



Ruritan

Volume 89, Summer 2024

Its Not Too Late to Sign Up For The
**SUMMER LEADERSHIP
CONFERENCE!**

See Pages 5 & 6 For Info!

*Make Plans Now to Attend the
2025 Ruritan National Convention
in Greenville, South Carolina
Details on Page 10*

SUMMER



Ruritan

Volume 89, Summer 2024

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#RuritanStrong

2024 National President Robin Davenport



I can't believe summer is here, and half my year is almost gone. To be honest, I have been working harder at listening to concerns and problems that we all have, so I decided that my letter to our membership should address this. Listening to one another is essential for effective communication and fostering understanding, empathy, and cooperation. When people listen to each other, they validate each other's perspectives, feelings, and experiences, which helps build trust and stronger relationships. Here's how communication and listening tie into the principles of "Ruritan," an acronym that can guide us in effective communication:

- 1. Respect:** Show respect for the other person by giving them your full attention when they're speaking. Avoid interrupting or dismissing their ideas.
- 2. Understanding:** Seek to understand the other person's point of view, even if you disagree. Ask questions to clarify and show genuine interest in what they have to say.
- 3. Reflection:** Reflect on what the other person has said to ensure you understand them correctly. Paraphrase their words and ask for confirmation if needed.
- 4. Inclusivity:** Create an inclusive environment where everyone feels comfortable expressing their thoughts and opinions. Encourage participation from all parties involved.
- 5. Transparency:** Be honest and transparent in your communication. Avoid hidden agendas or misleading information that could hinder trust and openness.
- 6. Active listening:** Practice active listening by focusing on what the other person is saying without thinking about your response. Please pay attention to both verbal and nonverbal cues to fully understand their message.
- 7. Nonverbal cues:** Pay attention to nonverbal cues such as body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice, as they can provide valuable insight into the other person's emotions and intentions.

By following these principles, people can communicate effectively, foster mutual respect, and build stronger relationships, clubs, and communities based on understanding and empathy. Listening to one another is not just about hearing words but also about understanding their deeper meaning and responding in a way that acknowledges and respects the other person's perspective.

I hope you, as a Ruritan member, have a great rest of the year. Let's continue to grow by the 5 and 1 plan: each club will add 5 new members, and each district will open one new club.

#RuritanStrong

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Executive Director Sarah Kelly



Recently, seemingly more so than ever, we are receiving calls and emails on how to address conflicts within clubs and between members.

We strive to uphold our vision of “Creating Thriving Communities” and to live our mission of fellowship, goodwill, and community service daily. However, when internal strife manifests in the form of arguments, disputes, or unruly behavior among club members, it not only undermines these ideals but also jeopardizes our efforts and image in our communities.

At the heart of resolving conflicts lies the commitment to being good listeners. Please read or re-read Robin’s message.

When faced with members at odds with each other, it’s crucial for club leaders to take proactive steps to address the situation promptly and effectively. Here are some strategies to navigate conflicts:

- Encourage an environment where members feel comfortable expressing their thoughts and concerns openly. Establish ways for feedback and dialogue, such as time during regular meetings where members can voice their opinions constructively and calmly.
- In situations where conflicts escalate, have a neutral mediator facilitate discussions between conflicting parties. The mediator should remain impartial and focus on guiding the conversation towards mutual understanding and resolution.
- Set clear expectations for behavior and conduct within the club. Write them out and pass them around. Emphasize the importance of respect, tolerance, and civility in all interactions. By establishing ground rules, members are reminded of their responsibilities and the standards of behavior expected of them.
- Organize team-building activities, workshops, or collaborative projects that foster camaraderie and strengthen relationships among club members. Building strong bonds outside of conflict situations can soften tensions and foster a sense of unity.
- As leaders within the club, demonstrate a commitment to resolving conflicts peacefully and constructively. Model positive communication and conflict resolution behaviors for other members to emulate.
- Remind members of the club’s overarching vision and mission dedicated to improving communities and fostering fellowship. Emphasize how conflict resolution and harmony align with these core values and contribute to the collective goals.

