

RU junior, Floyd native, earns top score in state Microsoft exam

Public input needed for downtown Radford plan



**Air purification
company to
bring 101 new
jobs to Radford**

See **Oransi**, page 5

*Radford Farmers
Market to open
Saturday, April 17*



Organizers say they “are looking forward to a great season with our returning vendors and adding a lot of new vendors to the market, too.”

Downtown Blacksburg, VT's Big Event partner for virtual support program

Downtown Blacksburg, Inc., and The Big Event at Virginia Tech have partnered to introduce a pilot program designed to give virtual, remote support to DBI member-businesses while offering VT students professional development opportunities.

This pilot program, although conceived before the traditional Big Event was modified, now takes an even greater spotlight as students will continue to have the opportunity to give back to the business community in a new way.

"This is a great new partnership to form with Virginia Tech students by building a

more robust talent pipeline while simultaneously strengthening the connection between students and the downtown business community," said Casey Jenkins, the Executive Director of DBI. "We are very fortunate and thankful to partner with Big Event executive staff."

The Big Event at Virginia Tech is a student-run community service effort that has grown into the second largest event of its kind in the nation. Every spring, thousands of students, faculty, and staff come together to complete hundreds of community service projects throughout Blacksburg, Christiansburg, and the New River

Valley.

Starting in 2002, The Big Event at Virginia Tech has grown exponentially. Rooted in Virginia Tech's motto Ut Prosim (That I May Serve), The Big Event has provided an opportunity for the entire Virginia Tech community to join together and thank the surrounding communities of Virginia Tech.

The 2002 Big Event saw about 475 volunteers with 60 projects. This past year, The Big Event 2019 saw 7,820 volunteers complete 1,180 projects.

"We, The Big Event, are very excited to be able to extend our mission of service

into the local business community," said Rissa McGill, fundraising executive of The Big Event. "It is essential that we not only thank our homeowners that allow us to take over Blacksburg for eight months out of the year, but also our businesses that provide us with everything we need as well."

This pilot program pairs 10 DBI merchants and organizations with 27 Virginia Tech students with multi-disciplinary backgrounds. "We hope this is the first of many fall and spring semesters where we will offer this program to merchants and Virginia Tech students," said Jenkins.

Between now and the end of

the spring semester, select Virginia Tech students will help downtown merchants with projects related to marketing and social media, website and graphic design, business accounting, website platform migration and software development, and much more. Offering their time and expertise, students will assist DBI businesses for up to 40 hours pro bono for the remainder of the spring semester.

For more information or questions about this pilot program, contact Casey Jenkins at director@downtownblacksburg.com, Rissa McGill at risamcgill@vt.edu, or Ryan Adcock at ryana99@vt.edu.

Montgomery-Floyd Regional libraries reopened to the public Thursday

The Montgomery-Floyd Regional libraries in Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Shawsville, and Floyd opened to the public on Thursday, April 8.

The libraries will continue to comply with all public health guidance and with the governor of

Virginia's Executive Order #72, which requires persons using public facilities to wear a face mask or other face covering.

All branches will be open regular hours and will have checkout, browsing, public WiFi, public computer use, and wire-

less printing. For persons needing to self-isolate, the libraries will continue to offer curbside pickup and Library Picks for You service. The libraries have also resumed passport and notary services.

Patrons are urged to return all library items in

the outside book drop. Overdue fines on materials for adults have been suspended since March 2020, and this will continue for now. Children's items are always fine-free.

MFRL will resume some library programming in compliance with

current occupancy limits. The programs are on the library's Calendar of Events.

To prevent the spread of COVID-19, community rooms and study rooms are not available at this time. As the state further loosens its restrictions, the

library staff hope to return to providing a fuller range of programming and community room throughout the spring.

For more information contact Linda Spivey at 540 382-6969, ext. 221 or visit the library's website at www.mfml.org.

Moss Arts Center to present refugees' stories in HomeStage production of 'Cartography'

In connection with its season theme, "Flight and Refuge," on Thursday, April 15, at 7 p.m. the Moss Arts Center will present a free stream of "Cartography," a multimedia theater production exploring the inspiring stories of young refugees as they set out into the unsure waters of their futures.

The performers and creators of the work will also participate in a virtual residency of engagement activities with the community, including families who have resettled in Virginia with assistance from refugee service providers.

Part of the center's "HomeStage" series, the free virtual showing of "Cartography" includes a post-show discussion with the performers and creators of the work moderated by Virginia Tech doctoral student Zuleka Woods. "Cartography" is recommended for ages 10 and up and lasts 90 min-

utes, including the discussion.

Inflatable rafts on the Mediterranean. Family photos hidden carefully in a backpack. "Cartography" brings a world alive with movement and migration as the effects of climate change, war, and poverty give shape to where people come from and where they are going.

