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# The Vinton Messenger

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## Grose, Mullins, Liles to run for re-election; Vinton seeks Historic District designation

**Debbie Adams**  
dadams@ourvalley.org

Mayor Brad Grose and Town Council members Laurie Mullins and Keith Liles officially announced at the Vinton Town Council meeting on Feb. 20 that they will be running for re-election to council in the fall General Election. Grose was first elected to Town Council in 2000 and to his position as mayor in 2004. Mullins was first elected in 2020; Liles, in 2016.

A public hearing was held to hear public comments on taking action to officially list the Vinton Historic District on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places.

Michael Pulice, Senior Architectural Historian for the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR), and Kate Kronau, Historic Preservation Associate for Hill Studio, gave a presentation to provide information to property owners and local officials about the meaning of the National Register designation.

The town contracted with Hill Studio to conduct an historic resources survey of the downtown district, which included about 35 properties. Their research indicates that the Vinton Downtown

Historic District appears to be eligible for a National Register listing at the local level of significance, based on the criteria of commerce and architecture.

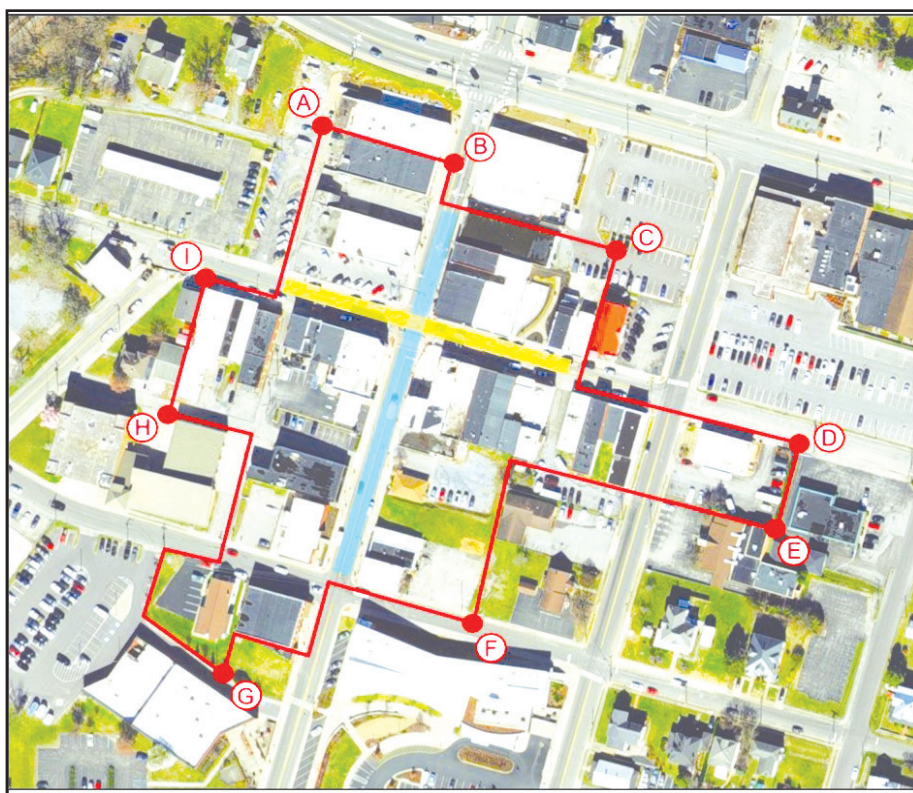
The district encompasses approximately 6.38 acres surrounding the intersection of Pollard Street and Lee Avenue, South Maple and Jackson, which includes about four blocks of commercial buildings constructed from 1900 to 1971.

Placement on the National Register is an honorary designation which does not restrict property owners in any way. Owners do not have to seek permission from DHR to make any changes to their property, including the demolition of a building or the subdivision of the property. Property assessments will not change as a result of the listing.

Being included on the National Register is a community planning tool which promotes awareness of and provides information and materials for education and heritage tourism, and makes monetary incentives available.

According to Town Manager Pete Peters, this process began when Sam and Bill Cundiff asked the town about

See **Council**, page 6



Title: Vinton Downtown Historic District Date: 10/23/2023

PHOTO COURTESY OF HILL STUDIO, TOWN OF VINTON

The proposed Vinton Historic District includes four blocks of commercial buildings mainly along Pollard Street and Lee Avenue in downtown Vinton.



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF RCPS

Architectural rendering of proposed renovations and expansion at W.E. Cundiff Elementary

## W.E. Cundiff renovations ready to move forward

**Debbie Adams**  
dadams@ourvalley.org

The Roanoke County Board of Supervisors and the Roanoke County School Board have given their approval to a revised interim agreement with Branch Builds which will allow a renovation and expansion project to move forward at W.E. Cundiff Elementary School (WEC). The agreement also allows the construction of the new Career and Technical Education Center off Peters Creek Road to proceed, along with renovations at Glen Cove Elementary.

The W.E. Cundiff and Glen Cove renovations have long been under discussion due to both schools' open classroom design—once a trend in elementary school education in the 1970s, but now considered a hindrance to learning.

These are the only two open concept elementary schools remaining in Virginia.

On December 7, 2023, the School Board selected a proposal by Branch Companies/RRMM Architects and Balzer & Associates to construct the new CTE center and renovate and expand W.E. Cundiff and Glen Cove.

The entire project will cost \$132 million with approximately \$80 million dedicated to building the new CTE center and \$50 million to renovating and expanding the two elementary schools.

"We are very excited to move forward with these much-needed projects," said Dr. Ken Nicely, superintendent of Roanoke County Public Schools. "This announcement is the culmination of a lot of work, planning and preparation. Our staff

has put in countless hours of advance work to identify what we need to include in the new CTE center and what improvements we need to make at Glen Cove and W.E. Cundiff."

"We're looking to start these projects this coming summer and that wouldn't have been possible without the support of the School Board, Board of Supervisors and Citizens Advisory Committee. We are very thankful for their partnership in helping us identify the site, scope, and funding to get these projects underway."

"The funding for this project was the result of a memorandum of understanding between the Roanoke County School Board and the Roanoke County Board of Supervisors earlier this year to provide

See **Cundiff**, page 6

## Harrison recommends new sport – no, it's not pickleball

Don Harrison, owner of Don's Cab-Inns Campground at Explore Park, has discovered a new favorite way to keep in shape at age 60 – disc golf. He took up the sport about four years ago and has found it to be a "very fun, and also healthy and inexpensive to play."

"This is not a 'new' sport, but it has taken off in popularity in the past few years," Harrison explains. "Covid was a major factor. That's how I got started. One of my campers during the start of Covid was a professional disc golfer and he showed me how to play. I've been involved in sports all my life but had never really heard of disc golf. I'm so glad I got introduced to it, though."

"What a great sport for any age! I find it especially nice for someone at a more advanced age – like me," he jokes. "I played in a tournament with a guy who was 91 and he was very good."

"It's inexpensive to get started; it's good, low-impact exercise that gets you outside in the beautiful outdoors, 'a hike with a purpose'. You can play it alone or with family or friends and you can do it competitively."

