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Local woman ranked No. 1 female flyweight bare knuckle fighter in the world

Monica McCullough and Debbie Adams
Contributing writers

Britain McCullough Beltran graduated from Staunton River High School in 2008, where she was an exceptional honor roll student, as well as a stand-out soccer player. She was on the varsity team all four years, and played in a travel league, as well. Britain was also on the SRHS cross-country team.

"After graduating with honors, Britain was awarded a full scholarship to Central Virginia Community College, studying Business Administration," says her mother, Monica McCullough, a former patrol officer and investigator with the Vinton Police Department. "Britain continued her education on multiple scholarships at Lynchburg College. She graduated from LC (with honors) with a Bachelor of Science in Sports Management in 2013.

"Britain then participated in an internship program at Charlotte Motor Speedway," McCullough

says. "Britain was later hired by the Carolina Panthers organization in Charlotte where she worked for several years. She continued her education while working for Bob Evans Restaurant in Lynchburg, commuting to Charlotte for her Panthers job, all while raising two children. Britain completed her master's degree with honors at Old Dominion University in 2016, earning a Master of Education with a concentration in Athletics."

So, how did she end up as a bare knuckle fighter?

After completing her master's degree, Britain decided to take some boxing lessons at a local gym. Her mother says the goal was simply "to stay in shape and have a healthy outlet for stress management," but "given Britain's natural athleticism, it became apparent to her trainers very quickly that she had the makings of becoming a 'great' boxer.

"At the time, Britain was going through some tough personal battles, and needed to set her sights on something greater," McCullough says. "She was encouraged by others to get her professional boxing certification so she could earn extra money and provide a better life for herself and her children."

Britain never fought at the amateur level but went straight into her first professional boxing match in October 2016. Her first two pro fights were won by technical knockouts within the first two rounds. She began taking on more experienced fighters and her pro-boxing record now stands at four wins, four losses and three draws. Britain has fought for Boxing Promoters Evander Holyfield in Atlantic City and Roy Jones, Jr. in Las Vegas, as well as for a notable women's boxing trailblazer, Christy Martin, out of Charlotte.

"In 2016, Britain caught the eye of the newly formed Bare Knuckle

See Britain Beltran, page 10



PHOTO COURTESY OF BKFC, PHOTOGRAPHER PHIL LAMBERT

Britain McCullough Beltran is currently the No. 1 ranked female flyweight fighter in the world. She is a graduate of Staunton River High School.

Demolition crews at work at D.R. Music site this week



Debbie Adams
dadams@ourvalley.org

Crews demolishing the remainder of the D.R. Music site began working on Monday, July 25. Several lanes are closed in downtown Vinton during the week to allow this work to proceed.

Firefighters from Vinton, Roanoke County and Roanoke City were called to the scene of a fire in downtown Vinton about 2 a.m. on July 2. The

fire seemed to originate in the building at 101 East Lee Avenue which contained D.R. Music. The building, which stood at the intersection of Lee Avenue and Pollard Street, was considered to be a Vinton landmark, built in 1930.

The fierce fire consumed the store. The Edward Jones Investment office next door (built in the 1920s) was also a total loss, along with several apartments above the commercial buildings. The Rustic Creations store

next door to Edward Jones sustained smoke damage. No one perished in the fire, although several pets were killed. Eight people in the apartments were displaced. Damages from the fire were estimated to be at least \$1.5 million.

According to Brian Clingeneel, Community Outreach Coordinator with Roanoke County Fire & Rescue, Roanoke County Fire Marshal Brian Simmons says the cause of the fire is still under investigation.



PHOTOS BY DEBBIE ADAMS

Demolition continues at the D.R. Music store site at the corner of East Lee Avenue and Pollard Street in downtown Vinton. The cause of the fire is still under investigation



Eva Pierce is shown in front of the Accademia Europea di Firenze, her school in Florence, where she studied opera this summer.

Pierce spends a summer under the Tuscan sun



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Eva Pierce performing as Annina in the opera "La Traviata."

This summer, Eva Pierce, a 2019 graduate of William Byrd High School and a Vocal Performance major at Elon University with the emphasis on Opera, spent four weeks

studying abroad with the Accademia Europea di Firenze in Florence, Italy.

During her time there she studied Italian, took private voice lessons from the instructors there, and studied opera.

A few of the many highlights of her trip were getting to sing in an opera for the first time, playing the role of Annina in Verdi's La Traviata. She performed in two concerts as well.

She also got to visit Siena, a city in central Italy's Tuscany region,

See Tuscan Sun, page 5

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SPOTLIGHT ON TOWN STAFF

Bo Herndon serves as the Public Works Director for the Town of Vinton. He has been employed with the town since December 2011, beginning as a Utility Technician before being quickly promoted to Special Projects Manager.

In 2016, Herndon was promoted to Emergency Services Coordinator, where he worked closely with the Fire Department and Police Department for the safety of the town. In 2017 he moved up to the position of Assistant Public Works Director, then Acting Director. He has been the Public Works Director since March 2021.

Herndon is originally from Roanoke and a graduate of Patrick Henry High School. He currently resides in Roanoke County. He is the proud father of two sons, Craig and Cole Herndon, and loves "being a Pa-pa to their children."

In his spare time, you will often find Herndon on the football or softball field as a VHSL referee. He has been officiating games for many years. He also referees travel softball. His favorite pas-

time is "being on the field helping coach grandson Matthew."

"I have particularly been impressed with Bo's positive attitude and his creativity and ingenuity to achieve an end goal," said Vinton Town Manager Pete Peters. "Bo maintains an excellent rapport with his staff and possesses an ability to lead his team, while also being able to roll up his sleeves and work directly alongside his crews when necessary. He really embodies the technique and skill of what you would describe as a 'players coach.' He is knowledgeable about his game plan and approaches each project from a tactical perspective, no different than a coach would game plan for his next opponent."

"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.

"Bo Herndon's leadership has contributed to vast improvements in the Town of Vinton Public Works Department," said Grose. "Bo can communicate with the staff members that report to him in a professional, knowledgeable manner and with the fellow members of the town leadership team. Bo is in one of the unique positions that requires both professionalism and a personal touch. Perhaps one of Bo's greatest assets is his passion for serving the citizens of our town. The Town of Vinton is truly blessed to have Bo Herndon as the Public Works Director."

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, like Bo Herndon, on staff and wants the community to see who is behind the scenes making the town look great and operate efficiently.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE TOWN OF VINTON
Public Works Director Bo Herndon

Progress continues with Gish Mill Redevelopment Project

The final stage of the repair and stabilization process at the historic Gish Mill is now underway. What appears to be a giant pile of boulders in the parking lot is, in fact, Class 3 rip rap that will be used to armor the streambank just outside the mill. According to David Hill, one of the developers, "The rip rap will prevent stormwaters from scouring the bank and undercutting the mill foundations. Native flowers and grasses will be planted in soil pockets once the stones are in place."

This part of the Gish Mill Redevelopment Project is being funded through a Department of Historic Resources (DHR) grant from the Emergency Supplemental Historic Preservation Fund administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, in partnership with the Virginia DHR. The grants are intended to assist historic structures throughout Virginia that were damaged by hurricane floods in the past.

According to Vinton Assistant Planning and Zoning Director Nathan McClung, who is the town's Project manager for Gish Mill, between September and December

final design work and permitting procedures will be completed before the next step of site preparation, anticipated for January and February 2023.

The Gish Mill Redevelopment Project has been in the works since 2015 when the Town of Vinton purchased the historic property, which at that time was known as Holdren's Country Store.

