

Thursday, January 15, 2026 • Dogwood Capital of Virginia • Covering Vinton, Bonsack & Stewartsville

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## Shepherd named chair of Board of Supervisors

The Roanoke County Board of Supervisors welcomed 2026 at the Jan. 13 meeting with the election of a new chair and vice chair. Tammy Shepherd, who represents the Vinton Magisterial District, was chosen by her colleagues as chair. David Radford, current chair, was selected as vice chair.

In other board actions, during a previous meeting on Dec. 16, the board approved a petition of the Economic Development Authority of Roanoke County to rezone approximately 36.501 acres from PTD, (Planned Technology Development) District, to R-3, Medium Density Multi-Family Residential District, to construct townhouses located at 2111, 2112, 2121 and 2351 Cardinal Park Drive in Vinton.

The board also approved a petition of the Economic Development Authority of Roanoke County and Cardinal IG Company to rezone approximately 60.704 acres of land zoned PTD, to amend the master plan for the Vinton Business Center located at 2131 and 2132 Cardinal Park Drive and 2411 Hardy Road.

There were numerous comments from citizens about the proposals. Some were eager to have a second entrance to the Montgomery Village subdivision. Others decried the visual impact on the nearby Blue Ridge Parkway and the increased traffic in the area.

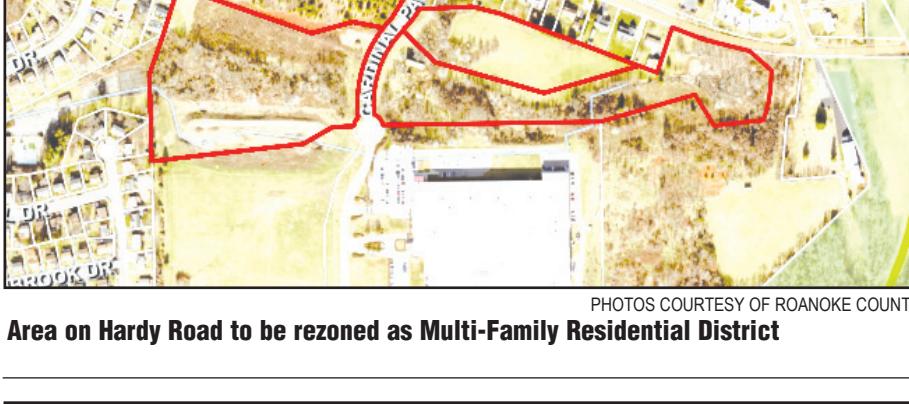
- Vinton Messenger staff report



New Roanoke County Board of Supervisors Chair Tammy Shepherd



Roanoke County Board of Supervisors Vice Chair for 2026 David Radford



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ROANOKE COUNTY

Area on Hardy Road to be rezoned as Multi-Family Residential District



PHOTO COURTESY OF SKANSKA

Updated W.E. Cundiff photo on Dec. 31

## School Board receives updates on W.E. Cundiff renovations

At their first meeting in 2026, Roanoke County School Board members received an update on progress being made on the renovation and expansion project at W.E. Cundiff Elementary School in Vinton. One of the main goals of the project has been to replace the "open classroom" design, no longer considered optimal for learning. Glen Cove Elementary, also an open classroom school, is being renovated concurrently.

Skanska Construction's program manager, Kamal Khalil, explained to board members what has been completed and what remains to be done before the project finishes up in the fall of 2026. He said the project has been running smoothly with "no glitches" in the construction process thus far.

The official groundbreaking for the project was held in August 2024. Plans include a new front entrance, a new

cafeteria, a new administrative and entry point, the addition of classrooms, an enlarged parking lot, and moving/improving the playground. The renovated and expanded facility is expected to cost \$29.9 million and enlarge the school to 75,026 square feet.

The school celebrated the official opening of the new administrative wing, cafeteria, and kitchen in October 2025.

The contractor is turning over areas of the building for students to occupy as construction phases are completed.

Phases 1A, 1B, 2A on the second level, the administrative wing, the corridor, the Phase 3B gym area, kitchen, dining areas, and Phase 2A kindergarten on the lower level are complete and have been turned over to the school with only a few punch list items to complete.

See Cundiff, page 4



Vinton History Museum personnel and volunteers who collected ornaments and decorated the Snowman Tree included (from left) Hotel Roanoke General Manager Brian Wells, Millie Stewart, Julie Tucci, Judy Cunningham, and Mary Beth Layman.

## Vinton History Museum, Creative Occasions repeat winners in Hotel Roanoke Fashions for Evergreens

The results are in for the 2025 Hotel Roanoke Fashions for Evergreens competition. Once again Mark Frye, owner of Creative Occasions Flowers and Events, and the Vinton History Museum have returned to Vinton as winners.

Frye won first place in the Judges Professional Vote category—a three-time winner—for his tree based on the movie "Wicked."

The Vinton History Museum won honorable mention in the Judges Professional Vote category and sixth place in the Public Vote category, raising over \$400 for the United Way.

To create their tree, the museum staff and volunteers collected over 500 snowmen—ornaments and free-standing—and placed them on and around not one, but two trees for "In the Meadow We Can Build a Snowman."

