

# News Messenger

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Wednesday, December 9, 2020

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## Montgomery Chamber hands out awards at annual meeting



The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce hosted its annual meeting and awards recognition on Thursday, Dec. 3.

The chamber had to innovate and create a platform for its annual gathering due to the governor's executive orders of Nov. 18.

Sharon Scott, the chamber's executive director, said of the meeting, "We felt in the best interest of public health and safety, the best way for us to deliver the program in 2020 was via a virtual format." Aaron Harris-Kirby, President and CEO of Pointe West Management and the chair of the chamber's board for 2020, supported the idea as long as the vehicle

used was not Zoom. Harris-Kirby said, "Don't get me wrong, Zoom has been an important part of our lives in 2020, but everyone has Zoom fatigue. We wanted to make the meeting as informative, engaging and fun as possible during a pandemic. We knew we could not physically distance 400 people in any venue in Montgomery County. We prepared a request for proposal document in late August for a virtual production. The annual meeting resembled the traditional format with some added fun."

Harris-Kirby shared the 2020 progress toward the very aggressive Program of Work of 100 objectives

for a 100 percent completion rate. She said, "This program of work was adjusted with the movement or removal of nine items due to the pandemic and the addition of seven objectives and over 200 tasks because of the events of 2020."

The chamber's award winners for 2020 in the business award categories were Business of the Year: LewisGale Hospital Montgomery; Small Business of the Year: Joba Studio; Distinguished Business Person of the Year: Ed Tuchler, Shelter Alternatives; Distinguished Government Leader: Mark Mear, Montgomery County Public School System; Distinguished Board Member: Terry Vangelos, Coldwell Banker Townside, REALTORS; Regional Impact Award: The Public Safety Task Force of the NRV; Outstanding Community Service - Individual: Jennifer Majdanik, BAE, OSI Systems; Outstanding Community Service - Or-

See Chamber, page 6

## Virginia to receive COVID-19 vaccine by end of December

The Commonwealth of Virginia will receive an estimated 480,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccine from two manufacturers (Pfizer and Moderna) by the end of December.

This initial distribution will ensure 480,000 health care personnel (HCP) and long-term care facility (LTCF) residents receive a first dose of the vaccine, beginning the inoculation process for nearly all members of Virginia's two top-priority groups. The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) estimates that there are up to 500,000 HCP and LTCF residents in Virginia.

"Vaccine will be provided to Virginians in a way that is fair, ethical, and transparent," said Dr. M. Norman Oliver, Virginia's state health commissioner. "We will focus initially on the groups that have been most at risk for severe illness from COVID-19 infections and those whose work puts them at greatest risk of contracting COVID-19 infections. Over time, as more vaccine supply becomes available, more Virginians will be able to get vaccinated, and we can look forward to a time when this pandemic will end."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) on Tuesday, Dec. 1, voted to for-

mally recommend HCP and LTCF residents as the top priorities for vaccination. In response, the Virginia Disaster Medical Advisory Committee (VDMAC) and the Virginia Unified Command voted this week to officially adopt ACIP recommendations in Virginia and provide initial vaccines to both HCP and LTCF residents.

The first shipment of vaccines is expected to be received from Pfizer in mid-December and will require ultracold storage (negative 70 degrees Celsius). All 72,150 initial doses will be distributed directly to geographically diverse health care systems with ultracold storage capacity and will go to HCP. Health care personnel that directly care for COVID-19 patients will receive top priority among health care providers.

Subsequent weekly shipments are expected to begin after the initial shipment and will be divided among HCP and LTCF residents. The majority of LTCF in Virginia will receive vaccinations from CVS and Walgreens' teams onsite through a federal CDC-pharmacy-LTCF partnership. Health care systems and public health will ensure access to vaccination for all HCP and LTCF residents equita-

See Vaccine, page 6

## Radford High School students help ring in the holidays for Glencoe Mansion

RADFORD -- Students from the Radford High School building trades classes have turned in some hard work to add some holiday cheer for the public to enjoy on the grounds of Glencoe Mansion.

Led by their instructor, Wesley Hallett, students from all his classes created large wooden snowflakes to adorn the grounds of the museum and show some holiday spirit to passers-by. The

students cut out, assembled and painted the snowflakes. Most of the work was done by the students with Hallett adding the final tweaks and touches.

The snowflakes will be on the grounds for all to see through Feb. 5, 2021. They accompany the annual holiday exhibit inside and outside the museum. The 2020 holiday theme is "Misfits, Ghosts and Grumps," which ex-

plores how our modern Christmas customs have been shaped by four unlikely heroes. The exhibit will be on display through February 5. The outside components of the exhibit are on display day and night.

The Glencoe Mansion, Museum & Gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and on Sunday from 1 to 4 p.m.



Building trades student Ryan Gordon measures out the components for the Glencoe Mansion snowflakes before cutting.



The snowflakes crafted by Radford High students are on display at the Glencoe Mansion.

## Moose Davis, beloved therapy dog, remembered for exemplary life of service

Beloved Virginia Tech therapy dog Moose Davis, age 8, died Wednesday, Dec. 2, 2020.

Moose was born and raised at Guiding Eyes for the Blind in Yorktown Heights, N.Y. His love for campus life began during time he spent at Ithaca College with his puppy raiser.

After a minor medical issue prevented him from being placed as a guide dog, Moose found his destined career as a therapy dog. Teaming up in October 2013 with Trent Davis, counselor and coordinator

of Virginia Tech's Animal-Assisted Therapy at Cook Counseling Center, the Labrador retriever got right to work serving the university and surrounding communities.

"He was the dog of a lifetime for me. We had an amazing bond. It was the key to our relationship and our work," said Davis. "Among his great lessons for all of us is his example of living in non-judgment, infinite calmness and unconditional love for everyone."

During his seven years at Virginia Tech, Moose aided in more than

7,500 counseling sessions and more than 500 outreach events, becoming one of the university's most beloved celebrities.

"I remember freshman year hearing about him and following his Instagram, desperate to find him around campus and finally getting to meet him," said Kayla Blatman (animal and poultry sciences '20), a doctor of veterinary medicine student at the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine. "And when I did, he was the sweetest dog and I loved giving him all the pets I could before he went off to meet more students. I always looked forward to seeing him again. He truly was an incredible dog and made a huge impact on our entire VT campus."

Because of his popularity and active presence on social media, Moose became an advocate for the variety of services and assistance offered by Cook Counseling Center.

"Moose was an incredibly effective ambassador for mental health and reducing the stigma of mental health. Because of his impact upon Virginia Tech, the counseling center now has three additional dogs to help carry on his work," said Ellie Sturgis, director of Cook Counseling Center.

"More importantly, Moose was



PHOTO BY CHRISTINA FRANUSICH FOR VIRGINIA TECH

Virginia Tech therapy dog Moose Davis.

See Moose, page 6

## United Way's first Festival of Trees underway



The United Way of the New River Valley is holding its first annual Festival of Trees.

The United Way and some of its partner agencies will be decorating Christmas trees in their offices as a way to help spread some holiday cheer in these troublesome times.

Pictures of each tree will be posted on unitedwaynr.org/tree. Residents of the NRV have the job of picking their favorite tree by visiting the Unit-

ed Way website anytime through Monday, Jan. 4, checking out the trees and casting a vote. A special trophy will be awarded to the winner.

Voting will be cast by donations of any amount. All the money raised through the voting will go directly toward United Way's mission of improving lives in the New River Valley.

More information is available by email at info@unitedwaynr.org or by calling (540)381-2066.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## Wednesday, Dec. 9 - Dec. 22:

**Radford Business window and residential decorating contest**  
Throughout the city. Tour the commercial districts and neighborhoods from the safety of a vehicle and then vote for favorites. A map is available on Radford-Chamber.com.

## Friday, Dec. 11:

**Christiansburg Reverse Christmas Parade**  
This year, in place of its traditional Christmas Parade, the Town will be offering a reverse parade at Uptown Christiansburg (formerly NRV Mall) on Dec. 11 from 7-9 p.m. Floats will be stationary (parked) in the New River Community College (NRCC) section of the Uptown Christiansburg parking lot while spectators slowly drive through on New River Road. This year's parade theme is "Light up the tree, it's Christmas you see." Floats will be spaced to adhere to social distancing guidelines, and there is a limit to the number of participants on each float dependent on its size. The inclement weather date is Dec. 14.

