

Saturday, December 19, 2020 • USPS 387-780 • ourvalley.org • 75 cents

COVID-19 vaccine arrives at Carilion Clinic, first doses administered



The first 4,000 COVID-19 vaccines arrived Monday at Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital. The vaccines were administered first to front-line workers directly responsible for patient care.

Carilion Clinic received its first shipment of 4,000 COVID-19 vaccines Monday and began administering the vaccine Tuesday morning to front-line workers with direct patient care responsibilities at Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital, the ones who are most likely to be exposed to the coronavirus.

"The light at the end of the COVID-19 tunnel is getting a little brighter," said Chad Alvarez, senior director of pharmacy and the leader of Carilion's COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force. "This is an exciting step

forward in the fight against this pandemic."

Front-line healthcare workers in Carilion's emergency departments and COVID units were among the first to be vaccinated. Officials expect to receive additional shipments in the coming weeks. Per Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Virginia Department of Health (VDH) guidance, the general public should have more access to the vaccines in the spring and summer of 2021.

"In the meantime, it's critical to remember that we all must double

down on the precautions we are taking to protect ourselves and each other," said Dr. Paul Skolnik, an infectious disease specialist and chair of the department of medicine at Carilion. "Keep washing your hands, wearing your masks, avoiding large gatherings and remaining distant from each other. Those actions and the COVID-19 vaccines will be what beat this pandemic."

Details of vaccine shipments including the timing, exact destinations and storage locations will not be disclosed to ensure security.

Governor provides boost for NRV passenger rail service

Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam is proposing a new state budget that includes an estimated \$50 million for the push for passenger rail service to the New River Valley.

The governor made his announcement Tuesday during a meeting of the state budget committee.

The plan has stalled for over two years after the Town of Christiansburg purchased a proposed site near the town's Aquatic Center for a rail station.

The new state funding would provide money for right-of-way and easement acquisitions. Previous state funding was approved for a study with Norfolk Southern to determine what type of infrastructure upgrades would be required to share the tracks with passenger rail traffic.

The rail giant has said such a report is on hold because of COVID-19 associated problems.

A group called "New River Valley Passenger Rail 2020" remains optimistic about having passenger service in the region.

Gaining such service requires the cooperation of Norfolk Southern, which must agree to share the rail line with Amtrak. The proposed study would determine how much money would be needed to upgrade the line to allow for travel for the much higher speed Amtrak requires.

Larry Hincker, a spokesman for NRV Passenger Rail 2020, said the group knows there is strong demand for the service based on a survey conducted by the Regional Commission. In a past interview, he said the group believes that a significant portion of the Roanoke boardings come from the New River Valley and that Roanoke has had the largest year-over-year increase in boardings in Virginia. "Those are all positive signs. So, we remain hopeful," Hincker said.

The city of Bristol recently released its own findings that forecast annual ridership for Christiansburg to be 40,200 with hopes the passenger service could stretch deep into southwest Virginia. A Bristol stop would generate annual ridership of 23,600. Currently, a stop in Roanoke is averaging 97,600 riders per year.

The Bristol study was a joint effort with the Virginia Tobacco Regional Commission, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Appalachian Regional Commission and the City of Bristol.

New River Valley leaders had hoped passenger rail service could start by 2020, but the overall project has halted with no projected start time in view.

The Town of Christiansburg recently purchased additional property near the aquatic center that would provide land for either a platform or a station. The purchase consisted of five parcels totaling 6.82 acres with the majority lying to the south of the current double tracks.

Initially, the Virginia General Assembly approved \$350,000 for a study to determine what improvements are needed to the current freight line in Southwest Virginia.

The train station would be owned on a regional basis by localities throughout the NRV. Early estimates say the facility would cost an estimated \$4 million.

Passenger service was initially stopped in the area in the mid-60s, but Norfolk Southern continued its own version until 1979 when passenger service was stopped completely.

A preliminary report shows a passenger service into NRV could attract 16,000 to 20,000 riders a year. The discussion includes a possible passenger route out of Roanoke where service has been in operation since 2017.

VFW announces Voice of Democracy essay winners



Radford High School students (from left) Abby Barnes, Emma McMurray and Marisa Myers have been named the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 776 winners of the VFW's national essay contest. Here, VFW representatives Gary Harris and Dana Jackson (at right) present the students with their awards.

Heather Bell
hbell@ourvalley.org

RADFORD - Radford High School students Abby Barnes, Emma McMurray and Marisa Myers have been named the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 776 winners of the VFW's national essay contest.

The VFW Voice of Democracy audio essay program has been awarding scholarship funds to teens in the U.S. for more than 70 years. Participants write an essay based on a yearly theme and then record themselves reading the essay. Those recordings are judged by members of the local VFW post. A win at the post level advances the student to district competition, leading to possible state and, finally, national competition, and a chance to win a sizable scholarship. Barnes was named the Post 776 first-place winner.

See Essay contest, page 2

Drug bust by Radford Police nets arrest of Wytheville resident

RADFORD -- A drug bust Tuesday morning, Dec. 15, by the Radford City Police Department in pursuant of a search warrant in the 1500 Block of Tyler Ave. resulted in the confiscation of two pounds of suspected methamphetamine along with about half a pound of marijuana and the arrest of Erin Wilson,

27, of Wytheville.

Wilson was charged with possession with the intent to distribute more than one ounce, but less than five pounds of marijuana and possession with the intent to distribute 100 grams or more of methamphetamine. She is currently being held in the New River Valley Regional Jail with no bond.



Erin Wilson of Wytheville is in the NRV Regional Jail after being arrested by Radford Police and charged with intent to distribute both marijuana and methamphetamine.

Radford Health and Rehab seeks to help seniors

The center is asking the public to donate items by this Monday, Dec. 21

RADFORD - Older Americans have been hit particularly hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, both from the health ramifications and the emotional and mental strain of being isolated from those they love.

That isolation is magnified during the holiday season, and one local health and rehab center is hoping to reach out to those seniors with a little help with items they need.

"At Radford Health and Rehab Center we recognize there are seniors in our surrounding area that are isolated and vulnerable this Christmas season and we want to help," the center recently announced. "Please join with us as we undertake a community project to

ensure that our NRV-area seniors do not feel alone. Thank you for your help and compassion."

Radford Health and Rehab Center is accepting donations of items such as blankets, gloves, hats, toiletries, household supplies and personal hygiene supplies that they "will safely distribute to seniors identified through our local area Agency on Aging and community partners."

Please bring the items to the facility and place them in the drop box outside the front door at 700 Randolph St. in Radford. All items must be new and in original packaging and dropped off by this Monday, Dec. 21.

-Heather Bell

News Brief: 'The Voice' features former RU student

Sid Kingsley, a native of Branchville, Va., and a former music student at Radford University, became a fan favorite on Season 19 of "The Voice" before he was eventually eliminated from the show.

During the show's blind auditions, the 37-year-old Kingsley

took to the stage and quickly won over coaches and fans alike with his cover of Bob Dylan's "Don't Think Twice, It's All Right" and his powerhouse vocals and soulful singing style. Three of the coaches turned their rotating red chairs, and Kelly Clarkson later said she wished she

had turned around as well.

During the course of the season, Kingsley worked with three of the four coaches. He first chose to join Team Legend before making his way to Team Kelly and eventually getting stolen by Team Blake.

Community Foundation grants more than \$157,000 to 54 local nonprofits in 2020



NRV Cares received a \$4,000 grant from the NRV Community Foundation in the fall.

Throughout the fall, the Community Foundation of the New River Valley (CFNRV) awarded \$157,645 in grants to 54 nonprofit organizations through its Responsive Grant Program.

The foundation manages more than \$10.6 million in more than 200 endowed funds created by NRV individuals, families and businesses to award grants to charitable organizations and scholarships to students. In a typical year, the Responsive Grant Program awards grants for both general operations and for specific community projects focused on issues such as poverty, natural resource conservation, education, the arts and housing.

In 2020, due to the

COVID-19 pandemic, the foundation's board of directors decided to award only operational support, giving organizations maximum flexibility to put the money where it is needed most. Nonprofits could apply for up to \$4,000.

The Community Foundation received nearly one hundred applications, and staff and volunteers then vetted the applications and made grant awards from dozens of endowed funds managed at the foundation. In addition to grants from endowments, the CFNRV opened its grant process to the public through an online grant catalog for the first time ever. Individuals and businesses could go to the online catalog to directly support a grant request,

expanding the amount of money available to award this year. Public contributions totaled almost \$10,000, making the first year of the grant catalog a great success.

The annual awards celebration that gathers donors and grant recipients could not be held this year, but many nonprofits sent in photos of appreciation when they received their checks in the mail.

The foundation's executive director, Jessica Wirgau, said of 2020, "The year has been a challenging one for many nonprofit organizations in the New River Valley. I am proud that the CFNRV could make changes quickly to our grant programs to better serve our community."