The New York Times reports there are more displaced people scattered throughout the globe now than at any time in recorded history. In their work with children who migrated to Munich on their own, artists Kaneza Schaal and Christopher Myers found that map-making and storytelling provided the young people a framework from which to unpack the complexities of their maps, both internal and geographic.

A performance rooted in the commonalities of migration and the concrete and metaphorical

mapping at the center of all of these worlds in motion, "Cartography" invites audiences to consider the maps that have yet to be drawn.

Teachers and family members with youth who want to supplement their students' experience of "Cartography" can explore a free digital study guide offered with the performance. The guide includes historical context for migration, information about the artists, and reflective learning activities.

In addition to the evening performance, the center will offer a free school-day viewing of the play on Thursday, April 15, from 10-11:30 a.m. for children, teachers, and families online. This event is recommended for students in grades eight through 12.

The virtual event is free and open to the public, but registration is required. Register online at the Moss Arts Center's box

office, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday through Friday, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday or by calling 540-231-5300 during box office hours.

In collaboration with Virginia Tech's newly established Center for Refugee, Migrant, and Displacement Studies, the center will host the "Cartography" artists in a statewide virtual meeting of refugee service providers, state officials, and community members.

During the session, the artists will lead an arts-based dialogue on the barriers individuals face when they make a home in Virginia. Perspectives shared during this session will inform the Commonwealth of Virginia's new Office for New Americans and Virginia General Assembly.

During their virtual residency, "Cartography" artists will also lead hands-on map-making and storytelling workshops with local families resettled by the

Floyd Friends of Asylum Seekers, the Blacksburg Refugee Partnership, and Commonwealth Catholic Charities' Resettlement Services. The artists will

also teach a virtual acting workshop with Blacksburg High School students and visit a Virginia Tech class in international studies.



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THE NRV MPO SEEKS PUBLIC INPUT FOR THE MPO TITLE VI PLAN UPDATE

The New River Valley MPO is in the process of updating its Title VI and Limited English Proficiency Plan. The plan, along with the opportunity to submit input, is available online at the MPO website: <http://www.montva.com/mpo>

Written comments will be received until April 13, 2021 at 5:00 pm.

Oral comments can be given at the MPO Policy Board meeting on May 6, 2021 at 2:00 pm at the Montgomery County Government Center.

The NRV MPO fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities.

The NRV MPO will strive to provide reasonable accommodations and services for persons who require special assistance to participate in this public involvement opportunity. For more information, or to obtain a Discrimination Complaint Form, or to request special assistance email: brughjd@montgomerycountyva.gov or call (540) 394-2145, TTY/TTD 711.



The cast of "Cartography."

PHOTO BY ELMAN STUDIO.

Send community news and photos to communitynews@ourvalley.org

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Thank you, Radford

Dear Radford community,

The Barta family just spent a few days in Radford. Unfortunately it was for the funeral of our beloved brother Michael.

Mom and Dad (Sue and Joe Barta) still live in Radford, but the rest of us have dispersed and have visited sporadically throughout the past four decades.

Michael died suddenly and had not left a funeral plan. After considering the options, we decided to have his memorial service and burial in Radford.

I cannot thank the people of the New River Valley enough: from Dot Wall and Alice Weeks who helped us find a burial plot on such short notice; to the Mullins Funeral Home, especially Eli and Jasmine, who helped us plan the service over Easter weekend; to the people of Radford, many of whom we had not seen in decades, who attended the service with less than 24 hours' notice; to those who were unable to attend the service and called, sent lovely flowers and cards,

wrote messages on social media and signed the online guest book.

We were overwhelmed with the outpouring of love and kind thoughts. It all was a profound comfort.

We were also touched by the simple gestures: the cars that pulled over on the way to the burial, a lone jogger who stopped his run to pay his respects as our motorcade drove down Main Street, and a neighbor of Westview Cemetery who laid his hand on his chest in reverence to our sorrow.

We are also so very thankful to TJs restaurant at Claytor Lake, which allowed us to linger as a family after dinner and reminisce after a long day in western North Carolina arranging to bring Michael home, and to Al's on First which accommodated 25 weary mourners following Michael's burial.

My husband, my siblings and I are so grateful to Radford for allowing us to have such an idyllic childhood and all these years later for being there in our time of sorrow. Radford is a very special place. Thank you.

Amy Barta Wall

OPINION

Financial focus: Will investors change behavior after the pandemic?

The COVID-19 pandemic may end up changing our lives in some significant ways.

To cite one example, it's likely we'll see a lot more people continue to work remotely now that they've seen the effectiveness of tools such as videoconferencing. Education, too, may be forever changed in some ways.

Perhaps just as important, though, is how many people may now think more about the future, including how they invest.

If you work with a financial professional, you may have connected with this individual over the past several months through a videoconferencing platform, rather than in person. Some people like this arrangement because it offers more scheduling flexibility and eliminates the time and effort of traveling to and from an appointment.