Proceeds for the Fashions for Evergreens

See Winners, page 4



"Wicked" by Mark Frye, first place in the Professional Vote



Mark Frye (left) with Brian Wells of Hotel Roanoke

PHOTO COURTESY OF HOTEL ROANOKE

## Vinton Hotel construction continues on the fast track

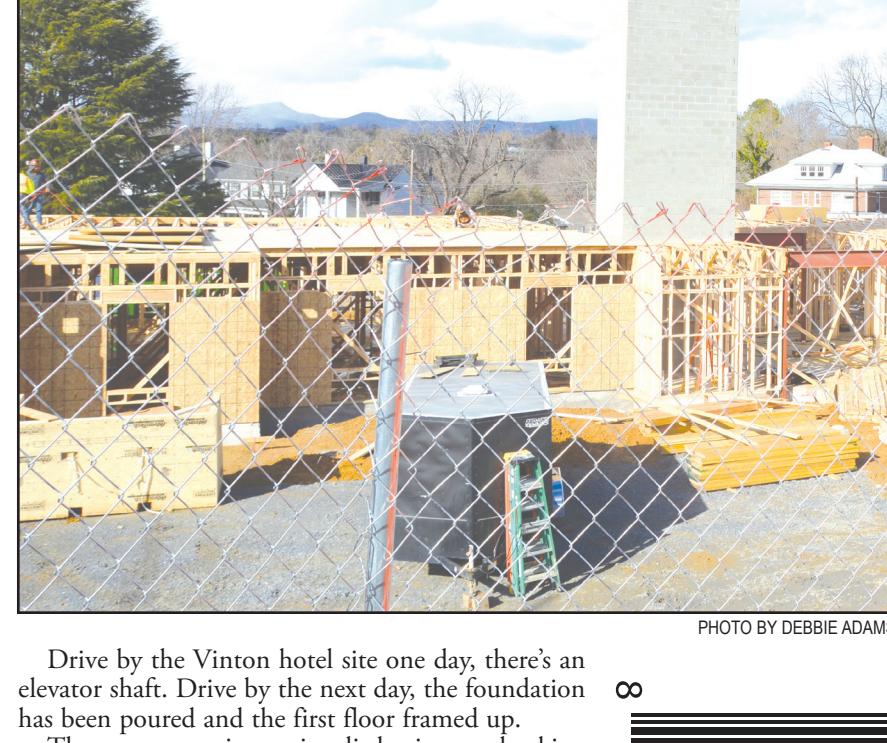


PHOTO BY DEBBIE ADAMS

Drive by the Vinton hotel site one day, there's an elevator shaft. Drive by the next day, the foundation has been poured and the first floor framed up.

The contractor is wasting little time and taking advantage of clear, albeit cold weather to get the Extended Stay America Premier Suites by KARA Roanoke, LLC, under roof.

The 92-room hotel now under construction is located in downtown Vinton at 525 Pollard Street at the intersection of Pollard, Virginia Avenue, and Cedar Avenue. Plans are for the hotel to be completed in the fall of 2026.

- Vinton Messenger staff report

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# McCarty, Stovall announce re-election bids

Vinton Town Council members Sabrina McCarty and Mike Stovall announced at the Jan. 6 council meeting that they would be seeking re-election to their positions in the General Election on November 3, 2026.

McCarty was first elected to council in 2014. Now retired,

she was the senior vice president at Pinnacle Financial Partners and served as president of the Vinton Area Chamber of Commerce for several years.

Stovall was first elected in 2018. He served in the Vinton Police Department as an investigator and represented the Vinton

District on the Roanoke County School Board for almost 20 years. He and his wife Patsy have been small business owners in Vinton since 1995. He is a graduate of William Byrd and a member of Vinton Baptist Church.

- *Vinton Messenger staff report*



PHOTO BY DEBBIE ADAMS

**Sabrina McCarty and Mike Stovall have announced that they will run for re-election to Vinton Town Council.**

## Clemons continues as School Board chair for 2026, Hudson as vice chair

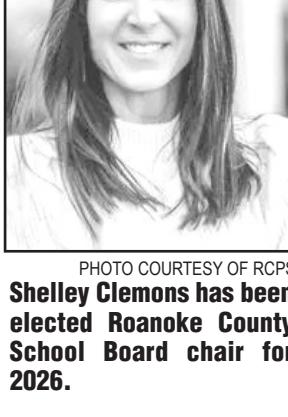


PHOTO COURTESY OF RCPS  
**Shelley Clemons has been elected Roanoke County School Board chair for 2026.**

At last week's Jan. 8 meeting, the Roanoke County School Board elected Cave Spring member Shelley Clemons to continue as board chairman for 2026. Clemons was first elected chair in 2025. The board also elected Catawba member Brent Hudson to continue as vice-chair. Other School Board members are Tim Greenway (Vinton), David Linden (Hollins), and Ryan White (Windsor Hills).

In addition, the board approved the list of meeting dates and times for 2026. School Board meetings will take place at 6 p.m. Work sessions will take place at 3:30 p.m. Meetings are scheduled to take place as follows (dates and times are subject to change):

School Board meetings: Jan. 22, Feb. 19, March 31, April 16, May 21, June 4, July 9, Aug. 6, Sept. 3, Oct. 1, Nov. 5, and Dec. 3.

School Board budget work sessions are scheduled for Jan. 27, Feb. 24, and March 11.

School Board work sessions are scheduled for Feb. 5, March 3, April 2, May 7, June 4, July 9, Aug. 6, Sept. 3, Oct. 1, Nov. 5, and Dec. 3.

All meetings and work sessions will take place at the Roanoke County Public Schools Central Office located at 5937 Cove Road in Roanoke, unless otherwise stated. Meetings are open to

the public. In-person attendance at meetings may be limited, and citizens in attendance may have to use overflow rooms. Additional meetings or work sessions may be scheduled by the School Board chair as needed.

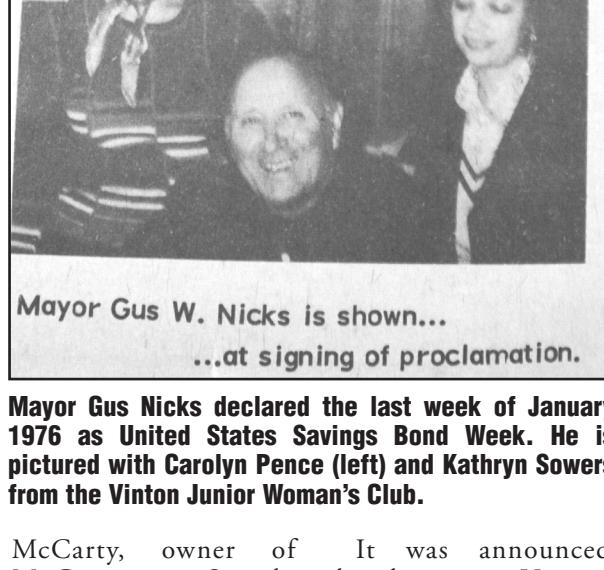
Meetings are streamed live and are available for on-demand playback at [www.rcps.us/schoolboard](http://www.rcps.us/schoolboard). See [www.rcps.us/schoolboardmeetings](http://www.rcps.us/schoolboardmeetings). Meeting agendas can be found at <https://www.rcps.us/SBagenda>.