For months the project seemed to passers-by to be at a standstill, but McClung says despite appearances, much has been going on inside all along, including stabilization and repair work. In recent months dumpsters have been visible at the historic mill as work began on the interior of the structure, along with the dismantling of the exterior eastern end of the building, leaving a concrete pad. (This section of the building was built after 1955 and not considered to be historic.)

"Using Town funds, we have completely cleaned out the building of all debris, leftover storage items, and even dust/dirt using a local company. It looks incredible inside (almost like stepping into a completely different building)," McClung said.

The town purchased the property at a cost of



PHOTO BY DEBBIE ADAMS
A giant pile of boulders at the historic Gish Mill site will be used for stream bank stabilization along Glade Creek.

\$126,000 in October 2015 as Town Council and much of the citizenry wanted to preserve the historic mill— which appears on the Town Seal— and put it back into use. In 2019 the town issued a Request for Proposals.

David Hill of Hill Studio and developer David Trinkle incorporated as Gish Mill Davii, LLC, and presented their proposal to council for converting the property to mixed-use de-

velopment and signed a contract of sale with the town in April 2020— contingent upon environmental, structural, and historic assessments of the property, and obtaining funding.

The redevelopment project includes a restaurant and seasonal market on the first floor, a special event space in the basement, conversion of the original mill structure, concrete silos, and upper floors into lodging or

apartments, along with outdoor dining on a deck with patio space. The historic "sluice" will be utilized as an intimate seating area with stairs that cascade down to the creek.

The concrete slab that is now visible will become an outdoor plaza, overlooking the creek.

The goal of the Gish Mill Redevelopment Project has been to return life and prosperity to the founding structure

of the Town of Vinton. Gish Mill was built in the 1770s and was in continuous operation in one form or the other since then— until it closed as Holdren's Country Store in 2015.

Gish Mill has been placed on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places as a "circa 1846 three-story brick grist mill situated along the south bank of Glade Creek."

CROSSWORD

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- CLUES ACROSS**
- Droop
 - Rested in a chair
 - Thai (var.)
 - Draw out wool
 - Coatis genus
 - Taxis
 - Beige
 - Supplementing with difficulty
 - Capital of Norway
 - A personal written history
 - Cologne
 - Australian flightless bird
 - Lowest freeman: early Eng.
 - 18th C. mathematician Leonhard
 - Cabinet Dept. for homes
 - Languages of Sulu islands
 - More scarce
 - Before
 - Swiss river
 - Actress & director Lupino
 - Edges
 - Thousand Leaves prefecture
 - Soldier hero of Spain
 - EI
 - Gains through work
 - To the front
 - I (German)
 - Price label
 - Barack's 1st lady
 - Drench with liquid
 - Child (scot.)
 - "Aba ___ Honeymoon"
 - Disappearing shade trees
 - Cricket frog genus
 - Union busting worker
 - A priest's liturgical vestment
 - Previously The Common Market
 - Upper left keyboard key
 - Point midway between S and SE
 - Genus of birds
 - Personal spiritual leader
 - Japanese rice beverage
 - Eared owl genus
 - Wood oil finish
 - Hyphen
 - Completely
 - Equal, prefix
 - Broad-winged soaring hawks
 - A collection of star systems
 - Be in accord
 - Links subject & predicate (linguistics)
 - Paddles
 - Asian river between China and Russia
 - Physicists Marie or Pierre
 - Excessive fluid accumulation
 - ___ Dunlap, pageant titleholder
 - Made again
 - Norse goddess of death
 - A waterproof raincoat
 - Express pleasure
 - Lanka
 - Radioactivity unit
 - Clay blocks for building
 - Linear unit
 - Conductor tools
 - Whale ship captain
 - Queen who tested Solomon
 - Good Gosh!
 - A gangster's girlfriend
 - Unstressed-stressed
 - Draw through holes
 - Old Italian monetary units
 - Musician Clapton
 - Ceremonial staff of authority
 - Fabrics of camels or goats
 - A very large body of water
 - Basics

Have a band instrument in the closet?

William Byrd Middle School is welcoming a huge influx of beginning band members this fall. Band Director Denise Aspell says any instrument donations to the Byrd band would be "very appreciated to give the opportunity to the new members of our tradition of excellence."

Instruments can be dropped off at the WBMS office to support the program. Email Denise Aspell at daspell@rcps.us.



Vinton Police host National Night Out

The Vinton Police Department is once again hosting National Night Out on the first Tuesday in August. That's August 2nd, beginning at 6 p.m. at the Charles R. Hill Community Center located at the Vinton War Memorial complex.

There will be live entertainment from DJ Flex, a bounce house for children from Dave's Moon Walks & More, and free Deb's Frozen Lemonade, along with free hot dogs, chips, and snow cones while supplies last.

National Night Out is an evening set aside across the nation, and even beyond, to enhance the relationship between law

enforcement and citizens in a relaxed, informal atmosphere.

National Night Out was founded in 1984. The first annual National Night Out involved 2.5 million neighbors across 400 communities in 23 states. Some 38 years later, 38 million neighbors gather for celebrations in 16,000 communities. In Virginia alone, there are 119 participating towns and cities.

The Vinton Town Council meeting is cancelled each year on the first Tuesday so that council members can attend National Night Out and talk with citizens informally.

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

VINTON

Police Department

TUESDAY AUGUST 2ND 6 PM

The Vinton Police Department invites you to a night out at the Charles R. Hill Community Center (Vinton War Memorial) 814 Washington Ave, Vinton

Includes logos for DJ FLEX, Dave's Moonwalks & More, and Deb's Lemonade.

Mount Pleasant community to honor first responders on National Night Out

The Mount Pleasant Lions Club will be sponsoring National Night Out to honor first responders on Tuesday, August 2, at Mount Pleasant United Methodist Church from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

The festivities will take place in the outdoor pavilion, parking lot and grounds of Mount Pleasant UMC. The Roanoke County Sheriff's Office will be providing hot dogs and buns. Drinks also will be provided.

Members of the community are asked to bring sides and sweets to share, along with their lawn chairs for seating.

The church is located at 3035 Mount Pleasant Boulevard.

NNO NATIONAL NIGHT OUT 2022

MOUNT PLEASANT - ROANOKE COUNTY, VA SPONSORED BY MT PLEASANT LIONS CLUB

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT 2022

TUESDAY, AUG, 2, 2022 6:30 - 8:30 PM

PARKING LOT & GROUNDS - MT PLEASANT UMC
3035 MOUNT PLEASANT BLVD
HOT DOGS AND DRINKS PROVIDED
BRING LAWN CHAIRS, SIDES AND SWEETS TO SHARE

TOGETHER, WE ARE MAKING COMMUNITIES SAFER, MORE CARING PLACES TO LIVE AND WORK



Have you heard the big news? Roanoke Valley Libraries are now fine-free! You may have noticed we suspended late fines during the pandemic; this will now be a permanent change. There will no longer be fines for overdue library materials at any RVL branch. In addition, fines accrued prior to July 1 will be canceled. Patrons will be charged, however, for items that are lost or damaged while checked out. This is just one way we are seeking to eliminate any barriers to access our information and services.

Last month we learned about planting native shrubs; this month, speaker Carla Selvey is here with Master Your Garden: Planting Fall Bulbs. On Wednesday, August 3 at 6 p.m., learn how and when to plant your bulbs this fall to achieve the most gorgeous plants in the upcoming year.

Creations and Temptations is finally back on Thursday, August 4 from 6-7:30 p.m. Melinda will be demonstrating how to make beautiful clothespin flower fairies. Register online and bring some medium-to-large sized artificial flowers with you to add to this adorable craft.

