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Vinton Vet Wall Mural now complete



PHOTO BY DEBBIE ADAMS

Jon Murrill has completed the stunning exterior wall mural at the Vinton Veterinary Specialty Services Center on Washington Avenue in Vinton.

Debbie Adams
dadams@ourvalley.com

Acclaimed artist Jon Murrill has now completed the beautiful wall mural at the new Vinton Veterinary Specialty Services Center on Washington Avenue in Vinton. Those who commissioned the work of art and the community in general are delighted.

Since April 23, Murrill, assisted by art students and teachers from William Byrd

High School, and some additional members of the community, has turned a blank white wall at the center into a work of art.

Vinton Vet Chief Medical Director Dr. Courtney Wiegard explained how the project came about, "Once we knew the Specialty Services Center project was a go and there was a huge blank white wall, we knew we had to make it gorgeous. I posted on Facebook asking for

See Mural, page 3



The wall mural includes a detailed painting of a blue bird.



PHOTO COURTESY OF RUSTY GALBREATH

William Byrd Ecology teacher Rusty Galbreath and one of his students analyze the health of Wolf Creek by catching bugs.

Ecology students at William Byrd impacting their world

Debbie Adams
dadams@ourvalley.com

If you are old enough, you will remember when virtually every high school class involved the traditional lecture approach. That's not what you will find in the classes taught by Rusty Galbreath. He teaches Ecology (along with a couple of physics classes) at William Byrd High School. He and his students were in the news recently for their "Storm Drain Stenciling

See Ecology, page 5

Dr. Mark Watts retiring from Carilion Clinic Family Medicine in Vinton



PHOTO BY DEBBIE ADAMS

Dr. Mark Watts will be retiring from Carilion Clinic Family Medicine in Vinton at the end of June. The practice held a retirement celebration for him at the Vinton War Memorial on June 16. Pictured left to right are his son-in-law, Dr. Ethan Scott; his daughters, Annie Watts and Mary Page Watts, Dr. Watts, and his wife, Debbie Watts.

Debbie Adams
dadams@ourvalley.com

Dr. Mark Watts is retiring after 34 years as a physician with Carilion Clinic Family Medicine in Vinton (formerly Parkway Physicians).

"Ask any of us that work here in the Carilion Vinton office about Dr. Watts, and the response would be universal," said Dr. Randall Rhea. "It has been a pleasure and an honor to work with such a fine physician over these many years. His sense of humor and keen wit, combined with his compassion and outstanding clinical skills, have made him a favorite with the staff and his many, many blessed patients. He is a caring physician, a dear friend of mine, and he will be

terribly missed. We wish him only the best!"

Watts grew up in Roanoke and graduated from Patrick Henry High School, as did his wife, Debbie.

He comes from a medical family. His father practiced Emergency and Occupational Medicine at Lewis-Gale and his mother was a nursing professor at Virginia Western Community College.

Dr. Watts earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Virginia in 1979, majoring in Biology. He attended the University of Virginia School of Medicine, graduating in 1984, then completed his residency in Family Medicine at Carilion.

See Retiring, page 8



PHOTO BY DEBBIE ADAMS

Pastor Seong Jae Jo, Associate Pastor at Thrasher Memorial United Methodist Church in Vinton, was ordained at the annual Virginia Conference in Roanoke on June 17. Shown left to right are his father, Byoung Gi Jo; his mother, Hyun Ok Bang; Pastor Jo, and his fiancée, Ella Son.

Thrasher's Pastor Seong Jae Jo ordained at Virginia United Methodist Conference

Debbie Adams
dadams@ourvalley.com

Pastor Seong Jae Jo, who has served as Associate Pastor and youth minister at Thrasher Memorial United Methodist Church in Vinton for four years, was ordained as an Elder during the Virginia Annual United Methodist Conference in Roanoke on June 17.

He has also served as pastor for the Thrasher Roanoke Korean Church which meets at Thrasher on Sunday afternoons.

The Virginia Conference represents over 1,000 churches, 308,490 members, and 1,895 clergy.

Pastor Jo, as he is known, was appointed to Thrasher Memorial in 2019. Now that he has been ordained as an

Elder, he will be moving to Herndon United Methodist Church to assume the position of Senior Pastor for that congregation. That's not the only big change coming in his life— he is newly engaged to Ella Son.

His ordination took place during a "Service of Call and the Ordering of the Ministry" at the annual conference held at the Berglund Center in a ceremony led by Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson.

"Ministry is the work of God, done by the people of God," Hauptert-Johnson said. "Today we recognize that God calls all of us, clergy and laity, to spread the good news of Jesus Christ to the world."

See Thrasher's, page 3



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PHOTO COURTESY OF RICHMOND PRSA

Roanoke County Public Schools won “Best in Show” from the PRSA for their “2022 Load the Bus” campaign to collect supplies for children in need. RCPS Director of Community Relations Chuck Lionberger (APR) accepts the award from Taya Jarman (APR), president of the Richmond Chapter of PRSA.

RCPS ‘Load the Bus’ named Best in Show

The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) Richmond Chapter announced the winners of the 76th Virginia Public Relations Awards at a banquet on Wednesday, June 7 at the Dominion Energy Center in Richmond.

Roanoke County Public Schools was honored with a “Best in Show” Commonwealth Award of Excellence for the “2022 Load the Bus” school supply campaign; “Graduation Live 2022” received a Capital Award of Excellence for “External Video Program.”

The Best-in-Show Commonwealth Award category recognizes exceptional public relations campaigns. The Capital Awards recognize excellence in individual public relations tactics that may or may not be part of a larger overall campaign.

Each year, the PRSA Richmond chapter recognizes outstanding public relations professionals and their work at the Virginia Public Relations Awards banquet. Entries are taken for local, statewide, national, and global campaigns, from government entities, non-profit organizations, corporations, and PR agencies and independent practitioners. The chapter recognizes the most creative and effective communications strategies and tactics happening across Virginia. Over 100 individuals and organizations were recognized for outstanding public relations campaigns and tactics in various categories.

The 2022 Load the Bus campaign, in partnership with Roanoke City, Salem City, and Craig County Public Schools, raised more than \$31,000 worth of school supplies for children in Roanoke County alone, with tens of thousands of dollars more collected for students in Roanoke City, Salem and Craig County.

“Graduation Live” began over a decade ago and produces live and on-demand playback of graduation ceremonies for the five Roanoke County high schools, allowing family and friends who are unable to attend the ceremonies in person the opportunity to watch students receive their diplomas. This program especially benefits those who live in other parts of the country, abroad, or who are serving in the military.

RCPS Director of Community Relations Chuck Lionberger spearheads the “Load the Bus” campaign each year, as well as “Graduation Live.”

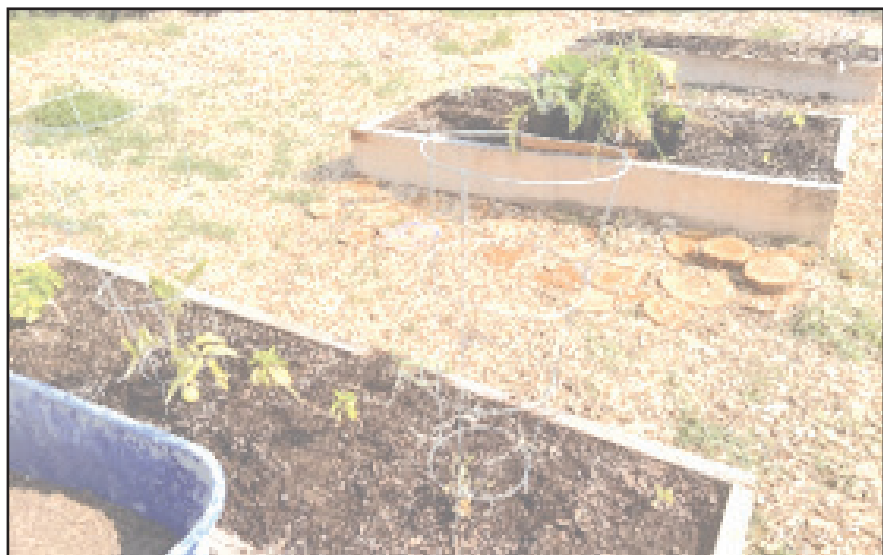
“Helping students and families with their school supplies is a community effort and we are grateful for everyone’s support,” said RCPS School Superintendent Dr. Ken Nicely. “Chuck Lionberger spends countless hours coordinating the effort, including securing volunteers, organizing and distributing the supplies, and promoting the event across the valley. We are proud of his award and the tremendous work he does for the school division.”

This year’s 2023 “Load the Bus” school supply drive will take place August 4-6.