- *RCPS*

## Remembering Vinton

### 50 years ago in January 1976

with the Vinton Historical Society



**Mayor Gus Nicks declared the last week of January 1976 as United States Savings Bond Week. He is pictured with Carolyn Pence (left) and Kathryn Sowers from the Vinton Junior Woman's Club.**



**The Dogwood Festival Committee invited Miss America, Tawny Godin, to appear at the Dogwood Festival in April.**

**Bobby Altice was named Chief of the Vinton First Aid Crew for the sixth time.**

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

The biggest news in January 1976 with the most far-reaching impact was the change in Roanoke County to the new county executive form of government, which resulted in many boards and positions being abolished.

The Vinton Police Department was busy over the holiday season with break-ins and thefts at homes and businesses (including Mayor Gus Nicks' furniture store), a bomb threat at the intermediate school, an attempted murder of a spouse, and a child found abandoned at a church. Three juveniles

broke into a home and stole installed carpet right off the floor.

Two other juveniles were charged with making a telephone bomb threat to the Roanoke County pre-vocational school (now the Billy Byrd Apartments) which resulted in the school being evacuated. Two more were arrested for breaking into the same school and stealing candy and money from the vending machine. Later in the month, juveniles broke 27 windows at the school by throwing stones at them.

Vinton also mourned the loss of community leader E.W. "Hawkeye"

McCarty, owner of McCarty Supply Company and in the hardware business for 35 years. His grandson, Chris McCarty, says that he's not quite sure how his grandfather got the nickname of "Hawkeye."

He thought it had to do with hunting, but a friend had another version. McCarty was part owner of a bar where the bingo hall is located today and had an uncanny ability to recognize when the police were coming and to warn the patrons to straighten up. He was known for organizing community bus trips to pro football games and the West Virginia State Fair each year.

It was announced that homes in Vinton, Roanoke County, and Roanoke City would have cable television available to them in the fall. Roanoke Valley Cablevision was awarded the franchise. The company was owned by 10 local businessmen and associated with Cox Cable Communications in Atlanta.

Vinton Town Council was planning a new fire house on the Vinyard property at Walnut Avenue and Jackson Street. The lot was currently being used for parking. It was first thought that the new fire station situated on the corner was not large enough for nine pieces of equipment, but Town Manager Ron Miller came up with the idea of turning the building around to front on Jackson Street. The town asked the county to share in the construction costs, since, according to Mayor Gus Nicks, half to two-thirds of the calls answered by the town's station were in the county. Nicks asked the county to pay one half (\$200,000) of the total cost of \$400,000.

Council also adopted a plan by AEP that would add 35 new streetlights downtown in Vinton, increasing the town's electric bill to about \$19,000 a month.

Council voted to obtain two memberships in the Vinton Chamber of Commerce—one in the mayor's name and one in the town manager's name.

Council also increased the wage of a minimum

laborer to \$2.37 an hour.

At its second meeting in January, council suggested that to relieve traffic problems in downtown Vinton, several of its streets be made one-way. The mayor recommended that one-way signs be installed along the first block of Pollard Street and two blocks of Lee Avenue from Walnut Avenue to Maple Street. He said he thought this might make the downtown area more convenient for people to drive into, park, and shop.

He also signed a proclamation declaring the last week of January as "United States Savings Bond Week."

Council scheduled public hearings on building a bowling alley on Clearview Drive, and approved spending \$7,016 for new kitchen equipment at the War Memorial.

Bobby Altice was re-elected by the membership as chief

of the Vinton First Aid Crew for his sixth term. He later served the community on Vinton Town Council. The previous year (1975) the crew had responded to 1,257 calls, volunteering 4,983 man-hours of service, and traveling 24,188 miles on calls.

Roanoke County Sheriff O.S. Foster reported serious crime was increasing in the county, largely because of thefts from vehicles, especially CB radios.

(Five CBs were stolen in Vinton in just one night in January 1976.)

The number of serious crimes increased in the county by 555 from the previous year.

The Virginia Dept. of Corrections reported that the state jails were overcrowded, with 2,200

convicted people waiting in local jails to be moved to state institutions.

A Vinton mother died

from carbon monoxide

See 1976, page 4

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OAKEY'S

TRADITION & INNOVATION IN FUNERAL CARE

# Roanoke County Schools launch 'Let's Talk' free telehealth therapy service

Roanoke County Public Schools has announced the launch of "Let's Talk," a new telehealth service available for elementary, middle and high school students and families. Through this new service, families can receive up to five free counseling sessions to receive mental health support for a variety of issues including:

- Relationships
- Stress
- Anxiety/depression
- Coping with grief or loss
- Any other difficult life situation

Like so many communities across the country, the Roanoke Valley faces a challenge when it comes to local availability of licensed mental health counselors due to overwhelming demand. "Let's Talk" helps bridge that gap and connects students and families to critical counseling services. The service, powered by Gaggle Therapy, is possible thanks to a grant from the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services.

"This program will support students and families through direct counseling, prevention, and early intervention services delivered by a contracted mental

telehealth provider," said Dr. Shawn Hughes, Director of School Counseling for RCPS. "We're working to improve access to care by reducing barriers such as transportation and scheduling challenges, supporting early identification and intervention for mental health concerns, and fostering a more supportive and responsive school environment that promotes wellness and academic success."

To schedule a counseling session, go online to [www.rcps.us/letstalk](http://www.rcps.us/letstalk).

"Let's Talk" is just one of several mental health support services offered by Roanoke County Public Schools.

For years, the district has provided "SpeakUp" – an anonymous phone, text and email line where students and parents can report concerns related to safety, bullying or mental health concerns about another student. Students and parents can report concerns by calling or texting 540-595-0706 or emailing [speakup@student.rcps.us](mailto:speakup@student.rcps.us).

At the beginning of the 2025-2026 school year, the district launched "ReachOut" – a 24/7/365 mental health support and crisis line for middle and high school

students and parents to receive immediate assistance in dealing with urgent issues including emotional support, processing difficult circumstances, grief and loss, and suicidal ideation. Students/parents can call or text 540-405-6650 to receive immediate support.

