

NEW RIVER VALLEY

Examining ranked voting

Civic groups to host forum Oct. 4 at 7 p.m.

Ranked-choice voting is an election method several states and localities are considering to encourage more collegial campaigning.

This year's Community Forum, sponsored by the League of Women Voters, Virginia Tech's Lifelong Learning Institute, and the NAACP-Montgomery Co-Radford City-Floyd Co Branch will explore that option through the perspective of two voting experts.

The forum is Wednesday, Oct. 4, at 7 p.m. in Blacksburg's Town Council Chambers. The event is free and open to the public.

Liz White, executive director of UpVote Virginia, and Caitlin Jewitt, assistant professor of political science at Virginia Tech, will be the speakers.

UpVote Virginia is a nonpartisan organization promoting ranked-choice voting as the way to improve the structure of our electoral system and better reflect the will of voters.

Jewitt is recognized for her



Jewitt

research on campaigns and elections, public opinion, political parties, and presidential primaries and caucuses, according to a news release about the event. She is particularly interested in the institutional features of elections and their effects on voters, election outcomes, and candidate strategy, according to the release.

With ranked-choice, voters

rank all candidates in an election rather than choosing one. The option can be viewed as a means to a more representative and inclusive government and a way to reduce negative campaigning.

The need for costly runoff elections can be bypassed because the candidate who garners more than 50% of the vote wins. If no one gets a majority of votes, the candidate with the fewest votes is dropped and his or her votes are redistributed to the other candidates. Voters whose candidate is eliminated then have their second

choice counted.

Ranked-choice voting was used this spring in Arlington in the Democratic primary, but the Arlington County Board decided not to use the increasingly popular voting system for November's general election, according to the release. The Democratic primary was the first publicly run ranked-choice election in Virginia, offering a highly visible test for a voting system that's been used in a growing number of races around the country.

- The Roanoke Times

Man gets 4 years in 2 teen abductions

DOUG THOMPSON
For The Floyd Press

FLOYD — A 22-year-old Roanoke man pleaded no contest in Floyd County Circuit Court earlier this month on abduction charges involving two 14-year-olds from Indian Valley.

Commonwealth's Attorney Eric Branscom said one of the two 14-year-old girls, after having her smartphone taken away by her parents in January for "violating the rules," found an older one in the house and used its WiFi capability to text Shameek Nyrell McEntyre, who she knew by another name, to ask for marijuana.

He agreed, Branscom said, to meet her and her friend at the end of the driveway at their home.

McEntyre arrived in an SUV about an hour later (after 10 p.m.) and met with the girls, who had left the house to take their dog for a walk, Branscom said.

McEntyre told the girls he did not have the drugs with him, but would take them to a gas station to "take care of things." Instead of stopping along Route 8 toward Christiansburg, Branscom said, McEntyre turned toward Roanoke.

Both girls were in the back, and McEntyre had one come up to the front seat, Branscom said, and he demanded oral sex from her while he was driving. She refused and they started telling him they wanted him to stop the car and let them out.

McEntyre drove into Roanoke and stopped at a Sheetz Store where he sent one girl with money into the store to buy a drink and had the other pump gas, before taking them to a park on Peters Creek Road, where he wanted sex and "other things," Branscom said.

Instead, the girls ran from the SUV. They found an open Seven-11 and called their parents. Roanoke County, State Police and Floyd County Sheriff's deputies responded to the calls.

"This was an adult abducting these two girls with the intention of sex and defiling them," Branscom said.

In interviews with the police, McEntyre said he had met at least one of the girls before, had exchanged texts and "revealing photos," Branscom said.

McEntyre is a child sexual predator who deserved "serious prison time" for his crimes, Branscom said.

McEntyre did not testify but said in a statement before sentencing that he got caught up with something that was "out of his control."

"I am not a bad man," he said. "I am a good man."

Judge Mike Fleenor, in remarks before sentencing, said McEntyre is an adult, the victims are children, and that was an overriding issue in the case.

The judge sentenced McEntyre to five years on each of the two charges with six suspended.

He has been in jail since his arrest earlier this year, and that eight months will be considered part of the time. McEntyre will also face two years of supervised probation after his release.

In victim impact statements, the mother of one of the girls said her daughter was "a different person" who is afraid of the dark and of strangers.



MATT GENTRY PHOTOS, THE ROANOKE TIMES

NATIVE AMERICAN-BASED EXHIBIT OPENS AT MOSS

Artists Laurie Steelink, left, and Victoria Ferguson pose with part of an exhibit at the Moss Art Center. Steelink is a citizen of the Akimel O'otham Nation from the Gila River Indian Community in Arizona. Ferguson is a Monacan Nation Citizen and director of the Solitude-Fraction site, part of Virginia Tech's Office for Inclusion and Diversity.

"Spirit Is Alive, Magic Is Afoot" opened last week and is now on display at Virginia Tech's Moss Arts Center. The Native American-themed exhibit includes mixed-media assemblages and sculptures, photographs, installation and more. The exhibit runs through Dec. 17.

- The Roanoke Times



Above: "Gathering Power II, Indian Market Place" by Laurie Steelink is part of an exhibit at the Moss Arts Center.

Left: Traditional weavings and beadwork by Victoria Ferguson

Kiwanis donate gift cards to schools

Gifts part of the club's continuing program of providing support for students

The Kiwanis Club of Christiansburg recently delivered Walmart gift cards to Montgomery Central School and Christiansburg High School.

The latest donations are part of the club's continuing program of providing support to local schools that have students needing clothing and/or supplies.

The cards, in the amount of \$550 (\$500 from the Kiwanis Club and \$50 from Walmart) are delivered to schools that have a zero or low balance on their cards and have requested additional funds, according to a Kiwanis Club news release.

The program was started several years ago for the seven schools in Christiansburg, and cards are replenished by the club as needed. Before this program was introduced, often teachers and staff members would personally pay for the needed items that the children could not afford, according to the release.

The Kiwanis Club of Christiansburg has provided services to the local community since its charter was granted in 1949.

- The Roanoke Times



COURTESY CHRISTIANBURG KIWANIS

Kiwanis member Ernie Wade, center, delivers a gift card to Mike Stanley, principal Montgomery Central and Anne Lawson, a Montgomery Central counselor.

Golf tournament raises \$11,500

Thorn Spring Golf Course held its 14th Annual Tee It Up Against Cancer golf tournament on Sept. 15 and the event raised \$11,500.

A gorgeous day brought ladies from the surrounding counties to participate in raising a new tournament high total of \$11,500.

All proceeds from the event stay local to help cancer patients in the New River Valley. Funds raised provide comfort items for patients as they progress through their treatments.

The participants enjoyed lunch and awards after play with the evening wrapping up with



COURTESY MARTHA THOMAS

Thorn Spring Golf Course recently held a successful cancer fundraising tournament.

raffle prizes and an auction. The tournament organizers

wish to thank the sponsors and other supporters for helping

make this a successful event.

- The Roanoke Time