Submitted by Roanoke County Public Schools

PEOPLE, PLACES AND THINGS

The Vinton Community Garden



By Angie Chewning

This spring, volunteers began building Vinton’s first community garden, located at 218 S. Pollard Street. What has been a vacant lot for years is currently being transformed into what will be a destination for those who love to garden and to learn about horticulture and self-sustainability.

With the help of a few local businesses such as Walter’s Greenhouse, MIB Tree Service, and Brown Hound Tree Service, the Public Works division of the Town of Vinton, Roanoke Valley Television-RVTV, the Vinton Chamber of Commerce, and even the Vinton Fire Department, donations are coming in and the word is spreading; something great is growing in Vinton!

Progress is slow, but sure. By Spring of 2024, this lot will be a budding sanctuary for pollinators and there will be garden plots for residents or local businesses to sponsor. But to

get from here to there, there are some things that need to be procured.

Residents or business owners/managers may donate any of the following to help this garden come to fruition:

- Gardening tools
- Fencing materials
- Rainwater collection barrels
- Native plants
- Picnic table
- Storage shed
- Garden hoses
- Gift Cards to hardware stores
- 5- Gallon buckets
- Flower pots
- Kneeling pads
- Solar lights
- Twine

To make a donation or to find out more information on this incredible project, please email vintoncommunitygarden@gmail.com. Please like us on Facebook and visit our website at www.vintoncommunitygarden.org to watch our progress. Together, we can do more!

Submitted by Carrie Poff, organizer of the Vinton Community Garden



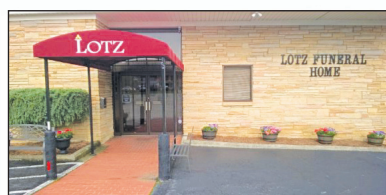
PHOTOS BY ANGIE CHEWNING

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ENTERTAINMENT

Thursday, June 29th – Pleading the Fifth Friday, June 30th – Blue Connection Saturday, July 1 – Midnight Blue Sunday, July 2 – CLOSED Monday, July 3 – Glen Shelton Band Tuesday, July 4 – Cimmaron	Wednesday, July 5 – Phlegar Hill Thursday, July 6 – Live Tandem Friday, July 7 – The Oddfellows Saturday, July 8 – Wound Tight also Rebels of Rhythm Cloggers during music breaks
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Thrasher's from page 1

“An elder is called to share in the ministry of Christ and the whole church: to preach and teach the Word of God and faithfully administer the sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion; to lead the people of God in worship and prayer; to lead persons to faith in Jesus Christ; to exercise pastoral supervision; to order the life of the congregation and the connection; to counsel the troubled and declare forgiveness of sin; to lead the people of God in obedience to Christ’s mission in the world; to seek justice, peace, and freedom for all people; and to take a responsible place in the government of the Church and in service in and to the community,” the Bishop said. “This is the rule of life and work of an Elder.”

Pastor Jo’s welcoming church, Herndon UMC, introduced him to his new congregation saying, “Pastor Seong Jae Jo has a heart for loving and serving God and God’s people and is excited to serve amid Northern Virginia’s diverse community. As a third culture kid, he knows how important and essential diversity is in today’s society and in Christianity. He hopes

to see ‘oneness that is not sameness, but an embracement of diversity and differences in Jesus Christ, who makes us one body.’ He firmly believes God has called us to ministry regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, generation, and age. His trilingual skill, diverse cultural background, and experience in different countries brings unique opportunities to serve and share God’s love through ministry and mission with Herndon UMC.”

Pastor Jo is a native of South Korea; however, he has lived all over the world as the child of missionary parents. His parents were pastors in South Korea, serving for several years before the opportunity arose for them to become missionaries with the Korean Methodist Church in Paraguay, when he was 12 years old.

The transition was challenging— a different language, different foods, a different culture, a different environment—a totally new and awkward experience for someone his age.

The predominant language in Paraguay is Spanish, which his family did not speak. Since his parents were



PHOTO BY DEBBIE ADAMS

Pastor John Hemming (on left), the Senior Pastor at Thrasher Memorial UMC, is shown with Pastor Jo, and Pastor Ilgha Ilunga, who will become the new Associate Pastor at Thrasher in July.

brother had to learn quickly as they were attending public schools. He now speaks three languages: Korean, Spanish, and

Mural from page 1

recommendations for muralists and Jon Murrill’s name was mentioned repeatedly. I reached out to him, and he immediately came to see the wall. He was thrilled with the idea of bringing gorgeous mural art to Vinton and we loved that he is an alumna of William Byrd (Class of 2005) and a Vinton resident. We collaborated on the idea, and we are just thrilled with the final concept. Being able to have William Byrd art students help is the icing on the cake. Truly a community effort!”

Murrill designed the artwork, in collaboration with the center. The project began with Vinton Vet first pressure washing the wall and having white primer applied. Murrill then roughly sketched his design, which features the great outdoors and local wildlife, on the primer layer.

Working on weekends, he, along with the volunteer students and their art teachers, Denise Sartell, Alicia Spangler and Allyson Goin, applied base coats of paint to fill in the basic shapes of wildlife and mountains with rollers and brushes.

Then Murrill used a special artist spray paint to add the fine details. On June 15, he sealed the mural with a coat of anti-graffiti paint which enhances the vibrancy of the colors, and which will protect the mural for five to ten years.

Expect to see more of Murrill’s exterior artwork in Vinton in the coming months. He has a history of community-driven projects. His large-scale artwork can be seen throughout the Roanoke Valley, from Salem to Roanoke, and now in Vinton. His murals can be found beneath the 9th and 13th Street bridges in Southeast Roanoke, work funded by the National Endowment of the Arts and Roanoke City.

He is spending much of June working with 40 volunteers on a 300-foot wall mural in downtown Martinsville, funded by the Harvest Foundation’s Project Hope grant series. The mural celebrates the diversity of Martinsville and features local flowers and large hands representing different ages, races, genders, and cultures.

The Martinsville mural is a community project and Murrill has developed a passion for collaborative efforts that bring people together.

July will be dedicated to creating a large-scale privately funded mural at Dixie Products in the Melrose community. Its theme is unity and celebrating the historic neighborhood.

Murrill has been an art teacher for about 10 years, most recently at Patrick Henry High School, but is now pursuing his passion for art full time, focused on exterior art and bringing



PHOTOS BY DEBBIE ADAMS

Artist Jon Murrill worked with art students and teachers from William Byrd High School on the mural – making it a community project.

communities together to produce art. He plans to continue his work with youth by drawing them into the public arts scene.

“We are thrilled to bring beautiful art to the Town of Vinton,” said Dr. Courtney Wiegard, Medical Director at Vinton Veterinary Hospital. “It has already brought so much joy to the staff and clients of Vinton Veterinary Hospital, which was always the intent. It was absolutely wonderful to work with Jon Murrill who is a major talent. We are incredibly grateful for the generosity of our sponsors who made funding possible.”

“We are so happy with all of the community involvement with this beautiful testament to the animals we serve and the natural beauty that surrounds us!” said Alice Dantzer, General Manager at Vinton Vet. “Our sponsors include

Kris and Doug Oursler. This lovely couple donated a chemotherapy hood in memory of their dog, Garrett, who Dr. Wiegard treated for cancer. The treatments gave them several more months with their beloved pet. The chemo hood did not cost the total amount they wanted to donate, and so they gave the rest towards the mural in memory of Garrett. We also have a picture of Garrett in the room in our hospital in which we do chemo. Other contributors are Pretty Paws Dog and Cat Grooming, Offleash K9 Training, Zoetis, Moneta Heating and Air, Judge and Mrs. Humes Franklin, and Merck Animal Health.”

Dr. Wiegard added, “Please come by and snap a photo with the sunbeam paw print, the blue bird or the deer fawn and tag #vintonvet or #vintonvetmural on Instagram and Facebook!”