## Sunday, Dec. 13:

**Radford Santa's Police Cruise**  
Beginning at 3 p.m., Santa cruises throughout Radford neighborhoods. A map of Santa's route is on RadfordVA.gov. Sponsored by the City of Radford Police Department.

## Monday, Dec. 14:

**Radford Handcrafted Holiday Night Market**  
Located at the Radford Triangle Lot, W. Main St., 5-8 p.m.,

featuring the Java Brothers and local vendors. The event is sponsored by MountainTrotter Arts and the Radford Information and Welcome Center

## Puppy Kindergarten Mini Course

This class is for puppies 10 to 17 weeks of age. The class is designed to get the puppy off to the right start. The puppy will learn how to interact with people by sitting to greet and how to bite nicely. The class lessons cover how to teach sit, down and come. Owners will learn how to teach their puppy in a positive and proactive manner. They will learn how to deal with the typical puppy problems such as chewing, barking, mouthing and jumping up. The puppy comes to all classes. Please bring a chair. The class is taught outside at 4 p.m. as course #312230-D5. The cost is \$60 refundable and \$70 non-refundable.

To register, visit [www.blacksburg.gov/recreation](http://www.blacksburg.gov/recreation) or call 540-443-1100.

## Wednesday, Dec. 16:

### Register to Light Up Your Home for the Holidays in Christiansburg

The Christiansburg Parks and Recreation Department is hosting a residential holiday decorating contest. Staff will visit each destination to determine the top 10 entries, which then go on the town's Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/cburgvagov](http://www.facebook.com/cburgvagov)) for voting by the community. Voting begins Friday, Dec. 18, and runs through 9 a.m. Monday, Dec. 21. Once all applications are received, decorated homes who give permission will be included in a map for others to visit on a self-guided light tour. To register for the contest, complete form by Dec. 16 at noon.

## Thursday, Dec. 17:

### Radford Christmas Cruise Thru

At the Radford Recreation Center, 200 George St., from 6 - 8 p.m. The event will feature a car decorating contest and holiday treats. Applications can be found on RadfordVA.gov.

## Thursday, Dec. 24, Dec. 25, Jan. 1:

### Christiansburg closings for Christmas, New Year's

The town's facilities will be closed Christmas Eve and Christmas day on Dec. 24-25.

Solid waste normally scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 24, will be collected on Tuesday, Dec. 22, along with Tuesday's regular collection.

Solid waste normally scheduled for Friday, Dec. 25, will be collected on Wednesday, Dec. 23, along with Wednesday's regular collection.

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

## Ongoing:

### Wrapping for a Reason

A holiday wrapping booth to raise money for local emergency assistance is in operation in Uptown Christiansburg (formerly NRV Mall), near Bath & Body Works. The booth is open Fridays through Sunday through Dec. 16 and then is open daily through Christmas Eve.

Volunteers are needed to wrap gifts in a sanitary, socially distanced environment. All proceeds benefit Montgomery County Emergency Assistance Program, commonly known as MCEAP, which provides

emergency food, clothing, utility, rent and mortgage assistance to Montgomery County residents year-round. The sign-up link is <https://tinyurl.com/w4r2020>.

Persons unable to volunteer time and talents this year, may consider donating supplies such as hand sanitizer and disinfecting spray/wipes, so all proceeds can go directly to help community members in need. A monetary, tax-deductible, year-end donation to MCEAP is also welcome. Details are at [mceap.com](http://mceap.com) or 540-260-3173. For more information, email [w4areason@gmail.com](mailto:w4areason@gmail.com) or text/call 540-239-1093.

### Aquatic, Rec Center hours for appointments

The Christiansburg Aquatic Center is open by appointment only on Mondays, Wednesdays and Friday from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m., on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. and on Saturdays from noon to 5 p.m. To make a reservation, visit [www.cacpool.com](http://www.cacpool.com)

The Christiansburg Recreation Center is open by appointment only Monday through Friday from 6 a.m. until 7 p.m., on Saturdays from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. and on Sundays from 1 p.m. until 7 p.m. To make a reservation, visit [www.christiansburg.org/recreation](http://www.christiansburg.org/recreation).

## Through Dec. 31:

### Christiansburg Leaf Collection

The Town of Christiansburg's annual free leaf collection is underway and runs through Dec. 31, weather permitting. Public Works crews use a special truck that vacuums the leaves. Therefore, they will collect only piles of loose leaves; leaves placed in bags will not be accepted. Please do not place your pile of loose leaves in a way that blocks sidewalks, sanitary sewers, solid waste carts, drainage ditches or utility meter boxes. If you are concerned your leaves may blow

away prior to pick-up, please place a tarp on top of your pile. Crews will remove the tarp when they get there, collect your leaves and leave your tarp behind.

### Montgomery-Floyd Library Curbside only

All branches of the Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library are offering only curbside pickup service (including remote printing). In-branch services are not currently available. Curbside hours are: Monday - Thursday 10 a.m. - 7 p.m.; Friday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Please return all library items in the outside Book Drop. Visit <https://www.mfirl.org> for more information.

### Radford Public Library Resumes In-Library Appointments

Same-day in-house browsing and computer use appointments can be made Monday through Saturday on the hour from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Staff will continue to ask screening health questions, take temperatures and require masks be worn as part of the ongoing process of in-library browsing. Children/youth under 18 are welcome to browse when accompanied by an adult. Please call (540) 731-3621 to schedule an appointment to browse or use the computers on Thursday through Saturday.

### Radford Public Library Grab & Go Services

Monday through Saturday. Please remember that you can use the MyLibro app to search RPL's catalog and place holds as well as schedule pick-up times. For Grab and Go Prints, email the documents you would like printed to [rad.lib@radfordva.gov](mailto:rad.lib@radfordva.gov), then call 731-3621 to make sure the document are received and schedule a time to pick them up at the building entrance. Prices are the same as usual (\$0.10 for black and white, \$0.25 for color), and exact change is appreciated when possible.

# NRCC offers tuition assistance to retrain those unemployed, underemployed due to COVID-19

New River Community College is offering a handful of programs in

2021 that provide new tuition assistance to retrain those unemployed or un-

deremployed due to COVID-19. Through the Re-Em-

ploying Virginians (REV) campaign, the governor's office is providing Virginia's Community Colleges \$27 million to help current and future students cover the costs of tuition and fees in fields that will lead to careers in their community.

To receive REV funds, recipients must be a Virginia citizen, they must have filed a claim for unemployment benefits on or after August 1, 2020, or they must have lost a full-time job due to COVID-19 and currently earn less than \$15 per hour or lost a full-time job because COVID-19 caused their employer to close or reduce staffing, and they are now work-

ing in a part-time job that pays less than \$15 per hour.

The REV voucher will pay up to \$1,500 toward the cost of tuition and fees for part-time enrollment (11 semester hours or less) or up to \$3,000 toward the cost of tuition and fees for full-time enrollment (12 hours or more) for credit programs.

Recipients of REV funds must be pursuing classes in a high-demand area such as early childhood education, health care, information technology, manufacturing, public safety or skilled trades.

NRCC offers more than 60 REV-eligible programs including as-

sociate degree, certificate, diploma and career studies certificate credit programs. For a complete list of available programs at NRCC, visit [www.nr.edu/rev](http://www.nr.edu/rev).

Students must enroll in a qualified program by Dec. 14, 2020, to receive REV funding. This is a one-time funding effort to help Virginians recover from job loss and underemployment due to COVID-19.

To enroll or speak with an NRCC REV team member, contact [rev@nr.edu](mailto:rev@nr.edu) or call (540) 674-3738. Contact information as well as a list of frequently asked questions is available at [www.nr.edu/rev](http://www.nr.edu/rev).



OPEN ENROLLMENT NOV 1 - DEC 15

# HEALTHCARE COVERAGE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER.

Make sure you're enrolled for 2021.