As stewards of our community, it is incumbent upon each of us to uphold the values of fellowship, goodwill, and service and to actively contribute to the creation of harmonious environments. Instead of being obstacles, conflicts can become catalysts for strengthening relationships and building a more cohesive community.

Remember, the strength of a community lies not in the absence of conflict but in our collective ability to navigate and resolve it with grace and compassion.

2024 SUMMER LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE JULY 12-13, 2024

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:

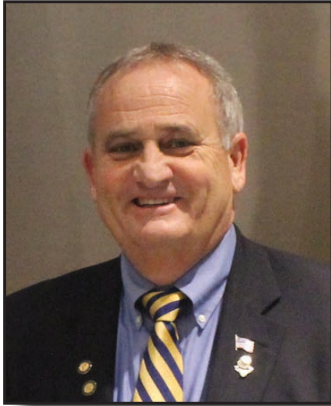
Name on Card: _____

Card Number: _____

Expiration Date: _____ CVC: _____

All credit card transaction will include a 3% service fee.

2024 Foundation President Phillip Bradshaw



Greetings Fellow Ruritans!

At the National Convention, the Foundation announced a \$675 payout for the Build Your Dollar Scholarship Program. We have 501 Clubs eligible for this payout. Get your claim forms in quickly to receive your payout. You have until September 1, 2024. Sixty-three clubs have claimed the \$675 payout so far.

For 2025 we have 67 clubs who have submitted their forms for participation.

If your club is not participating, you are missing this great investment opportunity to provide club scholarship funding.

Your Trustees at the National Convention launched a new investment program. This program will support our National membership and grow the Foundation. To date, 15 applications have been filed.

I challenge each of you to take advantage of this opportunity to support the Foundation!

“Invest Today...Impact Tomorrow”

The Ruritan National Foundation launched a new 5-year investment program in January 2024. The new program is: “Invest Today...Impact Tomorrow”. 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

Please contact any Foundation Trustee or the Foundation office for additional information.

- 2024 Foundation President** Phillip A. Bradshaw pbradshaw56@aol.com
- 2024 Foundation Vice President** Guy Cox cox4a5@atlanticbb.net
- 2024 Foundation Treasurer** Josh Adams joshadams@verizon.net
- 2024 Foundation Secretary** Debra Knesal debra.knesal0303@outlook.com
- 2024 Foundation Promotion Chair** Alex Sowers asowers1969@gmail.com
- Foundation Specialist** Bessie McCormick foundation@ruritan.org

2024 Foundation President's Message (continued)

The Foundation Fellowship weekend will be June 21-23 in Galax, Virginia. Make your 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. Get your club involved in the Foundation and support the growth of your club and Ruritan National.

Thank you for allowing us to serve as Trustees of your Foundation. If you have questions, please contact us by telephone, text, or email. We are always willing to assist Ruritans to understand your Foundation better. Invite us to your Club or District.





Let's Grow Ruritan

**SHOW PRIDE IN YOUR MEMBERSHIP DRIVE
MAY 1, 2024 THROUGH AUGUST 1, 2024**

So, how are we going to make this happen? It's all about the 5-and-1 Gets it Done strategy.

Have a membership drive to get your 5 or more new members for 2024. Send photos and your results to Diane Lawson at diane.lawson@ruritan.org.

These will be posted in the magazine and in the I Am Ruritan Facebook Page

Just imagine the impact on our communities, the dreams that we can fulfill and the hope that we can bring to those in need.

YOUR GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

The President's Gold Key program will continue and offer a special bar when you recruit five members each year.

The 2024 bar will be apricot, which is the lucky color for 2024.

Let's make history together!
Get ready for an exhilarating ride towards our centennial celebration.
Together we can achieve greatness!



