

# News Journal



Wednesday, January 13, 2021 • USPS 387-780 • ourvalley.org • 75 cents

## New River Health District began Phase 1B vaccinations Monday

CHRISTIANSBURG -- On Monday, Jan. 11, the Virginia Department of Health's New River Health District began providing COVID-19 vaccines -- by pre-registration and appointment only -- to additional groups of recipients identified as "Phase 1b."

These personnel include police, fire and hazmat response personnel, those living and working in correctional facilities, homeless shelters and migrant labor camps, childcare/K-12 teachers and staff, food and agriculture workers, manufacturers, grocery store workers, public transit workers, mail carriers (USPS and private) and anyone age 75 or over.

"As we approach the completion of vaccination programs for Phase 1a, we are beginning immediately to vaccinate those Phase 1b essential workers, those in other residential facilities and

older Virginians who face greater risk of illness," said Dr. Noelle Bissell, the health district's director. "We are committed to using every available vaccine as quickly as possible."

Pre-registration and appointments are required, and proof of qualification for Phase 1b is also required. Residents should not simply show up at a clinic. Without pre-registration, an appointment and proof of qualification, vaccinations will not be given.

Many Phase 1b recipients will get their vaccine through their workplace clinic or residential clinic and do not need to seek vaccine independently. Smaller and independent businesses, individuals 75 years old and up and anyone not affiliated with a workplace clinic or residential clinic may pre-register online at [www.NRVRoadtoWellness.com](http://www.NRVRoadtoWellness.com) or call 540-267-8240 to

complete the pre-registration process and provide contact information.

Family members, caregivers and others may register on behalf of other persons. Those in Phase 1c and the general public should not call or go online to pre-register at this time as there may be different systems and processes used for those phases. The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) will contact pre-registered individuals to schedule an appointment at a local health department, pharmacy or other health-care provider.

Pre-registration does not guarantee an appointment or a vaccination, but the process enables VDH to contact recipients when vaccines are available so they can make an appointment.

VDH has been pro-actively pre-

See Phase 1B, page 3



Walk-up window modifications are in progress at the Radford Public Library. The plan is to offer a walk-up service to accomplish things like faxing, copying, scanning and more. The overhang has been mounted and progress has been made, but it is not quite finished. Patrons can continue to call to make an appointment when services are needed.

## Library continues to serve public through pandemic

Heather Bell  
[hbelle@ourvalley.org](mailto:hbelle@ourvalley.org)

RADFORD - The Radford Public Library (RPL) has long been an integral part of many Radford citizens' lives, from story time with their babies to a quiet place to read and reflect, as well as a place to find valuable information and resources.

The COVID-19 pandemic has altered the way the library is able to offer its services, but Library Director Elizabeth Sensabaugh wants patrons to know the RPL is here for them during these trying times.

"Libraries have varied roles within their community, and public libraries are known to wear many hats," said Sensabaugh in a recent interview via email. "At RPL, we are trying to stay connected to our community members and our city to help throughout the pandemic, and staff have been committed to offering their help as safely as possible."

Sensabaugh says her staff has really stepped up, using their creativity, talents and love for the community to find ways to entertain, as-

See Library, page 3

## Women Who Care NRV donates \$10,000+ to Glean Team



Some of the 100+ Women Who Care gather, appropriately enough, in a pumpkin field to present their check for \$10,600 to the New River Valley Glean Team.

BLACKSBURG --The 100+ Women Who Care NRV recently voted to make their most recent contribution to the New River Valley Glean Team, and following their final meeting of 2020, the organization presented the Glean Team with a check for \$10,600.

Christy Gabbard, a member of both the 100+ WWC and Glean Team, put forth the organization for consideration. The NRV Glean Team provides nutritious and locally grown fresh fruit and vegetables to thousands of families throughout

the New River Valley by growing food in large gardens, collecting food from local farmers and farm fields, and purchasing bulk potatoes twice a year. They then distribute the crops to local food-insecure families and hunger relief organizations in the community.

With the support from 100+ WWC, the Glean Team purchased materials for a high tunnel to extend the growing season and protect crops from insect infestations. They also applied for a USDA matching grant. Extra food production

is especially critical now that more families and individuals are faced with food insecurity because of the pandemic.

In accepting the check, Glean Team founder John Galbraith said, "The Glean Team so greatly appreciates the generosity of the 100+ Women Who Care. Their support to us and to other community-based charitable and service groups is an inspiration. The group exemplifies the spirit of charitable giving."

More information about the NRV Glean Team is available at <https://www.facebook.com/NRV-GleanTeam/>.

The 100+ WWC meets quarterly on the third Tuesday of January, April, July and October via ZOOM because of the pandemic. All interested women are invited to join to support local nonprofits that make the New River Valley a better place to live.

The group's membership area includes the counties of Montgomery, Giles, Pulaski and Floyd and the City of Radford. More information about the 100+ WWC New River Valley is available at [www.100womenwhocarenrv.com](http://www.100womenwhocarenrv.com) or by emailing [nrv100wvc@gmail.com](mailto:nrv100wvc@gmail.com).

The group's next meeting will be Tuesday, Jan. 19, 2021, at 6:15 p.m.

## Researchers: Removal of dairy cows would have minimal impact on greenhouse emissions while reducing key nutrients in food chain



The removal of dairy cows from the United States would only slightly reduce greenhouse gas emissions while reducing essential nutrient supply, Virginia Tech researchers say.

The dairy industry in the United States is massive. It supplies dietary requirements to the vast majority of the population.

This same industry also contributes approximately 1.58 percent of the country's total greenhouse gas emissions. A commonly suggested solution to reduce greenhouse gas output has been to reduce or eliminate this industry in favor of plant production.

A team of Virginia Tech researchers wanted to uncover the actual impact that these cows have on the environment.

The researchers found that the removal of dairy cows from the United States agricultural industry would only reduce greenhouse emissions by about 0.7 percent while significantly lowering the available supply of essential nutrients for humans.

"There are environmental impacts associated with the production of food, period. The dairy industry does have an environmental impact, but if you look at it in the context of the entire U.S. enterprise, it's fairly minimal," said Robin White, an associate professor in VT's Department of Animal and Poultry Sciences and a member of the

research team. "Associated with that minimal impact is a very substantial provision of high quality, digestible and well-balanced nutrients for human consumption."

White was part of a team that included scientists from the U.S. Dairy Forage Research Center, part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and supported Dairy Management, Inc., that examined a few different scenarios for dairy cattle in the United States that factored in current management practices, retirement and depopulation from the United States agricultural industry.

White's team looked at both the environmental and nutritional impact of three different scenarios.

Greenhouse gas emissions were unchanged in the herd management scenario, in which cattle become an export-only industry and the supply of available nutrients decreases. In this economically realistic scenario, the industry stays similar to how it is now, but the United States no longer benefits from the human consumable nutrients that

See Emissions, page 5

## Health district director cautions COVID-19 vaccine is light at tunnel's end, but the tunnel is long

Dr. Noelle Bissell, health director of the New River Health District, warned in a recent virtual meeting with members of the media that "there is a light at the end of the tunnel, but it's a long tunnel."

Bissell said that people must continue to be cautious and follow public health guidelines to prevent the spread of the coronavirus despite an exciting nationwide vaccine rollout. The COVID-19 vaccine is making its rounds across hospitals, long-term care facilities and other health care settings in the New River Valley.

When it will be available to the wider community is hard to predict, Bissell said. Though the district is working on plans to administer the

vaccine in a large-scale way, it must follow state and federal guidelines that direct the order in which different groups receive the vaccine.

Vaccination of the groups classified as phase 1B began Monday. The group includes non-health care frontline workers and those 75 and older.

In the meantime, Bissell said during the virtual press conference that the community needs to remain patient.

"I am asking that people give each other a little bit of grace," she told the media. "It's a very ambitious effort, and there are multiple parallel avenues by which people are getting vaccinated. We are working through health care providers according to

the guidance that's been set."

Long-term care facilities are receiving vaccines through CVS and Walgreens, and Bissell said there are efforts starting to involve other pharmacies in distribution once the vaccine is available to the wider public.

The health district received its first shipment of the Moderna vaccine on Dec. 23 while New River Valley hospitals received the Pfizer vaccine in mid-December.

Currently, hospitals are giving second doses of the vaccine, and in two weeks, Bissell said, the health district will administer its second dose of the Moderna vaccine.

Both vaccines are administered in two doses taken approximately three to four weeks apart. People must receive the same vaccine for both doses.

Some who have received the second dose have reported having side effects, but that is a positive sign that the immune system is working, Bissell said.

"That first dose is a primer of the immune system," she said. "The second dose is when the immune system kicks in."

