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PHOTO BY DEBBIE ADAMS
Travis Anderson has been named principal at William Byrd High School.

Travis Anderson named new principal at WBHS, effective this summer

The Roanoke County School Board has named Travis Anderson as the new principal at William Byrd High School, effective July 1. He will replace Tammy Newcomb, who recently was named as the new executive director of administration for RCPS.

Anderson grew up in Mechanicsville. He earned his bachelor's degree in mathematics and a Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Virginia Tech, and a Master's Degree in Educational Leadership from Radford University.

He began his career with Roanoke County Public Schools in 2012 as a math teacher (mainly geometry) at Cave Spring High School. In 2018, he became the testing coordinator at William Byrd High School. In 2020,

he was named as an assistant principal at WBHS.

As for how he came to be a Byrd, "I heard from a good friend how great the school was, so I jumped at the chance to be able to follow him here. I'd heard that the WBHS area is a very close community, much like my hometown I grew up in."

As for his special interests, Anderson loves Hokie football and seldom misses a home game; in fact, he estimates that he has only missed three or four games since 1996.

He and his wife, Christine, have four children, a 2-year-old, 6-year-old twins, and an 8-year-old. They are active members of Clearbrook

See Anderson, page 6

DAR presents prestigious Good Citizen Award to Claire Glover

Debbie Adams
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The Roanoke Valley Chapter National Society Daughters of the American Revolution presented the 2024 DAR Good Citizen Award to William Byrd High School senior Claire Glover at the chapter meeting at Campbell Memorial Presbyterian Church on March 9.

The DAR Good Citizens Award and Scholarship Contest, created in 1934, is intended to encourage and reward the qualities of good citizenship. The award recognizes and rewards high school seniors who possess the qualities of dependability, service, leadership, and patriotism in their homes, schools, and communities.

The DAR Good Citizen is nominated by the faculty at WBHS and voted on by fellow students.

As part of the DAR Good Citizen process, Glover was invited to write an essay to participate in

the scholarship segment of the competition. This year's assigned topic was "What are the civic responsibilities of a good citizen and why are these duties, activities, and behaviors important to the shaping of America you hope to experience?" She read her essay to the DAR members at their meeting.

Glover's Essay:
"A good citizen of America. When hearing this trait, who is the first person that comes to mind? Is it your neighbor that flies an American flag from their front stoop? Is it the lady in the grocery store wearing an 'I voted' sticker with pride? Or is it the little boy filled with uncontainable excitement as he waits to see fireworks on the fourth of July? Although all these people exhibit characteristics of a proud American, displaying civic responsibilities of a good citizen is so much more. A good citizen not only shows pride in their own country, but represents a spirit of camaraderie, shows selfless

behavior, and demonstrates respect for others.

Our nation was built on the importance of community and camaraderie; without it, our society would be bitter and insufficient. The basis of camaraderie is companionship and can be shown in several ways. From a simple wave to a stranger, to holding the door for someone, camaraderie is always about community. Good citizens represent camaraderie in many aspects of life, and always look to be a companion to others. This attitude of fellowship and friendship creates a positive society with citizens that care for the well-being of one another.

Among our often-selfish society, it can be hard to show selflessness. A good citizen often looks to put the benefit of other people above their own. This behavior can be represented in numerous ways throughout society. Although this task is

See DAR, page 4



PHOTO COURTESY OF RCPS
Members of the Roanoke County School Board presented the Opportunity Ready 2023 State of the Schools report via video this year. Pictured left to right are Cheryl Facciani (Windsor Hills District), Tim Greenway (Vinton), Brent Hudson (Catawba), Shelley Clemons (Cave Spring), and David Linden (Hollins).

Roanoke County Schools present 'Opportunity Ready 2023' State of the Schools report; graduation rate among the highest in the state

The Roanoke County School Board has released "Opportunity Ready 2023," a video review of the state of Roanoke County Public Schools.

"For 2023, we wanted to provide our community a more comprehensive report on the state of our schools," said Roanoke County School Board Chairman Brent Hudson. "This video format allowed us to share more of our successes both inside the classroom and beyond and share more about the exciting things to come for our schools."

Produced by Roanoke Valley Television (RVTV), Opportunity Ready 2023 features updates from all five members of the Roanoke County School Board (Chair Brent Hudson, Vice Chair Cheryl Facciani, Tim Greenway, David Linden, and Shelley Clemons), along with key administrators.

"I hope, after viewing this presentation, our community will join us in celebrating all the hard work of

See RCPS, page 5



PHOTO BY DEBBIE ADAMS
Roanoke Valley Chapter NSDAR Regent Cindy Higgins (on left) presented this year's DAR Good Citizen Award to WBHS student Claire Glover. She is shown with her parents, Karena and Eddie Glover.

WBMS celebrates 'Drop Everything and Read'

Debbie Adams
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Students and staff at William Byrd Middle School celebrated National Reading Month and Read Across America throughout the building on March 6 with their own version of reading fun—"Drop Everything and Read!"

The idea originated with seventh grade English teacher Tracy Addison in 2022 after she saw data which encourages a universal

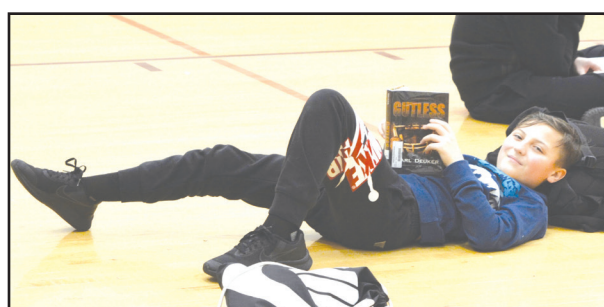


PHOTO BY DEBBIE ADAMS
Braylon Hensley

reading time that allows staff members to model silent reading alongside their students. The event on March 6 was the third at WBMS. Everyone read

whatever appealed to them for 25 minutes.

"Studies show that reading just 20 minutes

See WBMS, page 6



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Celebrating Decades of Dogwood Queens



Miss Vinton Dogwood Festival, Anne Norman



VINTON MESSENGER ARCHIVES

Anne Norman was crowned Miss Vinton Dogwood Festival Queen in 1991.

A gala was held at the Lancerlot in 1992 honoring the reigning Dogwood Queen and new contestants for the title.

Debbie Adams
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The 2024 Vinton Dogwood Festival is scheduled for April 26 and 27. Over the next several weeks, The Vinton Messenger will be looking back on past Dogwood Queens leading up to this year's festival and the crowning of a new queen. Miss Vinton Dogwood Festival 1992 Anne Norman Young is featured this week.

In the early years of the Dogwood Festival, each participating band was asked to select a princess. After interviews with a panel of judges, the Vinton Dogwood Festival Queen was chosen from among those princesses, crowned, and then went on to reign at the following year's festivities.

In the early 1980s, the method for selecting the Dogwood Queen (now Miss Vinton Dogwood Festival Queen) changed. According to Susan Teass, who has been Dogwood Queen's Court Coordinator for many years, "A group of Vinton's leaders wanted our young ladies to be a part of the official Miss Virginia competition held in Roanoke each year." The Vinton Dogwood Festival Pageant became a preliminary to the Miss Virginia Pageant.

"Ruth Thomas, Nita Echols, William Cundiff, and several others furnished the operating funds, created the corporation, and joined the Miss

Virginia organization, an affiliate of the Miss America organization, with all of its rules and procedures. Our franchise was an "open pageant," meaning that those who competed were allowed to come from any city or town in the state. Also, the contestant could be attending any college or university in the state. This led to great diversity and opportunity for friendships in our group of contestants."

That's how Anne Norman of Martinsville was chosen as Vinton Dogwood Queen in 1991. She was 21 years old at the time and a junior at Virginia Tech.