Check to see if you are eligible for free or low-cost coverage. Open enrollment is going on now – you have until December 15, 2020 to apply for coverage or update your account. Go to [HealthCare.gov](http://HealthCare.gov) and follow the easy steps to shop for coverage. There, you will also learn if you qualify for free or low-cost coverage through the Marketplace or under Virginia's recently expanded Medicaid program. For free help understanding your options, find an application assister at [coverva.org/assistance](http://coverva.org/assistance).

ENROLL NOW AT **HealthCare.gov**  
or call 1-800-318-2596

Sponsored by the Virginia Health Benefit Exchange of the State Corporation Commission

# CROSSWORD PUZZLE

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8		9	10	11	12	
13						14				15				
16					17					18				
19				20						21				
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49	50			51				52			53			
54		55				56						57	58	59
60						61					62			
63						64					65			
66						67					68			

- CLUES ACROSS  
1. Skateboarders love them  
6. Popular sports broadcast (abbr.)  
9. Former Ohio State great Michael  
13. Not dirty  
14. Earth goddess (Greek myth.)  
15. A Spanish river  
16. Pig meat (French)  
17. Famed astronomer  
18. Floating ice  
19. Broadcast  
21. Aquatic mammals  
22. Some are bath  
23. Hip hop trio  
24. NY Giants' #56  
25. Small European viper  
28. Neither  
29. Multiple Tony-winner Rivera  
31. Loud noise  
33. Second year high schooler  
36. "\_\_\_" in comparison"  
38. Golf score  
39. Raise  
41. Pastas  
44. Easily manageable  
45. Fathered  
46. Pouch  
48. Institute legal proceedings against  
49. News organization  
51. Unruly group of people  
52. Fasten or secure  
54. Sheets of glass  
56. Doubled  
60. Foolish person  
61. Rooney and Kate are two  
62. Small, rich sponge cake  
63. Advice or counsel  
64. Large wading bird  
65. Famed British physicist  
66. Narrow ridges (Swedish)  
67. Field force unit  
68. Lying face downward  
CLUES DOWN  
1. Proof of purchase (abbr.)  
2. Soap ingredient  
3. Blackbird  
4. Single steps  
5. Tin  
6. Books have lots of them  
7. Made of fermented honey and water  
8. You can get it in a bed  
9. Room for communal meals  
10. Early Syrian kingdom  
11. Provokes dry amusement  
12. Use with "thou"  
14. Mollusk  
17. Grain storage units  
20. Not a car, not a truck  
21. Ooze  
23. N. Vietnamese ethnic group  
25. Tennis pros group  
26. Something that's not what it's purported to be  
27. E. Indian trees  
29. Beloved December holiday  
30. Regions  
32. Metric unit of length  
34. Peter's last name  
35. Beige  
37. 18-year period in astronomy  
40. Where golfers begin  
42. Basketball stat (abbr.)  
43. Frocks  
47. Soda comes in it  
49. On approval  
50. Trims by cutting  
52. Small finch  
53. Language Bura-\_\_\_  
55. Nothing  
56. Imbecile (British)  
57. Tropical Asian plant  
58. Abba \_\_\_, Israeli politician  
59. Small freshwater fish  
61. Indicates position  
65. Data processing

# United Way's Toys from the Heart needs presents for teens

United Way's Toys from the Heart program is currently in need of presents for teenagers.

Donations may be brought to United Way's office at 111 W. Main St. in Christiansburg through Dec. 14.

United Way's business hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Friday.

The Christmas wish list for teens includes gift cards for Target, WalMart, Star-

bucks, iTunes, clothing stores, Google Play, Best Buy and others; 2) comforter/bedding/throw blankets; 3) backpacks; sports equipment and accessories such as footballs, basketballs, soccer balls, baseballs and gloves; 4) popular board games; 5) books from the teen fiction section; 6) teen appropriate movies (rated PG-13); 7) perfume, body wash, spray, hand lotions, soaps; 8) room decorations and items such

as lamps, blankets, picture frames, posters, wall decals and area rugs; 9) listening device headphones; 10) movie tickets, bowling or laser tag passes; 11) art supplies; 12) phones/Android phone accessories; 13) winter jackets and pajamas; 14) pop culture memorabilia; 15) nail manicure set; 16) purses and wallets; 17) journals and sketchbooks; 18) jewelry, watches and accessories; 19) wallets and belts; 20)

mini hand-held games; 20) electronic gadgets; 21) sports team jerseys; 22) sneakers; 23) Swiss army knife/multi-tool.

Anyone who has been served from another Christmas assistance program is not eligible for Toys from the Heart. To be screened for Toys from the Heart, residents should call the respective Emergency Action Assistance programs on Dec. 11 and from Dec. 11 through Dec. 14 during office hours

at the number given. Floyd residents 540-745-2102 from 9-11:30 a.m. and from 1-3:30 p.m.; Giles residents 540-921-2146 from 9-11:30 a.m. and from 12:30-2:30 p.m.; Montgomery residents 540-382-6186 from 9-noon and from 1-4:30 p.m.; Pulaski residents 540-980-5525 from 9-noon and from 1-3:30 p.m.; Radford/Fairlawn residents 540-320-7460 from 9-11:30 a.m. and from 1-3:30 p.m.

# Virginia Tech, Radford University offices of sustainability partner for global conference presentation

The Virginia Tech Office of Sustainability and the Radford University Sustainability Office work together on an ongoing basis to further sustainability on their campuses and enact positive sustainability change across the New River Valley.

Partnering since 2018, the offices recently took their collaboration to the global stage.

Nathan King, sustainability manager at Virginia Tech, and Josh Nease, sustainability manager at Radford University, gave a joint presentation to over 6,000 attendees at

the Global Conference on Sustainability in Higher Education.

The Virginia Tech-Radford University presentation at the global conference focused on a January 2020 workshop, where nearly 30 student interns from both universities met together at Selu Conservancy for a session on scaling their collective sustainability efforts to boost environmental stewardship in the New River Valley.

One of the key workshop themes King and Nease spoke to was how a shared business model can

be applied to advancing sustainability and reducing a community's environmental impact.

King and Nease also spoke to the workshop's professional development functions. Students networked, exchanged project successes and learnings, and reflected on how they can deepen their leadership and critical thinking skills to improve sustainability at their universities and in the community.

"Being able to represent the New River Valley and demonstrate what our students are learning, working, and collaborating

on is extremely important to both of our offices. We were fortunate to present on a global level this year," said King.

Along with hosting joint retreats, to deepen the sustainability community in the New River Valley, Virginia Tech and Radford University sustainability teams communicate closely around new initiatives and shared goals.

One example of a shared goal is delivering students opportunities to gain hands-on sustainability skills during the four-to-six years — or longer — studying in the region.

At Virginia Tech, such opportunities include the award-winning Sustainability Internship Program, the Green RFP Program where students can submit sustainability projects to be implemented on the Blacksburg campus, and the ability to directly engage in the Climate Action Commitment revision process.

With the aim of fostering even closer communication and cooperation, another shared goal in the works is the development of a regional sustainability student forum. Student interns would be chosen as

delegates to meet and discuss relevant sustainability topics, and to report back on the discussions to their university stakeholders.

Virginia Tech and Radford University also work together as members of the Virginia Association for Sustainability in Higher Education Consortium, which meets quarterly to network, share resources, and knowledge, and discuss sustainability across the commonwealth. Nease serves as the chair of the group, helping to give the New River Valley a larger voice in statewide sustainability efforts.

# Virginia Tech alums join project to craft hundreds of desks for Alexandria students

This fall, Eimy Romero, 9, started school virtually from her family's living room table. It was the only space that her family could carve out for her in their Alexandria apartment.

But it posed a problem when the family wanted to eat. Eimy had to move all of her school materials from the table each time.

For the past few months, home has been a classroom for children around the country, who like Eimy, have had to make space in their bedrooms, living rooms and kitchens for virtual learning due to the coronavirus pandemic and its limitations on in-person teaching.

But several weeks ago, Eimy's situation changed. She received a desk of her own — for free. Now, when she takes classes she sits at her desk in her family's living room.