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

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| <p>CLUES ACROSS</p> <p>1. ___ fi (slang)</p> <p>4. Anecdotes about a person</p> <p>7. Central Standard Time</p> <p>10. Beverage receptacle</p> <p>11. Football’s Newton</p> <p>12. Be in debt</p> <p>13. Tattles</p> <p>15. Musician ___ Lo</p> <p>16. Arrange again</p> <p>19. A binary compound of carbon with a metal</p> <p>21. Brazilian futbol great</p> <p>23. Feared</p> <p>24. Annoy</p> <p>25. Unit of heredity</p> <p>26. Small freshwater fish</p> <p>27. Muscular weaknesses</p> <p>30. Fined</p> <p>34. One-time EU currency</p> | <p>35. Egyptian unit of weight</p> <p>36. Winged horse</p> <p>41. Increments</p> <p>45. Abnormal rattling sound</p> <p>46. Middle Eastern country</p> <p>47. A type of greeter</p> <p>50. ___ inning stretch</p> <p>54. Reaches</p> <p>55. More gray</p> <p>56. Football term</p> <p>57. Swiss river</p> <p>59. Ninth day before the ides</p> <p>60. Grow old</p> <p>61. Don’t know when yet</p> <p>62. College hoops tournament</p> <p>63. Japanese monetary unit</p> <p>64. Medical device</p> <p>65. Antidiuretic hormone</p> | <p>CLUES DOWN</p> <p>1. Put fear into</p> <p>2. Partner to corned beef</p> <p>3. Interiors</p> <p>4. Agrees to a demand</p> <p>5. No (Scottish)</p> <p>6. ___ Hess Corp.</p> <p>7. Ornamental molding</p> <p>8. Garment</p> <p>9. Electric car company</p> <p>13. Decimal digits in binary (abbr.)</p> <p>14. Gibbon</p> <p>17. Sun up in New York</p> <p>18. ___ the line</p> <p>20. A vale</p> <p>22. Old Irish alphabet</p> <p>27. A type of band</p> <p>28. A team’s best pitcher</p> <p>29. Floor covering</p> | <p>31. A ___ in the machine</p> <p>32. Supplement with difficulty</p> <p>33. Prosecutors</p> <p>37. Place in order</p> <p>38. Japanese lute</p> <p>39. Mongolian city ___ Bator</p> <p>40. Perceived</p> <p>41. A cloth for washing dishes</p> <p>42. Chocolate cookie with white cream filling</p> <p>43. Grassy plain</p> <p>44. Barometer</p> <p>47. Father</p> <p>48. Of the ear</p> <p>49. Thomas ____, British dramatist 1652-85</p> <p>51. After eighth</p> <p>52. Where golfers begin</p> <p>53. Time units (abbr.)</p> <p>58. Basics</p> |
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FROM THE PULPIT

The Sermon on the Mount, the Beatitudes

Pastor Bryan Crouch
Lynn Haven Baptist Church

The Sermon on the Mount can be found in Matthew 5-7. It is the first public sermon given by Jesus. This incredible sermon begins with a series of “Blessed are those who” statements.

Scripture is full of “IF-THEN” statements. If you do this, act this way, or treat others a certain way, THEN this “blessing” or consequence will happen.

Matthew 5:3 gives us the first of these statements and it tells us, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Sounds pretty simple, right? Let’s take a closer look at some of the words used to get a better idea of the expectation being placed on all His followers.

According to the Amplified

version of the Bible, “Blessed” means “happy, to be envied, and spiritually prosperous—with life-joy and satisfaction in God’s favor and salvation, regardless of their outward conditions.”

WOW! Wouldn’t this be nice? But how do we get this type of blessing? By being “poor in spirit” which means being “humble, who rate themselves insignificant.”

Interesting...IF we are truly humble in spirit THEN we will be spiritually prosperous. Furthermore, IF these things are true in your life, THEN “theirs is the kingdom of heaven”.

The Sermon on the Mount is an extremely deep dive into some very deep Christian theology. I pray that as we look at these verses in Matthew 5 that we all learn something about being more like Christ tomorrow than we were today.

RECIPES OF THE WEEK

So Good, So Simple, So Quick – Brown Sugar Garlic Chicken

This tasty recipe is ready in half an hour, using just your basic ingredients.

Ingredients:
2 Tbsp. vegetable oil
5 boneless chicken thighs or a couple of boneless chicken breasts
2 Tbsp. minced garlic
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. black pepper
1/2 cup brown sugar, packed
1/4 cup water

Directions: Place vegetable oil and chicken in skillet on medium high heat. Sear the chicken for 5-7 minutes, then flip it over and cook 5 minutes more. Add garlic, salt, pepper, brown sugar, and water. Stir to combine. Lower the temperature to medium and cook 8 to 10 minutes more—and you’re done.

Serve as is, or over rice.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PIXABAY

The Vinton Messenger

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Peace in the Chaos

Read Luke 21:1 through 22:71

Do we ever look at our world and ask, “What happened?” The moral climate seems to have plunged. Sin is rampant. Nuclear war threatens. A bad economy has become the new way of life. And what’s with all these record-breaking natural disasters?

It’s easy to wonder if the end of world is near and become so afraid that we panic.

“When you hear of wars and uprisings, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away” (Luke 21:9).

Many times through the past two thousand years, people have panicked over the state of the world. Jesus had a word for them and for us: “Do not be frightened.”

The world may change, but God is still in control.

Bad times can bring good results. As society disintegrates people tend to turn to God, and revival can occur. Challenges even make believers depend on God more. Our survival plan should be to prepare ourselves spiritually for whatever God brings—in good times or bad.

Challenge for Today: Think of a way to point people to Jesus when they express their fears about the future.

Quicklook: Luke 21:5-18

VA 24016. A spiritual event is held on the 2nd Sunday of each month at 10:30 a.m. Since contracting COVID-19 may still be possible, please take the health steps that are best for you. It is appreciated that by attending you are taking responsibility for your own health. Visit www.eck-va.org, www.meetup.com/Roanoke-Spiritual-Experiences * Group* or call 540-353-5365 for other Eckankar programs and for more information about how the teachings of Eckankar can lead you to spiritual freedom.

FOURSQUARE

EVANGEL CHURCH - 2330 Hardy Road, Vinton (corner of Hardy Road and Feather Road), 540-982-3694, www.evangel4sq.com, Pastor Tim Wright. Worship Service Sunday, 10AM. Bible Study Wednesday 11AM-12PM.

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 Wor-

ship 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; cmpe2verizon.net Sunday school 9:45am, Worship 11:00am; Communion 1st Sundays; 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.

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

Ecology from page 1



WBHS Ecology teacher Rusty Galbreath was named as a “Terrific Terrier” for his dynamic teaching style and engaging lessons.



A William Byrd Ecology student completes a stream study at Wolf Creek.

Project.”
The students stenciled a “Dump No Waste, Drains to Creek” message on the high school’s drainage inlets hoping to make other students and the general public aware of the importance of protecting area waterways.

Most people mistakenly believe storm drainage systems carry stormwater to a treatment plant prior to it being discharged into the nearest waterway. However, stormwater is not treated, and it discharges directly into the area’s receiving waters. Often, stormwater is polluted with oil, sediment, cigarette butts, grass, trash, lawn and leaf debris, pet waste, and more. Stenciling storm drain inlets is an easy way to provide a visual reminder that stormwater goes, untreated, into nearby waterways.

Roanoke County’s Stormwater Dept. is encouraging other groups to duplicate the project in their areas of the county and will provide supplies necessary to carry out the project, so the hope is that the William Byrd project will have a wide impact.

However, the stenciling project is not the only way Galbreath has involved his students in hands-on projects that benefit the environment. He says it is only one of the outdoor projects they do. In fact, they are frequently outside.

“Kids get bored if they sit all day,” Galbreath says. “We get out a lot and do a lot.”

Ecology is basically the study of how living things interact with each other and their environment. To obtain a standard diploma in Virginia you are required to take three science classes in high school. An Advanced Studies Diploma requires four. Ecology is one of the choices to meet the requirements at all Roanoke County high schools.

When you register for Ecology classes at Byrd, usually in 11th or 12th grade,

you are signing up not just for instruction in the basic principles of ecology, but for some hands-on learning fun with the kind of teacher you always wished for.

Galbreath lists projects in forestry, stream and stormwater management, environmental studies, and biomes as other favorites STEM activities for him and his students.

During the forestry unit, his classes go outside (William Byrd is located near the Wolf Creek Greenway) and identify trees. In a partnership with the 4-H, they plant trees behind the school near Wolf Creek and near the edge of the woods at the school entrance. He brings in foresters as guest speakers. (He is always eager to share the story of the real Smokey Bear, born in New Mexico.)

The Ecology students also go to Wolf Creek and catch bugs as part of the Stream and Watershed Unit. You can analyze the health of a stream by determining which creatures live there. Students look for “benthic macro-invertebrates” (bottom dwellers), which are reliable indicators of the biological condition of waterbodies. They spend all or most of their lives in water, are easy to collect, and differ in their tolerance to pollution.

Galbreath says if the students catch leeches, that indicates a dirty creek if they are the majority of the bugs seen—they are more tolerant of pollutants. Water pennies and mayflies indicate a “clean creek.” Crawdads can go either way. Students do a head count of what they find— catch and then release back into the stream.