Her biography in The Vinton Messenger noted that she was majoring in family and child development at Tech with a minor in theatre arts. Her special training included 18 years in formal dance, tap, jazz, and ballet, eight years in vocal, and four years in drama. Her honors and accomplishments in college included being a member of The New Virginians, the musical ambassadors for Virginia Tech; recognition as a Seventeen Cover Model semi-finalist, and assistant choreographer for The New Virginians.

"The day I was crowned was so exciting," Young says. "I was traveling with The New Virginians at the time, and we had come off of a three-show weekend the week before the pageant. I felt so unprepared but had been encouraged to

enter by my precious friends, Alberto de Bobe and Gloria Jennings.

"I was the final contestant in the pageant and was completely shocked when I won the title. There were so many girls that year, and many of them had been finalists in the Miss Virginia Pageant. I was completely honored and overwhelmed to be selected by the judges. It was a joyful and humbling experience."

She was crowned by reigning Vinton Dogwood Queen 1991 Paula Ketterer and then became the reigning queen herself for 1992.

Senator John Warner was one of the grand marshals of the Dogwood Parade, along with Nathaniel Howell, the Ambassador to Kuwait.

Young says it was an honor to meet Warner, and "he gave me the supreme compliment of telling me that I reminded him of his former wife (Elizabeth Taylor)."

"On Dogwood Day, there was a beautiful breakfast at the Vinton War Memorial. We were interviewed, competed in swimsuit, gown, and talent. We also were judged on an on-stage question."

There was a poignant dogwood tree-planting ceremony at the Vinton War Memorial in memory of 1st Lt. Terry Plunk which brought the festival to a standstill as thousands stopped to honor the Vinton soldier who was killed in combat in the Persian Gulf War.

The 37th annual Dogwood Festival in 1992, when Young was the reigning queen, was held on May 2. Chris Keaton, a WBHS and VCU alumni, served as pageant director. Don Davis was festival president. Parade marshals were local elementary school students and surprise cartoon characters. Renowned vocalist Jane Powell headlined the entertainment that year. A gala was held at the Lancerlot honoring the reigning queen and contestants.

Young went on to graduate from

Virginia Tech and entered the teaching profession.

"Over the past 30 plus years, I have taught all levels of students from preschool, elementary, middle and upper school," Young says. "I owned and operated my own dance studio for 14 years. Currently, I am a creative movement, drama, music, and dance teacher at Carlisle School in Martinsville. I work professionally for the Barn Dinner Theatre and the Community Theatre of Greensboro on selected performances."

"My most favorite title of all has been being called Mom by my 17-year-old daughter, Scarlett Grace. She is a fantastic musical theatre performer, student, Christian, and the light of my life."

"The Vinton Dogwood title has had a profound impact on my life," Young says. "I was given the opportunity to represent an incredible community of warm and loving people. Most importantly, I met Susan Teass, who has been a lifelong friend—truly a treasure to me and to the Dogwood Pageant. I still am in contact with Alberto and Susan. I think of them as family."

"As their organization grew, the Miss America Pageant became encumbered in lots of fees and layers of rules, documents to be certified, papers to be notarized, lawyer's fees, etc.," Teass explains. "Many of the tiny pageants, ours being one of them, could no longer afford the personnel or funding required, and town support dwindled to the point that in our final year, our director had spent over \$5,000 in personal funds to keep it going."

The procedure for selecting a Vinton Dogwood Queen changed once again at that point, and the queen and her court were thereafter selected from senior girls at William Byrd High School, nominated by the faculty and chosen by the panel of judges. It remains the same today.

PEOPLE, PLACES AND THINGS



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANGIE CHEWNING

The Hendricks: table left, Chase, Kyle, and Valerie Hendricks; table right, Cade Hendricks, Steve and Kelly Hellams.

By Angie Chewning

The Hendricks' trip to New York was full of sightseeing, great weather, fun and family reunions! The first family meet-up was with Steve and Kelly (Chick) Hellams who were visiting NYC from Charleston, S.C. Dinner was full of catching up with news of the present and reminiscing about the past. Laughs, tears, and lots of hugs filled the night.

Kyle, Valerie (Bell), Chase, and Cade then hit

the ground running. A guided tour of Ground Zero and the 9/11 Memorial Park was full of information and very touching. A walk down Wall Street and through Battery Park wore the boys out. No trip to the city would be complete without a visit to Times Square.

Of course, the Apple Store, trying out the new Vision Pro was a must while there. The Summit at One Vanderbilt was another must see. Nothing like standing on glass

looking down 92 floors to the street below! Canal Street shopping, lunch in China Town and a visit to NYU were also crossed off the list.

The second family reunion came when they met up with Tony-nominated cousin Hunter Bell (son of George "Buddy"). More belly laughs reminiscing about the past and catching up on what's going on in everybody's lives these days. They had so much fun! They can't wait to go back.

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Community Wide
Sunrise Service
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GRAPHIC COURTESY OF THRASHER MEMORIAL UMC

Community Easter Sunrise Service scheduled for March 31

Several Vinton area churches are coming together for an Easter Sunrise worship service on Sunday, March 31, at 7 a.m. at Mountain View Cemetery in Vinton. Thrasher Memorial UMC, Three Oaks Fellowship UMC, Vinton Wesleyan, and St. Timothy Lutheran Church will be hosting the community-wide event. All are welcome to attend.

Submitted by Thrasher Memorial UMC



PHOTO COURTESY OF SUSAN LEWIS

Vocalist Paul Sealey won first place in the regional Bland Music Foundation Scholarship competition in Roanoke and will advance to the state competition. He is a student of Susan Lewis of Vinton (seated at piano).

Vocalist Paul Sealey wins regional Bland Music Foundation Scholarship Competition

Baritone Paul Sealey won first place in vocals at the regional Bland Music Foundation Scholarship Competition held on March 10 at Our Lady of Nazareth Catholic Church in Roanoke. Sealey is a student of the Susan Lewis Music Studio in Vinton. He advanced to the regional competition after placing first in vocals at the district level at the Vinton Breakfast Lions Club Bland Foundation-sponsored competition on Feb. 11 at Thrasher Memorial United Methodist Church. He will now move on to the state competition in

Dulles on April 26. Sealey won first place in the district competition in 2023, as well. He is a high school senior and plans to continue his education at Old Dominion University in the fall in the Diehn School of Music. His two older brothers, Oliver and Simon, are also students at ODU and well-known vocalists who studied with Lewis. At the state level, there will be 12 finalists—two from each district—six voice and six instrumentalists. First place scholarships to be awarded are \$2,500; second place scholarships are \$2,000; third place,

\$1,500; fourth, fifth, and sixth, \$1,000 each. Scholarships must be used within five years of the state competition. Scholarships are payable only to a college or school of music, summer music program or to a private/public music teacher. The Lions Clubs that are represented by the regional winners are required to pay expenses for the winners that advance to the state level. *-Vinton Messenger staff report*

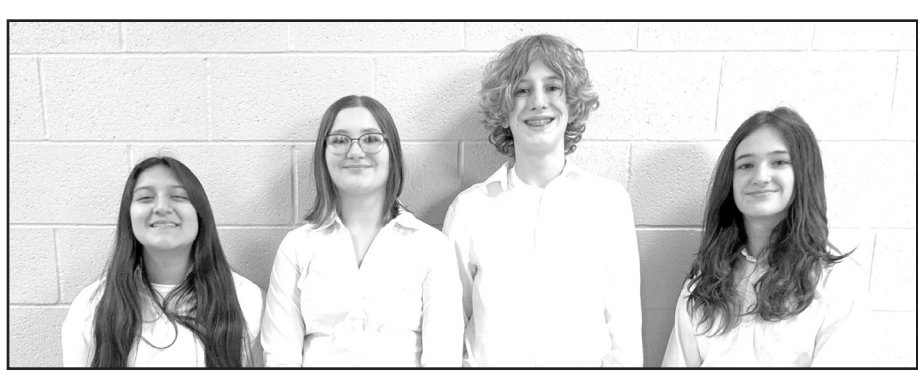


PHOTO COURTESY OF DENISE ASPELL

William Byrd Middle School students participating in All-District Band were (left to right) Julissa Garcia, Sabrina Wray, Levi Whitcomb, and Emma Whitcomb.

