president of the Community Foundation since 1990.

This permanently endowed fund makes annual grants to music and arts programs and organizations, with a preference for those which benefit the citizens of Vinton – such as this year's gift to the Vinton Dogwood Festival.

“Since its establishment, her fund has awarded hundreds of thousands of dollars in grants back to her home community in her name and supported the educational dreams of many young men and women through college scholarships,” said Michele Eberly, Director of Grants and Donor Engagement for the Community Foundation.

Each year, Eberly seeks out organizations with art and music projects and

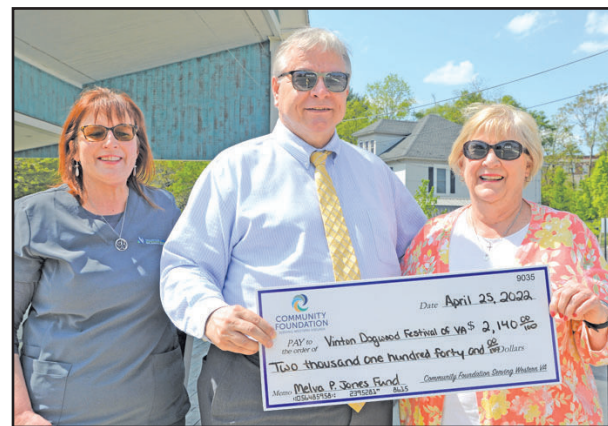


PHOTO BY DEBBIE ADAMS

**Alan Ronk, President and CEO of the Community Foundation Serving Western Virginia, presented a generous donation to the Vinton Dogwood Festival on April 25. He is shown with Karen Obenchain, Committee Chair for Fundraising and Sponsorships (right) and Dogwood Festival President Beth Abbott.**

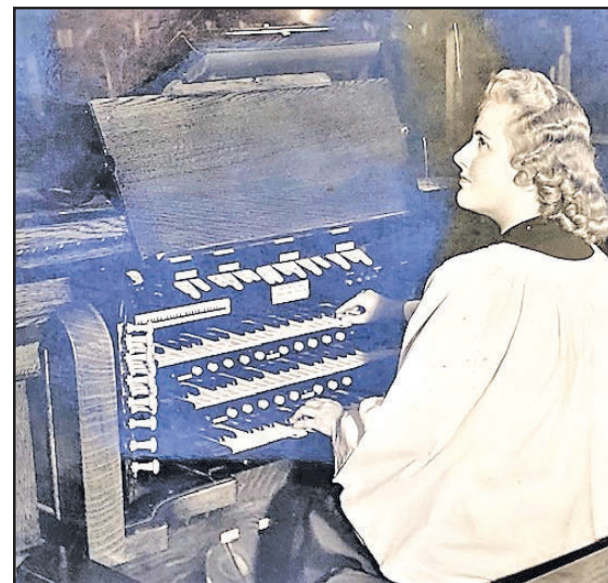


PHOTO FROM THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION SERVING WESTERN VIRGINIA

**Melva Payne Jones served at Belmont Baptist, where she was the organist for 11 years.**

other needs and offers funding from the Melva P. Jones endowment. Herman L. Horn and W.E. Cundiff Elementary Schools have been recipients in recent years. She coordinates many of the grant programs and scholarships and works closely with donors, nonprofit organizations, and students.

For many years, Vintonites Barbara Dillon, Elma Swain, and Frances Coleman served on the board and helped make decisions on the awarding of funds.

The Community Foundation has been helping individuals, families, nonprofit organizations, and others establish permanent charitable legacies since 1988. The website says that they “enable generous people to easily give back to the communities they love.” They have been described as “a central hub for community philanthropy.”

The foundation administers over 400 named endowment funds with

total assets and donations exceeding \$100 million and works to connect philanthropic resources with important community needs. Each year the foundation distributes about \$4 million in grants and scholarships. The organization serves the cities of Roanoke, Salem, Lexington and Martinsville, the counties of Roanoke, Botetourt, Craig, Floyd, Franklin, Henry, and Alleghany, and other surrounding areas.

The funding for the Kids' Zone at the Farmers' Market will enable children to enjoy – for free – many activities during the Dogwood Festival on April 30, providing everything from large inflatables to a petting zoo, to crafts, a Lego building station, photo booth, STEM Soap Snakes and Seltzer Poppers, a prize walk, and more. The kids' area will be supervised by volunteers from Lighthouse Bible Church in Vinton, home of Lighthouse Christian Academy.



“The generous donation from Rosie's will help Southwest Virginia Ballet continue to provide outreach programs in our area. Thank you so much for your support not only of our organization but also of our students and community.”

**Pedro Szalay, Artistic Director**  
Southwest Virginia Ballet  
www.svballet.org



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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.



# Dogwood Court in horse-drawn carriages will lead the parade

**Debbie Adams**  
dadams@ourvalley.org

Ten beautiful young women in gorgeous horse-drawn carriages will be leading the 2022 Vinton Dogwood Festival Parade on April 30. This will be the second year that the newly crowned Dogwood Queen and her Court (all seniors at William Byrd High School) will be riding through the streets of Vinton in carriages from the Lexington Carriage Company.

During the 67 years the Dogwood Festival has been in existence, in most years the women on the Dogwood Court and the Queen rode in chairs on a special float. In the first year of the pandemic, they rode in convertibles – and they made up the entire parade themselves – driving down Washington Avenue from the Vinton War Memorial, then circling back up, and in the month of July because the traditional April parade had been cancelled.

In 2021, there was still no official parade, but the Dogwood Queen was crowned at the Municipal Building. Afterwards, she and her court boarded horse-drawn carriages in front of the building and circled the downtown streets twice, led by the

Vinton Police and a carriage company attendant on foot.

Vinton Dogwood Festival President Beth Abbott started the tradition last year with a call to Shana Layman who owns Lexington Carriage Company. And in 2022, the full parade is on again and the Dogwood Queen and Court will lead off the parade in two of their carriages.

The Dogwood Queen will be crowned at the Vinton Municipal Building at noon on April 30. The parade with the Dogwood Court and carriages will kick-off from the Vinton War Memorial at 2:30, proceed down Washington Avenue, make a left onto Maple Street, a right onto Cleveland Avenue, another right onto Pollard Street, and then left onto Gus Nicks Boulevard, ending at the Billy Byrd apartments and field.

One of the carriages is a “limo” which will transport six girls; the other will carry the remaining four. All are “convertibles” with tops available in case of rain.

The carriage company was established in 1985 to support the historic downtown district with narrated tours through the business district, college campuses, and his-

toric residential area of Lexington.