Others, however, still prefer face-to-face contact and look forward to when such arrangements will again be practical and safe for everyone involved. But if you're in the first group – that is, you prefer videoconferencing – you may now wish to use this communication method in the future, at least some of the time.

But beyond the physical aspects of your investing experience, you may

now be looking at some changes in your investment strategy brought on, or at least suggested, by your reactions to the pandemic.

For example, many people – especially, but not exclusively, those whose employment was affected by the pandemic – found that they were coming up short in the area of liquidity. They didn't have enough easily accessible savings to provide them with the cash they needed to meet their expenses until their employment situations stabilized.

Consequently, some individuals were forced to dip into their long-term investments, such as their 401(k)'s and IRAs. Generally speaking, this type of move is not ideal. These accounts are designed for retirement, so the more you tap into them early, the less you'll have available when you do retire. Furthermore, your withdrawals will likely be taxable, and, depending on your age, may also be subject to penalties.

If you were affected by this liquidity crunch, you can take steps now to avoid its recurrence. Your best move may be to build an emergency fund containing three to six months' worth of living expenses with the funds held in a separate, highly accessible account of cash or cash equivalents. Of

course, given your regular expenses, it may take some time to build such an amount, but if you can commit yourself to putting away a certain amount of money each month, you will make progress. Even having a few hundred dollars in an emergency fund can help create more financial stability.

Apart from this new appreciation for short-term liquidity, though, the foundation for your overall financial future should remain essentially the same. In addition to building your emergency fund, you should still contribute what you can afford to your IRA, 401(k) and other retirement plans.

If you have children you want to send to college, you might still explore college-funding vehicles such as a 529 plan. Higher education will still be expensive even with an expansion in online learning programs.

Post-pandemic life may contain some differences, along with many similarities to life before. But it will always be a smart move to create a long-term financial strategy tailored to your individual needs, goals and risk tolerance.

*Submitted by
Meghan Kuczmarski,
Edward Jones Financial Advisor
540-552-1241.*

WalletHub: Virginia has fourth most coronavirus restrictions

The personal finance website WalletHub has noted that the United States is making considerable progress with the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine, and as a result states have been rolling back restrictions on business and gatherings. To determine which states have the fewest (and the most) coronavirus restrictions, WalletHub compared the 50 states and the District of Columbia across 13 key metrics.

The results determined

that Virginia has the fourth-most coronavirus restrictions in the country. Only Vermont, the District of Columbia, and Delaware still have more restrictions in place than does Virginia.

The metrics WalletHub used to rank the states were the presence or absence of a requirement to wear a face mask in public; the presence or absence of state domestic travel limitations; the presence or absence of policies that ban large gatherings; the status of

public schools reopening; the presence or absence of state-imposed mandatory closings of restaurants and bars to the public; the presence or absence of state-issued guidance on customer health checks at restaurants; the presence or absence of state-imposed mandatory closings of non-essential businesses to the public; the presence or absence of state action regarding legislation for ensuring businesses immunity against liability for any harm caused by

COVID-19; whether or not states have required or recommended working from home; whether or not a state has required or recommended workplace temperature screening; whether or not the state participation in multistate agreements or regional partnerships; the presence or absence of state-imposed mandatory quarantine policies; and the presence or absence of state-issued guidelines for assisted living facilities related to COVID-19.

National survey puts Virginia among top tier of states best prepared for large-scale emergency during pandemic

A new national report card on states' level of preparation to protect public health against disease, disaster, and other calamity lists Virginia among the states that are best prepared to respond to a large-scale emergency.

The report – Ready or Not 2021: Protecting the Public's Health from Diseases, Disasters, and Bioterrorism – includes Virginia among states in the highest performing tier based on an assessment of key emergency preparedness indicators. Virginia was likewise ranked in the top tier of states in the Ready or Not 2020 report and was ranked among the top states in overall emergency preparedness rating in the 2020 National Health Security Preparedness Index report from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Colorado School of Public Health.

The 2021 report also identifies Virginia as the “most prepared” among states determined to be

“more vulnerable” in public health emergency situations.

The report declares that “the COVID-19 pandemic has starkly demonstrated that underinvestment in public health emergency preparedness can cost hundreds of thousands of lives and wreak havoc on the economy.” Its methodology measured states' performance on 10 key emergency preparedness indicators. Its findings placed Virginia among 20 states and the District of Columbia in a high level of preparedness tier, 15 states in a middle preparation tier and 15 states in a low degree of preparation tier. The report's analysis found room for improvement in every jurisdiction.

In the high-performance

tier with Virginia were Colorado, Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Delaware, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, Mississippi, North Carolina, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin.

“The importance of this report is that it gives states actionable data to adopt policies that save lives,” said John Auerbach, President and CEO of Trust for America's Health. “The COVID-19 crisis shows that we have much more work to do to protect Americans from health threats. States need to take aggressive steps to shore up their preparedness for all types of public health emergencies.”