Harrison says that despite its tremendous health benefits, "I don't think a lot of people locally know about it."

The history of disc golf is closely



Don Harrison competing in the Disc Golf World Championship in Flagstaff, Ariz.

tied to the history of Frisbees. The first known instance of anyone playing golf with a flying disc occurred in Canada in 1926 when a group of school buddies played a game involving throwing tin plates at targets like trees and fence posts. They named it "Tin Lid Golf."

Modern disc golf seems to have popped up simultaneously but independently at many places in the early 1960s. Students at Rice University were known to hold tournaments with trees as targets, while players in Georgia

See **Harrison**, page 5



PHOTOS COURTESY OF DON HARRISON

There is a great variety in looks and creativity in laying out a disc golf course, depending upon the terrain. This is a course Harrison played in West Virginia.

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# Mayor Grose applauds regional cooperation at VLGMA conference

By Cody Sexton, Vinton Deputy Town Manager

The Virginia Local Government Management Association (VLGMA) held its Winter Conference at the Hotel Roanoke February 14-16. The theme of the conference was “No One Walks Alone,” highlighting the various partnerships that exist inside and outside of local government organizations to make the communities thrive.

Vinton Deputy Town Manager Cody Sexton, who also serves on the

Executive Committee of VLGMA, helped to lead the planning efforts of the conference as one of the conference co-chairs.

“The challenges that all local governments face are neither exclusive nor easy,” said Sexton. “VLGMA gives local government managers an opportunity to come together, share their stories, and build partnerships that can make us better leaders for our organizations and communities.”

A highlight of the conference this year was a unique welcome

to the Roanoke Valley. Typically, the mayor of the host locality has offered a welcome to the conference attendees.

This year, to demonstrate the spirit of regionalism that exists within the Roanoke Valley, the three mayors of Roanoke, Salem, and Vinton came together to celebrate the work of local government.

Mayors Sherman Lea (Roanoke City), Renee Turk (City of Salem), and Brad Grose (Vinton) shared the stage to show how they all work together to make the region stronger and

thanked the conference attendees for the work they do every day in their own localities.

Mayor Grose described this year’s conference as “Valley cooperation on display!”

The VLGMA is a non-profit, non-partisan organization composed mainly of city, town, and county managers and key members of their management teams. The foremost goal of the association is to strengthen the quality of local government through professional



PHOTO COURTESY OF BRAD GROSE  
From left, Mayors Sherman Lea (Roanoke City), Renee Turk (City of Salem), and Brad Grose (Vinton) welcomed the VLGMA Winter Conference to Roanoke, applauding the valley’s spirit of regional cooperation.

management in a variety of ways including training, networking, and resource sharing.



PHOTO COURTESY OF AMANDA KINSER  
Skylar Fitzgerald (far right) from William Byrd advocated for the FCCLA/FCS at the Capitol Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C.

# William Byrd student serving as Virginia FCCLA state officer

Skylar Fitzgerald, a junior at William Byrd High School and member of the Burton Center for Arts and Technology chapter of Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), is representing her community in a positive way by serving as the current Virginia FCCLA 1st Vice President.

She was elected by her peers in April 2023, and has spent the last 10 months leading youth members from all over Virginia in workshops and trainings and connecting with national officers and congressmen to advocate for FCCLA and Family and Consumer Sciences education.

Her major events and accomplishments thus far include:

- Leadership training at National Leadership Conference (July 2023, Denver, Colorado)
- Advocating for FCCLA/FCS at Capitol Leadership Conference (October 2023, Washington, D.C.)
- Leading College Day Workshops for youth members (October-November 2023, Virginia Tech and Virginia State

University)

- Earning first place in competitive events at the National Fall Conference (November 2023, Birmingham, Alabama)

Upcoming events:

- Speaking about FCCLA at Roanoke County School Board meeting (February 22, Roanoke)
- Presenting and facilitating workshops and sessions at Virginia State Leadership and Recognition Conference (April 12-14, Virginia Beach)

FCCLA is the ultimate leadership experience for students enrolled in Family and Consumer Sciences across the nation. It is the only national in-school organization with the family as its central focus. Participation in state and national programs and chapter activities helps members become strong leaders in their families, careers, and communities.

Submitted by Amanda Kinser, Burton Center for Arts and Technology

# Byrd/BCAT students recognized in 2024 Scholastic Arts Contest

Three William Byrd High School students, who are also students at the Burton Center for Arts and Technology, won honorable mention in the 2024 Southwest Virginia Scholastic Art Awards competition.

Kendall Lecas, a junior at WBHS and BCAT, won honorable mentions for her pieces entitled “Portrait” (in the Mixed Media category) and “Constrained” (in the Painting category).

Ellie Reid won honorable mentions for her pieces “Silent Scream” (Painting category) and “Music Makes Me Powerful” (Mixed Media category).

Their teacher at BCAT is Natalie

Strum. Sophomore Meisha Robinson won honorable mention in the Drawing and Illustration category for “House Plant.” Her teacher at BCAT is Pam Rose.

Each year students from across the country participate in the Scholastic Art Awards competition – the longest running and most prestigious arts award program for students in grades 7-12, ages 13 and up.

The Fine Arts Center for the New River Valley, located in Pulaski, sponsors the awards each year for students in 23 counties, and the towns and cities within, across Southwest Virginia.

Students submit artwork which is judged by panels of artists across 16 categories of art.

Artists will be recognized at a reception at the Fine Arts Center on Feb. 24.

This is the 101st year for the Scholastic Awards program, sponsored by the Alliance for Young Artists & Writers. Since its founding in 1923, the awards have fostered the creativity and talent of millions of students including Andy Warhol, Stephen King, and Ken Burns.

-Vinton Messenger staff report



“Constrained” by Kendell Lecas won honorable mention in this year’s Scholastic Art Awards competition.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF FINE ARTS CENTER FOR NEW RIVER VALLEY  
Meisha Robinson won honorable mention in the 2024 Scholastic Art Awards competition for “House Plant.”



PHOTO BY DEBBIE ADAMS

**Bonsack teacher Suzanne Witcher (on right) was awarded a grant for classroom supplies by the Virginia Lambda Chapter of Alpha Delta Kappa. Diane Taylor presented the award.**

# Witcher receives Alpha Delta Kappa grant

Suzanne Witcher, who teaches fifth grade at Bonsack Elementary School, has received a grant from the Virginia Lambda Chapter of Alpha Delta Kappa – an international honorary organization of women educators. The Lambda Chapter of Alpha Delta Kappa annually awards classroom grants to teachers in Roanoke County and Salem City Schools.

Diane Taylor from the Alpha Delta Kappa Lambda Chapter Grants Committee made the presentation of a \$194 check to Witcher at Bonsack on Feb. 15. Witcher plans to use the money to purchase math supplies for her students. She will be attending the chapter meeting in October to be recognized when the organization celebrates Excellence in Education.

“I applied for the grant to purchase items to build the connections between

fractions and decimals, an SOL that students struggle with,” said Witcher. “I plan to purchase fraction and decimal dominoes, Decimal W card games, magnetic fraction and decimal tiles, fraction and decimal folding number lines, and a fraction equivalence stack card game. As we prepare for the spring SOL tests, I try to incorporate more games as review. I am so appreciative of groups like ADK that offer classroom grants to teachers.”