WBMS students perform at All-District Band

Four band students from William Byrd Middle School participated in the 2024 District VI Middle School All-District band performance on Feb. 17. The musicians met as two bands for the first time late in the morning on Feb. 16 and performed an entire concert with two new bands and directors the next afternoon on Feb. 17. The performance was held at Blacksburg High School.

See **Band**, page 4

OBITUARIES

Leffell Jr., Wilmore "Butch"

Wilmore "Butch" Leffell Jr., 67, of Vinton, passed away peacefully in his sleep on Friday, March 8, 2024.

He is survived by his wife and partner of 34 years, Becky Leffell; daughters, Tiffany Leffell, Alisha Smith, Whitney Lawrence, and Ashley Radford; grandchildren, Cierra Radford, Wyatt Early, Rylie Lawrence, Tre' Gearhart, Kylea Early, Cassidy Lawrence, and Hope Perdue; mother, Shirley Leffell; brother, Jeff Leffell (Margaret); sister, Lynette Jobe; and many other beloved family and friends.

He was preceded in death by a daughter, Heather Leffell, and father, Wilmore "Willie" Leffell Sr.

Butch grew up in Vinton, graduated from William Byrd High School in 1975, and continued his education at Danville Community College where he studied HVAC. In those years, Butch also liked to work on race cars with his best friend, Steve Richardson. They raced at Franklin County Raceway, but rumor has it they never won a race but had a great time trying! This fell by the wayside as children started coming along and Butch became a devoted father to Tiffany and Heather then later Alisha, Whitney, and Ashley.

Butch met Becky, with encouragement from sister Lynette, and they hit it off! They would continue to have many adventures together including raising six girls,

trips to their favorite places, Smith Mountain Lake and the Outer Banks, buying their dream home at Green Hill, and spending time with their many beloved friends and family. They were each other's rock, and a truer love story could not be told.

Butch was the owner/operator of Temp-O-Matic, an HVAC company in Vinton, and retired after 50 plus years

of service. He was known throughout the Valley for being fair and honest. Butch took great pride in his business and his van was a welcome sight whether he was answering a call or just stopping by for a visit. Over the years he supported many community youth activities in Vinton.

The family would like to especially thank Good Samaritan Hospice for the excellent and loving care they gave Butch in the last weeks of his life.

Butch will be honored at Vinton Baptist Church at 10 a.m. on Thursday, March 14, 2024, for a service memorializing his life. Visitation was held from 6 until 8 p.m. on Wednesday, March 13, at Oakey's Vinton Chapel. Memorial donations can be made to Good Samaritan Hospice, the National Kidney Foundation, or to a local charity of your choice. Condolences may be expressed to the family by visiting www.Oakeys.com. Arrangements are by Oakey's Vinton Chapel, (540) 362-1237.



Powell, Bennett L.

Bennett "Benny" L. Powell, 75, husband of Patricia Powell, went to be with the Lord on Saturday, March 9, 2024. He was the son of the late Mitchell and Lois Herman Powell. He was also preceded in death by a sister, Anna Belle Gee.

Benny was a 1967 graduate of William Byrd High School. He worked for Norfolk Southern Railway for more than 40 years. His passion was the Vinton Volunteer Fire Department where he became the mascot in 1964 and a member in 1965, all while still in high school. Benny would go on to become Chief in 1995 and held that position until 2011, after which he remained an active honorary member until the time of his passing.

He enjoyed anything to do with the outdoors, especially family beach trips to Ocean Isle, N.C. He loved beach music and hanging out with his Budweiser Buddies at Bob's in Vinton, and was an avid UVA Wahoo fan. Benny was especially proud to

watch his grandchildren participate in sports and dance.

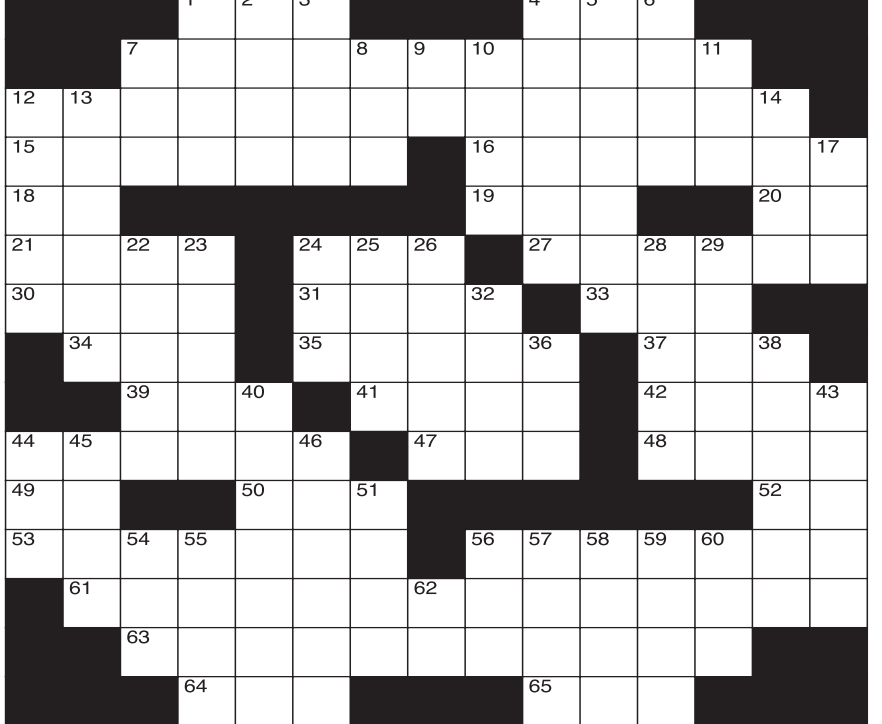
In addition to his wife of 55 years, Patricia "Pat" Powell, he will be missed and remembered by his daughters, Kristy Hodges and Kara Shafer (Jason); grandchildren, Trey Shafer, Noah Shafer, Mitchell Hodges, Heidi Knight, Madelyn Shafer, and Clayton Hodges; sister, Barbara Williams; as well as numerous other family and friends.

A Celebration of Life service to honor Benny will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, March 16, 2024 at Thrasher United Methodist Church in Vinton with the Rev. Rob Colwell, Michael Catron and Gary Houff officiating. There will be a time of gathering following the service.

In lieu of flowers the family has requested that memorial donations be made to Three Oaks Fellowship United Methodist Church, P. O. 692, Vinton, 24179. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to www.simpsonfuneral.com.



