



## Nelson woman back in the driver's seat on birthday

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## Track athlete takes part in state pole vault competition

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KENDALL WARNER PHOTOS, NELSON COUNTY TIMES

Garden club members browse the new exhibit on the Nelson County Garden Club at the Oakland Museum in Arlington on Friday, March 4, 2022.

## Oakland Museum exhibit shows garden club tended community

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Many of the items on display at Oakland Museum's new Nelson County Garden Club exhibit make for pleasant viewing: scrapbooks with award ribbons and newspaper clippings, hand-drawn pamphlets, black-and-white group photographs of former club leaders, and a tiny silver chalice honoring club founder and first president Reba Fitzpatrick Lea.

But exhibit items also demonstrate serious community involvement. Photographs and documents reveal the 87-year-old club was a robust and active organization that shaped the Nelson County community.

The garden club was invited to view the exhibit March 4 before the museum opened March 5 for its 2022 season.

Please see GARDEN, Page A2



A photo of the Executive Committee of the Nelson County Garden Club from 1947 sits on display in the new exhibit centered around the club at the Oakland Museum in Arlington on Friday, March 4, 2022.

## Schools' chief search progresses

### Nelson County School Board in process of reviewing 20 applicants for superintendent

The Nelson County School Board met with Virginia School Boards Association Executive Director Gina Patterson on March 4 to review applications for the open superintendent position.

According to a statement from VSBA, the board received 20 full applications. Of those applicants, 14 are men and 6 are women. Fifteen of the applicants reside in Virginia and remaining applications came from West Virginia, New Jersey, Tennessee, North Carolina and Pennsylvania.

The candidate pool is made up of five current or former superintendents; four assistant, associate or deputy superintendents; six central office administrators; and five principals or building level administrators.

Patterson said the board at the meeting discussed dates to start interviews.

She said 20 applications was good in light of the pandemic.

"Twenty-five years ago you may have had 50 applicants, but that trend has changed," Patterson said.

She added candidates have become more selective about their applications.

"At the end of the day it's about quality over quantity," Patterson said.

The board is seeking a successor to Martha Eagle, the first woman to serve in the role, who is retiring June 30 after four years steering the school system.

— Emma Martin

## Nelson school board discusses infrastructure

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The Nelson County School Board discussed upcoming capital improvement projects and salary adjustments at its Feb. 24 meeting, in preparation to submit a fiscal year 2023 budget to the board of supervisors for consideration.

Chris Toley of Piney Ridge Contracting and Construction provided an update on the high school greenhouse project. Toley said despite delays due to supply chain and workforce issues, the greenhouse components had arrived that week. He estimated construction would begin Feb. 28 and take four to six weeks, with an additional two weeks for mechanical and electrical installation.

"We're doing everything we can to get this thing rolling," Toley said.

Assistant Superintendent for

Please see SCHOOLS, Page A3

## Rapunzel's reopens with first open mic in two years

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Until closing its doors two years ago because of the COVID-19 pandemic, Rapunzel's in Lovingston sold Trager Brothers coffee, used books and county-crafted beer, wine and cider. But owner Bob Taylor said what people really come for is the live music.

"People are for the most part sitting down, they're socializing and talking. But they're here to hear the music. And I think that's a good thing," Taylor said.

Rapunzel's will hold its first open mic in two years at 8 p.m. Friday. Entry is free

for performers and \$3 for listeners.

"I've been in Charlottesville where I've seen bands so good, they made you want to cry, and nobody was even looking at them. They had their backs to them. It was amazing," Taylor said.

He described Rapunzel's as a "listening room." Cozy armchairs and small tables point toward a small stage. There are bookshelves across from a small bar staffed by volunteers; Rapunzel's operates as a nonprofit. The building retains the rustic charm of its origins as a fruit-packing facility.

Taylor's customers, whom he usually

knows by name, are important. But the musicians come first, he said, given artists are often treated like "second-class citizens" in a venue.

"We tried to make them first-class citizens, and it's worked out very well for us. We've had a lot of bands that are now on the verge of being very successful," Taylor said. He listed folk band Chamomile and Whiskey, blues guitarist Eli Cook, bassist and vocalist Sally Rose and Charlottesville rock group Lord Nelson among acts who played at Rapunzel's

Please see RAPUNZEL'S, Page A5



PHOTO PROVIDED BY LUKE RAMSEY

A view of the exterior of the Shipman Schoolhouse with Ramsey's crew.

## Restoration of historic schoolhouse carries on

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Thanks to the work of a Nelson County construction company, the effort to restore a historic school house for Black students has a solid foundation, but its future may be shaky without more rapid intervention.