This is not Witcher’s only grant this year. She also received grants from Blue Eagle Credit Union and VEA mini grants. She used those funds to purchase small whiteboards, math puzzles, number line whiteboards, and other manipulatives to support the fifth-grade math Standards of Learning.

- Vinton Messenger staff report

# PEOPLE, PLACES AND THINGS

By Angie Chewning

Kathryn Sowers attended the GFWC Virginia Executive Board meeting at Berry Hill Resort outside of South Boston on Feb. 10 and 11. The 2-day event included planning for the State Convention in April in Harrisonburg; the proposed budget, reports from the eight districts, by-law proposed changes, proposed resolutions presented and the announcement of the proposed slate of 2024-26 GFWC Virginia officers.

Carolyn Fellers from the GWC Bedford Woman’s Club and the Blue Ridge District has been nominated for 2nd Vice President. Her duties include assisting with the formation of new clubs, recruiting and retaining members, and recognizing outstanding members and clubs.

Items were from Central Alan B.



PHOTO COURTESY OF KATHRYN SOWERS

**Kathryn Sowers of the GFWC Vinton Woman’s Club**

Pearson Regional Cancer Center. These items are offered to patients within the center and contain snacks and other items that will help pass the time. Over 200 items

were collected and taken to the center. Mark your calendars for our upcoming Senior Services Expo on March 26 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Vinton War Memorial.

# Dogwood Festival Committee currently recruiting volunteers

The Dogwood Festival Committee is seeking volunteers to assist with this year’s 69th annual Dogwood Festival, scheduled for April 26 and 27 in downtown Vinton.

The committee will be holding a meeting on Wednesday, Feb. 28 at

5:30 p.m. at the Vinton Municipal Building to share more information.

You are invited to join the Dogwood Committee at the meeting for an opportunity to learn more about how to get involved in one of Vinton’s most dynamic events each year.

For more information on the 2024 Dogwood Festival visit [www.vintondogwoodfest.com](http://www.vintondogwoodfest.com) or check the Facebook page.

Submitted by Dogwood Festival Committee



PHOTO COURTESY OF MOUNT PLEASANT LIONS CLUB

**Sarah Baumgardner of the Western Virginia Water Authority presents a program to the Mount Pleasant Lions.**

# Baumgardner presents program on water to Mount Pleasant Lions

By Mount Pleasant Lion Mike Ferguson

It is said that a person cannot live without water for more than three days, so where do we get that precious fluid and is it safe to drink? The Mount Pleasant Lions Club got the answers to those two questions and others as well at the club’s last meeting. The Lions were pleased to have as their featured speaker Sarah Baumgardner, the Public Relations director and spokesperson for the Western Virginia Water Authority who talked about several aspects of the services provided by the authority.

The first item on her agenda was the forever chemicals discovered in the Spring Hollow Reservoir located in the western part of Roanoke County near the Montgomery County line. The chemical commonly called Gen X was inadvertently released into the Roanoke River, which feeds the reservoir by a company, Pro Chem Inc., in nearby Elliston. At the time of discovery, the EPA did not have

an acceptable minimum level of the stuff, made by Chemours Co., but finally determined that 10 parts per million (PPM) would not be harmful to humans. Chemours, which is located in West Virginia and North Carolina, has agreed to pay between \$9.5 and \$12 million to the Water Authority to cover the cost of testing and filtering the reservoir water. Granular charcoal filters, which have to be replaced every three months, are doing the job and the water is now consistently testing to be below the EPA minimum.

Water from Spring Hollow is now being routed into the distribution system. The amount of money coming from Chemours is as yet undetermined because it is unknown how long the testing will be required by EPA and the Water Authority.

So aside from Spring Hollow, where does the Western Virginia Water Authority get the water it distributes to Roanoke City, Roanoke County, Vinton, Franklin County, Botetourt County, and

the town of Iron Gate? Carvins Cove is the biggest source, followed by Muse Spring, a 1.4-million-gallon spring in the Mount Pleasant area, near the traffic circle, where the authority has a pumping and water treatment facility for water from Crystal Spring, and two wells in the Garden City portion of the valley greenway. There are other smaller sources of water, but Carvins Cove, Spring Hollow and Muse Spring are the three major ones.

These sources are about 90% interconnected, so that if one is offline, the others take up the slack to provide safe, clean drinking water. As a small proof of that, Sarah Baumgardner, when offered bottled water at the Lions meeting, declined and, instead, insisted on tap water from the authority.

In addition to clean drinking water, the Western Virginia Water Authority treats an average of 37 million gallons of sewage/wastewater each day at the Roanoke

See Lions, page 5

## ARE YOU INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?

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**FEBRUARY 28TH**  
5:30PM  
VINTON MUNICIPAL BUILDING

GRAPHIC COURTESY OF CALLIE WEBB

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE

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| <p><b>CLUES ACROSS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Golf scores</li> <li>5. Shock therapy</li> <li>8. Ballplayer’s tool</li> <li>11. Quench one’s thirst</li> <li>13. Female relatives of American war vets (abbr.)</li> <li>14. Every one of two or more things</li> <li>15. Member of Muslim people</li> <li>16. Play</li> <li>17. Type of cheese</li> <li>18. Type of lounge chair</li> <li>20. ___ King Cole, musician</li> <li>21. Fellows</li> <li>22. North, Central and South</li> <li>25. In an early way</li> <li>30. Foes</li> <li>31. Georgia rockers</li> </ul> | <p><b>CLUES DOWN</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>32. Cryptocurrency</li> <li>33. Narrow path along a slope</li> <li>38. Disallow</li> <li>41. Joyousness</li> <li>43. Inaccessible</li> <li>45. Evoke emotions</li> <li>47. Ancient kingdom near Dead Sea</li> <li>49. Boston Celtic punk rockers (abbr.)</li> <li>50. Sword</li> <li>55. Actor Idris</li> <li>56. Affirmative (slang)</li> <li>57. Afflicted</li> <li>59. One point north of northeast</li> <li>60. Born of</li> <li>61. Arabic name</li> <li>62. Traumatic brain injury (abbr.)</li> <li>63. Extremity</li> <li>64. Post</li> </ul> | <p><b>CLUES DOWN</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pacific Standard Time</li> <li>2. Protruding ridge on nematodes</li> <li>3. Indian king</li> <li>4. Type of milk</li> <li>5. One who brings home the bacon</li> <li>6. More comprehensible</li> <li>7. Connected with sense of touch</li> <li>8. Red mineral</li> <li>9. Breezed through</li> <li>10. Therefore</li> <li>12. Supplement with difficulty</li> <li>14. Early kingdom of Syria</li> <li>19. Satisfy</li> <li>23. They confuse doctors (abbr.)</li> <li>24. Brass instrument</li> <li>25. Domesticated animal</li> <li>26. Ribonucleic acid</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>27. Snakelike fish</li> <li>28. Woman (French)</li> <li>29. Economically-minded aircraft</li> <li>34. When you hope to get somewhere</li> <li>35. Tease</li> <li>36. Actress Gretchen</li> <li>37. Midway between northeast and east</li> <li>39. Inoffensive</li> <li>40. Yellowish cotton cloth</li> <li>41. Consume</li> <li>42. Does not tell the truth</li> <li>44. Improved something</li> <li>45. Spiritual leader</li> <li>46. Abba___, Israeli politician</li> <li>47. Fix</li> <li>48. Evergreen tree genus</li> <li>51. Swiss river</li> <li>52. Prejudice</li> <li>53. Major C. European river</li> <li>54. Long, narrow strap</li> <li>58. Male parent</li> </ul> |
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# DAR Chapter gets lesson in Cold War history

**Debbie Adams**  
dadams@ourvalley.org

The Roanoke Valley Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution (RVCDAR) received a history lesson on the end of the Cold War from retired U.S. Army Major Dwight Luedtke at the monthly meeting on Feb. 10. Luedtke's wife Cynthia is a member of the RVCDAR which meets in Vinton.