CROSSWORD PUZZLE



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| <p>CLUES ACROSS</p> <p>1. Helps little firms</p> <p>4. Political action committee</p> <p>7. Allowed</p> <p>12. Olivia Colman played one</p> <p>15. Open</p> <p>16. He had a notable lamp</p> <p>18. Promotional material</p> <p>19. Domesticated animal</p> <p>20. Larry and Curly's buddy</p> <p>21. The best ever</p> <p>24. TV network</p> <p>27. Checked for</p> <p>30. Dry or withered</p> <p>31. Expression of annoyance</p> <p>33. Dash</p> <p>34. Fifth note of a major scale</p> | <p>35. A secret clique</p> <p>37. Partner to cheese</p> <p>39. ___ school: where to learn healing</p> <p>41. City in ancient Syria</p> <p>42. Gasteyer and de Armas are two</p> <p>44. Established practice</p> <p>47. Thanksgiving side dish</p> <p>48. District in Peru</p> <p>49. It's becoming more prevalent</p> <p>50. State in India</p> <p>52. Measure of illumination</p> <p>53. Raised platform</p> <p>56. Japanese warrior</p> <p>61. R.L. Stevenson novel</p> <p>63. Transitory</p> <p>64. Advanced degree</p> <p>65. Fiddler crabs</p> | <p>CLUES DOWN</p> <p>1. Prevent from seeing</p> <p>2. Czech city</p> <p>3. ___ and Andy, TV show</p> <p>4. A young pig</p> <p>5. Removed surgically</p> <p>6. Covered with</p> <p>7. Chest muscle (slang)</p> <p>8. Nigerian City</p> <p>9. Midway between south and east</p> <p>10. A way to shut</p> <p>11. Stop playing</p> <p>12. Marshy places</p> <p>13. Takes apart</p> <p>14. Ten cents</p> <p>17. A gesture of assent</p> <p>22. Scent</p> <p>23. Teletypewriter</p> <p>24. General's assistant (abbr.)</p> <p>25. Hillside</p> <p>26. Taxi driver</p> <p>28. Semitic Sun god</p> | <p>29. Town in India</p> <p>32. Traditional rhythmic pattern</p> <p>36. Fugitives are on the ___</p> <p>38. Type of dance</p> <p>40. Two letters, one sound</p> <p>43. Having a strong, pleasant taste</p> <p>44. Golf score</p> <p>45. Mayhem</p> <p>46. Drenched</p> <p>51. River in northeastern Asia</p> <p>54. Drug to treat anxiety (abbr.)</p> <p>55. Part-time employee</p> <p>56. A very large body of water</p> <p>57. Aboriginal people of Japan</p> <p>58. Millisecond</p> <p>59. Forearm bone</p> <p>60. Subway dweller</p> <p>62. Royal Mail</p> |
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From the Pulpit

By Pastor Bryan Crouch,
Lynn Haven Baptist Church

A Study of Ephesians – ‘From Death to Life’

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.

We have been looking at the Book of Ephesians over the past several weeks and have reached chapter two of this great

letter to the Gentile believers in Ephesus.

After wrapping up chapter one with several verses that explained the power of God that lives within every believer, Paul begins chapter two by explaining this power should result in an outwardly change in the believer's life.

Verses 1-3 talk about how the

believer “used” to live and things they “used” to be involved in. The believer in Jesus Christ used to “follow the ways of the world” (v.2), have a “spirit of disobedience” (v.2) and focused on “satisfying the cravings, desires and thoughts of the flesh” (v.3).

Then in verse 4 Paul makes a HUGE shift in his focus. That was then, BUT this is now. Because of God's great love

for us, His rich mercy and glorious grace He has made us alive (v.4-5). We are no longer a target for His righteous wrath based on our sinful nature. We have “been saved by His grace” (v.5). It is not by anything we have done but only the grace and mercy of God alone (v.8-9) shown through the sacrifice of His One and Only Son, Jesus Christ that we are spiritually ALIVE!

DAR from page 1

seemingly simple, it not only makes a difference among the community, but can also change someone's personal outlook. Through selfless actions, the attitude of society is altered, and the sense of compassion is felt by all.

Respect is something that has been instilled among society for years. In grade school, we are taught to respect our teachers, ourselves, and our peers. I often question why this sense of respect has been lost amongst my generation. The loss of respect is often due to differences of opinions and circumstances. A good citizen sees past these differences and respects others regardless. Encouraging and upholding this sense of respect for generations to come, allows a diverse version of America with the freedom to voice opinions without judgment or criticism.

America is built on the people; by prioritizing the kind

and respectful treatment of others, the community becomes more efficient and inclusive to all. Representing a spirit of camaraderie, showing selfless behavior, and demonstrating respect for others, not only represents civic responsibilities of a good citizen, but also shapes America to be an accepting and caring society. With the importance of people placed above all else, differences can be set aside, and the growth of a strong and healthy nation can be prioritized.”

Her essay has advanced to state competition.

Glover will graduate this spring from William Byrd High School as a valedictorian with the Class of 2024. She has consistently been named to the All A Honor since 2020. She plans to attend a four-year university to earn her bachelor's degree in human nutrition and dietetics. Her career plans are “to work as a registered dietitian consulting with patients and helping to educate and influence them to better their diet and health.”

Glover is the president of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes at William Byrd, and a founding member of William Byrd Young Life, which promotes faith-based social opportunities for students and contributes to establishing a sense of belonging and a welcoming atmosphere for William Byrd students.

She is captain of the William Byrd cross country team and of the girls soccer team. She was named “Most Valuable Runner” in varsity cross country in 2020, Top Byrd 400 runner in 2022 and 2023, and won both All-District and All-Region awards in varsity girls soccer in 2023. She was also a varsity guest player on the WB girls lacrosse team from 2021-2023. She has been a member of Virginia United Travel Soccer from 2015-2023.

She was the William Byrd representative for the Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership Foundation in 2022 as a sophomore, developing skills to help take initiative and influence others to make a change within the community.

She was nominated for Top Terrier in 2022-23 and belongs to the Leo Club and Beta Club, and served as a Junior Marshal in 2022.

Glover has assisted in many ways as a volunteer at the Roanoke Rescue Mission. During the pandemic she packaged and delivered boxes filled with food and supplies

for those in need. When the kitchen reopened, Glover spent Tuesday evenings volunteering in the kitchen to help prepare and serve dinner, helping to ease the responsibilities of staff and give back to those around her.

She has also volunteered at Carilion Roanoke Memorial. Last summer she served as front desk volunteer to assist and escort patients and visitors throughout the hospital, which resulted in building relationships, while also providing a source of comfort to patients and families during a stressful time.

“During college and throughout my adult life, I intend to give back to my community through volunteer work,” Glover says.

She has worked as a preschool teacher with 3-year-olds at Second Presbyterian Preschool and as a babysitter for about six years.

Her hobbies are running, playing the ukelele, cooking, traveling, and doing watercolors.

WBHS Principal Tammy Newcomb said, “In the four years I have known Claire as her principal, I have witnessed her exceptional intellectual abilities and outstanding accomplishments in all areas of her life, particularly in academics which are truly remarkable. She has consistently demonstrated a deep commitment to her studies and maintained an exceptional GPA of 4.28. Her consistent high performance is a testament to her strong work ethic, dedication, and determination in pursuing academic excellence.

“In addition to her academic accomplishments, Claire exhibits exemplary leadership skills and academic involvement. She actively participates in various academic clubs and organizations, where she not only contributes her knowledge and skills, but also inspires and motivates her fellow students to strive for excellence.”

William Byrd chemistry teacher Melissa Carr says, “Claire is an extremely talented and gifted young woman who has impressed me with her academic achievements as well as her empathetic, caring, yet fun-loving nature and drive. She sets high expectations for herself and has a way of encouraging those around her to do the same. She is ‘one to watch’ as she is destined for great things.”

Glover is the daughter of Eddie and Karenna Glover.

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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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Band from page 3

WBMS All-District band (8th grade, clarinet), and Emma Whitcomb (8th grade, flute). District VI stretches all the way from Lynchburg to Blacksburg.

Submitted by Denise Aspell,
William Byrd Middle School Director
of Bands

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

BAPTIST (COOPERATIVE)
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 pos-

WINTON

WORSHIP DIRECTORY

TRUST THE TRUTH
Read 2 Timothy 1:1 through 4:22

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15).

The Greek word orthotomeo, translated here as “correctly handles,” is rendered “rightly dividing” in other versions.

It carries the idea of cutting straight like a surgeon and getting to the heart of the matter. Paul's letters to Timothy emphasize sound doctrine, which must be taught in the churches so believers will be established in the truth. Is false teaching being advocated? Stand firm on God's truth. Do unbelievers mock our Christian life? Stand firm on God's truth.

