

# News Messenger

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Blacksburg

Christiansburg



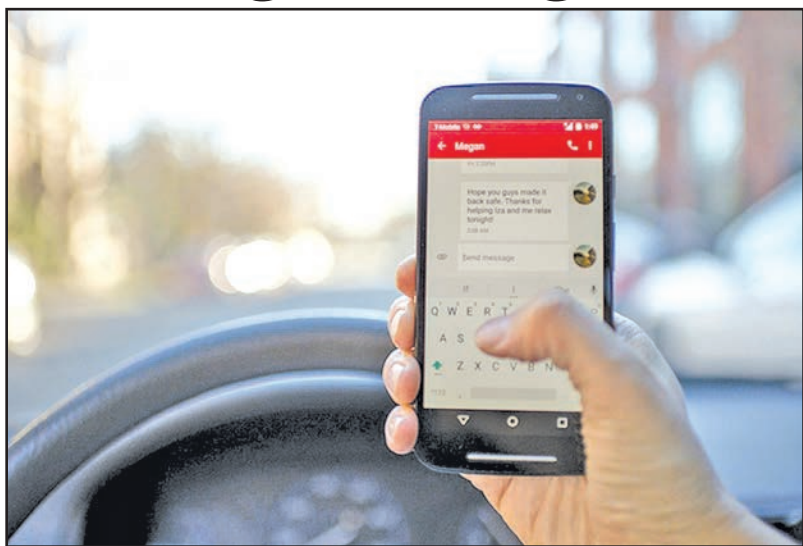
Wednesday, December 30, 2020

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## Ban on cellphone use while driving in Virginia starts Jan. 1



RICHMOND—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 handheld devices while driving. The law now prohibits drivers from holding any personal communication 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 William, 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. 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 to do so.

Drivers using a handheld 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.

## Winners announced in Radford Chamber's decorating contest



### AND THE WINNERS ARE...

#### BUSINESS HOLIDAY DISPLAY

- 1ST PLACE- PRICE WILLIAMS REALTY
- 2ND PLACE- RADFORD HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY
- 3RD PLACE- BRICK HOUSE PIZZA

#### RESIDENT HOLIDAY DISPLAY

- 1ST PLACE- 800 WADSWORTH ST.
- 2ND PLACE- 100 2ND ST.
- 3RD PLACE- 2 7TH ST.

Thank you to all who participated & helped us light up Radford!



## Virginia farmers to help shape national Farm Bureau policies

WASHINGTON—Seven delegates and two alternates from the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation will join Farm Bureau producer members from across the nation in shaping policies important to farmers and ranchers during the 2021 American Farm Bureau Federation Virtual Convention.

The event, which will be AFBF's 102nd consecutive annual convention, will be held Jan. 10-13.

AFBF President Zippy Duval said the top priority in holding the virtual event is the safety of attendees and staff. "Although we are saddened not to meet in person for this convention, we are eager to bring this event safely to farm and ranch homes across the country," Duval said.

AFBF anticipates increased attendance because registration for the virtual event is free.

Delegates from Virginia are VFBB President Wayne F. Pryor of Goochland County; VFBB Vice President Scott Sink of Franklin County; Lynwood Broaddus of Caroline County; Coley Drinkwater of Dinwiddie County; Jonathan Grimes of Wythe County; C.W. Pratt of Smyth County; and Kyle Sturgis of Northampton County. Alternates are Hayden Lyons of Tazewell County and Jason Thurman of Franklin County.

The Virginia delegates will help formulate AFBF policies for 2021 related to trade, regulatory reform, sustain-

ability, innovation, farm policy and more.

"Issues addressed at the annual American Farm Bureau convention often impact Virginia farmers as well as their peers across the country," Pryor noted. "It's even more critical now to continue the grassroots policy development process in Virginia and nationally. American Farm Bureau often represents our interests in Congress, and it's important that we participate in their policy development process for the coming year."

Farmers who register for this year's convention will have the opportunity to view live, online workshops and pre-recorded presentations they can access on demand. The sessions will cover timely topics like connecting in a post-COVID world, the importance of rural broadband and how to pivot a farm business during a pandemic.

Additionally, participants will have an opportunity to support VFBB's Young Farmers Achievement Award, Discussion Meet and Excellence in Agriculture Award winners as they compete during the convention.

The Virginia competitors are Matthew Helldreth of Wythe County, who won the Achievement Award; Jacob Gilley of Orange County, who won the Discussion Meet; and Jonathan and Kelsey Grimes of Wythe County, the Excellence in Agriculture Award winners.

## Virginia Tech becomes the eighth Russian Language Flagship School in the United States

In Russian, the word for growth is poct.

At Virginia Tech, growth – or poct – represents the ultimate goal for the new Russian Flagship program.

The Department of Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures launched the program this fall after earning a competitive grant from The Language Flagship, part of the National Security Education Program at the U.S. Department of Defense.