World War II and the defeat of the Axis powers transformed the United States and the USSR into world powers, resulting in ever-increasing rivalry between the two nations. In June 1948, Soviet forces blockaded rail, road, and water access to the Allied-controlled area of Berlin. The United States and the United

Kingdom responded by airlifting food and fuel to Berlin from Allied bases in western Germany— setting the stage for decades of conflict.

Luedtke was stationed in Germany for some 20 years and described milestones in the Cold War from the time period, including some anecdotes about his own related experiences during reunification.

Those milestones include:

- 1948 - 1949: Berlin Airlift
- 1961: Building of the Berlin Wall
- 1961: the Bay of Pigs
- 1962: the Cuban Missile Crisis
- Various proxy wars in Vietnam, Latin America, and Africa
- 1983: U.S.

deploys Pershing II tactical nuclear missiles to Germany (the start of the end of the Cold War)

- 1986: Reagan/Gorbachev summer in Iceland
- 1987: Reagan "Tear Down This Wall"
- 1989: Berlin Wall "breach" on Nov. 9 (end of the Cold War), tensions remained high for years between citizens of East Germany and West Germany, with culture shock on both sides
- 1990: German unification on Oct. 3

During the February meeting, led by Regent Cindy Higgins, DAR members signed individual Valentine's Day cards for veterans at the Virginia Veterans Care Center and VA Medical Center in Salem. DAR members Sharon Menzies and Linda Upchurch recently delivered 21 fleece blankets the chapter had made to the veterans, along with Christmas cards. They are also collecting sweatshirts and sweatpants for them.

Menzies shared details about a new program that the VA Medical Center is developing to help homeless veterans by providing new clothing and shoes. The chapter hopes to partner with them.



PHOTO BY DEBBIE ADAMS

**Dwight Luedtke, a retired U.S. Army major, presented a program on the end of the Cold War to the local Roanoke Valley Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution at the chapter meeting in Vinton on Feb. 10. His wife, Cynthia (on right), is a member of the chapter. They are pictured with Regent Cindy Higgins.**

The RVCDAR is also continuing its recycling program of collecting soft plastics in partnership with Food Lion, PFG, and the Trex Corporation. Trex donates a composite bench to the DAR for each 500 pounds of recyclables collected. The DAR has been donating those benches to the Town of Vinton to be placed on greenways.

DAR member Shannon Campbell gave a presentation on Navajo Code Talker Peter McDonald, Sr., one of the three living Marines who helped develop top secret codes to help the United

States win World War II. It is the only military code in modern history never broken by the enemy.

When MacDonald joined the military at age 15, claiming to be 17 years old, he had no idea that he would become a radio operator in the Pacific. About 540 Navajos served as Marines as of 1945 and approximately 400 of them were trained as Code Talkers— a mission that was not declassified and remained secret until 1968.

Upchurch explained why Americans place their hands over their hearts as a sign of respect

when saying the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. It seems that originally the salute to the flag resembled the Nazi salute with a straight arm extended, palm out. Congress made the change to placing the right hand over the heart during World War II.

Higgins noted that the RVCDAR logged over 2,000 volunteer hours in 2023.

The DAR Good Citizen of the Year, a William Byrd High School student, will be recognized at the March 9 DAR meeting at Campbell Memorial Presbyterian Church on Hardy Road.

**The Vinton Messenger**

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

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**VINTON BAPTIST CHURCH** - 219 Washington Avenue, Vinton. Rev. Dr. Travis Russell, 343-7685. Sunday Services: Sunday School 9:15AM, Morning Worship 10:30 AM, Wednesday Services: Worship, Bible Study, Children's Choirs and Youth Ministry at 6:15 PM.

**CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
**DALE RIDGE CHURCH OF CHRIST** - 7165 Cloverdale Rd., NW Roanoke, 24019; office: 992-4385. Sunday Bible Study, 9:30 a.m., Worship, 10:30 a.m., Wednesday Bible Study, 6 p.m. Ladies class - Thursdays 10:00 a.m. Visit our new web page: daleridgechurchofchrist.net, it's updated each week from local, national and international sources with news of interest to Christians. Take a video tour of our facilities. Read articles taken from the word of God that apply to our lives today. View a new sermon each week. Dale Ridge is reaching out to the Roanoke/Botetourt area with the good news of Jesus Christ. Come join our plea to return to the Bible. We believe in the inspired Word of God which is as relevant today as it was when it was written. We believe in the Holy Spirit is a gift, given to every Christian when we respond to the Gospel as taught in the context of Acts 2 and emphasized in verse 38. We believe Jesus is the only means of our salvation. (Acts 4:12) Is this your time to make a choice? (John 16:13) Have you been looking for a church family that's led by the Holy Spirit into all truth? (John 13:35) You will know we are His disciples by our love for one another. Follow the advice of Philip when he told Nathanael about Jesus in (John 1:46) "Come and See."

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

**ECKANKAR**  
**ECKANKAR, THE PATH OF SPIRITUAL FREEDOM**, is a simple teaching that focuses on the Light and Sound of God to help people find more love in their life. The Roanoke Eckankar Center is located at 1420 3rd St. SW, Roanoke, 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,

# VINTON

## WORSHIP DIRECTORY

**You ALONE**  
Read Numbers 18:1 through 19:22

Monte had given his son one job: Shovel the walk. Monte returned to see messy piles of snow haphazardly scattered about. The boy had convinced his younger sister—who could barely lift the shovel—to do it for him or he could play video games. Monte promptly unplugged the game and sent the boy out to finish the job.

Similarly, God gave Aaron and his sons enormous responsibility. He expected them—and them alone—to follow through.

“But only you and your sons may serve as priests in connection with everything at the altar and inside the curtain. I am giving you the service of the priesthood as a gift. Anyone else who comes near the sanctuary is to be put to death” (Numbers 18:7).

Has God placed a burden on your heart? Is He pointing you toward work that will expand His kingdom? You are uniquely gifted and in just the right place to effect divine change in this world. Don't wait for someone else to do the job the Lord has given you. He wants you, and you alone, to follow through.

Thought for Today: The work of the Kingdom changes our hearts as it changes our world.

Quicklook: Numbers 18:1-7

**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**

sible, 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](http://www.eck-va.org), [www.meetup.com/Roanoke-Spiritual-Experiences](http://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](http://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](mailto: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; [cmcp2verizon.net](http://cmcp2verizon.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.



