

Thursday, January 22, 2026 • Dogwood Capital of Virginia • Covering Vinton, Bonsack & Stewartsville

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## Vinton Town Council busy with recognitions, briefings, WVVA water line approval



PHOTO BY DEBBIE ADAMS

**Town Council recognized Director of Planning and Zoning Anita McMillan for her 30 years of service to the town at the Jan. 20 meeting. Pictured left to right are Councilman Mike Stovall, Vice Mayor Laurie Mullins, Mayor Brad Grose, Anita McMillan, and council members Sabrina McCarty and Keith Liles.**

**Debbie Adams**

[dadams@ourvalley.org](mailto:dadams@ourvalley.org)

Vinton Town Council met on Jan. 20 to recognize employees, listen to a briefing on changes in the Vinton Police Department from Chief Fabricio Drumond, adopt a resolution for an easement for the Western Virginia Water Authority (WVVA) on a Gish Mill/Gus Nicks Water Line Improvement Project, and hold a public hearing on the Solid Waste Management Plan.

Vinton Director of Planning and Zoning Anita McMillan was recognized by council for her 30 years of dedicated service to the Town of Vinton. A most valued employee, the comment from many to McMillan was "we don't know what we would do without you." In addition to her regular duties, McMillan has gone above and beyond in writing countless grants which have changed the face of Vinton, most especially the greenways.

Director of Cultural Placemaking and Events Mandy Adkins and Assistant Director of Planning and Zoning Nathan McClung were named by the Roanoker Magazine as members of this year's Class of 2026 "40 Under 40."

Winners of this award are nominated by the community—this year

there were 122 nominations.

"These young leaders represent the talent, passion, and dedication shaping the Roanoke Valley today and for years to come, inspiring innovation, strengthening our communities, and leaving a lasting impact on the region they call home. We're lucky to have their talent and passions making a positive impact for all" was the comment from the Roanoker.

Chief Fabricio Drumond briefed council on changes to the Vinton Police Department, including a new traffic safety position and a restructured chain of command within the department. He introduced Cpl. Jesse Dibble as the new traffic unit officer.

The focus of restructuring the chain of command is to create a more intentional focus on the rank of corporal, the first step in supervision of other officers. Cpl. Trey Boyd becomes a "floating corporal" under the new chain of command. He will be "the first supervisor in the absence of a sergeant in case of sickness, training, childcare, snow, etc. With the VPD being a 24 hour/365-day operation, scheduling changes always occur."

The corporal in that position will "be exposed to different leadership styles and officers; this will help

build that resilient leader that we need. We look forward to rotating each corporal to that position. We train well, but nothing is better than real world exposure," Drumond said.

Drumond spoke about traffic enforcement with the key mission being safety. He noted that traffic-related accidents have increased in recent years throughout the state, specifically in serious accidents involving fatalities. "The sharp curve came about during the pandemic years—2021 was a 14-year high in fatal accidents with less traffic, but more speed, and people taking more risks during that timeframe. While in some years traffic-related crashes have reduced, fatalities have increased."

During the pandemic, there was a decrease in public transit and carpooling; there were more independent drivers and families purchasing more vehicles.

"This is especially relevant in communities such as Vinton with accelerated moving from urban to suburban, and an explosion in delivery services."

He commented that driving behavior has remained the same in the years since, with increased "risk-based driving; as the number of cars increases,

**See Council, page 4**



GRAPHIC COURTESY TOWN OF VINTON

## Vinton Strategic Plan in final stages of development

Vinton Mayor Brad Grose, Vice Mayor Laurie Mullins, and Town Council members Sabrina McCarty, Keith Liles, and Mike Stovall and the town leadership team met with consultants Mike Callahan of 3TP Ventures and Vlad Gavrilovic of New Paradigm Planning on Jan. 20 for the final review of the town's five-year Strategic Plan (2026-2030), which will be adopted in February.

Council adopted a new Comprehensive Plan in July 2025, sketching out the town's goals for the next 25 years. The purpose of the Strategic Plan is to align the long-term vision of the Comprehensive Plan with the near-term goals for the coming five years. In essence, while the Comprehensive Plan sets policies for 2025-2050, the Strategic Plan sets work priorities for the next five years, which shape the upcoming year's budget, and determines which programs and projects to implement.

The broad goals of the Comprehensive Plan are to:

- Encourage redevelopment or repurposing of aging and outdated buildings to new housing, especially underutilized buildings near downtown

- Encourage transformation of aging strip development along major corridors to a more vibrant mix of uses, including housing

- Provide smooth and efficient circulation for all roadway users

- Make desired development and redevelopment easier by aligning zoning ordinances with town goals

- Provide accessible and exceptional local government services to people looking to do business in Vinton

- Maintain infrastructure in a state of good repair

Development of the Strategic Plan required extensive data analysis, a host of assessments, and council/community/staff input. Priorities were developed, then tweaked at a council retreat last fall, and now the final draft is complete.

Prior to the retreat, council members

were asked to prioritize vision principles and selected Adaptability, Exceptional Town Services and Infrastructure, and Housing for All Phases of Life as the most urgent in the next five years.

Breaking it down even further, council identified the top five priorities:

- Update the zoning code
- Adopt financial incentives for housing

- Purchase properties for economic development goals
- Acquire funding to improve aging housing stock
- Connect downtown and River Park with a slow street

Council and Town Manager Pete Peters cautioned that while these are high priority plans, the town's top priority is still maintaining the services it provides to its citizens, along with an emphasis on retention of an outstanding town staff.

The Strategic Plan clarifies the vision statement of the Comprehensive Plan: "Vinton embraces the future. In 2050 the town retains its safe and welcoming small-town character, has well maintained public infrastructure, provides more housing opportunities, and delivers exceptional services for all. The town's historic downtown will be a local and regional destination, walkable from surrounding neighborhoods with authentic gathering spaces, vibrant events, and a flourishing business community."

"Catalyst Projects" for the next five years include making substantial progress on:

- Building walkable connections in and to downtown (such as diverting commuter cut-through traffic from Lee Avenue through signage and design, prioritizing sidewalk gaps and dedicate funding to sidewalk construction, advance Glade Creek Greenway Phase 3 to construction ready)
- Updating and modernizing the Town Zoning Ordinance (modernizing the zoning code to support more

**See Plan, page 3**

## Bonsack Fire and Rescue Station celebrates

### one year of service

The Bonsack Fire and Rescue Station recently celebrated one year of service since officially opening on January 14, 2025.

Located along the U.S. 460 corridor, Bonsack is one of the fastest growing areas in Roanoke County. Prior to the station being built, most of the calls in the Bonsack area were answered by the Vinton station with an average response time of eight minutes. The response time is now four minutes.

"Through demands it was identified that Roanoke County needed a station in the Bonsack area, so that's what kind of spurred the idea and got it going to get us here today," Chief Travis Griffith said.