Layman started out working as a driver for eight years for the original owner and then bought the business in 2004. She will be one of the drivers in the Dogwood Parade. Layman says she attended the University of Virginia and started out in the medical field but kept coming back to the horses – each year whenever the weather got warm, she heard the call.

She says the carriage company is basically a family business. The horses are pastured on her mother’s farm; her sister, nieces, and nephews drive the carriages. Her husband goes along to assist with larger events, which now include local parades, festivals, weddings, seasonal events (like Roanoke’s Dickens of a Christmas), birthday and anniversary celebrations, and more.

Lexington Carriage currently owns five pairs of experienced teams, all used to working in crowds. Each carriage is pulled by a matched-horse team – this year Arron and Abe, and Jenny and Jake. The company does not breed horses themselves but looks elsewhere for matched pairs of horses that are related. Arron and Abe are broth-

ers; Jenny and Jake are brother and sister. (Other pairs are Nip and Tuck, Woody and Weepy, Maxx and Mutt.)

Arron and Abe are Haflingers, the smallest breed of draft horses and bred in the Alps. Layman says they are not only beautiful but have a great demeanor for their work. They have been with her for eight years. Three of her teams are the blond Haflingers.

Jenny and Jake are Percherons, a French draft breed frequently used in Amish communities for planting and plowing, and also known for their calm temperament and

stamina. These two have been with Lexington Carriage for 20 years.

Layman says her horses are thoroughly spoiled – which you can ascertain by a glimpse at the Lexington Carriage Company Facebook page. There are pictures of the horses frolicking in pastures, in addition to performing at events. Their treat of choice is a Pop-Tart – any flavor. In fact, Layman will be warning the girls on the Dogwood Court to keep their flowers out of reach – the horses will munch on most anything.

The horses and carriages will be transported to Vinton via trailers.

Once they arrive, the carriages will be decorated with dogwood blooms by Friends of Nancy Horne, Roanoke County Commissioner of the Revenue.

The horses wear diapers in the parade, so there is no mess to clean up along the streets. Layman says that is a law in Lexington.

Lexington Carriage Company operates historic tours each year from April through October. They are available for special events throughout the year. Check out the website at <http://www.lexcarriage.com/home.html> and the Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/lexcarriage>.



PHOTO BY DEBBIE ADAMS

**The Lexington Carriage Company is returning to the Vinton Dogwood Festival for its second year, this year transporting the Dogwood Queen and Court through the streets of Vinton in the Dogwood Parade. This scene is from Dogwood Festival 2021.**

## SPOTLIGHT ON TOWN OF VINTON STAFF

This month’s Spotlight on Town Staff features Kevin Orange who has been employed by the Town of Vinton since July 11, 2005, almost 17 years. He is a Wastewater System Operator III in the Public Works Department.

Orange was also recognized by Vinton Town Council and Public Works Director Bo Herndon in July 2021 for his actions, along with those of three other employees, as they were dealing with a water main break. He and his co-workers assisted Pat Davidson, whose car had broken down on Mountain View Road. They got her out of the car, out of the roadway, and safely on her way.

Councilwoman Laurie Mullins said at the time, “This is just one incident; Public Works employees go above and beyond everyday” for the citizens of Vinton.

Each year Orange and other military veterans are recognized by the town on Veterans Day. Orange served in the U.S. Army from 1982 through 1986 with the rank of E-4. He was in light infantry and stationed in Georgia and Kentucky.

“The Vinton Public Works Department touches the lives of thousands of people every day in a very professional manner,” says Mayor Brad Grose. “The dedicated individuals in

the department enhance the quality of life in Vinton by maintaining all the systems that provide safety, convenience, recreation, and a pleasing appearance in our Town. We are truly blessed to have such skilled, devoted people in the Vinton Public Works Department.”

The Town of Vinton and The Vinton Messenger are partnering to put the spotlight on Town of Vinton employees during the month of their birthdays. The town is proud to have these individuals on staff and want to make the community aware of who is “behind the scenes” making the town look great and operate so successfully.



Kevin Orange

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE TOWN OF VINTON

## Bonsack/Blue Ridge Ruritans Chicken BBQ scheduled for May 21

The Bonsack/Blue Ridge Ruritan Club will have a chicken barbecue fundraiser

from 4:30-6 p.m. on Saturday, May 21.

The drive-through event (no

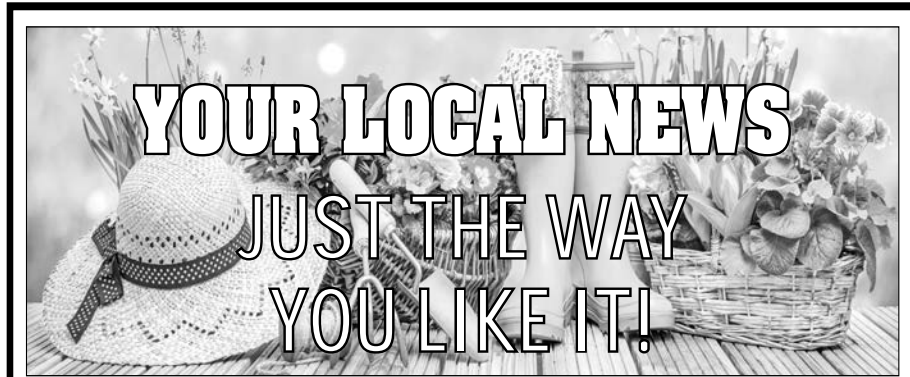
dine in) will be on the back lot at Bonsack United Methodist Church at 4493 Bonsack

Road.

Tickets are \$15 for half a chicken, baked beans, slaw,

roll and a beverage. Contact

Lou Rader at 540-400-7079 to reserve tickets.



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**CLUES ACROSS**

- 1. North American people
- 6. Chinese surname
- 10. Fit in at the last minute
- 14. “Very” in musical terminology
- 15. Underwater displays
- 17. Crosby’s bandmates
- 19. Belong to he
- 20. Informed about the latest trends (archaic)
- 21. Sequences of alternating turns
- 22. Genus of grasses
- 23. Satisfy
- 24. Petty quarrel
- 26. Made level
- 29. Ruler of Iran
- 31. Historical region of Syria
- 32. Food suitable for babies
- 34. Something to lend
- 35. Zone of oceanic trenches

- 37. Philippine island
- 38. Domesticated animal
- 39. Plant of the lily family
- 40. Bluish green
- 41. \_\_ Tomei, actress
- 43. Without (French)
- 45. Lilly and Manning are two
- 46. Apply pressure to
- 47. Divide in half
- 49. Bad deed
- 50. Don’t know when yet
- 53. Hollywood’s greatest honor
- 57. Aiming to exhort
- 58. Faked
- 59. A way to pierce
- 60. Midway between north-east and east
- 61. Points

**CLUES DOWN**

- 1. Chop up
- 2. \_\_ Spumante (Italian wine)

- 3. Egyptian goddess
- 4. Split pulses
- 5. Afflict
- 6. Type of area rug
- 7. Tide
- 8. Affirmative
- 9. Sudden change
- 10. One picked
- 11. Debauched man
- 12. Stiff bristles
- 13. Famous arena
- 16. Established rules and methods
- 18. Injection
- 22. Father
- 23. Protein-rich liquids
- 24. He delivers gifts
- 25. Advanced degree
- 27. Fencing swords
- 28. Chinese mountain range
- 29. Shaft horsepower (abbr.)