Luke Ramsey first posted on Ramsey Restoration's Facebook Page about the former Shipman Colored School in November 2018.

Ramsey regularly updates his page with photos from his recent restoration projects; he said the 2018 post garnered more likes, shares and comments than any previous post.

Community members commented expressing excitement about the project and recalled memories from when the building later served as a preschool.

Ramsey's photos show the school house's age and state of neglect; the

building has broken or missing window panes, little paint remaining on its weathered wooden siding and most notably a dramatic dip in the center of the roof and a large hole in the rear wall.

But a classic gabled bell tower remains in the center of its roof. In 2015 the original cast-iron bell was moved to the Nelson Heritage Center for safe-keeping.

"It needs a lot of work," Ramsey said.

Please see SCHOOLHOUSE, Page A2

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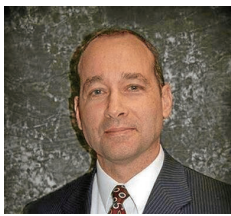
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## Rep. Bob Good again nominated to represent 5th District for GOP

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## Lady Govies soccer game ends in tie

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# Board disagrees on tax, budget

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Supervisors are reconsidering a proposed 5% increase to the transient occupancy tax (TOT) after community business and rental property owners recently voiced their opposition at two public hearings.

If supervisors elect not to raise the TOT, they'll need to make

other decisions to account for the \$1.15 million in additional tax revenue the increase was estimated to bring the county. That revenue has been balanced with \$1.5 million in additional funding the board has agreed to grant Nelson County Public Schools in the proposed budget. At its May 18 meeting, the board discussed the merits of the tax increase and what effect foregoing it would

have on school funding.

The TOT is levied on the boarding fees visitors to the county pay local hotels, motels, campgrounds and other facilities offering temporary lodging. Supervisors have argued the tax affects tourists and not Nelson County citizens while some hospitality business owners say a higher tax will drive away tourists and make it harder for them to stay in business. The

current TOT rate is 5%; county administration proposed an increase to 10% at the start of the board's fiscal year 2023 budget planning.

Finance Director Candy McGarry showed the board a possible budget option with no TOT increase and therefore a \$1.15 million reduction in revenue.

She told the board about another recent budget complication: McGarry said staff had heard the

day before about a \$132,000 increase to the county's solid waste hauling cost. She said Thomas Trucking, the company the county contracts to haul trash from the Arrington Transfer Station to the Region 2000 Services Authority sit the county partners in, hasn't increased its hauling fees since 2014, but now will.

Please see **BOARD**, Page A2



KENDALL WARNER, NELSON COUNTY TIMES

Amara Casterline works on her turtle painting at Rockfish River Elementary School on Friday, May 20, 2022.

# Rockfish River fourth graders paint turtles to save species

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Fourth graders at Rockfish River Elementary School have become informed, passionate advocates for Eastern box turtles and sea turtles, and their efforts to preserve both species already are making waves.

Three fourth-grade classes at RRES have been learning about the turtles, which are native to

the Eastern U.S. On May 20, students in Hayley Osborne's class were working on the last step of their research project, painting turtles to support wildlife conservation organizations.

The 50 RRES fourth graders each made two turtle paintings, of a sea turtle and a box turtle, on wooden boards. Their creations, propped up against Osborne's whiteboard, made a colorful mosaic of turtle tiles.

Osborne said the project was inspired by a February trip she took to Nicaragua, where she met Tim Rusmisl, founder and director of the nonprofit Vital Actions. Osborne showed off the original turtle painting she brought back from Nicaragua and explained the organization sells the paintings to support its efforts to protect endangered sea turtles and "rewild" their habitats.

"It's that easy," she said. Osborne explained the first 100 local donations to Vital Actions and the Waynesboro Virginia

Please see **TURTLES**, Page A2

**LOOK:** For more photos of students painting turtles point your smartphone over the QR code, then tap the link. [NEWSVU](#)

# Bold Rock reopens Barrel Barn as distillery

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The new Bold Rock Distillery at the Barrel Barn in Nellysford hadn't been open for more than a few hours on May 20 before a crowd had formed around the bar and under a chalkboard menu listing the location's new "hand-crafted cocktails."

Bold Rock invited guests to a grand reopening that day of the Barrel Barn along Virginia 151 as the new Bold Rock Distillery.

Chuck Kiehl was selling the brand's spirits: cinnamon apple whiskey, American whiskey, straight bourbon, vodka and the new spiced peach whiskey, to frequent customers. He said the brand has been producing liquors for four months and described the American whiskey as "almost like drinking a whiskey cocktail." He added the cinnamon apply whiskey was good mixed with the brand's hard cider.