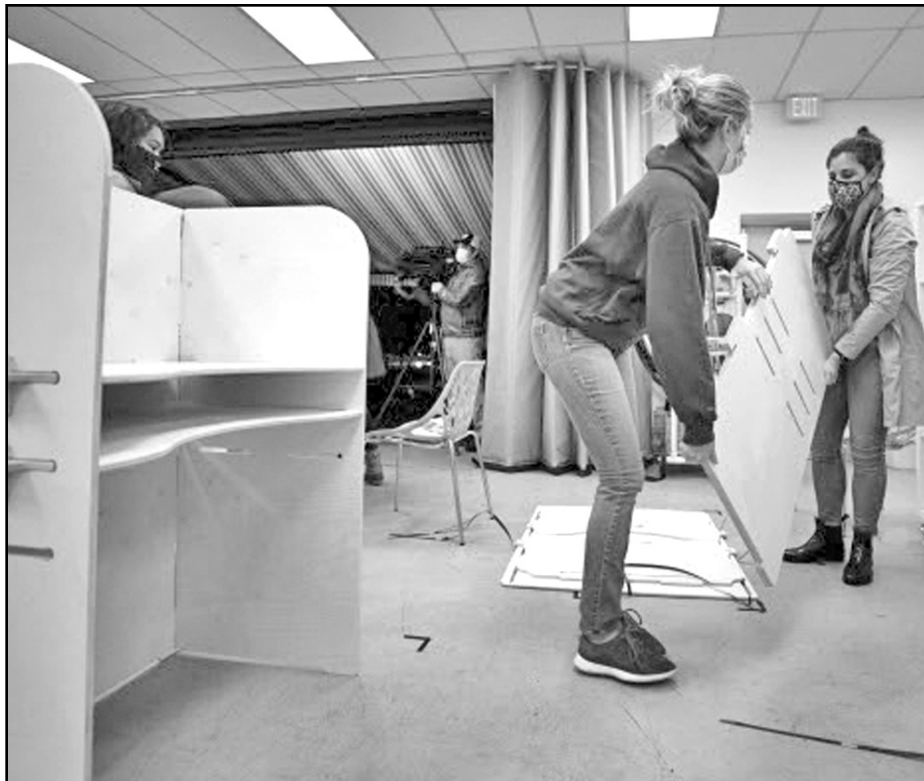
"She likes it a lot. It's her space, and she likes to have her own things organized there," said Margarita Romero, Eimy's mom, through a Spanish translator. Via Zoom, Romero pointed out the places in the desk where Eimy hangs her earphones and stacks her school materials.

Eimy's desk, made with pieces of plywood and tall dividers, was provided by Building Momentum, an Alexandria creative problem-solving company that has been giving away easy-to-assemble desks to children in the city since the start of the school year.

The idea for the desk project came to two executives at Building Momentum, Allen Brooks and Brad Halsey, when the school year began virtually for their own children. They saw students like Eimy from their children's computer screens when they logged on for class.

"As we were looking through our kids' Zoom channels, we could see kids who were taking class from their beds or were in community centers," said Brooks, who is chief operating officer for the company. Desks, for many, were not in sight, he said.

Cue the desk project and a group of Virginia



Virginia Tech alumni volunteers Kathryn Santerre '10 (left) and Erin Helbling '14 help to set up new desks for children at Casa Chirilagua, a nonprofit community organization in Alexandria. The desks are donated to the center and to students for use in their homes for virtual school. Photo by Erin Williams for Virginia Tech.

Tech alumni who have been helping to prepare the materials.

"We had the tools and capacity and the abilities as a team to build a desk that could be relatively quickly built and distributed to the community," Brooks said.

Each desk is crafted from five pieces of unfinished plywood and four wooden pegs. The pegs can be used as hooks for students to hang backpacks or headphones.

The plywood goes up around the sides of each desk as blinders, giving students privacy and acting as a guard from coughs and sneezes.

The desks have been delivered to children in their own homes and to community centers. Any family in Alexandria and the Washington, D.C., metro area can request a desk.

Since families assemble the desks themselves, the goal was to make them as easy as possible to put together, Brooks said.

"The whole desk goes together in less than five minutes," he said. "It's rock solid. The most important thing we can do is to make it so that no one has to buy anything to put it together themselves."

Kathryn Santerre,

who is community service director for the DC Hokies, a Virginia Tech alumni chapter, heard about the project and thought it would be a great way for her fellow alumni to help residents of Alexandria.

Some volunteers take four-hour work shifts at Building Momentum during the week, while others, like Santerre, have been working Saturday shifts.

"As an alumni association we are always looking for ways to get involved and give back to the community," she said.

Recently, Santerre helped Building Momentum deliver about 50 desks to Casa Chirilagua, a nonprofit organization that offers community programs for children and families. The organization is located in a Latino neighborhood in Alexandria.

Some of the desks will stay at the nonprofit to be used as workspaces for students who take virtual classes from the center. Others were delivered to families with whom Casa works, including Eimy Romero's family.

"A lot of our students live in highly dense homes," said Adriana Gómez Schellhaas, exec-

utive director of Casa. "A lot of times families share an apartment. It's very rare that a student would have their own space to do their work, let alone their own room."

Recently, during the Casa desk delivery, Santerre watched as the children saw the new desks for the first time.

"It was really cool to see the kids go in and sit down at the desks and hang their backpacks up," she said. "There are little areas where kids can set up their iPads and computers and hang backpacks on a hook. It's nice that they have that privacy and a functional learning environment."

Brooks said the desk project will continue as long as monetary donations and volunteers are available. Each desk costs about \$80 to make. Building Momentum even hired three new employees as official desk makers.

There will continue to be a need for the desks even after the pandemic is over, he said.

"The moment makes you realize the need," he said. "When they are back in schools, the economic realities of these families are not going to change."

By Jenny Kincaid Boone



# Cellphone use while driving is illegal in Virginia starting Jan. 1

A new Virginia law banning the use of cellphones while driving goes into effect Jan. 1, 2021, and Drive Smart Virginia is reminding motorists of the consequences of distracted driving.

The mandate was signed by Gov. Ralph Northam on July 8, making Virginia the 22nd state to ban the use of hand-held devices while driving a moving vehicle on the state's roadways.

Though the ban has officially been Virginia law since July, it will be enforced beginning Jan. 1. In the interim, DSV is raising public consciousness of the dangers of distracted driving through its "Phone Down. It's the Law." campaign.

According to the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles 2019 crash statistics, distracted driving caused 23,246 accidents and 120 fatal crashes. Those figures represent 18.1% of all crashes and 14.5% of all fatalities on Virginia roadways.

Virginia DMV statistics from 2018 revealed that the jurisdictions with the most distracted driving crashes were Fairfax County, Prince William County, Virginia Beach, Hampton and Newport News. The counties with the most fatalities were Prince Wil-

liam, Fairfax, Fauquier, Hanover and Spotsylvania.

"Thousands of Virginians are involved in crashes every year, and distracted driving is a factor in many of those crashes," said David Tenenbaum, Virginia Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Co. actuarial manager and treasurer of Drive Smart Virginia.

"Manipulating a cellphone while driving increases your crash risk by 2,300% because it involves all three kinds of distractions: manual, visual and cognitive," Tenenbaum said. "Help us save lives by putting your phone down."

Drivers who violate the new law will be subject to a \$125 fine for the first offense and \$250 for each subsequent offense. Violations that occur in highway work zones also will carry a \$250 fine.

It still is permissible to use hands-free technology to make or receive phone calls while driving. The ban only prohibits drivers from directly handling their devices. If drivers must use their phones while traveling, they must be lawfully parked or stopped.

Drivers using a hand-held device to report an emergency are exempt, as are the operators of emergency vehicles who are engaged in their official duties. Motorists also may handle amateur or citizens band radios.

## Montgomery Regional Solid Waste Authority

### Summary Statement of Financial Condition

For The Year Ended June 30, 2020

Assets	\$6,938,757
Deferred Out Flows of Resources	\$120,185
Liabilities	\$2,263,578
Deferred Inflows of Resources	\$35,756
Net Position	\$4,759,608
Revenues	\$4,426,695
Expenses	\$4,723,811
Net Change in Net Position	\$(297,116)

Detailed financial statements may be obtained by writing to: MRSWA P.O. Box 2130 Christiansburg, VA 24068

# OPINION

## Evans King: The seasons of a law practice

Every job has its ebbs and flows I'm sure. Daily, weekly, annually, seasonally. I was recently thinking about this as the holiday season comes upon us. Probably no time of the year creates more disruption than Christmas and New Year. And as we all know Christmas seems to come earlier every year.