The Russian Flagship represents a major accomplishment for the Russian program in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences and for Virginia Tech. The university is now only the eighth Russian Language Flagship School in the United States.

"We've had tremendous suc-



PHOTO BY IGOR SOBOLEV

The Cathedral of Vasily the Blessed, better known as Saint Basil's Cathedral, is an Orthodox church in Moscow's Red Square. Built between 1555 and 1561, it stands as one of Russia's most popular cultural symbols.

## Moss Arts Center announces new lineup of spring performances and engagement events

The Moss Arts Center has announced an inspiring lineup of online programming for the spring as part of its ongoing "HomeStage" performances.

Tickets are now available for the early-spring events. Ticketholders will have access to the performances as they happen as well as access

to each event for seven days following the performance.

To allow flexibility for changing circumstances, the Moss is announcing its spring performances in two phases. Five virtual performances are now on sale with more performances to be announced in mid-February. These events repre-

sent the center's leadership's partnering with artists and other arts presenters across the country to offer spirited performances and unparalleled access to artists.

"Our ambitious fall 'HomeStage' series was one of the first among our national peers to provide a full, live series completely online," said Margaret Lawrence, the Moss Arts Center director of programming. "We deliberately kept the events fairly short as we didn't know how long audiences wanted to view streams. People told us they loved them and they wanted more. So this spring we're lengthening the performances, retaining the wonderful conversations, and yet still keeping events to an hour. And we're very excited that this spring we'll deliver world premieres and exceptional performances that, quite literally, would not be happening without us."

Tickets are now on sale for the following five performances:

**Sankofa Danzafr**

**"The City of Others"**

Thursday, Jan. 28, 2021, 7:30 p.m.

Showcasing powerful Afro-



PHOTO BY JASON RIASCOS/MURCY

Dancers with Colombian dance company Sankofa Danzafr perform "The City of Others."



Nine representatives from the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation will help shape national agriculture policies at the 2021 American Farm Bureau's virtual convention.

See Moss Arts, page 2



# UPCOMING EVENTS

## Friday, Jan. 1:

### Christiansburg closings for New Year's

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

### Cookie Decorating Contest Begins

Montgomery Floyd Regional Library Online, 10 a.m. Decorate a cookie with supplies in your home. Cookies can be homemade or store bought. Participant entries will be featured on the library's social media. The contest is open to all ages with a prize to be awarded to the winner. The contest ends on Monday, Jan. 25. Contestants should send their pictures of decorated cookies to shodges@mfrl.org.

## Wednesday, Jan. 6:

### Talking About Books: Virtual Meeting

Christiansburg Library, 11 .m. - noon. Discussing American Dirt by Jeanine Cummins virtually.

## Thursday, Jan. 7:

### Chamber of Commerce Eggs & Issues

A panel discussion with local

law enforcement via Zoom, 8 - 9 a.m.

### American Legion meeting

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

## Tuesday, Jan. 12:

### Sons of Confederate Veterans meeting

Stuart Horse Artillery Camp 1784 will meet at 7 p.m. at Aly's Family Italian Restaurant on 3204 Riner Road. Jonathan McPeak will present the "History of the 24th Virginia Infantry Regiment." Members of the United Daughters of the Confederacy are also invited to attend. For further information, call 320-4315 or 239-9864.

## Ongoing:

### Through Dec. 30:

#### The YMCA at Virginia Tech Meals on Main program

The holiday schedule for meal distribution ends today, Dec. 30, with meals handed out from 4-6 p.m. in the parking lot of the Y's Thrift Shop.

### Through Dec. 31:

### Christiansburg Leaf Collection

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

### Montgomery-Floyd Library Curbside only

All branches of the Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library are offering only curbside pick-up 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.mfrl.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.

## Through Monday, Jan. 4, 2021:

### United Way Festival of Trees

The United Way and partner agencies are decorating Christmas trees in their offices to help spread some holiday cheer in these troublesome times. Pic-

tures of each tree will be posted on [unitedwaynrv.org/tree](http://unitedwaynrv.org/tree). Residents of the NRV have the job of picking their favorite tree by visiting the United Way website anytime through Monday, Jan. 4, checking out the trees and casting a vote. A special trophy will be awarded to the winner. Voting will be cast by donations of any amount.

## Through Thursday, Jan. 21:

### Girl Scout Cookie Sales

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

## Local students graduate, win honors

Blacksburg's Emily Barron named to honor roll

OXFORD, MISS. -- Emily Barron of Blacksburg was recently named to the University of Mississippi's Fall 2020 honor roll lists.

Barron was named to the Chancellor's Honor Roll, which is reserved for students who earn a semester GPA of 3.75-4.00.

"Our Chancellor's Honor Roll students deserve a great deal of recognition for their pursuit of academic excellence and incredible achievements," said Chancellor Glenn Boyce. "These students represent some of the best and brightest at the University of Mississippi, and I'm thrilled to congratulate them for their pursuit of personal and academic greatness."