- 30. Precursor to hemoglobin
- 31. Much \_\_ about nothing
- 33. Compound fabric (abbr.)
- 35. A way to act slowly on
- 36. Ottoman military commanders
- 37. Popular kids’ network
- 39. Hard compound
- 42. Sympathize with
- 43. Northeast college
- 44. Blood group
- 46. Frosted
- 47. Turn away
- 48. Benefit
- 49. Dry or withered
- 50. Bangladeshi monetary unit
- 51. Reproduced
- 52. Contributes
- 53. Thrust horse power (abbr.)
- 54. Wear
- 55. Promotes retention of water (abbr.)
- 56. Very small

# Class Ring from page 1

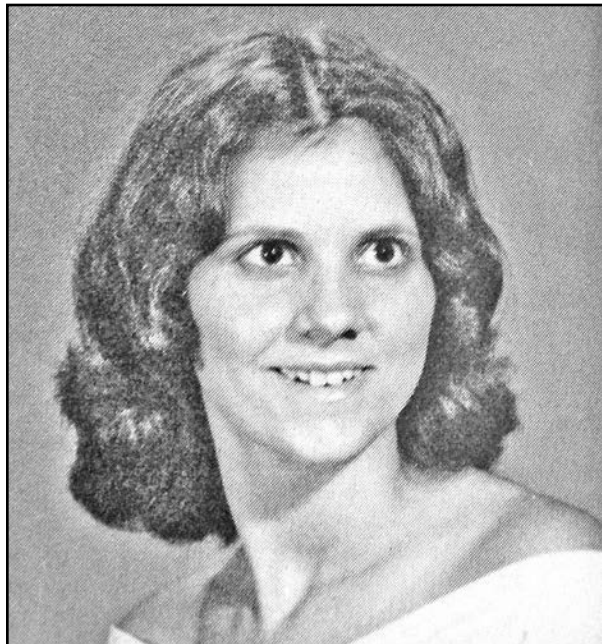


PHOTO FROM THE VINTON HISTORY MUSEUM  
**Owner of the WBHS Class Ring Michele Weiss Walker**



PHOTO BY SUE MERRIFIELD  
**Finder of WBHS Class Ring Velma Merrifield**



SUBMITTED PHOTO

**Sue Merrifield, who reunited Michele Weiss with her 1977 WBHS Class Ring.**

shire and Florida. There was no way to search back then. The ring was put away for decades. The family had no idea even where William Byrd High School was located. We came across the ring recently and thought we would try Facebook.”

On April 17, Merrifield posted a photo of the class ring on Facebook with the message, “Trying to find the owner of a girl’s 1977 William Byrd class ring. It has initials, but we cannot access a 1977 yearbook to narrow it down. Any suggestions?”

The family located some William Byrd alumni groups, which led to the Vinton History Museum Facebook pages. The responses poured in – with so many Byrd alumni brainstorming to find the owner of the ring, and Walker with no idea of what was going on.

Merrifield identified the initials engraved inside the band – MAW – and the search became more intense. The lost and found ring became a hot topic on not just the WBHS Alumni Facebook pages, but on the Vinton History and Memories page as well.

The History Museum owns an almost complete collection of WBHS Black Swan yearbooks

and took a look at the 1977 volume looking for names with the initials “MAW.”

Some thought it might be a man’s ring, but Merrifield identified it as definitely belonging to a woman, size 5 and 1/2 – “the photo just makes it look larger.”

Class of ’77 alumni Karen Jackson picked up the ball and kept the Facebook exchanges going, knowing that even with the Internet it might become frustrating for Merrifield searching from New Hampshire.

Jackson also called The Vinton Messenger, shared the story from Facebook with Editor Matt de Simone, and asked for assistance in the search – and for an article when the mystery was solved, but most of the legwork had been done by then.

The newspaper checked with the high school for information and was told by Chris Ayers, administrative assistant in the Counseling Department, “We only have current students and the previous year’s graduates at the school level now.” She referred inquiries to Cindy Pickeral, administrative analyst for School Counseling and Student Records at Central Office, who found no information on Weiss on file either.

Strangely enough, Vinton

History Museum Executive Director Judy Cunningham had just received copies of the missing 1976 and 1977 WBHS yearbooks from a patron, Caroline Forbes, which enabled her to do some research and pick out the names that might fit, including Melinda Whitlow, Myra Williamson, and even Mary Anne Wood who graduated with the Class of 1976. Mary Ann Wood Craighead noticed the post and informed everyone the ring was not hers. Alumni Terri Phlegar looked in the 1977 yearbook and found a Michele Ann Weiss as a senior that year.

Finally, the list was narrowed to that one person – Michele Ann Weiss. Through more Facebook messaging, Merrifield was able to find contact information for Michele’s mother.

Merrifield talked with Michele’s mom and then with Michele and the ring has now been put in the mail to Indiana.

“My mom, Marjorie Weiss, sold the Vinton house after Dad died and moved to Southwest Roanoke,” Walker says. “I return to Roanoke to visit my mom, my sister and nieces and nephews about twice a year. Funny thing is, I was supposed to be there over Easter but was too sick to travel. I noticed that Easter was

the day Susan Packard Merrifield posted the ring on Facebook.”

The story continues, “Mom is good friends with Judy Russ. Christelle Russ Worley and Charlotte Carver asked Judy to let mom know everyone was looking for me. Only four days later the mystery was solved.”

Walker says that she moved to Indiana in 1984 and once in a while would think about the lost ring, but not lately. When her mother called about the ring, Michele was surprised to find out it had been found, and on a day when she really needed some good news. She had been experiencing some health problems and on the day her mother called she had been having some tests, but “this afternoon’s news was fun. I am amazed, laughing, and crying.”