The biggest thing that sets the Bonsack station apart from others is the split bay design. This separates the living quarters from the fire and rescue gear, which helps prevent toxins that may be on equipment from coming into the living spaces.

There are also several features in place to help remove carcinogens from the environment, including a special washer

for gear and air filtration systems in the gear room and bays.

The investment into the new station went beyond just the building—it included

a significant investment in personnel and equipment. Roanoke County hired and trained 18 new firefighters and bought a new fire truck and ambulance for the station. The three crews that work the station have a minimum of five people working at a time, with a mix of veteran firefighters and the newly trained staff.

"It shows what the county wants to do for the citizens and the businesses, you know, public safety is a priority ... they don't just say it, they do it," Chief Griffith said.

Fire stations remain a priority for the county supervisors as they look to update aging stations. As part of the capital improvement program, money has been allocated for renovations of seven fire and rescue stations in Roanoke County over the next 10 years.

Planning work has already begun on the Hollins Fire and Rescue Station, which originally opened in 1981. Just over \$5 million has been allocated for renovations to the station for this year that will include integrating the split bay design.

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# WILLIAM BYRD MIDDLE SCHOOL HONOR ROLLS

WBMS has announced the A and A-B Honor rolls for the second nine weeks.

## A HONOR ROLL

8th grade: Brenner Alterio, Paige Aremia, Grayson Bell, Maggie Benson, Dorothy Booher, Jack Clark, Isabella Cooke, Kolbie Davis, Chaz Jordan Dunlap, Nicole Eggleston, Ahmad Faqiri, Rory Grant, Ethan Hastings, Shelby Hensley, Corbin Holloway, Sophia Jones, Jayden Lin, Kathryn Linkenhoker, Chance Nguyen, Jackson Price, Georgia Ralph, Alaina Robertson, Annabelle Robtison, Ashton Royall, Brooklynn Scott, Jonah Smith, Jordan Stanley, Collyns Terrell, and Matthew Yang

7th Grade: Baylee Angle, Lylah Arnold Parker, Beatrix Barr, Delaney Blewett, Clara Bliss, Kensington Brown, Harper Cain, Bailee Carlisle, Gracelyn Carlson, Owen Chilson, Elizabeth Chisom, Kathryn Dodson, Emma Dooley, Derrick Edwards, Anne Ely, Elizabeth Fraley, Oliver Fralin, Riley Fuller, Julia Gardner, Amaya Hall, Aria Hardifer, Mia Haylsett, Alexander Hebert, Riggins Hill, Rylee Hill, Ethan Holland, Emma Janney, Hayden Janney, Andrew Johnson, Javoun Jordan, Liam Krista, Elmer Lainez Andino, Cohen Leonard, Lucy Lineburg, Addyson Lutz, Ian McCallister, Hayden McClure, Brooklynn McGuinn, Jace Meador, Marina Mihelcic, Henry Nolan, Soha Patel, Emmalyn Redden, Grace Richardson, Nicholis Robtison, Brooklynn Siler, Cael Sink, Addilynne Thiel, Laila Thornton, Jacob Tingler, Avery Waddell, Jace Weddle, Jacoby Weddle, Sadie Whitenack, Willow Wiggins, Cadence Wood, Joanna Wood, and Graham Wooge

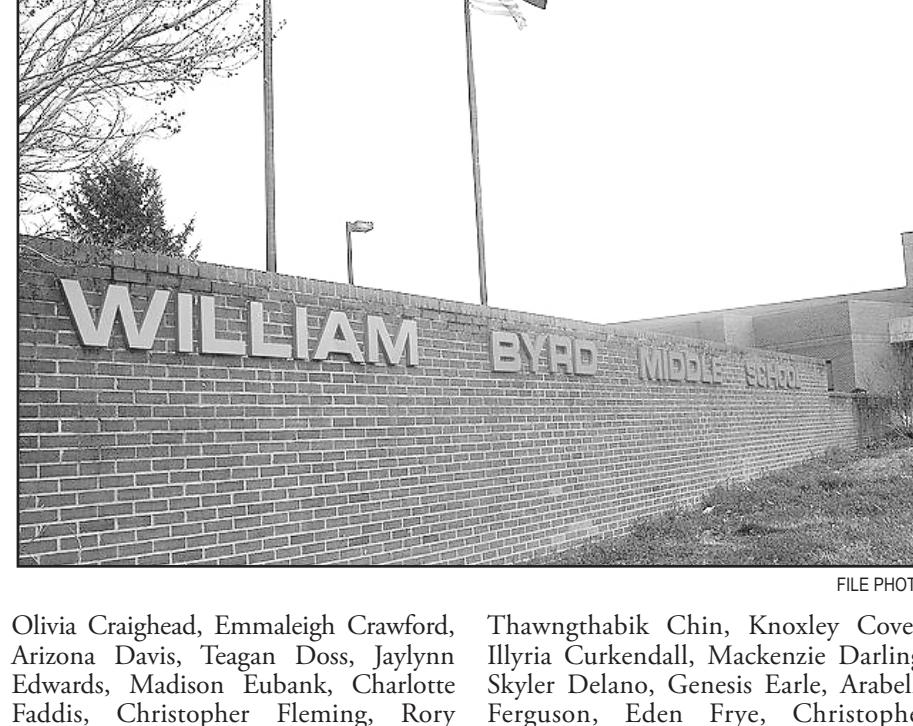
6th Grade: Kennedy Adams, Layla Anderson, Laurence Aremia, William Bake, Ashby Bernard, Emerson Brooks, Makayla Brown, Aiden Cain, Kelsy Cardenas Zambrano, Jackson Childress, Kendall Chitwood, Asher Cooke, Caeda

Crutchman, Aiden Davis, Kyra Davis, Lillian Elyard, Maryeli Spinoza Aguirre, Tenley Gusler, Asher Haddon, Anna Hemming, Lucas Hilscher, Duc Hieu Dung Hoang, Rayne Jones, Kaidence Justis, Jackson Kendrick, Alexander King Shepherd, Jacob Loomis, Lola Madonna, Brisa Maldonado Vasquez, Patrick McGann, Aniya Moore, Kason Nguyen, Easton Nicely, Madilynn Oliver, Mazlynn Otey, Alexandra Reeves, Carter Russell, Hayden Scott, Aarnav Shah, Haleigh Stokes, Aubrie Taylor, Emma Thompson, Everly Thompson, Jeriana Thompson, Skylor Ward, Grayson Webb, Haylee Wheeler, Reagan Whitehead, and Elayna Yeargan