2025 RURITAN NATIONAL CONVENTION
JANUARY 24-25, 2025
GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA

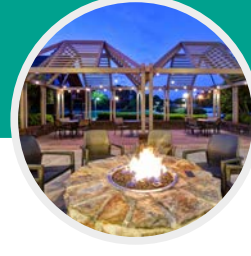


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Or use this link online: <https://www.hilton.com/en/attend-my-event/ruritannationalconf2025/>

Or scan this QR code:



Ruritan National Conference 2025

www.hilton.com



Cake Walk

Photo Booth

Scooter Race

Karaoke

Pottery Wheel

Ruritan
Tailgate Party
January 24, 2025
8 p.m. - 10 p.m

On Friday evening in Greenville, Ruritan's Tailgate Party will be the place to be! Ruritans will come together again for **ONE GIANT TAILGATING PARTY** that will feature a variety of favorite foods sponsored by clubs and districts. Food tables needed are a hot dog table, walking tacos, finger sandwiches, bbq sliders, a cookie and brownie table, a nacho table, a fruit and veggie table and a soda and water table. Each table should be decorated with the sponsoring club or district's favorite college or professional football or basketball team. Each table will be judged so be creative!!!. Make plans to attend the Ruritan 2025 Tailgate Party!

#RuritanStrong

To sponsor a table, email Crystal Andrews at crystal.andrews@ruritan.org

2025 RURITAN NATIONAL CONVENTION
JANUARY 24-25, 2025
GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA

Schedule of Events

DAY	ACTIVITY
Thurs	Vendors, Registration, Information, Candidates, Silent Auction, Supply, etc. Sgt-at-Arms Meeting
Friday	Vendors, Registration, Information, Candidates, Silent Auction, Supply, etc. Outgoing & Incoming DG/Board/APNP Breakfast on own before meeting District Governor Training APNP Meeting Officers Training/Workshops Bylaws/Resolutions to Accept Delegates First Timer Reception Opening Ceremony Reception Opening/Veterans Program President's Reception/fellowship Business Session Tailgating Caucuses Available
Saturday	Elections- to end by 9 am Business Session Live Auction Workshops Workshops Town Hall discussions - Strategizing - New ideas!!! Installation Banquet/entertainment
Sunday	Church Director's meeting

**** More Details Coming Soon!****





Project FOCUS

Funding Our Communities Under Stress

We will hold a 50/50 raffle during the Summer Leadership Conference to support Project FOCUS. We hope you will attend!

We have been asked to share information regarding Project FOCUS with our Districts and Clubs to provide a clear understanding of WHAT Project FOCUS is, WHO it is designed to benefit, and HOW to apply for Project FOCUS funds.

Project FOCUS is a 501(c)(3) created and administered by the Ruritan National Board of Directors. It is the “human care” hands and feet agency of Ruritan. The committee provides humanitarian aid through disaster relief in our communities. Requests for help come to the committee through requests made by Ruritan Clubs and/or Districts. The Project FOCUS committee consists of five National Directors who serve a one-year term. Committee members are tasked with reviewing and making recommendations regarding the allocation of funds requested to benefit those affected by natural disasters. The current members of the Project FOCUS committee are Roger Davis, President; Lynn Fillers, Vice President; Julie Marshall, Secretary; Debi Davis, Treasurer; and Cassandra Flanagan, Director.

Funding for Project FOCUS comes from various sources: local clubs and districts through annual budget line items, individuals, and businesses. We work with corporations to secure matching funds or grants as opportunities present themselves. Donations to Project FOCUS may be tax deductible per the IRS guidelines for a 501(c)(3).

Monies from Project FOCUS will assist local clubs and individuals who have faced a natural disaster such as a flood, tornado, hurricane, earthquake, or fire.

Clubs and Districts must submit a complete application, including minutes and all requested information, by visiting the Ruritan website and accessing the form through the Project FOCUS link in the member resources section.

Once a complete application has been submitted to Ruritan National, the committee will review it, and a decision will be made based on the information provided.