To be eligible for honor roll designation, a student must have completed at least 12 graded hours for the semester and may not be on academic probation during the semester.

The University of Mississippi, affectionately known as Ole Miss, is the state's flagship university. Included in the elite group of R1: Doctoral Universities - Highest Research Activity by the Carnegie Classification, it has a long history of producing leaders in public service, academics and business. With more than 23,000 students, Ole Miss is the state's largest university and is ranked among the nation's fastest-growing institutions.

Blacksburg's Caroline Jones earns 4.0 GPA

DAHLONEGA, GA -- Caroline Jones

of Blacksburg has been named to the President's Honor Roll at the University of North Georgia (UNG) for achieving a 4.0 grade point average during fall 2020.

Dr. Bonita C. Jacobs, president of UNG, recognized students who reached this academic achievement during the fall 2020 semester. Students enrolled in 12 or more credit hours in bachelor's degree programs who achieved a 4.0 grade point average were named to the President's Honor Roll.

Positioned in the fastest-growing region of the state, the University of North Georgia comprises five campuses united by a single mission focused on academic excellence and academic and co-curricular programs that develop students into leaders for a diverse and global society. The University of North Georgia is a University System of Georgia leadership institution and is The Military College of Georgia.

Two graduate from Emory & Henry

EMORY, VA -- Andrew Earp of Christiansburg and Alaina Evans of Blacksburg graduated from Emory & Henry College in December 2020.

Located in the Highlands of Virginia, Emory & Henry College has devoted itself since 1836 to the belief that education can have a transformative effect on an individual, a place and ultimately the wider world. Emory & Henry College is consistently ranked among the nation's best private liberal arts institutions.

## NRCC to offer short-term apartment maintenance technician program in 2021

Registration is open for an upcoming apartment maintenance technician short-term training program at New River Community College.

In partnership with the National Apartment Association Education Institute (NAAEI) and the Virginia Apartment Management Association (VAMA), NRCC is offering the 13-week training beginning Feb. 6, 2021.

The course will provide virtual classroom instruction and in-person lab activities for students seeking to become maintenance technicians in the residential property or commercial building

industry. Students will learn the basics of electrical, plumbing, HVAC, mechanical, appliance, construction, painting, lock and key services, and repairs.

Students who complete the course will be eligible to sit for the Certified Apartment Maintenance Technician (CAMT) Certification Exam. Upon successfully passing the exam, students will receive their provisional certificate from NAAEI. After completing one year of experience in the industry, NAAEI will grant students their full certificate.

The regular price for the program is \$1,950, but with special state funding the discounted price is \$650. Additional financial assistance may also be available.

The course is one of 10 NRCC FastForward programs that provide affordable and short-term training through the Office of Workforce Development.

To register, visit [www.nr.edu/workforce](http://www.nr.edu/workforce), Classes & Programs, Non-Credit Course Offerings and search with the class ID number (#18996); call 540-674-3613 or email [WFDtraining@nr.edu](mailto:WFDtraining@nr.edu).

## Moss Arts from page 1

Colombian and Afro-contemporary dance with live drumming and song, "The City of Others" by Colombia's Sankofa Dan-

zafro portrays the reality of marginalized communities who have been marked by ethnic discrimination and social inequality for generations. The Moss Arts Center presents the world premiere stream of this performance in a theatre in Medellín, Colombia. Co-sponsored by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration at Virginia Tech, the event includes a live post-performance conversation with Artistic Director Rafael Palacios.

### "Seven Limbs" by Douglas J. Cuomo

Featuring Nels Cline, guitar, and the Aizuri Quartet

Wednesday, Feb. 3, 2021, 7:30 p.m.

Wilco guitarist Nels Cline and Grammy-nominated Aizuri Quartet join forces for American composer Douglas Cuomo's "Seven Limbs," a virtuosic tour de force filled with melodic beauty, rhythmic urgency, celebration, serenity, and unbridled joy. The performance will be livestreamed from an East Coast studio and will include a live conversation with the composer and musicians. Presented exclusively for the Moss Arts Center, it is the world premiere for "Seven Limbs" and is one of only a small number of performances of the work featuring Cline.

"An Evening with Tara

### Westover"

Saturday, Feb. 6, 2021, 7:30 p.m.

Tara Westover's best-selling memoir "Educated" has captured worldwide attention. Growing up in rural Idaho in a survivalist family, Westover had no birth certificate and no formal schooling. At 17 she decided to educate herself, escaping her family to eventually earn a doctorate from Cambridge University. Livestreamed exclusively for the Moss Arts Center from Westover's home, the author will be interviewed by Amy Azano, associate professor in Virginia Tech's School of Education, and will answer audience members' questions.

### Danish String Quartet

Sunday, Feb. 21, 2021, 2 p.m.