## A-B HONOR ROLL

8th grade: Ashnoor Ashnoor, Evan Bays, Lydon Beavers, Cohen Berry, Hayden Biggs, Piper Bouvier, Reece Brady, Kenlee Campbell, Christina Chaney, Kimberly Chittum, Tania Cortes Martinez, Hanna Counts, Abigail Davis, Kayleigh Davis, Addilyn Dudley, Nazyiah Edmonds, Grayson Ferguson, Sophie Fielder, Pierce Franks, Brett Gardner, Cadence Gearhart, Brinkley Gonzales, Charlotte Harper, Madison Haupt, Brayden Hawse, Jameson Horst, Matthew Hoyle, Camden Ingram, Colton James, Douglas Jones, Korrina Kish, Bryden Lish, Cally Lutz, Annabelle McIntyre, Caiden Meyer, Jacinna Mitchell, Jacob Morris, Maci Morrison, Olivia Morrison, Trevor Nunn, Greylin Peters, Lauren Phillips, Ava Rader, Liam Roberts, Jasmin Rodriguez Muniz, Owen Rupe, Kristian Sattah, Owen Seth, Savannah Shepherd, Allie Smart, Jordin Terry Cabbler, Emma Thomas, Rose Tial, Jaciel Torres Carreon, Aaliyah Vorst, Brooks Walker, Ryne Walker, Caleb Webster, William Wede, Connor Wood, and Danielle Woodcock

7th grade: Jerry Angel, Tabitha Apple, Thomas Apple, Brenton Bailey, Tucker Baumgart, Hailey Bautista, Ellason Bradford, Cormac Brady, Landry Cain, Mia Caldwell, Alawyna Campbell, Payton Campbell, Alayna Coe, Eli Copening,



FILE PHOTO

Olivia Craighead, Emmaleigh Crawford, Arizona Davis, Teagan Doss, Jaylynn Edwards, Madison Eubank, Charlotte Faddis, Christopher Fleming, Rorry Gaskins, Owen Gibson, Carrington Gill, McKenna Gordon, Gabriel Griego, Aryaman Gupta, Micah Hamlar, Janilla Henderson, Zoey Hicks, Colton Jenkins, Tyler Jennelle, Britny Khouri, Carson Kirby, Kaydance Lorek, Collins Lott, Sincere Mann, Connor Manning, Taelyn Martin, Isaac Mason, Jace McCoy, Austin Mendoza Castillo, Kamden Miller, Kinley Moucha, Bentley Oliver, Evan Osborne, Luke Pagans, Bentlee Palmer, Jackson Passman, Hunter Robinson, Jeremiah Saunders, Kennedy Savignac, Abigail Schaefer, Audrey Siler, Aiden Sneed, Avone Stanley, Jayceon Stanley, Aubree Swiney, Jude Trent, Ethan Umberger, Grayson Underwood, Aubrey Walters, Jackson Warf, Gabryle Weden, Lakyn Wendell, Jaxen White, Kieran Wilhelm, Morriah Williams, Angelia Witcher, Grayson Woodford, and Anthony Yates

6th grade: Declan Arnold, Adalynn Barnett, Jesse Bingham, Ollaeky Brown, Nova Burrows, Elise Butrym, Tyler Carter, Penelope Chandler,

Thawngthabik Chin, Knoxley Covey, Illyria Cerkendall, Mackenzie Darling, Skyler Delano, Genesis Earle, Arabella Ferguson, Eden Frye, Christopher Gennosa, Carrington Gill, Croix Gill, Braydon Gregory, Gia Hall, Riley Hall, Alyeska Hanger, Ja Lyn Harrison, Hunter Havens, Nathaniel Hayslett, Asa Helm, Sawyer Hewitt, Sophia Hurt, Kaylee Jenkins, Joshua Johnson, Tyler Jones, Jahzir Jordan, Logan LaRose, Mackenzie Law, Tucker Mahanes, Makaela Manning, Ashley Martin, Kyle Martin, McKenzie McGuinn, Blayne Moore, Lynnx Morris, Beheshta Naiby, Kaylee Nichols, Raelynn Parker, Hudson Payne, Amethyst Pence, Jenna Pickeral, Isaac Ray, Declan Reed, Emma Grace Reedy, Walker Rickerson, Abagale Robertson, Kevin Rodriguez Del Valle, Zareth Rodriguez, Bailey Rutherford, Chase Schneider, Kristian Schult, Carter Shamblin, Kai Shonkiler, Kenlie Simmons, Brandon Smith, Carleigh St. Clair, Addison Stewart, Piper Turner, Gabriel Turpin, Lakyn Waldron, Arabella Weden, Falyn Welton, Dean Wheeler, Bennett Widner, Lucas Wijaya, Gavin Wilks, and Austin Wright

## PEOPLE, PLACES AND THINGS

By Angie Chewning

I hope everyone is staying warm! On Thursday, Jan. 22, the Vinton Chamber will install our new officers and Board of Directors. We are looking forward to a great 2026. Kicking that off, we host our annual Sponsors Appreciation Casino Night.

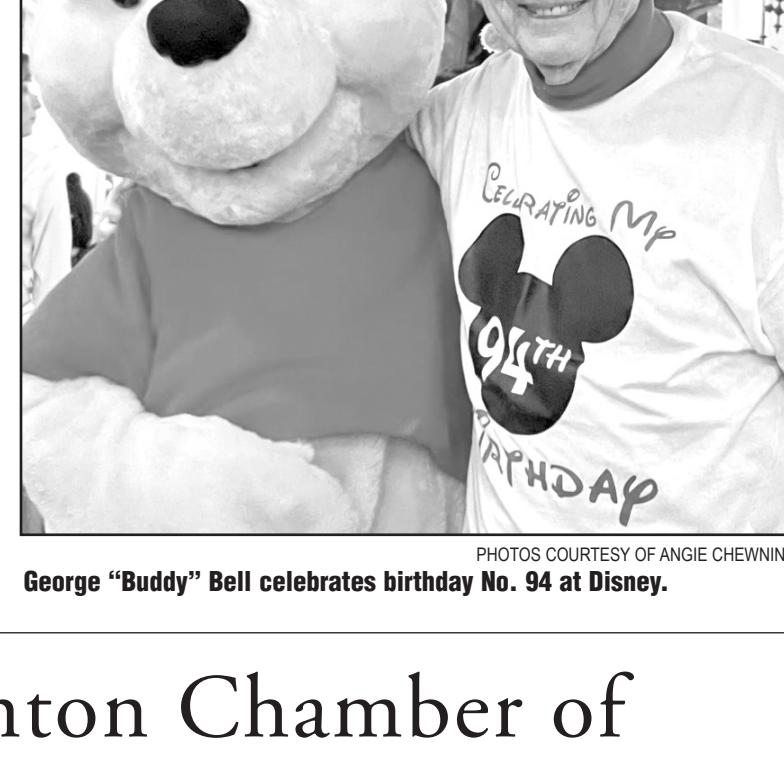
We are now accepting vendor applications for our upcoming Senior Services Expo on March 24. Mark your calendars. If you are a vendor and would like more information about the event, please visit our website at [www.vintonchamber.com](http://www.vintonchamber.com) or call the Chamber office 540-343-1364.