"In the spring, we

awarded over \$76,000 in COVID-19 Response Grants, and we were admittedly unsure about how much additional money we could award this fall. But our donors and the broader community really stepped up, and we were able to award a record amount in grants this fall. We appreciate all of the donors who have given this year to allow our nonprofits to continue the great work they are doing during the pandemic."

The 2021 Responsive Grant Program will open online in June 2021 with a deadline in late July. Anyone interested in starting an endowed fund to support charitable work in the New River Valley should contact the CFNRV at 540-381-8999 or email jessicawirgau@cfnrv.org.

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- 1. Twos under par
 - 7. Expresses surprise
 - 10. Shows exceedingly great size
 - 12. At this place
 - 13. One who prints from a plate
 - 14. '95 U.S. Open golf champ Corey
 - 15. Stupefy with alcohol
 - 16. Breezed through
 - 17. A major division of geological time
 - 18. Humble request for help
 - 19. Part of a deck
 - 21. Albanian monetary unit
 - 22. Atomic #22
 - 27. Atomic #18
 - 28. Catholic holiday service
 - 33. Canadian province
 - 34. Capital of Alberta
 - 36. Large African antelope
 - 37. Mexican tortilla sandwich
 - 38. Pigmented eye membrane
 - 39. Baby's food protector
 - 40. Winglike structures
 - 41. Sun-dried brick
 - 44. Those dull in appearance
 - 45. Basketlike baby's bed
 - 48. Purpose or intent
 - 49. Difficult to carry
 - 50. Cry made by sheep
 - 51. More than one spouse
- CLUES DOWN
- 1. Incredible edibles
 - 2. About aviation
 - 3. Small biting flies
 - 4. Bulgarian monetary unit
 - 5. Point midway between E and SE
 - 6. Old CCCP or U_____
 - 7. Rubber tree genus
 - 8. Waterless
 - 9. Female chicken
 - 10. Relating to the Hebrews
 - 11. Dig up
 - 12. Diacritic caron
 - 14. Capital of Sicily
 - 17. Shock therapy
 - 18. Cyto_____: surrounds the nucleus
 - 20. Daughters of the Am. Revolution
 - 23. Nincompoops
 - 24. Great battle of 333 BC
 - 25. Salt Lake state
 - 26. Woman (French)
 - 29. A public promotion
 - 30. Social insect
 - 31. Knifed
 - 32. Formal association of people
 - 35. Toff
 - 36. Snaps up
 - 38. *Annona diversifolia*
 - 40. Opera vocal solo
 - 41. Largest continent
 - 42. Day (Latin)
 - 43. Sole
 - 44. Hit lightly
 - 45. Guy (slang)
 - 46. Black tropical Am. cuckoo
 - 47. Screen Writers Guild

Girl Scout cookie sales underway

The Girl Scouts of Virginia Skyline Council launched its 2020-21 Girl Scout Cookie season Monday, Dec. 14. Girl Scouts are taking orders for cookies that will be delivered in mid-January.

This cookie season, the council has something new to offer during the holidays in the spirit of keeping everyone safe during these challenging times: cookie gift certificates. Gift certificates can be purchased through Jan. 14, 2021, by emailing info@gsvsc.org or calling 540-777-5100.

In the name of safety, the council is also making other changes in the way cookie sales are handled. When the cookies arrive in the region in mid-January, Girl Scouts will be delivering them in different ways: masked drop-offs to the customer's door; cookie booth drive-thrus; online ordering with shipping via Digital Cookie; cookie delivery service (The details are being worked out with a national food delivery service. They will be announced on Jan. 12.); and voice-activated sales via Echo home systems.

In these different times, the Girl Scouts are responding with creative ways to manage and sell the famously beloved cookies. The council's scouts will make sure customers get their favorite cookies in a safe manner.

Girl Scout cookies are \$5 a box. To

locate a Girl Scout to take an order, contact the girl scouts at info@gsvsc.org or 540-777-5100.

The Girl Scout Cookie Program teaches girls about entrepreneurship as they have fun learning essential skills like money management, public speaking, and decision making, which set them up for a lifetime of success. Nine in ten Girl Scouts say the cookie program has built their entrepreneurship skills and their interest in pursuing entrepreneurship as a career path, so every cookie purchase is an investment in the world-changing business leaders of tomorrow. Every purchase stays local to power amazing experiences and leadership opportunities for girls in communities across the United States.

The Girl Scouts of Virginia Skyline Council has 8,700 members, 5,300 girls and 3,400 adults in a 36-county area within Central, Southside, Southwest and Western Virginia. The council's headquarters are in Roanoke. The council operates three camp properties: Camp Icimani in Roanoke County, Camp Sacajawea in Bedford County and Camp Sugar Hollow in Albemarle County.

To volunteer, reconnect, donate or join, call 540-777-5100, email the council at info@gsvsc.org or visit www.gsvsc.org.

Essay contest from page 1


"Abby's essay will advance to the district level where she will be in the running for a variety of scholarships," said VFW Post 776 Commander Gary Harris.

McMurray won first runner up and Myers won second runner up. The 2020-21 theme was: Is This the Country the Founders Envisioned?

Established in 1947, the Voice of Democracy program "provides high school students with the unique opportunity to express themselves in regards to a democratic and patriotic-themed recorded essay," according to the VFW. "Each

year, nearly 64,500 9-12 grade students from across the country enter to win their share of more than \$2.1 million in educational scholarships and incentives awarded through the program"

And the grand prize is significant, with the national first place winner receiving a \$30,000 scholarship paid directly to the recipient's American university, college or vocational/technical school. Other national scholarships range from \$1,000-\$16,000, and the first place winner from each state wins a minimum scholarship of \$1,000.



AARP BLACKSBURG

A Proclamation by the Board of AARP Blacksburg Chapter during COVID-19

Whereas, throughout the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, first responders and medical personnel and related professionals, essential workers and volunteers have been on the front lines in ongoing efforts to keep our senior citizens and communities safe from wide-ranging and devastating effects of the virus; and

Whereas, at times these workers have been away from their families, worked overtime and in some cases put their health and lives at risk; and

Whereas, responding personnel are vital members of our communities, protecting our neighbors and loved ones from existing and emerging health threats resulting from COVID-19; and

Whereas, individuals, both professionals and volunteers, including rescue squads, EMTs, workers handling testing for COVID-19, fire department and law enforcement personnel, emergency operators and dispatchers, doctors and nurses, hospital and medical facility and laboratory workers, personnel serving nursing homes and assisted-living residential facilities, counselors, the clergy, educators, ambulance crews and many others serve the public in unrelenting supporting roles against COVID-19...

Now, therefore, the AARP Blacksburg Chapter does hereby express its sincere appreciation and gratitude for the dedication and expansive caring efforts of all such dedicated personnel and volunteers and calls this observance to the attention of the public.

Don G. Creamer, President
AARP Blacksburg Chapter #2613
www.blacksburgaarp.org
 December 2020

Send community news and photos to communitynews@ourvalley.org

Santa Claus to help out YMCA's Meals on Main Wednesday

Santa Claus has decided to take a few hours away from the elves and reindeer to come and help the YMCA at Virginia Tech with its Meals on Main food distribution on Wednesday, Dec. 23, at the Thrift Shop parking lot at 1000 N. Main St. in Blacksburg.

On Monday, Dec. 21, and Wednesday, Dec. 23, YMCA volunteers will be passing out holiday treats from Next Door Bake Shop, Blacksburg Bagels and the Thrift Shop along

with the shelf stable meals and snacks. (Treats will be available while stocks last.)

The YMCA at Virginia Tech Meals on Main program is still going strong on Mondays at Prices Fork Elementary School and on Fridays at the Thrift Shop. On both days the meal distribution happens between 4-6 p.m. and is free to all children and youth in the New River Valley under age 18.

On Wednesday, Santa will remain behind the tables to

keep safe social distancing, but he'll be delighted to see the children, say hello and pass out treats. Visitors should remember to wear their masks and keep their distance. As always, Meals on Main will operate rain or shine.

The holiday schedule for meal distribution will be as follows:

Mon. Dec. 21: 4-6 p.m. at Prices Fork Elementary School parking lot

Wed. Dec. 23 (to replace Fri. Dec. 25): 4-6 p.m. in the

Thrift Shop parking lot
Mon. Dec. 28: 4-6 p.m. at Prices Fork Elementary School parking lot

Wed. Dec. 30 (to replace Fri. Jan. 1): 4-6 p.m. in the Thrift Shop parking lot

The goal of the YMCA at Virginia Tech's Meals on Main initiative is to help relieve some of the pressure faced by families due to the current pandemic.

The YMCA needs brown paper shopping bags to contain the meals. They may be

dropped off at the YMCA Thrift Shop at 1000 N. Main St., Blacksburg. They will be quarantined on site before use.