# From the Pulpit

By Pastor Bryan Crouch, Lynn Haven Baptist Church

## Spiritual Confidence leads to Earthly Confidence, a study of Ephesians

Our focus at Lynn Haven Baptist Church for 2024 is on Discipleship. Discipleship is the process of becoming

more like Christ tomorrow than you were today. As we continue our study of the first chapter in the Book of Ephesians there is one phrase that continues to pop up in my head. The phrase is "Spiritual Confidence." Paul is trying to pass on his confidence in Jesus Christ to every reader of this great letter.

There is great confidence that can be found in our adoption into the family of God. We are sealed by

the Holy Spirit as believers of Jesus Christ and what He did on the cross for us. And because of this, we are "guaranteed an inheritance" (v.13-14) as God's possession. Just think about that for a minute. As a believer in Jesus Christ, we are guaranteed a place at the greatest table ever assembled. We are heirs to all the spiritual blessings available to God Himself (v.3). We are His possession. He is the potter, and

we are His clay. We have been adopted into His kingship; grafted into the vine that is Jesus Christ.

IF our spiritual confidence is truly based on these facts, THEN our earthly confidence will follow. It is this earthly confidence in an all-powerful and all-knowing God that will translate into our living out the Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) in our daily walk!

## Lions from page 3

Regional Water Pollution Control Plant located adjacent to the Roanoke River off Bennington Street in SE Roanoke. A high-tech development there is the conversion of methane gas, produced during the treatment process, to a clean gas used by the

Roanoke Gas Company which provides natural gas for heating to many homes and businesses in the valley. Imagine that—a waste product being taken out of the environment and used for a good purpose!

Also, there is a grant program

in place to cover about 50% of the cost of hooking on to the public sewer if your residence is now on a septic system, provided that a public sewer line is available nearby. Might be worth it to check with the authority to see if your property is one that

can make use of the grant.

The Lions were impressed by Sarah's presentation, asked several pertinent questions, and applauded her. She has been with the Authority for 18 years, dealing with issues, both tough and soft.

Speaking of soft, she was given a plush lion toy to take to a new granddaughter born February 2, but she and her husband will have to travel to Minneapolis to see Robin Paige Baumgardner and her proud dad and mom.

## Harrison from page 1

would toss Frisbees into 50-gallon barrel trashcans.

Harrison says, "Disc golf is played almost exactly like 'ball' golf. You have a tee pad where you tee off from and a basket, instead of a hole, which you aim for.

"Once you tee off, you throw the disc from where the previous disc landed until you reach the basket. (The baskets are made of hanging chains above a basket which are designed to catch the disc so it falls into the basket."

"You count strokes from tee to basket and after 18 'holes,' the lower your score the better," Harrison says.

The discs themselves, while they resemble Frisbees, are usually smaller, flatter, denser, heavier, aerodynamically designed to fly farther, more flexible, and with a beveled edge.

Harrison notes, "Most all communities have at least one course nearby (Mayflower Hills Disc Golf Course is just a mile from our campground and is ranked 40th in the world!) and we are fortunate to have several in our area. They are either free or very inexpensive to play.

"There is also a local disc golf club which sponsors different events you can get involved in. If you have a little more competitive spirit, there are many tournaments throughout the year to compete in. Within those tournaments, there are many categories in which you can compete, anywhere from the very beginner to top notch professionals. There are also age-protected categories so you can play with people your own age."

Harrison falls into that "very competitive" group and has played in many tournaments, including the Disc Golf World Championships in Flagstaff, Ariz., in July of last year where he placed 19th in his age group category "MA60," which refers to "Male Amateur 60+ years old." He has played at over 115 courses all across the country.

The Mayflower Hills course is his favorite, "mainly because it is so close and easy for me to go to." "In close proximity

to Roanoke, there are Greenfield, Beale's Treasure, Camp Bethel, Moneta Park, Yonder Holl'r (a private course in Hardy), Waid Park, Ferrum College, and several in the Bedford and Lynchburg area. This year's World Professional Championships will be held in Lynchburg." There are also courses at Highland Park, Fishburn Park, and Walrond Park.

Mayflower Hills received its 40th place ranking on the list of World's Best Disc Golf Courses in 2023 and fourth best in the state of Virginia in 2022 from UDisc. The course, located near Explore Park on Rutrough Road, is open to the public year-round with 105 possible course alignments, beginner to expert tee boxes, and two baskets on all 18 holes. A \$3 per player fee is requested to cover course upkeep and maintenance.

Harrison says for beginners the easy layout (from red tee to yellow basket) at the Mayflower Hills course is probably the easiest local course. The toughest is probably also at Mayflower (blue tee to blue basket).

"If you go to Waid Park in Rocky Mount, though, you will find one of the best and toughest courses around along with a 'very special' true beginner's course like I would like to see in the Roanoke area."

If you want to take up disc golf, Harrison says that while he doesn't know of any local disc golf instructors, as such, "most people are willing to help out a 'newbie' if they are asked." The local Roanoke Disc Golf Club hosts many events, and "if you were to attend, most would be glad to show you the ropes. There are also many YouTube videos out there so it's not hard to figure things out on your own to begin with," he said.

Disc golf is not a traditional sport; players can develop skills at their own pace. You don't have to be concerned about tee off times and score cards. The benefits of the sport are both physical, mental, and social if you play with others.

Disc golf burns plenty of calories with walking the course; players say there is a great deal of mental satisfaction when you hear the clink of chains when the disc lands inside the basket.

According to Harrison, "Walking is the main physical benefit of disc golf, although you may find some muscles you didn't remember you had after throwing discs for a while until you get used to it."

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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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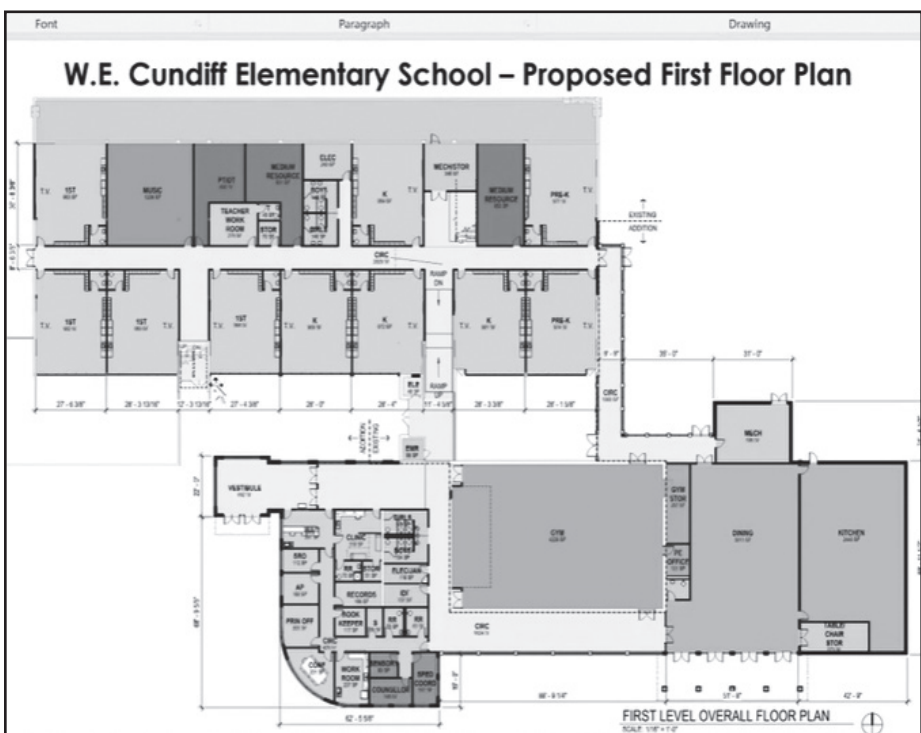
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# Cundiff

from page 1



Preliminary plans for W.E. Cundiff Elementary first floor PHOTO COURTESY ROANOKE COUNTY