“I think the funniest part and the most embarrassing is that because the ring was too big, I would take it off to wash my hands – so I wouldn’t lose it. Then it is lost for 45 years!”

Once Weiss was located, alumni Karen Jackson commented, “This whole experience has been mind-blowing! The power of teamwork, and all of us working for a greater good. It takes me back 45 years ago when we graduated!”

Jackson calls Merrifield a “living hero! As my pastor says, ‘People don’t have to be nice’ and you went above and beyond. In a world where people would just as soon step over you when they see you fall, thank you for reminding us that humanity is alive and well. I know your mother-in-law is smiling down with pride! You both could have just chucked the ring.”

Sue Merrifield’s husband summed it up, “Well, Mom would be happy” that the mystery was finally solved after so many years.

Walker sent a message to all who assisted in the search, “Thank you to all who helped with this real-life mystery” and sent another tidbit of information in a follow-up email.

“Just got off the phone with my mom and she tells me a story about her high school class ring,” Walker said. “She went to PK Yonge High School in Gainesville, Fla. In the 1950s she went to a party with her sister. Someone at the party asks to see her ring. She takes it off and hands it to them; they never return the ring. We had a good laugh, mother and daughter, young and doing silly things. Sometimes life is better than fiction.”

**The Vinton Messenger** USPS 660-020  
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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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## Drug Take Back Day at Lake Drive Plaza on April 30

National Prescription Drug Take Back Day will be held on April 30 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The Vinton event will be held at the Lake Drive Plaza Kroger parking lot at 915 Hardy Road, Vinton.

The National Prescription Drug

Take Back Day aims to provide a safe, convenient, and responsible means of disposing of prescription drugs, while also educating the general public about the potential for abuse of medications.

Too often, unused prescription drugs find their way into the wrong

hands. That’s dangerous and often tragic. That’s why it was great to see thousands of folks from across the country clean out their medicine cabinets and turn in – safely and anonymously – a record amount of prescription drugs.

### Got Drugs?

Turn in your unused or expired medication for safe disposal  
Saturday, April 30, 2022  
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.  
Lake Drive Plaza  
Kroger Parking Lot

# 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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## PEOPLE, PLACES AND THINGS

Our family reunion was held last weekend at the Charles Hill Senior Building. Family members came from all over to celebrate: Troy, Ginger and Leighton Huffman, Valerie Bell Hendricks, Lindsey Bell Wells and Amber from Richmond; Buddy Bell, Naomi Roberts (N.C.); David and Dahl Brown, Justin,

Hollyn and Gunner Brown, Trent Huffman ( N.Y.); Sally, Mel and granddaughter Olivia

Griffith (Lynchburg); Drake and Hannah Lewis, Steve and Tara Jones, Angie and Greg Boitnott, Abbie Lewis (soon to be graduate from Roanoke College), Greg Chewning, Karen, Tad and Laura Robertson (Covington); Kelley and Steve Helles, Austin Alzuro (S.C.). We so missed Mom – she was in the hospital and missed it all!

### Angie Chewning

Filling in for Bootie



SUBMITTED PHOTO

## Vote for WBHS art students in VANS competition

William Byrd High School art students have been selected as one of the top 50 finalists of the VANS Custom Culture Contest and a chance to win \$50,000 for the school. WBHS is the only school in Virginia to make Top 50.

William Byrd High School art students Morgan Kelly, Kamryn Brown, Joseph Spickard, Julie Satrah, Samantha Shrader, Lilly Kroese, McKenna Paradis, Emma Gordon, Briar Boksa, and Grace Owen are among the TOP 50 finalists.

The students created custom VANS highlighting the greater Roanoke Valley (including Bedford) as well as a tribute to VANS co-founder Paul Van Doren.

Public online voting is underway and will con-

tinue through May 6 at <https://customculture.vans.com>. Anyone can vote once per day.

- Go to <https://customculture.vans.com/>
- Click: VOTE HERE
- Type in your email

and go to William Byrd High School

- Cast your vote—once every day



PHOTO COURTESY ROANOKE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

**William Byrd High School art students have been selected as one of the top 50 finalists of the VANS Custom Culture Contest and a chance to win \$50,000 for the school. The community is urged to vote for them – and more than once.**

## Vinton Farmers' Market now open for the season

The Vinton Farmers' Market opened on April 16 and is now open Tuesdays through Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. It will be open through the fall.

Fresh fruits and vegetables, bedding plants, and hanging baskets are now on sale by Rueda Plants and Produce from

Gabby and Kayla Rueda, who have been the main anchors of the market for many years.

Community Programs Director Chasity Barbour, who is in charge of the market in Vinton, says that in addition to the Ruedas, there will be a number of other vendors this

year with crafts, meat sales, bakery items, and more.

Find updates on Facebook at Rueda Plants and Produce at <https://www.facebook.com/Rueda-Plants-and-Produce-109783661444327/> or at <https://www.facebook.com/InVinton>.



The Vinton Farmers' Market has reopened for the season.

PHOTO BY DEBBIE ADAMS

## Vinton History Museum open extra hours during Dogwood Festival

The Vinton History Museum will be open Friday, April 29 and Saturday, April 30 during the Vinton Dogwood Festival. Stop by between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. for a visit or a tour of the thousands of local artifacts.

Vinton Tapestry throws,

past William Byrd High School yearbooks, Friendship Baskets and other items from the "Gift Niche" will be available. There will also be a large assortment of books available free of charge.

The "Thrasher Quilters" will be at the museum on

Saturday with beautiful wall hangings and table toppers, as well as lap quilts.

The Vinton History Museum is located at the corner of Jackson Avenue and Maple Street in downtown Vinton just across from the Vinton Library back entrance.

CROSSWORD ANSWERS												
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## Beyond Books

### Beyond Books for May 2022

They say April showers bring May flowers, and here at the Vinton Library we are prepared to enjoy all the nature our community has to offer.

To start, on Tuesday, May 3 at 2 p.m., we will have a virtual program on Nature Apps. If you enjoy birds, plants, and all things outdoors, be sure to join us to find out about these great apps you can use on your smartphone during all your outdoor explorations.

Once you've learned all there is to know about your outside surroundings, you can come by our Plant Swap on Saturday, May 28 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., to bring the outdoors in. Spread smiles by sharing plants—bring in a plant to swap for another one brought in by a neighbor. Please bring only healthy plants in a container, as well as a box to take your new plant home in; we will also have plant stakes for labeling.

Attention all Star Wars fans! This month we are having a special May the Fourth Event. On Wednesday, May 4 from 4-5 p.m. drop by to join in the fun. We will have an awesome Star Wars backdrop for taking fun photos, Star Wars themed trivia for teens and adults, as well as snacks and crafts for all ages. Don't forget to enter the drawing for awesome Star Wars prizes.