A big 35th Happy Birthday to Mom's caregiver Shaquanna (Thursday). She is so good to Mom, we can't let her special day go by without celebrating!

Also, a big Happy Birthday to my uncle George "Buddy" Bell. Buddy celebrated his 94th birthday at Disney World. Joining him for the big celebration were Naomi Roberts, Kathrine and Elizabeth Alvord, Deborah Alvord, and Deaton and Hunter Bell.



Bootie Chewning celebrates her caregiver Shaquanna's birthday.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ANGIE CHEWNING

George "Buddy" Bell celebrates birthday No. 94 at Disney.

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## Vinton Chamber of Commerce announces new officers, directors

The Vinton Area Chamber of Commerce has announced its new officers and Board of Directors for 2026. Installation of officers and the board was scheduled to take place on Jan. 22 at the Chamber's annual Casino Sponsor Appreciation Night at the Vinton Moose Lodge. Vinton Mayor Brad Grose was scheduled to conduct the swearing-in ceremony.

Officers for 2026 are Chairman Page Lovern, 1st Vice Chairman Allison Finney, 2nd Vice Chairman Anthony Conner, and Past Chairman Jason Boothe.

This year's Board of Directors includes Julie Wheeler from HomeTrust Bank, Joy Rierson (Neely's Accounting), Lee Lovern (Star City Container), Jason Peters (Roanoke County), Chrissy Sensabaugh (Grand Rental Storage),



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF VINTON AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Anthony Conner (The Conner Group), Donald Childress (Coastal Planning Insurance), Tim Nininger (Star City Pest Control), Jason Peters (Roanoke County), Chrissy Sensabaugh (Grand Rental Storage), Danielle Napier (Pawsh Salon for Dogs), Brandy Humphreys, and Jacob Edberg (First Citizens Bank).

Vinton Town Manager Pete Peters, Director of Cultural Placemaking

See Chamber, page 4



Vinton Breakfast Lions are collecting donations of food and money at Vinton Food Lion this month.

PHOTO COURTESY OF LION JOHN BERRY

## January is 'Hunger Month' for Vinton Breakfast Lions Club

This January is "Hunger Month" for the Vinton Breakfast Lions Club. Following Lions International's "Hunger Week," the Vinton Breakfast Lions designated Jan. 13-31 for a food drive to aid the League of Older Americans (LOA). During this period specific food items will be collected: canned soup, canned fruits/vegetables, canned meat, oatmeal, peanut butter and Boost/Ensure.

The LOA food drive is just one activity to further the International Lions' goal of reducing community hunger.

Each year, in conjunction with community partner Food Lion, Vinton Breakfast Lions receive food purchases and cash donations at the Washington

Street Food Lion store. Food Lion employees also contribute their time and effort by packing "\$6 food boxes" customers can buy for donations toward the food drive.

The 2025 food drive produced 500+ pounds of donated food, thus helping the Vinton Baptist Church and Parrish Chapel United Methodist Church (Stewartsville) food pantries.

Also, Vinton Breakfast members continue their support of the Meals on Wheels program to deliver prepared meal/food items to local people in need. Monthly, Lions total over 16 volunteer hours toward this vital service project.

- Submitted by Lion John Berry

## LOA celebrates 20 years of Soup for Seniors: 2006-2026

The Local Office on Aging (LOA) reminds us that thousands of seniors in our community live at or below the poverty line. The annual Soup for Seniors program helps provide a hot meal on a cold day and reminds seniors in need they have not been forgotten.

The year 2026 marks the 20th anniversary of Soup for Seniors. For its first event in 2006, the LOA had modest goals of serving seniors who were enrolled in LOA's Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion programs. The community fully

embraced the project, and so much soup and crackers were donated, LOA was able to serve all our program participants, other needy seniors in the community, and even more in neighboring communities.

In 2012, LOA took on the project as an agency-wide service and joined forces with AARP Virginia. Collection and distribution were moved to early February to serve the senior population in the most vulnerable part of winter.

In 2026, the goal is to collect 50,000 pounds of soup and other non-perishable items to provide bags

of food for 3,000 older adults in need right here in our community. At the top of our list of who to serve are LOA's homebound Meals on Wheels recipients. Other recipients include: LOA's Diners Club participants; older adults receiving LOA's transportation, case management, and in-home care services; more than 1,500 residents of low-income, independent senior housing; and seniors who receive assistance from area Departments of Social Services and other agencies.

See LOA, page 4



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF LOA

## Plan from page 1

housing options, especially downtown; modernizing zoning code's design and development standards)

- Investing in Quality Housing for all phases of life (consider new incentives for housing development; increase height and density standards for new housing in downtown and mixed use areas; pursue grants for repairs and accessibility improvements to aging housing; consider financial options such as tax abatement or revolving loan fund to support private improvements to aging housing; partner with regional housing organizations to bring their services to Vinton)

- Strategically promoting economic development

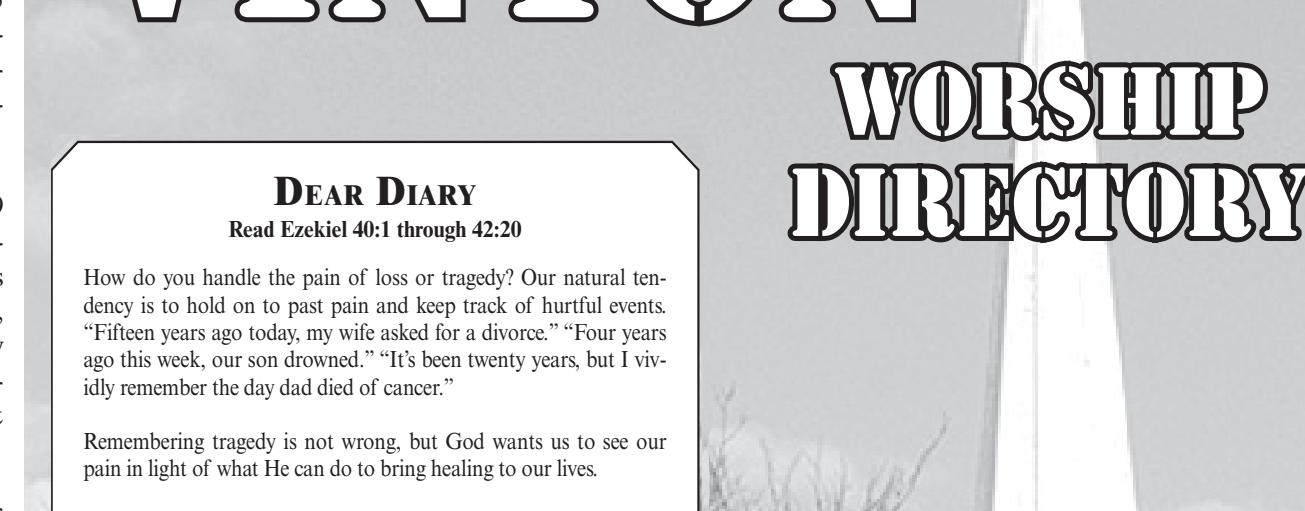
(seek opportunities to purchase key properties in Vinton; market opportunities for investment and development)