Volunteers are also needed. Sign up at <https://www.signup-genius.com/index.cfm?go=s.signup&urlid=4090449AFA929AFA7-meals1>

Donations to support the YMCA's community programs such as Meals On Main can be made at <http://vtyymca.org/> or by sending a check to YMCA at VT, 403 Washington St. SW, Blacksburg, VA 24060.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, Dec. 19:

Blacksburg Santa Tour 2020 - Santa and a few of his Police, Fire, and Rescue friends will make their way through town spreading holiday cheer and greetings from the North Pole from 2 - 5 p.m. Please remember to play it safe by wearing a mask and keeping your distance as you wait outside for Santa to arrive. This is a rain or shine event.

Saturday Creative Writing Group - Meadowbrook Public Library; 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Those taking part should bring your work for small-group feedback and editing.

Teen Dungeons and Dragons - 2-4 p.m. online. DnD is now virtual on Discord. The library staff suggest downloading Discord on your device for ease of access, but this is not required. To join the Discord server, contact shodges@mfrl.org for more info. For ages 11 years and up.

Through Monday, Dec. 21:

Voting in holiday decorating contest - The Christiansburg Parks and Recreation Department is hosting a residential holiday decorating contest. Staff will visit each destination to determine the top 10 entries, which then go on the town's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/cburgvagov) for voting by the community. Voting runs through 9 a.m. Monday, Dec. 21. Once all applications are received, decorated homes who give permission will be included in a map for others to visit on a self-guided light tour.

Monday, December 21:

Around the World: Virtual Holiday Edition - Christiansburg Library; 2 - 3 p.m. This is another virtual adventure touring the world. To be explored on Facebook are the holiday traditions of Mexico. Stop by the library for a take-and-make craft.

Radford Special Education Advisory Committee - A Radford City Schools Special Education Advisory Committee meeting will be held on Monday, December 21, 2020, at 4 p.m. The meeting will be a Google Meet Virtual Meeting. The public is invited to attend. To be invited to the meeting contact Josh Brown, Chairperson, at 267-3083, or Daniel Hill, Director of Special Education, at 267-3223, to be invited with a virtual meeting link.

Now through Dec. 22:

Radford Business window and residential decorating contest - Throughout the city; Tour the commercial districts and neighborhoods from the safety of your own car and then be sure to vote for your favorites, map on RadfordChamber.com.

Now through Dec. 24:

Wrapping for a Reason - A holiday wrapping booth to raise money for local emergency assistance is now open. The booth is located in Uptown Christiansburg (formerly NRV Mall),

near Bath & Body Works and is open daily through Dec. 24. Volunteers are needed. All proceeds benefit Montgomery County Emergency Assistance Program, commonly known as MCEAP which provides emergency food, clothing, utility, rent and mortgage assistance to Montgomery County residents year-round. The sign-up link is <https://tinyurl.com/w4r2020>. A monetary, tax-deductible, year-end donation to MCEAP is welcome. Details are at mceap.com or 540-260-3173. For more information, email w4reason@gmail.com or text/call 540-239-1093.

Monday, Dec. 21- Wed., Dec. 30:

The YMCA at Virginia Tech Meals On Main program - On Monday, Dec. 21 and Wednesday, Dec. 23 passing out holiday treats from Next Door Bake Shop, Blacksburg Bagels and the Thrift Shop along with the shelf stable meals and snacks. (Treats available while stocks last). We rely on volunteers to keep the program running smoothly so we were super excited when we received a message from a special someone in the North Pole. Santa has decided to take a few hours away from the elves and reindeer to come and help us with our meal distribution on Wednesday, Dec 23 at the Thrift Shop parking lot! Santa will remain behind the tables to keep safe social distancing but he'll be delighted to see you and say hello! Please remember to wear your mask and keep your distance. As always Meals On Main will operate rain or shine.

Please note the holiday schedule for meal distribution will be as follows:

Mon., Dec. 21- 4- 6 p.m. at Prices Fork Elementary School parking lot

Wed., Dec. 23 (to replace Fri Dec 25) - 4-6 p.m. in the Thrift Shop parking lot

Mon., Dec. 28- 4-6 p.m. at Prices Fork Elementary School parking lot

Wed., Dec. 30 (to replace Fri., Jan. 1) 4-6 p.m. in the Thrift Shop parking lot

Through our Meals on Main initiative, the YMCA at Virginia Tech hopes to help relieve some of the pressure faced by families due to the current pandemic.

Tuesday, Dec. 22:

Rambling Readers - Jessie Peterman Memorial Library; 2-4 p.m. This is a safety distanced group activity involving reading and walking for a little exercise and some

intellectual stimulation. Readers taking part will walk and talk about what books they're all currently reading and enjoying. The walk will start at the library and cover roughly two miles. Dress warmly and with appropriate footwear for the hills and uneven footing. Call the library for more details.

Polar Express Storytime - 6:30 p.m. at the MFRL Library Online

Join in on Facebook live for a special Polar Express storytime. Complimentary hot chocolate packets and a small craft will be part of the fun. Supplies are limited.

Thursday, Dec. 24:

Christiansburg closings for Christmas, New Year's - The town's facilities will be closed Christmas Eve and Christmas day on Dec. 24- 25. Solid waste normally scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 24, will be collected on Tuesday, Dec. 22, along with Tuesday's regular collection. Solid waste normally scheduled for Friday, Dec. 25, will be collected on Wednesday, Dec. 23, along with Wednesday's regular collection.

Also, Town facilities closed for New Year's Day on Friday, Jan. 1, 2021. Solid waste normally collected Fridays will be collected on Thursday, Dec. 31, along with Thursday's regular collection.

Radford Closings for Christmas: City offices will be closed Wednesday, Dec. 23 through Friday, Dec. 25.

The Solid Waste Collection schedule is: Wednesday, Dec. 23 collected on Monday, Dec. 21. Thursday, Dec. 24 collected on Tuesday, Dec. 22. Friday, Dec. 25 collected on Monday, Dec. 28. Please have garbage available for collection by 7:30 a.m. Drop Center closed Dec. 23- Dec. 25.

Saturday, Dec. 26:

Escape of the North Pole - MFRL Library Online at 4 p.m. On Discord, a live play of a North Pole Escape Room or participants may play at their own pace. Email shodges@mfrl.org for more information.

Monday, Dec. 28:

Hibernation Station - MFRL Library Online at 1 p.m.

Through Dec. 31:

Christiansburg Leaf Collection - The Town of Christiansburg's annual free leaf collection is underway. Runs

through Dec. 31, weather permitting. Public Works crews use a special truck that vacuums the leaves- will collect only piles of loose leaves; leaves placed in bags will not be accepted. Do not place leaves in a way that blocks sidewalks, sanitary sewers, solid waste carts, drainage ditches or utility meter boxes. If you are concerned your leaves may blow away, please place a tarp on top of your pile. Crews will remove the tarp, collect leaves and leave tarp behind.

Through Monday, Jan. 4, 2021:

United Way Festival of Trees - The United Way and partner agencies are decorating Christmas trees in their offices to help spread some holiday cheer in these troublesome times. Pictures of each tree posted on unitedwaynrv.org/tree. Residents of the NRV have the job of picking their favorite tree by visiting the United Way website anytime through Monday, Jan. 4, checking out the trees and casting a vote. A special trophy will be awarded to the winner. Voting will be cast by donations of any amount.

Thursday, Jan. 7:

Chamber of Commerce Eggs & Issues - Panel discussion with local law enforcement via Zoom, 8 - 9 a.m.

American Legion meeting - Harvey-Howe-Carper Post 30 will meet at 7 p.m. at the VFW Post Home on 102 Watts St. in Radford. In the event of heavy snowfall or ice, the meeting will be canceled. For further information, please contact 250-2283 or 239-9864.

Tuesday, Jan. 12:

Sons of Confederate Veterans meeting - Stuart Horse Artillery Camp 1784 will meet at 7 p.m. at Aly's Family Italian Restaurant on 3204 Riner Road. Jonathan McPeak will present the "History of the 24th Virginia Infantry Regiment". Members of the United Daughters of the Confederacy are also invited to attend. For further information, please call 320-

4315 or 239-9864.

Through Thursday, Jan. 21:

Girl Scout Cookie Sales - The Girl Scouts of Virginia Skyline Council taking orders for cookies that will be delivered in mid-January. Gift certificates can be purchased through Jan. 14, 2021, by emailing info@gsvsc.org or calling 540-777-5100. Girl Scout cookies are \$5 a box. To locate a Girl Scout to take an order, contact the girl scouts at info@gsvsc.org or 540-777-5100. When the cookies arrive in the region in mid-January, Girl Scouts will be delivering them in different ways: masked drop-offs to the customer's door; cookie booth drive-thrus; online ordering with shipping via Digital Cookie; cookie delivery service (The details are being worked out with a national food delivery service. They will be announced on Jan. 12.); and voice-activated sales via Echo home systems.

Ongoing Throughout December:

Grab-and-Go Crafts - At the Meadowbrook Public Library during regular library hours. These are free crafts that may be taken home to make. Each week there will be new crafts.