We are all to be students of God's Word—diligently studying it, faithfully putting it into practice in our daily lives, and effectively sharing it. We should never be ashamed to be identified with Christ, nor do we want to be embarrassed by our lack of preparation for witnessing.

We need to be ready with knowledge of the truth and guided by God's Spirit in sharing it with others.

Thought for Today: Train in the truth and trust its teaching.

Quicklook: 2 Timothy 2:7-15

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, 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 Worship 10:30 a.m., Sunday School 9:30 a.m., Wednesday

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

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

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

RCPS

from page 1

our students, staff and parents this past year,” Hudson said. He noted that the “heart of everything we do is our C-Change Strategic Framework.”

School Superintendent Dr. Ken Nicely described how the framework has become the roadmap for the school system.

“At the heart of the C-Change Strategic Framework is deeper learning—learning that is engaging and purposeful,” Nicely explained. “Through deeper learning, students utilize content knowledge to think deeply, engage with what they learn, and become prepared with a variety of opportunity ready skills—communication, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking, and citizenship.

“Surrounding the heart of the C-Change framework are key support factors. Learning needs to be engaging and purposeful and it takes a lot of support to make this happen. From maintaining and improving our school facilities, to safely transporting our students each day, to providing our students nutritious school meals, and keeping our schools safe and secure, our support teams work every day to provide our teachers with the resources and facilities they need to help students learn and be successful.”

“The C-Change Strategic Framework is our roadmap for success and we’re seeing that success,” Hudson said. “The class of 2023 had an on-time graduation rate of 95.7 percent—among the highest in the state and well above the statewide average of 91.9 percent. We have maintained an on-time graduation rate of at least 90 percent ever since the state started this measurement back in 2008 and our on-time graduation rate has always exceeded the state average. Thanks, in part to this high graduation rate, all our schools are, once again, fully accredited by the Virginia Department of Education.”

Hudson and Dr. Nicely voiced their concerns that these distinctions are becoming more difficult to earn each year. One reason is chronic absenteeism among students, in addition to lingering effects of the pandemic.

“We believe strongly that learning is most effective when students are in the classroom working in-person with a teacher,” Nicely said. “During the pandemic, we were one of only a handful of school districts across the state that maintained in-person instruction, either daily or on alternating days, especially for our youngest students. We are confident that decision has paid off.

“While some of our students still have some learning gaps to address, overall, our students have mostly recovered from any learning loss that may have occurred due to the pandemic, because most of our students never experienced huge learning losses to begin with—this was a direct result of having so much in-person learning during the height of the pandemic.

“To help districts address learning loss and chronic absenteeism, the state has introduced a new program called ‘All In Virginia’ that includes extra support for students in grades 3-8 and support for the Virginia Literacy Act, as well as programs to curb absences. Our plan has been accepted by the Virginia Department of Education and we’re working now to implement the extra support for students who need it as a supplement to the robust, effective instructional programs already in place.

“Long before the state introduced their tutoring program, Roanoke County Public Schools recognized the need for free tutoring support for our middle and high school students. Using pandemic-related funding, we launched ‘Just In Time Tutoring’ in early 2023 to provide 24-7 free online tutoring access and help with proofreading for writing assignments. This has become a game changer for many of our students who need a little help completing assignments, improving writing skills and preparing for key college assessments. ‘Just In Time Tutoring’ was a hit from the start and our students continue to use this free service every day.

Nicely reminded viewers to “remember that tutoring, acceleration, and remediation programs are necessary and useful for helping students who struggle or have unfinished learning. What is most important and essential to the academic success of ALL students, however, is the effective, high-quality instruction provided every day by our classroom teachers and staff in our 27 schools.

“Some parents and grandparents may remember the old days when students sat quietly at their desks listening to a teacher lecture. Those days are long gone. Today, our teachers are like guides, helping students discover answers to problems and work to discover knowledge—far more than just telling our students information.

“I wish every parent could sit in our classrooms and see the amazing instruction our teachers provide every day. After every visit to our classrooms, I’m

reinvigorated and energized when I see engaging and learning taking place. Teachers are working one-on-one with students, and it’s amazing when you see a student finally comprehend a concept – that “ah-ha” moment when you see on a student’s face that they understand.”

Next was an update from Clemons and RCPS Director of Career and Technical Education Jason Suhr on the largest construction program in the history of Roanoke County— the Career and Technical Education Center now underway.

“This is an exciting time,” Clemons noted. “In a few short years, our students will be able to learn in an all new, state-of-the-art center for advanced instruction in career and technical education fields.

“This new center will provide a modern, state-of-the-art facility for our existing programs and offer the space to add some exciting new programs such as HVAC, collision repair, dental assistant and more,” Suhr added.

“We are proud to partner with many area businesses and organizations like Carilion Clinic, The Claude Moore Charitable Foundation, the Blue Ridge Partnership for Health Science Careers, Radford University, Blue Ridge Color Company, Lawrence Companies and more. We are actively seeking additional support from area businesses.

“Career and Technical Education is a critical part of the economic development of Roanoke County. CTE plays a significant role in developing a skilled workforce, and centers like the one we’re planning to build go a long way toward expanding a skilled workforce to attract new businesses and to fill jobs left vacant by those who have retired. The new CTE center will be an exciting, visual symbol of what it means to prepare students to be Opportunity Ready.

“Earlier this year, we received proposals to construct this new center along with renovations at two elementary schools,” Suhr explained. “In December, the board selected the Branch Group and RRMM to complete these projects. Based on our current timeline, we are looking at a possible completion date of summer or fall of 2026.

“I’d like express the appreciation of the School Board and the school system to the Roanoke County Board of Supervisors,” Clemons said. “We value our relationship with the board of supervisors and, together, with a lot of discussion and careful consideration, we found a way to find funding for this new CTE Center and funding for badly needed renovations at two elementary schools. We thank the supervisors and the citizens of Roanoke County for making these projects a top priority.”

Suhr reminded businesses that the school system is eager to partner with them in many work-force development ways, including student registered apprenticeship positions.

“The student registered apprenticeship program is a partnership between school systems and area businesses to employ students in their junior and/or senior years on a part-time basis while working to earn an industry-related credential,” Suhr explained. “After completing the apprenticeship program, hopefully the company will hire the student full-time and, ultimately, advance to leadership positions within that company.

“Our regional student registered apprenticeship program is the largest in the state and includes students from Roanoke City Public Schools and Salem City Public Schools.”

Greenway and RCPS Director of Facilities and Operations Todd Kageals presented an update on the renovation and expansion project at William Byrd High School and two new projects getting underway soon at W.E. Cundiff and Glen Cove Elementary schools.

“We’re in the final phases of this project (William Byrd) and we’re on target to have things wrapped up before the end of the school year,” Kageals noted. “In all, this project involved making improvements and renovations to more than 100,000 square feet of the existing school and adding more than 13,500 square feet in new spaces. Renovations included science labs, band room, weight room, media center, school counseling offices, library, the main gym, and front lobby. Additions included choir and art rooms, wrestling area, a front entrance portico, and more.”

“This has been a great project, and the end result is fantastic and something the entire William Byrd community can be proud of,” Greenway said. “But this isn’t the only project we’re working on. We’re in the initial stages of much-needed renovations at Glen Cove and W.E. Cundiff Elementary Schools.

“Both were designed more than 50 years ago at a time when open-concept classrooms were a trend,” Kageals pointed out. There were few walls in the original buildings.

“I’m in the real estate business and open concept is great for houses but terrible for classrooms,” Greenway

noted. “With all this open space, it’s very hard for classrooms to not disrupt one another. I’m amazed at how the teachers and students there handle this environment every day.

“The teachers and students do an amazing job at Glen Cove and W.E. Cundiff, but it is definitely time to correct these obstacles to learning,” Kageals agreed.