Simply Elemental 2021 issues call for artists with Thursday submission deadline

Simply Elemental 2021, the annual outdoor art exhibit of the Hahn Horticulture Garden (HHG) integrated along the paths, plantings, and trees within the garden, has issued a call for artists.

Artists, groups of artists, art teachers, and students working in any media are invited to submit a proposal with a conceptual design for consideration by a jury.

Because this is an exhibit of relatively short duration, materials used in the pieces can be non-permanent but need to hold up for a mini-

mum of eight weeks.

The deadline for submission is Thursday, April 15.

The HHG art committee will review the submissions April 15 through May 1. The artists will then be notified of their acceptance on May 1.

The exhibits will be installed the week of July 26 with installations scheduled to allow for social distancing.

A prize will be awarded for the Best in Show as determined by a judging committee. This will be

the first year that a Best in Show Award has been given.

Pieces in the exhibit will be selected using the following guidelines:

The piece uses the garden setting to advantage. It makes a strong visual impact. It is not harmful to the horticulture garden and its plants. It is appropriate to a family-friendly setting. It requires no maintenance during the exhibit. It installs in a secure manner. It is safe for the public. It leaves no permanent impact on the garden

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

CLUES ACROSS

1. Checks

5. Pears

10. Resound

14. Swerve

15. Plant of a clone

16. Launched Apollo

17. So far

19. Settled down

20. Clumsy grab

21. Grade

22. Flightless birds

23. Wraps packages

26. Withdrawn from drugs

28. Plague

32. Mineral

35. Tell a white lie

36. Anwar __, Egyptian statesman

38. Devil

39. Frosted

41. Indonesian Island

43. Remove

44. Vegetables

46. Douroucoulis

48. Turkey

49. Tilts

51. Deficiency disease

53. Goose genus

55. The back

56. Lacking excess flesh

58. Dandy

60. Hill (Celtic)

61. Initiate

62. Voids

67. Brews

68. Thread in skin

69. Trillion, prefix

70. Inclinations

71. Afrikaans

72. Acquire by one's efforts

CLUES DOWN

1. A pituitary hormone

2. Brew

3. Seed vessel having hooks or prickles

4. In a way, oozed

5. The part of the face above the eyes

6. An awkward stupid person

7. Air pollution

8. Mackerels

9. Secretaries

10. Adorned

11. Determines quantities of heat

12. First Chinese dynasty

13. Annual grass of Europe and N Africa

18. Equalizers

23. In a way, matches

24. Situated at an apex

25. In a way, changed

27. Offer

29. Raincoat

30. Concept

31. Mediterranean tree

33. A flag flown by a ship to show its nationality

34. A deficiency of red blood cells

37. __ Gallery

40. A finished quality

42. Austrian river

45. Engine additive

47. Phoenician city

50. Most sure

52. A salt or ester

54. Flounder genus

56. Compared to

57. A circle of light around the sun or moon

59. Round flat Middle Eastern bread

60. Cans

63. Metric weight unit

64. Earl Gray

65. Stray

66. — Diego, Francisco, Anselmo

Wildflowers decorate area woods, paths and parks



Bloodroot is an early bloomer and is seen here at Wildwood Park in Radford on March 21. This flower's bud is hidden and protected from the cold by its "wraparound" leaf.

Pat Brown
Contributing writer

The appearance of domestic blooms in home gardens is a signal that wildflowers are busily coming out of their winter hiding in the woods in and around the New River Valley.

Local residents can gain access to see and enjoy wildflowers if they are willing to do some walking. A variety of wildflowers can easily be spotted, admired, and photographed. Picking, however, is against the rules.

One of the princesses of wildflowers, the trillium, is about to be visible in a number of locations, including Falls Ridge Nature Conservancy Reserve that lies between Shawsville and Ellett Valley in Montgomery County. Trillium can also be viewed on the wildflower trail at Wildwood Park in Radford.



A blossom and buds of Hepatica are visible during a late March stroll at Wildwood Park. Another name for this plant is "Liverwort" because, according to wildflower guide books, it was once believed the leaves promoted liver health.



This budding Toothwort emerged at Mid-County Park in late March. More Toothwort was also observed along Dry Run Road as March came to a close.

Each location has a website.

White Toothwort and Hepatica (also called Liverwort) were visible on Dry Run Road at the end of March and may still be showing up. Hepatica also grows at Wildwood and at Montgomery County's Mid-County Park (Blue Blaze Trail). Dutchman's Breeches was just beginning at Wildwood and on Dry Run Road outside of Blacksburg in the last days of March.

Delicate pastel pink Spring Beauties grow in clusters from March to May, so they have been and should continue to be easy to spot at Wildwood, Mid-County Park or along Dry Run Road.