Celebrate Pet Month with us! When you come by our drive-thru to pick up your items, get a paw-licious Milkbone for your dog or a Temptations treat to take home to your cat. We will also have Bark Bags with instructions and materials for making a simple dog toy. Kits also include a Milkbone treat, a simple treat recipe to make at home, books for dog lovers available at <https://www.roanokecountyva.gov/library> and ideas for fun things to do with your dog to celebrate National Pet Month. For the kitties we will have a Cat Snack kit with the supplies and instructions for growing cat grass for your feline friend.

We're partnering with the Better Business Bureau and presenter Riley Ginger to bring you a program on Military, Veterans, and Scams. Register to learn more about the common scams that target members of the military and veterans on Thursday, May 5 at 11 a.m.

In case you missed it last month, we will have another Medicare 101 session on Monday, May 16 at 11 a.m. Learn important information and dates for anyone over the age of 65 and how to tailor your Medicare plan to meet your individual needs.

On Saturday, May 7 at 3 p.m. NAMI-Roanoke Valley will be here to give a Mental Health Awareness Talk with an overview of common diagnoses as well as mental health services available for help in the Roanoke area.

This month the Vinton Book Club will be discussing Maus by Art Spiegelman on Thursday, May 5 at 3 p.m. The As the Page Turns book club will discuss The Maidens by Alex Michaelides on Wednesday, May 11 at 2

p.m. Also continuing this month, we will host Open Bridge for experienced players every Tuesday from 1-4 p.m.

The Roanoke Valley Dulcimers will meet Saturday, May 21 from 10:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

We will also continue to have classic Saturday Morning Cartoons every Saturday from 10:30 a.m.-12 p.m. on the patio.

DMV Connect will be at the library on Tuesday, May 31 through Thursday, June 2 from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. (closed 1-2 p.m. for lunch). No appointment necessary.

Children's Book Week is from Monday, May 2 through Saturday, May 7! Kids can celebrate during the first week of the month by drawing a picture of their favorite picture book cover and/or character—stop by the library to pick up a drawing sheet. All art will be displayed in the children's area, and participants will be entered into a drawing to win a prize. On Saturday, May 7, bring the kids to the children's area to make a special Mother's Day Card for mom, while supplies last.

Be sure to register for this month's Saturday on Saturday, May 28 from 2:30-3:30 p.m., along with visiting author Valerie Archual, who will be here with her rescue cat, Roger, whom she rescued from RCACP during a previous Saturday event.

Did you know that Roanoke County Public Library started a Discord Server for Teens? Visit our website for a link to join our server and a calendar for events where you can take part in all kinds of fun with other teens in the area.

Also continuing this month, kids can come to Lego Play on Wednesday, May 25 at 4 p.m.; Teen Gaming will take place in the teen center on Monday, May 23 from 5:30-7:30 p.m.; Junior Makers Club's theme this month is "candy science" and will take place on Wednesday, May 18 from 4 to 5 p.m. Register for Super Saturday: Super Kicks Ninja Training, which will be on Saturday, May 14 from 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Jammie Time (ages 3-5) will continue on Tuesdays at 6 p.m.; Early Start Club (ages 0-18 months) on Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m.; and Family Storytime (ages 3-5) on Wednesdays at 11:30 a.m.

May Kids Wonder Packs: Blooming Paper Flowers

May Kids Take and Creates:

Week of May 2: Spaceship Craft

Week of May 9: STEM Tangrams

Week of May 16: Elephant Craft

Week of May 23: Bowtie Butterflies

May Teen Take and Create: Macramé Keychains

May Adult Take and Create: Watercolor Hummingbirds

Please be sure to check [rocolibrary.org](http://rocolibrary.org) for any registration requirements for all programs.

By Vinton Branch Library Assistant Molly Meador

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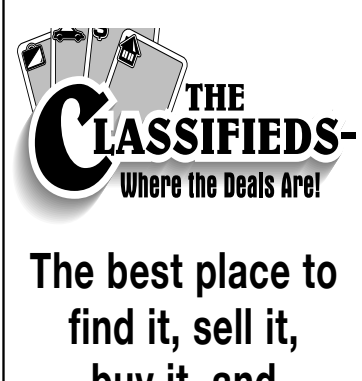


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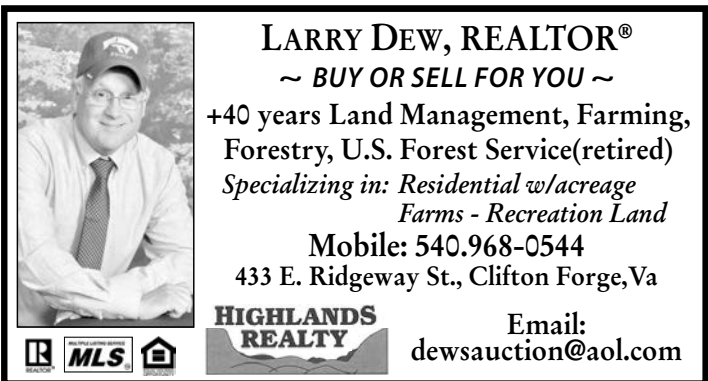
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# SPORTS

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Left, William Byrd's Sam Martin(left in white jersey) and Camryn Sigafoes(#5) battle for a loose ball in last week's lacrosse win over Franklin County. Right, Byrd keeper Haley Firebaugh stops a point-blank shot for the Terriers.



PHOTOS BY BRIAN HOFFMAN

## Byrd lacrosse teams will host Christiansburg in doubleheader tonight *Girls score 13 unanswered goals to run away from Franklin County for big win Monday*

The William Byrd lacrosse teams will play host to Christiansburg tonight in a doubleheader at Robert A. Patterson Stadium. The girls will open the twinbill at 5:30 pm, followed by the boys at approximately 7:15 pm.

The boys have been idle in the past week but the girls picked up a big win Monday at home against Franklin County. The Terriers broke up a game that was tied 4-4 at the half and held the visiting Eagles scoreless after intermission for a 16-4 win.

Franklin County scored the first two goals of the game and led 4-3 with time running out in the half when Byrd's Trinity Hylton gathered a deflected shot and found the net just before the horn sounded to end the half. As it turned out that started a run of 13 straight goals for the Byrd girls as they dominated the second half. Byrd peppered the Franklin goal with 17 shots after intermission, finding the net a dozen times for a runaway win.