I think we're all tired of jokes about stores putting up their Christmas decorations right after the Fourth of July. In this unforgettable and almost unbearable year of 2020, though, I think we would all like just to be able to walk into a store and enjoy it rather than feeling we had to avoid others and get in and out as quickly as we can. I could accept an early beginning of the holidays.

All of this made me think it might be fun to write a column on the seasonal aspects of what I have done to "keep the wolf off of the door" for the last 40 years (the

expression our managing partner Herb used to tell me my salary for the next year when I was an associate). The private practice of law has been my livelihood. It has its own unique "flow," its own rising and falling of the tides.

I'll start at this time of the year and describe the calendar of a law practice. I do not do litigation any more, and this ebb and flow is most prevalent in a trial practice, but all "law work" is affected to some extent by the calendar.

First, starting around Thanksgiving, maybe even Halloween now, lawyers when "comparing calendars" start tossing around lines like "Well, the holidays are coming up so we better not try to schedule those depositions (or that closing) now. Probably need to get through the holidays to the first of the year." "Just too much going on now, so hard to get everyone together."

Then comes the first of the year. The holidays are behind us; it's time to get back to work. Things are back to normal; let's schedule that deposition now. But then reality sets in and the conversation becomes "Well, it's the dead of winter, the roads are bad, let's not take any chances. Maybe we better wait till the winter is over. Better safe than sorry." So there goes January, February and March.

Now it's spring. The roads are clear, things can be scheduled. Let's get started. But wait, it will be spring break soon. The kids will be out of school, there will be trips, a lot of folks going to Disney. And then there are graduations coming up in May. Parties and celebrations. Better not try to schedule anything now.

Then comes summer. A safe time right? No holiday parties, the roads are clear, spring breaks and graduations are behind us.

So let's schedule things. But no, school's out, summer vacations are here. It's wedding season. People will be traveling, the kids are at home, everyone needs to take it a little easier in the summertime. "Let's get through the summer and see where we are." Why, the courts in NYC used to even close for the whole month of August. See ya in September.

Finally, autumn comes. Kids are back in school, vacation trips are over, let's schedule things. Really time to get back to the practice of law. But not so fast. School IS back. The kids will be in all sorts of activities. Soccer practices, dance lessons, play practice, music lessons. And then there is football. Long football weekends. Tired from fall Saturdays. Not really a good time to try to get things done. In West Virginia, everyone has their minds on Morgantown. In Montgomery County

all roads lead to Lane Stadium. Let's keep our priorities straight. Hard to schedule closings around a 7-game home schedule.

And now it's the holidays again. Where did the year go?

Obviously, I am a little tongue in cheek here (a lot?). And perhaps I write this piece wistfully thinking of our pre-COVID 19 lives and hoping for a return to a time when these types of calendar problems are our biggest worry. But I have heard all of these rationales at one time or another. And yet lawyers still manage to bill a gazillion hours a year. Go figure.

*Evans "Buddy" King is a proud native of Christiansburg, CHS Class of 1971. He resides in Clarksburg, W.Va., where he has practiced law with the firm of Steptoe & Johnson, PLLC, since 1980. He can be reached at evans.king@steptoe-johnson.com.*

## Cong. Morgan Griffith: Marijuana legislation: wrong time, wrong bill

Setting an agenda means setting priorities. Based on the agenda of the U.S. House of Representatives, apparently marijuana is a priority of Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA).

It must be so because on Dec. 4 she used some of the little legislative time remaining in this Congress to bring up H.R. 3884, the Marijuana Opportunity Reinvestment and Expungement Act of 2019. H.R. 3884 not only decriminalizes marijuana, but expunges previous marijuana convictions and permits taxpayer dollars to be used in support of the marijuana industry and convicted drug dealers.

I doubt the constituents we represent in the House believe this measure to be such an urgent concern amid the current pandemic and economic downturn.

To be sure, I am supportive of changes to current federal drug laws. I support medicinal marijuana and further research into the effects of marijuana use, which the present laws and regulations make difficult to pursue. I have introduced legislation and worked with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to achieve these goals.

But with few legislative days remaining in this Congress, now is certainly

not the time to focus on full-blown marijuana legalization. Further, H.R. 3884 goes way too far in the other direction from the restrictions currently in place.

In light of the fact that the bill was taken up so late in the Congress and with little chance of becoming law, H.R. 3884 appears to be more of a messaging bill than a serious attempt at legislating. But what kind of message is sent by its provisions?

Consider how it handles marijuana convictions. Any prior conviction for non-violent federal marijuana offenses are expunged, and courts are required to conduct resentencing hearings on any federal convictions that included marijuana as part of the underlying offense apart from crimes of violence. For example, if an individual was convicted of embezzling from a bank but was in possession of marijuana when arrested, he or she could be eligible for resentencing.

This would create tremendous strain on the court system, occupying its time and resources with

thousands of resentencing hearings rather than more important business.

Prior marijuana convictions could also not be considered in denying any federal public benefit, granting security clearances or in regard to immigration laws. So the individuals recently caught in Connecticut with a rental truck carrying an estimated \$15 million worth of marijuana, as an example, could benefit from these provisions.

Not only are these offenses expunged, but H.R. 3884 creates an "Office of Cannabis Justice" in the Department of Justice. The task of the new office would be to administer a grant program providing services to individuals convicted of marijuana-related offenses.

Changing the laws should not mean directing taxpayer dollars to individuals convicted of breaking the law or require federal grants and loans for the marijuana industry.

We still do not have enough data on the effects of marijuana use. This has long been a concern of mine, and why I have intro-

duced or cosponsored bills that would make research on possible effects easier.

Just in September, a bill I cosponsored, the Medical Marijuana Research Act, advanced out of the House Energy and Commerce Committee. I had introduced versions of it in previous years and am glad to see it progress now. A floor vote is anticipated this month, a fact I appreciate but which makes little sense considering the vote on H.R. 3884.

H.R. 3884 leapfrogs over more careful measures, disregarding public health consequences. It deschedules marijuana entirely from the list of scheduled substances under the Controlled Substances Act instead of moving it to another schedule that more appropriately assesses the risk of use.

Earlier this year, the House rushed to ban flavored tobacco products and vaping after a spate of sicknesses. Most of the people who fell ill were vaping products that contained THC, the psychoactive ingredient in marijuana. Yet H.R. 3884 takes

no action to ban flavored marijuana vapes or generally to prevent marijuana use among young people.

H.R. 3884 would introduce more problems than it solves at a time when our attention is best directed to other topics.

My position on marijuana remains the same: legalization for medicinal purposes and loosened restrictions for research. I am ready to work with Democrats and Republicans to achieve these goals and more generally to rationalize federal policy at a time when more states are opting to legalize marijuana to various degrees. The path away from the perplexing current state of marijuana policy need not lead to the reckless policy regime created by H.R. 3884.

If you have questions, concerns, or comments, feel free to contact my office. You can call my Abingdon office at 276-525-1405 or my Christiansburg office at 540-381-5671. To reach my office via email, please visit my website at www.morgangriffith.house.gov.

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## Virginia's recovery from unemployment claims remains slow

Despite the fact that many states have been hit by a surge in COVID-19 cases, new unemployment claims continue to decrease in the various states, but Virginia's recovery remains the eighth slowest in the country, according to the personal finance website WalletHub.

WalletHub's latest survey showed that unemployment claims were 90% below the peak during the COVID-19 pandemic.

To identify which states' workforces are experiencing the quickest recovery from COVID-19, WalletHub compared the 50 states and the District of Columbia across three metrics based on changes in unemployment

claims: 1) the change in unemployment claims (the latest week vs. last year); 2) the change in unemployment claims (the latest week vs. the start of 2020); and 3) the change in unemployment claims (since the start of COVID-19 crisis vs. last year).