Monies distributed through Project FOCUS will be monitored for progress. The applicant will be responsible for providing progress reports to the committee. Once the funds have been used, the applicant will submit a final report documenting the project.

The Project FOCUS committee will be at the Summer Leadership Conference in July. We encourage you to attend, visit the Project FOCUS table, and talk with the committee members. They will be happy to share information with you regarding specific types of assistance available and ways that your club and community can help Project FOCUS through donations.

There will be a 50/50 drawing at the Summer Leadership Conference- one member will receive 50% of the ticket sales, and the remaining 50% will be placed into the Project FOCUS account for use as needed through the assistance program.

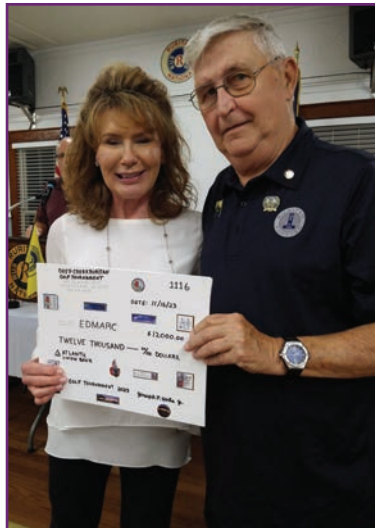
News From Ruritan: HOLLAND District

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.



News From Ruritan: HOLLAND District

Ruritan National Foundation President Philip Bradshaw visited **Deep Creek** to present Mrs. Peggy Waddell with a permanent fund certificate. The fund was created in memory of Peggy's late husband, Earl Waddell. Phillip also surprised Peggy with a permanent fund certificate in her name in honor of her many years of service as a teacher in Deep Creek schools.



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.

GRASSFIELD TURNS 68!

Grassfield celebrated their 68th anniversary with a special barbeque dinner and a program that included a reading of the charter names. Current members shared stories and memories of past club members and activities.



News From Ruritan: HOLLAND District

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.



News From Ruritan: HOLLAND District

SMITHFIELD HONORS SERVICE

Smithfield enjoyed selling hot dogs and drinks at their first cruise-in at Luter Sports Complex. The cruise-in is held on the first Friday of each month.



The club honored Judge Robert Edwards and Herb Jones for their service and dedication to Ruritan. They were each presented with a Ruritan Forever at a recent club meeting.

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.



News From Ruritan: HOLLAND District

STANLEY RAY TURNER

Stanley Ray Turner II was a true gentleman. Stan - also known as husband, Dad, Grandad, brother, and of course, "Too Short" to his Ruritans - left this world peacefully on April 17. The story of his life is a beautiful story of love, kindness, and his selfless caring for others.

He leaves behind his beautiful wife of 6 years, Robin Jeanne Turner, with whom he created a beautiful family and many wonderful memories. He is also survived by their children and their spouses Laura and Rob Reid, Abbie and David Meier and James and Amanda Willett who all knew and loved him as Dad; his grandchildren, Owen Reid, Ruby Reid, Gracie Willett and Hallie Meier; his sisters, Raye Atkins and Barbara O'Brien, and their spouses that Stan always treated as brothers, Jess Atkins and Ed O'Brien; and his sisters-in-law, Phyllis Cox (Carson) and Marsha Lightsey. He also leaves behind numerous nieces and nephews, great nieces and nephews, his first wife and Laura's mom, Helen Worthington, as well as dear friends, Darden and Sheila Stallings. He was preceded in death by his parents, Frances Elder Turner and Stanley Ray Turner (S. Ray), and his Mother-in-Love, Jean Goodrich.