Even treasured canon repertoire sounds new when played by chamber music phenom the Grammy-nominated Danish String Quartet. The quartet makes its Blacksburg debut with the world premiere of a new recording made exclusively for the Moss from a rustic church in Copenhagen. The musical journey through profound beauty, darkness, and triumph features a Bach fugue and chorale prelude, the Webern String Quartet (1905), and the Danish String Quartet's own Nordic folk music. Members of the ensemble will participate in a live question-and-answer session following the performance.

### Theatre Lovett's "The Girl Who Forgot to Sing Badly"

Saturday, March 6, 2021, 4 p.m.

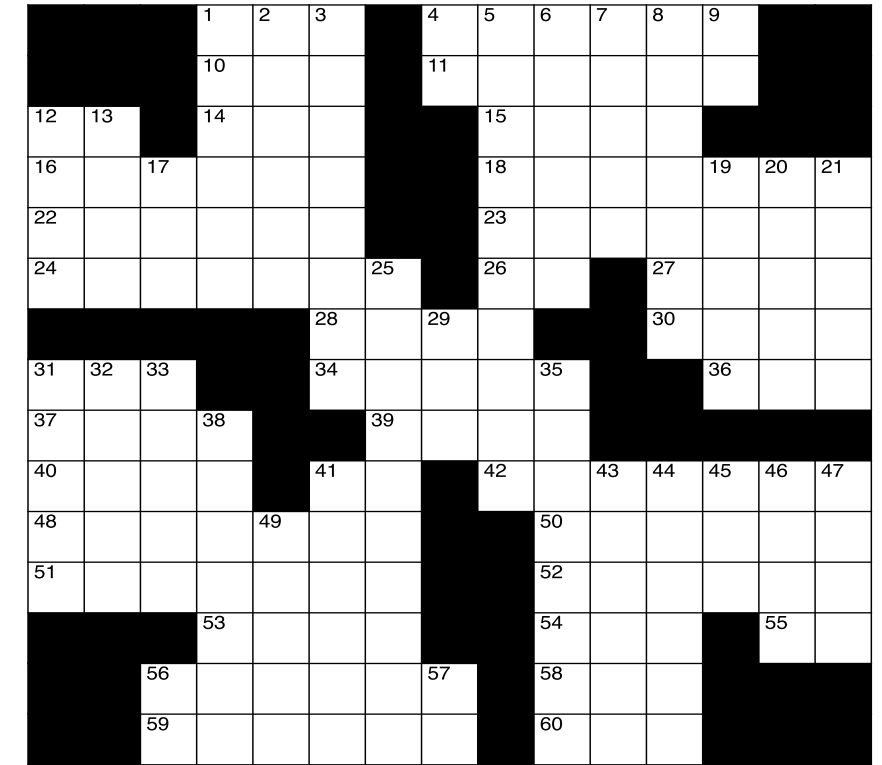
Ingenious Irish performer Louis Lovett leads the audience on an untamed adventure. Complete with a jack-in-the-box set, this solo theatre show details Peggy O'Hegarty's trek across snowy lands and wild seas. As Peggy tries to save the day, the audience learns about love, loss, the reassurance of goats, and the courage to sing gloriously on- or off-key. This multi-camera stream from a performance in Australia is recommended for the entire family, especially children in second through sixth grades. Star Lovett will answer questions live after the performance.

"HomeStage" artists will lead multiple virtual class visits and workshops at Virginia Tech, giving students opportunities to delve into international issues and for budding performers to hone their craft.

Tickets for each "HomeStage" series performance are \$10 for the general public and free for Virginia Tech students.

Tickets and access passes can be purchased online, at the Moss Arts Center's box office, or by calling 540-231-5300. The box office will be open for in-person and telephone ticket purchases from 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Wednesday through Friday.

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE



- CLUES ACROSS**
- Hair care product
  - Looped
  - It's present in all living cells
  - Choose
  - South Dakota
  - Cash machine
  - Of the pia mater
  - Ancient Egyptian documents
  - Layers at the back of the eyeballs
  - Not perceived
  - Look over
  - Improve a tire
  - Time zone
  - Main branch of Islam
  - Bark of the mulberry tree
  - Sea eagles
  - Records heart muscle

- activity (abbr.)
- Produced Hollywood
  - Framer
  - Yuck!
  - Reject outright and bluntly
  - 500, car race
  - Small heap or pile
  - Type of degree (abbr.)
  - Contagious skin disease
  - Erases from a surface
  - In an enthusiastic way
  - Begin again
  - Intricately produced pattern
  - It flows NW to the Seine
  - Be obliged to repay
  - Southeast
  - Slip in
  - Leisure time activity
  - Breastbones
  - Sun up in New York

- CLUES DOWN**
- More cloudy
  - Main course
  - Protect with plastic
  - Equally
  - Rebukes
  - Friend to a salesman
  - Warms up
  - Overshadow
  - Interior lineman in football
  - San Antonio hoopster
  - Comedian Cook
  - Time zone
  - First PM of India
  - Performing perfectly
  - A way to hide
  - Former NBA commissioner

- Peter's last name
- Outlying suburb of London
- Used to cut steak
- Deep inlets
- Type of tree
- Done openly and unashamedly
- Indigenous person of N. Africa
- Confessed openly
- A way to separate with an instrument
- Influential journalist Tarbell
- Manning and Roth are two
- One who cares for horses in India
- Something to believe in
- Form of "to be"
- Atomic #73

# NRCC to offer Lean Six Sigma training online in 2021

New River Community College has two upcoming online Lean Six Sigma training sessions that can help businesses reduce costs and increase productivity.