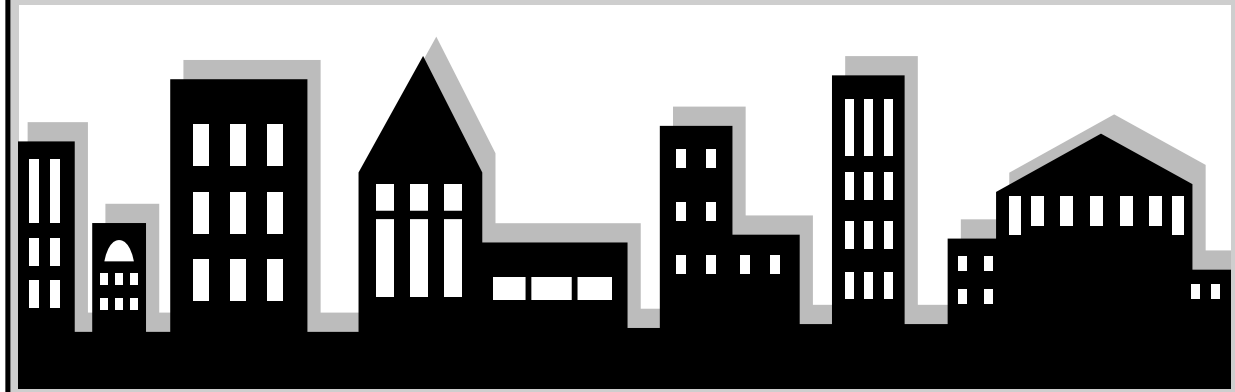
The results for Virginia across the three metrics respectively were a 471.16% change in unemployment claims (11,149 the week of Nov. 23, 2020, vs. 1,952 the week of Nov. 25, 2019, the seventh slowest recovery in the U.S.), a 249.72% change in unemployment claims (11,149 the week of Nov. 23, 2020, vs. 3,188 the week of Jan. 1, 2020, the tenth slowest recovery in the country) and

a 1,414.87% change in unemployment claims (1,265,432 between the week of March 16, 2020, and the week of Nov. 23, 2020, vs. 89,438 between the week of March 18, 2019, and the week of Nov. 25, 2019, the fifth slowest recovery in the country).

Combined, the three metrics placed Virginia as the state with the eighth slowest recovery rate among the 50 states.

The seven states recovering from unemployment claims slower than the commonwealth in order from slow to slowest are Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Indiana, Colorado, New Mexico and Kansas.

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# Chamber

from page 1

ganization: The Montgomery County Health Department; Outstanding New Members: Gigi's Cupcakes and Pest Management Services, Inc.; 2020 Pivot Awards: Cody Thompson with Zeppoli's; WING and New River Engraving, Inc.; Chamber Volunteer of the Year: Christine Chittenden, Coldwell Banker Townside, REALTORS; Ambassador of the Year: Tia Brown, Budget Blinds Serving Salem, Roanoke, Botetourt and the New River Valley; Green or Sustainability Award: Blacksburg Transit.

The Non-Profits of the Year (small) award was won by Vittles for Vets with New River Community Action named the Non-Profit of the Year (large). The Distinguished Non-Profit Leader was Sara Bohn, United Way NRV.

The Technology Company of the Year was Baseline Solar Solutions, and the Leadership NRV Sparkplug award

was presented to Meghan Kuczumski of Edward Jones.

The nomination process was open to members and non-members from April through October, and the nominees were vetted by a committee composed of previous award winners. The 2020 Awards committee was chaired by board member Terry Vangelos, Coldwell Banker Townside, REALTORS - Christiansburg.

The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce serves Blacksburg, Christiansburg and Montgomery County, supporting approximately 650 local businesses through business advocacy, education, marketing and networking opportunities.

For membership information, visit the chamber website at www.montgomerycc.org or the chamber's Facebook page, or call The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce at 540.382.3020.

# Vaccine

from page 1

ably across the entire state.

According to ACIP, as of December 1, 2020, approximately 245,000 COVID-19 cases and 858 COVID-19-associated deaths had been reported among U.S. HCP. Early protection of HCP is critical to preserve capacity to care for patients with COVID-19 or other illnesses. LTCF residents, because of their age, high rates of underlying medical conditions, and congregate living situation, are at high risk for infection and severe illness from COVID-19. As of November 15, 2020, approximately 500,000 COVID-19 cases and 70,000 associated deaths had been reported among residents of skilled nursing fa-

cilities in the United States.

Health care personnel are defined as paid and unpaid persons serving in health care settings who have the potential for direct or indirect exposure to patients or infectious materials. Long-term care facility residents are defined as adults who reside in facilities that provide a variety of services, including medical and personal care, to persons who are unable to live independently.

The actual amount of vaccine received in Virginia is a moving target and is dependent on when and how quickly vaccination doses are manufactured. VDH is coordinating future prioritization based on federal guidance.

# Moose

from page 1

an example for all of us: He loved life, always extended his paw in friendship, and built community and good will wherever he went. The Cook Counseling Center and the entire Hokie Nation will miss him, but his legacy and impact upon the university will go on."

Moose's service and accomplishments reached beyond the university into the surrounding community, including work at the monthly "Paws to Read" program at the public library in Blacksburg.

A champion for wellness in the veterinary profession, Moose was honored in 2019 with the Virginia Veterinary Medical Association's Animal Hero Award and was recently recognized with a Proclamation of Appreciation from the veterinary college in honor of his support to veterinary students.

"Moose was responsible for much healing and joy amidst grief for many individuals in this college," said Daniel Givens, dean of the veterinary college. "He will be greatly missed."

"Moose will be fondly remembered for his calm, steady demeanor, and easy spirit. He had exuberant energy, love for everyone, and incredible compassion for the human condition," said Trish Haak, a veterinary social worker at the Veterinary Teaching Hospital. "To describe him in human terms, he was patient, kind, caring, loyal and stoic. His life impacted so many people and has a global reach."

Just a week after his eighth birthday in February, Moose was diagnosed with prostate cancer and began a treatment regimen of radiation, chemotherapy

and other therapies. His treatment was managed by providers at the veterinary college.

Davis credited the care teams at both the Veterinary Teaching Hospital in Blacksburg and the newly opened Animal Cancer Care and Research Center in Roanoke for providing Moose with excellent care.

"The team at the vet school has been wonderful. Having this comprehensive care facility on our campus is a blessing," said Davis. "From oncology and internal medicine to radiology and community practice, the faculty, staff and students went above and beyond for Moose and me. I can't thank them enough. Even though he could not be cured, Moose lived a good quality of life and continued to serve our community up until the end."

Moose embodied the Virginia Tech motto, Ut Prosim (That I May Serve). In one of his final acts of service, he ran through the tunnel at Lane Stadium and helped former Virginia Tech football coach Frank Beamer share an encouraging message to promote wellness among Hokie Nation.

When not working, Moose enjoyed swimming, playing tug of war and, perhaps most of all, eating.

Memorial contributions can be made in Moose's name to the Virginia Tech Veterinary Teaching Hospital's Compassionate Care Fund and to Guiding Eyes for the Blind in New York.

Favorite memories of Moose can be shared on the @vttherapydogs Instagram account.

# OBITUARIES

continued from page 5

## Harrison, Patricia Sale

Patricia Sale Harrison, mother, grandmother, wife and friend, passed away Friday, Nov. 27, 2020, at the age of 58 after years of battling complications of Parkinson's disease. She was surrounded by family.



Pat's life work was with children. Following the birth of her sons, Patricia started a career in childcare. The kids she kept became part of her family by extension and were a source of pride throughout her life.

Pat later transitioned into school bus driving and eventually became Director of Transportation for Radford City Schools. Pat cared deeply for every child in her care and worked tirelessly in service of the children of Radford. She loved every second.

If you knew Pat, you were a friend. Pat always had another seat at her table and was never happier than when she was surrounded by all her boys and anyone they

chose to love.

Pat is survived by her loving husband, Randy, her sons Stuart and Daniel, her daughters-in-law Jessica and Amanda, her grandson Ellis, her brother and sisters, nieces, nephew, countless loving friends and generations of children for whom she was a relentless advocate.