Each vaccine vial contains 10 doses, and once the vial is opened, the vaccine must be administered within six hours because of cold temperature requirements. If some people do not show up for a scheduled vaccina-

See Vaccine, page 4



PHOTO BY RYAN YOUNG

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## Wednesday, Jan. 13:

**Talking About Books**  
At Christiansburg Library, discussing "Red at the Bone" by Jacqueline Woodson, virtually; 11 a.m. - noon.

## Thursday, Jan. 14:

**Virtual Knitting Group**  
Join Blacksburg Library for a demonstration of easy knitting techniques in a Knitting 101 virtual program; 5 - 6 p.m. The perfect craft for a long winter, knitting is based on only two stitches. Knitting 101 will cover purl, knit, and casting on. Grab some needles and yarn and knit along. A troubleshooting discussion will follow. Call 540-552-8246 for more information.

## Sunday, Jan. 17:

**NAACP Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration**  
The Montgomery County-Radford City-Floyd County Branch of the NAACP will hold its annual celebration of the life and legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., at 3:30 p.m. virtually. The guest speaker will be the Rev. Jefferson Jones, pastor of Surge Ministries and Race & Grace. All are welcome.

The celebration will be via Zoom and Facebook Live. To register and receive additional information, visit <http://bit.ly/2021MLKCelebration>.

## Tuesday, Jan. 19:

**100+ Women Who Care NRV Winter 2021 Quarterly Meeting**  
From 6:15-7:15 p.m. on Zoom, the quarterly meeting at which each member contributes \$100 directly to a charity selected by majority vote with approximately \$10,000 being donated to the elected organization. No membership dues or additional commitments of time or money are required, and members can enter the quarterly drawing to represent a favorite not-for-profit to the group for consideration of that meeting's entire donation amount. All funds remain in the NRV area. For more information contact [nrv100wvc@gmail.com](mailto:nrv100wvc@gmail.com), [www.100womenwhocarenrvc.com](http://www.100womenwhocarenrvc.com) or Sarah Black at (937) 205-3722.

## Thursday, Jan. 21:

**Discord Comic Book Club**  
The Radford Public Library presents an all-ages voice chat discussion of Comic Books via Discord. Neil Gaiman's "Eternals" will be the subject of this month's reading and discussion. Check it out on

Hoopla at [Eternalshttps://www.hoopladigital.com/title/12003687](https://www.hoopladigital.com/title/12003687). To sign up, send a Facebook message or email [duncan.hall@radfordva.gov](mailto:duncan.hall@radfordva.gov). The library will then send an invitation to the RPL Discord server.

## Thursday, Jan. 28:

**Writing Flash Fiction Workshop**  
Blue Ridge Writers, an affiliated chapter of the Virginia Writers Club, is offering a workshop "Writing Flash Fiction" (less than 1500 words) at 7 p.m. via Zoom for interested writers from high school students to adults. Blue Ridge Writers is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit member organization that supports beginning writers and seasoned writers through critique programs, quarterly literary journal publication and monthly workshops. For additional information, contact Dr. John Nicolay [nicolay0211@gmail.com](mailto:nicolay0211@gmail.com) or visit <https://blueridgewriters.com>. Class size is limited.

## Ongoing:

## Throughout January:

**Keep Your Lights Up for Healthcare Heroes**  
Local communities are calling upon

every citizen and business to keep their holiday lights up through January 31 to recognize those working in healthcare.

## StoryWalk

All month at the Christiansburg Library. Brains and bodies get exercise 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.

## Through Thursday, Jan. 21:

## Girl Scout Cookie Sales

The Girl Scouts of the Virginia Skyline Council are taking orders for cookies that will be delivered in mid-January. Gift certificates can be purchased through Thursday, Jan. 14, 2021, by emailing [info@gsvsc.org](mailto: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](mailto: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 and voice-activated sales via Echo home systems.

# Blacksburg Aquatic Center's winter schedule to feature aqualates, Saturdays at the pool

On Monday, Jan. 18, the Blacksburg Aquatic Center will begin offering aqualates on Mondays and Fridays and will open the pool for one Saturday per month from Jan. 23 through May 22.

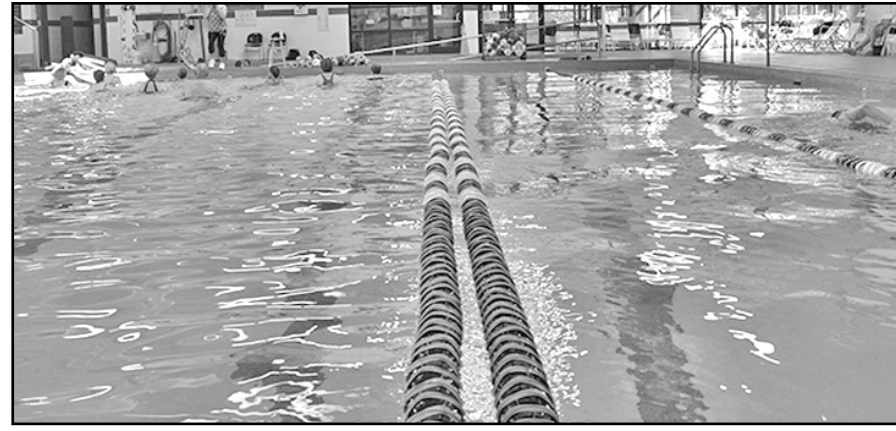
Aqualates is a combination of strength building and endurance exercise. Taught both in the pool and on deck, this hybrid class is an opportunity for a total body workout in a fun setting. Participants must bring their own mats.

Three aqualates courses will be taught, each from 11 a.m. until noon and each with a registration fee of \$45. The courses are scheduled for Jan. 18 through Feb. 26 with a registration deadline of Jan. 15, March

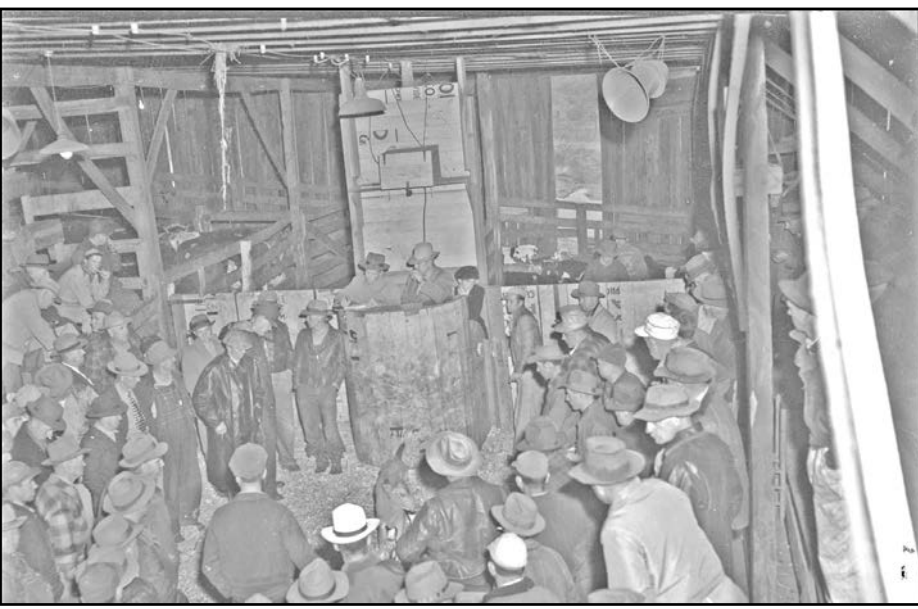
1 through April 9 with a registration deadline of Feb. 26 and April 12 through May 1 with a registration deadline of April 9.

Saturdays at the pool will offer fun and games with events including races, rock hopping and balancing and use of the slide and the diving board. The pool will be open from 12:15 p.m. until 3 p.m. for ages 8-12 and will be limited to 15 participants.

The pool will be open on the following four Saturdays with a registration fee of \$15: Jan. 23 with a registration deadline of Jan. 20, March 27 with a registration deadline of March 24, April 24 with a registration deadline of April 21 and May 22 with a registration deadline of May 19.



# Historic Montgomery



In this 1950s photograph of the interior ring at the Christiansburg Livestock Market, auctioneer Joe Stewart is shown on the right in the auctioneer's booth. (This image from the D. D. Lester Collection and many more are available from the Montgomery Museum of Art & History.)

# New River Health District establishes COVID vaccine hotline

CHRISTIANSBURG -- The Virginia Department of Health's (VDH) New River Health District has activated a telephone hotline at 540-838-8222 (VACC) for questions about COVID-19 vaccine.

The hotline is available for vaccine questions and for anyone who wishes to pre-register for vaccine under Phase 1b, in addition to those in Phase 1a who may have not yet received the vaccine. The number is staffed daily.

Residents in Phase 1a (including healthcare workers, emergency medical services personnel and long term care facility residents and staff) and Phase 1b (including other essential workers, residents of homeless shelters, correctional facilities and migrant labor camps and anyone age 75 and up) may call to pre-register to make an appointment for the vaccine.