It is time for the appearance of a yellow lily-like blossom called trout lily to adorn hillsides at Wildwood Park and Dry Run Road. This plant has another less lovely name: Dogtooth. Coltsfoot, also yellow

and resembling a leggy and less leafy version of a dandelion, can be found at those locations and others.

Wildwood Park's website can help in a wildflower identification quest. A special wildflower trail goes up a hillside. (Dog owners usually stick to the park's paths.) Mid-County Park is public and also has a single-file trail for nature lovers. Falls Ridge is a Nature Conservancy property that prohibits dogs. Dry Run Road is flanked by private property, but hillsides give walkers a floral display without encroaching on another person's property.

"I always watch for Virginia bluebells at tax time, and (wild) rhododendron at Father's Day" said Beth Thomas recently. As a hiker and member of the Virginia Native Plant Society, she has been seeking out wildflowers in the area for decades.

She recalled taking trips with Virginia Tech's former "Free University" program because she loved "being out in nature." For years she led a hiking group in the area, and wildflower sightings were an integral part of each trip.

Thomas recommends revisiting favorite walks at different times since "you may discover something that was not blooming" on your first outing.

To help with identification, she recommends locating a copy of "Wildflowers of the Shenandoah Valley and Blue Ridge Mountains" by Oscar W. Gupton and Fred C. Swope. In addition to being specific to this region, the book is organized by the timing and color of blossoms. It lists blooms that are visible even into October.

Wildflower lovers should always be careful to look and photograph but not to pick and trample. Look-

ing for the same blooms next year is part of the fun, and picking the flowers threatens to reduce their ability to multiply and thrive.

Thomas clarified the concept. Wildflowers, she explained, "colonize" where conditions are perfect. They won't just grow any and every place. That's why people have to go find them. A friend remarked to Thomas that she had witnessed (on a recent weekend) crowds of people visiting Falls Ridge with a number of them ignoring the dog prohibition.

Thomas noted, "This year of COVID isolation has been bad for many natural areas that have been 'discovered' such as Falls Ridge and Pandapas Pond trails."

Anyone answering the call of the wildflowers should grab a guidebook and head out. But remember to carefully and leave the dogs at home.

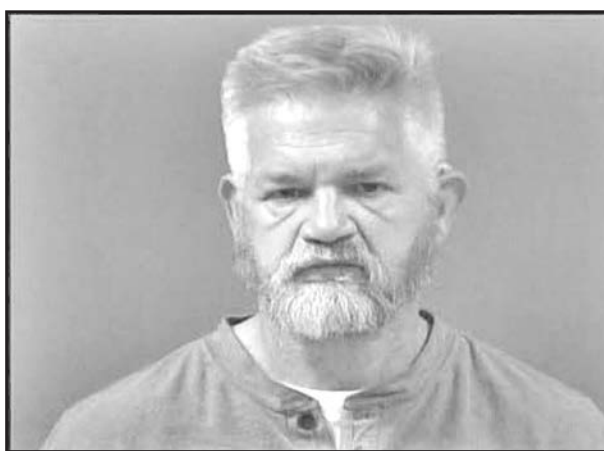
Radford police arrest, jail two

The Radford City Police Department responded Friday, April 2, at approximately 5:44 p.m. to a call in the 100 block of Jeffries Drive and arrested Buford Clifford Dunbar, Jr., and Shawna Lynn Dunbar.

They were jailed and held without bond at the New River Valley Regional Jail.

Buford Dunbar, 55, was charged with malicious wounding, breaking and entering to commit assault, assault and battery, conspiracy to commit malicious wounding, and resisting arrest.

Shawna Dunbar, 51, was charged with assault and battery and conspiracy to commit malicious wounding.



Buford Dunbar



Shawna Dunbar

Oransi

from page 1

New River City, and one thing Oransi does is help make the quality of the indoor environment even better."

"We appreciate so much your investment in our community, the jobs you're going to create and the overall investment in infrastructure," said Ridpath in a message to Oransi. "This is just a wonderful investment in our community."

According to the announcement from the governor's office, "the Virginia Economic Development Partnership worked with the City of Radford and Onward New River Valley to secure the project for Virginia. Governor Northam approved a \$50,000 grant from the commonwealth's Opportunity Fund to assist the City of Radford with the project. Oransi is eligible to receive state benefits from the Virginia Enterprise Zone Program, administered by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development. Funding and services to support the company's employee recruitment and training activities will be provided through the Virginia Jobs Investment Program."

Oransi was founded in 2009 as an "engineer's quest to find a better indoor air quality solution for the founder's young asthmatic son" according to the governor's office and "has evolved to become a leading air purification company designing some of the most efficient and intuitive products on the market."

The company is based in Raleigh, N.C.

"We are excited that Oransi has decided to put down roots in the New River Valley," said Virginia Secretary of Com-

merce and Trade Brian Ball. "The Plymouth Building provided an infrastructure-ready solution that will allow the company to be up and running quickly, and we are certain the region's renowned workforce will meet Oransi's needs from development to manufacturing."