Since 2018, every middle and high school in Roanoke County Public Schools has a dedicated licensed mental health professional (called LIFE Counselors), who provide individual and group counseling to students. LIFE Counselors also provide education on approved mental health, trauma, and substance topics to students, staff, and parents. LIFE counselors focus on prevention and intervention to promote academic, personal growth, and well-being.

Every school in Roanoke County also has one or more school counselors to provide academic and mental health support and guidance to facilitate the healthy development of all students in their educational, career, and personal lives through intentional efforts of supportive quality services.

—RCPS



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF RCPS

## OBITUARY

### Dennis, James Wilson

James Wilson Dennis, 86, of Bedford County, passed away Sunday, January 11, 2026.

Born in Narrows, Va. on May 15, 1939, he was the son of the late Edith and Ray Neely. James was preceded in death by his brothers, Carl Lyle Neely and Tom Dennis. He was a veteran, serving in the United States Army.

He leaves to cherish his memory his wife of 60 years, Mary Linda (Lamb) Dennis; his daughter, Christine Dennis Anderson and husband, Matthew Anderson of Lakeland, Tenn.; three grandchildren, Hayley Kincheloe

and husband, Christian; Hannah Franklin and husband Lucas; and Luke Anderson; three great-grandchildren, Jude and Ezra Kincheloe and Westley Franklin. He is also survived by his sisters, Carol Ballard and Patricia Walker, and by his brother, Allen Neely, along with several nieces and nephews.

James was a comedian, storyteller, hunter, outdoorsman, protector, provider, veteran and a man of great faith.

Memorial services will be held on Friday, January 16, 2026 at 11 a.m. at Lake Drive Church of Christ in Vinton.

### RCPS schedules community meetings about online dangers

Roanoke County Public Schools is encouraging parents to attend a series of important community meetings concerning student safety and mental health issues.

A series of meetings, in cooperation with the Partnership for Community Wellness, will be held concerning the dangers of cellphone use among elementary, middle and high school students.

Today's digital world is full of threats including dangerous apps disguised as harmless games, online predators, social media

addiction, and relentless cyberbullying. Parents will learn exactly what to look for — and how they can fight back with powerful tools and expert-backed strategies to reclaim control over their child's digital life and guard their mental and emotional health in a tech-driven world.

Excessive device use is rewiring young brains, disrupting sleep, fueling anxiety, and lowering academic success. The damage is happening now — and it's deeper than most parents realize.

Last fall, community meetings were held at

William Byrd High School and several other county schools. The meetings will continue from January through April. All meetings will begin at 6 p.m. unless otherwise stated. Additional meetings may be scheduled.

Here is the schedule:

- January 15 at Glenvar Middle School - Rescheduled
- January 20 at Herman L. Horn Elementary School
- January 23 at Clearbrook Elementary School (5:30 p.m.)

See **RCPS**, page 4

# VINTON

## WORSHIP DIRECTORY

### Time to Rest

Read Exodus 30:1 through 32:35

"This project has to be done right, and it has to be done soon. Work all weekend if you have to." Some work assignments make us wonder if we need to make a few clones to help us get the work done. Life's responsibilities may seem larger than we can handle, yet we need to learn the importance of rest.

"It will be a sign between me and the Israelites forever, for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed" (Exodus 31:17).

God created the Sabbath for two key purposes. First, people need to set aside

a day to worship God and fellowship with His people. Second, we need a day of rest and refreshing. Scientific research bears this out.

Nearly everyone must contend with deadlines and expectations from others. God, however, wants us to set aside time to rest and to seek Him. Obeying His instructions for rest and worship actually helps us gain the energy and renewal we need to be more effective and productive in the responsibilities we carry.

Prayer Suggestion: God, please direct me in ways to better rest in You.

Quicklook: Exodus 31:14-17

If you would like to see your church services listed here in the Vinton Messenger contact Alixandria Wall at Cell: (276) 732-6083 [awall@mountainmedianews.com](mailto:awall@mountainmedianews.com)

Spiritual IQ. The Roanoke ECK Center is located at 1420 3rd. St. SW, Roanoke, VA 24016. For more information visit [www.eck-va.org](http://www.eck-va.org) or call 540-353-5365. People of all faiths are welcome.

**FOURSQUARE**  
**EVANGEL CHURCH** - 2360 Hardy Road, Vinton (corner of Hardy Road and Feather Road), 540-982-3694, [www.evangel4sq.com](http://www.evangel4sq.com), Pastor Tim Wright. Contemporary Worship Service Sunday, 10AM. Bible Study Wednesday 11AM-12PM. "Building People to Change Our World"

**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, 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; [cmppc2verizon.net](mailto:cmppc2verizon.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.

**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 PARKWAY CHURCH VINTON** - 246 Jefferson Ave., 540-345-3385; Sunday Service 10:30 AM.

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[www.VintonMessenger.com](http://www.VintonMessenger.com)

## RCPS from page 3

- January 26 at Burlington Elementary School
- January 29 at Mt. Pleasant Elementary School (6:30 p.m.)
- February 3 at Green Valley Elementary School
- February 10 at W.E. Cundiff Elementary School
- March 10 at Oak Grove Elementary School
- March 17 at Back Creek Elementary School
- April 7 at Penn Forest Elementary School (5:00 p.m.)

"Social media is having a disastrous impact on our students, from cyberbullying to predators and more," said Dr. Ken Nicely, superintendent of Roanoke County Public Schools. "We strongly recommend parents wait until at least eighth grade, or later, before allowing their children to have a smartphone and access to social media. There are many online dangers, and we want to make sure our students are safe."

Parents and caregivers play a powerful role in protecting young lives and will learn more at the meetings about how to recognize the

signs and symptoms of mental health struggles in children, particularly as it applies to internet-enabled mobile devices. Risk factors will be reviewed that may increase a child's digital vulnerability, steps parents can take to strengthen their child's mental and emotional well-being, and support services available through their child's school and local community.

"We continue to be in the midst of a mental health crisis," said Dr. Shawn Hughes, director of school counseling for Roanoke County Public Schools. "Students continue to struggle with mental health concerns. The sooner that a parent or caregiver can recognize that a student is dealing with a mental health concern, the sooner that student can receive support through the many resources schools and the community have available." Hughes said.