Stan was kind and welcoming to everyone he met, and we hope everyone who knew him remembers his smile, his warmth, and his ability to sneak a joke into most any conversation. He was a dedicated believer in Christ and gave his skills, time, and love to the Isle of Wight Christian Church; his life is his ministry and his testimony. Stan was a graduate of Virginia Tech, where he majored in Mechanical Engineering. He spent his career at Norfolk Naval Shipyard, and retired as a Supervisory Nuclear Engineer in 2007. (Many of you may remember that retirement party, where the bucket of the tractor served as a cooler.) For his whole life, but especially after he retired, he used his skills and gifts for woodworking, gardening, and undertaking projects in support of the Ruritans and his church. His last passion project was a beautiful kitchen that he renovated into a work of art and a symbol of his careful attention to detail. "Measure twice, cut once," he always said. He served the local and national Ruritan organization, as a lifetime member of the Isle of Wight Ruritan Club (where he wore many hats) and served two terms as Holland District Governor from 2012-13, was Ruritan of the Year in 2016 and he also served as National Director from 2017-2019. Stan loved giving back to his community through serving others. Some of his favorite Ruritan projects included the Annual Brunswick Stew cooking and running the Ruritan food tent at the Isle of Wight County Fair.



News From Ruritan: CHESAPEAKE District

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.

Abingdon's Seafood Festival committee recently assembled a group of culinary experts to experiment with a new dish of grilled scallops for the upcoming Festival. After several attempts to get it right, the experts unanimously approved the new dish. The secret recipe was not

made public; however, it was recorded and will be closely guarded by the Seafood Festival chair.

Rachel Wells was recognized as the club's Volunteer of the Year 2023 (pictured with 2023 Club President Tony Dziadul). She has volunteered at every Seafood Festival, the Children's Christmas Party, and other major club fundraisers and events.



The club collects food items for donation at each of their monthly meetings. In February, they delivered 202 pounds of food to the Bread for Life food pantry. Pictured are Bread of Life Executive Director Monique Rapoza, and Social Development Committee Chair Abby Bowles.

The club has donated over \$2400 to the DeGood Foundation. Their donation will help support the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, which gifts books to children from birth to age five. The library's mission is to inspire a love of reading. Pictured, Community Engagement Chair Regina Scott presents the check to Kyle DeGood.



News From Ruritan: CHESAPEAKE District



The club's "birdhouse builders" group handcrafted over 50 birdhouses, which were sold during the two-day 2024 Daffodil Festival. They also presented a donation to 4-H Extension Agent Krista Gustafson to help send children to the 4-H Summer Camp.

Citizenship and Patriotism Chair John Atherton presented a donation to American Legion Post 75 Commander Dr. David C. Workman. American Legion Post 75 sponsors three youth groups from Gloucester High School. They participate in Girls State, Boys State, and the Youth Cadet Law Enforcement Program.



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.



News From Ruritan: **CHESAPEAKE District**

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.

Zone 4 Governor Don Sandridge and **Gloucester** Club Secretary Barbara Bauer dropped off 151.1 pounds of plastic bags, which will be recycled into park benches for the county. The club has partnered with the Gloucester Lions Club on this project. Beginning in 2020, the Club has collected over 1,339 pounds of bags.



Club member Henry Thompson, a.k.a. "Hurricane," proudly represents the club at events dressed as Rudy Ruritan. On Valentine's Day, Hurricane visited the Riverside Peninsula Cancer



Institute and Infusion Center in Gloucester to pass out gift bags to staff members to thank them for their care during his recent treatments, which has allowed him to serve again as Rudy.

The club recently hosted guest speaker Jane Wenner, Coordinator of the Gloucester County Department of Emergency Management. She was accompanied by Emergency Planner David Dixon. Jane shared that the county is facing predictions of a very active hurricane season and shared information about her department's programs to ensure community preparedness in emergency situations. Pictured with Jane (right) is Club President Bill Naquin.

News From Ruritan: CHESAPEAKE District

HANOVER HELPS OUT

Hanover quickly responded to help a local family when their home suffered fire, smoke, and water damage. The family of two adults, four children, two cats, and a dog were all displaced. In less than a day, Club Director Tom Gurley, Club Treasurer Ralph Cantrell, and Club Member Don Ward reached out to help the family recover from the fire by providing financial assistance and information on additional community resources available.



