



Ruritan

Volume 89, Spring 2024





Ruritan

Volume 89, SPRING 2024

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#RuritanStrong

2024 National President Robin Davenport



Everyone Has a Story and Honoring Our Stories with Integrity to Shape Our Future is so important to all of us.

That is #RURITANSTRONG!

As Ruritan leaders, our mission should always be "community first." Each day, we are challenged with shaping a vision of success for all communities, creating, and maintaining a healthy climate, cultivating leadership in others, improving our communities, and managing people, data, and processes. Times have changed, and we must rise to the challenges that face us.

"There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you." (Maya Angelou) Every day, I reflect on this quote, and it provides a reminder of the many unknown individual stories in the lives of our communities and their untold stories. As I reflect on my personal story and share my journey, four words power my life and work each day: communication, purpose, passion, and pride. Communication builds relationships and success. Purpose drives me to stay determined and focused on my goals. My passion provides the fuel to accomplish my purpose; and finally, I take pride in doing my job to the fullest with no regrets. My stories, both personal and professional, have included challenges and successes and my active involvement in state and national organizations provided many rewarding and beneficial experiences, successfully guiding me through those challenges and successes. Locally, my experiences include valuable time serving my club, Creeds Ruritan, along with numerous other leadership and representative opportunities in the Holland District. My state involvement began with serving on the Association of Virginia Ruritans I served as secretary, treasurer, and president. At the national level, I served on several national committees and most recently completed as your 2023 President-Elect. I have been fortunate and honored to serve our Ruritan National organization.

Now, I am ready for the greatest job. Serving as your 2024 National President. I am committed to Ruritan and what it stands for. I realize there are many topics important to all of us who serve Ruritan. My primary purpose will be to lead with my voice at the national level for all of you. I am not afraid to take risks for the betterment of Ruritan. I will speak truth to power, and question controversial issues, ideas, and topics to deepen discussions. I will do this to find better solutions, rather than assigning blame. I want to promote national leadership and offer these ten important leadership characteristics for effective leadership in Ruritan.

- 1. Lead with honesty and integrity.*
- 2. Lead with trust and empowerment.*
- 3. Lead with communication, collaboration, and connectivity.*
- 4. Lead with positive energy.*
- 5. Lead with confidence.*
- 6. Lead with commitment and persistence.*
- 7. Lead with the willingness to learn, unlearn and relearn.*

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2024 National President Robin Davenport

8. Lead with creativity and innovation.

9. Lead with insight.

10. Lead by inspiring.

I believe in Ruritan and its opportunities for our leaders, for you. My entire career has revolved around serving Ruritan and learning and leading with all of you. I am here today because of the opportunities through Ruritan and my relationships with you and across this nation. Ruritan continues to offer learning opportunities for growth through professional development, mentoring, and leadership. As an organization that serves you, we must continue to provide support and services that are relevant to the issues we face each day. The stories I hear and learn about will be the evidence and feedback I will use to form our national platform to promote meaningful growth and common-sense change in our organization.

Now I have been asked by many as to why the Turtle is so important to me. The turtle, revered across cultures and mythologies, is a symbol of profound significance. Its deliberate and steady pace represents patience, resilience, and longevity. The protective shell embodies security and a retreat to introspection. In Native American traditions, the turtle is a symbol of Mother Earth, grounding us to our roots. In Eastern philosophies, it signifies stability and wisdom, with the world carried on its back. The turtle's symbolism reminds us to navigate life's challenges with calmness, adaptability, and a steadfast spirit. Embrace the wisdom of the turtle, and let its symbolism guide you on your Ruritan journey.

As many of you know, there has traditionally been a yearly fundraising activity. For my activity, I want you to give back to your local community. What I will do, I will be asking for the amounts you do in community donations and the number of Ruritan scholarships you have given with their totals. There will be more on this coming year. Now, you know every Past President has a membership goal and I want to be the first in over ten years of a growth. First, we must remember those clubs that are struggling and set up to help them. Retaining the members, we have for retention is so important to our organization. Now, listen carefully, 5 and 1 gets it done. Yes, just five new members plus one new district club will get us on a positive track. Now, you are hearing a secret. I will be challenging our National Directors to start a new club or going back to the district they serve and restarting a club that folded. Guess the cat is out of the bag. They will be working closely with their District Governor to achieve this goal.

I am confident that I can meet your expectations as 2024 President of Ruritan. I will take your stories to those that need to hear them. I would be honored with the opportunity to support our National Directors and help establish a community of learners throughout our nation. It is with excitement, energy, experience, pride, and integrity that I aspire to honor each one of our stories to propel our organization as your next Ruritan President.

Remember #RURITANSTRONG



Executive Director Sarah Kelly



First and foremost, I hope you are truly proud of your last year's accomplishments in your communities and for our incredible organization.

For the second year in a row, we have stemmed the massive hemorrhaging of membership loss, and that is all you. President Mike's challenge was to do a little bit better. His challenge was just 3%. Who can't do something 3% better? Ruritans have stepped up, and so many clubs set a positive example.

What that translates to, to me, is Community.

I have been thinking a lot lately about Community. Society has become very tribal and more separated from others than ever before. Do we even need community with all our gadgets and gizmos? I know I do. Consider the essence of our shared experiences, the support that emerges within a community. We find understanding, empathy, and collective resilience within these connections. Community is not just a need; it is the fabric that weaves our stories, aspirations, and shared humanity together. So, let us appreciate the value of community and its profound impact on shaping our lives.

Ruritan's purpose is to "create a better understanding among people and through volunteer community service make your community a better place to work and live." So, we must transcend the tribalism, separation, segregation, and the "us vs. them" mentality. Whoever the "them" is, because we can't have "us" without "them." Let us strive for unity; in unity, we find the common ground that builds bridges of understanding, compassion, and a brighter future for all.

It is time for some introspection. Is our club genuinely relevant? Are we making a tangible impact on our community and the lives of our members? Consider the same question for our districts and national. Relevance isn't a given; it's earned through purposeful actions and meaningful contributions. Let's reflect on our role and strive to ensure that at every level – club, district, and national – we are not just present but profoundly relevant in making a positive difference.

This will probably take a gut check in each of us and a genuine change of behaviors, beliefs, and mindset. Change is not a collective decision; it begins with each individual embracing the spark of transformation. Mere words won't suffice; it's the commitment of each one of us that will pave the way for meaningful change. Let us recognize the power within ourselves to break the cycle of repetitive behavior and usher in a brighter future.

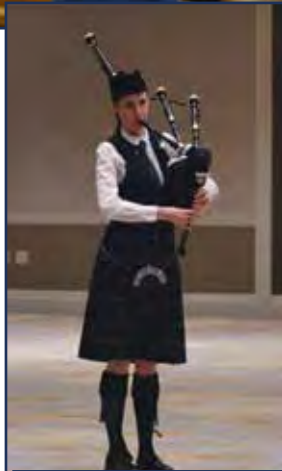
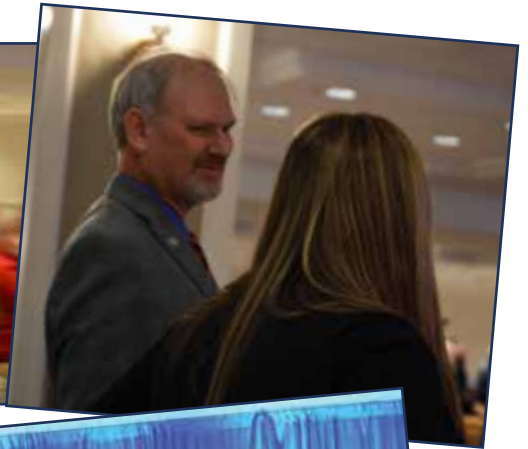
I wouldn't be doing my job if I didn't encourage growth, but let's shift our perspective. It's not about mere numbers. It's about fostering vibrant communities. Growing for the sake of numbers alone is a shallow pursuit. Instead, let's channel our efforts into creating environments where individuals thrive, connections are meaningful, and our impact extends far beyond numerical metrics. Quality growth transforms not just the size but the substance of our organization, ensuring a richer and more fulfilling experience for everyone.

In our pursuit of success and progress, it's crucial to recognize that anything other than focusing on the health and stability of our clubs and incredible organization can be a distraction. While challenges and diversions may arise, our primary focus should remain on forward-moving behaviors like opening new clubs, bringing new members into existing clubs, retaining existing members, training, and communicating. Let's stay steadfast on that path, acknowledging that each step forward is a step away from distractions and toward our collective aspirations.