Hylton finished with five goals and two assists

to lead the Terriers while Ashlyn Stover had four and two and Olivia Hurd had four goals. Annika Hylton had two goals and three helpers while Haley Firebaugh shut out the Eagles in the second half and had six saves on the night. Sam Martin had a goal, two ground balls and three forced turnovers.

After tonight's home doubleheader the girls and boys will play a twinbill in Blacksburg on Monday night with the girls opening at 5:30 pm and the boys to follow.



William Byrd's Hannah Sutton heads the ball as Anna Milliron(#11) looks on.

PHOTO BY BRIAN HOFFMAN

## Terriers will host football camp for linemen Saturday

The William Byrd football team will be hosting the Gary Chilcoat Memorial Lineman Camp this on Saturday, April 30th. The camp is open to players from all over the state.

"We are expecting players from the Roanoke Valley, Richmond, Bassett, Lynchburg, the Shenandoah Valley, Charlottesville, VA Beach, and Tennessee," said Byrd coach Brad Lutz.

The camp staff will include coaches from Emory & Henry College, Christopher Newport University, Southern Virginia University, Bridgewater College, Ferrum College, Brookville HS, Hopewell HS, William Fleming HS, Patrick Henry HS, and William Byrd HS. Ed Mulitalo, the head coach at Southern Virginia University who started for the Ravens on the offensive line when they won the Super Bowl will also be attending.

The camp begins at 10 AM and concludes at 1 PM. The camp is only \$10, and all of the camp proceeds will go to a few of Coach Chilcoat's favorite charities.

"Gary Chilcoat was my high school football coach at Varina HS," said Lutz. "I also coached for him for seven years. His impact on high school football in Richmond is unmatched. He passed away from brain cancer three years ago and a few of his former players and assistant coaches will be working the camp as well."

For more information contact coach Lutz at William Byrd High School.

## Byrd soccer girls have rematch with LB

The William Byrd soccer girls will get a rematch with Blue Ridge District leading Lord Botetourt on Friday night in Daleville.

The two rivals played a classic the first time around, with LB taking a 2-1 win in overtime in a game played in Vinton. LB came into the week undefeated in district games and 8-2 overall while Byrd is 3-1-1 in the district after a dominating win over William Fleming in Roanoke Tuesday.

The girls won by slaughter rule, 8-0, over the Colonels in Tuesday's district game. Maddy Simmons started the scoring for the Terriers just three minutes into the game and netted a second goal one minute later. Hannah Sutton

scored the third goal of the game off an assist from Anna Milliron, and Anna got her own goal to make it 4-0 half way through the first half.

Simmons completed her three goal hat trick, off an assist from Claire Glover, as Byrd took a 5-0 lead and Riley Firebaugh finished the first half scoring off an assist from Yulissa Bonilla for a 6-0 lead at intermission.

The second half goals were scored by Bonilla and Martina Mihelcic, and when Byrd went up 8-0 the game was stopped midway through the second half for a slaughter rule victory.

The win followed a 2-2 tie with Northside last Friday at Patterson

Stadium in Vinton. The Vikings scored the first two goals of the game to take an early lead with just five minutes gone. However the orange and maroon defense settled in and kept the visitors off the board for the duration as Byrd rallied to tie.

Claire Glover hit a cross that resulted in an "own goal" to make it 2-1, then Claire scored the game tying goal off a Addisyn St. Clair assist to force overtime. After two periods settled nothing the game was declared a draw. Kadence Fermat had six saves for the Terriers.

Byrd will take a 7-2-1 overall record into Friday's game at Botetourt.

## Boys soccer looks to regroup on the pitch

Traditional district rivals William Byrd and Lord Botetourt will renew their soccer rivalry Friday when the boys play host to LB.. Game time for the varsity is 7 pm following a 5:30 pm jayvee game at Patterson Stadium.

Lord Botetourt won the first match between the two in Daleville but it was close, as the Cavs took a 3-1 win. Botetourt comes into the week at 3-2 in the district and 5-3-2 overall and Byrd is 1-3-1 and 4-6-1 after falling to William Fleming at home Tuesday, 6-1.

Byrd drew first blood against Fleming, taking a 1-0 lead on a goal by Landon Niday 18 minutes into the match. However, Fleming answered with two first half goals and controlled the second half to earn the win.

"Overall, I felt that we were playing well and controlling the match and keeping in on our terms, even after their first goal," said Byrd coach Russell Dishman. "The second goal was a tough one but it was close to the half so we were looking to regroup at halftime and go strong in the second half. I felt we had a solid plan but a bit into the half they were awarded a PK and I felt we never recovered from that moment. It was tough to lose the energy and confidence. We tried a few things and I would say we played better in the final 15, but it was still frustrating for the guys."

The loss followed a 3-1 loss at Northside, with Hunter Burgess scoring the goal for the Terriers. Next



Cole Kovacevic gets a header.

PHOTO BY BRIAN HOFFMAN

Tuesday the boys go to Staunton River.

"Hopefully we can regroup," said Dishman. "It is our job as coaches to try to get them back on track and build their confidence and find the proper mindset. Our biggest point right now is how to regroup from adversity."

## Girls defeat Fleming, Staunton River in tennis

The William Byrd tennis teams will take on Northside on Friday in Blue Ridge District action. The boys will be home and the girls will play at Walrond Park.

The girls won two matches in the past week and were scheduled host Cave Spring Wednesday. Last week the girls beat William Fleming 9-0, with singles win by Lexi Aquino, Makenna Jacobsen, Emilie McCaskill and Grace Saunders, and Fleming forfeited number five and six. Aquino and Jacobsen won at first singles, as did McCaskill and Saunders at two and

Fleming forfeited three.

Byrd hosted Staunton River on Friday and pulled out a 7-2 in as Aquino, Jacobsen, McCaskill and Timber Raines all won at singles. Byrd then swept the doubles with the teams of Aquino and Jacobsen at one, McCaskill and Saunders at two and Raines and Ashley Begasse at three.