Calling all coffee fans! On Saturday, August 20 at 10:30 a.m. we will have a Coffee Shop Talk with RND Coffee. Join Quincy Randolph, owner of RND Coffee, for an in-depth talk on all things coffee shop, from the coffee itself, to behind the scenes tidbits, all the way to "mayo coffee." If you have an interest in coffee or cafes, this is the program for you.

On Monday, August 8, join us at 11 a.m. with presenter Gayle Clary of the Department of Medical Assistance Services to learn all about Virginia Healthcare Plans. On Monday, August 15 at 11 a.m., Patrick Harmon will be back with Medicare 101.

Open Bridge continues every Tuesday from 1-4 p.m., as well as Saturday Morning Cartoons every Saturday from 10:30 a.m.-12 p.m. on the patio, weather permitting.

This month the Vinton Book Club will discuss "Cloud Cuckoo Land" by Anthony Doerr on Thursday, August 4 at 3 p.m., and the As the Page Turns Book Club will discuss "The Lincoln Highway" by Amor Towles on Wednesday, August 10 at 2 p.m.

Our DMV Connect service will be back Wednesday, August 31, and Thurs-

day, September 1, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., closing from 1-2 p.m. for lunch.

We will have a program on Basic Banking for Young Adults on Thursday, August 4 from 4:30-5:30 p.m.; Member One Federal Credit Union will help teens learn the ins and outs of how checking and savings accounts work, as well as online banking. Member One will be back on Thursday, August 18 from 4:30-5:30 p.m. as well with another presentation on Buying a Car for Young Adults; come by to learn what you need to know about saving for and purchasing your first car.

On Saturday, August 20 from 2 to 4 p.m. we'd like to welcome teens for a First Week of School Survival Party. You've survived your first week back at school, now come join us in the Teen Center for pizza and a viewing of "Ferris Bueller's Day Off." Also be sure to come by for Teen Gaming on Monday, August 22 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. and Teen Book Club on Monday, August 29 from 5-6 p.m.

Friday, August 19 is National Potato Day, and we have something special planned for everyone! We will kick off the celebrations with a children's story time at 11 a.m. From 3:30-4:30 p.m. teens and adults are also invited to join in for a potato chip tasting challenge as well as potato-themed trivia; enter to win an exciting potato prize.

Be sure to drop in on Tuesday, August 2 from 2-3 p.m. for a special frozen treat from Kona Ice to celebrate the end of our Summer Reading Program. The last day of Summer Reading is Saturday, August 4; please turn in your reading logs by that date to redeem your completion prize. On Wednesday, August 24 at 4 p.m. kids are invited to come to Lego Play to create and share their own Lego masterpieces.

Attention creatives! The Friends of the Roanoke County Public Library is looking for a new logo and opened a contest to the public. Anyone is welcome to submit designs and the winner's entry will be used by the FOL for branding both online in social media and in printed materials. The winner will also win a \$50 Amazon gift card. The deadline to enter is Monday, September 5 by 5 p.m. Please check our website at www.rocolibrary.org for more information and guidelines for the competition.

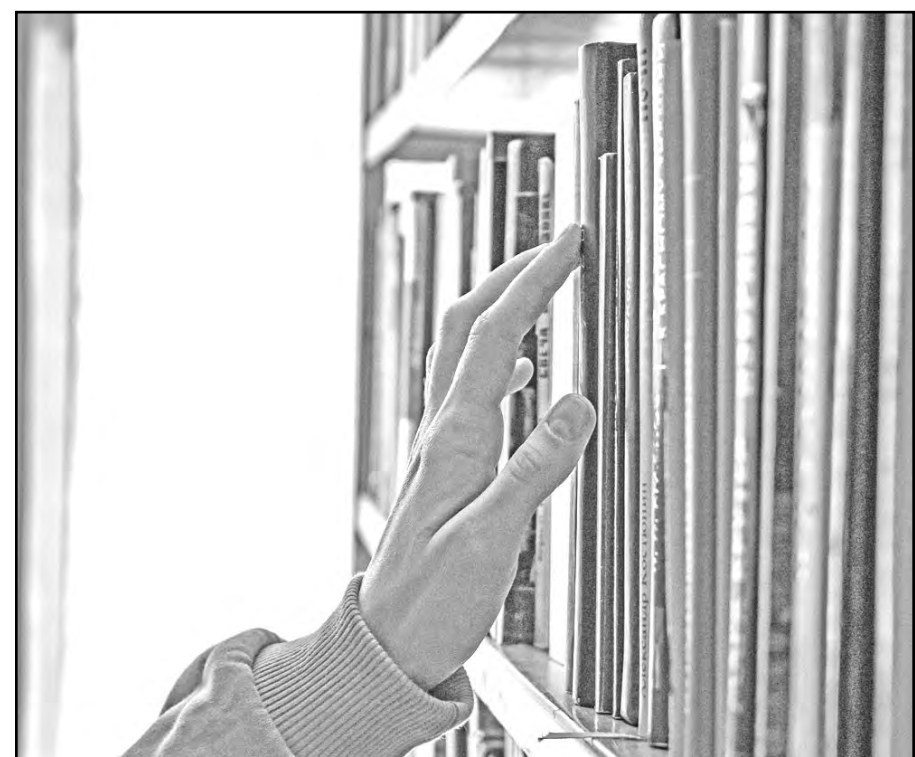


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Dulcimer champion Joe Collins to perform in concert at Thrasher

Joe Collins, the 2007 National Mountain Dulcimer Champion, will be featured in a folk concert at Thrasher Memorial United Methodist Church on Sunday, August 7 at 7 p.m. The concert will take place in the chapel at Thrasher. A love offering will be accepted afterwards to offset Collins' expenses.

In addition, Collins will teach four mountain dulcimer workshops on Monday, August 8 at Thrasher. The workshops include Focusing on Basic Chords at 9 a.m., Sweet and Gentle Songs for the Mountain Dulcimer at 10:30 a.m., Making Arrangements at 1:30 a.m., and Bringing Out the Irish in You at 3 p.m. The cost is \$15 for one, \$25 for two, \$30 for three or four. Confirm your participation in classes by emailing roanokevalleydulcimers@gmail.com. If paying at the door, bring cash or check payable to Joe Collins. To pay with a credit card prior to coming to class, contact him at dulciman@bellsouth.net and he will send you an invoice.

His website states that Collins fell in love with the mountain dulcimer back in 1978. At the time he was performing at coffee houses as a college student in eastern North Carolina, and

a good friend thought that he might be interested in tackling another instrument besides the guitar. He took her instrument home, and she did not get it back for three years! Today, he plays a lot less guitar and a lot more dulcimer than in those early days.

After competing in a number of competitions and winning several regional competitions over a 10-year period, he won the National Mountain Dulcimer Championship in 2007 in Winfield, Kansas. Over the past 20 years, he has had the opportunity to teach and play in festivals from California to the East Coast, from Florida to Vermont, and a lot of places in between.

A folk musician and mountain dulcimer player since the late '70s, Collins combines mountain dulcimer wizardry with good, solid vocals. He is a songwriter and vocalist, inspired by artists like Simon & Garfunkle, Gordon Lightfoot, Bob Dylan, and Kris Kristofferson. However, as he grows older, he realizes that perhaps the most profound influence on his musical bent was the old Burt Ives records he listened to over and over again as a kid. His performances are sprinkled with a lot



Folk Concert

featuring Joe Collins,
2007 National Mountain
Dulcimer Champion
Sunday, August 7 @ 7:00 pm

Thrasher UMC Chapel
707 E. Washington St.
Vinton, VA 24179

of humor and some excellent mountain dulcimer playing.