I am honored and humbled to serve as your Executive Director, and I am PROUD to be a Ruritan.

It's up to you now. Our future is in your hands.

2024 Ruritan National Convention Winston-Salem NC



2024 Ruritan National Convention Winston-Salem NC



2024 Ruritan National Convention Winston-Salem NC



2024 National Convention Ballot Items Voted On By Delegates

Ballot Item 1 -

The caption of the National Bylaws ARTICLE I currently reads:

“Name/Emblem/Politics”. The Board approved striking the word “Politics” and inserting the word “Principles”.

They further moved that the heading politics be replaced with principles in all bylaws and publications.

Reason for the motion: The word politics is too narrow of scope as we are non-sectarian and non-partisan in both politics and religious affiliations. Principles is a more inclusive word and portrays how we want to present ourselves to our communities. *Will take effect immediately upon approval by a 2/3 vote of the delegates at the national convention.*

DISPOSITION: FAILED

Ballot Item 2 -

The National Board approved a motion for a \$1 per quarter dues increase (\$4 per year) for all adult/business org memberships (not including youth) to take effect April 1, 2024.

Reason for the motion: To maintain the solvency of the organization. The 2023-2024 Ruritan National operating budget of \$1,133,204.00 income and expenses of \$1,124,900.83 is based on an anticipated dues increase of \$1/quarter, to take effect April 2024, pending convention delegates’ approval at the 2024 Ruritan National Convention. If there is no approved dues increase, the proposed operating budget for 2023-2024 would be \$1,095,226.00 income and expenses of \$1,120,904.83, reflecting a deficit budget of -\$25,678.83. *Will take effect on April 1, 2024, upon approval by a 2/3 vote of the delegates at the national convention.*

DISPOSITION: PASSED

2024 National Convention Ballot Items Voted On By Delegates

Ballot Item 3 -

National Bylaws ARTICLE III Membership/Members
Section 4. Dues and Fees

E. Dues Payment Dates currently reads as follows: *“Membership dues shall be billed on the 1st day of each quarter and payable to Ruritan National no later than the last day of January, April, July, and October. Any club which fails to pay its financial obligation to this organization, in accordance with these bylaws, may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension of its charter.”*

Move in sentence one to strike the word “shall” and insert the word “should” and between 1st and day, insert the word “business.” The sentence will then read “Membership dues should be billed on the 1st business day of each quarter and payable to Ruritan National no later than the last day of January, April, July and October.”

Reason for the motion: This allows flexibility to Ruritan National when the 1st day of the quarter falls on a weekend or holiday. *Will take effect immediately upon approval by a 2/3 vote of the delegates at the national convention.*

DISPOSITION: PASSED

Ballot Item 4 -

Amend National Bylaws by creating new Article V Exempt Charitable Organizations.

Current Section 5 and subsequent sections will be renumbered. Current Article IV Section 9 Ruritan National Foundation will become part of the new Article V. Text for the new article is below.

Reason for the motion: Provide a definitive section for the current and future Exempt Charitable Organizations that are part of Ruritan National. *Will take effect immediately upon approval by a 2/3 vote of the delegates at the national convention.*

DISPOSITION: PASSED



FOUNDERS' DAY 2024

SAVE THE DATE

SATURDAY, JUNE 1, 2024

COME CELEBRATE RURITAN!

The Celebration will begin at 12 noon with a Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Ruritan Monument Immediately followed at 1:00 pm with a Banquet/Lunch and speaker at the Holland Community Building.

All are invited to attend and participate in this celebration of the legacy of Ruritan!!

Mark your calendar and stay tuned for future details with added information about events and costs 2010 National President Donald Worrell (757-375-6218) is the local Holland contact for further details.



2024 Foundation President Phillip Bradshaw



Greetings Fellow Ruritans!

What a National Convention we had at Winston-Salem! Welcome Alex Sowers to the Foundation Board of Trustees. Alex is a charter member of the Slanesville Club located in Upper West Virginia. We also want to thank Cleve Wright for the year he gave to the Foundation.

At the National Convention, the Foundation announced a payout of \$675 for the “Build Your Dollars” Scholarship Program. We have 501 Clubs eligible for this payout. Get your claim forms turned in quickly to get your payout. You have until June 30, 2024. If your club is not participating, you are missing out on this great investment opportunity to provide club scholarship funding.

Your Trustees launched a new investment program at the National Convention. This program will support our National membership and grow the Foundation.

“Invest Today...Impact Tomorrow”

The Ruritan National Foundation will launch this new investment program in January 2024. The new program is: “Invest Today...Impact Tomorrow”. The program is a 5-year program. The intent is to have members, or anyone, invest \$.60/day over the next five years, which culminates with the 60th Anniversary of the Foundation. When you complete the 5-year program, you will have a permanent fund with the Foundation. In addition, if you already have a fund, you can grow it even larger.

Just think, you only have to commit to investing \$.60 per day. This is less than a soft drink or a cup of coffee. The impact will be tremendous for the Foundation! Review the table below to visualize the impact based on the number of donors. With 5,000 donors, the Ruritan National Foundation will have \$5.5M in new investments, which doubles your Foundation.

Ruritan Foundation				
“Invest Today...Impact Tomorrow” 5 Year Challenge				
Donation/Day	Days	1 Year	5 Years	1000 Donors
\$0.60	365	\$ 219.00	\$ 1,095.00	\$ 1,095,000.00
Donation/Day	Days	1 Year	5 Years	2500 Donors
\$0.60	365	\$ 219.00	\$ 1,095.00	\$ 2,737,500.00
Donation/Day	Days	1 Year	5 Years	5000 Donors
\$0.60	365	\$ 219.00	\$ 1,095.00	\$ 5,475,000.00

2024 Foundation President Phillip Bradshaw

This year, the Foundation Fellowship Weekend will be June 21-22 in Hillsville Virginia. Make plans today to attend this exciting weekend of Ruritan fellowship and fun!

A Short Guide to Ruritan National Foundation Programs is available on the website. This is a one-page summary of the programs offered by your Foundation. Please take the time to read this Guide and share it with your club members. There are many ways that your club can become involved in the Foundation and support the growth of your club and Ruritan National. Please help us by contributing so we can help more students with a larger scholarship for next year. You can contribute by honoring each club member by donating \$2 or \$10 to the Birthday Fund.

Thank you for allowing us to serve as Trustees of your Foundation. If you have questions, please contact us by telephone, text, or email, or invite us to visit your club or district. We are always willing to assist Ruritans in better understanding your Foundation.





Foundation Fellowship Weekend

Blue Ridge Mountains

Galax, VA

June 21-22, 2024



Reservations: 1-276-238-4605, Call Hampton Inn Galax, 205 Cranberry Road, Galax, VA 24333. Group: **Ruritan National**, Room rate is \$169 plus taxes and fees per night. Primary hotel nearest to event venue. Cutoff date for Room Registration is **5/20/2024 or until full.** Free hot breakfast.

Reservations: 1-276-728-9100, Call Holiday Inn Express Hillsville, 1994 Carrolton Pike Road, Hillsville, VA 24343. Group: **Ruritan National**, Room rate is \$169 plus taxes and fees per night. Cutoff date for Room Reservation is **5/30/2024.** Complimentary breakfast.

Event Venue: Pat Davis's Park property at 589 Tee Time Dr, Galax, VA, for Friday night bonfire to include roasting marshmallows and hot dogs. Bring your auction items and goodies for the hospitality room. Music entertainment. Multiple other events planned. Saturday night banquet meal.

Registration cost is \$50 for each person. Registration includes the Friday night bonfire, the Saturday night banquet meal, and access to the venue hospitality room. Send the below form with payment to **Ruritan National Foundation, PO Box 487, Dublin, VA 24084**, postmarked by **May 20, 2024.**

Name: _____

Member number: _____

Name Badge: _____

Spouse/Guest Name: _____

Member Number: _____

Guest Name Badge: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Payment Information

Check No. _____

C.C. No. _____

C.C. Exp. Date _____ Zip Code _____

Security Code _____

Cell Phone Number: _____

District: _____

Club: _____

2024 SUMMER LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

CALLING ALL RURITAN MEMBERS!

Please join President-Elect Becky Lane at an exciting new location for the Summer Leadership Conference, the Highlander Hotel in Radford, VA. Fellowship will begin on Friday evening with a picnic hosted by the Belmont II Ruritan club. We will get a jump start on learning by having District, Zone and Club officer training following the picnic.

To start us off on Saturday we have a motivational speaker who will give us tools to use in our everyday lives as well as for growing Ruritan.