- Investing in critical public infrastructure, especially stormwater projects and connecting sidewalks (maintain street pavement data and invest in paving program so all streets are in good state of repair; upgrade water supply to eastern part of Vinton to support future development; develop comprehensive stormwater system dataset and stormwater master plan; dedicate new funding source towards stormwater infrastructure replacements and upgrades)

There were many items on the last Strategic Plan (2020-2025) which have been completed—an extension of the Glade Creek Greenway, improvements to Walnut Avenue, streambank restoration, Billy Byrd and Roland E. Cook conversions to housing, transfer of the utility system to the Western Virginia Water Authority, and numerous grant awards.

With the new Strategic Plan, Town Council and staff are focused on building upon what the town is already doing well.

- Vinton Messenger staff report



### DEAR DIARY

Read Ezekiel 40:1 through 42:20

How do you handle the pain of loss or tragedy? Our natural tendency is to hold on to past pain and keep track of hurtful events. "Fifteen years ago today, my wife asked for a divorce." "Four years ago this week, our son drowned." "It's been twenty years, but I vividly remember the day dad died of cancer."

Remembering tragedy is not wrong, but God wants us to see our pain in light of what He can do to bring healing to our lives.

In the twenty-fifth year of our exile, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth of the month, in the fourteenth year after the fall of the city—on that very day the hand of the Lord was on me and he took me there. (Ezekiel 40:1).

Ezekiel and the exiles of Israel would always remember the painful years, but God was at work even during this dark season of their history. In our own lives, we can expect "that very day the hand of the Lord" will become evident in our circumstances.

Thought for Today: Are you measuring the days since your last heartache, or looking to the day of God's provision?

Quicklook: Ezekiel 40:1-4

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

and discussion, or other topics and techniques to help Raise Your 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.

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**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.

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**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.

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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.

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# Time for the Gauntlet

It's time for the annual Gauntlet—Virginia's largest business program and competition now in its 12th year of connecting entrepreneurs to training, mentorship, and resources needed for success.

The cross regional networks of entrepreneurs is supported by The Advancement Program (TAF) and 300 mentors and business support partners working to help entrepreneurs help accelerate their businesses. The Gauntlet program offers opportunities for participants to not just learn but make connections that can help them refine their vision of their business and also help navigate the obstacles they may identify on their journey to their next phase.

Participants who actively engage in the program can expect to create:

- A clear, functional business strategy designed to grow with their business
- Practical systems across operations, marketing, sales, and finance
- Increased confidence, clarity, and momentum to continue building beyond the program

This year sessions run Feb. 3-April 7. The program kicks off on Feb. 3 with a live orientation call. Virtual lessons are held on Tuesday evenings from 6 to 7:30

p.m. Applications are open through Feb. 1.

Developed and sponsored by The Advancement Foundation (TAF), the Gauntlet this year has expanded to include two distinct pathways—Gauntlet and Quest.

Gauntlet now focuses on businesses built to serve a local or regional customer base, whether storefront, service-based, mobile, or run from home.

Quest supports scalable, tech-enabled, innovation-driven ventures designed to reach cross-regional or national markets.

Gauntlet serves entrepreneurs located in or serving Roanoke City; Roanoke County including Salem and Vinton; Alleghany County including Clifton Forge and Covington; Bedford City and County; Botetourt County including Buchanan, Daleville, and Fincastle; Franklin County; and Rockbridge County including Buena Vista and Lexington. Surrounding areas are encouraged to participate.

Gauntlet is designed for idea-stage and early-stage entrepreneurs building place-based, local-market businesses—including service-based, mobile, home-based, and storefront ventures.

If your primary customers are local or regional and you're focused on building a sustainable business to serve that market,



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[www.TheAdvancementFoundation.org](http://www.TheAdvancementFoundation.org)

GRAPHIC COURTESY OF GAUNTLET

Gauntlet is likely a strong fit. The Gauntlet program cost is \$299.

You do not need an established business to apply for Gauntlet. Many participants enter with an early-stage idea or a business that's still taking shape. Gauntlet is designed to help entrepreneurs—new or experienced—build clarity, structure, and confidence as they go.

Following the 10-week Gauntlet program, \$300,000 in cash and in-kind

prizes will be awarded.

Nearly 1,100 Gauntlet alumni have received more than \$1 million in cash and in-kind prizes over the past 11 years. Start by filling out the entrepreneur interest form at: [tinyurl.com/TAF-interest-form](http://tinyurl.com/TAF-interest-form).

Find more information at [theadvancementfoundation.org/the-gauntlet](http://theadvancementfoundation.org/the-gauntlet).

—Vinton Messenger staff report

## Council

from page 1

our patience decreases." The goal of local law enforcement is to curb such behavior.

Drumond also spoke about the adoption of new traffic safety programs in schools, civic groups, churches, anywhere police presence is requested. The department is eager to work with neighborhoods and businesses on improving traffic safety, most especially school zone enforcement and congestion.

The department has formed partnerships with Vinton Public Works, engineering, the Safe Streets Initiative, and the town manager's office. A recent study indicated that in Vinton, "while an overwhelming part of the community is interested in lane reductions, they were even more in favor of more law enforcement presence to help change driving behavior."

Town Council took action to approve a resolution allowing the town manager to execute an easement with the Western Virginia Water Authority for the construction of the Gus Nicks Water Line Improvement Project. This project will support residential and commercial water supply and fire flow through Gearhart Park and along Highland Road, Wayne Street, Marloe Street, the Billy Byrd Apartments, Save on Signs, and Gish Mill. The WVWA asked for a temporary construction easement and a permanent water line easement.

Council held a public hearing on amendments to the state-required Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP). Julie Williams-Daves and Mike Lawless from the TRC Company made a brief presentation on proposed amendments to the plan. The plan must be reviewed every five years and submitted to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. These plans address the "waste hierarchy," including source reduction, reuse, recycling, resource recovery, incineration, and landfilling, to manage solid waste and a recycling program to achieve a mandated 25% recycling rate.

According to Williams-Daves, the Town of Vinton generated 4,553 tons of municipal solid waste last year—that's 4.9 pounds per day per resident.