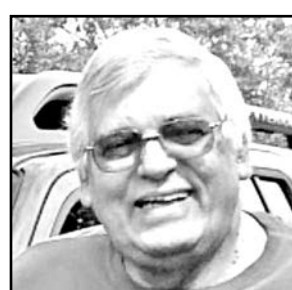
In an effort to keep family and loved ones healthy, a celebration of life will be held when it is safer to gather. The family asks that you offer support at this time by contributing photos, memories and comments to an online memorial at mykeeper.com/profile/PatHarrison.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the Michael J. Fox Foundation or the Parkinson's Foundation in Pat's memory.

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

## Moche, Jr., Spero

Spero Moche, Jr., 74, passed away peacefully at his home in Floyd on Friday, Dec. 4, 2020.



He was preceded in death by his parents, Vije and Spero Moche; his brothers, Michael Moche and Theodore Moche; and his nephews, Justin Spiers and Marcus Moche.

He is survived by Joanne Spiers Moche, his wife of 39 years; his nephew, Theodore Stanley Moche; and by his sisters-in-law, his brothers-in-law, nieces and nephews in Florida and Hawaii.

Spero was a retired merchant mariner. As a member of the Seafarers International Union and American Maritime Officers, he sailed across eleven bodies of water and docked at ports on five continents. He received a United States Merchant Marine

Expeditionary Award and medals for mariner support services to the American military in Vietnam and to the American and International Coalition Military Forces in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm in the waters of Southwest Asia.

Most of all, he was a loving, devoted husband who filled his wife's life with joy. He was well loved by so many people whose lives he touched. He will be greatly missed and will be remembered with smiles.

The family will plan a private memorial celebration in the spring.

In lieu of flowers, please make a donation to Spero's most devoted cause: your local food bank.

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

## Smith, Myrtle Sweeney

Myrtle Sweeney Smith, 99, of Christiansburg, died Sunday, Nov. 29, 2020, at Heritage Hall.



She was born in Wide Mouth, W.Va., on Aug. 26, 1921, to the late John and Catherine Underwood Sweeney.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Herman Smith; a daughter, Mamie Carol Smith; brothers Edward and Junior Sweeney; sisters Bessie Barton and Della Hollins; a daughter-in-law, Nancy Smith; and a son-in-law, Gil Wurzburger.

She is survived by her daughter, Judy Wurzburger; a son, Ronnie Smith; grandchildren Denise Williams and husband, Terry, Jeffrey Blankenship and Ashley Wurzburger; great-grandchildren Peyton, Brian and Levi; a brother and sister-in-law, Vernon and Shirley Sweeney.

A funeral service was held on Wednesday, Dec. 2, 2020, in the McCoy Funeral Home chapel with the Rev. Shake Smith officiating. Interment followed at Sunset Cemetery, Christiansburg.

## Talbert, Lynwood Michael, Sr.

Lynwood Michael "Big Mike" Talbert, Sr., 70, of New River entered his eternal heavenly home on Thursday, Nov. 26, 2020.



Mike was born Dec. 12, 1949, in Radford. He was preceded in death by his parents, James Preston Talbert and Dolly Ruth Cox Talbert, and a sister, Doris G. Talbert.

Matthew 25:21 "His Lord said unto him, well done thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Mike was a 1968 graduate of Dublin High School where he played football and was active in the FFA, even serving as a chapter president. He worked the farm his entire life. Early on he drove a school bus. He was an iron worker at the Lynchburg Foundry for most of his life. He worked a short time at Radford Arsenal and Pulaski Furniture before returning to the foundry.

His love of raising dogs, cattle and horses was always evident. He and his wife were 4-H leaders for over 14 years. Mike was a founding member of the New River Valley Polled Hereford Association. At the time of his death, he was serving on the Pulaski County Farm Bureau Board of directors. He was a lifelong member of Dublin Church of God where he sang, led the choir, served as Sunday school superintendent and was on the pastor's council.

Mike loved his Lord, his family, his friends and his farm dearly. He had an unforgettable sense of humor and could make anyone laugh and smile. He was a gentle giant with a heart of gold. A farm

tractor rollover in July of 1997 left him disabled, but his faith in God never wavered. He left a legacy that will live forever.

Mike is survived by his loving wife and soulmate of 49 years, Regina Sue Lyons Talbert; son and daughter-in-law, Lynwood Michael "Mikie" Talbert, Jr. and Angela of New River; daughter and son-in-law, Cara Elizabeth Talbert Smythers and Curtis of Allisonia; grandchildren Dakota "Cody" Michael Talbert of New River, Josey L'Amour Smythers and Justin Colt Smythers both of Allisonia; sisters and brothers-in-law, Donna T. Marshall and Roger of New River, and Frances T. Wickline and Matthew of Dublin; brothers-in-laws and sisters-in-law Drexel Lyons of Pulaski, James Lyons of Pulaski, Gerald Lyons and Cheryl of Dublin, Darlene Francisco and David of Salem, and Wildean Lindsey of Newbern; and numerous nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles and cousins.

The family would like to thank Dr. Charles Judy and his staff as well as Intrepid Hospice for the love and compassion they gave through the hands of caretakers Maureen Shinault and Marsha Merritt.

The family received friends from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 29, 2020, at the Dublin Church of God. Funeral services began at 6 p.m. with the Rev. Michael Talbert, Jr., the Rev. Michael Collins and the Rev. Craig Caylor officiating. Interment was held privately in Sunrise Burial Park in Radford.

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

## Young, Arnold "Arnie" Gordon

Arnold "Arnie" Gordon Young, 76, of Blacksburg, passed away on Monday, Nov. 30, 2020.



He was born in Radford on Oct. 19, 1944, to the late Zella Lee Young Wade.

He is survived by his brothers, Sherman Lee Young and Richard Andrew Wade; his sisters Blanch Virginia Johnson, Jo Ann Young Price, Marie Hardy and her husband,

Walter; and numerous nieces, nephews, other relatives, and friends.

Thank you to Commonwealth Assisted Living Memory Care Unit and a special thank you to Intrepid Hospice for their professional care. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, services will be held at a later date. Arrangements by McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg.

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# MONTGOMERY SPORTS

## Virginia Tech Athletics adopts cost-saving measures to address COVID-19 budget impact

Virginia Tech Director of Athletics Whit Babcock announced last Thursday cost-saving measures totaling nearly \$15 million to help offset significant department budget shortfalls caused by the impact of COVID-19.

VT Athletics will use salary reductions, financial contributions and efficiencies, to return the money into its budget to manage through the challenges of the coming 2021 fiscal year and beyond.

“No collegiate athletics department has been spared from the harsh financial reality of revenue shortfalls directly attributable to COVID-19,” Babcock said. “At Virginia Tech, home football and bas-

ketball games, especially, are significant sources of revenue and support all of our varsity sports programs. Although we’ve had to make some very difficult decisions, we are more fortunate than others in being able to keep our commitment to all varsity athletics programs and our student-athletes.”

In recent months, Virginia Tech Athletics has taken proactive and on-going measures through operational cuts and reductions in overtime, as well as keeping select position vacancies open, in order to achieve budget savings. In addition, numerous employees have voluntarily returned or forgone benefits, such as car stipends and performance bonuses. Gen-

erous donors have also stepped up with personal gifts to the Hokie Club through a variety of means. However, the severity of COVID-19’s impact required the department to undertake a strategic review and consider additional measures to offset the short-term financial impact of the pandemic.

“We deeply appreciate the leadership of President Sands and his team, the Board of Visitors, as well as our Tech Athletics staff, for their willingness to help us manage through this unprecedented situation,” Babcock said. “We’re also incredibly grateful for our Hokie Club donors and others who have generously continued to support Tech

Athletics throughout a challenging 2020. We have asked many others to sacrifice, and we too must do our part.”

Like many other collegiate athletics programs across the country, Tech Athletics plans to implement a multi-tiered compensation reduction plan. Beginning in January 2021 and ending in December 2021, individuals making \$115,000 or more will see a 10 percent salary reduction, while a sliding percentage scale will be adopted for those making more than \$40,000.

“We’re all in this together,” Babcock said. “We worked hard to develop a plan that was equitable across the board while protecting as many



employees as possible in lower compensation brackets. Importantly, no individual making \$40,000 or less will be impacted by our salary reduction plans.”

The department is also making operational reductions when possible, has made a small reduction in workforce and will continue to

work with university officials to streamline operations moving forward in alignment with university policies and procedures.