Phases are described in detail at [www.vdh.virginia.gov/covid-19-vaccine/](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/covid-19-vaccine/). Those under age 75, even with serious medical conditions, are not eligible in Phases 1a or 1b, unless they qualify according to their place of work or of residence.

Residents also may register online at [www.NRVRoadtoWellness.com](http://www.NRVRoadtoWellness.com). Anyone not eligible under Phase 1b should not pre-register by phone or online as that may delay or prevent others from receiving the

vaccine.

Residents may call the hotline any time and may leave a message if they are unable to reach a call-center staffer. High call volumes are expected, so please be patient. Please do not leave duplicate messages as that will delay the process for everyone.

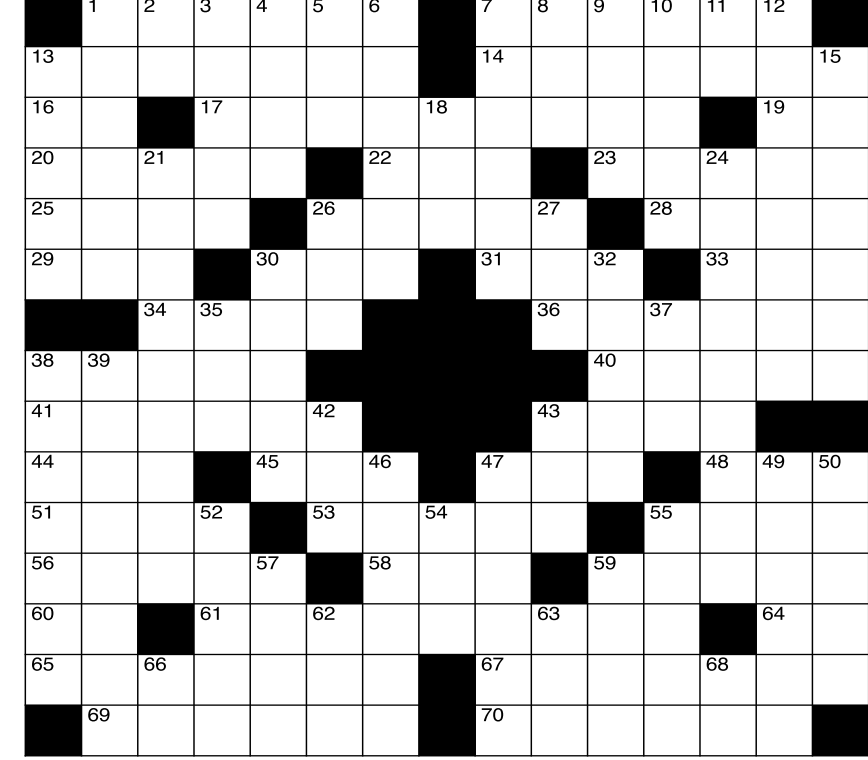
"We have had people showing up at the vaccination site who do not have appointments, which causes delays for everybody," said Dr. Noelle Bissell, director of the New River Health District. "Please do not do this. We are working to vaccinate as many people as possible as quickly as possible, but we cannot vaccinate those without a specific appointment. We ask our fellow Virginians to honor the process so that we can move quickly."

The district's previous hotline number, 540-267-8240, will remain in operation for general questions about COVID-19, especially for questions about testing.

"We are committed to using every available vaccine, and to vaccinating as many Virginians as possible as quickly as possible," said Dr. Bissell.

For more information, visit [www.NRV-RoadtoWellness.com](http://www.NRV-RoadtoWellness.com), [www.vdh.virginia.gov/covid-19-vaccine/](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/covid-19-vaccine/) and [www.vdh.virginia.gov/covid-19-faq/](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/covid-19-faq/) or call 540-267-8240.

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE



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|--|---|---|--|
| <p><b>CLUES ACROSS</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recurring TV show</li> <li>Throws out</li> <li>Iberian Peninsula</li> <li>microstate</li> <li>Gossip</li> <li>Atomic #20</li> <li>Ivy League institution</li> <li>Of I</li> <li>"He Is ___": Scripture excerpt</li> <li>Musical genre</li> <li>Heavy cavalry sword</li> <li>Ancient Olympic Site</li> <li>Satisfies</li> <li>Popular flower</li> <li>Shared services center</li> <li>Drain</li> <li>A way to attack</li> <li>Urban Transit Authority</li> <li>Spiritual leader</li> <li>Postponed</li> <li>N. American plant with</li> </ol> | <p>edible purple-black berries</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gazes unpleasantly</li> <li>Gets up</li> <li>Capital of Ukraine</li> <li>Returned material authorization (abbr.)</li> <li>Golf score</li> <li>Superhigh frequency</li> <li>Swiss river</li> <li>Felons</li> <li>Succulent plants</li> <li>Soluble ribonucleic acid</li> <li>Deliberately setting fire to</li> <li>Infamous singer Zadora</li> <li>Anwar ___, Egyptian statesman</li> <li>Influential sports mag</li> <li>Aromatic Mediterranean plant</li> <li>Sixth note of a major scale</li> <li>Unit of explosive power</li> <li>Large watertight chamber</li> <li>Popular street</li> <li>A way of watering</li> </ol> | <p><b>CLUES DOWN</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mollusks</li> <li>___ denotes past</li> <li>Anchor ropes</li> <li>Large Middle Eastern country</li> <li>To make a mistake</li> <li>Ancient governor</li> <li>Extents</li> <li>Chinese surname</li> <li>NYC subway "residents"</li> <li>Essential oil used as perfume</li> <li>A way to treat injuries (abbr.)</li> <li>Session</li> <li>Units of land areas</li> <li>Goes over once more</li> <li>Where wrestlers work</li> <li>Italian islanders</li> <li>Avenue</li> <li>___ Adams, U.S. President</li> <li>Rest with legs bent</li> <li>Type of flour</li> <li>The Golden State (abbr.)</li> <li>More (Spanish)</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stinging, winged insect</li> <li>The use of irony to mock</li> <li>Arsenals</li> <li>Pouch</li> <li>22nd letter of the Greek alphabet</li> <li>Violent seizure of property</li> <li>Restrict</li> <li>Something comparable to another</li> <li>Punishment device made from stems</li> <li>Soul and calypso songs</li> <li>Formerly OSS</li> <li>Athabaskan language</li> <li>___ bene: observe carefully</li> <li>Six (Spanish)</li> <li>Read-only memory</li> <li>Chinese philosophical principle</li> <li>American conglomerate</li> <li>Tin</li> </ol> |
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**ENTERTAINMENT AT ANY AGE**

**NRV Superbowl**  
575 Arbor Drive, Christiansburg

[www.nrvsuperbowl.biz](http://www.nrvsuperbowl.biz)

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We're OPEN!

**200 Midway Plaza Drive, Christiansburg**

**For opening hours and information, go to [www.xtremespringz.com](http://www.xtremespringz.com)**

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# Library from page 1



**A family browses at the Radford Public Library after making an appointment to peruse the books, DVDs and everything else the library has to offer. The library is open by appointment Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. and Friday through Saturday from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.**

sist and inform patrons through everything from livestreaming story time and crafts to hosting on-line book clubs and more.

"I've always known that I worked with amazing people at RPL and the City of Radford, but they've shown me even more how committed they are to their patrons and community members respectfully in a myriad of ways," she said.

"Staff have creatively offered virtual programs in the way that many public libraries have, moving their programs to an online platform," said Sensabaugh. "RPL has offered Zoom author talks and book club meetings. We've had many Facebook (FB) science experiments, cooking events, book reviews, storytimes, craft activities and more. We've created a channel on YouTube for recorded events. On Discord, we've reached out to youth to provide comic book clubs. Using the ReadSquared platform we provided a remote Summer Reading Program (SRP), a Tri-Wizard Academy Reading Program, a Superheroes Reading program and now a 2021 Reading Challenge for adults and Reading Bingo for kids and teens.

"We've stepped up our presence on FB as well as on Instagram in effort to engage our patrons," she continued. "We've highlighted new materials, promoted library databases, offered reading suggestions and genre lists, created contests and awarded prizes, and generally interacted so as to provide good cheer and comfort to our community."

Sensabaugh said supplemental funding from the Lamplighters, the library's volunteer and fundraising group, has been important.