In partnership with the Manufacturing Technology Center (MTC), NRCC is offering training in Six Sigma Yellow Belt beginning on Jan. 14 and Six Sigma Green Belt beginning Feb. 23.

Yellow Belt is an eight-week course for entry-level employees seeking to improve their role in the company by using

the concepts and methodologies of Six Sigma. The train-and-do process uses classroom activities, combining lecture and simulation exercises.

According to the American Society for Quality, one corporation reported \$1.6 million in savings within the first year of implementing a Six Sigma initiative.

The Yellow Belt training will be held virtually on Thursdays, beginning Jan. 14, from 8 a.m. to noon (Class ID #18990). The regular price for the program is \$1,200, but with special state

funding the discounted price is \$400. Additional financial assistance may also be available.

Green Belt is a 14-week course that presents the ASQ Lean Six Sigma Green Belt body of knowledge that includes a project simulation taking participants through the define, measure, analyze, improve and control (DMAIC) process improvement methodology. Participants interested in Green Belt certification are required to have three years of industry experience.

Each Green Belt participant

will be required to have a job-related and sponsor-approved project that should be selected prior to the start of the class. The course agenda is intended to teach the Six Sigma body of knowledge while leading participants through completion of their individual projects. MTC instructors will provide weekly support to mentor and coach participants through the completion of projects.

The Green Belt training will be held virtually on Tuesdays, beginning Feb. 23, from 8 a.m. to noon (Class ID #18988). The

regular price for the program is \$2,400, but with special state funding, the discounted price is \$800. Additional financial assistance may also be available.

These courses are two of 10 NRCC FastForward programs that provide affordable and short-term training through the Office of Workforce Development.

To register, visit [www.nr.edu/workforce](http://www.nr.edu/workforce), Classes & Programs, Non-Credit Course Offerings and search with the class ID number; call 540-674-3613 or email [WFDtraining@nr.edu](mailto:WFDtraining@nr.edu).

## Curiosity and unicycles make for an award-winning graduate student

The coffee cup was empty. Sabrina Sturgeon, a Virginia Tech Aspire! Award winner, stood up, stepped away from her computer, and strapped on her bike helmet. Gathering three small balls and her long-distance unicycle, she left the comforts of her room in East Campbell Hall.

As she rode one wheel onto the Drillfield, she wondered whether her coordination between juggling and riding was improving. In fact, Sturgeon was curious about many things: how to improve life for others, happenings in higher education, and equity among graduate students.

And it was this curiosity that caused Sturgeon, a School of Education graduate student in higher education and student affairs, to win one of the five Aspire! Awards for 2020-21.

These Virginia Tech awards recognize students, faculty, and staff who exemplify one of the five key aspirations for learning as defined by Student Affairs. Recipients demonstrate the pursuit of self-understanding and

integrity; practice civility; prepare for a life of courageous leadership; embrace Virginia Tech's motto, Ut Prosim (That I May Serve), as a way of life; or, as in Sturgeon's case, commit to unwavering curiosity.

Stephen Henninger, assistant director of housing and residence life, nominated her for this honor. He met her through her position as an assistant residential learning coordinator co-supervising 850 students in a living-learning community.

"I nominated Sabrina because she is immensely curious," Henninger said. "Sabrina and I would grab coffee or lunch when we were in person to check in and see how she was adjusting to our department. Ultimately, Sabrina and I would talk about everything and anything."

"Whether we talked about the nature of democracy, capitalism, or philosophy, Sabrina would seek out new perspectives, information, and ideas. Curiosity is what we hope everyone — students, faculty, and staff — live out. Sabrina is not only a role model for that

but also challenges others to live it out, too."

Sturgeon does this in several ways. She was a conduct hearing officer for the university, interned with Assessment and Professional Development, and serves as president of the Higher Education Advisory Council, which advocates for the needs of higher education graduate students on campus. She also co-taught a three-credit course in the principles of peer leadership.

While her career plans after graduating in May 2021 are still vague, she is exploring staying at Virginia Tech if the opportunity arises or possibly moving to Washington, D.C.

"I see the passion for innovation and growth here," she said, "and that ignites me. I love that. But Washington, D.C., is a city that invigorates me, too. It seems so fascinating. I would love to be there because I think that's the heart of where a lot of policy and high-level changes happen in our country."