\$130 million to allow these projects to start as soon as summer 2024,” said Brent Hudson, chairman of the Roanoke County School Board said at the December 7 meeting. “We thank the Board of Supervisors for working with us to move these projects forward quickly.”

Renovations and expansions at Cundiff and Glen Cove elementary schools will include removal of the outdated open concept classrooms, which will allow for more effective instruction and greater opportunities for interactive, hands-on instruction.

At WEC, plans include a new front entrance, a new cafeteria, a new administrative and entry point, and the addition of several classrooms.

The total costs at Cundiff are estimated at \$28,366,412 based on renovations to the interior of the building and approximately 15,900 gross square feet in new additions.

Dr. Nicely, along with representatives from Branch Builds and RRMM Architects, made

a presentation to the Board of Supervisors on Feb. 13 on plans for the project and the need to approve a revised interim agreement to get work underway. The completion date for all three schools is anticipated for July 31, 2026. The Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the agreement at the meeting.

Tammy Shepherd, who represents Vinton on the Board of Supervisors, said she is very excited about the project looking forward as she and her four children all attended the school, once known as Hardy Road Elementary.

Subsequently, the School Board approved the revised interim agreement at a special called meeting on Feb. 16.

“The School Board has fought hard to make these three projects a reality for five years now,” said Vinton School Board representative Tim Greenway. “We are all extremely happy to see this reality finally come to fruition.”

# Council

from page 1

moving the historic Cundiff Drug Store sign back to its original location on Pollard Street.

Virginia State Code says, “It shall be unlawful for any place of business which is not a pharmacy to advertise or to have upon it or in it as a sign the words, ‘pharmacy,’ ‘pharmacist,’ ‘apothecary,’ ‘drugstore,’ ‘druggist,’ ‘drugs,’ ‘medicines store,’ ‘drug sundries,’ ‘prescriptions filled’ or any like words indicating that drugs are compounded or sold or prescriptions filled.

“Upon consultation with the Department of Historic Resources, the Board may grant an exception from this section for such signage on an historic building that formerly housed a drugstore or pharmacy if that building is individually listed as a Virginia Historic Landmark, a contributing property in a Virginia Historic Landmark District, or is determined to be eligible for listing by the Department of Historic Resources, provided that the signage relates to the historic character of the building.”

Peters says that historic district designation will help to relocate the Cundiff sign and lead to other properties being cleared for historic tax credits which could assist with future rehabilitation

projects such as Roland E. Cook, the Billy Byrd apartments, and Gish Mill in the past.

The Historic Resources Board and the State Review Board will meet to consider the nomination on March 21. If the historic district is approved, it will be listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register; then the nomination will be forwarded to the National Park Service for consideration for the National Register of Historic Places.

Ken Fay, Director of Roanoke County Real Estate Valuation, briefed council on the 2024 Real Estate Reassessment. Roanoke County appraises all properties annually at 100% fair market value. Reassessment notices are mailed to property owners in mid-January.

“Citizens who buy and sell real estate in the open market establish the market values by how much they are willing to offer/accept for individual properties,” Fay explained. As a result, “real estate values have increased significantly due to limited supply and favorable mortgage rates.”

Residential properties assessed values in Roanoke County increased by 9.14% in 2024; commercial by 4.8%, for a total increase of 8.63%.

In the Town of Vinton, real estate assessments in 2024 increased by 8.63%; commercial by 3.96%, for a total increase of 7.75%, again attributable to market value increases.

The median price of a home in Roanoke County was \$320,000 in 2023 with 916 homes sold with 20 foreclosures. The median price of a home in Vinton in 2023 was \$240,000 with 59 sales and two foreclosures.

Fay noted that mortgage rates could be lower in 2024 since the Federal Reserve has stopped rate increases and an increase in housing inventory is anticipated.

Jim Blanton, Roanoke County’s Director of Library Services, and Kimberly Burnette-Dean, Vinton Library Branch Manager, next presented a report on library activities in 2023. System-wide, the library has developed a new strategic plan, focused on the library as a place of discovery and community. Community outreach programs are increasing, along with staff training opportunities.

Renovations have been completed at the Mount Pleasant and Bent Mountain libraries, with the Hollins Library slated for replacement in 2026.

County libraries now offer RVL Mobile which allows patrons to turn their phones into digital library cards and access most library services via an app.

One of the most exciting developments at the Vinton Library

is the addition of the DigiLab which allows patrons to digitize their old media from photographs to film to vinyl records and audio cassettes to “preserve your history for future generations.” Best of all, the service is free. Over 100 visitors have used the service since it was launched in August 2023.

Burnette-Dean described the multitude of programs and activities available at the Vinton branch – for all ages and interests. The library partners with the town (especially the Vinton Police Department) and community throughout the year for events such as Arbor Day (coming up on April 25), the Dogwood Festival, Storytime at the Vinton Farmers’ Market, Cocoa with a Cop, and more.

Services at the library go beyond books. There are digital and even physical items that can be checked out, including dulcimers, telescopes, and bright light therapy lamps.

The Teen Center is being updated at the Vinton Library and a service desk added to the second floor, with LED lighting in use throughout the facility.

John Hull, Executive Director of the Roanoke Regional Partnership, briefed council members on a “record-setting year” throughout the valley promoting economic growth, placemaking, talent solutions, and real estate.

Mayor Grose described the organization as the “unsung heroes in this valley and an incredible resource, who receive 50% of their funding from the private sector.” He mentioned their hard work to reverse the “brain drain” and keep young adults in the area after graduation and their emphasis on the outdoors, a topic near and dear to Vinton.

Council adopted a resolution authorizing a new purchase card program through Pinnacle Bank. (Councilwoman Sabrina McCarty, a

Pinnacle employee, recused herself from the vote.)

Finance Director/Treasurer Andrew Keen stated that Pinnacle Bank has a product which meets the town’s needs more efficiently than their present credit card partner, is more technologically advanced, and offers more safeguards against fraud. The bank offers a flat rebate on a monthly basis, adding dollars to the town coffers. The Pinnacle program can be accessed online; the previous account required time-consuming transactions by phone. The Pinnacle purchase card program will interface well with the town’s new HR payroll financial system.