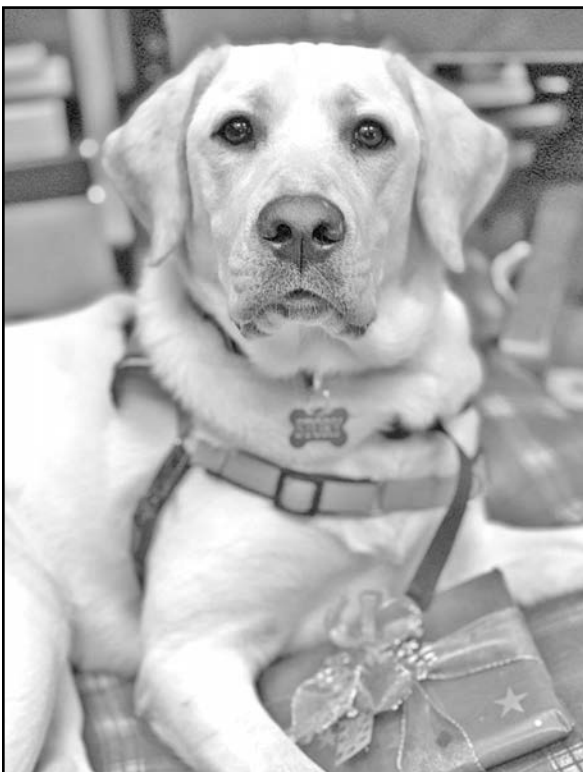
"We're thankful to our Lamplighters for providing the funding for the prizes awarded during the SRP and for affording the costs of some of these platforms," she said.

Sensabaugh said she feels it is important for the library to provide entertainment and comfort to the community during these sometimes scary and stressful times, as well as important resources.

"At a minimum, we hope we're helping our patrons cope during the pandemic through the comfort of entertainment - books, movies, music and more," she said. "We're also trying to meet technology and other educational needs. From an early point in this pandemic, RPL has been offering Grab & Go Holds and Copies (for curbside services) as well as in-house computer appointments. Many people have needed computer help filling out unemployment forms or simply having copies and faxes accomplished for them." "Our IT staff acquired hotspots and chromebooks so that more connectivity could be offered remotely within our community to those who didn't previously have access," said Sensabaugh.

The library also made it possible for new users to sign up for a library card remotely so access to services could be provided to people who didn't already hold a library card.

"Our IT staff acquired hotspots and chromebooks so that more connectivity could be offered remotely within our community to those who didn't previously have access," said Sensabaugh.



**One unique undertaking of the library during the pandemic is to help train a service dog for Saint Francis Service Dogs. The library's puppy, Story, has passed her beginner level and has moved on to intermediate level.**

"We've worked with Literacy Volunteers of the New River Valley to share hotspots and resources to help students and tutors connect. We've increased our online offerings of digital materials including ebooks, audiobooks, streaming content and more with Hoopla, OverDrive, and Kanopy to name a few. We've purchased new museum passes for Wonder Universe: A Children's Museum so that families can experience this playful learning environment at no cost to them (each pass is \$150 annually)." Sensabaugh said she and the library staff members miss their interactions with patrons.

"It's disheartening not to have people in the library, relaxing, reading, and playing in the children's area; we miss our regular patrons, our families, our seniors, our teens, everyone," she said. "We're just constantly trying to find ways to reach out."

"We especially love when people call us because we're happy to hear the voices of our patrons."

One way to interact was to partner with the school and the school librarian, Dr. Rebecca Cauffman, who began a Global Read Aloud with students. The Lamplighters purchased the books for the teen participants, and library staff were able to visit and read with students twice a week at Radford High School and Dalton Intermediate School Library.

Other library outreach has included:

Met with departments of Radford University (McConnell Library and the College of Education and Human Development) to continue planning Radford Reads with Radford University in hopes of offering an author talk to children

via the local schools in 2021.

Participated in other outreach opportunities to connect with the community, including the MountainTrotter Arts Pop-Up Holiday event and the Christmas Cruise-Through, at the Radford Recreation Center.

MyLibro, a new app, was acquired so that folks can access the library catalog, place holds, and schedule a time to pick up those holds. Sensabaugh says offering ease of access is paramount, and offering the simplicity of the app has helped reach patrons.

The library has placed craft bags of supplies outside for pickup weekly so that children and adults could enjoy a free craft and activity together.

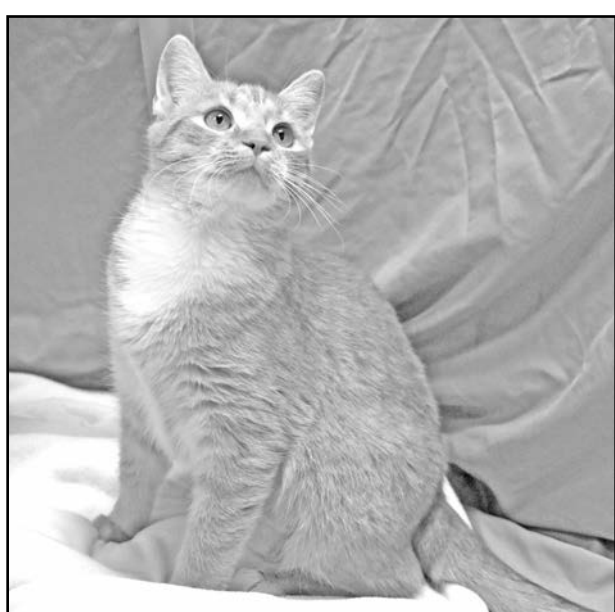
The library has done away with fines during the pandemic and has 'suggested' due dates, offering increased flexibility in hopes that patrons will feel comfortable checking out and enjoying library materials.

Patrons can schedule library browsing appointments and public computer use appointments between Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. and Friday through Saturday from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

For more information about anything library related, call 540-731-3621.

# PETS-OF-THE-WEEK

At this time, visits to the Animal Care and Adoption Center are limited to one party at a time in the lobby area. Animal areas are not open to the public. To schedule an appointment to meet a prospective pet call (540) 382-5795 or email [animalcenter@montgomerycountytva.gov](mailto:animalcenter@montgomerycountytva.gov).



**Nova (pictured) and her BFF (best feline friend) Celeste are a bonded pair of older kittens. They share a space at the Animal Care and Adoption Center and would love to go to a new home together. Nova is a charming gal who likes to play and explore once she gets used to her surroundings. Celeste, a tortie, has a similar personality. Both get along with other cats, dogs and humans big or small. They are also housetrained.**



**If there were an award for the best squishy, mushy doggie face, Mookie might take the prize. Typical of Shar-peis, she tends to have an independent spirit. She may take some time to warm up to a stranger. Mookie would do best in a quiet home where she is the only pet. Her adoption is sponsored by Montgomery County Friends of Animal Care and Control (MCFACC).**

Send community news and photos to [communitynews@ourvalley.org](mailto:communitynews@ourvalley.org)

# Phase 1B from page 1

registering Phase 1b recipients in anticipation of vaccines being available, so appointments may not immediately be available to new registrants. They will be made -- and vaccines will be given -- as quickly as possible.

Currently, two COVID-19 vaccines, Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna, are authorized for emergency use by the Food and Drug Administration and are recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Statewide, VDH expects to receive approximately 100,000 doses per week, 50,000 of each vaccine.

As availability of the vaccine increases, Virginia will move to the other phases. Phase 1c will include other essential workers, people age 65 and older and people

16 and older with underlying medical conditions. The complete definitions of all phases, data and other information are on VDH's Vaccine Response website at [www.vdh.virginia.gov/covid-19-vaccine/](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/covid-19-vaccine/).

Virginians who do not fall into priority phases will be offered the COVID-19 vaccine when it is more widely available. Once the vaccine is rolled out to the general public, distribution will be similar to the flu vaccine. People will be able to get the vaccine from a local pharmacy, a primary care physician, a federally qualified health center/free clinic, a local health department or other clinic that is participating as a COVID-19 vaccination program provider.

In the meantime, vigilance is still necessary for COVID-19 prevention.

Cover your mouth and nose with a mask, wash your hands often and well, stay at least six feet away from others, avoid gatherings with anyone who is not a member of your household and get a flu shot.

**Etzler's Hams**



**This Friday, Jan. 15th  
Fresh Hams &  
Pork Bellies**

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# OPINION

## Home Country with Slim Randles

“Windy, my man,” said Doc, “how are you and the widow getting along?”

“She’s been sorta creepitatin’ up on my blind side, Doc,” Windy said.

“Which side is that, Windy?”

“Very humoristic, Dud. Ha. Ha.”

We had all been watching, as closely as we could, the relationship between Windy Wilson, bachelor, camp cook, cowboy, and teller of tales ...

and Mamie Dilworth, aging hippie chick, starrer at crystals, vegetarian, widow.

We all knew, those of us who lived vicariously alongside the perimeter of their friendship, that if it could’ve been filmed, it’d be on television longer than The Flying Nun.

“Doc,” said Windy, “ol’ Mame the Dame is a awful nice lady, sure ‘nuf. I have consideration maybe takin’ our friendship to the next level.”

“What level is that?”

“Steve, that would be puttin’ one of my patented power sneaks on her and holdin’ hands.”