Company officials said the city's engineering pool because of its proximity to Virginia Tech and Radford University

was a driving factor in the decision to locate in the New River Valley..

"Oransi is very pleased to establish its first manufacturing facility in the City of Radford to develop and manufacture our best-in-class air purifiers," said Oransi's founder and CEO, Peter Mann, CEO and Founder of Oransi. "We selected the location because of the exceptional local engineering talent pool that will support our

continued growth while inspiring innovation, creativity, and collaboration. We hope to provide one of the best employee experiences in the New River Valley."

Charlie Jewell, Executive Director of Onward New River Valley, said the news is good for the growth of manufacturing in the region.

"This is great news for our region and the continued growth of its advanced manufacturing

sector," said Jewell. "On behalf of our region, we congratulate Oransi on locating its first manufacturing facility in the City of Radford, and we look forward to supporting its long-term success here in Virginia's New River Valley."

Delegate Chris Hurst, who represents Virginia's 12th District, which includes the City of Radford, also lauded the announcement.

"I am beyond thrilled

that Oransi chose Radford to open its first manufacturing facility," Hurst said. "The veteran-owned manufacturing facility is exactly the type of business the New River Valley attracts. Offering a diverse range of resources, exceptional educational opportunities, and a qualified workforce, this is not only a great place for businesses to thrive, but also is a great place for their employees to live."

THE NRV MPO SEEKS PUBLIC INPUT FOR TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

The New River Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is developing its 2021-22 Unified Planning Work Program. The UPWP provides an annual schedule of activities, lists planning tasks and studies, and identifies funding sources. A draft plan is available for review at the offices of the Towns of Blacksburg and Christiansburg, the City of Radford, and the Montgomery and Pulaski County offices. It is also available on the MPO website: www.montgomerycountyva.gov/mpo



Deadline for written comments: 5:00 PM April 13, 2021

Oral comments will also be taken at the MPO Policy Board meeting at 2:00 PM on May 6, 2021 at the Montgomery County Government Center if it is held.

Comments can also address transit projects for which Federal operating and capital assistance will be sought under 49 USC Section 5303, as well as other transportation modes.

The NRV MPO ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact Dan Brugh at: brughjd@montgomerycountyva.gov or 540-394-2145, TTY/TTD 711.

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Virginia Tech COVID-19 lab passes 100,000-sample milestone

Virginia Tech’s COVID-19 analysis lab reached a milestone in March, breaking more than 100,000 samples analyzed since the lab opened less than a year ago.

“It was an emotional moment to see the 100,000th sample arrive,” said Carla Finkelstein, director of the Virginia Tech Molecular Diagnostics Laboratory at the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute at Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine (VTC).

“We’ve come so far since we first started,” Finkelstein said. “This achievement is beyond our wildest dreams, but we really can’t spend time reflecting on it. For now, we are not really conscious of what we’ve achieved. We just keep moving samples. We are on autopilot, reporting the results of our sample testing as fast as we can

to public health officials to help contain the virus.”

As of Friday, April 2, Virginia Tech had processed 113,031 samples. The lab opened on April 20, 2020, and received permission from the Food and Drug Administration to carry out testing while its Emergency Use Authorization was under consideration in order to help expand public health lab testing capacity in Southwest Virginia.

“We will have a much larger celebration once the pandemic is over,” said Finkelstein, an associate professor with the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute at VTC and the College of Science’s Department of Biological Sciences. “The team members are honored for the opportunity to serve their community and look forward to a not-so-distant future when there are zero sam-

ples to process.”

“Dr. Finkelstein took a bold and innovative series of steps early in the pandemic to position the commonwealth to rapidly stand up and sustain a state-of-the-art COVID-19 testing operation for the citizens of the southwest region of our state, including the Virginia Tech community at a time of great need,” said Michael Friedlander, Virginia Tech’s vice president for health sciences and technology and executive director of the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute.

Finkelstein shifted her attention from her laboratory’s cancer research and enlisted “a small army of volunteers” at the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute to work day and night with her to develop a reliable qRT-PCR-based assay that could be validated, could be submitted to the FDA for consider-



Personnel of the Virginia Tech Molecular Diagnostics Lab at the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute take a moment to mark the occasion of the 100,000th sample analyzed for the COVID-19 virus. Photo by Clayton Metz/Virginia Tech

ation for Emergency Use Authorization, and could avoid the flawed tests kits and potential reagent supply chain challenges on the horizon for the nation.

On Nov. 10, 2020, state officials announced Virginia Tech’s COVID-19 lab was selected as one of three exclusive

OneLab Network Tier 2 laboratories to expand virus testing capacity across Virginia. By being included in the OneLab Network, Virginia Tech can be called upon to receive samples from any health district in the state, depending on the greatest need.