Collins graduated from East Carolina University with Bachelor and Master's Degrees in English, from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary with a Master of Divinity in Religious Education, and from

North Carolina State University with a Doctorate in Adult Education. He has worked in Religious Education for most of his professional career and is professor emeritus of religion at Gardner-Webb University in Boiling Springs, N.C. Now that he is retired, he has more time

for dulcimer, writing music, and traveling to work with clubs and in festivals.

The concert and classes are co-sponsored in cooperation with the Roanoke Valley Dulcimers. For additional information, email roanokevalleydulcimers@gmail.com.

PEOPLE, PLACES AND THINGS

Well., Vinton (and more) showed up and showed off last night. Our super-sized Mingle at the Market presented by MemberOne FCU was a huge success. Many thanks to all our sponsors, vendors. Bank of Botetourt volunteers, WB football volunteers and, of course, everyone who came out to support our event. I know there were other things happening around town.

Low, Low, Chariot and Adam Rutledge did not disappoint.

Blue Ridge Beverage was spot on with some new RTDs (we will add some new flavors next time). Delicia and DG Ice and

Angie Chewing
Filling in for Bootie

her amazing Italian Ice was on hand for a sweet cold treat. And I cannot say enough about Food on the Go food truck. They handled the crowd like champs all night (our other food truck was a no show). The kids enjoyed the bounce house by Dave's Moonwalk.

August is jammed packed with fun! Saturday, August 13, Mingle at the Market with Five Dollar Shake and Mountain Grille; Sunday, August 21, Vinton Palooza on the War Memorial lawn with two great bands – The Jarod Stout Band and The Kings, food and craft vendors, 1-6; and Saturday, August 27, Mingle at the Market with Fuzzy Logic and Ferguson Family Provisions food truck

Another River Week is in the books for Greg Boitnott and myself and Jeff and Nonie Hall. We love the River Bend and hope to spend many more weeks there!

See more at

www.vintonmessenger.com

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

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

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

CHURCH OF CHRIST
DALE RIDGE CHURCH OF CHRIST - 7165 Cloverdale Rd., Roanoke, 24019; beside the Botetourt Athletic Club. Leave message 992-4385. Sunday Bible Study, 9:30 a.m., Worship, 10:30 a.m., Wednesday Bible Study, 6 p.m. Please come visit us in person or get to know about us first by visiting our web page: daleridgechurchofchrist.net. Updated each week with a new sermon by Mike Mazzalongo, four minutes of video showing our nearly six acres of land and our beautiful, functional inside facilities, articles, events, news from Christian sources around the world and here locally plus much, much more. See how many ways Dale Ridge is "Reaching Out There" to the Roanoke Valley with the "Good News of Jesus. By clicking on "visit us virtually" real time access to our Worship services is available via your computer, a tablet or smartphone: Just follow the instructions. We believe in the inspired Word of God which is as relevant today as it was when it was written. We believe the Holy Spirit is a gift to every Christian upon their response to the Gospel as demonstrated by the 3000 obedient souls in (Acts 2:38). We believe Jesus is the only author of our salvation. (Acts 4:12) Have you been looking for a church family that is progressive, outside the box thinkers, led by the Holy Spirit into all truth. (John 16:13). You will know we are His disciples by our love for one another. (John 13:35) Real time contact thru our website via email.

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

Vinton Worship Directory

DEALING WISELY

1 Samuel 18:1 through 20:42
"In everything he did he had great success, because the Lord was with him" (1 Samuel 18:14).

If ever there were ample reason to justify retaliation, David certainly qualified. Repeatedly wronged by King Saul, David always responded with respect and love. Even when he had the opportunity to kill the treacherous king, David restrained himself. Because of his willing submission to Saul's God-given authority, David was crowned king over Israel. There are times when we too are wronged by those in authority over us. At such times, we often feel justified in rebelling, thinking that we are simply standing up for ourselves. But rebellion will only reduce us to the spiritual maturity (or immaturity) level of the authority who is hurting us. Instead of rebelling, we should seek to discuss any problems with our abusive authority (Romans 12:18). If our authority continues in the abuse, then we, like David, must do all we can to protect ourselves by leaving the abusive situation. Leaving, however, does not imply license to judge our abusive authority. Only God has the right to judge and to vindicate.

Thought for Today: Abusive people are wounded people, and wounded people often hurt others.

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

Morning Service 10:45 a.m., Wednesday Bible Study 10 a.m.

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

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

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

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

PRESBYTERIAN
CAMPBELL MEMORIAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 1130 Hardy Rd, Vinton, VA, 540-343-1842; cmpc2verizon.net Sunday school 9:45am, Worship 11:00am; Communion 1st Su.ndays; 2nd Sunday Session; Monday Noon Bible Study; Tuesdays & Thursdays Stretch Class 9:00am; 1st Tuesdays Deacons; Wednesday Choir 7:00pm; Monday Girl Scouts 7:00pm; 3rd Saturday Men's Breakfast 8:00am. Rev. Jonathan Moelker, pastor

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

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

Hildebrand in concert at Vinton History Museum

Dan Hildebrand, singer-songwriter and musician, will perform a casual and free concert at the Vinton History Museum on Saturday, August 6 from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

His performance will include traditional, original, and historical songs, soulful ballads and light-hearted tunes.

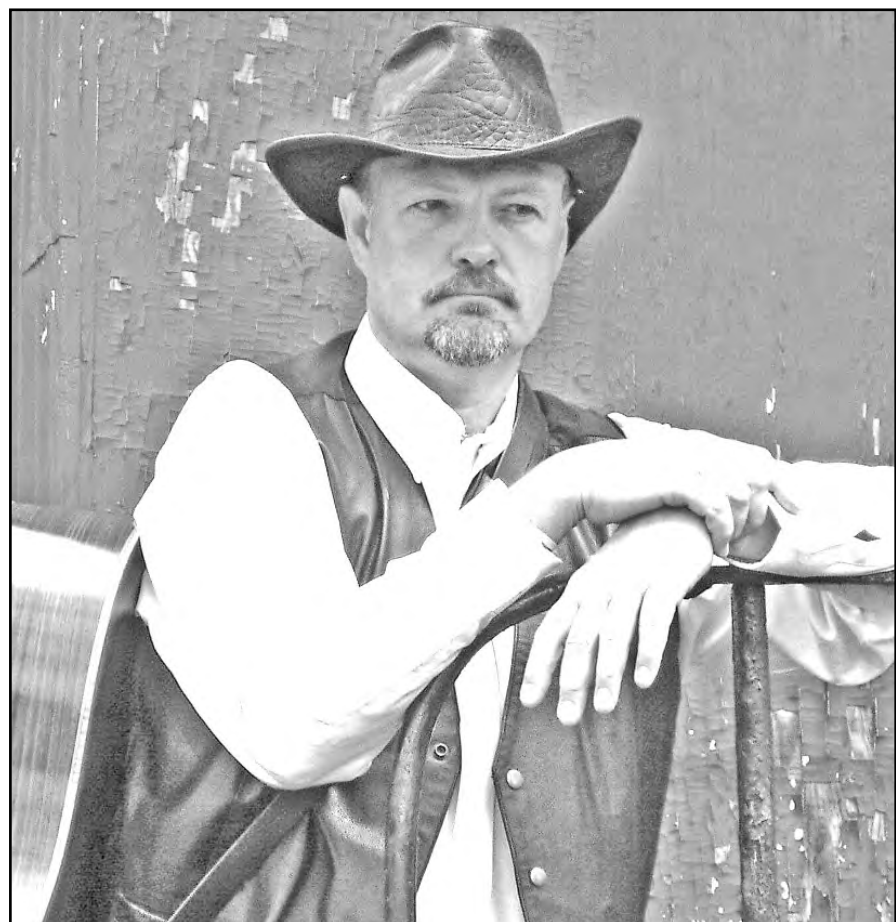
Hildebrand resides in Franklin County and performs solo and as a duo with Adonna Lemon. The duo also has a Facebook Live Variety Show called "The Dan & Adonna Show" which can be seen every third Wednesday at 7 p.m.