“Be careful you don’t rush these things, Windy. You’ve only known each other a couple of years now.”

“I’ll be careful, Doc, don’t you worry none. Why, we almost got to that there hand-holdin’ when we capper-sized that stock tank boat of mine in the crick. Had to pull ‘er out. Weren’t no grateful smooch,

howsomever.”

“So why ramp it up now?”

“Valentine’s Day, Steve! Comin’ up, ain’t it? Yessir, afore long there’s gonna be young lovers squarin’ off and smoochin’ and darin’ the world to stop them from cuddlin.’ I really take to Valentine’s Day.”

“Buy her a card yet?”

“Thinkin’ on it, Doc. But I gotta get jest the right kind. Can’t be too moochie-smoochie or she’ll get the wrong idear. What I’m lookin’ for is one

that says, ‘Mame, I kinda like you and think you’re smart and kind, And would you like to hold hands and talk about good stuff? And no more a-them tofu tacos, thank you.’”

“That’s a tall order, Windy.”

“Valentine’s only comes on- ceter a year, boys.”

*Brought to you by A Cowboy’s Guide to Growing up Right. Look it over at www.lpdpress.com. Avuncular tips from a guy who made lots of mistakes.*

## Having this COVID-19 vaccine at all is proof of miracles

The COVID-19 vaccine arrived so fast with such a minimum of fanfare that we tended to take it for granted. The truth is anything but.

Wondering if perhaps I wasn’t really appreciating what an incredible thing had happened here with the creation, testing, and marketing of the virus vaccine, I did a little research. Yeah, I know, that sounds like cerebral work, which is pretty amazing for me, but I did it anyhow.

And what has happened while we weren’t looking is pretty amazing.

For instance, at one point, more than 100 studies were underway to find a coronavirus vaccine.

Two finally emerged from the pack, and we have them here.

There are five stages of vaccine development. To move through all five typically takes more than 10 years and costs some \$500 million. Our scientists and researchers got it to us in less than a year.

The first stage of the development of any vaccine is discovery research, which is where the mass of 100 possible vaccines came from. This process alone usually requires two to five years.

The second stage in the process is pre-clinical; that is, the weeds and the tares, the stuff that doesn’t work, are tossed into the trash. This process

narrowed the efficacious vaccines down to 20 and usually requires some two years.

Step number three is clinical development, which itself requires several stages. What is sought here is the answer to three crucial questions: 1) Is the darned thing safe to use on humans since it’s an elemental axiom of basic medicine that the cure can’t be worse than the disease? 2) Does it activate an immune response in the human body? If it doesn’t, then it’s obviously worthless. Who wants to take a shot and still wind up with the virus? 3) Does it protect against the disease? See question No. 2 above.

On to step four, the most cumbersome and annoying of

the bunch: regulatory review and approval. Never a sure thing when the government is involved.

And then finally comes manufacturing and delivery. It should come as no surprise that manufacturing vaccines requires specialized facilities that are highly regulated and expensive to develop.

And so, dear hearts and gentle people, when we got through with all that, we had two vaccines left out of the original 100, and they have been and are being distributed.

I, for one, offer some kind of amazed congratulations to the scientific geniuses who did this on behalf of the rest of us who wouldn’t know a virus

from a football. Well, I would at least be able to recognize a football. Hey, I wasn’t raised in the Deep South for nothing.

*The author is a man of a certain age who frankly admits he’s impressed at what the nation’s scientific community has pulled off with this vaccine thing. Every few decades or so, Americans wise up temporarily, quit fighting among themselves for a season, decide to work together for a change, put their collective brains and brawn to work with single-minded determination and dedication, and do something worthwhile and heroic that staggers the imagination. I think the last time had something to do with the moon.*

Submit letters to the editor to editor@ourvalley.org

## Virginia still struggling to recover from unemployment claims

As of the new year, unemployment claims across the nation are down by 89% from the peak achieved during the pandemic, but in its first survey of 2021, the personal finance website WalletHub ranked the 50 states and the District of Columbia from fastest to slowest with their recovery from unemployment claims and found that Virginia is the fourth slowest recovering state in the country.

The latest national survey showed that 10.7 million Americans are still unemployed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Last week, more than 787,000 new unemployment claims were filed nationwide, which is a lot fewer than the 6.9 million during the peak of the pandemic.

To identify which states’ work-

forces are experiencing the quickest recovery from COVID-19, WalletHub compared the states and D.C. across three metrics based on changes in unemployment claims.

These three metrics and Virginia’s respective standing among the states are 1) the percent change in Virginia Weekly unemployment claims comparing the week of Jan. 1, 2019, to the current week of Jan. 1, 2021, a 619.76% increase in unemployment claims (25,170 the week of Jan. 1, 2021, vs. 3,497 3th the week of Jan. 1, 2019, the fourth slowest recovery in the country); 2) the percent change in Virginia unemployment claims comparing the week of Jan. 1, 2021, with the week of Jan. 1, 2020, a 689.52%

increase in unemployment claims (25,170 the week of Jan. 1, 2021 vs. 3,188 the week of Jan. 1, 2020, the fourth slowest recovery in the United States); and 3) the percent change in unemployment claims comparing unemployment claims the week between the week of March 16, 2020, and the week of Jan. 1, 2020, with the week of March 18, 2019, and the week of Jan. 1, 2020, a 1,258.3 percent increase in unemployment claims (1,345,752 between March 16, 2020, and Jan. 1, 2021, vs. 106,950 between March 18, 2019, and Jan. 1, 2020), the fifth slowest recover in the country.

The only states recovering from unemployment claims at a slower rate than Virginia are Louisiana, Colorado and Kansas.

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Radford News Journal is a newspaper of, by and for the people of Radford. We encourage letters from our readers on topics of general interest to the community and responses to our articles and columns. Letters must be signed and have a telephone number where you can be reached for verification. All letters will be verified before publication. We reserve the right to deny publication of any letter and edit letters for length, content and style.

Radford News Journal (USPS 387-780) is published twice a week for \$41 a year in the City of Radford, \$50 elsewhere in Virginia, and \$54 out of state by Virginia Media Inc., P.O. Box 429, Lewisburg, WV 24901. Periodical postage paid at Christiansburg, VA. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to RADFORD NEWS JOURNAL 1633 W. Main St., Salem, VA 24153.

## Vaccine

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tion appointment, there is a standby list of health care workers that the district will call, Bissell said.

During the virtual meeting, she stressed the need for ongoing vigilance in following public health guidelines. The district continues to offer COVID-19 testing, and it has seen an increase in positive cases following the holiday season compared to levels before Thanksgiving.

Also, she addressed decisions by Virginia Tech and Radford Univer-

sity to begin classes in mid-January, rather than delaying opening dates. Bissell said she does not expect to see the same large surge in COVID-19 cases when students return from the winter break as happened at the start of school in the fall. Largely, college students have been following public health guidelines, she said.

The health district head reiterated that significant coronavirus transmissions in the district have not been linked to university or K-12

classroom settings. That’s because mitigation efforts, such as universal masking and physical distancing, are working, she said.

“Our community transmission right now is community members. It’s not our students,” Bissell said. “I do want to get away from blaming our students for bringing it [COVID-19] or exacerbating it.”

—Written by Jenny Kincaid Boone

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# OBITUARIES

## Akers, Sue Ellen Marlowe

Sue Ellen Marlowe Akers of Fairlawn passed away Sunday, Jan. 10, 2021.

She was born Jan. 1, 1945, in Norfolk, the daughter of the late Paul W. and Louise Marlowe.

Sue spent her childhood in Danville. She graduated from George Washington High School and attended Averett College and Radford University, where she graduated with her master's degree in psychology. She retired from the Southwestern Virginia Mental Health Institute after 30 years of service as the Director of the Adolescent Program.

Predeceased family members include her brother, Paul A. Marlowe; her mother-in-law, Elverta "Bertie" Akers; and her brother-in-law, Bill Akers.

She is survived by her husband of 50 years, James "Butch" Akers; her son, Christopher T. Akers and his fiancé, Lynn Gibson; a brother, John T. Marlowe and his wife, Karen; sister-in-

law, Sherry McGuire and her husband, Mike; brother-in-law Alan Akers and his wife Karen; sister-in-law Marie Marlowe; and sister-in-law Dot Albert Akers. Sue is also survived by many special nieces, nephews and special friends, each of whom she loved very much

The family would like to express their love and appreciation for their neighbors, the pastor and the members of St. Michael Lutheran Church. A special thank-you goes to Dr. Matthew Skews and his staff for their excellent care and support.

With the current COVID-19 crisis, a celebration of Sue's life will take place at a later date.

If you wish, memorials may be made to St. Michael Lutheran Church (Micah's Backpack) or a charity of your choice.

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

## McCoy, Patsy Darlene

Patsy Darlene McCoy, 80, of Christiansburg entered her eternal home on Jan. 9, 2021.