The goals of solid waste planning are:

- Reuse, recycling, and source reduction (Vinton is well-known and recognized for its recycling program)
- Resource recovery, waste to energy (this involves incineration and is not viable in Vinton)
- Hazardous waste management (keeping hazardous materials out of the landfill)
- Collection and disposal efficiency

## LOA

from page 3

LOA's annual canned food drive will be held Jan. 28-Feb. 4. It's easy to help—just collect canned food items. Bring the items to a designated drop-off location. Invite family, coworkers, and neighbors to participate. Volunteer your time to help deliver bags to local seniors.

Again for 2026, St. Peter and St. Paul Anglican

Church will serve as the main collection site for this community-wide event. Along with partner AARP Virginia, Flagship Sponsor P1 Technologies, Gold Sponsor Trinkle & Associates, Inc., Silver Sponsor the Salem Host Lions Club and Media Sponsor WFJX Fox Radio, plus hundreds of volunteers, LOA Soup for Seniors will provide important nutrition to seniors most in need in the community during the harshest part of winter.

Collect food during January, then deliver it to one of the community drop-off sites between Jan. 28 and Feb. 4 or to the main collection site Feb. 2-4.

The LOA suggests teaming up with your church, business, school, or other group for your own canned food drive during January. Then deliver the collected food to one of our many community drop-off sites between Jan. 28-Feb. 4, or to the main collection site, St. Peter and St. Paul Anglican Church,

4909 North Lake Drive in Roanoke Feb. 2-4, between 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

If you have any questions, contact Aimee Lawson at LOA: (540) 345-0451 or [alawson@loaa.org](mailto:alawson@loaa.org).

It takes hundreds of Soup for Seniors volunteers to organize and inspect the donated

food, pack an array of items in reusable cloth bags (donated by AARP Virginia), and deliver the bags to older neighbors in need. Sign-up to volunteer at [landerson@loaa.org](mailto:landerson@loaa.org).

Monetary donations are also welcome. Donate to Soup for Seniors and the funds will be used to purchase food items to offset any shortfall in food collection. All food and money collected will be used to give nutritional support to seniors right here in the area.

Items most needed include:

- Soup
- Peanut Butter
- Canned Meats
- Canned Fruit
- Canned

Vegetables

- Crackers
- Oatmeal
- Boost or Ensure
- Moneata

Donations

No glass containers; please check expiration dates. Low-salt, nutritious items are preferred.

Bring food donations to any of these convenient drop-off sites between Jan. 28-Feb. 4:

Evergreen Burial Park: 1307 Summit Ave., SW, Roanoke

First Bank (all locations):

- Blue Ridge: 98

Blue Ridge Blvd.

- Cloverdale: 614

Lee Highway • Daleville: 1245

Roanoke Rd. • Fincastle: 17

South Roanoke St. • Roanoke: 310

First St., Ste. 110 • Troutville: 5192

Lee Highway • 3320 Franklin

Rd., Roanoke • 707 Jefferson St.,

Downtown Roanoke • 426 W Main St.,

Salem • 6125 Airport Rd.,

Roanoke • Vistar Eye Center (only

these locations): • 3320 Franklin

Rd., Roanoke • 707 Jefferson St.,

Downtown Roanoke • 426 W Main St.,

Salem • 6125 Airport Rd.,

Roanoke • Mountain View

Cemetery: 1401 Mountain

View Rd., Vinton

Roanoke County

Libraries (only these

locations): • Bent Mountain

Library: 10148 Tinsley Ln.,

Bent Mountain • Glenvar Library:

3917 Daugherty Rd., Salem

• South County

Library: 6303 Merriman

Rd., Roanoke • Vinton Library:

300 S Pollard St., Vinton

Salem Library: 28 E

Main St., Salem

• Alleghany Highlands:

Call 540-962-0465

Learn more about

Soup for Seniors or find a

donation drop-off location

near you at <https://loaa.org/soup-for-seniors/>.

—Submitted by LOA

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE



### CLUES ACROSS

1. Tax collector
4. Fishes without the line touching water
8. Brooklyn hoopers
10. Actress Lathan
11. A metric for athletes
12. Food storage location
13. Colossus
15. Desolations
16. Accustom to something unpleasant
17. Kubrick, film-maker
18. You might ask this
21. Arkansas city
22. Gave food to
23. Request
24. V-shaped open trough
25. Make lively
26. It accompanies feather
27. Blonde bombshell
28. One who revolves
29. Blush greens
30. Charity
31. Having the shape of a cube
32. Unwind
33. Believed by some to be the supreme being
34. One who revolves
35. Blush greens
36. Charity
37. Having the shape of a cube
38. Unwind
39. Believed by some to be the supreme being
40. Checks or guides
41. Leak slowly through
42. Mid-quality
43. Midway between

### CLUES DOWN

1. Part of your foot
2. It's at the back of the eyeball
3. Where things stand
4. Offered
5. Contains pollen
6. Boisterous get-together
7. Asserts out loud
9. They're in the sky
10. Canonized
12. A politician's official stances
14. It can catch fish
15. British thermal unit
17. Help little firms go for treatment
20. Large red deer
23. Pokes holes in Solo
24. "Star Wars" hero Solo
25. One in a hospital
26. Scandinavian god of battle
27. Famous cat
28. Angeles: City of Angels
29. Type of drug (abbr.)
30. City along the Rhine
31. Animal disease
32. Martini ingredients
33. Get away
34. Rare species of rodent
35. Suppress

and Events Mandy Adkins, and Councilman Mike Stovall serve as non-voting representatives from the Town of Vinton on the board.

Angie Chewing serves as executive director of the Chamber.

The Vinton Area Chamber of Commerce, Inc. is organized "for the

purpose of advancing the agricultural, commercial, industrial, civic and general interests of Vinton and its trade area, in expectation that its citizens and all areas of its business community will prosper.