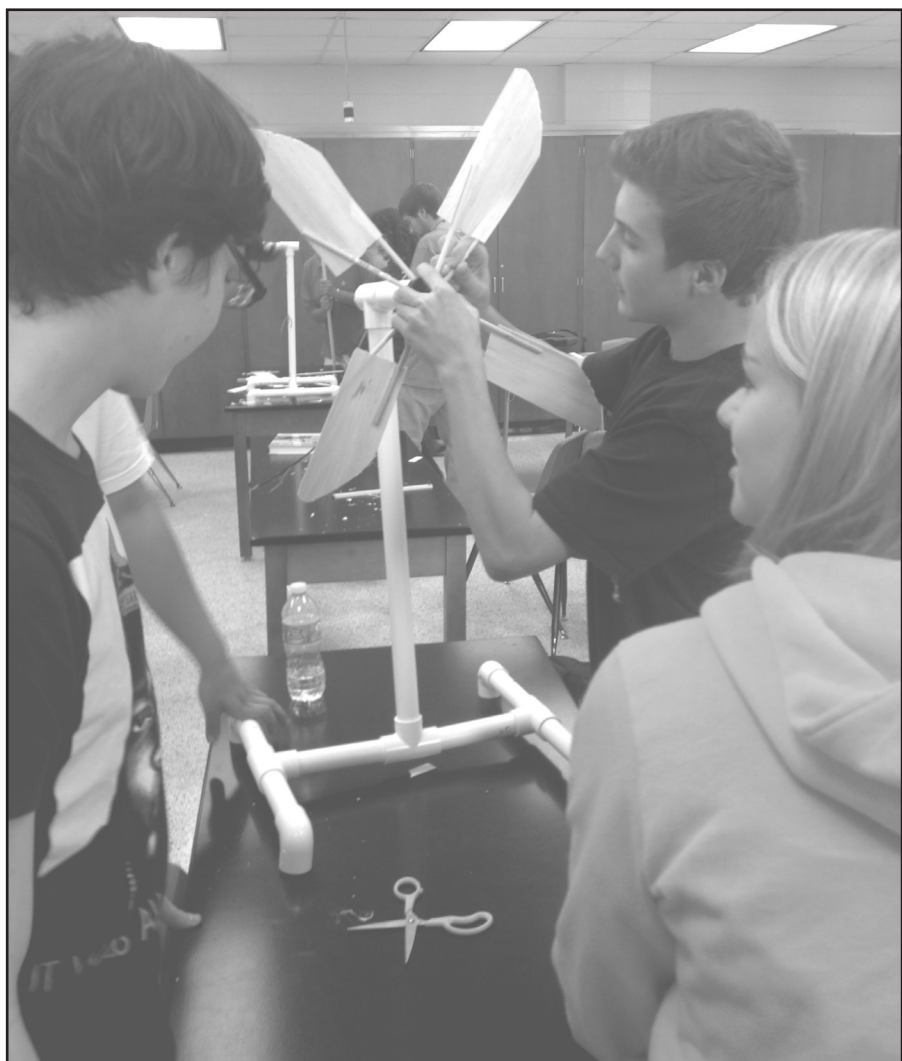
Assistant Principal Phillip Martin thanked Galbreath for “an awesome lesson” he observed at Wolf Creek one day.

“The students collected and analyzed data from the creek to check the health of the stream,” Martin said. “I learned which organisms indicate healthy or polluted water. I also learned that I can’t catch a crawfish and that Mr. Galbreath can identify every living organism on the planet.”

Students get to don hip waders and use hand-held nets, kick-nets, and shower curtains to complete stream studies on Wolf Creek, comparing water quality.

Guest speakers also come from the Roanoke Valley Clean Valley Council,

See **Ecology**, page 8



Ecology students build and test a wind turbine. PHOTOS COURTESY OF RUSTY GALBREATH

***In honor of
4th of July***

**OUR NEWSPAPER
offices will be closed on
Tuesday, July 4th, 2023
And will reopen on
Wed., July 5th
@ 8:30 a.m.**

**All ads for July 5th and
July 6th papers need to
be in our office by
Friday, June 30
at 12:00 Noon.**

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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Next Mingle at the Market concert coming up on June 24

The Mended Fences band will be headlining the second Mingle at the Market concert of the season on June 24. The local/regional band plays country/rock/rop/R&B/dance/Top 40 hits.

The Mingle concert series is sponsored by the Vinton Area Chamber of Commerce and takes place on the HomeTrust Stage at the Vinton Farmers' Market in downtown Vinton from 7 to 10 p.m.

Food on the Go and Elote Alebrije Mexican Street Corn are this week's food vendors.

There will be the usual beer garden—ID required. The Chamber asks that you have your ID out and ready for volunteers to check to

speed up entry.

Admission is \$7 for adults. Kids under 12 are free.

Bring your own chair. No pets are allowed. No outside food or drink.

Sponsors for this year's Mingle at the Market concerts include:

Alcova Mortgage, Coastal Insurance Planning, MemberOne, PFG, Mountain View Real Estate, Fox Radio 910, ServPro, Winters Storage, Bank of Botetourt, the Vinton War Memorial, Jason Boothe-Realtor, Blue Ridge Beverage, The Vinton Messenger, Vertex Signs, Magnets USA, Lotz Vinton Chapel, Carilion Clinic, TL Electric, HomeTrust Bank, the Town of Vinton, Vinton McDonald's, Roanoke



PHOTO COURTESY PATRICK PERKINS PHOTOGRAPHY

Mended Fences will be the featured performers at the June 24 Mingle at the Market concert.

County, and RVTV.

Upcoming Mingle at the Market concerts are July 8 (the Eric Wayne Band and Mark Osbourne), July 22 (Glam'r Kiti and Adrenaline 6), Aug. 12 (Filthy Souls and Gasoline Alley), Aug. 26 (\$5 Shake), Sept. 9 (Fuzzy Logic Band), and Sept. 23 (Five Shades of Grey).

Any organizations interested in volunteering at the Mingle events may contact the Chamber office at 540-343-1364.

BUSINESS SERVICES DIRECTORY

New police officer sworn in at Vinton Town Council, Council tours Vinton History Museum

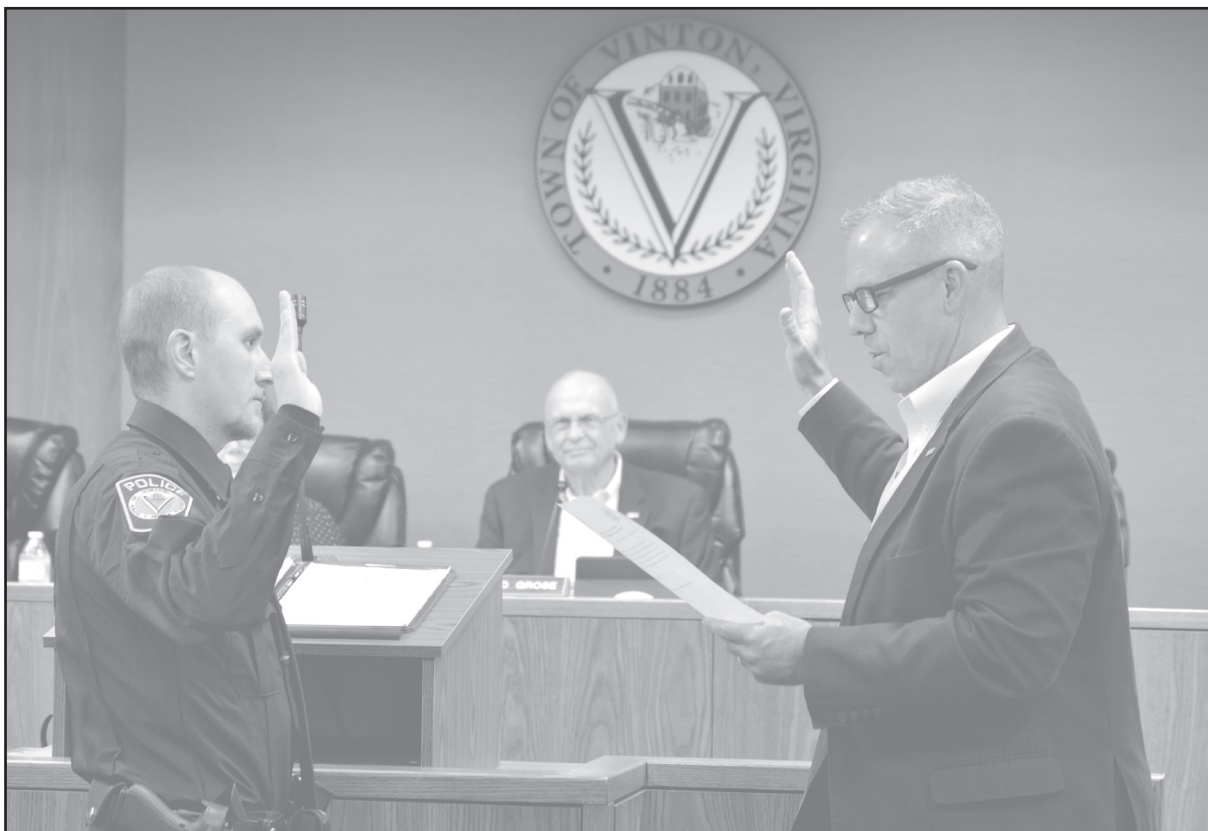


PHOTO BY DEBBIE ADAMS

Officer Andrew Hagy (on left) was sworn in as the newest member of the Vinton Police Department by Town Manager Pete Peters at the Town Council meeting on June 20.