Hildebrand has been writing songs

and performing solo and in bands for most of his adult life. Some of the bands he has been a part of include the Huckleberry Blues Hounds, Mocha Joe, and the popular Wisconsin duo, Hardbean & McHonzik.

He has recorded several CDs over the years including his most recent "Songwriter Sessions" and "Tales from the Fire Pit" with his partner Adonna Lemon.

For additional information contact the Vinton History Museum at (540) 342-8634. The museum is located at 210 East Jackson Avenue in downtown Vinton.



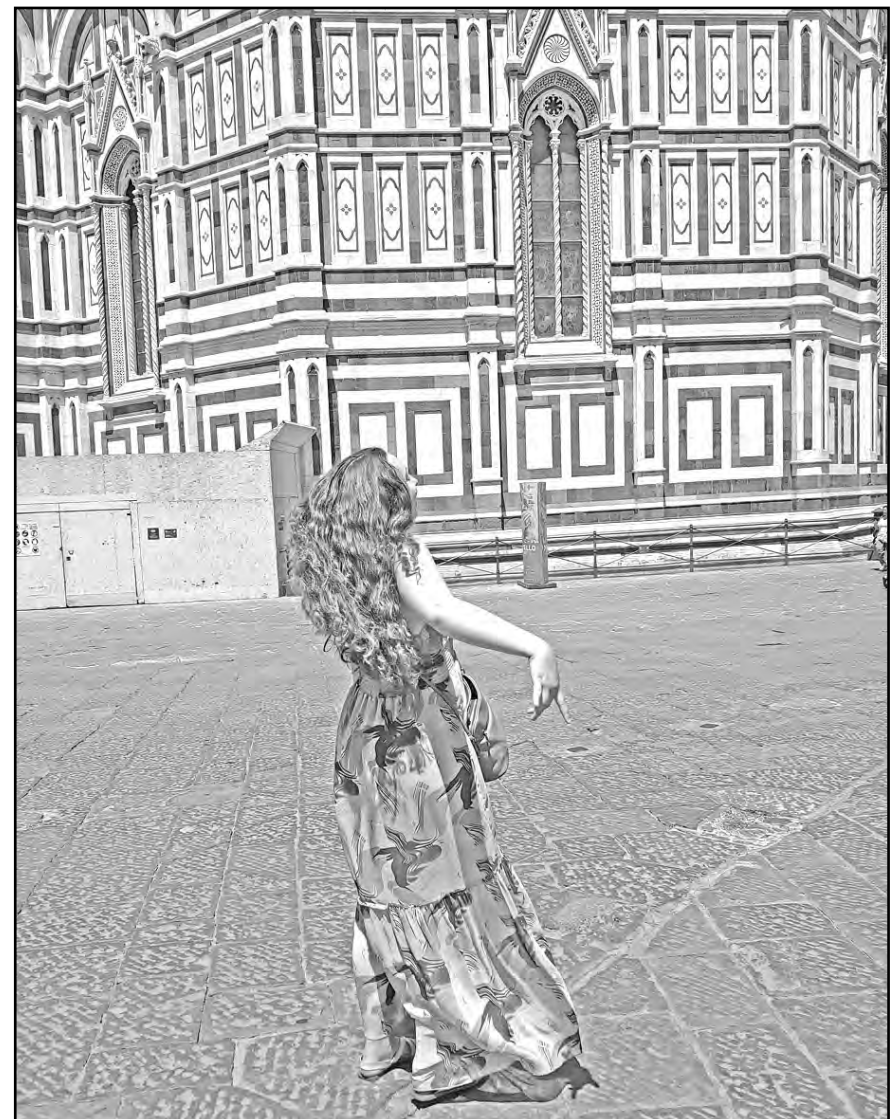
Dan Hildebrand SUBMITTED PHOTO

Tuscan Sun from page 1

which is distinguished by its medieval brick buildings, the Gulf of Baratti, and Monterosso where she got to swim in the Mediterranean Sea.

Pierce participated in this program through Elon University and as a Benjamin A. Gilman Scholar.

By Eva Pierce



Eva Pierce in front of the Duomo cathedral in Florence, Italy.



Eva Pierce at the beach in Monterosso on the Mediterranean Sea. SUBMITTED PHOTO

Mt. Pleasant Library reopens

The Mt. Pleasant Library has officially reopened. The current operating hours are Tuesdays from 1 to 5 p.m., Thursdays, 1-7 p.m., and Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 2

p.m. The library invites patrons to stop by to browse the shelves, attend a program, and meet the new library staff. Curbside services will

still be available for patrons' convenience.

The Mt. Pleasant Library is located at 2918 Jae Valley Road, Roanoke. Call 540-777-8760 for more information.



PHOTO BY AUSTIN PACHECO

Load the Bus for Kids is back

Roanoke County Public Schools is joining with Roanoke City Public Schools, Salem City Public Schools and Craig County Schools to Load the Bus for Kids! Organizers are collecting school supplies for students in need across the Roanoke Valley now through Virginia's Tax-Free Weekend, Aug. 5-7.

Come out to any of the Roanoke Valley Walmart stores (Bonsack, Clearbrook, Salem and Valley View) to donate school supplies for students who might not be able to afford the tools they need to be successful in school. Supplies will be collected at the registers and at bins in each store throughout the day.

Any money collected at the event will be used to purchase school supplies. Every item and every cent of donations will go to help students in need in the Roanoke Valley and Craig County.

What kind of supplies are needed? Needed are backpacks, glue sticks, notebooks, three-ring binders, crayons, colored pencils, notebook paper (college and wide-ruled), pens, pencils, highlighters, rulers, folders, scissors, and construction paper. Classroom items like tissues, hand sanitizer, printer paper, dry erase markers and more are also needed.

"Each year, thousands of children across the Roanoke Valley begin school without the supplies they need to be successful," said Roanoke County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Ken Nicely. "Walmart is teaming up with area school systems to work together to provide the tools our children need in school. Every single donation will help a student learn and achieve, even as many families continue to recover from the effects created by the pandemic."



PHOTO BY TIM GOUW



From the Pulpit

A Devotional

Retired, unemployed, disabled, cancered, divorced, unwed – some events in life like these are pretty big for us to handle. They often overwhelm us, so we let them take our whole life and identify us.

Although those events may take a big room in our life, they are not us. What identifies us is not what happened in our life but how we respond to it every day. The way we deal with the challenges and the beauty we draw from them is what truly identifies us.

A pearl forms when "an irritant" comes into a shell. The mollusk responds to what has come from outside by coating it. Layer upon layer of this coating turns "the challenge" into a lustrous pearl. This beauty slowly forms by a shell's persistent response to the irritant.

I do not know what you are dealing with today. You may be unhappy because of a squabble with your spouse last night. You may be anxious while you are waiting for a test result. You may be tired of

the burdensome work of providing care for someone. You may be overwhelmed by a tragic event that happened in your life.

I hope and pray we remember that whatever happens, whatever failures we have, whatever outside circumstances are thrown at our lives, they don't/can't define who we are. They way we handle them identifies us. A pearl forms in our life when we coat the irritant with courage, kindness, forgiveness, gentleness, patience, goodness, joy, peace, and love.