She was born on Nov. 28, 1940, to her beloved parents, Clarence and Clarice Coleman.

Patsy was a devoted employee of 27 years at Wal-Mart, Christiansburg. She reluctantly retired in 2017. Patsy gained many close friends at Wal-Mart.

She is survived by her husband, Andrew C. McCoy, of the home; her son, Darrell Jones (Shelby); her daughter, Sherry Compton (Cliff); granddaughters Tera Compton, Karen Compton



and Tammy Walker; great-grandchildren Logan and Lauren; and step-children Melinda Slusser and Holly Hughes and their families.

A special thanks goes to Medi-Home Hospice for their wonderful care.

Funeral services will be held Thursday, Jan. 14, 2021, in the McCoy Funeral Home Chapel with Pastor T. Michael Bond officiating. Burial will follow in Sunset Cemetery, Christiansburg.

The family will receive friends from 10 a.m. until service time at McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg.

## Neighbors, Elizabeth Price

Elizabeth Price Neighbors, 84, of Blacksburg died, Saturday, Jan. 9, 2021, at LewisGale Hospital Montgomery.

She was born in Montgomery County on Jan. 21, 1936, to the late Minor Simeon and Ruby Woolwine Price. She was preceded in death by an infant daughter, Cheryl Denise Neighbors; and a brother, Charles Matthew Price.

She loved spending time with her family and is retired from the National Bank of Blacksburg. She is survived by her husband of 65 years, Samuel Hope Neighbors; daughters and sons-in-law, Karen and Gary Worrell, Jeanette and John Wiggert and Sherry Neighbors and Stephen Donathan; a son, Mi-



chael Neighbors; grandchildren Traci Worrell, Hope Worrell, Jessica Wiggert, Jamie Wiggert and David Neighbors; great-grandchildren Hannah, Landon, Madison and Annabelle; sisters and brothers-in-law, Alice and Robert Wrenn, Kathleen and J.C. Absher, Judy Dowdy and Carolyn Alls; brother and sister-in-law David and

Sandy Price; and numerous nieces and nephews.

A graveside service will be held today, Wednesday, Jan. 13, 2021, at 2 p.m. at Roselawn Memorial Gardens, Christiansburg.

Arrangements by McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg.

## Huff, Marvin Dale

Marvin Dale Huff, 75, of Christiansburg, died Saturday, Jan. 9, 2021.

He was born in Floyd on May 22, 1945, to the late Thurman Jack and Virgil Keith Huff.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Rebecca Wright Huff, and his brother-in-law, Lowell Aldridge.

He is survived by his daughters and son-in-law, Vonda Kay Dillon, Shana Nicole Biter and her husband, Billy; grandchildren Trey Dillon and his wife, Ashlyn; Lacie Dillon and Nikki and Ricky Roop; step-grandchildren Jessica, Amanda and Kassie; great-grandchildren Everleigh, Mya, Alex



and Kayden; sisters and brother-in-law, Janice Foro and her husband, Brad; and Emma Jean Aldridge; brother-in-law and sister-in-law Frank and Terri Wright; as well as several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services will be held today, Wednesday, Jan. 13, 2021, at 11 a.m. in the McCoy Funeral Home Chapel with Pastor Trey Dillon and Pastor Mike Johnston officiating.

Interment will follow at Roselawn Memorial Gardens, Christiansburg.

The family will receive friends from 10-11 a.m. prior to the service at McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg.

# VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION ROAD WATCH

The following is a list of forecasted highway projects that may impact traffic traveling in the 12-county Salem Transportation District this week. Work schedules and construction project timelines are always subject to change and weather dependent. The Salem District covers Bedford, Botetourt, Carroll, Craig, Floyd, Franklin, Giles, Henry, Montgomery, Patrick, Pulaski, and Roanoke.

until the completion of the project. Route 11 South will experience intermittent left lane closures as crossovers are prepared for an eventual detour. Once in place, the detour will re-route Route 11 south traffic through the left lane of Route 11 north, limiting each direction to a single lane. The detour will be in place until the completion of the project. The expected completion date is November 2021.

to be completed in late June 2021.

**ROUTE 685 TURN LANE CONSTRUCTION** – Turn lane construction on Route 685 (Prices Fork Road) between Route 1145 (Stratford View Drive) and Route 654 (Brookfield Road) is underway. Motorists should expect daily shoulder closures with intermittent lanes closures controlled by flagging forces. Work will be performed

from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Completion is spring 2021.

**WATERLINE CONSTRUCTION** – Construction of a waterline along Route 659 (Vicker Switch Road), Route 719 (Switchback Road), Route 660 (Crab Creek Road), and Route 661 (Chrisman Mill Road) includes shoulder closures and lane closures. The work is expected to be completed in February 2021.

**INTERSTATE 81 SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS AT S-CURVES IN BOTETOURT COUNTY**

A project to improve the S-curves along southbound I-81 in Botetourt County between mile markers 167.4 and 169.5 is underway. This project will enhance safety and improve vehicle traction. Work includes repaving the travel lanes, applying new pavement markers

and installing underground pavement drains. Nighttime lane closures will be in place and the speed limit will be reduced to 60 mph in the work zone. This project also includes permanently closing and removing the southbound off ramp at exit 167 (Buchanan) to reduce speed differentials, conflict points and lane changes associated with exiting vehicles. The estimated completion date is summer 2021.

## MONTGOMERY COUNTY

**ROUTE 11 BRIDGE DECK REPLACEMENT** - Work has begun on Route 11 southbound to replace the bridge deck over the Norfolk Southern Railroad. The bridge is located .4 miles north of the intersection with Route 748 (Big Spring Drive) and .4 mile south of the intersection with Route 603 (North Fork Road). The left lane of both Route 11 north and south are closed

## ROUTE 636 BRIDGE REPLACEMENT AT SENECA HOLLOW

Work is underway to replace the bridge on Route 636 over the Roanoke River at Seneca Hollow. A road closure is in place from Echo Hills Road to .36 mile south of Route 460. A detour will be in place. The detour will restrict access to Route 460 at Seneca Hollow and will require travelers to enter/exit Route 460 at Friendship Road near Wheeling Hollow. The project is expected

## Legal Notice

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC OF A PETITION BY APPALACHIAN POWER COMPANY, FOR APPROVAL TO CONTINUE RATE ADJUSTMENT CLAUSE, THE EE-RAC, AND FOR APPROVAL OF NEW ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMS PURSUANT TO §§ 56-585.1 A 5 AND 56-596.2 OF THE CODE OF VIRGINIA. CASE NO. PUR-2020-00251

Appalachian Power Company ("APCo") requests a total of \$16,586,746 for its 2021 EE-RAC. According to APCo, this amount would increase the bill of a residential customer using 1,000 kilowatt hours per month by approximately \$0.39.

A Hearing Examiner appointed by the Commission will hear public witness testimony on the case on May 18, 2021, at 10 a.m.; and testimony and evidence of APCo, Staff, and any respondents on May 19, 2021.

Further information about this case is available on the SCC website at: [scc.virginia.gov/pages/Case-Information](http://scc.virginia.gov/pages/Case-Information).

On November 30, 2020, Appalachian Power Company ("APCo" or "Company"), pursuant to §§ 56-585.1 A 5 and 56-596.2 of the Code of Virginia and the Final Order of the State Corporation Commission ("Commission") in Case No. PUR-2019-00122, filed with the Commission its Petition for approval of the continued implementation of a rate adjustment clause - the "EERAC" - to recover the costs of its existing portfolio of energy efficiency ("EE") and demand response ("DR") programs, as well as for approval of five new programs and one pilot program and to continue two previously approved programs.

In its Petition, APCo seeks approval to implement five new EE/DR programs and one new EE pilot program and to continue two existing programs. Specifically, the Company requests that the Commission permit it to implement the following proposed programs for a five-year period starting January 2022: (1) Residential Home Energy Report Program; (2) Residential Efficient Products Program; (3) Residential Energy Efficiency Kit Program; (4) Residential Home Performance Program; and (5) Business Energy Solutions Program.

APCo requests approval to continue the EE-RAC for the rate year of July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022 ("2021 Rate Year"), to recover: (i) 2021 Rate Year costs associated with the Company's EE/DR programs ("Projected Factor"); and (ii) any (over)/under recovery of costs associated with the EE/DR Portfolio as of June 30, 2021 ("True-Up Factor").

Interested persons are encouraged to review the Petition and supporting documents for the details of these and other proposals.

Electronic copies of the Petition and other supporting documents, as well as the Commission's Order for Notice and Hearing, may be obtained by submitting a written request to counsel for the Company, Noelle J. Coates, Esquire, 3 James Center, American Electric Power Service Corporation, 1051 East Cary Street, Suite 1100, Richmond, Virginia 23219, or [njcoates@aep.com](mailto:njcoates@aep.com).