PHOTO COURTESY VINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Vinton Historical Society has proposed a campaign to raise funds for the installation of a cargo lift at the Vinton History Museum to make the second floor ADA accessible.

Vinton Town Council met in Chambers on June 20. Prior to the meeting, several members toured the nearby Vinton History Museum to gain a better understanding of an agenda item on helping to fund the installation of a cargo lift at the museum— the historic Upson House— which is owned by the town and leased by the Vinton Historical Society.

First up on the agenda was the introduction and swearing in of a new officer in the Vinton Police Dept.— Officer Andrew Hagy. He was introduced by Deputy Chief Tim Lawless and sworn in by Vinton Town Manager Pete Peters.

Hagy, 29, is from Marion, Va., and a graduate of Marion High School. He earned his bachelor's degree in political science from Radford University in 2017. He then began his career in law enforcement with the City of Roanoke, where he has remained until being hired by the Vinton Police Dept. He was pinned by his fiancée, Chelsea Mundy, and accompanied by his mother, Amanda Hagy, and his sisters, Abby and Anna.

Council held a public hearing on a proposed amendment to the town's FY2022-2023 budget to appropriate funding for additional milling and paving, economic development expenditures, projected operational expenditures, capital reserves, and stormwater projects in the total amount of \$5,329,163.16 in the General Fund, Capital Fund, and Stormwater Fund. (A public hearing is required when an amended budget exceeds 1% of the total expenditures in the currently adopted budget.)

The budget presentation was made by Assistant Town Manager Cody Sexton.

According to Sexton, when the town transferred its water and wastewater utility system to the Western Virginia Water Authority in July 2022, the agreement allowed the town to keep the remaining fund balances in the Utility Fund. The town had estimated those balances to be \$2.5 million and budgeted that amount for capital projects in the fiscal year 2022-2023 budget. However, the actual amount of remaining fund balances exceeded that estimate.

Sexton noted that, in addition, several revenue streams have outperformed what was anticipated in the original budget for the past fiscal year. Economic activity is up in the Town of Vinton, allowing the transfer of money into the Capital Reserve Fund.

For instance, pari-mutuel taxes are \$200,000 higher than anticipated. Revenues from meals taxes are up significantly, primarily due to restaurants that have opened in the past five years, indicating that "they are being enjoyed by the community with the town reaping the benefits." Revenues from cigarette taxes are "robust."

The Vinton War Memorial had a record year of bookings, leading to increased revenues. Interest rates are high, and the town has made prudent investments which are bringing in about \$25,000 per month in added revenues. The state sales tax is also "robust." VDOT has unexpectedly increased funding for highway maintenance which will pay for more paving in the town. Due to a settlement with Monsanto involving contaminated water, the town has \$246,000 to add to the Stormwater Fund. Remaining ARPA funding in the amount of \$1.8 million has been transferred to the General Fund.

The list is long, but the takeaway is that the town is in excellent financial shape and virtually debt free. Council adopted the resolution to amend the budget.

Finance Director Andrew Keen reported that the town has approximately \$4 million in cash and \$7 million in investments for a total liquidity of \$11 million through the end of April.

Debbie Pitts, Treasurer of the Vinton Historical Society, and Judy Cunningham, Executive Director of the Vinton History Museum, briefed Town Council on the proposed installation of the cargo lift at the museum to enable easier access to the second floor of the historic building. The original plan was to add an elevator to the structure, but a price tag of \$300,000 was too costly and changes to the building would have been too extensive.

The revised cargo lift option, designed by Hill Studio, will cost approximately \$163,000 with no

structural changes to the building and no loss of space for exhibits. The lift will make the museum ADA accessible and safer for staff and visitors; currently there is only a steep, narrow set of interior stairs to reach the second floor. Many of the museum's thousands of Vinton artifacts are heavy and difficult to move from floor to floor.

Seeking council's approval, the Historical Society proposed a fundraising campaign. The organization has been setting aside funds for the "Rising to New Heights" project for quite a while. They would like to form a joint committee with the town, local businesses, and community members to define and facilitate the project. Council gave the "head nod" to proceed.

In other business, council adopted a resolution appropriating \$15,182 from a VRSA insurance claim reimbursement for construction costs for water damage to the Vinton Farmers' Market during last year's cold weather to the Farmers' Market Expenditure Account for Special Programs.

Town Manager Pete Peters updated council on several projects. Demolition will resume shortly on the downtown block damaged by last summer's fire. The owners of the majority of the affected properties are eager to rebuild and have hired an architectural firm to begin planning.

Milling is underway on Cleveland Avenue with paving soon to follow. There will be temporary striping of the pavement until town-wide restriping is scheduled.

The 3rd Street Lift Station project is in its final stages; water meter replacement is also "in the home stretch."

The new Pollard 107 South restaurant plans to open in July, once the ABC licensing process is complete.

The Vinton Police Department has been successful in applying for more grant funding, receiving two grants, one for \$5,000 and another for \$158,000.

The town's annual paving program will begin in August with approximately \$1.4 million to be spent,

See **Council**, page 9

Retiring from page 1

"I grew up in this area and wanted to stay," Watts said. "I had the opportunity to join the Vinton group and took advantage of it. This has been a wonderful place to practice medicine."

"I chose Family Medicine due to the relationships and continuity of care," he shared. "It is much more fun to see patients you know rather than strangers and makes for better care."

His first day on the job was July 17, 1989. His last day will be at the end of June 2023.

"The best things about my career are our patients and all the physicians and staff with which I work," Watts said. "I have also served as assistant professor at Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine and am Clerkship Director for Family Medicine. The third year students do four weeks in Family Medicine, and I oversee their experience as Clerkship Director. I have really enjoyed working with them."

One of those students said, "Dr. Watts exemplifies what a physician should be— caring, involved, enthusiastic and devoted to life-long learning."

probably won't miss in retirement, his response is "the Electronic Health System." In his 30+ years as a doctor, there have been huge changes in the medical field, "with more emphasis on meeting quality measures and doing population management."

"Our health system is facing huge challenges in the future," Watts said. "We need to make significant quality improvements so that we serve all of our patients better. I also urge our local community to support Bradley Free Clinic in its efforts to fill a lot of the gaps still left in the system in serving the underserved."

Dr. Watts has two daughters: Mary Page who is an occupational therapist at The Center for Discovery in upstate New York working with autistic children; and Annie, who is a lawyer working with Apex Clean Energy in Charlottesville on the legal aspects of creating solar and windmill farms.

His plans for retirement include traveling, cycling, playing "bad golf," learning to "play the guitar again," and volunteering at the Bradley Free Clinic.



Dr. Watts celebrated his upcoming retirement with colleagues (left to right) Ashley Dudden (Nurse Practitioner), Dr. Elaine Renick, Dr. Mark Watts, Dr. Taylor Dayton, and Dr. Randall Rhea; back row, Derrick Barr (Physician Assistant) and Dr. Timothy Beirne.

Free Clinic has been a helping hand in the community, serving as the safety net for low-income, uninsured persons in the area. Nearly 2,000 patients receive no-cost medical, pharmacy, dental and behavioral health services each year, thanks to a network of 300 medical professionals, like Dr. Watts and Dr. Rhea.

Watts was honored with a retirement celebration at the Vinton War Memorial on June 16. The room was filled with family and Carilion Clinic friends and colleagues. Dr. Watts, as usual, was grinning from ear to ear.



PHOTOS BY DEBBIE ADAMS

Dr. Mark Watts with colleague Dr. Randall Rhea, also of Carilion Clinic Family Medicine in Vinton. The two physicians volunteer at the Bradley Free Clinic and serve on its board of directors.

OBITUARIES

Wayne Edward Wray

Wayne Edward Wray, beloved husband, father, and papaw, of Roanoke, slipped peacefully from this life and entered the gates of Heaven on Saturday, June 17, 2023, at the age of 82. He was surrounded by those who loved him at the time of his passing. He spent the last month heroically battling against a thief called cancer.

He was born on October 25, 1940, to Henry and Mable (Lee) Wray in the family home on Bandy Road. He was the fifth of seven children.