“We’re eager to get started on these projects, but it’s important to remember that these aren’t the only needs our schools have,” Greenway commented. “In our capital improvement plan, we’ve also identified significant needs at Northside Middle, Glenvar Elementary, Hidden Valley Middle, Burlington Elementary and Penn Forest Elementary. All these schools are more than 50 years old and in need of substantial renovations and improvements.

“Our students have needs that go beyond renovating school buildings. We also have to look out for the needs of students in many other areas. We’re proud to have developed a plan to upgrade or replace playgrounds at all our elementary schools over the next 20 years – and we’re also focusing on playground space for some of our most precious students with special needs.”

Facciani, along with the Mike Riley and Stephanie Hogan, Executive Directors of Secondary Instruction, shared more on “how we’re taking the idea of being Opportunity Ready to a whole new level. Not only do our graduates leave school Opportunity Ready— now they get to prove it.”

“It all started with the creation of the Opportunity Ready Profile of a Graduate,” Hogan said. “This profile is a visual representation of the skills and traits a student from Roanoke County Public Schools should have developed by the time that student graduates.

“Using the Profile of a Graduate as a base, we started the Opportunity Ready certification pilot program last year. Throughout a student’s academic career, they will develop a portfolio to provide evidence of that mastery, beginning at the elementary school level.

“Students there start with student-led conferences. You may remember going to parent-teacher conferences where the parent and the teacher discussed the student’s learning. With student-led conferences, we flip that entire process. The student meets with the parent and shows them the learning that has taken place. The teacher is there to help guide the discussion, but the student is the one who is presenting directly to the parent.

“This approach gives the student the opportunity to practice and develop important communication skills as well as showcase their work while at school, reviewing strengths and opportunities for improvement.”

“We carry the student-led conferences through middle school and into the first few years of high school with students creating a digital portfolio,” said Riley. “By the time a student is a senior, he or she has collected a significant amount of evidence to then use to prepare a presentation to demonstrate mastery of the skills and traits of the Profile of a Graduate. Those students that successfully defend their portfolio will earn the Opportunity Ready Certification, telling businesses and colleges that this graduate has demonstrated proficiency in key success skills and should have extra consideration when it comes to job or college applications.”

“It’s a very exciting and innovative process for our students to showcase their learning and it makes learning much more engaging and purposeful,” Facciani concluded.

The report went on to detail how the school system is making great strides toward ensuring schools are as safe and secure as possible, implementing initiatives that other area school divisions are only now considering.

“Over the past 10 years, we have spent millions of dollars improving the security of our schools,” Riley explained. “From physical improvements to changing locks on our doors, to updated visitor screening systems, additional cameras, and advanced notification systems like Raptor, Roanoke County Public Schools and the School Board have worked hard to make sure our schools are safe places for students to learn.

“But we can’t rest on our laurels. We must always be vigilant. We want to remain as proactive as we can. That’s why we constantly remind our students, staff, and parents to report anything that seems suspicious or concerning. Even if it seems trivial, it might be a sign of something larger.

“We’re very fortunate that the number of school resource officers has grown considerably over the past few years. Today, we have 18 SROs for our schools. In addition, we have other police officers and sheriff’s deputies who frequently visit and patrol our schools.

“We are incredibly fortunate to have a very strong

See **Opportunity**, page 6

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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Opportunity from page 5

relationship with the Roanoke County Police and Sheriff's Departments.

"Another key area of safety we continue to expand is our capability to address the mental health of our students. Our school counselors seek to establish productive relationships with students, parents, staff, and community members. In addition, LIFE Counselors provide individual and group counseling to students as well as education on approved mental health, trauma, and substance topics to our students, staff, and parents. LIFE counselors and school counselors also focus on prevention and intervention to promote academic, personal growth, and well-being.

The report emphasized the important role parents can play in keeping schools safe.

"Parents can report anything concerning or suspicious to the Roanoke County Police Department or to any school administrator," said Riley. "If parents or students see something concerning on social media – please

report it, but do not share it. Sharing social media rumors makes it harder for us to discover the source of the rumor or post."

In concluding the Opportunity Ready 2023 report, School Board member David Linden and Assistant Superintendent Dr. Jessica McClung shared a few of the many successes RCPS has experienced in 2023, including the PBIS program.

Linden identified McClung as "the driving force behind our positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) program" which promotes a positive culture in the schools.

"This is an ongoing program that encourages our students to be safe, be respectful and be responsible," McClung explained. "We are using the PBIS program to focus on school safety, coping with trauma, being fair, for substance abuse prevention, bullying prevention and suicide prevention.

"PBIS involves explicitly teaching, prompting,

modeling, practicing, and encouraging positive expected social skills across settings and individuals. The key word is positive. For many years, inappropriate student behavior was corrected in a negative way – DON'T do this... DON'T do that.

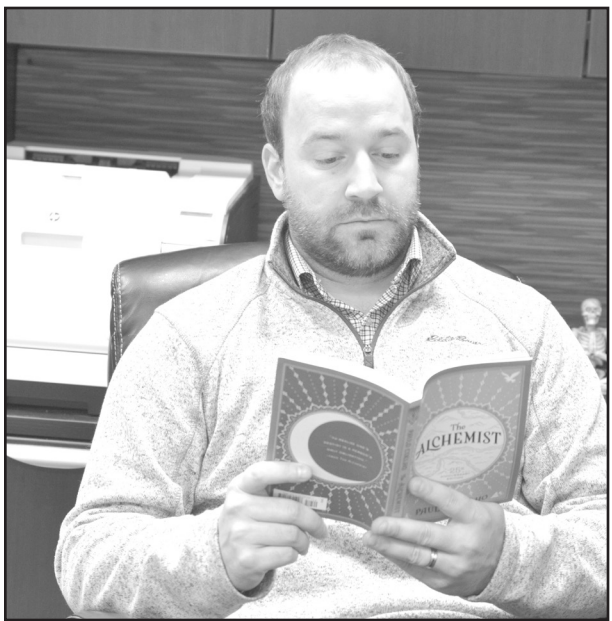
"Through PBIS, we want to emphasize and encourage correct, positive behavior. If a student demonstrates inappropriate behavior, we help the student correct the behavior by emphasizing what TO DO. Students are still held accountable for their actions, but we start by making it clear what actions and behavior are expected.

The School Board expressed thanks to Mike Wray, who retired from the School Board in 2023 after eight years of service on the School Board and four years on the Board of Supervisors.

The public may watch the "Opportunity Ready 2023" presentation at www.rcps.us/opportunityready2023.

-Roanoke County Public Schools

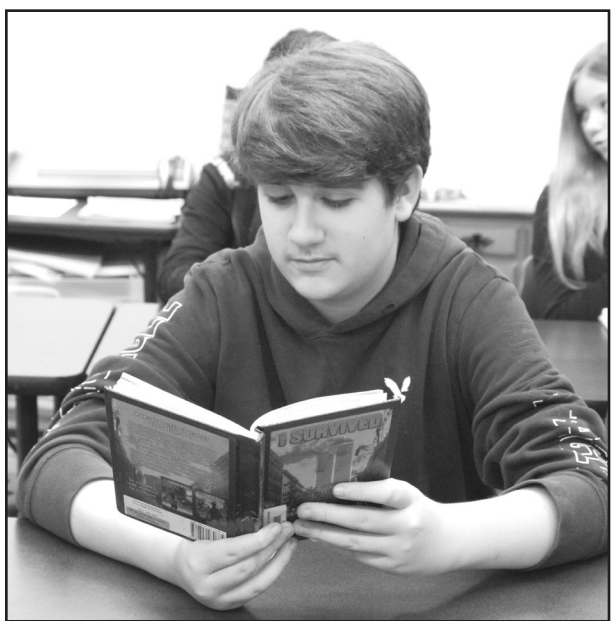
WBMS from page 1



Principal Evan Noell



Jennifer Cabrera



Ethan Camper

PHOTO BY DEBBIE ADAMS

per day can boost test scores significantly, improve vocabulary, enhance creativity, increase stamina for longer high-stakes assessments, and, most importantly, reduce stress in both adults and students alike," Anderson noted before the day of the event. "We chose the date to coincide with Read Across America week. I'm looking forward to seeing all of our staff members and students

take a break to drop everything and read on Wednesday!