StoryWalk - All month at the Christiansburg Library. Brains and bodies get exercised by reading and walking the trail. The walk begins at the library at the College Street entrance of Downtown Park. This month's book is The Emperor's Egg.

Virtual Cookie Recipe Exchange - All Month of December, at the Christiansburg Library. Join us on Facebook to share your favorite cookie recipe. Take and Make Snowman Hot Cocoa in a Jar craft will be available while supplies last.

Aquatic, Rec Center hours for appointments - The Christiansburg Aquatic Center is open by appointment only on Mondays, Wednesdays and Friday from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m., on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8 a.m. to 7

HOLIDAY ADVERTISING DEADLINES

Our offices will be closed on Friday, December 25 for Christmas. The deadline for ALL ADVERTISING running in the Saturday 12/26 issue of the News Messenger/Radford News Journal will be Wed., December 23 at noon. We will also be closed on Friday, January 1 for New Years. The deadline for ALL ADVERTISING running in the Saturday 1/2 issue of the News Messenger/Radford News Journal will be Wed., December 30 at noon.

GIVE THE GIFT OF FUN THIS Christmas

PURCHASE A \$25 GIFT CARD & GET 2 FREE SPIN ZONE BUMPER CAR PASSES

NRV SUPERBOWL
375 Arbor Dr., Christiansburg
www.nrvsuperbowl.net

OPINION

Evans King: Coming through in the clutch (not)

One of the greatest compliments you can give is to say that a person “comes through in the clutch.” The term is borrowed from the world of sports of course and is a corollary to the principle that “the tough get going when the going gets tough.” Old coachspeak.

I think we all like to think that we have this quality within ourselves, that we’re ready to come to bat with the winning run on base in the last inning and deliver.

When you think about it, there are lots of opportunities in everyday life to show this grit and determination. Maybe you only remember your failures, but it seems that I have had a long history, however, of NOT coming through in those situations. I will recount a few such instances.

Perhaps the first such occasion was my first day of school: Christiansburg Primary, Junkin Street, directly across the street from my grandmother’s house, my teacher Mrs. King (no relation) on duty. She called the roll of the 40 or so kids in my class. She got to my name and called out “Evans King.” It did

not get my attention; I had no idea who that was. Up to that point in life I had only heard myself referred to as “Buddy.” The name sounded vaguely familiar, but nary a move nor sound did I make. She repeated herself, staring right at me. I looked over my shoulder to see who shared my last name. No one responded. My first “choke,” my first failure to come through in the clutch.

Then there is the time my senior year of high school when I was on a local television quiz show on Channel 7 out of Roanoke, Classroom Kwiz. I chronicled this event a few years ago in this column. In an extra playoff round, I botched the answer to what President had been born on February 12, confidently responding Washington rather than Lincoln and costing Christiansburg High the contest. It was almost more than my overly proud school teacher parents could stand.

My appearance on this show did, however, further the use of the phrase “deer-in-the-headlights look.”

That event followed by only

a few months another abject failure on my part. It was parent-teacher night at CHS, and one of my high school classmates and I had been asked to ring the bells for the parents to change classes. The classmate assisting me was a very nice and stunningly beautiful girl whom I had been terrified of since first grade. Unapproachable by guys like me.

At the end of the evening, she asked for a ride home. When I pulled into her parents’ driveway, she leaned over, gave me a slight kiss and then got out of the car and walked to the door. I sat in stunned silence until she got into the house. I then suavely backed up and pulled out of the driveway, over the top of the trash cans sitting at the side, flattening both of them.

In more recent years (not that recent), there is the matter of my interview at the law firm that became my home. At that time, in-house interviews were done in an intimidating and austere fashion. The candidate (in this instance, me) was brought into a large conference room with five or six

of the firm’s partners seated around a long table. As I recall the event, the “five or six” in the room with me were not only among the most powerful partners in the firm, they were also among the most talented lawyers in the state.

I was interviewing for a position in the firm’s banking and transactions practice. Critical to this practice (as I later learned) was knowledge of Article 9 of the Uniform Commercial Code. Simply stated it governs granting collateral for loans (again as I later learned). My resume showed that I had gotten an award for the highest grade in a class called “Uniform Commercial Code,” so a comment was made by one of the partners to the effect that “it’s good that you know Article 9; it’s critical to our practice.”

Unfortunately my class had NOT included “Article 9,” a bunch of other articles but not number 9. Showing grace (or lack thereof) under pressure, and having no clue what Article 9 covered, I blurted out “Oh, yes, Article 9, that’s the one that comes after Article 8.” I got a couple of strange looks but also the job.

All of this is prelude to my failure of this past week. An astoundingly bad performance in a clutch situation. I decided to apply for my “social security retirement benefits,” having reached (and exceeded) “full retirement age” (a depressing thought). I pulled the trigger and called the SSA. After having paid in all the way back to 1969, it was now my turn to get something back, time for the government to start paying me.

The big moment right? You finally become creditor of the federal government rather than its debtor. And after years of walking into academic buildings and getting my grades by checking my social security number, after years of placing it on hundreds of applications, after filing what seems like thousands of tax returns, I blew it. I could not remember my number. I knew there were a bunch of “two’s” and “four’s” but I had no idea of the exact order.

Just the most recent failure to come through in the clutch. I hope I get a few more at-bats. And I hope my money starts showing up.

Virginia offers driver privilege card beginning Jan. 2, 2021

Beginning January 2, 2021, Virginians may apply for a driver privilege card at the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Applications will be accepted by appointment only; appointments can be made

at dmvNOW.com/appt. This change in Virginia law, authorized by the Virginia General Assembly, creates a driving credential for individuals who are non-U.S. citizens and cannot meet Virginia’s legal presence

requirements, making them ineligible to receive a standard or REAL ID-compliant driver’s license in Virginia.

Customers may be eligible to obtain a driver privilege card if they meet the following criteria:

- are a non-U.S. citizen who is a resident of Virginia.
 - have reported income from Virginia sources or are claimed as a dependent on a tax return filed in Virginia in the past 12 months.
 - do not have a driving privilege that is currently suspended or revoked in Virginia or any other state, to include insurance-related infractions.
- “We are pleased to

offer this new credential to give thousands of tax-paying Virginians the opportunity to drive legally on our roadways, something they previously have not been able to do,” said DMV Commissioner Richard D. Holcomb. “Like applicants for any driving credential, driver privilege card applicants must prepare for their visit by gathering necessary documents and studying for all required testing. A good place to start is the DMV webpage dedicated to this new credential, dmvNOW.com/dpc.”

In order to obtain a driver privilege card in Virginia, the following documents must be provided:

• two proofs of identity (e.g., foreign passport and Consular identification document issued by country of citizenship).

• two proofs of Virginia residency (e.g., monthly mortgage statement and utility bill).

• proof of Social Security number (if one has been issued) or the individual’s taxpayer identification number (e.g., W-2 form or ITIN letter).

• tax return documentation (e.g. Virginia Resident Form, Virginia Part-Year Resident Income Tax Return Form or Virginia Nonresident Income Tax Return Form, filed in the past 12 months).

All documents must be

originals and are subject to verification; however, printouts of approved online residency documents may be accepted.

The steps to obtain a driver privilege card vary based on a customer’s licensed driving history. Applicants will be required to pass a vision screening. DMV encourages those eligible to make an appointment for the new year, study and prepare for applicable tests at dmvNOW.com and organize the documents necessary to obtain a driver privilege card. An interactive document guide, available on DMV’s website, helps to prepare customers for their visit.

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WalletHub: Virginia has fourth biggest increase in unemployment claims in country

Many states are now fighting a surge in COVID-19 cases and the increase in new unemployment claims that has come along with them. To identify which states’ workforces are experiencing the biggest increases in unemployment claims due to COVID-19, the personal finance website WalletHub compared the 50 states and the District of Columbia across three metrics.

The results were not good for the commonwealth as Virginia ranked as the state with the fourth biggest increase in unemployment claims in the country

for the week in December when the survey was conducted.

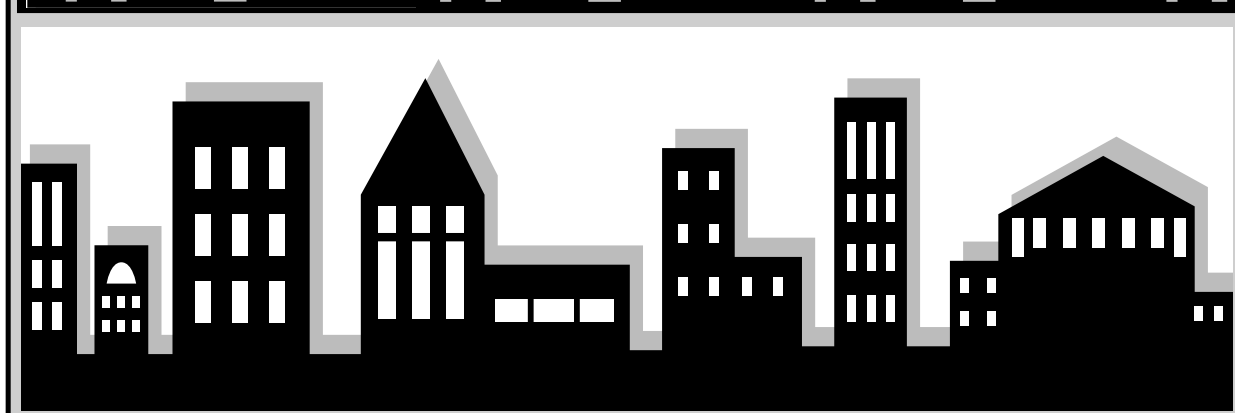
The three metrics WalletHub used to determine its rankings were the same as the website has used throughout its weekly unemployment surveys: 1) the change in unemployment claims the latest week vs. last year; 2) the change in unemployment claims the latest week vs. the start of 2020; and 3) the change in unemployment claims since the start of the COVID-19 crisis vs. last year.