Attendees will leave the conference confident that they have received training on a wide variety of topics that are of concern to our members, such as Motivating & Encouraging members, Conflict Resolution, Dealing with Change, Building Trust & Respect, Committee Responsibilities, and Mentoring, to name a few and that they will have the tools needed to share our growth plan with our clubs and communities.

Also, stay tuned for information on a fun filled community service project. It's top secret so we can't tell you more about it at this time.

All Ruritan members are encouraged to attend so that they can share in this highly valuable informational opportunity.

Current Lt. Governors are expensed for this conference. **Lt. Governors are required to attend this conference to be eligible for reimbursement of one half of their National Convention expenses.**

2024 District Lt. Governors will be paid ½ of their expenses to the 2025 National Convention in Greenville, SC, provided they complete the requirements below. **(This will only apply if the Lt. Governor becomes the District Governor the following year.)**

- Attend the 2024 Summer Leadership Conference (unless excused in writing by the National President).
- Attend the Governors' Training at the 2025 National Convention.
- Attend substantially all meetings at the 2025 National Convention.
- The district's form 990 has been filed with the IRS by the February 15 filing deadline for the fiscal year end of September 30.

****All expense vouchers must be submitted within 90 days after the 2025 National Convention.**



Please reserve your hotel room at the Highlander in Radford, VA, no later than June 12th by calling 540-744-1500 or by visiting www.highlanderradford.com. Ask for the RURITAN rate.





Ruritan Summer Leadership Conference July 12-13, 2024

Registration includes Friday dinner at Belmont II Ruritan Club and lunch on Saturday; conference materials are included

Complete this form and include \$140 per person.

Every attendee will receive a Conference Tote Bag.

****Return this form no later than June 12, 2024 to Ruritan National
P.O. Box 487, Dublin, VA 24084.****

Please reserve your hotel room at the Highlander in Radford, VA, no later than June 12th by calling 540-744-1500 or by visiting www.highlanderradford.com. Ask for the RURITAN rate.

Name: _____

Title: _____ Member ID: _____

Address: _____

District: _____

I have _____ guests for the Saturday lunch at \$40 each = \$ _____ total

I have _____ guests for the picnic on Friday at \$25 each = \$ _____ total

Credit Card Payment

Zipcode associated with card: _____

Card Type: Discover

Visa:

Mastercard:

Name on Card: _____

Card Number: _____

Expiration Date: _____ CVC: _____

All credit card transaction will include a 3.5% service fee.

BETHLEHEM AWARDS RURITAN OF THE YEAR

Bethlehem VA 2023 Ruritan of the Year Jamie Cross (right) passed the honor to Jesse Pruden (2024) who was named the club's Ruritan of the Year for 2024.



DEEP CREEK HOSTS BUSY 4TH QUARTER



Deep Creek recently presented a check for \$12,000 to the Edmarc Children's Hospice of Portsmouth, VA. The money was raised from their annual golf tournament in October. The club also held a dedicated fundraiser dinner to help a community member who had suffered several strokes and was unable to work. The club presented him with a check for over \$5,000.

Public Service Committee Chair Mike



Kirsch presented a donation to Chesapeake Police Officer Brandon Viera for the Law Enforcement United "Road to Hope"



bicycle ride from Chesapeake to Washington, DC. Pictured (l-r) are Mike, Officer Viera, and Ruritan National President Robin Davenport.

The club closed out a busy year by hosting several activities. They provided a free community breakfast, asking only that they bring a new toy to be donated to "Toys for Tots". Club members also traveled to the Veterans Administration Medical Center in Hampton with gift bags for hospitalized veterans.



DRIVER AND GRASSFIELD SERVE AS SANTA'S HELPERS

Driver wrapped up their annual drive to support Toys-4-Tots with a delicious Christmas dinner for club members and their families. Three area churches also helped collect toys to support this annual club project.



Grassfield celebrated the holiday season by collecting toys for Toys-for-Tots, pictured here with 2023 Club President Wayne Abernathy.

HOLLAND SHARES PRIDE IN HISTORY

Several **Holland** members helped decorate Holland Park, the site of the Ruritan National Monument, for the holidays. Pictured (l-r) are Club President Curtis Johnson, Vice President Calvin Jones, Tommy Queen, Jim Thorsen, Kimi Stevens, and Terry McGahee. Not pictured, Orin Reams.

Club members also joined others in laying wreaths at the Albert G Horton Jr Memorial Veteran Cemetery, a state-operated cemetery in Suffolk, VA. Joining Curtis, Calvin, and Tommy were Rita Queen and Ronald Daughtrey.



SAPPONY HONORS VETERANS



Sappony honored two local World War II veterans, David Poole and Abe Norfleet, at a recent club meeting. The guest speaker was Army Veteran Mike Rae.



ZUNI CELEBRATES MILESTONE

Zuni awarded their 2023 scholarship for \$1100 to David Carter. Vice President Darryl Palmer presented the scholarship to David (pictured).

The club recently celebrated their 75th anniversary with a delicious catered meal. District Governor Doug Parr and National President Robin Davenport were on hand for the celebration.



ABINGDON CELEBRATES VETERANS, HONORS MEMORY

Abingdon presented a wreath at the Veterans Day celebration at the Gloucester County Courthouse. Pictured (l-r) are Dean Marzocca, David Dea, Dick Beasley, David Kyle, Julianna Woolley, Diane Woolley, Mary Lou Privott, Danny Privott, and Tony Dziadul.



Club member Dick Beasley created and hung a sign honoring Past National President Elliott Hogge. The sign is posted on the booth that Elliott managed for many years during the club's seafood festivals.

CALLAO AWARDS CHANCE FOR CAMP ADVENTURE

Callao held a drawing at the local farmer's market to select two children to spend a week at Camp Piankatank in Hartfield, VA. The camp offers fellowship and adventure at week-long camping experiences during the summer. Pictured are William and Charlotte Blackwell, the brother and sister who were selected to attend. Their mother shared that it provided a new experience for the children that has greatly impacted their lives. The club plans to make the drawing an annual event.



GLOUCESTER GIVES BACK

Gloucester Vice President Bill Naquin thanked Sherry Kosakowski, Clean Community Coordinator under Parks, Recreation & Tourism, for her presentation to the club during its October meeting. Mrs. Kosakowski shared her department's focus on recycling, litter prevention, and the beautification of Gloucester, as well as involving youth in planting trees and wildflowers. Her presentation focused on Gloucester as an affiliate of Bee City USA, which promotes native bees, the most important pollinators critical for food production.



Club members met at the American Legion Post 75 building to wrap presents for nursing and assisted living facility residents in their community. Rudy Bear joined members in delivering 267 gifts to the Cary House, Walter Reed Nursing and Rehab Center, Sanders Assisted Living, and Heron Cover 1 & 2. Pictured with Rudy are Paul Bauer, Bev Thomas, and Karen Engle.

PROVIDENCE FORGE CELEBRATES 75TH

Providence Forge is celebrating their 75th Anniversary in 2024. The club has welcomed several new members this past year, and has many events and activities scheduled for 2024.



MECHANICSVILLE HONORS SERVICE

Mechanicsville recently honored two members for their dedication and service. Pictured with Club President Paul Dorn (center) are Johnny Moore (left), who served 13 years as Club President, and Barry Shalowitz (right), who served twenty years as Club Treasurer.



The club also donated to Hanover County Project Lifesaver. Colonel David Hines (center) accepted the donation on behalf of the Hanover County Sheriff's Department.

SHORT PUMP SUPPORTS COMMUNITY

Short Pump donated Rudy Bears to the Richmond Auxiliary Police. Club member Ray Gargiulo, who is also a member of the police auxiliary unit, made the request to the club after responding to traffic accidents where children in the cars involved were extremely frightened. The club agreed with Ray that the gift of a cute, cuddly Rudy Bear should provide calm and comfort to them in these stressful situations.



The club also kicked off the new year by assisting the Three Chopt Presbyterian Food Pantry by reorganizing their storage areas. Members also joined residents and staff of Cockrell House to package and shelve diapers for the food pantry to distribute. Cockrell House is a group home for neurodivergent adults located two doors down from the food pantry.

BEALETON-REMINGTON SHARES BUSY YEAR-END



Bealeton-Remington closed out a busy year by participating in the Remington Volunteer Fire Department Parade, the Remington Volunteer Fire Department's Santa Run, and collecting Toys-for-Tots. The club also partnered with the local American-Legion Post 247 for the fifth year to purchase and place wreaths for 430 veterans interred at local cemeteries.