—Vinton Messenger staff report



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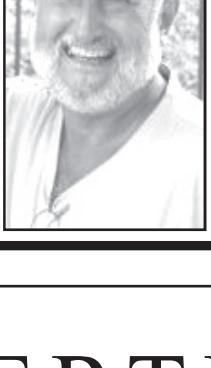
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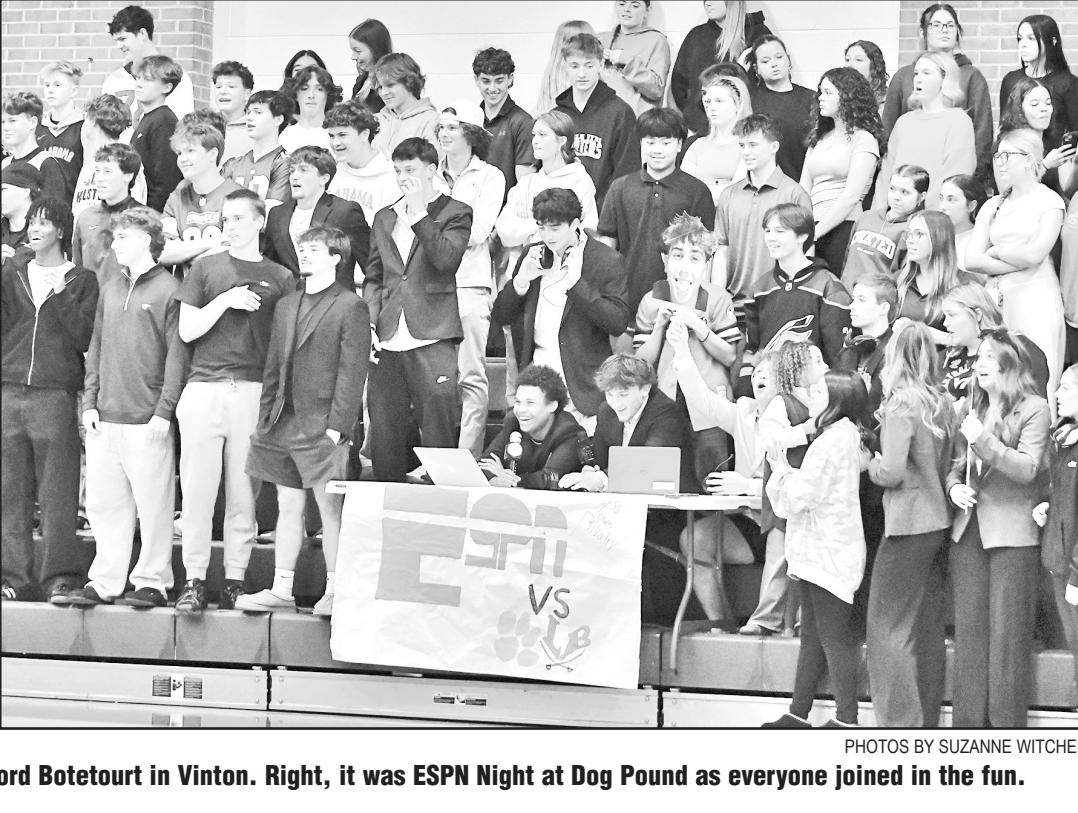
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PHOTOS BY SUZANNE WITCHER

## Left, Byrd's Moises Leon drives to the hoop in last week's win over Lord Botetourt in Vinton. Right, it was ESPN Night at Dog Pound as everyone joined in the fun.

# Terrier basketball teams will play doubleheader Saturday

Staunton River High in Moneta will be the site of a girls-boys varsity basketball doubleheader Saturday against William Byrd teams. The girls will play the first game of the twin-bill at 4 pm followed by the boys at 6:30 pm.

It will be part of a big weekend for Byrd basketball. Both teams are competing in the "Rock the Ribbon" event at Rockbridge County High on Friday, followed by important Blue Ridge District games on Saturday. Both the boys and girls had non-district games on Monday and Wednesday so both teams will be playing four games in the span of six days.

On Monday Byrd teams played Hidden Valley, with the boys at home and the girls at Hidden Valley. The girls pulled out a 47-28 win over the Titans to improve to 7-6 on the season. Heidi Dixon had 12 points to lead the Terriers and Mia Martin had eight. Skye Williams had a great defensive game with nine steals.

"Very balanced night scoring-wise but such a great defensive effort!" said Byrd coach Ben Munsey. "Excellent energy and focus to start a four-game week."

The boys were at Hidden Valley where they dropped a 69-49 decision. Byrd fell to 2-11 with the loss while the Titans improved to 14-1.

"Really never got it going," said Byrd coach Brad Greenway. "For whatever reason we didn't show up. We looked sluggish at best against the top team in our region right now and that just won't get it done. Turning the page and moving on."

The game was tied 10-10 after the first quarter but the Titans caught fire in the second period, outscoring Byrd 24-7. David Foster and Jesus Leon had nine points each to lead Byrd while Moises Leon and Reid Divers had eight each.

Last Friday both Byrd teams played Franklin County. The boys were in Rocky Mount where they dropped a 58-53 decision. The game was close all

the way but the Terriers couldn't pull even down the stretch.

"We started out strong offensively and had a good flow for most of the game," said Greenway. "I thought Franklin County's size really got the best of us. We were a little shorthanded with one of our two post defenders out and they really hurt us in the paint from start to finish. I think they only had one three go in on a few attempts the whole game but we struggled to get stops when we needed them."

Foster had 18 to lead Byrd, including nine in the fourth quarter. Cason Nichols had 14.

The girls hosted Franklin County in Vinton last Friday and suffered much the same fate, dropping a close one, 39-34.

"Great effort in the second half by all the girls to try and dig out of a hole," said Munsey.

Williams had 10 points and eight rebounds for Byrd while Dixon had 10 boards, four assists and three blocks.

Both the boys and girls were scheduled to play Glenvar on Wednesday in non-district action but results were too late for publication. Next week will be another busy schedule as the boys host Northside on Tuesday while the girls go there. Then, a night later, the boys are home to Christiansburg and the girls are on the road against the Blue Demons. On Friday, January 30, the Terriers will host William Fleming in a doubleheader with the girls at 5:30 pm and the boys to follow.



Left, Byrd's Heidi Dixon drives and dishes and, right, Maurasia Burnette handles the ball. PHOTOS BY REGINA DEVINNEY

## Byrd basketball teams compete in fundraiser in Rockbridge County

The William Byrd basketball teams will be participating in the "Rock the Ribbon" basketball event at Rockbridge County High School this Friday night. The girls varsity team will play Staunton High on Friday at 5 pm followed by the boys against Staunton(formerly Robert E. Lee High) at 6:30 pm.

The "Rock the Ribbon" event is a two-day day event that is a fundraiser for the American Cancer Society. A total of 12 games will be played with some top talent for what promises to be an exciting weekend of high school basketball. This year's schedule is as follows.