Yes, our life circumstances may really irritate us, challenge us, and sometimes overwhelm us. However, let us face them instead of running away. Let us deal with them one by one; coat them one layer at a time. Then, one day, we will find a shining pearl that emerges from the irritant.

By Pastor Jae Song, Red Valley Church (formerly Associate Pastor at Thrasher Memorial UMC)

Vinton Town Council meeting cancelled for August 2

The regular Vinton Town Council meeting scheduled for August 2 has been cancelled. Council members will be participating in the National Night Out event at the

Charles R. Hill Community Center that evening instead. Council members will meet and mingle informally with citizens that night. Vinton's National

Night Out begins at 6 p.m. on August 2.

The next regular Council meeting will be Tuesday, August 16, at 6 p.m. in Council Chambers.



Remembering Vinton

with the Vinton Historical Society

Fifty years ago in July 1972

By Debbie Adams
 In July 1972, a front-page headline in The Vinton Messenger announced that the Vinton Police Force had increased from 10 law enforcement officers to 12, with one vacancy left to fill. Clarence Irby was police chief at the time. He had joined the VPD in 1953. (In July 2022, the town funds about 27 positions in the police department.)

"This increase in strength has been needed badly to meet the requirements posed by continuing residential expansion, and the addition of many new businesses in Vinton," Irby said.

Police officers in July 1972 included: new Patrolmen Thomas Arthur Clark and Henry McCoy Bulaski, Jr., Corporal F.E. Richardson, Sgt. W. W. Johnston, Sgt. C.A. Jones, and Patrolmen D.L. Yates, E.D. Francisco, S.D. Goodwin, D.D. Booley, and C.B. Barton.

The department's first independent radio system with 24-hour dispatch had been installed for the Vinton police in their offices that year as well.

The Roanoke County Sheriff's Office was busy that summer trying to track down vandals who were shooting out streetlights, automobile headlights, windows and storm doors in residences, and vegetable gardens with BB guns. One family found pellets in the draperies of their living room. Sheriff O.S. Foster (father of Vinton's former police chief, Tom Foster) advised parents to keep better track of their children's whereabouts.

Work was proceeding on Hardy Road Elementary School (now known as W.E. Cundiff). Frank Stone had been named principal and announced that the school would be ready when schools reopened in the fall. Stone had previously been principal at East Vinton Elementary School. The cost of the new school was \$1.5 million. It was located on an 18-acre site and designed to serve 1,000 students. An enrollment of 700 was expected in 1972.

According to The Vinton Messenger, Stone said, "The open space concept and its potential for individual teach-

ing provides the greatest challenge and opportunity in the new facility."

For the first time, students entering public schools would be required to have an extensive physical examination and a number of immunizations before enrolling. The stated purpose of the new law was to identify children who might need special services. The immunizations included diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, polio, German measles, red measles, and mumps. Children could be exempt for religious or medical reasons.

The state increased the paving allocation to Vinton from \$57,000 in 1971-72 to \$119,000 in 1972-73. The increase was paid for by a two-cent hike in motor fuel taxes by the General Assembly.

Vintonite Philip Turpin, a mail carrier in Roanoke City, had been recognized for his quick action in reviving a baby who had fainted when left in a closed, parked car. The mother rushed into the Melrose Post Office branch carrying the child who had stopped breathing. Turpin received a certificate and \$200 to honor his efforts.

Members of Vinton Town Council were squabbling in public restaurants that summer. Councilman Norman Dowdy was calling for the dismissal of Town Manager Don Smith. The dispute seemed to center around whether town department heads and employees took their orders from the town manager or members of council. At their July 26 meeting, the town manager received a vote of confidence. A large and reportedly angry group of 75 citizens showed up at the meeting demanding an apology for Smith. Shouting continued for about 15 minutes. There was a physical altercation involving a radio reporter's microphone.

In other council actions, Mayor Gus Nicks was urging council to purchase Bedford County property that would provide a municipal water source, reservoir, and recreation area. The 400-acre property was known as the Pedigo tract and was within the Falling Creek watershed. His

reasoning for the purchase was that Roanoke City could curtail or suspend water sales to Vinton at any time it wished, and the town needed to be prepared. Town Attorney Richard Cranwell asked the state for a ruling on whether the town could purchase property outside its corporate limits. There was also discussion of developing an additional well inside the corporate limits.

Town residents were experiencing water pressure problems caused by lawn sprinkling and inadequate pipelines and were asked to limit their water use.

County Registrar Elizabeth Leah advised 2,500 county residents that they would be dropped from the voter list if they did not notify the registrar of their new addresses. That's the number of letters returned to her office as undeliverable in a recent mailing.

Members of the Vinton Baptist Church Youth Choir were traveling 1,800 miles on a tour through South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, and Tennessee. The 58 members and sponsors planned to make a stop at Disney World along the way. William C. Elliott was the Youth Choir Director.

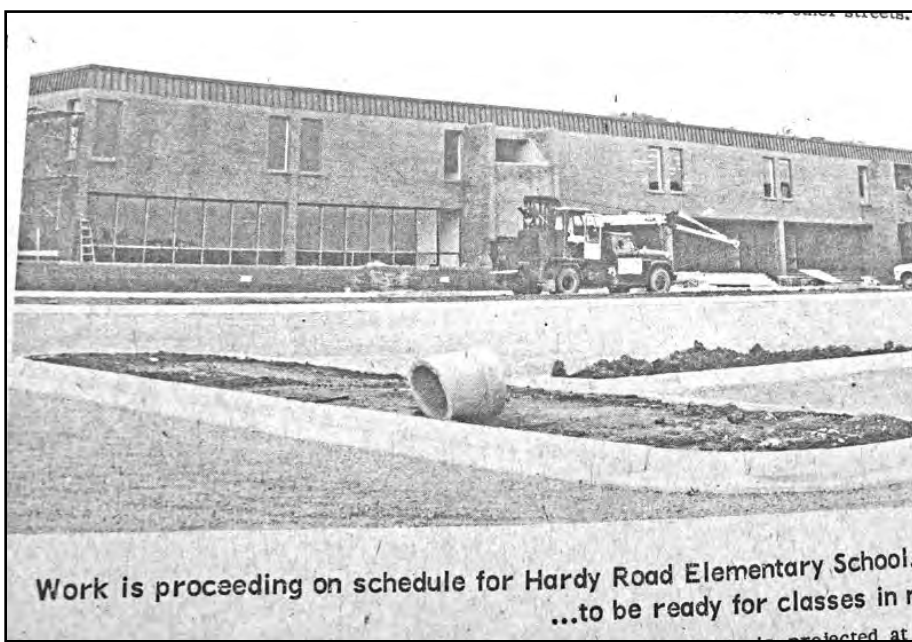
The Braves team (ages 14 and 15) won the Vinton Recreation Department Senior League Championship. The coach was Butch Sowers.

Team members included Matt Stinnett, Jim Bell, Randy Fitzgerald, Paul Martindale, Butch Lyke, Chris Stinnett, Tommy Overstreet, Keith Harper, Scott Wood, Johnny Ryder, Lanny West, Karl Kultz, Terry Ratcliff, and Ricky Robertson.

Little League champs that year were the Wildcats. Team members included Anthony Conner, Mark Meador, William Blair, Melvin Gregory, Keith Kuelz, Joe Hall, Dale Blankenship, John Ritter, Mike Morris, Gary Groff, Douglas Hale, and Jamie Wright. Coaches were Donald Blair and Emil Kuelz.

Passbook savings accounts paid 5% in July 1972; two-year certificates of deposit, 6%.

Temp-O-Matic was advertising installation of a central air conditioning unit for \$675.