"Prior to the event, I made and shared a power point with the staff, who then showed it to the students. It featured pictures of students and staff members participating in the past and it talks about the expectations of the event and the statistics that show the benefits of reading daily."

Addison says in past years of

"Drop Everything and Read" the response from staff has been very positive and encouraging.

When randomly dropping in on classes or peeking through windows during "Drop Everything and Read," students were obviously engaged and enjoying their free reading time— some sitting at desks or tables, some choosing isolated spots under tables, and some stretched

out on the gym floor— with a wide variety of reading selections.

Student Nehemias Maldonado, who was reading a book involving robots, said he enjoyed taking a break from classwork. Seventh grader Ethan Camper said he has always liked to read, especially books about history. Grant Bartley favors historical fiction and also likes

the break from routine that "Drop Everything and Read" allows. On March 6, Rylan Lang was finishing up a book for a book report—"Little Princess"—but generally chooses mysteries.

"Lots of kids don't get to just stop and read if they are involved after-school hours in school, sports, and other activities, so time dedicated to reading is great!" Lang said.

Anderson from page 1

Baptist Church. Despite his job responsibilities,

Anderson says the family does find time for board

games and puzzles in the evenings and many

church activities.

Anderson has been the coordinator for the school on the renovation and expansion project that will be completed later this month, with students fully returning to the building for classes on April 1 after spring break.

"Mrs. Newcomb is leaving the school in a good place," Anderson said. "I will still turn to her for support and advice in her new role at central office. I love working with the William Byrd students and the community, and I am excited for the new opportunity to lead in this community. There is a lot of positive history and tradition to build on."

"Mr. Anderson joined the Terrier community five years ago and immediately immersed himself into the school and community," said Newcomb. "His commitment to

teaching and learning is something that sets him apart, but his work ethic is unmatched. He has been an integral part of the construction project and without him I'm not sure how we would have navigated the Covid years. The WBHS staff and students are in good hands. I'm excited for Mr. Anderson and look forward to working with him in his new role."

"I've had the pleasure of seeing Travis Anderson brought in as an assistant principal and grow in this role," said School Board representative Tim Greenway. "The teachers at Byrd have nothing but rave reviews to say about him and sing his praises every day. He has managed our two-year renovation on a day-to-day basis with very little supervision. I have no doubt Travis will serve our community well and be a valued leader at William Byrd."

The School Board also selected Philip Martin as the new supervisor of social studies for Roanoke County Public Schools. He is from Botetourt County and graduated from Roanoke Catholic School, where he was a standout in basketball. He also

played basketball at Radford University where he earned his undergraduate degree in philosophy and social sciences. He went on to receive his graduate degree from Radford in Educational Leadership. His wife is also an educator, teaching English and history.

Martin joined RCPS in 2020 as a dean at William Byrd High School, following nine years of teaching experience in Roanoke City Public Schools at John P. Fishwick Middle School (U.S. History) and at Patrick Henry High School (World History and World Religions).

In 2022, Martin was named as an assistant principal at WBHS. He says he had heard great things about WBHS from friends at Patrick Henry and applied for the dean of students position when it opened up.

In his free time, Martin enjoys outdoor activities— biking, hiking, and kayaking.

-Roanoke County Schools and Vinton Messenger staff report

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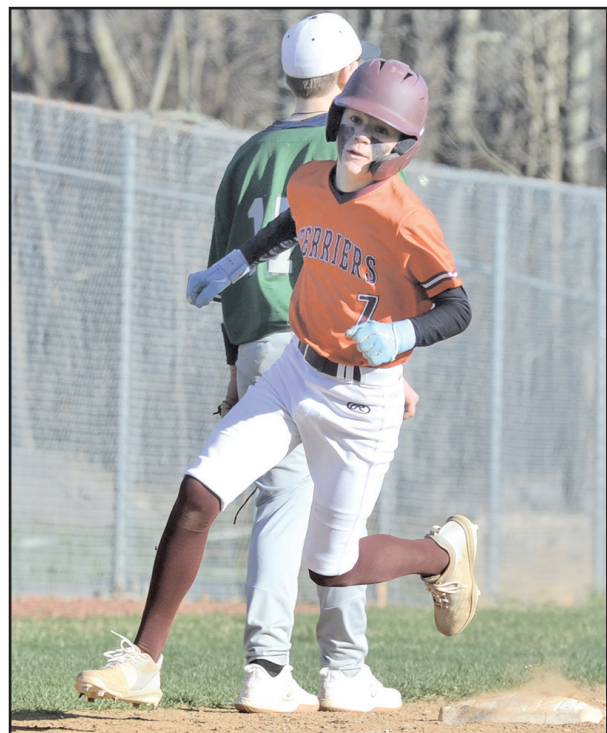
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PHOTOS BY BRIAN HOFFMAN & SUZANNE WITCHER

Action from some William Byrd Middle School games in the past week. Left, Carlie Zimmerman of the girls' soccer team handles the ball in the Terriers game with Andrew Lewis in Salem last Thursday. Middle, Raegan Henritze(#15) slides safely into third in Byrd's 18-2 win over Lewis in softball at the Salem Civic Center. Right, Carter Gray of Byrd rounds third and scores in Byrd's 13-2 win over Northside in Vinton, keeping the Terrier baseball team undefeated at 3-0. As an added note, in the middle photo the Lewis thirdbaseman is Katherine Wise, daughter of former William Byrd pitching standout Scott Wise.

MS TERRIERS



PHOTO BY BRIAN HOFFMAN

William Byrd lacrosse teams open today

The William Byrd lacrosse teams open today as both the boys and girls take on Blacksburg opponents. The girls will be home at Patterson Stadium to take on the Bruins at 7:15 pm and the boys play in Blacksburg tonight. On Monday the boys are at Franklin County and the girls are home again to host the Eagles in Vinton. Here Byrd defenseman CJ Roberts brings the ball up the field in last Saturday's scrimmage against Jefferson Forest at Patterson Stadium.

Byrd tennis season opens

The girls split and the boys dropped two to start the 2024 high school tennis season this week. Both teams played on back-to-back nights.

The girls played their first two matches on the road. Monday at Bassett they dropped a 2-7 decision but bounced back for an 8-1 win over Hidden Valley on Tuesday.

"We competed very well across the board," said Byrd coach Randy Bush. "The girls learned a lot from the Bassett match and were able to make their individual adjustments. Very proud of this group."

The boys had two matches at home, falling to Bassett Monday, 5-4, and Hidden Valley Tuesday, 7-2.

Both teams are scheduled to play Cave Spring next, with the boys at home Thursday and the girls at Cave Spring Friday.



PHOTO BY JIM DEVINNEY

Byrd's Camden Thepsimuong hits a return in Monday's season opening match with Bassett.

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Quality pitching, experience and depth give Byrd baseball team high hopes

The William Byrd baseball team is scheduled to open this week, and as of press time opening day will be Friday at Cave Spring.

The Terriers have already seen some changes to their schedule. They were slated to open at home with Craig County on Wednesday, but Craig officials called and cancelled that game without giving a reason. The Rockets did play Glenvar on Monday of this week and lost 10-0 by slaughter rule, so that likely wiped out a sure win for the Terriers.

With the Craig game eliminated the new opener is Friday at Cave Spring. However, several Byrd events were moved from Friday to Thursday with anticipation of poor weather. The baseball game at Cave Spring was still on for Friday at press time but that could change.

"I really didn't want to open with Cave Spring," said Byrd coach Jason Taylor. "We've had to find two more games. We added a third game for our trip to Tennessee but we're still looking for one more."