"If we partner together to take steps, even small steps, these can have a big impact on our children's well-being and mental health," said Dr. Nicely.

Find more resources at <https://www.rcps.us/departments/counseling-student-records/wait-until-8>.



## From the Pulpit

By Pastor Bryan Crouch, Lynn Haven Baptist Church

For the month of January, I will be preaching a sermon series on the stark difference between a cruise ship mentality and a battleship mentality that goes on within the church.

Imagine boarding what you thought was a luxury cruise—buffet lines, deck chairs, endless entertainment—only to hear the captain announce: "This is not a pleasure voyage. This is a battleship at war."

That's the shock Jesus delivers to every follower. The Christian life isn't a relaxing getaway; it's

active duty in a spiritual conflict where souls hang in the balance. Ephesians 6:12 reminds us: "Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against... the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."

The enemy doesn't take vacations, and neither can the church. Jesus didn't call us to be pampered passengers but enlisted soldiers—each with a battle station, each essential to the mission.

Too often we slip into cruise mentality: "What's in this for me? Is the music good? Do

I feel inspired?" But on a battleship, the question shifts: "Am I at my post? Am I ready when the alarm sounds?"

Hebrews 10:24–25 commands us to "spur one another on toward love and good deeds... encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching." The Day is nearer today than yesterday. You matter. Your prayers, your service, your witness—they're ammunition in the fight. No one is a spectator.

VintonMessenger.com

## 1976 from page 2

poisoning caused by a faulty heater in her apartment in mid-January. Her husband and infant daughter survived.

The town received word that the Virginia State Health

Commission had approved a 120-bed nursing home on Clearview Drive in Vinton behind Lake Drive Plaza. Construction costs were estimated at over \$2 million.

The Vinton Dogwood Festival

Committee announced that Miss America, Tawny Godin, would be attending the 1976 Dogwood Festival in April, appearing at the Lions Club Minstrel Show, the Dogwood Court luncheon, the

parade, and the coronation ball.

In 1976, the price of bananas was 17 cents a pound, chuck roasts were 79 cents a pound, five cans of peas or corn could be purchased for a dollar, a

five-pound bag of sugar was 88 cents, 10 jars of baby food were 70 cents, and four pounds of margarine cost \$1. Savings accounts were earning 5.25% interest.

## Cundiff from page 1

The former administrative area on the lower level is being turned into preschool, kindergarten, and first grade classrooms in Phase 3A.

As of now, demolition is complete on Phase 3A; floors have been cut for plumbing. Sanitary pipe has been installed, along with electrical overhead piping and wiring. HVAC

installation is underway, along with overhead copper piping, sprinklers, and some framing. Shear foundation and braced columns have been installed. The slab facing the administrative area has been poured.

As for site work and the parking lot, the waterline connection was completed working around the holiday break. The connection was made and tested, and piping for the switchgear has been installed.

Todd Kageals, Director of Facilities and Operations, also shared details on minor projects in the Vinton area. The carpet and flooring installation project has been completed at Bonsack Elementary with the library and offices finished up over winter break.

*Vinton Messenger Staff report*

The Vinton Messenger Since 1960



Completed kindergarten class at W.E. Cundiff



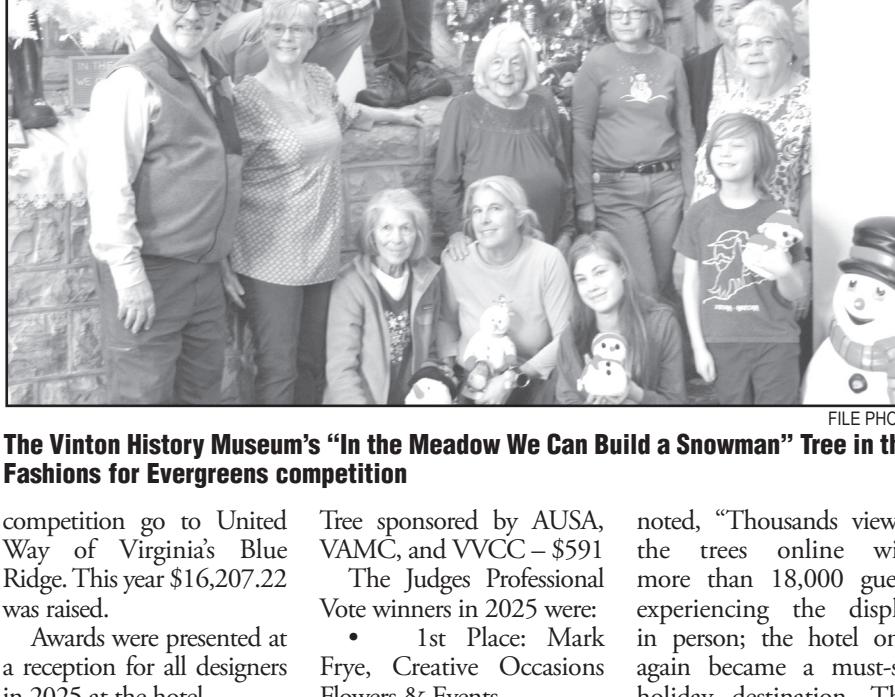
Floors have been cut for plumbing at the W.E. Cundiff renovation project.



Installation of carpet and flooring is now complete at Bonsack Elementary.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SKANSKA

## Winners from page 1



FILE PHOTO

The Vinton History Museum's "In the Meadow We Can Build a Snowman" Tree in the Fashions for Evergreens competition

competition go to United Way of Virginia's Blue Ridge. This year \$16,207.22 was raised.

Awards were presented at a reception for all designers in 2025 at the hotel.