Kat Engslar was working the Barrel Barn bar for the grand opening, making the location's first cocktails with Bold Rock spirits. Engslar said she started at Bold Rock in the main taproom and while she's worked in restaurants for 11 years, it's her first time making cocktails to order. She said she expects the menu to change seasonally and is excited to create new cocktail recipes. Engslar's favorite Bold Rock spirit is the cinnamon apple whiskey, which she said is great on the rocks.

Please see **DISTILLERY**, Page A5



KENDALL WARNER, NELSON COUNTY TIMES

Elise Lauterbach poses for a portrait in her studio during the Nelson Artist Spring Tour on Saturday, May 14, 2022.

# Nelson Artist Tour showcases local talent and creativity

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Designer Rosalba Valentino creates and sells her line of clothing and accessories out of a small studio in the Lovingston Nelson Center, one of five stops along the first ever Nelson Artist Tour on May 14.

Valentino greeted visitors from a seat at her sewing machine, between rolls of fabric and ready-

to-wear clothes on racks.

She said the emphasis of her work is recycling and salvaging. Almost all Rosalba Couture designs feature vintage or discarded fabrics the artist has creatively combined with new: "If I've done my job right, people don't really know what's what."

Valentino said the problem with the fashion industry is consumers don't know where their clothes come from or where they

go after they've worn them out or grown tired of them. Rather than add to the output, she considers it a worthy challenge to give old

Please see **ARTISTS**, Page A2

**LOOK:** For more photos of the Nelson Artist Tour point your smartphone over the QR code, then tap the link. [NEWSVU](#)

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## State report addresses pandemic's effects on K-12

### FROM STAFF REPORTS

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, which works to make state government operations more effective, efficient and accountable and reports to the General Assembly, last month issued a report on the pandemic's impact on public K-12 education in Virginia. That document was included in the Amherst County School Board's meeting documents.

The following are highlights of the JLARC report:

### Chronic absenteeism, student behavior major concerns

As students returned to in-person instruction, fewer of them regularly attended school. Chronic absenteeism — a student missing 10 percent or more of school days — nearly dou-

bled last year compared with pre-pandemic rates. Twenty percent of students statewide were chronically absent in the 2021-22 school year and nearly all school divisions in the 2021-22 school year experienced surges in chronic absenteeism, with just three divisions experiencing a decrease.

More students also exhibited disruptive behavior as they returned to in-person instruc-

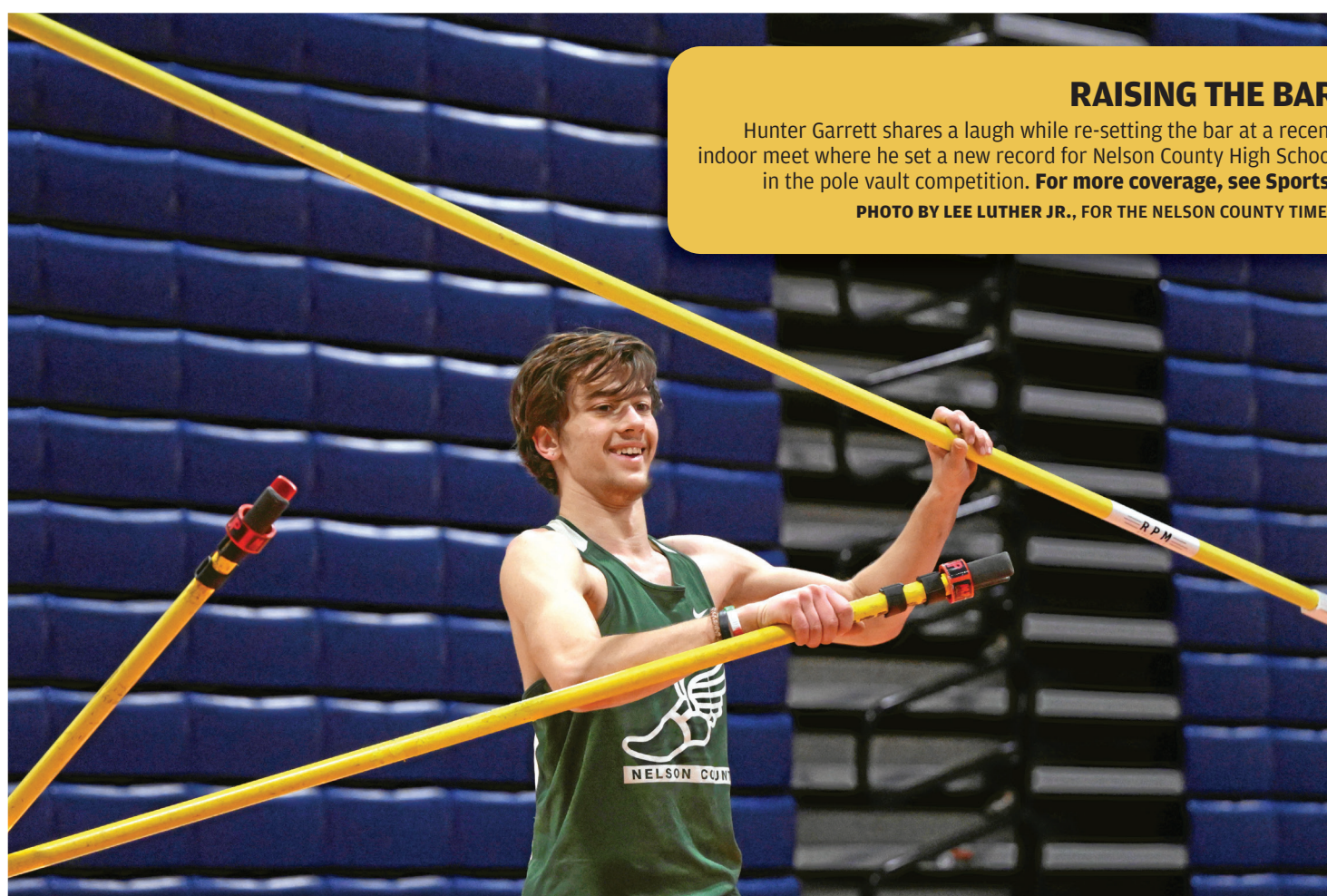
tion, according to school staff. JLARC asked school staff to rate the seriousness of 15 issues faced by school staff, such as teacher compensation, student academic progress, lack of respect from parents, and concerns about health during the pandemic. Student behavior problems were rated as the most serious of all 15 issues listed. Principals and teachers cited months spent out of the physical classroom as the