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.



News From Ruritan: CHESAPEAKE District

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 shelf diapers for the food pantry to distribute. Cockrell House is a group home for neurodivergent adults located two doors down from the food pantry.

News From Ruritan: CHESAPEAKE District

Short Pump recently donated Rudy Bears to the Richmond Auxiliary Police and then received a photo of a little girl holding tight to a Rudy Bear she received following an auto accident. The club appreciated seeing firsthand the results of their donation.



The club hosted guest speaker Chris Watson, owner of Kitchen 33. He explained his mission of eliminating plastic pollution from rivers and streams and how his foundation, American River Restoration, works to show other restaurants how to eliminate the use of plastics and styrofoam.



West Point held a successful Brunswick Stew fundraiser. Proceeds went to the Ricky Sturtz Memorial Children's Christmas Benefit, named after the young Ruritan who started the project and passed a couple of years later. The fund provided 55 needy elementary school children in the community with warm winter clothing and provided over \$300 in school supplies to one of the local elementary schools.



The club hosts two annual food drives to support local food pantries and has partnered with the newly created Little Free Pantry. The West Point Ruritan Foundation provides monthly financial support to purchase items for the pantries and donates most of the proceeds and grocery items from the food drives.

The club also partnered with the local Food Lion to distribute Christmas Food Boxes to needy families in the community. Each box purchased by Food Lion customers contained a box of spaghetti, a box of macaroni and cheese, a bag of rice, a can of corn, green beans, and spaghetti sauce. West Point club members distributed over 800 boxes.



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.



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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.

The club

News From Ruritan: RAPPAHANNOCK District

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: RAPPAHANNOCK District

RURITEENS SHOW COMMITMENT

Roaring Round Hill Ruri-Teens braved the rain and cold to set up a fundraiser for a family in need. Pictured (l-r) are Advisor Rebecca Stone, Heaven-Lee Wilson, Colt James Wilson, and Samantha Wilson.



DISTRICT HOSTS NATIONAL PRESIDENT FOR APPLE BLOSSOM FESTIVAL



Dennis Bagnell, President Robin, and Executive Dir. Sarah Kelly



"The Voice" Season 24 Winner Huntley Receives Rudy Bear from President Robin



Mischief Makers!

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. 2023 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

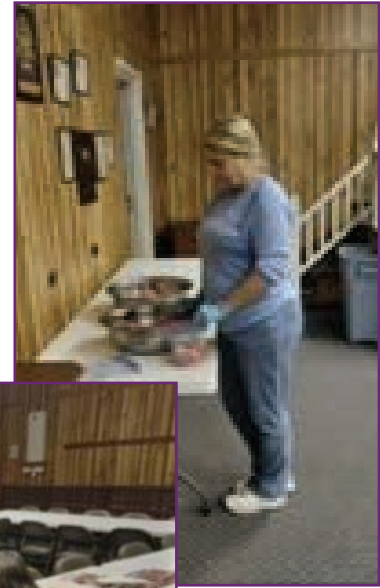
Forest Hill prepared and distributed 16 food baskets for Christmas and purchased gifts for children in three families. Club Secretary Jennifer Nolder presented Miriam's House representative, Jennifer Gallion, with over \$200 in cleaning supplies. Established in 1994, Miriam's House has worked to end homelessness "by connecting individuals and families with stable, affordable housing and providing the skills and support that lead to self-sufficiency."



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.



ATKINS WRESTLES UP FUN



Atkins assisted with concessions for an Atkins Fire Department wrestling fundraiser. Pictured is club member and District Governor Lester Owens with one of the Lady Wrestlers.



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.



Club member Scott Hannah continued a club tradition by handing out dictionaries to the third-grade class at Natural Bridge Elementary. They also delivered copies of the US Constitution and Declaration of Independence to the seventh-grade civics classes at Maury River Middle School. Pictured with some of the students are Principal Scott Hannah, Vicki Stevens, and Club Vice President Tim Manning.