Work is proceeding on schedule for Hardy Road Elementary School...to be ready for classes in the fall.

PHOTO FROM VINTON HISTORY MUSEUM, VINTON MESSENGER ARCHIVES

In July 1972, Hardy Road Elementary School (W.E. Cundiff) was almost complete and ready to open in the fall.



In July 1972, Town of Vinton workers were busy repairing an 8-inch sewer main buried some 23 feet deep on Blandford Avenue. The main and lateral lines had been causing problems for 5 years.



LITTLE LEAGUE CHAMPS--The Vinton Little League Wildcats were this year's champions with a record of 13-1. Pictured, left to right, are: top row, Mark Meador, Coach Donald Blair, William Blair, Anthony Conner, Melvin Gregory, Keith Kuelz, and Coach Emil Kuelz; bottom row, Joe Hall, Dale Blankenship, John Ritter, Mike Morris, Gary Groff, Douglas Hale. Not pictured: Jamie Wright.

The Wildcats won the Little League Championship in the summer of 1972 with a record of 13 and 1.



(Messenger Photo) Philip Turpin, left, receives award...

...from R. H. Cooper

Vintonite Is Honored

Mailman Philip Turner of Vinton was honored for reviving a baby who had stopped breathing in a parked, closed car.



LEAGUE CHAMPS--These 14- and 15-year-old members of the Braves team won the championship in the Vinton Recreation Department Senior League. Pictured left to right, are: front row, Matt Stinnett, bat boy, Jim Bell, Randy Fitzgerald, Paul Martindale, Butch Lyke and bat boy Chris Stinnett; standing row, Tommy Overstreet, Keith Harper, coach Butch Sowers, Karl Harper, Scott Wood and Johnny Ryder. Team members Lanny West, Karl Kultz, Terry Ratcliff and Ricky Robertson were not present for picture. The Braves had a season record of 13 wins and three losses.

PHOTOS FROM THE VINTON HISTORY MUSEUM

The Braves won the Vinton Recreation Department Senior League Championship in the summer of 1972.

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SPORTS

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Terriers will play in "The Last Inning" baseball game Saturday

Salem Memorial Ballpark will be the site for "The Last Inning" this Saturday, an annual event celebrating recently graduated high school senior baseball players. Two seven inning games will be played with teams comprised of players who graduated in the spring of this year.

The annual event was initiated in 2020 when the COVID pandemic cancelled the high school season. It gave the seniors a chance to get on the field, and it was such a success it was decided to make it an annual event for senior players. The event is sponsored by the Salem Red Sox and the Salem-Roanoke Baseball Hall of Fame. There is no charge for the players and the event is free to the public.

Players are divided into four teams and each will receive a shirt with their team color, uniform number and name. The players will wear their team hats and either white or gray pants. All area teams were invited to send players.

The first game is scheduled for 4 pm with the Red team meeting the Green team. The Red team will have players from Franklin County, Lord Botetourt, Alleghany and Smith Mountain Lake Christian Academy. Coaches are Barry Shelton from Franklin, Seth Bradley from Alleghany and Tanner Holt from

SMLCA.

The Green team is comprised of players from Northside, Salem, Auburn and North Cross. Coaches are Kelly Dampier and Trent Cundiff from Northside, Wes McMillan from Salem and Scott Smith from North Cross.

Following the Red versus Green game the Salem-Roanoke Baseball Hall of Fame will present the Posey Oylar Scholarship and the Kelvin Bowles Scholarship. Also, the seven finalists for the Ray Bellamy Award, honoring the High School Player of the Year, will be presented a framed certificate and the overall winner will be announced.

Game two, between the Navy Blue and Gray teams, will begin following the award presentations and a "spruce up" by the grounds crew.

The Gray team is comprised of players from William Byrd, Cave Spring, Hidden Valley, Jefferson Forest and Eastern Montgomery. Shortstop Ethan Hairston and pitcher-thirdbaseman Trenton Sayers will represent Byrd and Terrier coach Jason Taylor will join Hidden Valley's Randy Boone and Ricky Lonker of Cave Spring on the coaching staff.

The Navy team will have players from Blacksburg, Christiansburg and Glenvar. The coaches, all from



Christiansburg, are Dale Nelson, Tom Meadows and Roy Jones.

As mentioned, there is no cost to attend the games and concessions will be available.

Practice for fall sports will begin today

Practice for Virginia High School League fall sports officially begins this week and William Byrd athletes will be busy preparing for the coming season.

The football team will take the field today for their first workout, beginning at 3 pm at Patterson Stadium. Byrd's first scrimmage is at home on Friday, August 12, against Glenvar, and a week later the Terriers will scrimmage at Rockbridge on August 19. Opening day for Byrd is August 26 when the Byrdmen travel to Bedford to take on Liberty High School.

The volleyball team will have a home scrimmage on August 10 against E.C. Glass. Byrd will be at Patrick Henry for a scrimmage on August 18, then open at home against Hidden Valley on Tuesday, August 23.

The cross country schedule has yet to be finalized, but the runners won't have a meet until September.



Senior Evan Mullen is a returning starter on the Byrd golf team.

PHOTO BY BRIAN HOFFMAN

First golf match Monday; Goodman is new coach

The William Byrd golf team will open the fall season on Monday when the Terriers compete for the "Roanoke Valley Cup" at the Hidden Valley Country Club. Byrd will be one of six teams competing with a 2 pm shotgun start.

The Terriers have a new coach this year as William Byrd graduate Tyler Goodman takes over the team. Tyler has been a coach in the basketball program and he's excited to add golf to his resume.

"I'm super excited to work with William Byrd and with the golf program," he said. "Coaches before me (Scott Whitehead and Kevin Tuck) have done a tremendous job with the program and I hope to continue with it. I am blessed to keep assistant coach Hunter Thompson on staff for this year."

Tryouts for the team began on Monday of this week so Tyler was still working to find a lineup for next week's opener. He has some solid returning players in seniors Evan Mullen, Clayton Gilmore, Kobe Turner and Colin Murtaugh as well sophomore Madeline Cunningham, junior Maddox Wolfe and junior Nathan Carter.

"They're key for a successful year," said Goodman. "I think we have some returners coming back this year that haven't had much match experience that will compete for a chance in the top six. Our goal as a team would be to compete to win the district and advance to the region."

Following Monday's match at Hidden Valley the Terriers will go to Olde Mill for a match hosted by Carroll County a week from today, on August 4.



The Valley United 13U team won the national "President's Cup" in Greensboro. Left to right: coach Josh Krehbiel, coach Chris Smoot(behind), Skylar Krehbiel, Laikyn Funk, Myla McDonald, Gabriella Carnevali, Bailey Smoot, Nadahlia Pollard, Abigail Tozier, Scotlyn Leonard, Amelia Stoner, Alyson Price, Emery Mitchem, Mead Pennylegion, Rachel Bobo, Madeline Howes, Rory Basel, Charlotte Wright, Kendall Ranson, head coach Cory Carroll and coach Ryan Ranson. Below, left to right, Hidden Valley's Rachel Bobo joins William Byrd's Scottie Leonard and Kendall Ranson as the girls hold the President's Cup.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Local girls are members of 13U soccer team that won national championship

Two William Byrd girls competed on the Valley United 13-and-under soccer team that won the national "Presidents Cup" in Greensboro, NC the second week-end of July. Scotlyn Leonard and Kendall Ranson were part of Valley United's team that won the Virginia State crown, the US Eastern Regionals and then the National President's Cup Championship on July 10.

The girls represented the Eastern Region in the four team national championship tournament, with a team from Charlotte representing the South Region, a team from Illinois from the North and a team from Las Vegas, Nevada from the West.