This year's Public Vote winners included:

• 1st Place: Sirens & Salutes – \$3,736 (setting a new record)

• 2nd Place: Roanoke Council of Garden Clubs – \$1,385.25

• 3rd Place: Bank of Botetourt – \$668

• 4th Place: Willow Valley Lawn Care – \$652.50

• 5th Place: Veteran's

Tree sponsored by AUSA, VAMC, and VVCC – \$591

The Judges Professional

Vote winners in 2025 were:

• 1st Place: Mark

Frye, Creative Occasions

Flowers & Events

• 2nd Place: Betty

Perry, Willow Valley Lawn

Care

• 3rd Place: Shelly

and Dean Whittaker, Bricks

4 Kidz

• Honorable Mention: Vinton History

Museum, Cornerstone Building, and Roanoke

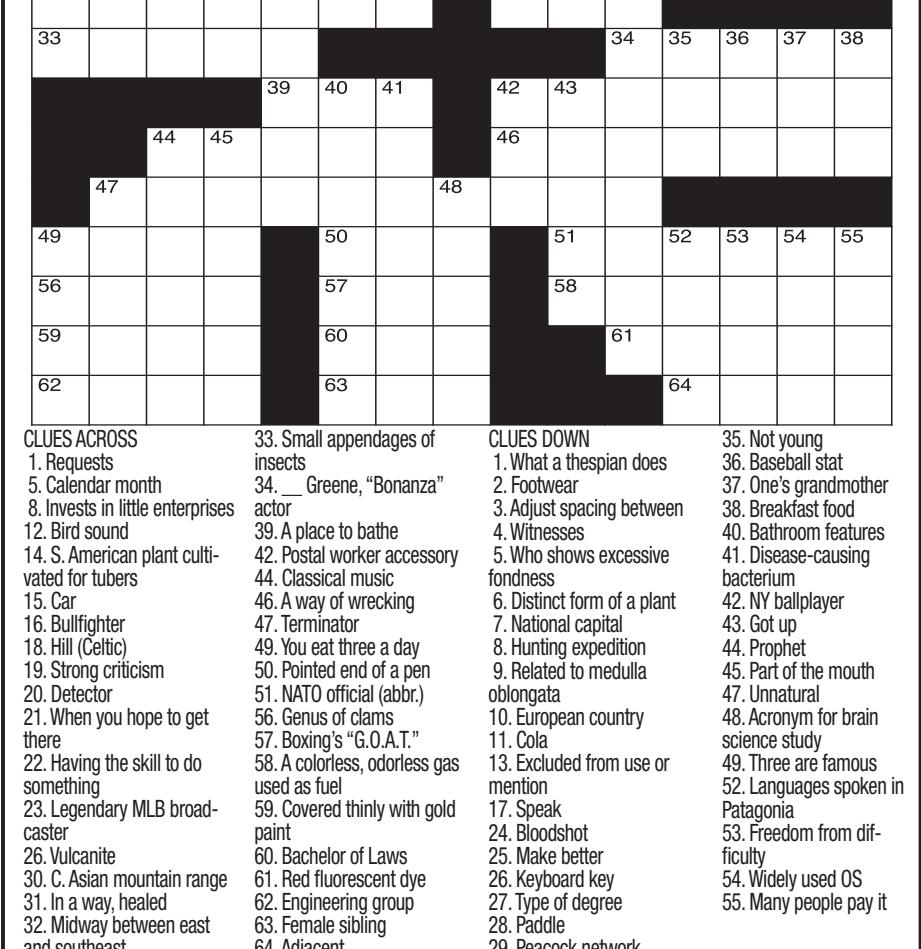
Valley Council of Garden

Clubs

The Hotel Roanoke

noted, "Thousands viewed the trees online with more than 18,000 guests experiencing the display in person; the hotel once again became a must-see holiday destination. That holiday magic also earned us national recognition as one of the Top 10 Best Hotels for the Holidays in the USA TODAY's Best Readers' Choice Awards for 2025, an honor we share with everyone who walked through our doors this season."

*Vinton Messenger staff*



## CROSSWORD PUZZLE

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## CLUES ACROSS

1. Requests 33. Small appendages of insects

5. Calendar month 34. Greene, "Bonanza" actor

8. Invests in little enterprises 35. A place to bathe

12. Bird sound 42. Postal worker accessory

14. S. American plant cultivated for tubers 44. Classical music

15. Car 46. A way of wrecking

16. Bullfighter 47. Terminator

18. Hill (Celtic) 49. You eat three a day

19. Strong criticism 50. Pointed end of a pen

20. Detector 51. NATO official (abbr.)

21. When you hope to get there 56. Genus of clams

22. Having the skill to do something 57. Boxing's "G.O.A.T."

23. Legendary MLB broadcaster 58. A colorless, odorless gas used as fuel

26. Vulcanite 59. Covered thinly with gold paint

31. C. Asian mountain range 60. Bachelor of Laws

32. Midway, Healed and southeast 61. Red fluorescent dye

33. Female sibling 62. Engineering group

34. Adjacent 63. Engineering group

35. Small appendages of insects

36. Greene, "Bonanza" actor

37. A place to bathe

38. Classical music

39. A way of wrecking

40. Terminator

41. You eat three a day

42. Postal worker accessory

43. Pointed end of a pen

44. NATO official (abbr.)

45. A way of wrecking

46. Terminator

47. You eat three a day

48. Pointed end of a pen

49. Covered thinly with gold paint

50. Bachelor of Laws

51. Red fluorescent dye

52. Engineering group

53. Adjacent

54. Engineering group

55. Adjacent

56. Vulcanite

57. Red fluorescent dye



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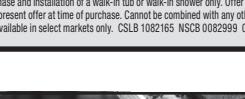
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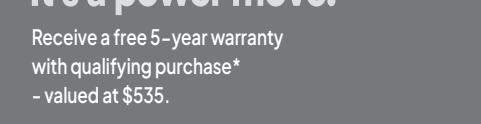
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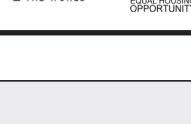
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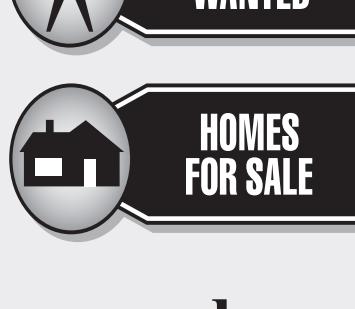
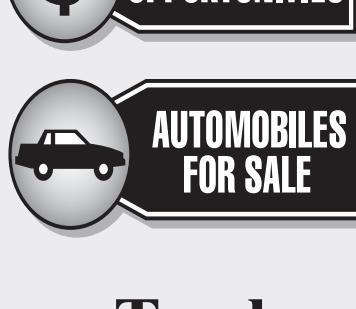
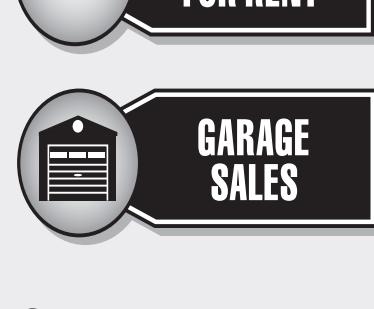
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Left, Byrd's Luke Helton looks to pass as he's guarded by a Fleming defender. Middle, Moises Leon drives to the hoop. Right, Cason Nichols shoots a corner three Friday.