Originally, Sturgeon had another plan after graduation. She hoped to



Sabrina Sturgeon gets ready to ride her long-distance unicycle outside East Campbell Hall. Photo by Leslie King for Virginia Tech.

unicycle across the globe. But since the COVID-19 pandemic, she may postpone that dream for a few years. This, however, does not mean she has given up on unicycling. In fact, she is honing this goal. She wants to break the world record for long-distance unicycling while juggling.

Though she has only been cycling for a year and is a novice juggler, she has put in hundreds of miles on her four unicycles. Two are basic uni-

cycles, one is for traveling long distances, and one is a five-foot giraffe circus unicycle, which is used by entertainers.

But as she works up to juggling and cycling over 18 miles to break the current record, she is no less engaged with her various roles at Virginia Tech. She is still drinking coffee and having deep discussions with Henninger. Her curiosity propels her, she said.

"We discuss the nature

of democracy in our country," she said, "and what role higher education has in business. We like to explore all these interesting ideas and worldviews, and we do it while upholding the aspiration of civility. And I think that really encompasses what curiosity is to me — the open exploration of ideas and the never-ending pursuit of knowledge."

— Written by Leslie King

## Keep squirrels out of bird feeders this winter

From elaborate obstacle courses to spinning, bungee-jumping apparatuses, people have invented ingenious ways to keep

squirrels out of bird feeders.

Backyard birders get discouraged when squirrels drive their feathered

friends away from bird feeders. Additionally, expensive specialty birdseed eaten by squirrels is seed that birds don't get.

"That's probably one of the reasons why it's so frustrating to watch the squirrels get in there and eat it," said Terry Lautzenheiser, horticulture technician for Virginia Cooperative Extension in Henrico County.

Lautzenheiser tried to find something that would keep the squirrels out. She eventually bought a bird feeder with a weight-sensitive clos-

ing mechanism. Birds are light enough to perch, but a squirrel's heavier weight will trigger the seed ports to close.

"That's what's worked best for us," she said. "They're very, very smart, so you have to get something that literally closes that they can't get into."

Horticulturist Mark Viette, host of a gardening segment on Virginia Farm Bureau Federation's Real Virginia television program, customized his bird feeder using plastic-coated chicken wire purchased from a hardware store.

"You can make a box and put it over the feeder," he said. "The holes are just large enough for birds to get in, but are small enough to keep squirrels out."

Viette also placed a separate squirrel feeder 100 to 200 feet away from his bird feeders.

"Squirrel feed tends to be inexpensive and is based more with a mixture of sunflower, corn and other foods," he said. "Some people like the squirrels, but you can feed them away from your birds."

Consumers also can purchase round, slick metal baffles that attach underneath or above a feeder, preventing a ravenous rodent from climbing on. Additionally, both Lautzenheiser and Viette advised keeping bird feeders up high in an open area and away from branches or anything a squirrel could use as a jumping point to access the feeder.

Squirrels also can be discouraged by the birdseed choice. Birds tend to enjoy eating Nyjer and safflower seed, but squirrels will avoid it.



## Russian

from page 1

ness in helping students achieve an extremely high level of proficiency in the Russian language by the time they graduate from Virginia Tech," said Robert Efird, associate professor of Russian. "The Russian Flagship builds from this foundation and adds a degree of intensity beyond that of the normal undergraduate experience."

The program's primary goal is to help students reach a high degree of cultural competency and a professional-level proficiency in Russian, a language considered especially difficult to master for most native speakers of English. In the short term, Efird said the program aims to help students qualify for the capstone, spending a year completely immersed in the language.

In addition to coursework, program offerings include co-curricular activities, study abroad and tutoring to help students develop the skills needed for a va-

riety of careers in both the public and private sectors.

With applications open to students of all majors, the Russian Flagship program has already surged in popularity. "The level of interest from students has already exceeded our expectations," said Efird.

Students who graduate with a Russian Flagship certification will carry a highly rated specialization recognized throughout the national security community as well as academia. The U.S. Agency for International Development, along with private companies such as Google and Goldman Sachs, have also sought to hire Flagship alumni, Efird said.

"It's not just the linguistic skills that make these alumni attractive to employers," he added. "The cultural competence, which the Russian program emphasizes from the beginning, is a major factor."

Efird said the success of the Russian program

is thanks in large part to its affiliation with the Project Global Officer, a Department of Defense initiative focused on helping future military officers improve their language skills, regional expertise and intercultural communication skills.

The Russian Flagship program is designed to transcend the department and college. Along with engaging members of the ROTC programs and the Corps of Cadets, the program could benefit future engineers, biologists and chemists. Many students who have already participated in the Russian program are double majoring in science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields, said Efird.

"Speaking more than one language is the norm in many parts of the world," said Janell Watson, chair of the Department of Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures and a professor of French. "Achieving professional-level fluency in a second

language enables our students to engage more fully as global citizens."