The three metrics for the Commonwealth of Virginia revealed, respectively, increases

of 574.61% (21,095 in 2020 vs 3,127 in 2019), the fourth biggest increase in the U.S.; 561.70% (21,095 vs 3,188 the week of Jan. 1, 2020), again the fourth biggest increase in the U.S.; and 1,342.95% (1,300,638 between the week of March 16, 2020 and the week of Dec. 7, 2020 vs 96,849 between the week of March 18, 2019 and the week of Dec. 9, 2019), the fifth biggest increase in the U.S.

Only Kansas, Illinois and Colorado reported bigger increases in unemployment claims than did Virginia.

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OBITUARIES

Marshall, Carmon James

On Dec. 14, 2020, we had to say good-bye to the greatest Daddy in the world, Carmon James Marshall.

He was born June 9, 1926, to Everett and Mareth Marshall. He grew up in Indian Valley until he went off to World War II. After returning home, he married Myrtle Hollandsworth Marshall, and they made their home in Radford.

He was the owner of a wholesale tree nursery for 75 years and had a small farm he enjoyed working on. He was humble, kind and always had a smile on his face. He never raised his voice or met a stranger. We will miss him, but he will be forever in our hearts.

His wife Myrtle, a granddaughter, Jessica Vaughn; a brother Quinton Marshall; and his sisters, Sylva Minnick and



Claudia Roop preceded him in death.

His two daughters and sons-in-law, Janet and Steve Bishop and Sherry and Danny Vaughn, all of Radford, survive him. He had three grandchildren: Kimberly (Scott) Keith of Lovettsville, Va., Kristen (Scott) Lucas of Charleston, S. C., and Justin (Emily) Vaughn of Winston-Salem, N.C. He had 10 precious great-grandchildren: Jacob, Daniel and Kora Keith, Liam and Mallo-ry Lucas, and Kerrigan, Gracie, Bowman, Graham and Anderson Vaughn. He has a sister, Vera Hollandsworth, and a brother, Davis Marshall, both of Indian Valley.

A private memorial service will be held. The Marshall family is in the care of Mullins Funeral Home & Crematory in Radford. www.mullinsfuneralhome.com Rest in peace with your Lord, Daddy.

Sutphin, Edgar Robert "Bobby"

The Rev. Edgar Robert "Bobby" Sutphin, 87, of Christiansburg, went to be with his Lord on Sunday, Dec. 13, 2020.

He was a member of Belmont Christian Church and was retired from Burlington Mills after 45 years of service. Bobby served his Lord as a Disciples of Christ minister for over 43 years.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Edgar and Mary Sutphin; a son, David Sutphin, and his brother-in-law, Tony Alvarez.

Survivors include his wife of 68 years, Alice T. Sutphin; sons and daughters-in-law, Ben and Melody Sutphin of Roanoke and Stephen and Peggy Sutphin of Weber City; daughter and son-in-law Crystal and Oakley Johnston of Christiansburg; seven grandchildren and their spouses: Allison Gilbert (Ryan),



Laura Riner (Paul), Mary Dayton (Peter), Robbie Johnston (Kayla), Samantha Belt (Joey), Harmony Hixon (Jordan) and David Sutphin; and 13 great-grandchildren; a sister, Jane Alvarez of Tampa, Fla.; and many other relatives and friends.

Funeral services were held Friday, Dec. 14, at Belmont Christian Church and streamed live at trybelmontonline.com with Pastors Beaver Terry, Jerry Dowdy and Brandon Craig officiating. Interment was private in the Belmont Community Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that contributions be made to the Visions Project at Belmont Christian Church.

The Sutphin family is in the care of Mullins Funeral Home & Crematory in Radford. www.mullinsfuneralhome.com.

ANGLICAN CATHOLIC

St. Philip's Anglican Church, 306 Progress Street, NE, Blacksburg, Virginia 24060, (540) 552-1771, www.stphilips-blacksburg.org. Reverend Fr. Wade Miller, Priest. Sunday Morning Prayer 9:45 AM, Sunday Morning Eucharist 10:30 AM, Traditional Anglican Worship using the King James Bible, 1928 Book of Common Prayer, And the 1940 Hymnal. **St. Thomas Anglican Church**- located at 4910 Hubert Rd, NW Roanoke, Va. Traditional Liturgical Lenten Services, Sunday at 10:30 am. Call (540) 589-1299 or visit www.sttofc.org for midweek masses and events. (In Roanoke, go E on Hershberger, L on Hubert to 4910).

BAPTIST

First Baptist Church, 555 West Rock Road, Radford, 639-3873. Rev. Corwin C. Casey, Pastor. Worship with us: 9:45 a.m.; Sunday School: 10:45 a.m.; Praise and Worship: 11:00 a.m. Morning Worship Service; Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. 1 Corinthians 15:58.

First Baptist Church on 3rd Ave., 215 Third Ave. at the corner with Downey St. We are committed to personal spiritual growth and to providing leadership in community ministry. We celebrate the dignity and worth of all persons, created in the image of God. Sunday Bible Study Groups - 9:45, Sunday Worship - 11:00. Website: www.fbcradford.org, 540-639-4419. Worship is broadcast live on 105.9 FM, 101.3 F, 1430AM.

Trinity Community Church, 1505 N. Franklin Street, C'burg. John Altizer, Lead Pastor, Brian Cockram, Associate Pastor, 382-8121. Worship at 10:45 a.m., Outreach Ministries - 6:00p.m. Wednesday, Growth Groups - 5:00p.m. Sunday, Youth and Children's Ministry - 5:00p.m. Sunday, www.trinitycburg.org.

CHURCH OF CHRIST

Blacksburg Church of Christ, 315 Eakin St., 552-1331. Sun. Bible Classes 9:30 a.m., Sun. Worship 10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m., Wed. Bible classes, 7 p.m., Outreach Minister Curt Seright, Community Minister Tom Gilliam, Campus Minister Deonté Watkins.

CHURCH OF GOD

Childress Church of God, 4187 Piney Woods Rd., C'Burg. 381-3693. Sun. School 10 a.m.; Worship 11 a.m. & Wed. 7 p.m.

New Hope Church of God, 1404 Mud Pike Rd., C'Burg. Rev. T. Michael Bond, pastor, 731-3178. Sun. School 10 a.m., Worship 10:50 a.m., 6 p.m. Thurs., 7:00 p.m.

West Radford Church of God, 1824 West Main Street, Radford, VA 24141, Sunday School - 10:00A.M. Morning Worship - 11:00A.M., Children's Church 11:00A.M. Sunday Evening - 6:00P.M., Wednesday Night - 7:00P.M., Pastor Danny Newman, Church Office - 540-639-6562 or 804-921-0828

Radford

WORSHIP DIRECTORY

What About Holiness

Read 1 Peter 1:1 through 5:14

Modern Christians seem to have fallen into the entitlement trap. They expect a comfortable life and readily answered prayers. Rather than self-discipline or correction from church leaders when they stray from Scripture, they want acceptance of their personal practices. They may overlook or excuse sin in themselves and others.

God calls believers to a higher standard.

As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do (1 Peter 1:14-15).

holy like He is? Isn't that impossible? If the Lord commands this, He will enable us to accomplish it. First, we must choose to say "no" to evil longings and become totally devoted to God and His ways. If no desire to please God fills the heart, ask Him to give one. Consult the Lord about daily choices like what to read, watch, and wear. Will these bring glory to God or might they tug us away from holy living? With God's help, holiness happens.

Thought for Today: How can you encourage others in holy living?

Quicklook: 1 Peter 1:13-23

Whoa! God calls us to be

CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST

Radford Church of God in Christ, 206 Russell Ave., Radford. Supt. Ronald A. Watson, Sr.; Elder, 639- 5948. Sun. School 9 a.m.; Prayer 11:30 a.m.; Worship 6 p.m.

LUTHERAN

Christ Lutheran Church, 201 Harvey St. Sunday worship with communion at 10am; fellowship & snacks at 11am. All are welcome. Upcoming events and fellowship opportunities (Senior Brunch, Faith & Film, Rough Draught, etc.) detailed in weekly email and on website: clcradford.org. 540-639-2671.