PHOTOS BY JOHN WACHER

## Terriers pick up BRD hoop win over Lord Botetourt

The William Byrd boys picked up a Blue Ridge District basketball win Tuesday when the Terriers defeated Lord Botetourt. Byrd took a 63-57 win in Vinton.

"Proud of our guys for playing a strong game start to finish," said Byrd coach Brad Greenway. "Got contributions down the stretch from different guys in different ways, but bottom line is we got a good team win on our court and our guys earned it."

Byrd jumped to an early lead and had a 35-24 advantage at the half. Botetourt won the third quarter, 15-13, but the Terriers were able to stay in control down the stretch despite canning just seven of 13 from the free throw line in the fourth quarter.

"LB had some guys hit big shots

and we are still struggling to make our free throws, so that made it tough to pull away down the stretch," said Greenway.

David Foster led the Terriers with 22 points. Jesus Leon had 11 points, Moises Leon had nine and Cason Nichols had eight.

The game was the second of a back-to-back, as Byrd played at Hidden Valley on Monday and dropped a 44-51 game to the 11-1 Titans.

"I was proud of the way we competed with a really good Hidden Valley team," said Greenway. "I respect that group a lot and they have played well for a few years with this group."

The Titans jumped out to an early lead, outscoring Byrd 26-11 in the first quarter. However, Byrd played the

home team even for the rest of the game. The Terriers pulled to within six points with just over two minutes remaining in the game.

"This group competes and we stayed in it until the very end," said Greenway. "We had opportunities, we just couldn't convert."

Foster had 23 in this one, including 16 in the second half. Jaden Holmes had 10 points.

Last Friday the Byrdmen played at William Fleming in the second half of a doubleheader with the girls. Byrd took an early lead, outscoring the Colonels 12-9 in the first quarter, but Fleming won the second quarter 21-5 and never looked back for a 62-48 Blue Ridge District win.

"I thought our guys did a really solid

job of competing, but at the end of the day we just weren't able to finish enough plays on the offensive end to get it done," said Greenway. "That's been the theme for us this year. We are doing some good things, we have guys competing. Fleming didn't really do anything that stood out as difficult to stop, they just made more plays."

Foster, Luke Helton and Jesus Leon had 10 points each to pace Byrd.

Now 2-9, the Terriers will be in Rocky Mount Friday for a BRD game against Franklin County. Next Monday, January 19, Hidden Valley will return the trip and it will be just the fourth home game of the season for Byrd.

"That sounds odd for the middle of January," said Greenway. "We will keep digging."

## Byrd girls host Franklin Friday

The William Byrd girls opened a three-game week by splitting two basketball games on back-to-back nights. The girls won at home against Hidden Valley on Monday but lost to Lord Botetourt in Daleville Tuesday.

On Monday the girls downed Hidden Valley, 44-38. The game was somewhat of a Homecoming for Titans' coach Samantha Webster, who was a standout player as a student at Byrd and also spent time on the coaching staff.

Skye Williams had a big night for the Terriers, controlling the boards and scoring 20 points. Maggie Zimmerman had 11.

On Tuesday the girls dropped a 57-32 decision at Lord Botetourt. Heidi Dixon led the Terriers with 11 points.

"Defensively we executed our plan well but LB hit the shots they needed to hit," said Byrd coach Ben Munsey.

Last Friday the Byrd girls played the first end of a doubleheader with the boys at William Fleming and lost 64-26 to the Colonels. Fleming improved to 10-3 overall and the Colonels are leading the district in the early going. Williams had nine points and 13 boards for Byrd.

"Tough game overall but the growth is showing for these girls," said Munsey.

Now 6-5, the Terriers are back home Friday to host Franklin County. Next week they return the trip to Hidden Valley on Monday and travel to Glenvar on Wednesday, January 21. Both are non-district games.



Left, Byrd's Elena Mullen leads the break in last week's game at William Fleming. Right, Mauraia Burnette drives to the bucket

PHOTOS BY JOHN WACHER



## Indoor Terriers compete at RC

The William Byrd High School Indoor Track and Field team traveled to Salem for the East Coast Elite "Pajama Invitational" at the Roanoke College Kerr-Cregger Indoor Fieldhouse last Saturday. The Terriers had some strong performances at the meet that attracted a large number of competitors.

James Smtih led the Byrd boys' team with a PR in the 55m dash with a time of 6.72 and a fourth place finish overall. Giovanni Pandolfini finished sixth in the 500m dash with a time of 1:12.13 and Colton Sotherden was ninth in the 3200m run with a time of 11:22.04. Titus Beatty finished ninth in the shot put with a throw of 12.85m.

For the girls, Lily Perez had a big day. She was second in the long jump with a jump of

5.05 meters and third in the triple jump, hop-skip & jump with a jump of 10.27 meters.

Lily also took fifth in the 55m hurdles with a time of 9.69.

Ellie Ruble finished fifth overall in the 55m dash with a time of 7.79 and Jadyn St. Clair was 10th in the 500m dash with a time of 1:29.88.

The William Byrd indoor track and field team will be traveling to Liberty University this Saturday, January 19th, for the Walter Bass High School Invitational.

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PHOTOS BY BRIAN HOFFMAN

Above, Byrd's Giovanni Pandolfini runs at Roanoke

College last Saturday. Right, Lily Perez long jumps.