Whenever the Terriers play, they should be pretty good. They lost just two starters from last year's 12-11 team, catcher James Purcell and centerfielder Evan Mullen, and Taylor has the entire pitching staff back. And, the 12-11 record is somewhat deceiving.

"We lost seven games by one run and didn't win any by a run," said Taylor. "If we turn around three or four of those games we would have had 15 or 16 wins."

Jason is hoping the Terriers do just that this season with a strong pitching staff. Seniors Blake Glover, Cooper Minnix and Brenin Witcher and junior Brogan Dent all return to give the Terriers quality depth and balance. Glover and Witcher are righthanders and Dent and Minnix are portsiders.

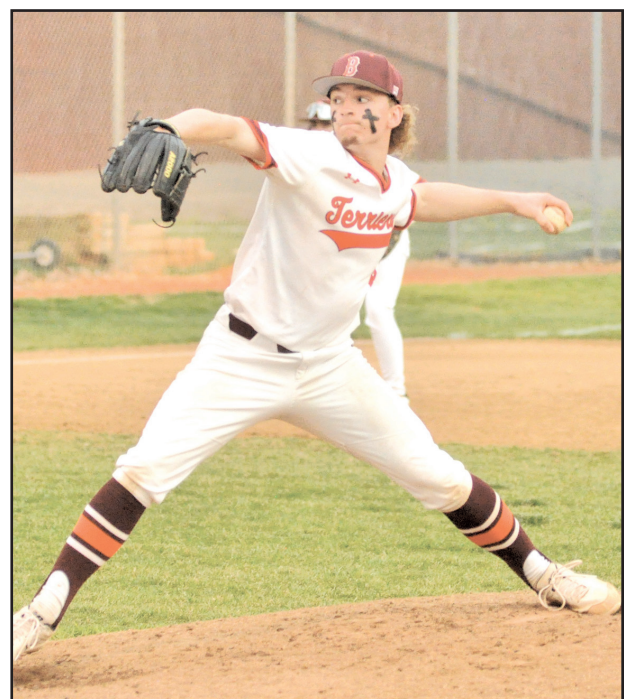
"If they throw strikes we should be pretty solid on the mound," said Taylor.

Senior Keller Spraker, juniors Hunter Obenchain and Torin Bundy and sophomores Cannin Lutz and Kylind Spence are also available to pitch.

Byrd graduated slugging Purcell behind the plate and senior Noah Thompson will inherit the tools of ignorance. Noah has excellent speed and he can also play the outfield, and in that case sophomore Joshua Vaughan would catch.

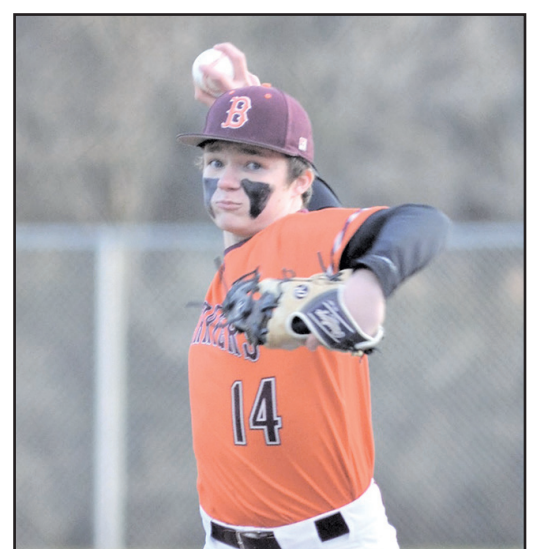
Glover or Dent will play first when the other is pitching, and if neither are pitching the one with the hotter bat will play. Israel Hairston will be at second and Jerrett Shepherd and Hayden Eads can also play there. Ian Burnett moves from second to short and All-Region Spraker returns to play third. Eads can play any of the infield or outfield positions.

Junior Kam McKee moves from short to centerfield to replace Mullen and anchor the outfield.



PHOTOS BY BRIAN HOFFMAN

Leftys Brogan Dent (top left) and Cooper Minnix (top right) and righthanders Blake Glover (below left) and Brenin Witcher (below right) all return to the mound to give Byrd talent and experience.



PHOTOS BY SUZANNE WITCHER

Others vying for time at the corners include Bundy, Minnix, Witcher and Eads. Juniors Obenchain, Landon Haithcock, Logan Beavers and Conner Amos are all up from the jayvee team and looking to crack the lineup.

It should be a good team and an exciting season at

Walthall Park. Like last year, every game will count as Byrd looks to play in the Region 3D tournament and beyond.

"We'll be better," said Taylor. "We have a plan, and the way the region is set up every game will be important whether it's a district game or not."



William Byrd's Ian Sigmon lines up a kick.

PHOTO BY EVAN COPENING

Wm. Byrd soccer team off to flying start with wins over Bassett, Hidden Valley

The William Byrd boys' soccer team is off to a fast start with two wins in the first two nights of the spring season. Byrd won at Bassett High on Monday night, 5-1, then beat Hidden Valley in Vinton Monday, 3-0.

Byrd got off to a quick start as Sean Minnix scored just eight minutes into the season on a shot from 30 yards. Sergio Leon picked up an assist after gathering a punt from Byrd keeper Bricen Lancaster.

"It was a great goal, and it rallied the team," said Byrd coach Russell Dishman.

Four minutes later Cole Kovacevic intercepted a pass and was able to play Sergio through, where he beat two defenders to place a ball past the keeper low and away for a 2-0 lead. The third goal came when Ian Sigmon headed a ball to Cole Kovacevic who scored for a 3-0 halftime lead.

Byrd took a 4-0 lead on a Ben Guertin penalty kick in the second half. Bassett answered for the Bengals' only goal of the night, but Leon added a late score for some icing on the cake. Lancaster finished with eight saves.

On Tuesday at Highfill Field Leon opened the scoring against Hidden Valley with a goal in the 37th minute when he was able to get in behind and play over the Titan keeper, and it was 1-0 at the half. The second half started well, and in the 66th minute Thomas Bibby was able to get some space and play a ball from 35 yards out and beat the keeper. Guertin closed out the scoring with a 71st minute penalty kick and Lancaster got his first shutout of the season with four saves.

The Terriers are back home Friday night to host Cave Spring.

"This is a tough week to start playing three matches in five days and the travel Monday to Bassett was a long night to return to play Hidden Valley the next day," said Dishman. "We have two more next week. It's a challenge to play 30 percent of the regular season matches in the first two weeks. Hopefully this risk pays off later in the season."

Girls split first two soccer games

The William Byrd girls played a back-to-back to open the season and split their first two soccer matches, both by shutout scores. The Terriers beat Bassett at home Monday, 6-0, but lost at Hidden Valley Tuesday, 4-0.

Byrd got off to a quick start Monday at Addisyn St. Clair scored the first two goals of the season with assists going to Emma Milliron and Claire Glover. Ryan Markham had the third goal of the game off an assist from Mia Martin and Milliron made it 4-0 at the half off an assist from Elena Mullen.

Byrd tacked on two more goals after intermission. St. Clair found Logan Andrews for a score with 23 minutes remaining, then Markham scored her second goal of the night off a Martin assist to top things off. Kadence Fernatt and Bella Trumble split time in the goal for the shutout.

On Tuesday at Hidden Valley it was the Titans who got off to the hot start, taking a 2-0 lead in the first half. The host team put two more on the board in the second half to secure the win as Fernatt had five saves.

Byrd is now off until next Tuesday, March 19, when the Terriers go to Magna Vista.



PHOTOS BY JIM & REGINA DEVINNEY



Above, Byrd's Claire Glover pushes the ball down the field in Monday's opening night soccer win over Bassett. Left, Evan Brown (#4) controls the ball for the Terriers.