The club has hosted several enlightening guest speakers throughout the year. In February, we were joined by Mark Nelson from the Rockbridge Ukrainian Relief Effort, who shared his experiences through slides and stories.



In March, they welcomed National Wild Turkey Federation Chapter President Ricky Siler, who shared the importance of wildlife conservation and youth mentoring. The club also continues to work with the Red Cross by hosting blood drive events. Club member Bob Gilbert donates and volunteers at each drive.



Club members joined Friends of Natural Bridge State Park for the Annual Kid's Fishing Day in April. Gary Barker and Tim Manning helped to clean and prep the trout for cooking.

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.*

FALLING SPRING HONORS ACHIEVEMENT

Falling Spring has recognized area resident John Helmtoller with a Community Achievement Award. John was honored for his many years of selfless service to his community by providing emergency water and septic services, and helping with excavation and general handyman jobs, without accepting any payment other than “give me a little bit for fuel and that will be good”. Club President Lee Smith shared about John helping him with an access road to his property, and Lee getting advice from John about how to perform the grading. “Fill in the low places’, that’s what he said,” Smith recalled. “John’s philosophy on road maintenance is kind of the same as his philosophy on treating his neighbors,” Smith added. “If there’s a neighbor in need – somebody that needs help in his community – he’s there helping, filling in that low place.” John was also presented with a commendation letter from Senator Mark Warner. The club also presented John with a gift certificate for him to use for fuel, as well as a Ruritan National camouflage hat to wear. Pictured is John (left) with Club President Lee Smith.



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.



DEERFIELD CELEBRATES BUSY FIRST QUARTER



Deerfield (VA) distributed community calendars with a flyer advertising their food drive. Boxes were placed in local churches, stores, and the post office. Club members collected donations for the Community Center Food Closet. The club hosted a Baked Potato and Chili Supper, and over \$1,000 in donations were received for the Food Pantry. The club also supports the Blue Ridge Food Bank.

Club members have also been staying busy with other fundraisers and projects to help in their community. They hosted a cake walk and Bingo night to raise funds for



Wounded Warriors. They also help with their local 4H/FFA Market Animal Show, the Woodrow District Dictionary Project, and the Valley Mission. The club also sponsored a Community Easter Egg Hunt for local children.



News From Ruritan: WOODROW WILSON District

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 Ruritans. 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.

News From Ruritan: WOODROW WILSON District

MT. SIDNEY COOKS UP BUSY YEAR

Mt. Sidney has had a busy year fundraising to support the needs of six nonprofits and the club. The club sold 939 funnel cakes during the Weyers Cave Fire Company Lawn Party and Dayton Days Autumn Celebration and held nine chicken barbecue fundraisers, selling over 6000 cooked halves. Combined sales for all their fundraisers in 2023 totaled \$41,936.00.



NEW HOPE CELEBRATES COMMUNITY MILESTONE



New Hope VA helped celebrate their community center's 100th anniversary by hosting their annual "Big Breakfast." The 100th person to attend (pictured center) was awarded a free breakfast. Also pictured are Club President Christy Powell, Zone Governor Stephanie Ramsey, and Stephanie's grandson, Jack Ramsey, who also helped serve.



Youth members Garrett Simmons (left) and Landon Powell (right, as Rudy Bear) recently read to and played games with the kindergarten class at Claymore Elementary School.

STUARTS DRAFT SPREADS THE WORD

Stuart's Draft Club President Lou Gage presented dictionaries to excited students of Ms. Lewis's reading class at Stuart's Draft Elementary School.



News From Ruritan: WOODROW WILSON District

DISTRICT HONORS MILESTONES

Mt. Sidney, New Hope, and Weyers Cave gathered in April to commemorate 85 years of community service. The three clubs were all chartered in 1939. Steve Landes, District Governor for the Woodrow Wilson District, presided over the meeting. Representatives from each club spoke

briefly about their clubs' histories, and State Delegate Chris Runion presented each club president

with a Resolution of Appreciation from the Virginia General Assembly. FFA members from Fort Defiance High School served the dinner prepared by the ladies of Mt. Horeb Church. Gary Huffman shared his collection of memorabilia and entertainment was provided by the Massanutten Brass Quintet.