The launch of the Russian Flagship pro-

gram represents another milestone for the department and college. The department launched an Arabic ma-

yor this fall following the success of its Arabic program.

— Written by Andrew Adkins

### HOLIDAY ADVERTISING DEADLINES

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



# OPINION

## The pandemic has done the most harm to the most vulnerable

2020 is almost over and that's good news.

The problem is that the problems that made 2020 from March through December the most disruptive period in modern American history are not over. Moving forward one calendar day into a new year doesn't really change anything except the date.

While I've heard some optimism about the pandemic coming to an end in 2021, I don't think anybody bothered to tell the virus. It has plans of its own, and I don't believe those plans include going away just because the year does.

The virus has shuttered more businesses than we care to think about, including here in Montgomery County. Our school system has been torn apart. It's easy to see what's happening to our kids short-term. My wife teaches at Christiansburg High School, and virtually every day, she has a new lament about some of her students, the ones who this time a year ago were straight-A students who are now flunking every course and stand a good chance of not being promoted to the next grade. Without classrooms, without any sports or academic or service clubs -- in other words, with-

out any organization in their lives -- they've surrendered themselves to confusion and a sense of hopelessness, abandoning the motivation and drive that before all this broke loose pushed them to succeed and made them happy and proud in their accomplishments.

Adults, I think, for the most part are doing okay. We're adults, after all. We simply adapt to the havoc and the disruption -- the new normal -- and go on. This is not to make light of the virus, all the deaths it has caused and the heartbreak it has wreaked on so many families.

But any adults who have spent an appreciable amount of time duking it out with life have probably had the props of their lives knocked out from under them at least once. We have stood eyeball-to-eyeball with loss, change, and setbacks, and we have survived, battered and bruised perhaps, but we're still in the game.

Adjusting and moving forward don't mean our lives haven't been blasted and damaged. I miss concerts. I miss high school sports. I miss spending time with friends. I miss traveling. My life these days in many ways is like that of our teen-age children: It's empty.

But as an adult, I square my shoulders, take a deep breath (COVID-19 willing) and meet the day head-on. I can envision a future without the virus, a day -- I don't know when -- but a day when what I see as normality returns to America. This mess will end.

Our school-age children, however, have not had the advantage of a wealth of experience and the coping mechanisms it invariably develops. They have known only one environment, one with structure, regimen, order, and at least some measure of discipline. They have known what is expected of them, what to do and where and when they are to do it. Until now. All that structure has been replaced by chaos. And we are seeing now the short-term impact on our kids.

What's not so easy to see is what this will do to our children long-term. Are the pandemic and its effects sabotaging our children's hopes and dreams, especially their plans for college? If our children can't get out of high school and into college, what kind of future will they have? Are we losing many of our brightest and our best to havoc wreaked by the pandemic? It sure looks like it, at

least right now.

The sad truth is that our children are the ones paying the biggest and worst prices for life in the pandemic. For them, nothing is easy now because their familiar lives have been turned upside down and replaced with confusion and bewilderment that have become the new norm. And I worry about them. After all, we're seeing classes of children who are losing forever the chance for experiences that we as adults have always considered the norm for high school: proms, graduation, football games, basketball games, cheerleading squads, academic clubs, service clubs, even social clubs. Where will the happy memories come from? I fear they have been lost forever.

So how will our children turn out in the long run? What will their post-pandemic lives be like, say, ten years from now?

I don't think any of us can know. I do know I have nothing but admiration for our school administrators who have soldiered on amid downright impossible circumstances the likes of which they've never encountered before. I feel they've accomplished nothing less than a miracle in keeping

our schools functioning at all.

But it's clear to me at least if not to anyone else that our school-age children are the ones whom the pandemic is doing the most damage to. We often underestimate the moral and emotional strength of our children. They may well surprise us yet one more time. I just hope and pray they're strong enough to come out at the end with a rejuvenated sense of purpose that will enable them to move on with their lives and to step confidently into a new world where fear, masks, and tyrannical executive orders aren't part of the daily routine. That day will come for them. I pray they'll be ready for it.

2020 is about over. But the pandemic isn't. The adults just have to keep going and giving our children all the help, guidance, direction, and support we can. For their sakes, not ours.

*The author is a man of a certain age who, like virtually everyone in the entire country, has never seen anything like what is going on thanks to COVID-19. And he doesn't like it one bit. There's just nothing he can do about it except follow the protocols, which he does, and keep a firm grip on his sense of hope.*

## Home Country by Slim Randles

"Boys," said our tall cowboy, Steve. "I've got a real problem coming up, and I'm not sure how to cope with it."

The rest of us in the world dilemma think tank, meeting here each morning as long as the Farmers Brothers coffee doesn't run out, turned toward our friend. We're nothing if not a helpful bunch. We put our cups down, even Dud,

who was still on his first cup.

Doc said, "Maybe we can help a bit, Steve. Tell us about it."