SHAWQUON SHARES SERVICE

Shawquon recently volunteered to shuttle reenactors and spectators in hayrides to battlegrounds and encampments during the reenactment of the Battle of Cedar Creek in Middletown, Virginia. They also used this opportunity as a fundraiser by selling apple butter the club made.



News From Ruritan: RAPPAHANNOCK District



The club partnered with local Boy Scout Troop/Pack 159 to collect toys for Toys for Tots. The club also donated 79 pounds of food to the local food pantry, Blue Ridge Food Bank.



SUMERDUCK PROVIDES HOLIDAY MEALS



Sumerduck club members Connie Mullenax and Pam Steelman-Key spearheaded the club's effort to provide holiday meals for local families in need. They partnered with the local Dollar General Store to sponsor a canned food drive. They received donations of boxed mashed potatoes, stuffing, soups from community members, 240 lbs of sweet potatoes from Fauquier Education Farm Coordinator Jim Hankins, and discounted turkeys and a gift card from Stafford Giant Foods. They were able to provide 30 families with complete holiday meals, as well as provide donations to the Ruritan Community Food Bank.



The club also recognized Lettie Glenz with the Tom Downing Award. Lettie has been a member for several years and is heavily involved with their fundraisers. Lettie's father, Leroy Day, was a founding member of the Sumerduck Ruritans.



WARRENTON HONORS PUBLIC SERVICE

Warrenton club members participated in the Warrenton Fall Festival. The Warrenton Chamber of Commerce hosts the event and highlights local organizations and vendors.

The club also hosted their annual Public Safety Law Enforcement Officer of the Year awards and a banquet dinner for the recipients, family, and friends. Pictured are recipients Virginia State Police Sr. Trooper Jeff Palmer, Warrenton Police Corporal Jeffrey Shaver, and Fauquier Sheriff's Deputy Corporal Justin Welch.

In conjunction with the Fauquier Community Theatre, the club held its bi-annual stage play production of "Miracle on 34th Street." This benefit production is produced and held for children and their families who are experiencing disabilities. Proceeds help other organizations, such as Top Soccer, that benefit children with disabilities. Pictured is club member and event coordinator John Schlenker with the Top Soccer mascot.



News From Ruritan: APPOMATTOX District

AMELIA CELEBRATES 85!

Amelia celebrated its 85th anniversary in November. The club was chartered on September 1, 1938, with 47 members. Past National President Mike Morrison, National Secretary Juliann Poff, National Treasurer David Thompson, and National Foundation Trustee Debra Knesal joined in the celebration. Also in attendance were District Governor Chris Wittan, Lt. Governor Matt Maxey, District Secretary Julie Marshall, Zone Governor Ron Stewart, and Past National Presidents, Rick Poff (1999), John Hancock (2004), and Bobby Burton (2015).



The club also recognized long-standing members P. Warren Anderson (57 years), Juan Whittington (45 years) and Jerry Yospin (44 years) and welcomed new member Maudie Scott.

News From Ruritan: PEAKS OF OTTER District

FOREST HILL SHARES GOODWILL

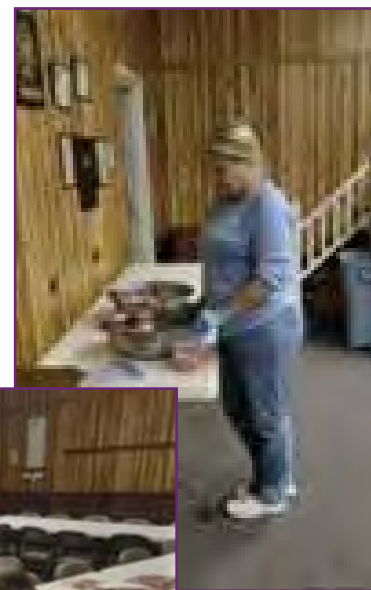
Forest Hill prepared and distributed 16 food baskets for Christmas and purchased gifts for children in three families.



News From Ruritan: SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA District

COPPER CREEK SERVES COUNTRY LINKS

Copper Creek members recently came together to prepare country sausage. Proceeds will be used to fund community activities sponsored by the club. Pictured, Donita Davis (r) filled the bags, and Pat Davis (l) weighed and labeled each bag. Mike Short and Jean Shell prepared orders.



News From Ruritan: NATURAL BRIDGE District

NATURAL BRIDGE HELPS HIKERS

Natural Bridge VA took on the project of maintaining, cleaning, and providing firewood for the Glasgow Hiking Shelter, a stop for hikers along the Appalachian Trail. Originally built by local Eagle Scout Parks Talbott with the help of the Glasgow Ruritan Club, the shelter now provides an open area for camping, open bunks for sleeping (awning covered), a picnic area, a lending library (sometimes for books or items like shampoo and soap), a fire pit and sitting area, hot showers (unique to most any other hiking shelters), mobile toilets, internet, and trash and recycling bins. It is a short walk to a local grocery, the Post Office, a library, and a local restaurant. Over the past year, club members have cleaned, repaired the showers, and kept a steady supply of fresh firewood on hand.



News From Ruritan: NATURAL BRIDGE District

CATAWBA VALLEY DEDICATES HONOR GARDEN

Catawba Valley held a dedication for a Military Honor Garden. The garden was an inspiration from Navy Veteran Jim Hottel. Mr. Hottel lived in the Catawba area and mentioned the idea to Club President Pam Garman. Plans for the garden began in late Spring 2023. Unfortunately, Mr. Hottel was not able to see the final project as he passed away in June 2023.



On the day of the dedication, approximately 100 folks turned out as they honored the active military and Veterans that were present.

They also recognized family members of the deceased military with a moment of silence. House Delegate Elect Chris Obenshain gave an inspirational speech, which included his personal dedication and service to the military, having served in the midst of September 11, 2001.

A monument will be placed in Spring 2024 with the following verse:
This garden is dedicated to the Honor and Memory of the men and women of this community who proudly served their country. We don't know them all, but we owe them all.



News From Ruritan: WOODROW WILSON District

MIDDLEBROOK HONORS VETERANS

Middlebrook recently honored area veterans and their families to thank them for their service to America. Guests at the annual event included veterans who had served in the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps. Attendees were presented with tokens of the club's appreciation and thank-you letters written by fourth-grade students from Riverheads Elementary School.



WEYERS CAVE HOSTS MUSIC AND FUN



Weyers Cave recently hosted Jimmy Fortune for his annual performance at the Weyers Cave Community Center. Jimmy is pictured with club member and fellow musician Shania Flora. Seats were sold out for both performances. Other club members were busy in the kitchen preparing hot dogs, chips, drinks, and more for the hungry crowds. Pictured are Gary Huffman on popcorn duty and Mark Flora turning hot dogs.



The club counts on David Showalter (left) to make oyster stew at their annual Christmas dinner. Dave, who is now 94, has been a member since 1961. Dave also helps with set up and clean up for events, as well as selling BBQ chicken halves for fundraisers. In his spare time, he enjoys playing golf as often as possible.



The club once again hosted Breakfast with Santa.

Breakfast was prepared and served by club members free of charge. Goodwill offerings were accepted and used to support the Verona Community Food Bank. Pictured with Santa are Norah, Charlotte, Kerri, Hank, Mali, and Kane Cash.



The club will celebrate their 85th anniversary in 2024. Club member Harry Lee Houff (left), 86 years old, grew up with the Ruritan. His father, David W. Houff, was the club's president in 1946. Harry Lee joined the club in January 1965 and has a record of perfect attendance. The club depends on Harry for his culinary skills. He is instrumental with the chicken barbeques and has been the chief fish and oyster fryer for many years. His grilled pork loins, sold by the sandwich and pound, have raised innumerable funds to support the Weyers Cave community.

BRIDGEWATER SHARES BUSY YEAR END

Bridgewater recently held their annual peanut fundraiser and supported the Salvation Army's bell-ringing program in December. The club donated \$500 to the Rockingham Academy Agricultural Department and \$500 to Rockingham Academy's Food Pantry project. Club member John Harsh (pictured) was named club Ruritan of the Year for 2023.



Their annual Christmas Auction, conducted by Mark Craig, raised over



\$1,000 for their scholarship fund. The club also recognized the Bridgewater UMC United Women in Faith as their "David Evick Fair Volunteers of the Year."



The Citizenship and Patriotism Committee presented the 2023 "Citizens of the Year" award to Rodney and Gloria Hildebrand. They have both been active supporters of the Bridgewater Volunteer Fire Department, been involved in community service projects of the Bridgewater United Methodist Church, and helped out in the club's food booth at the Rockingham County Fair.