Since opening, the

Molecular Diagnostics Lab has analyzed thousands of Virginia Tech Virginia Tech students and employees who were tested for the COVID-19 virus through the university’s testing centers. That’s in addition to testing done for regional health districts since April 20, 2020.

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. Eucharist Sunday’s at 11am and Wednesday’s at 12pm.

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 mid-week 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.fbradford.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.

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

CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST

Radford Church of God in Christ, 206 Russell Ave., Radford. Supt. Ronald A.

Radford

WORSHIP DIRECTORY

Looking for Wisdom

Read Esther 1:1 through 3:15

When the turn came for Esther (the young woman Mordecai had adopted, the daughter of his uncle Abihail) to go to the king, she asked for nothing other than what Hegai, the king's eunuch who was in charge of the harem, suggested. And Esther won the favor of everyone who saw her (Esther 2:15).

What do you do when you're a young woman vying to be the king's next queen?

We don't know much about Esther's personality or feelings. But the Bible does give us some clues about this young heroine of the faith. From this passage, it seems Esther was wise enough to seek—or at least listen to—and follow the advice of more experienced people.

First she listened to Hegai. We don't know what he told her about winning the king's heart, but it worked! And other Scriptures tell us that Esther repeatedly asked for and followed Mordecai's advice.

God often places other people in our lives to give us counsel. We're wise when, instead of trying to go it on our own, we ask for help from others who are godly and have more life experience.

Prayer Suggestion: Ask God to send you wise counselors.

Quicklook: Esther 2:15–19

If your church is not listed and if you are interested, call Randy Thompson at 540-389-9355 or email at advertise@ourvalley.org

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.

RADFORD SPORTS

Transfer portal both helps and hurts VT basketball; RU loses two starters

Marty Gordon

NRVsports@ourvalley.org

The Virginia Tech men's basketball team received some help from the transfer portal recently with the announcements that 7'-1" Michael Durr will transfer to Tech from South Florida and former Wofford guard Storm Murphy will join his former coach, Mike Young, in Blacksburg.

Durr averaged 8.8 points and 7.9 rebounds last season and finished his third year at South Florida. He will have two years of eligibility left because of the NCAA COVID waiver this season.

Murphy started all 34 games this past season, averaging 11.9 points while dishing out a team-high 121 assists.

On the other hand, the Hokies have been hurt by college basketball's new norm of the transfer portal in that Joseph Bamisile and Jalen Cone entered the portal and will finish out their college playing days on other campuses.

At Radford, the Highlanders men's program has likewise been hurt by the transfer portal. Six players, including two starters, have entered the portal. Former Radford High School all-star Quinton Morton-Robertson and starter Fah'mir Ali, who led RU in scoring this past season, have entered the transfer portal.

As of this week, 1,000 players are in basketball's transfer portal.



Former Wofford guard Storm Murphy is headed to Virginia Tech after entering the transfer portal.

FILE PHOTO

According to the NCAA, the transfer portal was created as a compliance tool to systematically manage the transfer process from start to finish, to add more transparency to the process among schools, and to empower student-athletes to make known their desire to consider

other programs.

But instead, the portal is an actual website where coaches all over the country can go to find and recruit players looking for a new home in the college ranks.

The bottom line in this illustrious portal, which conjures

up images of Star Trek and its transmission to another planet, allows student-athletes to transfer because of the lack of playing time, a mismatch between their athletics expectations and their experience, coaching issues, and just the hope of playing somewhere else.

This year has made it a lot easier for unhappy players to transfer as the NCAA has waived off the year thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic. This means that most transferring players could be eligible immediately and have an extra year of playing time.

Women's national championship game had Hokies, RU flavor



From the Sidelines
Marty Gordon

When Stanford and Arizona's women's basketball teams took to the floor for the national championship, there was a local flair to the contest on both sides of the court. Stanford assistant coach Brittany Anderson is a former player at Blacksburg High School and Virginia Tech. She had also coached at Radford University and Virginia Tech.

Anderson joined the Stanford staff in June.

After moving with her family to Blacksburg, she played one season at Blacksburg High School.

Playing for the Hokies from 2003-07, Anderson helped guide Virginia Tech to four straight postseason appearances, including three trips to the NCAA Tournament and one to the WNIT. She shot 44.6 percent from the floor for her career and averaged 10.2 points per game as a senior.

Upon graduating from VT with a bachelor's degree in apparel design and merchandise management, Anderson served as the corporate recruiter for M.C. Dean, Inc., in Dulles, Va., from 2008-13.

During that time, Anderson also coached girls' basketball at Potomac Falls High School in Potomac Falls, Va., and in the AAU ranks.

She joined the college coaching ranks in 2013, serving as an assistant at Radford and aiding in the resurgence of its program that included a trip to the WNIT in 2015. With her return to her alma mater, Anderson helped Virginia Tech to four straight postseason appearances, highlighted by a run to the WNIT

championship game in 2018.