main reason for increased student behavioral problems.

### Mental health issues among students are prevalent

Students themselves, especially females, reported disconcertingly high levels of mental health issues during the pandemic. Half

Please see **REPORT**, Page A3



### RAISING THE BAR

Hunter Garrett shares a laugh while re-setting the bar at a recent indoor meet where he set a new record for Nelson County High School in the pole vault competition. **For more coverage, see Sports.**

PHOTO BY LEE LUTHER JR., FOR THE NELSON COUNTY TIMES

## Gov. sees strong outlook

Youngkin expects a 2023 recession but state has a 'structurally balanced budget'

DAVE RESS  
Richmond Times-Dispatch

Sometimes with a cloud — like the recession Gov. Glenn Youngkin expects next year — there's a silver lining. For state government, that means a pretty encouraging outlook for tax collections.

So encouraging, in fact, that even with \$1 billion of additional tax cuts, the more than \$600 million in spending Youngkin's budget amendments proposed for this year and more than \$1.9 billion in fiscal 2024, Virginia has hit that golden era budget-writers dream of: "structurally balanced budgets."

That is, a long-term prospect that ever-rising costs will be covered by future tax collections — without a need for new taxes or tax rate increases.

While Youngkin sees a clear consensus that there will be a recession next year that could last six months or more, he said "there is a big difference between Virginia's economic trajectory and the current strength of the state government financial statements."

And one big reason, he says, is that Virginians are taxed too much — a view that not all legislative budget writers necessarily agree with.

For a family of three, with a

Please see **YOUNGKIN**, Page A3

## After two-year battle, Dominion releasing some easements along proposed ACP route

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During Christmas week 2014, many Nelson County landowners along the Atlantic Coast Pipeline (ACP)'s proposed route received a not-so-festive piece of mail: a notice that Atlantic Coast Pipeline LLC was suing them for survey access to their properties.

The approximately 600-mile pipeline would have run from Harrison County, West Virginia through Virginia — crossing di-

rectly through Nelson, Augusta and Buckingham counties — and south into North Carolina. Many Nelson landowners had refused ACP permission to survey their land for the project, the first act of resistance in what would be a six-year fight, according to Joyce Burton, landowner liaison and a former board member of Friends of Nelson, one of the first groups to formally organize around halting the pipeline.

On July 5, 2020, ACP parent

Please see **EASEMENT**, Page A2



PAIGE DINGLER, THE NELSON COUNTY TIMES

Friends of Nelson Landowner Liaison Joyce Burton holds copies of the Nelson County easements that ACP has released so far through her advocacy work. The rest of the papers in the box are copies of the remaining easements agreements ACP still holds in Nelson County.

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