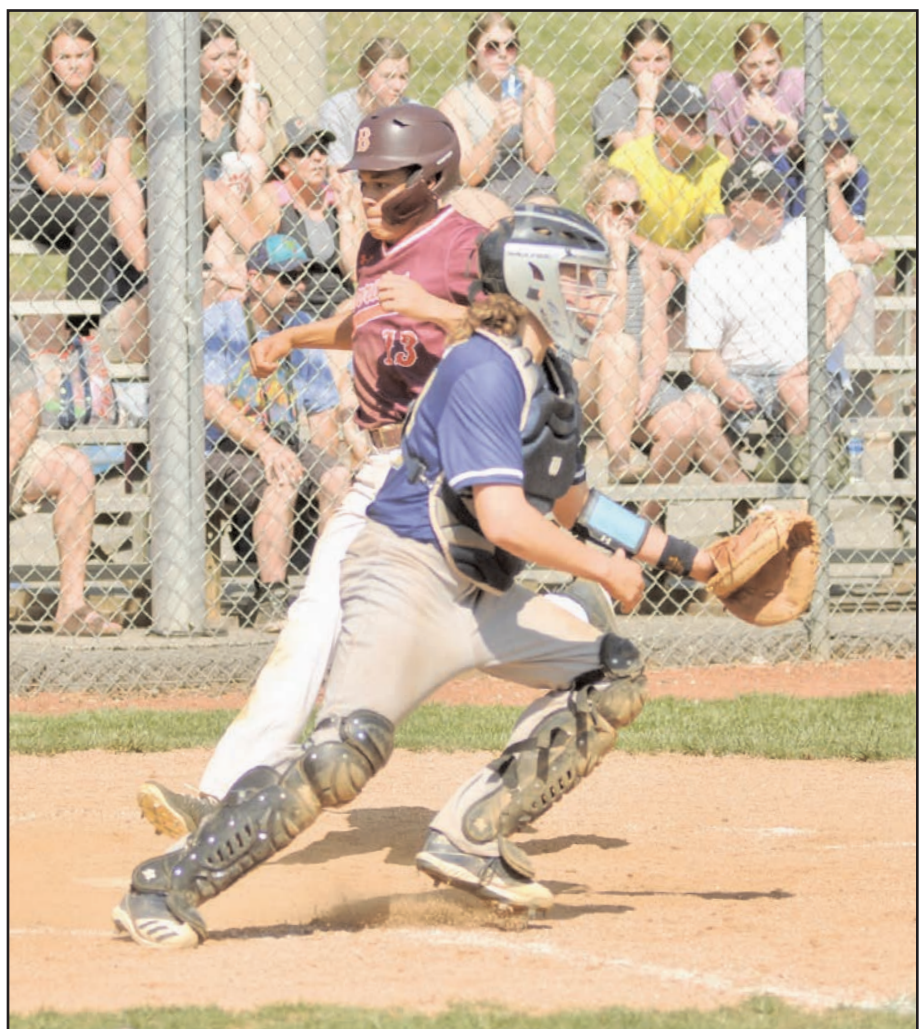
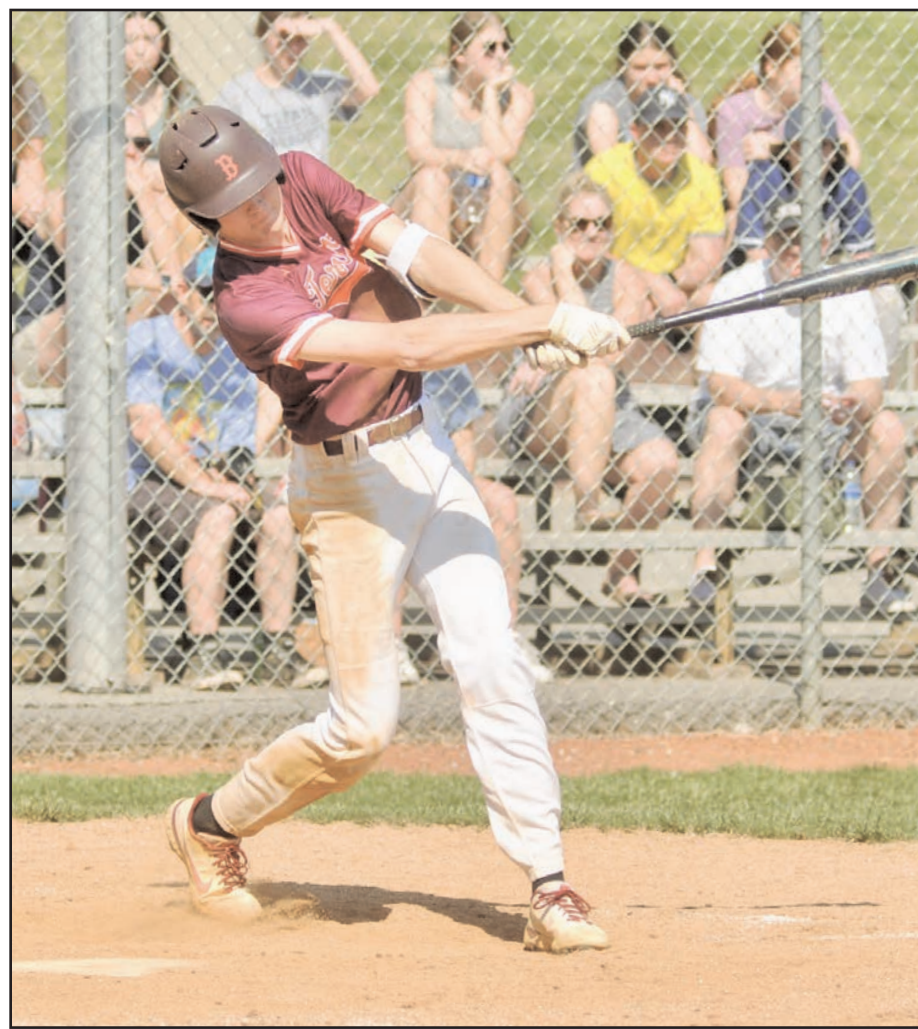
"Great match between these two teams," said coach Kayla Mitchell-McCroskey.

The boys are still looking for their first win. They were scheduled to play at Cave Spring Wednesday.

## Byrd team will compete in Knights Track Classic Saturday

A large and competitive field is expected Saturday when the Cave Spring track team plays host to the 12th annual Knights Track Classic at Cave Spring High School. William Byrd will be among the many teams attending.

The meet is scheduled to begin at 9 am. The last field events are scheduled for 11:45 am and the running events will begin at 9 am and run through late afternoon. There will be a break after the 4x100 relay to dedicate a bench to former Cave Spring coach and Roanoke College Hall of Fame runner Joe LaRocco, who passed away in 2021.



Above left, Byrd's Ross Divers connects for one of his two hits against Hidden Valley Saturday. Above right, Israel Hairston beats a throw to the plate and, below, Trenton Sayers pitches a gem to pick up the win over the Titans.

PHOTOS BY BRIAN HOFFMAN

## Terriers have big game at LB Friday

The William Byrd baseball team took a four game winning streak and an overall record of 10-2 into a non-district game at Cave Spring Wednesday. The Terriers will play a big Blue Ridge game at Lord Botetourt Friday.