All athletics staff members have been informed about the impact of COVID-19 on the department’s budget and the resulting cost-savings measures.

## Notre Dame and Clemson to meet in ACC title game

**Marty Gordon**  
*NRVsports@ourvalley.org*

After the weekend’s results, Notre Dame and Clemson will meet in the Atlantic Coast Conference championship game that is tentatively set for Saturday, Dec. 19.

Following a recommendation from the conference athletic director football subcommittee, the ACC’s athletic directors voted to preserve the integrity of the league’s title game by evaluating each of the three teams in contention (Clemson, Miami and Notre Dame) based on a nine-game conference sched-

ule. As a result, Clemson and Notre Dame concluded their regular seasons last weekend. Further, because Notre Dame held all the tiebreakers, the decision meant the Irish clinched a spot in the game. Clemson then clinched its berth with Saturday’s win over Virginia Tech.

Wake Forest, which was scheduled to play Notre Dame on Dec. 12, will now play at Louisville. Florida State will play Duke on Saturday, Dec. 12, and then will travel to Wake Forest on Dec. 19.

The schedule for the remainder of the football sea-

son now at least temporarily looks like this:

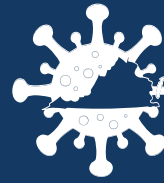
- Thursday, Dec. 10  
 Pitt at Georgia Tech (previously announced)
  - Saturday, Dec. 12  
 Virginia at Virginia Tech (previously announced)
  - North Carolina at Miami (previously announced)
  - Duke at Florida State
  - Wake Forest at Louisville
  - Saturday, Dec. 19  
 ACC Football Championship Game, 4 p.m., ABC (previously announced)
  - Georgia Tech at Miami
  - Florida State at Wake Forest
- In addition, following guidance from the league’s

medical advisory group, adjustments to the testing of football teams have been made. Each team will be required to have a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test administered on Thursday with a result prior to the visiting team traveling to the game locale.

The chief medical officers from each team will confirm results and attest that there is every expectation that the championship game will be played. While the medical advisory group has not identified any evidence of virus transmission during competition, this adjustment will

mitigate the chances of unnecessary interactions between team members and outside individuals that are inevitable during travel.

In another twist with negative implications for the ACC, a fourth conference affiliated bowl game has opted out of the 2020 season. The Sun Bowl has been canceled, and the Fenway, Holiday and Pinstripe bowls had previously announced a decision not to play. The Sun Bowl was slated to host an ACC team versus a team from the PAC 12. The latter three bowls also had ACC teams affiliated with their games.



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# Fans out at high school basketball games; December competition in question

**Marty Gordon**  
*NRVsports@ourvalley.org*

The original timetable from the Virginia High School League had basketball competition beginning Monday, Dec. 7, but for now that remains uncertain. What is not uncertain is that no fans will be allowed in the Montgomery County School System's gymnasiums if the games are played.

That information was contained in a statement released Friday from Danny Knott, the Director of Human Resources for Montgomery County schools. Knott based the decisions on the governor's latest round of restrictions on spectators at games.

"Game participants, administrative participants and cheerleaders will be allowed," Knott's statement said. Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam has reduced the number of spectators from 250 to 25 for in-person gatherings.

According to the VHSL, the reduction in public and private gatherings to 25 individuals applies to "spectators" and does not include participants at those events. The governor's order defines "participants" as players, coaches, officials, school event staff and school administration critical to the operations of the contests, media, law enforcement, and medical services.

Cheerleaders, pep bands and other student support groups, are counted as spectators in the limit of 25 allowed at events.

But whether competition is held in the county in December could still be up in the air. "We have support from the NRHD (National Human Resource Development) to participate in athletics, and we also are following guidance that was developed by the Region 6 Superintendents (in Virginia)," Knott said. "We [began] practicing for our winter sports using Phase III guidance on Dec. 7 and can hopefully participate in competitions. Whether we hold competitions in December will be determined by following the Region 6 superintendents' guidance. Currently, that guidance does not allow us to compete."

If competition proceeds in Radford, there will be several special protocols in place.

According to Knott, there will be screening of participants before entering the school. "Social distancing of all participants and mask wearing (unless the participant is playing) is required," Knott said. "If there is more than one game being played, the gym will be cleaned between games. We are following the VHSL Return to Play Guidelines."

County schools have been following VHSL Phase III Guidance for out-of-season practice.

"Because of the current COVID situation, we will continue to follow this guidance as the winter regular season begins," Knott said. "This will continue until our situ-

ation improves. These guidelines call for cleaning of equipment before and after practices, student/athletes using their own water bottles and towels and no sharing of these, and cleaning of the practice facility after the practice ends."

In Radford, fans will be allowed at games, but they face the 25-maximum number. Radford Superintendent of Schools Dr. Robert F. Graham said special protocols have been put in place to deal with COVID-19 for each game for players, coaches and staff. There will be social distancing, use of bleachers and masks on sidelines. "All of those plus touchless water fountains, assigned seats on the bleachers, extra basketballs to switch out during the end of quarters, halftime and timeouts, separate water bottles and other measures too," Graham said.

As of right now, Radford city schools will move ahead with competition. However, Graham admits that could change in the next day, week or month.

Both school systems will follow strict protocols if or when any student-athlete or staff receive a positive COVID-19 test. Of course, all the questions surrounding basketball also affect several other winter sports. The VHSL previously announced a winter season for basketball, gymnastics, indoor track, swimming and diving, and wrestling that began Monday, Dec. 7, and continues through Feb. 20.



FILE PHOTO

Fans will not be allowed inside Montgomery County gymnasiums for basketball games, according to a statement released Friday by Danny Knott, the Director of Human Resources for county schools.

# Rick Cormany and his Radford Bobcats head into uncertain waters

**Marty Gordon**  
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Rick Cormany started his 40th season last week as the head coach of the men's basketball team at Radford High School, but he well knows that his Bobcats will face challenges this season both his squad and he have never seen in his previous 39 seasons.

The season starts with a lot of uncertainties with restrictions associated with COVID-19 and thus will provide challenges the likes of which the veteran coach has never encountered.

His team has had no live play in the off season, and that has been tough on coaches and players for a program that is used to being together and practicing.

"In normal times we play pickup two or three times a week in the off season," Cormany said earlier this week. "We have spent more time on skills. I think kids just want to play and are serious about being safe in order to play."

"We'll just have to make sure we're following all the safety guidelines and stress to the team the importance of being safe and smart away from the court," Cormany said.

So far, none of his team or staff have been affected by the virus.

The Three Rivers District, of which Radford is a member, is having to tinker with scheduling. "So far scheduling has been fine, but I'm sure it will get tricky if teams have cases [of the

virus] pop up," admitted Cormany.

The Virginia High School League (VHSL) has said participants do not have to wear face covering when engaged in workouts or competitions, but has recommended that coaches and officials wear masks to the greatest extent possible. They must wear face covering when on the sidelines.

All individuals must maintain six feet or a greater distance from each other while on the bench. The VHSL also recommends using the first level of the bleachers as overflow for team personnel and to provide limited contact between players when substituting.

Jump balls will be eliminated with the visiting team receiving

the first possession of the game. To start an overtime, a coin toss will determine who is awarded the ball.

The basketball will be given to officials in the locker room where it will be sanitized and not used for warm-ups. The host school must then assure the ball is sanitized during time outs and between quarters. Sanitizer must also be provided at the scorer's table for everyone involved in the contest.

This past year, Cormany was named the All-county/All-City coach of the decade for his outstanding career. He notched his 700th win last season to move him to number four on the state's most wins list all-time and number one among active coaches.

In 1993, the Radford dynasty began.

The Bobcats have won five state championships, 20 of the last 21 regular season championships in the Three Rivers District, 15 of 16 tournament championships, the last four Conference 45 championships, five Region C championships (2001, 2002, 2004, 2013), three Region 1A West championships (2014, 2016, 2017), two Region 2C championships (2018, 2019) and have made nine trips to the state finals.

"So far, we've stayed out of gathering in the locker room. When we do begin using the locker room, we will social distance, wear masks, wash hands and do anything else we can to make it safe for our players and coaches," Cormany said.



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