## Emissions

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dairy cows provide. The scenario where cows were retired — where cows lived out the remainder of their lives in pastures or free-range — resulted in a 12 percent reduction in agricultural emissions. All 39 nutrients considered declined. The depopulation scenario — where cows are killed off — resulted in a 7 percent reduction in agricultural emissions. Thirty of 39 nutrients increased for the depopulation scenario, though several essential nutrients declined. A major factor in all of the scenarios is the use of the land that has to be managed after the removal of the cows. The impact on the industry downstream must be factored into the scenario results. For example, a pasture that was formerly used for cattle would no longer be used for that resource. Areas used for grain, fertilizer and more would also change functionality. "Land use was a focus in all animal removal scenarios because the assumptions surrounding how to use land made available if we remove dairy cattle greatly influence results of the simulations," White said. "If dairy cattle are no longer present in U.S. ag-

riculture, we must consider downstream effects, such as handling of pasture and grain land previously used for producing dairy feed, disposition of byproduct feeds and sourcing fertilizer."

Plants have long been thought of as a more renewable method to obtain nutrients essential for humans, but that requires farming of the land, which also produces emissions.

The impact of dairy cows on the environment is minimal in large part because of advancements in the industry over the last 50-plus years, White said. As with most industries, efficiency improves over time. To produce the same 1 billion kilograms of milk in 2007 as in 1944, it required just 21 percent of the animals, 23 percent of the foodstuffs, 35 percent of the water and only 10 percent of the land.

### CROSSWORD ANSWERS

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**Legals - Botetourt County**

**ORDER OF PUBLICATION**  
Commonwealth of Virginia VA. Code Ann. §§ 8.01-316, -317  
**Case No. 20-649**  
Botetourt County Circuit Court  
Mary Elizabeth McKenney v. Richard Lee McKenney  
The object of this suit is to: Obtain a divorce based on separation of 1 year. It is ORDERED that Richard Lee McKenney appear at the above-named court and protect his/her interests on or before 02/01/2021.  
12-28-20

**Legals - City of Salem**

**ORDER OF PUBLICATION**  
Commonwealth of Virginia VA. Code Ann. §§ 8.01-316, -317  
**Case No. CL20-2497**  
Roanoke County Circuit Court  
April Lynn Webster-Mullins v. Timothy Roger Mullins  
The object of this suit is to: Obtain a divorce based on a one year separation. It is ORDERED that Timothy Roger Mullins appear at the above-named court and protect his/her interests on or before 2-26-2021 @ 4:30pm.

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**Special Commissioner's Sale of 58 Lakeland Circle, Troutville, VA 24175 Tax Map #108(A)(1)BK2-19**  
The Special Commissioner will offer the above-described property for sale to the highest bidder at public auction on the date and time referenced below.

**Legals - Botetourt County**

Date of Sale: February 9, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.  
Location: outside the Botetourt County Circuit Court, PO Box 219, Courthouse, Main Street, Fincastle, VA 24090.

**Legals - Craig County**

**ORDER OF PUBLICATION**  
Commonwealth of Virginia VA CODE § 8.01-316  
**Case No. JJ002182-04-00, JJ002182-05-00, JJ002182-06-00**  
CRAIG COMBINED COURT- JUVENILE Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court Commonwealth of Virginia, in re PAITSEL, RAYNE, AKA BABY GIRL GARMAN  
The object of this suit is to terminate the residual parental rights of the father of Rayne Paitzel, aka Baby Girl Garman thought to be either Daniel Garman, Christopher Allen Paitzel or Unknown Father pursuant to Virginia Code Sections 16.1-283 B and C, and which child is under the age of twelve (12) months and was born to Kristen Nicole Garman. Residual parental rights are defined in Section 16.1-228 of the Code of Virginia (1950, as amended), as the rights and responsibilities remaining with a parent after the parent loses custody of a child, including but not limited to the right to visitation, consent to adoption, the right to determine religious affiliation, and the responsibility for support. The termination of your residual parental rights will permanently end all of your rights and responsibilities to the child named in the petition. The ties between you and your child are severed forever and you become a legal stranger to the child.

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# RADFORD SPORTS

## Boys' basketball preview: Radford Bobcats unbeaten in COVID-19 shortened season, county schools gambling on future scheduling

**Marty Gordon**  
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

Radford High School Bobcats

Radford High School has dominated boys' basketball locally for the past 10 years. Head coach Rick Cormany has won 551 games at Radford and 715 games in his career. This past year, he was named the All-county/All-city coach of the decade.

Already, the Bobcats have shown they plan to stay on that elevated plateau. Despite the pandemic, they managed to play five games so far this winter, and they won every game.

But Cormany and his team have a different type of opponent this season, an invisible one they can't meet head-to-head on the court: COVID-19.

"With a shortened season, we've had to try and not put so much in but rather be good at a few things," Cormany said. "It's just been so hard to deal with all of this."

The boss Bobcat said his group has been handling the added stress well, but it definitely takes a toll on a day-to-day basis. The Bobcats might have to play at an even higher level than what they're accustomed to.

Of course, the longtime coach doesn't have to look too far from the dinner table to see one of his top scorers. His son, Cam Cormany, is one of the top shooters in the entire state.

Last year, Cormany (the player) connected on 108 of 247 shots from behind the arc for a 43.7 percentage and averaged 21.2 points per game. He and Auburn's Ethan Millirons were last year's All-county/All-city co-players of the year. Cormany was also the Three Rivers District and Region C player of the year.

The Bobcats won 24 games last season but fell

short in a regional championship game with Gate City.

Cormany the coach is optimistic his team can pick up where it left off.

"I think this team has a chance to be pretty good, especially if some of the younger players develop like I think they are capable of," Cormany said.

The Bobcats did lose 6-4 Jon Woods to graduation. Woods played a pivotal role for the team inside for the past two seasons. But the Cats have nine players taller than 6-1 and three taller than 6-4 on the roster. That includes 6-5 freshman Elijah Kelly.

The biggest returner could be 5-10 PJ. Prioleau, who sat out last season after suffering a knee injury in the football preseason.

Cormany can also look down the "social distance" bench for his younger son, 6-1 freshman Gavin. All-district performer Alex Kanipe (66 rebounds) returns and at 6-3 will give the Bobcats some experience inside the paint.

5-11 Nate Wesley will provide some help at the guard position along with Jackson McManus. 6-4 Carter Davis could also help the defense this season.

Radford put the program on hold last week and cancelled three ball games after COVID-19 contact tracing affected as many as five players.

Rising COVID-19 numbers have not allowed Montgomery County's boys' teams to even get out of the gate, and for over three weeks, athletic directors have been scrambling to re-schedule or even cancel ball games.

Auburn High School Eagles

No one knows this struggle more than Auburn High School's Terry Millirons, whose team was moments

away from playing for a Class 1 state championship this past March.

"We were one of the first to be affected," Millirons said. "We were in VCU, watching the games before ours when we found out that our state championship game against Matthews was cancelled. Telling the kids the game was cancelled was the toughest thing I have ever had to do as a coach."

Instead of claiming the trophy on the court, Auburn was declared co-state champions.

Auburn finished 22-7 last season, won the Mt. Empire District tournament and finished as the regional runner up before beating Grundy to advance to the state title game.

Millirons, who is in his 10th straight year coaching the boys' team, returns all five starters including junior Ethan Millirons, who sits across the kitchen table after hours. The two are joined by little brother 5-9 freshman Nicholas Millirons.

Ethan was the 2019 all-Mt. Empire, Region C and Class 1 all-state player of the year. He led the Eagles in scoring at 21.9 points per game that included hitting on 67 of 171 shots from behind the three-point line for a 39.2 percentage. He also hit 88 percent of his free throws and pulled down six rebounds per game.

Coach Millirons said this is the best team the school has ever had with a deep bench with 14 kids who can play on any given night.

"We can play big- or small-ball," the head Eagle said. "We are experienced, returning all but one player from last year's team. We have the best player in the state, Ethan Millirons, regardless of classification. I just hope we get to play."

Rich with seven seniors, the roster also includes 6-4

Michael Royal, 6-1 Rusty Marshall, 6-4 Daniel Brotherton and 6-0 Reed Underwood.

Christiansburg High School Blue Demons

Mike Hunter probably returns one the most-experienced teams in his time at Christiansburg after going 14-9 last season. He admits the pandemic has affected them so far.

"We have not been able to bond as one unit," the head coach said, "because we haven't been able to prepare for teams due to not knowing whether we are going to play. We are dealing with it by staying positive and doing what is asked of us."

Like other area coaches, Hunter's son, MJ, will be a key in the Demons' success during the shortened season.