CEDAR CREEK VALLEY FILLS EMPTY STOCKINGS



Cedar Creek Valley was busy during the holidays shopping for the Empty Stocking project. The club shopped and wrapped gifts for 20 needy children in their community. Once wrapped, the gifts are distributed to the parents/guardians. All Zone 4 clubs participate in the Empty Stocking project.

FORT VALLEY HOSTS HOLIDAY BAZAAR

Fort Valley hosted a Christmas bazaar. Local vendors were invited to display their wares. The sale of booth space provided funds for the club to support future community service projects.



LURAY EXPANDS VOCABULARY

Luray distributed dictionaries to 3rd-grade students in two local elementary schools. Terry Dodson and Rudy Bear (aka Teresa Dodson) gave a short intro about the club, then discussed all the extra information you can learn from a dictionary.



Club members recently completed their annual Boxwood Christmas Tree and Centerpiece fundraiser. Members spent a Friday evening and Saturday morning making up the ordered arrangements. Club member Dave Naser grew up in the floral business and provided the training to create the arrangements.

MAUR-BROOK-OLIVE SUPPORTS FURRY FRIENDS

Shenandoah County Humane Society President Melissa Miller and Secretary Millie Murphy accepted a donation of \$500 from **Maur-Brook-Olive**. The funds will help support the organization's spay and neuter and foster care services.



Club members were busy during the holidays shopping for the Empty Stocking Fund, making wreaths to sell, and ringing bells for the Salvation Army. Pictured are Donnie Fravel, Andy Orndorff, and grandson Levi.

News From Ruritan: ROCKINGHAM District

PORT REPUBLIC HOSTS ANNUAL EVENT



Port Republic held their 20th Annual Veterans Dinner on November 7, 2023, with 37 veterans, guests, and members in attendance. The ladies of Grace Episcopal Church served a delicious meal. The special guest speaker was Colonel Tom Harkins.

RILEYVILLE SHARES GIFTS WITH ANGELS

Rileyville delivered Angel Tree gifts to Springfield Elementary School for 15 Angels. Pictured (l-r) are Pam Hanson, Dennis Donak, Michaela Mason, and Ahdayis Whittaker. Not pictured, Project Chair Stacy Mason.



News From Ruritan: POTOMAC District

MAUGANSVILLE SHARES PRIDE

Maugansville members placed American flags in the community park and along the highway in observance of Veteran's Day.



News From Ruritan: POTOMAC District

JEFFERSON MD HOSTS COMMUNITY TRADITION

Jefferson MD, recently held its 120th community hog butchering. The event began in 1962 and has continued every year. They have had several talented coordinators over the years, from Berkeley Pearson to Larry Jones, Sam Pearson, and Price Kaler, along with the support of members and volunteers. All the meat is sold by pre-order, and the event serves as one of the club's biggest fundraisers, with proceeds primarily used for other community service projects. A country breakfast was held on the morning of the sale, with fresh sausage, pudding, hominy, sausage gravy, pancakes, eggs, country ham, and more. They also had help from Brunswick HS Random Acts of Kindness Ruri-Teens.



News From Ruritan: ALBEMARLE District

HALL CONTINUES ANNUAL PROJECT

Hall assembled 86 fruit baskets to be distributed in the community for Christmas. This is an annual community service project for the club.



BEAR GRASS CELEBRATES MILESTONE

Bear Grass recently celebrated their 75th anniversary. Past National President Mike Morrison, National Director Melody Davis, and Roanoke District cabinet members joined with friends, and families to honor the club's achievements.



George "Tom" Holliday was presented with the club's 2023 Ruritan of the Year Award for his unselfish work, outstanding dedication, and service to his club and community.

ROBERSONVILLE HOSTS VETERANS



Robersonville hosted a Veterans Banquet for local veterans at the Filling Station Restaurant. Each veteran in attendance shared their branch and area where they were served.

News From Ruritan: ROANOKE District



The club's Ruritan of the Year was presented to Tommy Whichard (pictured left with Tyler Warren.)

The club helped some local residents by building a ramp that allows easier access to their houses. Pictured is the ramp team with the finished projects.



News From Ruritan: ROCKY MT - DURHAM District

BENVENUE HONORS DEDICATION

Benvenue Club President Fran Bunn recently recognized club member Donnie Perry for 51 years of perfect attendance.



EFLAND HONORS SERVICE

Efland has named Miguel Castaneda as the club's Ruritan of the Year. Miguel was recognized for his service and dedication to the club in taking on the responsibility of maintaining the club buildings and managing the building rentals.

The club also participated in the Military Missions in Action project by assembling and sending out care packages to members of the U.S. Armed Forces. Jana Murdock-Doherty coordinated the project.



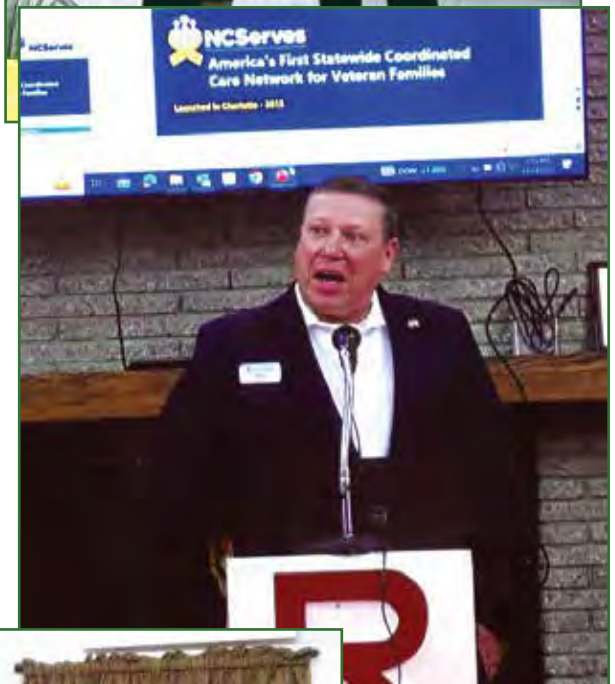
MCCULLERS AWARDS CLUB RURITAN OF THE YEAR



McCullers closed out the year with its annual Christmas banquet. Amy Eggers and Tina Carter were honored as co-recipients of the club's Ruritan of the Year. Although both are employed full-time, they contributed significantly to the Club's success in 2023. Amy (left) and Tina (right) are pictured with Club President Mark Millikin.

REDWOOD HONORS VETERANS

Redwood NC continues their tradition of honoring veterans in several ways. They recently presented a donation to Durham VA Medical Center Voluntary Services Chief Kendra Moden. They also hosted a guest speaker from NC Serves, an organization that works with veterans and their families transitioning to civilian life. The club invited local veterans to a catered meal to celebrate Veterans Day. During the holidays, the club collected toys for the Army National Guard toy drive and made a donation to help with the purchase of additional items.



News From Ruritan: GREENVILLE-GOLDSBORO District

PINETOWN KEEPS A SECRET



Pinetown sponsored Secret Santa for 12 children from The Salvation Army Angel Tree. Pictured are Club President Dale Fawver and Teresa Fawver.

News From Ruritan: CAPE FEAR District

JOHNSONVILLE SHARES GIFTS

Johnsonville assembled treat bags stuffed with candy and small personal items for the local dialysis center. They helped their community during the holidays with gifts of Thanksgiving baskets, Christmas dinner boxes, and fruit baskets.



The club also welcomed their first youth member, Shelby Webb.



BUNNLEVEL HOSTS FESTIVAL AND FUN



Bunnlevel hosted a fall festival that included tables set up by other local service providers. Residents were able to meet with providers and get information on services that were available in their community.

The club also held its annual Boston Butts sale and hosted a Breakfast with Santa. The club donated items to a local nursing home, including soda, coloring books, coffee, and storage containers. Beth Byrd was honored as the club's 2023 Ruritan of the Year.



News From Ruritan: CAPE FEAR District

ANDERSON CREEK HONORS TAYLOR

Anderson Creek recognized their longest-serving club member, Johnny Taylor. Johnny and his wife, Marie, were recently treated to a special dinner in honor of his 42 years of dedicated service to the Club, his community, and his family.



News From Ruritan: COLUMBIA District

LOWER RICHLAND SHARES GOODWILL

Lower Richland hosted a successful pork butt sale in December.

The club also continued their annual tradition of making cards for Meals on Wheels. They make approximately 500 cards each year. Pictured are Stephanie Ryon (center) with Meal on Wheels Director Becky Morrison and Coordinator Regina Richburg.