Mr. Wray spent most of his 82 years on Bandy Road near the family home, where he made a life with his wife of 60 years, Barbara (Booth) Wray. They raised two children, David and Kimberly, and saw the birth of five grandchildren.

Mr. Wray was well known in the Mount Pleasant community. He spent time working with the youth as a member of Mount Pleasant Baptist Church for over 50 years. He was also an active member of the Mt. Pleasant Lions Club for over 20 years, helping often with their community outreach projects like Breakfast with Santa and shopping for at risk children for back-to-school items. He and Barbara are current members of Vinton Baptist Church.



Mr. Wray spent time working at Wirtz Florist, Save-A-Stop, and Norfolk Southern Railway where he retired after 27 years of service. Wayne loved his family and spending time with them in some way. He was always quick with a smile or a laugh to help you feel at ease. He liked listening to southern gospel music, especially The Gaither Vocal Band and spending time on his front porch, usually with a dog on his lap or by his side. He will be remembered by his grandchildren for his love of plants, his ability to cook good chicken tenders and cabbage, his taste in afternoon shows like "Let's Make a Deal" or "Law and Order: SVU" and just how nice and kind he was to everyone.

Mr. Wray was preceded in death by his parents, Henry and Mable; his brother, Willard, and sister-in-law, Jewel, of West Virginia; brothers, Jack, Jim, and Danny; as well as his only sister, Betty.

He leaves behind his loving wife, Barbara; son, David (Heather) Wray; daughter, Kimberly Parrish (Matthew), both of Roanoke; brother, Barry, and sister-in-law, Dorinda (Payne) Wray, of Elkins, W.Va.; sister-in-law, Norma Wray of Roanoke; as well as former sister-in-law, Nadine (Wray) Sigmon of Rocky Mount. Left here to carry on his legacy are his loving grandchildren, Kallie and Brody Parrish; Ethan, Claire, and Mary Wray, of Roanoke; as well as countless cousins, nieces, and nephews. He also leaves behind his loving dogs, Mocha and Prince, who never left his side.

A special thank you from the family to those at Gentle Shepherd Hospice, Maggie, Mary Lou, and Sylvia, who helped care for Wayne in his final days.

A Celebration of Life will be held at Vinton Baptist Church at 12 Noon on Thursday, June 22. Mr. Wray's final resting place will be with family at Bandy Cemetery. The family received visitors at Oakey's Chapel in Vinton on Wednesday, June 21, from 5 to 8 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to Vinton Baptist Church or to the Mt. Pleasant Lions Club. Online condolences may be expressed to the family at www.Oakeys.com; 540-982-2221.

Thrashers

from page 1

English.

As missionaries, his parents generally worked to establish new churches in Paraguay and assumed regular pastoral care duties. The family spent three years in Paraguay, before another opportunity presented itself, and they moved to Kenya to partner with other missionaries in a Masai village. Jo describes it as a "unique experience." There was no school to attend. Kenyans spoke Swahili, some English, and tribal languages. It was a difficult year with little water, no electricity, and little civilization. He does have special memories of the wild animals nearby and trying to "run with the giraffes."

Pastor Jo had first felt the call to serve God when he was 13 through a vision; God showed him an image of himself as a worship leader. His relationship with God intensified during the year in Kenya. It was a lonely year which allowed him to find God as he asked for strength to get through the experience.

His family returned to South America after a year to serve one of the Korean Methodist churches in Argentina. To a 16-year-old, it felt like God was making up for the difficult year in Kenya with the blessing of moving to the capital city of Argentina.

After researching colleges in the United States, he elected to attend John Brown University, a Christian college in Arkansas, where "God had opened the door." He chose a Christian school because of his experiences in Argentina which put attending a Christian college "in my heart." He majored in Worship Arts at JBU and served as worship leader in a small Baptist church.

After he completed his undergraduate degree, Jo didn't feel ready for the ministry or attending seminary. He thought he just wanted to be a worship leader, not a full-fledged pastor. He applied to different churches and had the opportunity to serve as a worship pastor in Los Angeles for a year. He made friends, liked the "LA experience," and liked his church.

However, while serving the church, he found it necessary to work a regular job to "survive." He found himself feeling guilty for his focus on his day job rather than spending more time serving God directly. Through prayer, he determined the path he was on was not what God had in mind for him.

"God gave me the heart to go seminary," he says. He considered seminaries in the Los Angeles area, which were numerous, but "somehow God led me to see Wesley all the way on the East Coast in Washington, D. C."

He applied and received a scholarship, with everything falling into place in a two-week time frame— "like it was meant to be." He had really never even thought of an East Coast college, but "God is sending me there now; okay, I'll go."

While in seminary, Jo served as Youth Minister with the Korean United Methodist Church of Greater Washington in McLean, Va. He discovered how much he liked working with teens and young college students, an opportunity which he hadn't had before. He says his heart "got bigger for them," and he began to love the work.

He graduated from Wesley Theological Seminary in May 2019 with his Master's in Divinity.

When he was appointed to serve as Associate Pastor at Thrasher, he had no idea where Roanoke was located. In fact, he had never heard of it, and he had no idea what to expect, but said, "God and the Virginia Conference sent me here."

In his farewell to Thrasher Memorial (June 18 was his last day), Pastor Jo said, "As I write this, I am filled with mixed emotions and feelings— grief, gratitude, and excitement. It is with a heavy heart that I am leaving you all, but I am also filled with gratitude for the time which we have shared. I am blessed that God put us together for God's ministry and mission through which we made so many memories, even during the COVID pandemic. I am grateful for the ways my existence and identity have been accepted, welcomed, and embraced."

He has always believed a big part of his ministry is to answer the call to be a bridge to unite those of different backgrounds, generations, cultures, languages, and ethnicities as one church, one body, and one community in Christ. His calling is not about him but about God calling him to serve others.

"While I am sad to be leaving, I know that God has a plan for you and me and I trust that He will guide us. I will keep all of you in my prayers and I ask that you keep me and my new ministry in yours as well. Thank you for being a part of my life, ministry, and this faith journey, and for making my time here so special, unique, and incomparable. I will miss you all dearly, but I am grateful for the ministry in which we have served together, the life we have shared, and the familyhood that we have built together."

Ecology

from page 5

the Department of Environmental Quality, and other environmental agencies. There are PowerPoints and classroom simulations. Students create posters and complete art projects involving whatever they are studying. They create 3D biomes from shoe boxes. They make homemade wind turbines and test amperage.

The top 20 students are able to attend the Earth Summit Conference at Virginia Western Community College to participate in environmental activities on campus for a day.

WBHS Principal Tammy Newcomb says, "Mr. Galbreath goes above and beyond to immerse students in real life environmental lessons. He often has the students examining the viability of Wolf Creek and the surrounding woods around WBHS."

A couple of years ago, William Byrd started a new tradition of recognizing teachers with a "Terrier of the Week Spotlight." Galbreath was in the first group selected by students and received this commendation, "He always makes science engaging with his many fun and creative lessons, as well as his

unique characters, such as Backwoods Bob. Thank you, Mr. Galbreath, for your hard work and creativity."

Galbreath says he appreciates the administrators at William Byrd who give him support and a wide latitude in projects.

He has been teaching for 34 years—18 years at Glenvar High School and 17 years at WBHS. He has also taught some classes at Hidden Valley and Cave Spring High Schools when needed. He ran cross-country as a student at Virginia Tech in the 1980s, and coached at Glenvar, but gave that up and became a house painter on the side when his four children reached college age. He is also an enthusiastic sponsor for the Fellowship of Christian Athletes Club which meets each week at Byrd.

His hope is that students in his Ecology classes will not just learn about the environment, but more importantly about the impact of human activity on the environment, and how they themselves are capable of making a positive impact on their community and the world.

Vinton Wesleyan Bible School scheduled for June 25-28

Vinton Wesleyan Church will be holding the annual Vacation Bible School June 25-28 from 6:30-8 p.m. The theme is "God of Wonders."

Toddlers, kids and teens ages 2-17 will participate in crafts,

games, and music, and learn Bible stories based on Exodus 3:14 in which God said to Moses, "I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I am' has sent me to you."

Vinton Wesleyan is located at 246

East Jefferson Ave. in downtown Vinton. You may sign up at the door.

For more information, call the church office at 540-345-3385.

Submitted by Vinton Wesleyan Church

W.E. Cundiff Elementary wins Continuous Improvement Exemplar Award, RCPS wins Innovative Practice Award

Debbie Adams

dadams@ourvalley.com

W.E. Cundiff Elementary School in Vinton has been recognized by the Virginia Board of Education with the 2023 Continuous Improvement Exemplar Award. Roanoke County Public Schools has received the Innovative Practice Award.