PHOTOS BY JOHN WACHER

# VINTON SPORTS

Send story ideas & announcements to [bhoffman@ourvalley.org](mailto:bhoffman@ourvalley.org), or PO Box 1125, Salem, Va, 24153 • [ourvalley.org](http://ourvalley.org)



Above left, William Byrd wrestling coach Thomas Kessler(left in photo) joins Darin Witcher for a photo after Darin was presented the Bob McLellan Award as the Outstanding Wrestler in the Big Orange Classic. Above right, Davion Wade(left in photo) battles to a third place finish at 138. Below, Byrd's Myles Preston(right in photo) wrestles in the 157 pound championship match, which he won.

PHOTOS BY SUZANNE WITCHER AND BAILEY TABOR

## Terriers are 3rd on Big Orange mats, Witcher, Preston win championships

The William Byrd wrestlers finished third among 26 teams and had two champions when the Terriers hosted the Big Orange Classic wrestling tournament in Vinton last weekend. A big crowd was on hand for an exciting weekend of wrestling at the annual event.

Independence High won the team championship at the Big Orange with and even 200 points. Salem was second with 193 and Byrd took third with 170 points, nine more than fourth place Lord Botetourt.

Byrd had two Big Orange champions, Darin Witcher at 132 and Myles Preston at 157. Witcher, a two time state champion, dominated the field as he pinned his way through the bracket. He had pins of 46 seconds, 36 seconds and 1:32 to reach the final, then pinned Salem's Anthony Baudanza in the championship match in 2:48. Witcher received the Bob McLellan Award as Outstanding Wrestler of the

Tournament. The award is voted on by the referees.

Preston also had a big weekend. He pinned Theo Reinhart of Charlottesville in four minutes in the 157 pound championship match to claim his first Big Orange title.

Byrd's Davion Wade wrestled back for a third place at 138, defeating Northside's Noah Spangler in the consolation final, 13-9. Zane Taylor was fourth at 150 and Lane Brunk and Gabe Campbell took fifth places at 113 and 120.

"Overall it was a solid weekend for us," said Byrd coach Thomas Kessler.

The Terriers were scheduled to host Lord Botetourt, Franklin County and William Fleming for a quad match on Wednesday of this week. This weekend they'll be in Christiansburg for the Big Blue.

"We will get to see some teams that we haven't seen and I am excited to see how we perform," said Kessler.



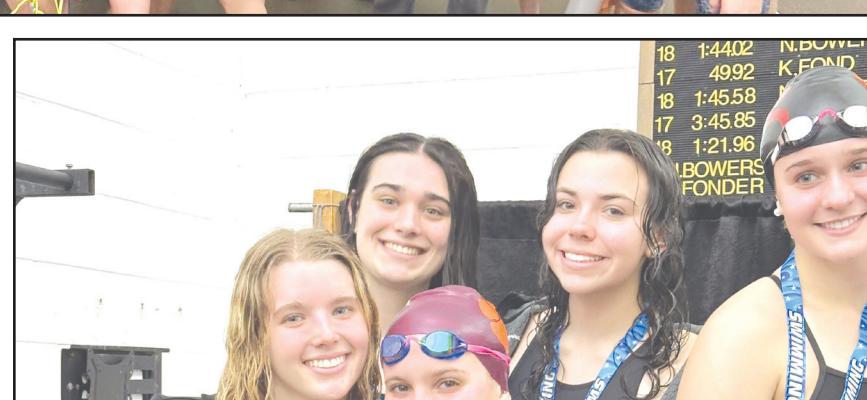
## Murtaugh, Terrell win races at All-Timesland swim meet



### Terriers in the pool

Above are the 14 William Byrd swimmers who qualified for the All-Timesland Finals at the Gator Cener Saturday. Left to right are Tristan Blevins, Ace Adkins, Sydney Nichols, Lindsay Murtaugh, Ben Hoyos, Hadyn Terrell, Ben Gardner, Kayleigh Barber, Cary Jones, Gabby Romeo, Owen Humphreys, Kyler Martin, Brody Parrish and Chase Madonna. Right, the Byrd girls 200 Free Relay team placed second Saturday. Front, left to right, are Lindsay Murtaugh and Hadyn Terrell and back are Gabby Romeo and Kayleigh Barber. Below, these four Terriers won the 400 Freestyle Relay at Franklin County last week. Left to right are Cary Jones, Mia Pippin, Addison Collins and Bianca Demelo.

PHOTOS COURTESY WILLIAM BYRD SWIMMING



The Gator Center in Roanoke was packed with swimmers and fans Saturday as the annual All-Timesland meet included teams from throughout the Roanoke Valley. William Byrd had some strong performances in the Gator pool.

"All-Timesland is one of my favorite high school meets of the year," said Byrd coach Krista Martin. "I was so happy with how Saturday went for our Terriers. We had tons of best times and 14 swimmers that qualified for finals."

Byrd had several champions. Hadyn Terrell won the 200 IM and also took second in the Breaststroke. Lindsay Murtaugh took first place in the 200 Free. The girls' foursome of Gabby Romeo, Kayleigh Barber, Murtaugh and Terrell took second place in the 200 Free Relay and fourth in the 200 Medley Relay.

Individually, Romeo was sixth in the 100 Fly and ninth in the 50 Free. Barber was seventh in the 100 Free and 10th in the 100 Backstroke.

For the boys, Brody Parrish took a second in the 200 IM and a fourth in the Breaststroke. He also swam on the fifth place 200 Medley Relay team with Kyler Martin, Ben Gardner and Chase Madonna. Martin was fourth in both the 100 and 500 Free and Gardner took a seventh place in the 100 Butterfly. Sydney Nichols was ninth in the 100 Fly.

Byrd also swam in a meet in Franklin County last Thursday, just two days before All-Timesland, and dominated the meet with 15 first place finishes. The girls scored 91 points to 38 for Franklin and 23 for Staunton River and the boys had 72 points with Franklin County having 63, Martinsville 14 and Staunton River nine.

"Our swimmers had some great races and several best times," said Martin. "A handful of swimmers swam longer or more challenging events for the first time. Lots to be proud of."

The Terriers were scheduled to have their Senior Night this Wednesday at the Gator Center. The Byrd swimmers are back in the pool this Friday, January 16, to host Cave Spring, Hidden Valley and Patrick Henry at the Gator pool at 6 pm.