In reference to the earlier real estate tax assessment presentation, Deputy Town Manager Cody Sexton said the town will hold a public hearing on the tax rate on April 2, advertising no change in the current 7% tax rate. The hearing is required by law when tax assessments increase by 1% or more.

**CROSSWORD ANSWERS**

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Council member Laurie Mullins, Mayor Brad Grose (center), and Council member Keith Liles have officially announced their plans to run for re-election in the fall.

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PHOTOS COURTESY OF WILLIAM BYRD SWIMMING

Left photo, these swimmers represented William Byrd in the state meet in Richmond last Saturday. Left to right are Cary Jones, Gabby Romeo, Addison Collins, Evan Copenig, Lindsay Murtaugh, Bruno De Melo, Blake Richardson (behind him Michael Hoyos), Cole Kovacevic, Chris Hurd and Brody Parrish. Middle photo is the girls relay team left to right are Gabby Romeo, Addison Collins, Cary Jones and Lindsay Murtaugh. Right, Murtaugh poses with a state medal.

# Byrd's Murtaugh swims to pair of state medals

William Byrd sophomore Lindsay Murtaugh took a third and fourth in the Class 3 state swim meet last Saturday. Murtaugh was one of 11 Byrd swimmers who competed at the SwimRVA pool in Richmond. The Terriers finished 17th among 26 teams in the girls' meet and 26th among 32 in the boys' meet as Western Albemarle dominated, sweeping both the girls' and boys' team championships. Murtaugh scored most of the points for the girls with a third place finish in the 500 freestyle race with a time of 5:05.24 and a fourth in the 200 free in 1:54.21. "Lindsay is a very talented distance swimmer and she's great at racing," said Byrd coach Krista

Martin. Murtaugh also swam on the girls 200 medley relay team with Cary Jones, Gabby Romeo and Addison Collins. They qualified for the "B" final, and finished 15th in the state to score four points for the team. The B race is for the eight teams with the next best times who did not qualify for the eight team final. Two boys' relay teams also swam in the "B" race. The boys 200 free relay team of Bruno De Melo, Michael Hoyos, Chris Hurd and Blake Richardson finished 14th in the state and the 400 free relay team of Richardson, Hoyos, Cole Kovacevic and Evan

Copenig was 15th in the state. "We had some great swims in prelims, and state is always such a fantastic opportunity to race," said Martin. "These 11 swimmers did a terrific job representing William Byrd High School this past weekend. I'm so proud of them and I hope they made some great memories." Byrd had three seniors competing in the state meet, Hoyos, De Melo and Kovacevic. "It was bitter sweet to watch our three senior state team swimmers complete the last races of their high school career," said Martin. "All three have come so far and I'm really going to miss them."



PHOTOS BY BRIAN HOFFMAN

Left, Byrd's Israel Hairston blocks a Magna Vista shot. Right, Isiah Board goes to the hoop for the Terriers.

## Hot start propels Warriors to Region 3D basketball win over William Byrd

The William Byrd boys saw their basketball season come to an end with a loss to Magna Vista in the Region 3D quarterfinal round Friday. The visiting Warriors took a 73-66 win in Vinton. Byrd was the higher seed, but Magna Vista came out on fire. The Warriors jumped to a 20-11 lead in the first quarter and never trailed. "Magna Vista came out in that zone, and dared us to hit shots from the opening tip and we just couldn't consistently" said Byrd coach Brad Greenway. "We shot about 20 percent from behind the arc and that's not a formula for us to typically win this year." The Terriers stayed within striking range until the final minutes. Late in the third quarter they trailed by five, 45-40, and had a three-point try rattle around and spill out that would have cut the lead to two. Magna Vista then went on an 11-0 run that was too much for the Terriers to overcome. "I thought our guys played really hard, competed for four quarters, played unselfish, moved the ball well," said Greenway. "We did a lot of things well, we just didn't get enough points on the board, mainly in that first quarter. We just couldn't get over the hump again. I wish I could have put them in a better position to succeed, but again, we didn't get it done." Isiah Board had 27 points to lead the Terriers, including five three-pointers. Jahdai English had 11 points, Drew Lindsay had nine and Luke Helton had seven. With the loss Byrd finished the season one game under .500 at 12-13. The Terriers will graduate two seniors, Lindsay and Israel Hairston. "I appreciate my guys who stuck with this thing through the roller coaster that this season was," said Greenway. "They deserve a lot of credit for battling down the stretch and I'd take any of them with me to any game again. Great group of guys that we finished this thing with. "I hurt for our two seniors that it ended, we will miss them. A lot of credit to them. Looking back, finishing with 12 wins is something we haven't done in a few years and hopefully we can keep building and moving forward. We will bounce back and get this thing rolling again. We have lots of youth coming back that we can build on along with a core of rising seniors."

## Golden Eagles oust Byrd girls in first round of Region 3 basketball

The fourth time was not the charm for the William Byrd girls as they were eliminated from the Region 3D basketball tournament by Staunton River last Friday. The girls dropped a 34-18 decision in Moneta in an opening round game. It was the fourth time this season the girls played the Eagles. They split during the regular season but lost to the Eagles, in Vinton, in the Blue Ridge District tournament. Fate had them meeting again to open Region 3D play and Staunton River took the season series and moved on to a quarterfinal game at Lord Botetourt, where they were eliminated on Tuesday by a 57-24 score. "The last game against Staunton River was a season ending game that we did not want to come out on the short end of," said Byrd coach Randy Bush. "Unfortunately, we did not do enough to win that game." Byrd struggled to score. Logan Andrews led the team with just seven points and no one else had more than two. "Defensively we played well," said Bush. "We held them to 34 points, which is not bad. On the offensive side not so much, but these things happen and in sports you have to store it away for the future and remember what it felt like." Byrd finished the season with an 11-13 record. The Terriers had just one senior, Makayla Price. "The season was good," said Bush. "We had a young group that gained valuable experience. We had a large group of juniors that improved and there's a young group coming up that will add to this team in a few years, so the future is very bright."



PHOTOS BY JIM & REGINA DEVINNEY

Left, Byrd's Jada Johnson is fouled as she goes to the hoop in last Friday's game at Staunton River. Right, Logan Andrews slices through two Eagles to score for Byrd.

# SPORTS

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PHOTO BY BRIAN HOFFMAN

Left, William Byrd's Darin Witcher polishes off a championship pin at the state wrestling tournament, and right has his hand raised in victory as Byrd coaches look on.

## Big Orange is 12th in state wrestling, Witcher is 106 pound champion

William Byrd wrestler Darin Witcher took care of unfinished business Saturday. The sophomore Terrier pinned his way through the state 106 pound bracket to win the Class 3 championship a year after finishing second as a freshman.

Witcher was Byrd's only finalist as the Big Orange finished 12th among 45 teams represented in the Class 3 state tournament. The Salem Civic Center hosted the "Big Dance" once again for the Class 1, 2 and 3 state tournaments. William Byrd's Blue Ridge District and border rival, Staunton River, won the Class 3 state team championship for the second straight year while traditional powers Grundy and Strasburg won in Class 1 and 2, respectively.