SANDY RUN CELEBRATES SERVICE

Sandy Run recently celebrated their local veterans. The guest speaker was Reverend Alvin Haigler, Sr., pictured with Citizenship and Patriotism Committee Chair Howard Pees, who shared about his 38-year military career. Veterans provided special military uniforms, photos, insignia, and other military artifacts for display. Pianist June Kirkland played all the songs of the various military branches.



Pictured (l-r) are club veterans Marion Wolfe, Debra Harmon, Dennis Shanklin, Jill Crim, Gene Crim, Herbert Geiger, Howard Pees, Jack Inabinet, Alvin Haigler, Gary Geiger, and Marshall Stabler.



The club also displayed the Operation Christmas Child shoe boxes they had assembled to be sent to children around the world. The boxes contain small toys, school supplies, and other items for children. Pictured (l-r) are Sandra Pees, Gerbert Geiger, Ginger Hardee, Kay James, Hailey Hardee, Sheila Shanklin, Amber Hardee, and Kelley Roche-Sanders. The club also provided gifts to local families in need.



News From Ruritan: COLUMBIA District

Calhoun County Soil and Water Conservation District Director Mary Dixon was awarded the club's first-ever Environmental "Person of the Year" award. Mary helped with the club's efforts to clean and beautify the Sandy Run Pond. Club member Gerald Starnes also presented Mary with his 63rd hand-made bluebird house.



The club joined several local organizations to clean up Old Sandy Run Road 31 and Highway #176 for the Christmas parade. They helped pick up 70 bags of trash off the highway. Pictured (l-r) are Cynthia Boone, Rick Boone, Marshall Stabler, Lena Stabler, Kelley Roche-Sanders, Donald Knight, Becky Starnes, and Reuben Mayer.

News From Ruritan: UPPER WEST VIRGINIA District

DISTRICT PRESENTS TOM DOWNING AWARDS

In November, the Upper West Virginia District presented four Tom Downing awards at their District Convention. Pictured (l-r) are recipients Angela Pugh (Slanesville), Peggy Nelson (North Fork), Gary Riggelman (Capon Bridge), and Sandra Timbrook (North River & Slanesville), with Past National President Mike Morrison, and North River Club President Bryan Flanagan.



SLANESVILLE BUTTERS UP TRADITION

Slanesville recently hosted their 32nd annual apple butter sale. Club members lit the fires at 3:00 am and some of the club's scholarship recipients showed up to help. The event started as a fundraiser in 1991, but it has truly grown into something special for Hampshire County and surrounding communities, who look forward to the event every year. Pictured stirring a pot is Luke Alkire, one of the club's youth members and a scholarship recipient.



MAXWELTON NAMES RURITAN OF THE YEAR



Maxwelton recently named club member Bob Hefner (left) as their 2023 Ruritan of the Year. Bob has a love for serving his community. He serves on the Fair Committee and keeps the ice cream concession stand running smoothly during the West Virginia State Fair.

Bob has served as Club President and Vice President and is currently on the Board of Directors. He works with the Frankford Fire Department to determine the location of fire hydrants that the club purchases for the area. As Pastor of the Henning Church of God, he also volunteers with his church by going on mission trips and caring for his church members.

News From Ruritan: TENNESSEAN District

DISTRICT SUPPORTS MILITARY AFFAIRS COUNCIL

The **Tennessean District** donated a portion of the proceeds from their convention's silent auction to Wreaths Across America. Tri-Cities Military Affairs Council (TC-MAC) President Sam Jones accepted the donation along with additional donations from **Bloomington** and **Holston**. Pictured (l-r) are District Governor Gary Collier, TC-MAC President (and Holston club member) Sam Jones, Bloomington Treasurer Jim Smallwood, and Holston Treasurer Gary Olinger.



News From Ruritan: GEORGIA-NORTH ALABAMA District

BRYANT CELEBRATES 60!



Bryant recently celebrated their 60th anniversary. National Director Donna Poulton (pictured with Club President Bill Wheeler) was on hand for the celebration.

BROWNS COMMUNITY GETS COOKIN'

Browns Community recently hosted a stew and chicken barbeque sale. The event kicked off when the first ingredients went into the pots at 3:30 a.m. By 9:30, 170 gallons of stew and 60 barbeque chicken halves were ready for sale. Club participation was nearly 100% and was supported by parents and Boy Scout Troop 205 members.



The club has “adopted” an assisted living facility in their community. During their first visit, members made floral arrangements and delivered them to female residents for Mother’s Day. They returned on Father’s Day with gift bags for the gentlemen. Club members with sewing talents designed and sewed 32 “walker aprons.” The aprons tie onto the walker handles and have small pockets to hold a cell phone, water bottle, or other small items.



DISTRICT HONORS DEDICATION TO SERVICE



District Governor Dave Wingett (right) recently honored Jim Means for serving 25 years as Zone 4 Governor. Jim is a member of **Guilford Lake**.

BUCKEYE ENDS YEAR WITH A BANG!

Buckeye closed out 2023 with a community holiday party. Long-time member Harry Fair served as Santa, and attendees were given gift bags with games and handcrafted toys by Gretchen and Brian Yanssens.



GOSHEN CENTER FOCUSES ON COMMUNITY SERVICE

Goshen Center recently donated to the Sebring Chapter of the Salvation Army. Each year, the club selects a charity to sponsor with funds raised throughout the year from their tractor pulls. Pictured (l-r) are Club member and Sebring Salvation Army Chapter President Charlie Pierce, Austin Pierce, Club President Jason Pierce, Lance Myers, and Past Club President and National Director John Biery.



The club also purchased and installed a wheelchair ramp to help Goshen Township residents Harry and Naomi Karlen. Pictured (l-r) are Dave Biery, Brian Schmid, Jeff Hoopes, Dan Zippay, Everett Zippay, and past members Rob Spencer and Dale Elder. Also assisting but not pictured were Larry Pigza and John Biery.



The club recently partnered with the Goshen Good Growers 4H Club to purchase and place 100 wreaths on the graves of Veterans in our local cemetery.



The club also donated to the Damascus Volunteer Fire Department. This brought the club's total donations for 2023 to over \$51,000 in our local community. Club President and National Director John Biery (left) and Damascus Fire Chief Shawn Mesler are pictured.

NEW LONDON SHARES RAFFLE SUCCESS

New London held their 2nd annual raffle ticket fundraiser with great success. Prizes included a pedal tractor, a meat bundle, and a family pack of season tickets to a local theme park. The fundraiser was well supported and provided a great opportunity to share Ruritan with the community. Proceeds will fund two scholarships awarded to local youth and various other community service projects throughout the year.



SMITHVILLE HONORS SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Smithville awarded four academic scholarships for 2023. The recipients were invited to attend the club's annual Christmas Dinner. The students are now attending college and were asked to discuss their first semester/quarter experience. Ben Rhoads received the club's Feusier Scholarship and is attending ATI-OSU. Olivia Haines received the Build Your Dollar scholarship and is also attending ATI-OSU. Maddilyn Brillhart received the club's Maynard Yoh Scholarship and is attending Heidelberg University, and Brayden Leach received the club's Academic Scholarship and is attending Ashland University. Pictured (l-r) are Club President Rick Dilyard, Madilyn Brillhart, Olivia Haines, Ben Rhoads, Brayden Leach, Scholarship Chair Phil Gresser, and Club Vice President Bryan Woodward.



BATON WORKS TO SHARE RURITAN

Baton works hard but has fun doing it. The club recently participated in a community workday. Club youth members, parents and grandparents pitched in to clean up a local park and club grounds.



The club has recently added 25 youth members from Baton Elementary and Hudson Middle School. The students meet at the school with a

teacher who is also an adult club member. They are enthusiastic and enjoy helping with club projects. Pictured are some of the students with club member and teacher Pam Walker, Club President Nicole Conner, Club Treasurer Gary Barger, Club Director Brenda Barger, and Club Secretary and School Principal Jason Teffeteller.



Club President Nicole Conner presented the club's Ruritan of the Year award to Pam Walker (pictured right). Baton Water Works Manager Beth Gray (left) was presented with their Citizen of the Year award.



News From Ruritan: WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA District

COLLETTSVILLE CELEBRATES 70TH!

Collettsville recently celebrated their 70th anniversary. National Director Larry Garrison recognized the club for their long history of service to their community.



GLENWOOD SHARES RUDY BEARS

Glenwood recently donated Rudy Bears to the Glenwood Fire Department to be given out to pediatric victims of medical and traumatic injuries. Pictured (l-r) are Club President Kyle Settlemyre, Chief Donnie Tipton, and Rudy Bear (aka club member Issac Brendle).