Ninety-three schools across the Commonwealth received the Continuous Improvement Award for 2022-2023. To receive this recognition the school can be Accredited or Accredited with Conditions and must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- The school demonstrates an increase in the combined rate for math, reading and science for each of the past three years (2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2021-2022), with a total increase across the three years of ten points or more;
- The school demonstrates an increase in the combined rate for two or more student groups in reading and math for each of the past three years (2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2021-2022), with a total increase across the three years of ten points or more;
- The school demonstrates an increase in the Graduation and Completion Index (GCI) for each of the past three years (2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2021-2022), with a total increase across the three years of four percent or more; and the school demonstrates a decrease in the dropout rate for each of the past three years (2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2021-2022), with the total reduction across three years of 15 percent or more of the first year's dropout rate.

The Continuous Improvement awards criteria were amended for 2022-2023 awards (based on 2021-2022 school year data) to remove chronic absenteeism criteria since 2021-2022 school year chronic absenteeism data was not used in accreditation calculations for 2021-2022.

Roanoke County Public Schools was one of seven school divisions and one school in the Commonwealth which received the Innovative Practice Award. RCPS, in fact, received two awards.

The goals and objectives of the innovative practice must align with one of the following priority areas:

- Closing achievement gaps among vulnerable and/or minority student groups.
- Developing an integrated STEM approach to learning.
- Building genuine relationships with families to support overall family well-being and children's healthy development.
- Elevating the quality and character of the school environment and supporting norms, goals, and values of the community.
- Retaining high-quality teachers.
- Developing life-ready students through implementation of the Profile of a Virginia Graduate.

RCPS received the Innovative Practice Award for implementing a system to promote a school environment that cultivates students' physical, emotional, and intellectual well-being using Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS); having a licensed health counselor in every secondary school; violence and suicide prevention programs and enhanced school safety and security.

Roanoke County, Roanoke City, and Salem Public Schools were recognized for Developing and Implementing a regional approach to the Student Registered Apprenticeship Program with regional businesses to provide students with apprenticeship opportunities that could lead to industry-recognized credentials and/or full-time employment to meet local business needs.

The Innovative Practice recognitions are part of the board's Exemplar Performance Awards program and are based on performance and practices during 2021-2022 and prior school years. The winning divisions and school also include Goochland County, Louisa County, Radford, and York County Public Schools and Kempsville High School in Virginia Beach.

"I congratulate all of the winners for developing innovative practices that address the needs of their students and communities and for implementing them successfully over time," Board of Education President Dan Gecker said. "These awards recognize the creative and innovative work of educators and provide an incentive for other divisions and schools to develop their own innovations to improve outcomes and expand opportunities for students."

"I am looking forward to visiting each of these divisions during the next school year to learn more about their innovations and see firsthand how students are benefitting," Superintendent of Public Instruction Lisa Coons said. "I see every school division and school as a potential laboratory for innovations that could potentially inform statewide policies and practices."

Sowers attends 2023 GFWC Annual Convention

The General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC) held the 2023 annual convention in Louisville, Ky., June 10-12.

Kathryn Sowers of Vinton is the International Liaisons chairman and "had the privilege of hosting the six representatives of the International Clubs from Belize, San Paulo, Brazil and the Philippines."

During the Opening Ceremony, she introduced Tricia Pelayo, president of the Belmopan Woman's Club, and Emily Carrillo, president of the Belize City Juniores, both representing Belize; Maria Tereza Mendes, president of the GFWC Cre-Ser Woman's Club in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Eliane Felix Okamoto, and Luis Fernando Marmo, all representing Sao Paulo; and Linda Gonzalez, president of the National Federation of Women's Clubs of the Philippines.

At the convention, awards were presented to the states for projects completed, workshops held, speakers on Food Insecurity, Canine Companions, and micro-volunteering. Members also participated in a service project - no-sew blankets for dogs.

Under Sowers, the GFWC International Liaisons Committee meets regularly with the International Clubs via Zoom.

The GFWC, both locally, nationally, and internationally, is distinguished from other service organizations by the breadth of its outreach. The community service programs span all areas of the lives of members, their families, and communities: arts and culture, civic engagement and outreach, education and libraries, environment, and health and wellness. The organization was founded in 1890.

The GFWC Woman's Club of Vinton is well known for the members' focus on domestic violence and prevention of child abuse, as they partner with the Vinton Police Dept. in planting a pinwheel garden at the Municipal Building each spring to focus attention on child abuse. They complete a wide variety of community service projects throughout the year - wherever there is a need, they seek to meet it.

Submitted by Kathryn Sowers



Kathryn Sowers (on left) escorting Linda Bonzalez, president of the National Federation of Women's Clubs of the Philippines, at the GFWC Annual Convention in Louisville, Ky.



Kathryn Sowers announcing and presenting awards to the International Clubs representatives.



A reception was held for the International Representatives with the GFWC International Liaison Committee in the GFWC International President's suite.



The opening ceremony of the 2023 GFWC Annual Convention where each International Representative was introduced, and her country's flag presented.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF KATHRYN SOWERS



Five William Byrd players were recently named to the All-Region 3D first team in soccer. Left to right are Maci Glass, Addi St. Clair, Claire Glover, Maddy Simmons and Sophia Chrisley. Far right, coach Molly Cox was named the Region 3D Coach of the Year.

PHOTOS BY BRIAN HOFFMAN, SUZANNE WITCHER & JIM DEVINNEY

ALL-REGION 3D TERRIERS

William Byrd High School had players in all spring sports represented on All-Region 3D teams, but the most by far came from the 17-3-2 girls' soccer team. Of seven Terriers who made first team All-Region, five came from the soccer team.

In addition to being first team all-region senior Maddy Simmons was the Region 3D Player of the Year in girls' soccer. In addition, Byrd coach Molly Cox was named the region Coach of the Year.

Senior keeper Sophia Chrisley was first team all-region, and Chrisley and Simmons would also be named second team All-State in Class 3. Also making first team All-Region 3D were senior defender Maci Glass and two juniors, forward Addi St. Clair and midfielder Claire Glover.

In boys' soccer sophomore defender Ian Sigmon of Byrd was named to the first team. Seniors Braden Crossan, at forward, and defender Dylan Hughers were all-region second team selections.

In softball Terrier senior Haleigh Vaughan, the Blue Ridge District Player of the Year, was named to the All-Region 3D first team as a shortstop. Seniors Makayla Bell and Brooklyn Peters and freshman Addison Clark were all Honorable Mention all-region selections from Byrd.

The baseball team had no first team selections but had three players on the second team. Senior James Purcell was named second team at catcher, senior Evan Mullen was chosen in the outfield and junior Ian Burnett was named at second base.

In boys' lacrosse Byrd put four players on the all-region second team, and all four are juniors slated to return next year. Second teamers include Beau Brady at midfield, Dom Dulak at short stick defensive middle, Ian Vest on defense and Julian Pantoja in the goal.

For the girls' lacrosse team, sophomore Annika Hylton was selected second team all-region at attack. Samantha Martin, another sophomore, was honorable mention at midfield.



Haleigh Vaughan, left, is first team all-region in softball and Ian Sigmon made the first team in boys' soccer.

PHOTOS BY BRIAN HOFFMAN & JIM DEVINNEY

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Council

from page 8

mainly in the neighborhoods behind Kroger and Oakey's.

The Midweek Crew of Pathfinders for Greenways will be clearing the sediment build-up from Wolf Creek Greenway in the tunnel under Route 24. Vinton Public Works will assist.

The Town of Vinton has received its second EPA Brownfields Environmental Assessment Program Grant in the amount of \$500,000. The first grant for \$300,000 leveraged funds to assist in expediting projects for Gish Mill, Vinyard Station, the Cleveland Mart, and the proposed hotel.

Construction is expected to resume at Gish Mill in September.

Planning and Zoning received a grant of \$218,000 to assist with development of a community park at the former Vinton Municipal Pool site.

Assistant Planning and Zoning Director Nathan McClung reported on the June Community Development Committee meeting. Topics of discussion included an expansion of the dumpster site at the Vinton Farmers' Market in an

effort to support downtown businesses. The Hotel Market Report and Engineered Site Plan has been completed and will be used to assist with financial investor recruitment.

McClung said that the Planning and Zoning staff will be working to update the street light ordinance in order to better manage light levels (control lumens) for private street lamps that are in the town's right-of-way. This has become an issue on Ramada Street and McClung anticipates the complaints will spread in the future.

In council remarks, Vice Mayor Mike Stovall updated members on the proposed playground for the Boys and Girls Clubs of SWVA program located at Vinton Baptist. The playground will be located on the lot next to Lotz Funeral Home. The property is owned by the church. The project is in partnership with KABOOM.