Witcher spent less than four minutes on the mat in his first three matches. He had a 21 second pin in the first round over Simon Dronov of Broadway, then pinned Justin Savage of Warren County in 1:30 in the quarterfinal. Turner Ashby's Bisrat Mussie almost made it out of the first period, but not quite, as Darin pinned him with one second to go at 1:59.

That set up a match with Jacob Buffum of Skyline in Saturday evening's championship. Buffum came in at 43-8 on the season and the 106 pound match led off the night of 42 state championship matches, 14 each in three Virginia High School League classifications.

For the first time in the state tournament Darin didn't get a first period pin. However, he worked on top and got in

a good position in the second period and was able to put shoulders to the mat 34 seconds into the period for a 2:34 fall.

"As soon as his shoulder hit the mat and I sunk a half, that's when I knew I was in a good spot," said Witcher.

The victory was a sweet one for Darin, who finished 35-9 as a freshman but lost in the 106 pound final. He was determined not to let that happen again.

"I wrestled as much as I could with my awesome practice partners," said Witcher. "I wrestled one of my practice partners over the summer twice and he was two of my three hardest matches, but it definitely helped prepare me for States. The State Finals match was just as hard, if not harder."

One of his regular practice partners is Derek Bush of Salem, who won the 113 pound state championship at the Class 4 tournament in Virginia Beach last weekend. They split two matches this season when Darin bumped to 113 to go against Bush, and they were both epic battles.

"Darin has improved so much over the last year," said Byrd coach Thomas Kessler. "Last year he made it to the finals and weighed 99 pounds soaking wet. This year he has physically grown and has to cut to get to 106. It showed on the mat and he was able to physically dominate everyone he wrestled. I am so excited to have Darin back for the next two years, he represents the school so well."

Witcher finished with a record of 32-2 and he's now 67-11 in his high

school career. He scored 30 of Byrd's 56.5 state points with his four pins.

Byrd's only other place winner at the state tournament was Gage Cockran, who finished fifth at 138. Gage won his first two matches then lost in the semifinals. He split two in the consolation bracket for fifth and finished 35-10 on the season.

"I was very happy for Gage, who ends up being a four-time state qualifier and a two-time state placer," said Kessler.

Zane Taylor won two matches at 126, Bricen Lancaster won two at 157

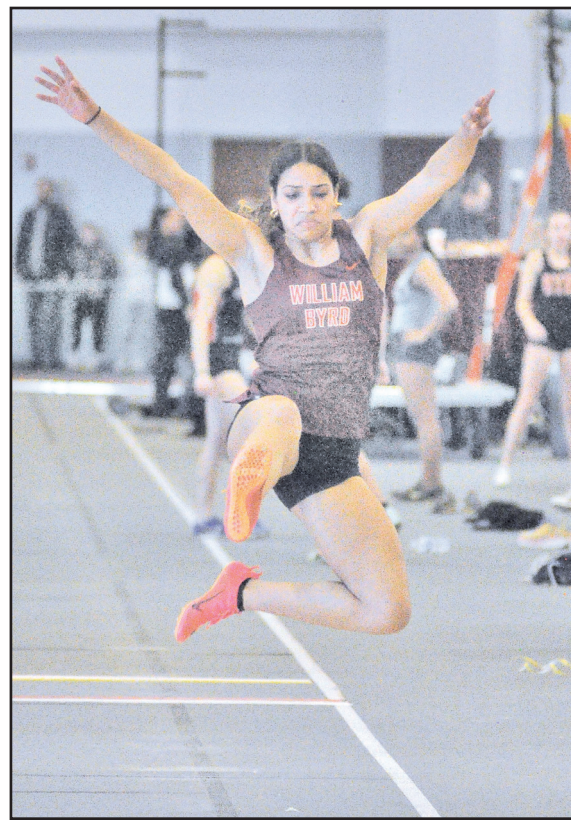
and Aidan Lucas won two at 190. Graylen Castleberry lost twice at 175 and Stephen Underwood came down with the flu and was not able to wrestle after qualifying for the state at 165.

"Aidan and Bricen lost in the quarterfinals by one point and almost made it to the semis," said Kessler. "They both lost close matches in the blood round as well. We showed up ready to wrestle and those guys gave it their all. My heart breaks for them being so close to placing but just missing it by a match."



PHOTO BY BRIAN HOFFMAN

Gage Cockran of William Byrd (on top) battles in his state quarterfinal match.



Above left and right, William Byrd's DeShawn Austin and Lily Perez were named the Male and Female Field Event Athletes of the Year at last Saturday's Region 3D indoor track meet at Roanoke College. Below, Byrd's Olivia Bustamante won the high jump competition.



PHOTOS BY BRIAN HOFFMAN

## Byrd boys win region track, girls are second

The William Byrd indoor track team came within two girls' points of sweeping the Region 3D track meet last Saturday. The Byrd boys won the meet and the girls were second, just one and a half points out of first place, at the Kerr-Cregger Fieldhouse on the campus of Roanoke College in Salem.

The Byrd boys scored 99.5 points to easily win their meet. Abingdon was second with 65 and Lord Botetourt finished third with 52 points.

Byrd's DeShawn Austin was named the boys' Field Event Athlete of the Year. DeShawn won the regional championship in the long and triple jump with distances of 21'11.5" and 44'11.75". He also won the 55m hurdles with a time of 7.93 and was region runnerup in the 300 in 36.78. To finish off the day Austin anchored the winning 4x400 relay with Brady Reachy, Wyatt Bailey and Donald Mullins, taking the region championship with a time of 3:38.35.

Bailey was the regional champion in the pole vault and he also finished second in the 500m dash with a time of 1:09.83. Cooper Minnix finished fourth in the 55m dash with a time of 6.75 and fifth in the 300m dash in 37.67.

Byrd also had two third place relay teams in the boys' meet. The 4x200m relay of Minnix, Reachy, Noah Thompson and Jerrett Shepherd ran a time of 1:36.86 and the 4x800m foursome of Reagan Lilley, Mullins, Reid Hanson and Shaun Gower finished in 8:43.13.

The girls nearly matched the boys result with 89.5 points. Unfortunately that was a point and a half behind Abingdon, who had 91, so the Byrd girls settled for second. Christiansburg was third, just four points behind the winner, for third place with 87 in a race to the finish for region supremacy.

Byrd's Lily Perez was named the Female Field Event Athlete of the Year. Lily won the long jump with a leap of 16'.75" and was the triple jump champ with a hop, skip and a jump of 34'2.75". Perez also took second in the 55 hurdles with a time of 9.55 while Virginia Yonce finished fifth in that race and Emily Fisher was eighth.

Olivia Bustamante won region high jump honors, clearing the bar at 4'10". Olivia also took second in the long jump at 15'6".

Other runnerup finishes included Sydney Blewett with a second in the shot put and Grace Onwi took two seconds with a time of 42.6 in the 300 meter dash and 1:18.86 in the 500 meters.

Lucy Whitenack took fourth place in the 1,000 and also ran on the third place 4x800 relay team with Liz Dixon, Heidi Wienke and Alexandra Bonilla. The relay team ran a time of 10:59.40.

Next up for the Terriers is the Class 3 state meet. That will be held at Liberty University in Lynchburg on Monday and Tuesday of next week, February 26 and 27.