PENTECOSTAL HOLINESS

Merrimac Pentecostal Holiness Church, Rev. Larry Christopher (540) 552-7194. l.christopher695@comcast.net. Sunday school at 10 a.m. and morning worship is 11 a.m. Evening service at 6 p.m. and Wednesday at 7 p.m.

Radford Worship Center, 1820 Second Street, Radford, 639-6287, Our music is passionate, our worship is real, and Pastor Hal Adams brings relevant messages for everyone at any place on their journey, Sunday Worship Experience at 9:00 AM & 10:45 AM, Wednesday Family Night at 7 PM, Children Ministry provided for all services, join us as Love, Grow, Serve, find us on facebook and Instagram

Walton Pentecostal Holiness Church, 4003 Morning Glory Rd., off Walton Rd. on Rt. 114. 731-1755. Lee Sarver, pastor. Sun. School 9:30 a.m., Worship 10:30 a.m. & 6: p.m., Wed., 7 p.m.

PRESBYTERIAN

Join us at **The Presbyterian Church of Radford**, 201 Fourth Street, at the corner of 4th and Randolph Streets. Phone 639-2585. Worship at 11 am in the parking lot. In case of rain, the service will be streamed on Facebook. Bible study on Tuesday at noon, also on Facebook. Find us on Facebook (The Presbyterian Church of Radford) and on our Website (www.pcradford.org) The mission of our church is to exhibit our belief in God's love for us by sharing and extending that love to all of our brothers and sisters. Kelsey and Peter Hawisher-Faul, Pastors.

UNITED METHODIST

Asbury United Methodist Church, 500 Stuart Street, Christiansburg. 540-382- 0743. Rev. Ryan Schaeffer. Sunday School, 10:15 a.m., Sunday Worship, 11:30 a.m., Wednesday Bible Study 7pm, alternating month's with Schaeffer Memorial Baptist Church, Senior Bible Study Thursday, 10:30 a.m. All are welcome.

Central United Methodist Church, 803 Wadsworth Street, Radford. 639-3529. 8:30 a.m. Sunday Services: 8:30am (interpreter provided); 9:45am Sunday School (interpreter provided); and 11:00am. Wednesday Bible Study: 6:30pm. Child care is provided. www.centralmethodistchurch.com.

St. Paul United Methodist Church, 220 W. Main St., C'Burg. Rev. Moonsup "Paul" Song (540) 382-2410. Sunday Worship 10am, Sunday School 9am. Live streaming Sunday Service - www.twitch.tv/stpaulumc

OBITUARIES continued from page 18

Dehart, Thomas Eugene

Thomas Eugene Dehart, 78, of Pulaski, passed away Monday, Dec. 14, 2020.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Bert and Evelyn Dehart, and a daughter, Rita Collins Hall.

Survivors include his son, Allen (Elizabeth) Dehart; grandchildren Ashley (Robert) Rogers, Cassandra Dehart, Gregory



Dehart and Beth Dehart; seven great-grandchildren; brothers Donald (Carolyn) Dehart, Daniel Dehart and Gary (Edie) Dehart; special friend Bunny Dalton; and many other relatives and friends.

Services will be private. The Dehart family is in the care of Mullins Funeral Home & Crematory in Radford.

Gunter, Martha Fay Whitlock

Martha Fay Whitlock Gunter, 80, passed away at her home in Fairlawn on Thursday, Dec. 17, 2020. She was preceded in death by her parents, Lawrence and Daisy Whitlock.

Survivors include her husband of 56 years, Jackie D. Gunter; son and daughter-in-law, Mike and Carol Gunter of Fairlawn; granddaughters, Kayla Gunter of



Parrott, and Ashley (Luke) Parah of Fairlawn; great grandchildren, Jackson Sadler, Ember Lattimer and Katherine Parah; brother, Daniel L. Whitlock; her canine companion, Jake; and many other relatives and friends.

Services will be private. The Gunter family is in the care of Mullins Funeral Home & Crematory.

Long, Barbara Nell Slusher

With heavy hearts, we announce that our dear mother and grandmother, Barbara Nell Slusher Long of Fairlawn, passed away at Carilion Medical Center NRV, surrounded by her loved ones, on Thursday, Dec. 10, 2020 at the age of 89.

Born in Willis, she grew up in Radford. She was married to the love of her life, Wilbur Long, for 60 years. She loved to laugh and could always be counted on to lighten the mood with her antics. Her personality was contagious and she never met a stranger. She had a passion for shopping that was indulged in by her family.

As a dedicated mother, she loved fiercely. She was a caregiver for children whom she adored, and although



she was paid, she never considered it work. Her strength and vivaciousness were a gift to those who loved her.

She was preceded in death by her husband and six siblings. She is survived by her devoted children, Gary Long, Rhonda Houchins and Kimberly Long. She will live on in the hearts of her grandchildren, great-granddaughters and great-great-granddaughter who revered her.

In a celebration of a life well-lived, a memorial service will be conducted by Jehovah's Witnesses at a later date. May her memory be a blessing.

The Long family is in the care of Mullins Funeral Home & Crematory in Radford.

Price, Alicia Snider

Alicia Snider Price, 51, joined her mother in their Heavenly Home on Wednesday, Dec. 9, at 8:07 a.m. at UVA Medical Hospital.

Alicia was born to Wayne Snider and the late Barbara DeHart Snider of Dublin on Jan. 16, 1969. She was a 1987 graduate of Pulaski County High School and attended college at New River Community College in Dublin.

She enjoyed spending time with her family, watching Atlanta Braves baseball and attending her daughter's softball games.

She was preceded in death by her beloved mother, Barbara DeHart Snider; grandmother Della Snider and grandfather Charles Snider; grandmother Katherine DeHart and grand-



father John DeHart, and her uncle, Johnny DeHart.

She is survived by her husband, Terry Price, and her daughter, Kayla Price, both of Fairlawn; her father, Wayne Snider of Dublin; a sister, Chrissy Price, and brother-in-law Mike Price of Draper; brother Tony Snider and sister-in-law Sabrina Snider of Christiansburg; brother Gary Snider of Alexandria; a number of nieces and all her wonderful aunts, uncles, cousins and friends.

Alicia requested to be cremated and wished to be placed near her mother. A celebration of life will be held for family and friends in the coming months. In lieu of flowers, please donate to your charity of choice.

Slusser, Jr., Pascal Erno (Bud)

Pascal Erno (Bud) Slusser, Jr., 63, of Christiansburg died, Wednesday, Dec. 16, 2020, at his home surrounded by his family. He was born on March 10, 1957 to the late Pascal Erno, Sr. and Mary Bradley Slusser. He was also preceded in death by a brother, Roger Slusser.

Bud was an avid hunter, fisherman, and outdoorsman. Most of all he cherished his time watching Jamie play ball. He is survived by his wife of 45 years, Margaret Akers Slusser; his son and daughter-in-law, Jamie and Aman-



da Slusser; brother, Gary (Slim) Slusser; special niece, Tonya and her husband, Charlie; special nephew, Josh and his girlfriend, Tracey; sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law, Velma and Mike McMurray, Janice and Haywood Tiller; brother-in-law, and sister-in-law, Eddie and Shirley Akers, special friends, Sid Smith and Al Lugar, several nieces and nephews.

Services will be held at a later date. Arrangements by McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg.

Mullins, Virginia Frances Sutphin Meredith

Virginia Frances Sutphin Meredith Mullins, 86, passed away Monday, Dec. 14, 2020. She was a smiling face in the Deli of the Kroger in Fairlawn and a member of Calvary Baptist Church. She was preceded in death by her husbands, Henry Harman Meredith and Edwin Clarence Mullins.

Survivors include her son and daughter-in-law, David and Donna Meredith; sister, Opal S. Jones; several much loved nieces

and nephews; many great nieces and great nephews; and a multitude of friends.

Graveside services will be held at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 22, 2020, at the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Dublin. Due to the restrictions with COVID19, services will be limited to 25 people.

The Mullins family is in the care of Mullins Funeral Home & Crematory in Radford. www.mullinsfuneralhome.com.

Ross, Joyce Wimmer

Joyce Wimmer Ross, 74, of Christiansburg passed away on Tuesday, Dec. 15, 2020. A loving and devoted wife, mother and grandmother, she left this world peacefully with her husband and two children by her side.