The July 4 Town Council meeting has been cancelled due to the fireworks festivities at the Vinton War Memorial that night.



PHOTO COURTESY VINTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The proposed cargo lift at the Vinton History Museum would not change the structure of the museum. It would be installed on the exterior of the building, running from ground level to the second-floor window shown here with an air conditioning unit.

Annual Four on the 4th benefit race returns to Vinton

After a successful 2022 event, American National Bank & Trust's Four on the 4th race presented by Fleet Feet will be returning to the Town of Vinton. The fundraiser benefits the Boys & Girls Clubs of SWVA, which has a location at Vinton Baptist Church.

The town has welcomed back the celebrated holiday tradition to its town limits, with the start and finish line at the Vinton War Memorial.

The race course features a downhill start, less than 150 feet of elevation gain, and a run through downtown Vinton, including the Vinton Farmers' Market, newly developed Vinyard Station, and the Boys & Girls Club at Vinton Baptist Church.

A free Kids Fun Run makes the event exciting for the entire family. Four on the 4th celebrates the spirit of community and the nation's 247th birthday.

Boys & Girls Clubs of SWVA (BGCSWVA) currently serve students ages 6-18 in 11 locations throughout the region in all-day summer camps at little to no cost to families. BGCSWVA has locations in Montgomery County, Franklin County, Roanoke County, Salem City, and Roanoke City. The event raises more than \$30,000 annually to support summer programs including field trips, academic support and mentoring, and summer meals for youth.

Underserved youth in the Roanoke region benefit from American National Bank & Trust's Four on the 4th race, which annually attracts more than 500 runners.

Register at www.fouronthe4th.com.

Submitted by Town of Vinton, Fleet Feet

SPORTS

Send story ideas & announcements to bhoffman@ourvalley.org, or PO Box 1125, Salem, Va, 24153 • ourvalley.org



RAYSA

Left, Ellie Conner of the Vinton All-Stars pitches in Monday's win over Salem in the 13U opener of the Roanoke Area Youth Softball Association (RAYSA) tournament. Above, Emmalee Harris rips a double for the Vinton girls and, right, Janilla Henderson of the 10U team pulls safely into second. Tournament action continues this week, weather permitting, at Darrell Shell Park.



PHOTOS BY BRIAN HOFFMAN

Vinton teams in RAYSA this week, baseball opens Saturday

The Roanoke Area Youth Softball Association tournaments for girls opened on a rainy night at Darrell Shell Park Monday but all the first round games were played. Vinton had teams in the 10U and 13U tournaments and this weekend the baseball tournaments start at Green Hill Park.

Monday at Darrell Shell, on the grounds of Penn Forest Elementary School, Vinton's 10U team lost to

South County Red in the opening round. Tuesday's action was postponed by rain and Vinton was scheduled to meet North Roanoke on Wednesday, although rain was in the forecast again at press time. All tournaments are double elimination.

In the 13U bracket Vinton opened with a win over Salem. The Vinton girls were scheduled to play GSA, a Roanoke City team, in the second

round when weather and playing conditions allowed.

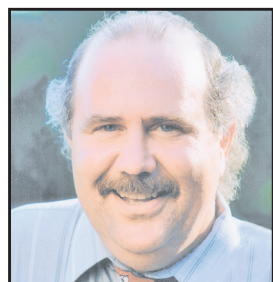
There is also a tournament for 17U but Vinton is not included. Championship games in all three tournaments were originally scheduled for Friday but may be moved back due to inclement weather.

The new Roanoke Area Youth Baseball Association tournaments are scheduled to begin on Saturday at

Green Hill Park in Roanoke County. The "Valley Series" is an end-of-the-season all-star tournament for participating youth baseball teams.

On Saturday Salem and Glenvar will open against each other at 12:30 pm in the 10U tournament, with Vinton against North Roanoke to follow. In the 12U tournament Salem will play Franklin County at 1 pm, followed by North Roanoke against Vinton.

Brian Hoffman



DIAMONDS ARE FOR WINNERS

I watched the coronation of King Charles in May and was amazed at the gold and jewelry on display in the crowns, crosses and anywhere you might stick a diamond, ruby or sapphire. Then I saw the Chiefs' championship ring.

The Chiefs unveiled their championship rings last week and they're a sight to behold. It seems like every year the current champion tries to out-do the previous one, and I'm pretty certain the Chiefs have accomplished that.

First off, the ring includes 609 round diamonds, 16 baguette diamonds, whatever a baguette is, and four marquise diamonds. That's 629 diamonds on one ring!! If I didn't know better I wouldn't think you could get 100 diamonds on a ring, much less 629.

I'm wondering who all gets those rings. Certainly everyone on the 45 man roster and let's say another five or six on the practice squad. Let's round it off to 50 players.

Then you have the coaches. I checked the Chiefs' web-site and they list 29 assistant coaches in addition to head coach Andy Reid, so that's another 30 rings.

Of course the owner and front office personnel will be included, and a conservative guess would be another 20. So, I'm thinking about 100 of the real rings will be given out.

I saw an article where over 700 rings were given after the 2020 Chiefs won the Super Bowl, but most of them were "replica" models that went to cheerleaders, support staff and the like. I guess that means

it's not solid gold and real diamonds, but it would still be cool to have.

So, let's say 100 real rings are given out, and that's probably a conservative estimate. At 629 diamonds per ring that would be 62,900 diamonds. And I know they're not cheap, because when I bought an engagement ring for my wife 35 years ago I had to save up for a year in advance, and it had just one diamond. Thank goodness she's not a Chiefs' fan.

Along with the diamonds each Super Bowl ring also has 35 custom cut rubies, since the Chiefs' color scheme is red. And, get this, the top of the ring comes off and inside Arrowhead Stadium is revealed with a pair of Lombardi Trophies on the field.

"Winning a Super Bowl is the crowning achievement for an NFL club, and the championship ring is the ultimate symbol of the hard work, dedication and sacrifice that it takes from everyone in the organization to reach this pinnacle," Chiefs President Mark Donovan said, via a press release.

Okay, that's great, but I'd be scared to wear the thing. It would be like standing outside the casino counting 100 dollar bills. You're just asking for someone to hit you over the head and take off with the ring.

And, in a more practical vein, how are you going to get something out of your pocket? With 664 stones, counting diamonds and rubies, that has to be a pretty good sized ring. If you feel a sneeze coming on that would be a challenge to get your handkerchief out of your pocket in time.

From what I can see, this Chiefs' ring might be the most elaborate of all-time. A couple years ago former Bucs' coach Bruce Arians was at a Virginia Tech football game and he was happy to show me his ring. It was very nice, indeed, but I doubt if it had over 600 stones.

I've been to the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton many times, and one of my favorite displays is the case with all the Super Bowl rings, starting with the Packers in 1967. It was a ring you might actually wear, but as the years progressed you could see them getting bigger and gaudier every season until now the Chiefs are basically wearing a jewelry store on their finger.

Shortly after reading about the new rings I was driving through Roanoke and saw a guy struggling to push a shopping cart, loaded with all his worldly possessions, up a hill. All that money going to bling and some folks are struggling to get a bite to eat. Makes you think.

GOOD START FOR SIPE AT VMI

Hunter Sipe, a 2022 graduate of William Byrd High School and a product of the Terrier baseball program, saw lots of time on the mound for VMI as a freshman.

The 6'1", 185 pound lefty appeared in 23 games for the Keydets, all in relief, pitching 36 and a third innings. He struck out 21 with 11 walks and finished the season with a 6.94 earned run average on a team



Hunter Sipe recently completed his first year at VMI.

PHOTO BY KEITH LUCAS

that was 26-29. His longest stint was on March 28 when he pitched four and a third innings against Virginia Tech in Blacksburg.

Hunter had a 1-3 record. He picked up his first collegiate win on March 17, St. Patrick's Day, in a 14-4 victory over Norfolk State. Hunter pitched three and a third innings, striking out four with no walks and allowing just one earned run.

In his senior season at Byrd Sipe was 7-1 with a 1.77 ERA, striking out 67 in 60 innings.

DEAN TRANSFERRING TO SOUTH CAROLINA

When Hunter Sipe pitched against Virginia Tech this year former Byrd teammate Tyler Dean was in the Hokies' bullpen. That won't happen next spring.

Dean, a rising junior, announced last week that he will be transferring to the University of South Carolina to pitch for the Gamecocks. Tyler is hoping to get a little more mound time for the Cocks after pitching just 16 innings in his first two seasons at Tech. South Carolina was 42-21 this past season and made it to the NCAA Super Regionals, where they were eliminated by the University of Florida.

Tyler will be pitching in the Cape Cod "wooden bat" league this summer.