News From Ruritan: ROCKINGHAM District

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."



News From Ruritan: **ROCKINGHAM** District



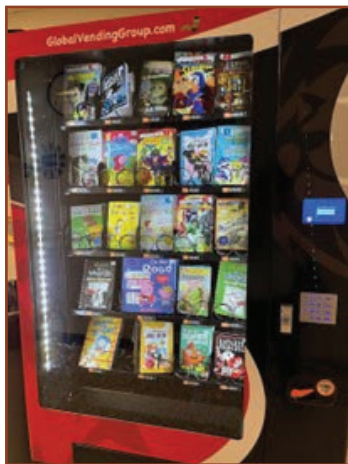
The Citizenship and Patriotism Committee presented the 2023 “Citizens of the Year” award to Rodney and Gloria Hildebrand. They have both been active supporters of the Bridgewater Volunteer Fire Department, been involved in community service projects of the Bridgewater United Methodist Church, and helped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

Bridgewater recently hosted Bridgewater Girl Scout Troop 1336 and a representative from the Boys and Girls Clubs of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County. Members also assembled Valentine’s Day gift bags.



MCGAHEYSVILLE CHECKS IN TO BOOKS

McGaheysville purchased a gazebo for its property in the center of downtown. The gazebo will house the free library box.



Several club members assisted McGaheysville Elementary School during its Spring Carnival by managing concessions and games. The club also purchased books for the school’s “vending machine,” which allows every child in the school to have a book.



News From Ruritan: **ROCKINGHAM** District

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 BAZAAR AND BUSY FIRST QUARTER



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.

In March, the club celebrated their 65th Anniversary. Club President Tim Stephens and his son, Dagan Stephens, shared a display of the club charter and a picture of the very first club meeting held in March 1959. Tim's

father, Calvin Stephens, helped organize the club, and was elected as the first club president. Guests included

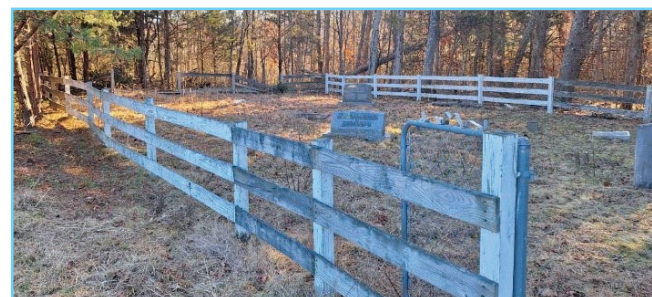


Barry Sweitzer from the Hamburg Ruritan Club (pictured (l) with



Charter Member Charles Lichliter (r.) Mr. Sweitzer assisted the Fort Valley community in forming the club.

Club members demonstrated their commitment to community service by organizing a cleanup and fence repair for a local cemetery. This project not only helps



News From Ruritan: ROCKINGHAM District



maintain the cemetery's appearance but also highlights the club's dedication to the local community.

Club members played an active role in supporting the Fort Valley Volunteer Fire



Department Ham & Oyster Supper, a major community event aimed at raising funds for the Fire Department. Their involvement ranged from dining hall setup/cleanup, oyster rolling, cooking, and table service to even purchasing their own meals to support the cause.



Public Service Committee Chair Adam Selby organized a breakfast fundraiser, which more than 150 community residents attended to support the club. The Environment



Committee initiated the annual highway litter cleanup project. Committee Chair Steve Adams led the project, providing litter bags and coordinating with the local office of the Virginia

Department of Transportation.



News From Ruritan: ROCKINGHAM District

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 Favel, Andy Orndorff, and grandson Levi.