Wednesday's results were too late for publication, but the Terriers were red hot heading to south county after winning four games in seven days. The streak started with an 11-1 blowout of Bassett at Walthall Park in Vinton last Wednesday. Coach Jason Taylor called up Brogan Dent from the jayvee team to pitch and he was near flawless, twirling a two-hitter and striking out 10 for his first varsity win.

Byrd ran wild on the Bengals, stealing eight bases in nine tries. Ethan Hairston was three-for-three at the plate with four stolen bases and Trenton Sayers had two hits and four runs batted in.

On Friday the Terriers played host to Northside. The Vikings came into the game undefeated in the BRD and 10-1 overall, but the Byrdmen gave them their first loss with a 3-0 shutout win.

Senior lefty Hunter Sipe took the mound for Byrd and pitched a gem three six innings, shutting out the Vikings on five hits and fanning seven. However, Northside opened the seventh with a single. Sipe struck out the next two batters but another single put runners on first and second and Hunter had to leave the game due to the VHSL pitch count rule.

Blake Glover came in to close and promptly walked the first batter he saw on four pitches to load the bases. Dylan Dampeer, son of Viking coach Kelly Dampeer, was up next and took the first two pitches for balls to work a 2-0 count. However, Glover gathered himself and struck out Dampeer to end the game and pick up the save.

Sipe also had two hits in this game. He was in the middle of a two-run third inning as Byrd scored on a sacrifice fly by Ross Divers and a wild pitch. The Terriers picked up a third run in the fifth when Sipe singled home Ethan Hairston.

On Saturday afternoon the Terriers hosted Hidden Valley in a makeup game and took a 6-2 decision. Sayers had a strong day on the mound, pitching six scoreless innings with 10 strikeouts before tiring in the seventh. The Titans scored two in the seventh with no outs before Glover came in to record the last three outs and put out the fire.

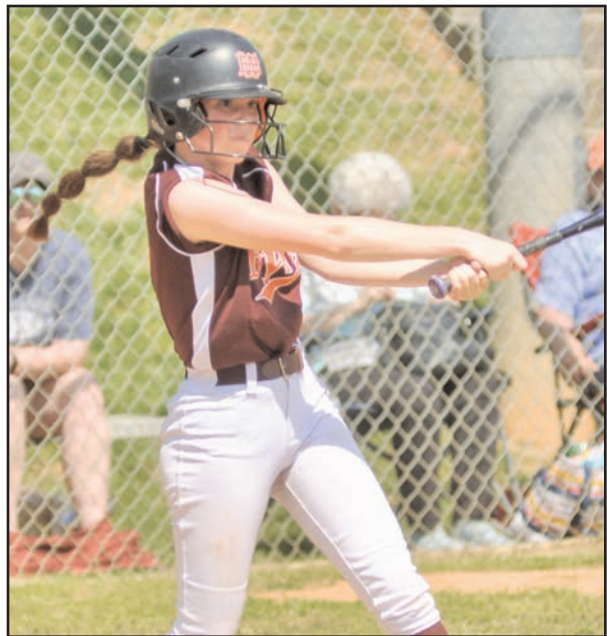
Divers had two hits in this one and Matthew Scavelli and Ethan Hairston had three runs batted in each. Israel Hairston had three of Byrd's 10 stolen bases.

On Tuesday the Terriers traveled to Roanoke to take on a struggling William Fleming team and the Colonels continued to struggle, falling 25-0. Alex Johnson pitched the first two innings for Byrd and Peyton Leftwich, Jacob Dickerson and Devon Foutz were on the hill for one inning each in the rout. The four pitched a



combined one-hitter while Byrd was led by Scavelli with three hits and Leftwich with two as everyone on the team got in the game.

After games with Cave Spring and LB this week the Terriers will continue a busy schedule next week. They'll host Staunton River Tuesday in a jayvee-varsity doubleheader, with the jayvees opening at 5 pm. Then, on Thursday, Byrd will conclude a game at Staunton River that was halted by rain the first time around. The game will be picked up in the top of the third with Byrd leading 5-0. It will resume at 6 pm in Moneta.



Byrd's Logan Pekala leads off Saturday's win over Hidden Valley with a double.

PHOTO BY BRIAN HOFFMAN

## Big bats power girls to wins over HV, WF

The William Byrd softball team won their first Blue Ridge District game of the season on Tuesday when they hosted William Fleming and took a 16-2 victory.

Byrd has six seniors this season, Maddy Tuck, Keely Hoal, Amber Vaughn, Logan Pekala, Verity Watkins and Elyssa Kitts. Pekala led the offense Tuesday with four hits, including a triple.

Byrd put the game away early with 13 runs in the second inning. Watkins, Pekala, Tuck, Hoal, Haleigh Vaughan and Sydney Blewett all drove in runs for the Terriers, and Tuck had a home run to highlight the explosion.

Chloe Varney was credited with the victory on the mound, surrendering two runs on three hits over three innings while striking out one and walking one. Pekala threw two innings in relief to close out the win as Byrd improved to 6-7 overall.

Byrd had 15 hits in the four innings the Terriers batted before the game was called by slaughter rule.

The win was the second in a row for the Terriers, as they hosted Hidden Valley on Saturday afternoon and banded out 11 hits. Tuck, Hoal, and Haleigh Vaughan all collected multiple hits, including three for Tuck.

Byrd broke the game open with seven runs in the

bottom of the fourth. Vaughan tripled, Tuck singled her in and Blewett blasted a home run to highlight the uprising. Varney pitched all five innings before the game was called due to the 10 run rule and she fanned four Titans in picking up the win.

The two wins followed two losses in a busy stretch of softball. On April 20 the girls lost at Bassett, 11-5. The game was tied at 5-5 into the bottom of the sixth but the Bengals scored six in that frame to win.

The Terriers put up three runs in the third inning. Makayla Bell, Hoal and Haleigh Vaughan each had RBIs in the inning, and Bell had a home run.

Varney took the loss, allowing 13 hits and 12 runs while striking out one.

On Friday at Northside the Terriers dropped a 9-4 decision to the host Vikings. Northside broke open a 2-2 game in the home third with two runs and held on to win. Blewett and Vaughan had multiple hit games in the loss. Varney went three innings on the mound and was saddled with the loss.

A busy stretch of softball continued with a non-district game against Cave Spring on Wednesday, and Friday the girls will host Lord Botetourt in a big district game. The Cavaliers came into the week at 9-1 overall and 5-0 in the district.



Byrd catcher Elyssa Kitts makes a diving attempt at a foul pop in Saturday's win.

PHOTO BY BRIAN HOFFMAN

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