### FRIDAY — January 23

1 pm — Rockbridge County vs Roanoke Catholic  
5 pm — Staunton vs **William Byrd (girls)**  
6:30 pm — Staunton vs **William Byrd (boys)**  
8 pm — Oak Hill Academy vs Colorado Prep

### SATURDAY — January 24

11 am — Rockbridge Co. vs Smith Mountain Lake Christian Academy (girls)  
12:30 pm — Parry McCluer vs Rural Retreat (girls)  
2 pm — Parry McCluer vs Fort Defiance  
3 pm — Covenant vs Stuarts Draft (girls)  
5 pm — Alleghany vs Loudoun Valley  
6 pm — Oak Hill Academy vs Blue Ridge School  
8 pm — Colorado Prep vs Gillion Academy



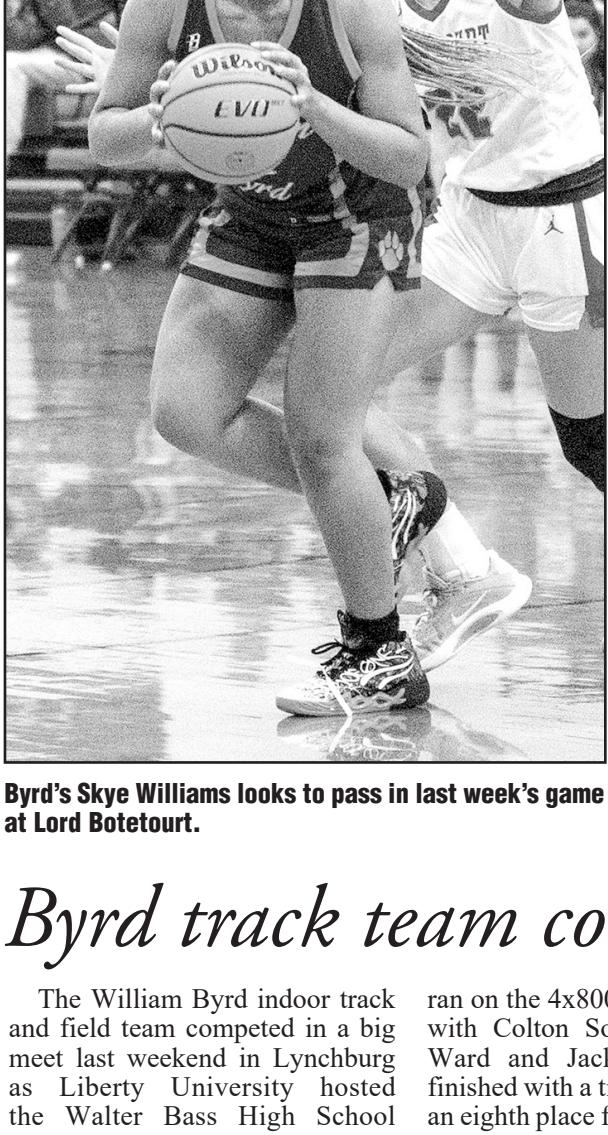
## Fuchs puts the shot for RC

The Kerr-Cregger Indoor Fieldhouse at Roanoke College was the site of the annual Finn Pincus Invitational collegiate track meet last weekend. Here

William Byrd grad Sarah Fuchs competes in the shot put on Saturday. Sarah finished sixth with a throw of

14.30 meters.

PHOTO BY BRIAN HOFFMAN



Byrd's Skye Williams looks to pass in last week's game at Lord Botetourt.

## Byrd track team competes in big meets

The William Byrd indoor track and field team competed in a big meet last weekend in Lynchburg as Liberty University hosted the Walter Bass High School Invitational. The meet featured athletes from over 200 schools and five states.

Byrd's Giovanni Pandolfini finished third in the unseeded 500m dash with a time of 1:09.71 and

ran on the 4x800 meter relay team with Colton Sotherden, Camden Ward and Jack Petersen. They finished with a time of 9:04.81 and an eighth place finish. Titus Beatty finished 18th with a throw of 44'1 in the shot put.

For the girls', Ellie Ruble finished 13th in the long jump with a jump of 15'6.75".

Also, James Smith traveled

to the Virginia Showcase meet in Virginia Beach last weekend, another meet with many schools attending and outstanding competition. James state qualified for the 55m dash with a time of 6.67 seconds.

The Terriers next scheduled indoor track event is January 31 at Heritage High School in Lynchburg.

Leaders after the fall season are as follows: Class

1 Auburn -172.5 pts.; Class 2 Poquoson -170 pts.

Class 3 Western Albemarle -172.5 pts.; Class 4

Hanover -170 pts.; Class 5 Mid-Atlantic -182.5 pts.

Class 6 West Springfield -240 pts.

Class 7 Vinton -240 pts.

Class 8 Roanoke -240 pts.

Class 9 Lynchburg -240 pts.

Class 10 Staunton -240 pts.

Class 11 Rockbridge -240 pts.

Class 12 Franklin -240 pts.

Class 13 Bedford -240 pts.

Class 14 Lee -240 pts.

Class 15 Rockbridge -240 pts.

Class 16 Lee -240 pts.

Class 17 Lee -240 pts.

Class 18 Lee -240 pts.

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Class 93 Lee -240 pts.

Class 94 Lee -240 pts.

Class 95 Lee -240 pts.

# SPORTS

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or PO Box 1125, Salem, Va, 24153 • [ourvalley.org](http://ourvalley.org)

## Byrd swimmers sweep three BRD foes on "Senior Night"



PHOTOS COURTESY WILLIAM BYRD SWIMMING

Above are the swimming Terrier seniors. Left to right are Addi Kincer, Owen Humphreys, Gabby Romeo, Keith Schult, Lindsay Murtaugh, Bianca DeMelo and Cary Jones. Below left, Romeo shakes hands with William Byrd High School principal Evan Noell and, below right, Schult does the "Senior Walk" at the Gator Center in Roanoke.



## Big Orange ties for 9th on Big Blue mats in C'Burg

The Big Orange wrestlers celebrated "Senior Night" last week by hosting three Blue Ridge District teams in a quad event at William Byrd High School. The Terriers went 2-1, defeating Franklin County and William Fleming but losing to Lord Botetourt, who clinched the BRD dual title with the win over Byrd.

Last weekend Byrd competed in the Big Blue at Christiansburg High School. The Terriers tied for ninth among 21 teams that scored. Fort Mill High of South Carolina was the team champ followed by Salem and host Christiansburg.

Byrd had a champion at 165 in Myles Preston. He won four matches, including a technical fall, a 37 second pin, a 4-2 decision over a Fort Mill wrestler in the semifinals and a 19-12 win over Eddie Sherlinki of Grayson County in the championship match.

"Myles went up a weight class and won the Big Blue title at 165," said Byrd coach Thomas Kessler. "He has been undefeated since returning to the lineup and looks to continue to be a dominant wrestler at whatever weight he goes."

Lane Brunk took third place at 113. Zane Taylor was fourth at 150 while TJ Duncan and Jayden Omiyo took fifth places at 138 and 190.

Two-time state champ Darin Witcher did not compete in the Big Blue. He traveled to Pennsylvania to wrestle in the "Escape the Rock" tournament and went 1-1 before the big tournament was called due to impending weather.

Byrd was scheduled to wrestle at William Fleming on Wednesday of this week. This weekend they're entered in the John Kelly Invitational at Ocean Lakes, VA.

"With the weather looking grim for this weekend, we will be lucky to get in our tournament," said Kessler.



Above, Byrd's Evan Tabor is close to a pin. Below, Brandon Hurley is on top and in control in last week's match with William Fleming.

PHOTOS BY SUZANNE WITCHER

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