The Valley United girls lost their opener to the Illinois team, but bounced back to win their next two and gain a spot in the championship game against Las Vegas. Valley United led the game, 1-0, until the West Region champs scored with about 10 minutes to go. The game was decided by a shootout and it went seven shooters before the local girls prevailed, 1-0.

The overtime shooter was a thriller. Valley United goalie Amelia Stoner made a save to keep West alive in the seventh round of the shootout, then scored the winner.

"We were behind in the shootout and needed Amelia to make a save to even things up," said coach Corey Carroll. "It was a very exciting finish."

All the girls on the team came from Roanoke County, Salem and Roanoke City with one girl from Franklin County. After the tournament the "Top 11" were announced and Byrd's Leonard was selected as a defensive player.



Britain Beltran from page 1

Fighting Championship (BKFC)," said McCullough. "BKFC had been working for several years to legalize bare knuckle fighting here in the United States. The very first legal and fully sanctioned bare knuckle fight (since 1889) was held in June 2018 in Cheyenne, Wyoming. It was a huge success and the promotion is now the fastest growing combat sport in the world."

That first fight in 2018 also featured the first American-sanctioned women's bare knuckle fight in modern history.

Bare knuckle fighting is, basically, closed-fist boxing with no gloves. Fighters are permitted to wrap and tape the wrist, thumb, and mid-hand, but no gauze or tape can be within one inch of the knuckles.

According to its website, the BKFC holds its bouts in a unique circular four-rope ring, designed to encourage fast-paced and exciting bouts. The BKFC "Squared Circle" contains scratch lines, based on rules which governed bare knuckle fighting in the 19th century, and which requires fighters to "Toe the Line," starting every round face to face, just inches apart. "Knuckle Up" signals the beginning of the round. Fighters are allowed to "dirty box" or fight in the clinch, as long as they are actively striking, with no hits behind the head. There are five two-minute rounds, for both male and female bouts.

"BKFC was seeking other professional level fighters from MMA, boxing, kickboxing and Muay Thai to join their

promotion," McCullough says. "BKFC matchmakers had seen Britain's "scrappy style," and reached out to Britain to see if she'd like to fight on their second event, scheduled for August 25, 2018, in Biloxi, Mississippi."

The scheduled opponent would be a highly accomplished former UFC stand out, Bec Rawlings, from Australia. She had won the very first female bare knuckle fight at the Cheyenne event.

"Britain declined, at first, but after a second request, she decided to just go for it," McCullough said. "She needed the money and figured it would at least be a good experience for herself. Given that Britain had only just began her boxing career at age 26, she was the clear underdog against the highly experienced Rawlings, with over a decade more ring experience."

"Through great adversity and some very challenging circumstances, Britain prepared herself as best she could for what would become a turning point in her career," her mother says. "She showed up in Biloxi and shocked the world by not only holding her own against a long-standing combat sports veteran, but by going the distance and ending the match with a 'split decision' win for Bec Rawlings. That very closely scored fight has been viewed by over 14 million people and is still the highest viewed fight in BKFC's history. Britain earned the respect of fans the world over for her sheer heart and determination that she exhibited throughout that fight."

McCullough says Britain's career in BKFC has been nothing short of remarkable. "After a bad cut to her eye which ended her second fight due to a 'doctor stoppage,' Britain went on to win four fights in a row, all within a 12-month period. She was selected as the BKFC's Female Fighter of the Year for 2021 with notable wins over popular UFC Fighters Paige Van Zant and Pearl Gonzalez.

Britain's mother says bare knuckle fighting is as rough a sport as it sounds. Over her career, Britain has had dozens of facial stitches and even some extensive dental work. Her nose has been broken several times, but fortunately, "Britain is a fast healer and most of her facial lacerations healed really quickly with a little extra TLC." Early studies have found that bare knuckle fighting, while visually bloodier, due to cuts, is actually safer for the fighter than gloved boxing and MMA. Bare knuckle fighters must be very strategic in their strikes, and do not cause the high level of head trauma as other combat sports with padded gloves, elbows, knees and feet. In bare knuckle fighting, the fighter's only tool is the hands, taking the sport back to its historic roots.

Since her 2018 debut, Britain advanced to the very top of the 125-pound Women's Division and earned a title shot to become the World Champion. Her opponent was Christine Ferea, who Britain had faced in that second BKFC fight which ended with the "doctor stoppage."

McCullough says that in the Ferea rematch, "Britain fought a very tough five-round battle, leaving it all in the ring to the very last bell. Unfortunately, the judges gave the win to Ferea. However, Britain remained the No. 1 contender, as she still has the best record of all the female fighters in the organization. The only other loss on her record she hadn't had the opportunity to avenge was her debut loss against Bec Rawlings, back in 2018."

Rawlings had previously opted to leave the BKFC in 2019 with a 3-0 perfect record. She had been signed to the Bellator promotion. After two fights and then two years of inactivity due to the pandemic, Rawlings asked to return to BKFC as it had remained active in states with less restrictive guidelines during COVID.

Due to strict lockdowns, Rawlings was unable to leave

her home in Australia to return to the states and reclaim her place on the BKFC roster. However, when restrictions were finally lifted, the long-awaited rematch of that first battle with Britain was scheduled. Britain was "more than happy to be the one to welcome Bec Rawlings back to BKFC."

The long-awaited rematch with Rawlings took place on June 24, at the Hard Rock Hotel & Casino, in Hollywood, Florida. Britain surprised many by switching up her normal "brawler" style and showcased her much-improved skillset with an impressive performance. She out-boxed Rawlings with a very technically sound match, winning the nod of all three judges in a unanimous decision. This was a significant win for Britain as it reaffirmed her rightful place at the top of the roster, proving to all that she is the true No. 1 contender, her mother said.

McCullough says she has been fortunate enough to see Britain fight each of her bare knuckle bouts, to date, with a standing record of five wins and three losses. Britain currently remains the most active female fighter in the organization. She had four fights/four wins in 2021 and two fights so far this year—in February and June.

What's next for Britain? David Feldman, the owner of BKFC, has stated in a recent interview that he intends to keep Britain active, and his matchmakers will be working on obtaining a new opponent for her in the months ahead.

Britain, now 32, is the

mother of two children, ages 12 and 9. In July 2021, (during fight week and two days before her scheduled bout with Jenny Savage) she married Joey Beltran while in Tampa for her fight, surrounded by her team.

Joey is also an accomplished pro-fighter, was the two-time former BKFC Heavyweight World Champion and also a previous MMA stand-out with nearly two decades of elite combat sports experience. In an interview, Beltran says it was basically "love at first sight" when he met Britain while both were sitting VIP at another BKFC event.

They have been living

and training in Miami for the past year, but have just recently relocated to Bedford, where they will both continue their fighting careers from Virginia. They will continue to spend much of their time training out of Luck's Boxing Gym in Danville, with owner Marcus Luck having coached and trained both Beltrons in previous fights.

To follow Britain, go to her Facebook page: Britain Beltran or follow her on Instagram: @TeamBritain-Beltran. For sponsorship opportunities, reach out to Britain directly. For upcoming fight information, visit Bkfc.com.



Britain Beltran defeats Pearl Gonzalez in Miami in November 2021.



Britain Beltran defeated Jenny Savage by a TKO. The ref stopped the fight in Round 4.



Britain's big win over superstar Paige Van Zant. PHOTO COURTESY OF BKFC, PHOTOGRAPHER PHIL LAMBERT



Britain married fellow pro-fighter Joey Beltran in July 2021 in Tampa. SUBMITTED PHOTO

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

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