Across the floor, the Arizona squad included Trinity Baptiste, who had transferred from Virginia Tech. She went to Arizona to experience the NCAA Tournament after stops at Northwest Florida State College and Virginia Tech.

In a meeting of Hokies, Anderson hugged Baptiste after the game.

Baptiste started all 27 games for the Wildcats on their run to the national championship game. She scored in double figures for Arizona nine times and ended the year averaging 8.6 points and 6.1 rebounds per game, averaging 26.4 minutes per game.

While at Tech, Baptiste was the ACC Sixth Player of the Year in 2020. She has said she will not return for another year of eligibility at Arizona.

Meanwhile another former Radford University women's basketball head coach, Tajama Abraham-Ngongba, has a new gig after being named the head coach of the U.S. Virgin Islands' women's national basketball team. Tajama coached for the Highlanders from 2008-2013 and compiled a 62-85 mark that included a 22-11 record in 2011. She was named the Big South Conference's Coach of the Year.

In other women's basketball news, Radford University received a top-notch commitment this past week when Vanessa Blake made her announcement. The Ashley Ridge (S.C.) 6-1 senior was one of 16 players named to South Carolina's 5A all-state team after averaging 18.5 points, 14.7 rebounds and 2.2 blocks per game for the season.

Radford also received news that 5-8 Harrisonburg guard Mariah Cain is also headed to the school. She averaged 18.2 points and five rebounds this past season.

CMS volleyball finishes season undefeated



The Christiansburg Middle School volleyball team, under the direction of Coach Morgan Taylor, finished its 2020-2021 season undefeated. Team members are pictured above. Front row, left to right: Sophie Akers, Blair Self, Abby Neel, Jasmyn Charlton and Sophia Russell; back row, left to right: Coach Morgan Taylor, Ellie Eddleton, Ela Shepherd, Jade Moore, Hannah Bishop, Reese Hall and Tyleigh Dillard.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Tyleigh Dillard finished her final game as an eighth grader on the 2020-21 CMS volleyball team.

Outdoor report: Montgomery Co. 2020-21 turkey fall season harvest up from 2019-20

With 45 turkeys harvested during the 2020-2021 hunting season, the bird harvest in Montgomery County was up by 4.7 percent as compared to the 2019-20 season, according to numbers reported from the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources.

A total of 2,092 wild turkeys were harvested in Virginia during the 2020-21 fall turkey hunting season, a 3.7% increase over the 2019 harvest of 2,018 turkeys.

The harvest declined approximately 1.5% in counties east of the Blue Ridge Mountains but increased by 11% in counties west of the Blue Ridge. Nearly 96% of turkeys harvested this fall were reported through the electronic harvest reporting systems (telephone, online, and mobile app).

While Virginia's turkey population is close to record levels for modern times, fall harvests will fluctuate due to a number of other factors beyond the population size. These factors, which vary across the state, include the length and timing of the fall season, annual variation in reproductive success, acorn abundance, hunting pressure, and weather.

Reproductive success can vary widely; inclement weather in May and June can lead to nest losses or death of the young turkey poults. In 2020, the statewide productivity estimate (1.9 poults/hen) fell well below the long-term average (2.6 poults/hen) for Virginia. However, productivity varies by region, and juvenile birds typically account for 40-60% of the fall bag, so reproductive success can greatly influence turkey population size and fall harvest.

Acorn abundance also has a significant impact on fall harvest rates. In years with abundant acorns, wild turkey home ranges are small, which makes them harder for hunters to find. As a result, harvest rates decline. On the other hand, during years of acorn scarcity turkeys must range further to find food and this typically helps hunters find and harvest more birds.

An interesting as-

pect of the 2020-21 fall harvest was the marked increase in harvest by hunters using archery equipment (bows or crossbows).

The archery harvest made up nearly 19% of the total fall harvest with crossbow users accounting for nearly 12% of the total fall harvest. This represents a 125% increase over the archery harvest from the 2019-20 season.

This increase may be attributed to acorn abundance that was not uniform across the landscape. In areas where there were acorns, field reports generally indicated a "bumper" crop.

Archery hunters, much like the turkeys and other wildlife, likely keyed in on areas of high acorn abundance.

Thanksgiving Day and the newly added hunting opportunity on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving continue to be popular fall turkey hunting days statewide. This new day was added in 2019 except for counties that have only a 2-week fall season.

This year a total of 519 birds were harvested during this two-day timeframe, accounting for nearly 25% of the total fall harvest. Thanksgiving Day accounted for the single highest day of harvest with 333 birds or 16% of the total fall harvest.

Even with the slight increase in fall harvest this year, the overall decline in fall turkey hunting seems to continue for Virginia and many other eastern states. One of the goals of the Department of Wildlife Resources' Wild Turkey Management Plan is to reverse the general decline in fall turkey hunting interest.

-- Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources

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PHOTO BY TYLER DONAGHY



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