News From Ruritan: DELMARVA-NEW JERSEY District

PUNGOTEAGUE DELIVER 25 YRS OF GOODWILL

Pungoteague members Jim Gillett, Carol Wehner, and Doug Wehner were among 11 club members who helped deliver Bank of Cheer food boxes to needy families on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. Club members also packed 125 boxes prior to the delivery. The club has supported this local volunteer project for over 25 years.



HARTLY HOSTS HOLIDAY HAPPENIN'

Hartly hosted a Christmas Bazaar with over 25 vendors and local businesses, a bake sale, raffles, and Santa! They are planning to make the bazaar an annual event. The club donated the proceeds to five organizations as a part of their end-of-year community partnerships.



TRI-COUNTY MD JOINS FESTIVAL

Tri-County MD participated in the Waterfowl Festival in Easton, MD, by selling oyster sandwiches, french fries, hotdogs, and cheeseburgers.



SANDY RIDGE SHARES CHRISTMAS SPIRIT



Sandy Ridge hosted their annual Veterans Appreciation Meal at the American Legion Building. Program coordinator Andrea Finch welcomed members and guests, and Girl Scout Troop #2072 presented the colors.

The club sponsored a Veterans Day contest at the local elementary school, with prizes given at each grade level for coloring, drawing, or writing essays. First-place winners and their immediate families were invited to the dinner to share their



winning entries. A “Missing Soldier: table was set up in the center of the room, and the description of the table was read. Attendees played a bingo game, and each veteran was given a treat bag. Club members also delivered meals to homebound veterans and their spouses.

The club sponsored “Christmas on the Ridge” in December at the Northeast Stokes Fire and Rescue Department. The night included a visit from Santa, snacks, crafts, and tree lighting. The event also included a toy and food drive.



The club closed the year with a Christmas social and meeting. Voting on their 2023 Ruritan of the Year ended in a three-way tie. The winners were Andy Melvin, David Hogan, and Deborah Ellington. A donation will be presented to the Sandy Ridge Elementary School Library in their honor. Members also prepared 124 treat bags which were distributed to local elderly and shut-ins.



News From Ruritan: **PIEDMONT District**

SHOALS HELPS WITH ANGEL TREE



Shoals club members and community volunteers worked together on the Shoals Angel Tree project. Local churches, community members, organizations, and Ruritans came together to sponsor approximately 100 children in the local community to ensure they had a very merry Christmas.

FRANCISCO HONORS SERVICE AND DEDICATION

Kathryn Converse has been awarded **Francisco's** 2023 Ruritan of the Year. Kathryn joined the club in 2018. She has volunteered over 800 hours running the Northern Stokes Food Pantry to provide food assistance to the community and surrounding areas. She is much appreciated for her service, dedication, and passion for duty.



News From Ruritan: **DAN RIVER District**

DAN RIVER TREATS VETERANS



Dan River recently recognized local Veterans with a meal of hotdogs, all the trimmings, beans, drinks, and a dessert. The club partnered with Ringgold Fire and Rescue to serve the meal. Pictured (l-r) (front row) are Barry Sides, Matt Foster, Randy Echols, Stephanie Burton, Christie Farlow, Frances Sides, (back row) Todd Fitts, Steve Farlow, Eddie Hite, Mike Neal, and Frank Burdette.

ARARAT SHARES BUSY 4TH QUARTER

Ararat had a busy fourth quarter. They hosted a Be the Match bone marrow drive to register people for the national registry. The event was held in memory of McRay Smith, who lost his life to leukemia at the young age of 46. Pictured are club member and McRay's father, Ray Smith, and McRay's children, Loren Walker and Garrett Smith.

Club member and certified nutritionist Kathleen Loveland started hosting a monthly Nutritional Workshop at the club building. Each is a different topic to help promote healthier eating habits. The club also held their annual barbeque and cruise-in. They cooked over 250 pounds of



barbeque and hosted 40 cars and trucks for the cruise-in.

In November, Patrick County Sheriff Office held their crime watch meeting at the Ararat Ruritan Building. Club Treasurer Kevin Smith presented Deputy and Woolwine Community club member Dustin Foley with a donation for the "Shop With a Cop" program and 18 Rudy Bears for the Sheriff's Office.

The club closed out the year by presenting donations to the Ararat Volunteer Fire Department, the Ararat Rescue Squad, and the Blue Ridge Rescue Squad. Several



members spent a Sunday afternoon purchasing Christmas presents for 14 children that the club sponsored through the Patrick County Christmas Cheer program. The club also sponsored four senior citizens through the Senior Tree program. The club donated to the PARC Workshop, which offers training and counseling programs to mentally and



physically handicapped individuals in Patrick County, VA, and held its final blood drive of the year. Twenty-three units were collected, with a couple of first timers and several returning donors.



BASSETT MAKES COMMUNITY SERVICE A PRIORITY

Bassett was very active with events and fundraisers throughout 2023. The club donated to several community needs, including \$500 donations to two local schools for classroom supplies and \$250 to Bassett High School for snacks for the band when they travel for competitions. The club also donated \$1000 to help local resident Steve Stone purchase a new wheelchair after his was damaged in an automobile accident.



The club awarded a scholarship to Marcie Kendrick, and a basket of handmade chemo caps was presented to the Martinsville Cancer Center. The club also honored local veterans with a free breakfast. Vietnam veteran Buddy Janey made a display for the front of the building.



The club held several fundraisers that included monthly breakfasts, apple butter, stew, and baskets of items for Easter, Mother's Day, and Thanksgiving. Each Friday, the club sponsors a free community event. They set up rook tables, crafts, puzzles, and snacks to share. Local bands volunteer their time and talents to play music.



CARVER ROAD SHARES BUSY 4TH QUARTER

Carver Road had a very busy fourth quarter. Club members participated in Oktoberfest, delivered Christmas fruit baskets to the elderly, sold fruit cups at the Smith River Fest, hosted community meetings with County officials, and held fish fries and apple pie sales. The Club also won a grant for a sign project in the Carver community.



PATRICK SPRINGS HONORS VETERANS

Patrick Springs honored Veterans at a recent monthly meeting. Veteran attendees were each presented with a gift to thank them for their service. The club presented Tom Steele the Outstanding Citizenship Award for his contributions and dedication to his community. Tom (left) is pictured with Club Secretary Kevin Reynolds. The club also participated in their community's annual Christmas Parade. Rudy Bear handed out candy to the kids during the parade.



RANGELEY SUPPORTS FIRE DEPARTMENT

Rangeley Club President Rick Huffman (r) presented Fieldale Fire Department Chief Todd Norman with the proceeds from a recent breakfast fundraiser.



RED BANK HONORS BOWMAN

Red Bank recently honored Club Secretary Charlie Bowman with a Ruritan Forever. Pictured (l-r) are Jerry Atkins, National Director Merlin Scales, Charlie, and Club President and Past National Director Roger Gammons.



STUART STARTS STRONG

The new **Stuart** Ruritan Club has hit the ground running! After a successful raffle ticket fundraiser, the club partnered with Piedmont Community Services to host a Mental Health Walk to bring awareness of mental health issues worldwide and to mobilize efforts to support mental health.

The club also partnered with Tin Pen Alley and held a “Bowling for our Heroes” event. All local veterans, police, fire, and EMS personnel were honored with a night of free bowling (pictured).

Club members are looking forward to spreading the meaning of Ruritan throughout the Stuart community in the years to come.



News From Ruritan: LINCOLNLAND District

DISTRICT PRESENTS RURITAN OF THE YEAR



Lincolnland District Governor Michele Zehr presented the District's 2023 Ruritan of the Year Award to Allendale Club Secretary James Barger.



News From Ruritan: NEW RIVER District

LEAD MINES CELEBRATES 75TH ANNIVERSARY

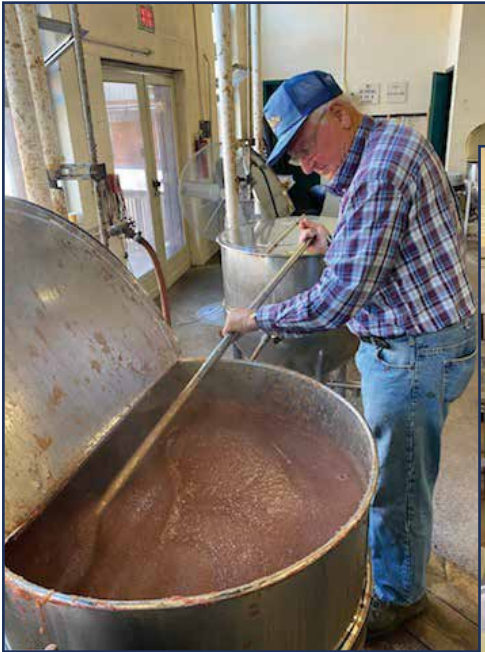
Lead Mines celebrated their 75th anniversary in October. The club was chartered on October 12, 1948. Initially sponsored by the Draper club, Lead Mines went on to sponsor three additional clubs. The event was organized by club member Jackie Cregger, whose father,



Herman Jackson, was a charter member. A slideshow and memorabilia detailing the club's history was on display.