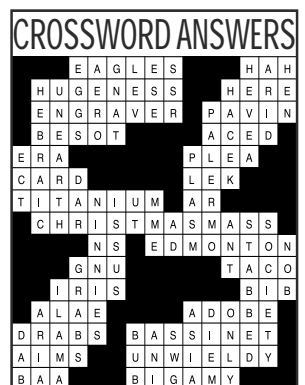
Born on Sept. 30, 1946,

in Roanoke, she was raised in the area and graduated from Patrick Henry High School in 1964 and then Radford College in 1968. She married Harold Houchins Ross Jr. on July 3, 1970, at a ceremony held at her childhood church, First Christian Church in

downtown Roanoke. She taught school for a few years and throughout her life she dedicated herself to her family, her church and several other causes and organizations. She shared her love of cooking and baking with family and friends and self-published two cookbooks. She also enjoyed crafting, crossword puzzles and reading. She was preceded in death by her parents, Arthur Lewis and Helen Hunter Wimmer. She is survived by her husband of 50 years, Harold; her children Alison Ross MacPhail and Mark Stephen Ross and their spouses, Joseph C. MacPhail III and Virginia Katherine Ross; her brothers Neil Jackson Wimmer and Donald Lewis Wimmer; and her five granddaughters, Elizabeth, Ashleigh and Emily MacPhail, and Katherine Joyce and Evelyn Ross.

A celebration of life service will be held later in 2021. In lieu of flowers, the family has requested that memorials be made in Joyce's honor to First Christian Church 344 Church Ave SW, Roanoke, VA 24016 or the American Red Cross. Arrangements by Horne Funeral Home & Crematory, Christiansburg, VA 540-382-2612.

Submit letters to the editor to editor@ourvalley.org



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RADFORD SPORTS

Fuente will be back as VT head football coach for 2021 season

Marty Gordon
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

Athletic Director Whit Babcock ended the speculation surrounding football coach Justin Fuente Tuesday by stating there will be no changes for next season.

"I believe in Justin," Babcock said during a Zoom news conference. "It's not always the fashionable thing to keep somebody when everybody is yelling, but he's our guy and I believe he gives us the best chance to be successful."

Babcock told reporters he understands the rumblings of fans and longtime Hokie supporters but asked them to stay the course.

"We would ask from Hokie nation if you can do it when we play again in nine to 10 months if you are up to this: Don't tear it down," Babcock said. "Some will continue to try to tear and never stop just to justify their previous position of thinking that we needed to make a change."

Babcock said he and Fuente sat down on Monday. "We covered recruiting, the depth chart, strength and conditioning, coaches, coaching, community outreach, fan donor engagement, his media appearances, former player involvement, that this is a results-driven business, what the identity to our team is and needs to be, where we need help and support, his level of commitment whether he wants to be here and what he wants to do right here. And his answers were honest and sincere and genuine and they certainly energized me," the AD said.

Babcock put to rest any rumors that the two men did not see eye-to-eye.

"Any past misunderstandings that Justin and I may have had are greatly, greatly exaggerated," the athletic director said. "Please keep in mind any leak that is put out there is always with a motive. We get along just fine, and yesterday was a great

example."

Coincidentally, Tuesday was the day Fuente's buyout of his contract dropped from approximately \$12 to \$10 million. But Babcock said that did not come into play, and neither did the overall financial downslide of the university's athletic budget.

"Yes, we are in a bind financially, yes there's buyouts, but we were determined to make the right decision either way because I cannot imagine a working relationship with somebody whom you don't believe in that you just keep for money," Babcock said. "You can lose or risk money no matter which way you go, so make the right decision and the rest will take care of itself."

Fuente has gone 43-32 in five seasons in Blacksburg, and Babcock compared this season to being the former Memphis head coach's first "true" year in charge of the Hokies.

The athletic director said it's hard to follow a



FILE PHOTO

Justin Fuente will return in 2021 for a sixth season as head coach of the Virginia Tech football team.

legendary coach like Frank Beamer.

"For Justin, this was Year 1 in some respects," he said. "And please let me explain it like that. We are not going to look at it like Year 1. We know it's Year 5. What I mean is this, that this is Year 1 of being totally Justin's program, all

of his players. I believe that the transition from Coach Beamer and Bud Foster was harder than anticipated, not because of Bud or Coach Beamer."

COVID-19 has turned the program upside down. Babcock admitted over 70 percent of the football team and staff has had the

virus this season.

The pandemic could also play into whether the Hokies participate in another postseason bowl game. Babcock said that decision has not yet been made.

At least four other ACC programs, including UVA, have opted out of playing in a bowl game.

RU adds two to women's golf



PHOTO COURTESY OF RU ATHLETICS

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Radford University head women's golf coach Jeff Beeler announced

the addition of two in-state standouts Monday afternoon.

Kaitlyn Mosdell and Caleigh Street will join the program for the

2021-22 season. Mosdell and Street will each have four years of eligibility remaining.

Mosdell, a Roanoke native, is a three-time

qualifier for the Virginia High School League Girls State Championship (2017-19). She competed at Lord Botetourt High School. She was a two-time All-Blue Ridge District Team selection (2018, 2019) and also won the Blue Ridge District Tournament.

On the junior side, Mosdell was a two-time member of the Roanoke Valley Golf Hall of Fame (2018, 2019) and finished second at the Roanoke County City Tournament, posting rounds of 77 and 71. Mosdell was also ranked as the sixth-best prospect in the 2021 class.

"I'm excited to have Kaitlyn join our program," Beeler said. "She has tremendous upside

and is a local talent that should have an immediate impact on our program."

Street, a Jewell Ridge, Va., native, is a three-time qualifier for the VHSL Girls State Championship (2017-19). She competed at Richlands High School. She was the first female from Richlands to ever qualify for the VHSL State Championship. She shot a 69 to win the VHSL Region 2D Championship in 2019. Street was also the 2019 VHSL Southwest District and Region 2D Player of the Year.

Street had a decorated junior career as well, winning both the Hurricane Junior Golf Tour's Raleigh Summer Junior Tournament and

the HJGT Knoxville Fall Junior Open, shooting 70-76 to win the latter event. She also finished as the runner-up in the HJGT Pinehurst Fall Junior Open.

"Like a lot of recruits for 2021, I've never met Caleigh, but after speaking with her and getting to know her I know she's going to fit in perfectly with our team," Beeler said. "She's had a great junior golf career and we're excited for her to join us in the fall."

Mosdell and Street will join a Highlanders team that returns four of its five starters from the 2019-20 team that set the school record for lowest 54-hole team score.

--RU Athletics

VHSL retracts earlier statement requiring masks in games and practices in favor of encouraging masks to be worn

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In a statement issued Monday morning, the Virginia High School League rescinded its earlier statement requiring that face coverings be worn during training and competition and has reissued its guidance to declare that face masks are "strongly encouraged" but not required in accordance with the governor's emergency order.

On Dec. 10, the VHSL announced that it "is requiring each school to follow the recommendations of the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)" that students and coaches wear masks while participating in sports.

This requirement was issued in response to information that the Governor's Requirement to Wear Face Coverings would include such a provision. However, Emergency Order 72 when issued stated that face coverings re-

quirements "do not apply to ... individuals exercising or using exercise equipment."

"VHSL apologizes for any confusion created by its original release," said VHSL Executive Director, Dr. John W. "Billy" Haun. "We ask the public to understand that it is the first mission of VHSL to make sure that athletics are conducted in a safe and healthy environment, and it was that desire that motivated the original decision."

"Each school may continue to exercise its discretion and judgment as to safety steps within its athletics programs as it pertains to face coverings."

In its statement, the VHSL said, "The state's athletic group is rescinding its requirement that face coverings be worn during training and competition and is reissuing its guidance to conform with the intent of EO 72 that face masks are 'strongly encouraged' but not required."

According to the Virginia Department of Health, individuals

who participate in, attend, or organize sports activities should consider the potential level of risk for transmitting COVID-19 associated with certain sports before deciding to participate in recreational sports. COVID-19 is spread by close contact between infectious individuals (who may or may not be symptomatic).

In line with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Considerations for Youth Sports, the VDH recommends that participants and organizers of sports activities consider the following to help assess the risk of spread during a particular sport:

- Physical closeness of players, and the length of time that players are close to each other or to staff.
- Amount of necessary touching of shared equipment and gear (e.g., protective gear, balls, bats, racquets, mats or water bottles).
- Ability to engage in social distancing while not actively

engaged in play (e.g., during practice, on the sideline or in the dugout).

- Age of the player.
- Players at higher risk of developing serious disease.
- Size of the team. Limit any nonessential visitors, spectators, volunteers and activities involving external groups or organizations.
- Travel outside of the local community.
- Setting in which the sport is typically played (e.g. indoors vs. outdoors).

The VDH says wearing masks is especially important during indoor competition and practices. Wearing masks is also important in shared spaces such as locker rooms and during shared transportation (including carpooling) to/from an event.

Masks should also be worn by coaches, officials, spectators and volunteers at all times and coaches and/or officials should monitor proper use. Individual outdoor sports that do not involve

close contact (e.g. golf, singles tennis, etc) may not necessitate wearing a mask.

Masks are generally well tolerated by the majority of persons who wear them during exercise; however the masks may need to be removed under certain circumstances (e.g. if the masks become wet). There are some sports in which the mask could become a choking hazard or inadvertently impair vision and should not be worn, such as cheerleading-tumbling/stunting, gymnastics, wrestling and water sports.

Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam's Executive Order 72 includes capacity limits.