Hunter, who was the All-county/All-city athlete of the year, is a 6-0 guard who will have to direct traffic while also being relied on to score. His range is a mixture of inside and out, as he hit more than 30 percent of his shots from the arc last season.

Two-guard Chris Calloway returns and could also be key with second-level scoring for the Blue Demons. Big men Tyrique Taylor and Kenyon Johnson-Buchannon will patrol the paint this season, and the team will also get some help from New York-transfer Matt Simmons.

Eastern Montgomery High School Mustangs

Eastern Montgomery lost All-county/All-city performer Cole Shepherd (10 points and seven rebounds a game), but returns a group of four-year starters in Darien Moore, Adam Bahnken, Jacob Price and Justin Tyree. At 6-1 and one of only three players taller than six feet, Bahnken will move to the middle.

Coach Josh Blevins is blessed with several hard-



PHOTO BY ASHLEY DAWN PHOTOGRAPHY  
The Radford High School boys' basketball team took a social distancing approach to this year's team photo.

nosed kids who moved up from a decent jayvee team, but for now, he is still trying to get on the court as COVID has slowed their start.

"The unknown is killing everyone," Blevins said. "I have four seniors who have started games since their freshman year eager to get after someone, but we don't even know week-to-week what we can do. Hopefully we can get on the court soon."

Blacksburg High School Bruins

The same is true in Blacksburg where Coach Doug Day admits it definitely has been an adjustment.

"When you compare what we were doing at this time last year with what we've been doing this winter, it has been a big adjustment," Day said. "But to our kids' credit they have shown a lot of resiliency. They have continued to work hard and strive to get better each day. Our players worked really hard this offseason on their skills and fundamentals. We were not able to participate in any competitive or live action due to our mitigation protocols, but I feel like we had a successful offseason."

The Bruins were 12-10 last season and lost a lot of scoring in their top four players. But there is some height

to pour on the court with 6-4 Owen Walters, 6-3, Keegan Appea, 6-2 Alex Trexell, 6-1 Cody Miller, 6-1 Brock Duma, 6-1 Bennett Shealor and 6-5 Brett Babcock.

Some scoring could come from freshman guard Brooklyn Vick.

"I really like this group and feel like they have the potential to be good," said Day. "Our guys will compete and play hard each and every night. I feel that year in year out, the teams in our area are some of the best in the state. Teams are well coached and prepared. You must bring your 'A' game every night. That makes it exciting for coaches, players and fans. I feel our kids fit right in with all the other good teams in our area."

Boys' basketball predictions:

Three Rivers District: 1) Radford 2) Giles 3) Alleghany 4) Carroll 5) James River.

Pioneer District: 1) Narrows 2) Parry McCluer 3) Eastern Montgomery 4) Covington 5) Bath 6) Craig.

River Ridge District: 1) Cave Spring 2) Christiansburg 3) Hidden Valley 4) William Fleming 5) Patrick Henry 6) Salem 7) Blacksburg.

Mountain Empire District: 1) Auburn 2) George Wythe 3) Ft. Chiswell 4) Grayson 5) Galax 6) Bland.

## Girls' basketball preview: No games yet for Blacksburg girls, county schools; Radford, Christiansburg, Auburn have new coaches; East Mont coach optimistic

**Marty Gordon**  
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

Blacksburg High School Bruins

Blacksburg girls' basketball head coach Roger Henderson has spent over a dozen years dealing with the sport's changing environment, but like others in his profession, 2020-21 is a whole new world.

Because of COVID-19, Montgomery County schools are requiring student-athletes to wear masks when they practice and compete, and other restrictions continue to affect the teams. So far, the rising coronavirus numbers have not allowed county teams to compete against anyone but themselves. Henderson said that has been huge. "It's tough to improve team-wise," he said.

"The players have really been tough-minded on and off the court," the boss Bruin said. "They come to practice

and give great effort most days. That's hard without the promise of games. They are taking care of themselves off the court. Our families, at the jayvee and varsity level, are invested in seeing their children have some semblance of a competitive season."

If and when the Bruins hit the court, they could be competitive. They did lose all-district and all-region performer Skyler Prosser from a 13-13 2019-2020 season, but returning is an experienced squad with two seniors and four juniors.

As 5-9 senior guard Danielle Gresh goes, so will this year's Bruins. The double-figure scorer leads a team that also includes 5-6 twins, McKenzie and Morgan Cheynet, senior Lillian Mosser and five sophomores.

"I think we would have the opportunity to be competitive in the region again," Henderson said. "We have athletes who can move and

get after it. Our returning group got a taste of what it takes to compete last year."

Eastern Montgomery High School Mustangs

Eastern Montgomery is coming off one of the best years in the history of the school. The Mustangs won the Pioneer District regular season and tournament titles in route to a 17-8 mark before losing to county rival Auburn in the state quarters.

Returner Eli Underwood was named the Pioneer District and All-county/All-city player of the year while averaging 13 points, 6.8 points and 4.2 steals per contest.

Head coach Kelley Sutphin was named the Pioneer District and All-county/All-city coach of the year.

The Mustangs return four other players with lots of experience: Maddie Bruce (8.3 points and 4.6 rebounds per game), Lilly Underwood (6.9 points and 3.4 rebounds), and Morgan Bahnken and

Logan Boone, who are big on the boards.

Sutphin is hoping to play soon and maybe get back to normal practice and competitions.

The area's three other schools, Radford, Christiansburg and Auburn, all have new head coaches this season.

Radford High School Bobcats

Timothy Worles, who is a full-time minister at Calvary Baptist Church in Radford, had served as an assistant for the past few years before taking over the reins of the Radford girls' team this season. His wife, Hannah, will serve as his assistant coach.

Worles played for Rick Cormany's 2011 state championship team while Hannah-Kait won the same year as a member of the Lady Bobcats.

Worles played four years at Piedmont International University, which is now Carolina University in Winston-Salem, N.C. (National Christian College Athletic Association Division 1). He was voted to the All-Southern Conference and All-NC-CAA academic All-American teams. In his senior year, Piedmont won the conference tournament and made it to the NCCAA national tourney.

The husband-and-wife coaching team will receive some help from Radford grad Jada Penn, who played collegiately at Emory and Henry.

So far, the Bobcats have played a shortened schedule with five straight wins that include a win over Floyd for the first time in five years.

"We have such a great

group of girls right now who love the game but most importantly love life," the head coach said. "We are having a blast and are already coming together as a tight-knit family."

Radford was 14-8 last season and returns a strong core group. Senior Maggie Turk serves as a leader on and off the court and is joined by 5-11 Laney Cline, who was second team All-Three Rivers District last year.

Radford is one of a group of schools in the area that will dress a set of twins this season. 5-6 sophomore guards Hannah and Haley Whitt could see considerable playing time this year. Senior Makenzie Page could also be important for the Bobcats.

"I firmly believe we have the toughest district in our division," Worles said. "Floyd and Carroll always seem to be at the top, whereas everyone else is capable of beating any one on any given night. Every game will be seen as a new challenge for us."

Worles is no different from other local and area coaches in that the pandemic has affected the way his team approaches the season.

"It has certainly limited our off-season workouts and shortened our season," the head Bobcat said. "Our schedule has been pushed back quite a bit due to other school districts not playing yet."

Christiansburg High School Blue Demons

Lamont Calloway, who previously had coached the jayvee team at Christiansburg, takes over a varsity level group trying to find some winning ways after winning only 10 games in the past

two years.

He does return two keys in Hannah Altizer (18.6 points per game) and Antwaniqua Banks (6.5 points and 5.3 rebounds).

To complete a nine-player roster, Calloway had to bring up two sophomores and three freshmen to the varsity squad.

Auburn High School Eagles

Kayla Ragsdale is the new girls' head coach at Auburn. She returns 5-9 junior Hannah Huffman, who had several double-figure contests last year and was named to the All-Mountain Empire District team.

Juniors 5-10 Amelia Terry and 5-11 Allyson Martin will also play a critical role from a squad that won only four games a season ago.

"We're still hopeful and excited to show our improved program," Raggsdale said. "However, we're taking it one week at a time, but we will be ready for our first game whenever that will be. We're not backing down this year."

Girls' district predictions:

Three Rivers District: 1) Carroll County 2) Floyd 3) Radford 4) Glenvar 5) Alleghany 6) Giles 7) James River.

River Ridge District: 1) Salem 2) William Fleming 3) Patrick Henry 4) Pulaski 5) Cave Spring 6) Blacksburg 7) Hidden Valley 8) Christiansburg.

Mountain Empire District: 1) George Wythe 2) Galax 3) Ft. Chiswell 4) Grayson 5) Auburn 6) Bland.

Pioneer District: 1) Eastern Montgomery 2) Covington 3) Narrows 4) Parry McCluer 5) Craig 6) Bath.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BHS  
The Blacksburg High School girls' basketball team is making the most of social distancing and mask requirements.