The club recently produced their second batch of apple butter. Proceeds from the apple butter sales are used to fund community service projects. Pictured, Keith Kelly (l) and Vic Gravley (r) cut up the apples, Rodney Cassell takes a turn stirring the apple butter, and Jackie Cregger performs a taste test to ensure the seasoning is just right.

News From Ruritan: NEW RIVER District



The club named Gayle Wright as their 2023 Citizen of the Year. Gayle (center) is pictured with Sheridan Kelly (l) and Club President Victor Gravley (r). Tina Quesenberry was named 2023 Club Ruritan of the Year. Tina (center) is pictured with Dave Bockes (l) and Victor (r).



TELFORD HOSTS KIDS AND CRAFTS

Telford held a “Children’s Craft Christmas” party for their community in December. Organized by members Dan and Betty Westbrook, the event allowed local children to craft Christmas gifts for their parents and friends. Helped by Santa and his workers, the children also participated in face painting and enjoyed juice and cookies.



The club followed up the event with their long-standing annual Christmas delivery of food and toys to underprivileged families. The family’s names are provided each year by West View and Grandview Elementary Schools. Over 50 food and toy boxes were packed and delivered, with most supplies donated by club members or funded by the club.

LIMESTONE SUPPORTS GIRL SCOUTS

Limestone Vice President Mark Sams presented a check for \$500 to the local Girl Scouts. The Girl Scout troop started with just three members but now has 17 members. The donation will help fund some of their projects and help provide uniforms.



EAST ROANE COUNTY SHARES RURITAN

East Roane County participated in the October Sky Festival in Oliver Springs, TN. The club sponsored a booth to promote Ruritan and a photo booth with different costume styles. Pictured is Past National Director Roy Wallen displaying one of the costumes.

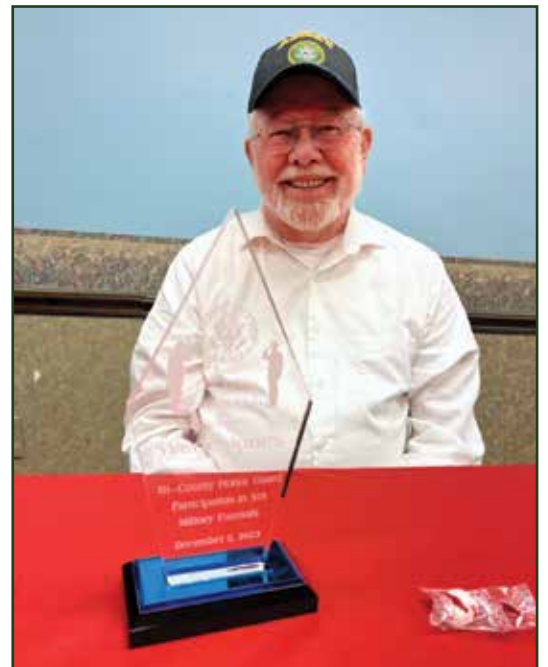


GIBBS MEMBER HONORED FOR SERVICE

Gibbs sponsored and coordinated their community's annual Christmas Parade.



Club member Wade Jones was recently honored by the club for his work with the Tri-County Honor Guard. Jones, a United States Army Veteran, has participated in 501 military honors at the gravesides of his fellow veterans.



News From Ruritan: MIDDLE AMERICA District

SPRINGHILL COMMUNITY HOSTS COMMUNITY BREAKFAST



Springhill Community served breakfast to more than 250 people at their annual “Breakfast with Santa”.



News From Ruritan: RAPIDAN District

WOLFTOWN STEPS UP TO SERVE

Wolfstown served supper to the Madison County firefighters working the Quaker Run wildfire in Shenandoah National Park. The club provided burgers, hot dogs, chili, chips, and doughnuts.



The club also donated twelve Thanksgiving boxes for clients of Madison County Department of Social Services. DSS staffer Tiffany accepted the donation.

WHY RURITAN?

My Why . . .

By Fred Shumaker, President, Cartersville Ruritan Club, Cartersville, VA

“You can’t move forward by sitting down.”

Fred is the current President of the Cartersville Ruritan Club. With a population of 200 people, their club has 39 ACTIVE members.

When visiting their club, they have a very vibrant and exuberant club full of life and energy. The enthusiasm that was exuded when visiting was truly contagious and motivating!

What motivated you to join this particular community service organization? I was asked. One of the senior members years ago asked if I was interested and I said yes. I went to one meeting and have been there ever since. I have always enjoyed helping people, and to me, Ruritan was the only true civic organization that helped the local people.

What specific goals or causes within the community service organization resonated with you? The main thing at that time was that they had a couple of small scholarship programs. I could see where they would help needy people in the community helping with expenses. e.g., For someone in the hospital, everyone would assemble and cut grass and were great neighborly sort of people.

Can you share any personal experiences or values that led you to engage in community service? Everything that I participate in or see the members doing, I am proud of it! They are all glad that they can help people and relieve some of their burdens. In one particular instance, they had an elderly woman that they were helping at Christmas. They help an average of 30 families each Christmas. In addition to the food and gifts they presented to her, they had extra funds and were able to also give her a cash donation. They handed her the items and she immediately started crying. She was on cancer medication and couldn't afford it. With the money they gave her, she could now afford her cancer medication.

I have seen so many instances, it is hard to see people struggle and they are trying, but when you can hand them some money or do something for them and see them smile and see the relief it brings to them, that is a great feeling.

The club sponsors a lot of programs at the elementary school, and then they gave \$6K worth of scholarships at the high school. They participate in helping the young men on the football team. They invite them to help with the projects they are working on and have built an unbelievable relationship with those guys.

You can be a small community or a small club, but you can be so influential with the work that you do. They ask the high school what they needed. The track at the high school was not well maintained. The track team had to always go to other schools for their meets. Through the club's efforts and working with members of the House of Delegates, they were

able to secure a \$750K grant. They have all new bleachers and have put in a competitive track. They can now have tournaments there which also helps the local economy.

You have got to be willing to work. ***You can't move forward by sitting down.***

They have just taken in two new members. Their club activities include parking at a wine festival, an annual duck race down the James River, a community ramp program, and much, much more.

The population of Cartersville is 200 people, so not only do they support the village, but they also support outside the limits in the surrounding communities.

How do you get people to join? One of the new members gave him a call and asked what Ruritan is. I think I want to join. - He invited her to their meeting, and she came and joined. They welcome people that move into the community, and that is a great way for them to meet people. There was a young couple that moved in, and all of the guys got together to help them move. They all serve to be good neighbors.

They went to each of the country churches and extended a hand to them, and asked how they could support the families in their parish.

Tell me some of the impacts that the Ruritan Club has had on the community.

Within their county is a very dangerous intersection. They all united, went to the board meeting, went to the state, and now putting in a whole new intersection with LED strips and stop signs.

They were the first organization to approach Central Virginia Electric for high-speed internet to get Firefly. They brought 76 people to a meeting to get signed up. Parents were having to pay \$150/month to get their children to get homework done. When the Club members heard about that, they knew that needed to be changed. That has been a huge success.

The Cartersville Ruritan Club was the second-largest contributor to the school this year. Fred serves on the public school foundation, so he knows their needs and where the money goes.

"Ruritan is for the good of everybody, and it makes you feel good. It is everyone working together."

Fred said that one success of their club is that he has made a point of recruiting younger people. Fred is 78 years old. *"You have to get young people in the club, guide them and then step back and let them go. It is the most amazing thing you have ever seen! Give them the opportunity to grow and succeed! When you go through the door, leave your agenda behind."*

If you want a good member - you have to ask. Extend your hand. You can be a semi-welcome wagon to neighbors in your community. If you don't have people in your club that can help them, you can direct them to people that can.

Make them feel welcome and not have any qualms about paying their dues. We are the only organization where you pay to work, but you gain more rewards, and you gain more relationships than you can ever imagine, and it is well worth it!