For sports played indoors, spectators must be limited to 25 persons per field (indoor courts).

For sports played outdoors, spectators are limited to two guests per player.

The total number of spectators cannot exceed 30 percent of the occupancy load of the certificate of occupancy for the venue.

Major League Baseball reclassifies Salem baseball, Pulaski loses Yankees

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Major League Baseball's (MLB) final overhaul for Minor League Baseball has been announced, and it includes reclassifying the Salem club from High-A to Low-A ball.

Salem will remain a Red Sox affiliate, but Pulaski lost the Yankees when the Appalachian League was downgraded from a rookie short season to a college

wooden bat league.

Details are still out on how the change in classifications will affect the Sox. A new Player Development License (PDL) was signed last week, and the Salem franchise is owned and operated by the big-league team so the re-up came as no surprise.

The PDL replaces a previous agreement between MLB and minor league baseball teams that expired in October. If a full season is played in 2021,

the schedule will include a 132-game schedule for A, 138 for AA and 144 games for AAA.

The changes also eliminated some teams around the country including longtime Carolina League members Fredrick and Hagerstown.

In addition to Pulaski, the New York Yankees eliminated nearby Staten Island, a Single-A affiliate. The team said it would shut down operations completely for the time being. The

Staten Island ownership has filed a lawsuit against the Yankees to hold them accountable to a written agreement with the club.

The overall plan lowers the total of minor league teams from 160 to 120. The change caused every MLB team to re-evaluate and streamline its minor league operation. The Yankees reduced its locations from 10 to six.

Twenty-seven games will be

played at Pulaski's Calfee Park as part of the new wooden bat league that will feature seniors in high school and freshmen from college. League play will begin on June 3 and continue through August 7.

On a side note, the Calfee trolley was vandalized this past week, and Calfee Park officials are offering a \$1,000 reward for the arrest and conviction of the individual and/or individuals responsible for the incident.

Outdoor report: What are F1 largemouth bass?

F1 largemouth bass (also sometimes referred to as “tiger bass”) are the first-generation cross between two subspecies of largemouth bass: the Northern largemouth bass and the Florida largemouth bass.

These fish are called “intergrades” instead of “hybrids” because they are not a cross of two different species, but rather two different subspecies. By intentionally crossing the two pure subspecies, F1 fish are produced.

This is important because it has been documented that only the first-generation cross (F1s) exhibit enhanced growth rates. Thus, the idea is to stock fish that can outperform the wild fish in our lakes with respect to growth (and maybe ultimate size as well).

What kind of largemouth bass does Virginia have?

The Department of Wildlife Resources has done an extensive amount of genetic testing in Virginia’s lakes. What the department has found is that our largemouth bass populations are made up of fish with both Northern and Florida genetic traits. When we’ve looked at the frequency of Northern and Florida genes in our bass populations, we typically see anywhere from 40% to 60% Florida genes. All of our populations appear to be mixed. However, our wild fish are not first-generation crosses between pure Northern and Florida strains. Instead, they are what geneticists call an Fx generation. This simply means that it’s a fish that has both Northern and Florida ancestry, but isn’t the direct offspring of pure parents.

You can think of it as the difference between a labra-

doodle and a mutt that has some lab and some poodle in its ancestry. The key to all of this is that by stocking F1 fish, we are not introducing any new genetic material into our populations, and we aren’t doing this in an attempt to change the genetic composition of the populations.

Where does the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) get F1 largemouth bass?

Currently, we do not have the hatchery infrastructure or a source of pure Northern/Florida brood stock required to produce F1 fish. Therefore, we are purchasing these fish from a private source that meets our fish health protocols (so we don’t introduce any new diseases into our waters).

Because we have to purchase these fish, the entire

program is affordable only if we can achieve results with a relatively small number of fish. Thus, the plan is to stock these at a low density because that’s the only way it would be sustainable on a bigger scale (should the project prove to be successful).

Additionally, this is a good time to remind folks that stocking fish into public waters in the state is illegal without an authorization from DWR. We follow a very stringent set of protocols when we decide to stock fish, and this is not something to be taken lightly. Stocking the wrong fish in the wrong place can have serious consequences to the ecosystem.

Because of this, we consider all potential stockings very carefully, evaluate the possible outcomes using the best available data, and make



Stocking F1 largemouth bass fingerlings into the Chickahominy River

sure the fish we’re stocking come from a healthy source (so we don’t introduce any new diseases). Stocking any fish has consequences of some sort and requires careful planning and evaluation. Many ecosystems have been irreparably harmed by people stocking fish (intentionally and unintentionally) and should never be done without considering all the possible outcomes.

Where is DWR stocking F1s?

Over the years, we have stocked F1 largemouth bass in several places. These include resources like Back Bay, the Chickahominy River, the tidal Rappahannock River and several small impoundments. This current experimental stocking program is focusing on a set of large reservoirs. We are stocking these fish into Smith Mountain Lake, Claytor Lake, Lake Anna, Lake Chesdin and Beaverdam Swamp Reservoir.

Because this experiment is directed toward large reservoirs, it will be separated from any other work we might do with F1 fish on small impoundments (under 500 ac) or tidal waters. Those resources will be treated separately on a case-by-case basis.

Why is DWR stocking F1s?

Studies have shown F1 intergrade fish have potential to grow faster and reach larger sizes than pure Northern strain fish, Florida strain fish or other crosses beyond the first generation (e.g., the offspring of two F1 fish would be F2 fish, and these don’t show enhanced growth rates). However, that first-generation cross (F1s) do tend to grow faster (and maybe get larger) than largemouth bass currently swimming around in our lakes.

The idea behind stocking these fish is we want to try to enhance the trophy fishery component in our big lakes. If we can get fish to a trophy size faster, then theoretically there will be more trophy-sized fish in the lake.

Additionally, if F1 fish can get a little larger than wild fish, we might see some bigger fish coming out of these lakes as well. We don’t know it will work this way, which is why we are doing this on an experimental basis.

Why are some water bodies stocked with F1s, while others aren’t?

The biggest reason is that we don’t know if this will work. We currently do not have the hatchery resources to produce our own F1 largemouth bass, so we have to purchase them from the private sector.

This isn’t particularly cheap. If the stockings do work, then we’ll look to expand the program to other lakes. If it doesn’t work and our results do not meet our goals for the program, then we will have learned what we needed at a reduced cost for the study.

We are doing this on enough lakes (five of them) to get a good picture of the success rate, while still being relatively conservative with our budget. In short, we are stocking just enough lakes to make this a viable experiment, and not wasting money with overkill.

We’ve picked a wide enough variety of lakes across the state to get a good picture of how well this might work and allow

us to plan for future efforts should it prove successful. Conversely, if the whole thing doesn’t work, we won’t have spent license money where we didn’t need to. Ultimately, this pilot program should allow us to evaluate the success of this management tool. If we achieve our goals for the program, then we can look to expand it in the future.

Do F1 largemouth bass have the potential to harm established bass fisheries?

We don’t think so. From a genetic standpoint, all of our largemouth populations are a mix of Northern and Florida genes (in various proportions). Based on the rather extensive amount of genetic testing we’ve done, we don’t have any “pure” largemouth populations anywhere in the state. So, we don’t expect any genetic impacts to our largemouth bass from these stockings.

Beyond that, we also do not anticipate any negative impacts to established fisheries based upon competition between stocked and wild fish. We are deliberately stocking low numbers of F1 fish, which is the only way this program is affordable and sustainable.

Given that we are stocking at low densities, we don’t expect any competitive impacts with wild fish.

Will I catch more bass in lakes where you’ve stocked F1s?

Probably not. The idea behind this program is to target the trophy end of these fisheries. The better growth rates of F1 fish may show up as more 5+ lb. bass, but we’re still talking about a relatively small number of fish when you look at the entire lake population. As far as overall catch rates go, we are not stocking enough fish to really notice much of a difference in the numbers of 12”-18” fish. So, while we may see an increase in the numbers of really big fish, modest increases of average-sized fish won’t be detectable for most anglers.

How long will it take to determine whether this program worked or not?

Because we’re talking about trying to change the trophy aspect of these fisheries, we’re looking at 5-10-year-old fish. Thus, it’s not something that we can evaluate in a couple of years.

Under perfect conditions, we might start seeing some results in as few as five or six years, but it will be 10 to 12 years before we get a really good idea of whether this worked or not. Basically, it’s a long-term project that will require many years of monitoring on our part to evaluate its success or failure.

How can I tell the difference between a stocked F1 largemouth and a wild largemouth?

The short answer is that you can’t tell the difference without access to a good genetics lab. Visually, the stocked fish are indistinguishable from the wild fish. We take a small piece of fin from any fish we want to test and send that to a genetics laboratory for analysis. The only way to identify the stocked fish is with genetic testing, which looks at the ratio of Northern and Florida genes. Beyond that, there is no way to tell the stocked fish from the wild ones.

— Scott Smith, DWR Regional Fisheries Manager

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