"Well, Doc, it's these dang New Year's Resolutions. Time's almost here, and I don't even have one, not even one."

"Why not?" asked Dud.

Steve grinned, picked up his coffee mug and raised it in a toast to others at the philosophy counter of the Mule

Barn Truck Stop.

"Well," he said, "since I'm dang near already perfect, it makes it kinda hard to find something that needs improvement."

"We can see," said Herb, "where that would weigh on a guy's mind all right."

"Now Steve, when you say 'perfect' you're speaking hypothetically, right?"

Dud leaned over and whispered to Bert. "I thought a hypothetical was what Doc gives us shots with."

"Hypothetically?" Bull drool!" Steve said. "Check this out. Muscles. Brain. Ability to drive a pickup truck. Able to level a horse's hoof with a rasp and a prayer. Hey, I stand before you a genuine American cowboy, the very pinnacle of

human evolution. Thank you very much for the thunderous applause you were just now thinking of giving me. I'll go to the head of the class."

"I may have one solution to your dilemma, Steve."

"What's that, Doc?"

"Oh, just maybe you could work on that modesty just a bit next year."

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

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## Youth can apply for state fair exhibitor scholarships

The State Fair of Virginia has announced details for its 2020 applied scholarship program.

While restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the cancellation of the 2020 State Fair and activities were limited to a modified Youth Livestock Show, the fair remains committed to supporting the commonwealth's youth through scholarships.

Youth who exhibited beef cattle, sheep, meat goats or swine in the modified Youth Livestock Show are eligible to apply for 12 scholarships offered by the fair. Additionally, a \$1,000 scholarship from the Gatewood Holland Stoneman Endowment and two youth development scholarship opportunities, each worth \$2,000, are open to youth who participated in the 2020 livestock shows or 2019 non-

livestock youth competitions.

Funds allocated for the scholarships represent a portion of the proceeds from the sixth annual Youth Livestock Sale of Champions auction, which was held Oct. 3, as well as general donations to the scholarship program.

The 12 scholarships for 2020 livestock exhibitors, totaling \$18,000, will be offered in three age groups: juniors (9-12), intermediate (13-15) and seniors (16 and older). Groups are based on exhibitors' ages as of Sept. 30, 2020.

Details and applications are available in the "Scholarship" section of the fair's website at StateFairVa.org. Applications must be completed electronically and received by 5 p.m. on Jan. 27, 2021.

Since 2013 the state fair has

awarded 1,634 scholarships and has given over \$545,000 to support youth education. The fair offers youth more than \$100,000 each year in scholarship funds through 4-H, FFA and vocational competitions and specific equine, fine arts and horticulture competitions.

The 2021 State Fair of Virginia will run from Sept. 24 through Oct. 3. Information is available at StateFairVa.org.

The state fair is held each fall at its permanent home at The Meadow Event Park in Caroline County and attracts 250,000 fairgoers. The event celebrates the best of Virginia's past, present and future through scholarship initiatives, creative programming and a focus on the commonwealth's agriculture and natural resources industries.

Submit letters to the editor to editor@ourvalley.org

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# OBITUARIES

## Bruck, Linda (Sieglinde)

Linda (Sieglinde) Bruck, our beloved mother and grandmother, formerly of Potomac, Md., passed away Dec. 17, 2020. She will be greatly missed.

She was born on Nov. 17, 1937, to Joseph and Anna Koch Bohn in Gross Betschkerek in what is now the city of Zrenjanin, Serbia, as a member of the German-speaking Danube Swabian population.

After an idyllic early childhood, her father was imprisoned and shot after the Serbian Partisans took over, and she was imprisoned in a work camp with her three siblings, her mother and both grandmothers. They managed to survive and stave off scurvy and famine by eating onions and gleaning in crop fields nearby. They escaped from the camp on one moonless night on foot, leaving one grandmother behind, and trekked over the border into Romania. They then stowed away on a train across Hungary before crossing into Austria on foot.

There in post-war Vienna, Austria, she became part of a large population of refugees, and the family lived for some years in old military barracks before moving into a two-bedroom apartment shared by the five of them, and it even had a private indoor toilet and bath. Thanks to the hard work and cleverness of her mother, Linda was afforded a good education and trade school as well as enjoying the many cultural events and resources of the capital city of Austria.

She met and married Nicholas Bruck, a fellow displaced Danube Swabian, and they moved to New York City in 1961. There she worked as an interpreter at the Australian Embassy and embraced her new country and city. In 1967, she and Nicholas had an adventurous year living in Guatemala City and exploring Central America where he was teaching at the university. In 1968, they moved to the Washington, D.C., area, where they settled in the Glen Hills suburb in Montgomery County and raised their children.

In the process, she ran a small horse board-



ing stable, raised a few head of cattle, kept chickens to sell eggs, participated in the PTA, ran a campaign to keep a nearby quarry from expanding and went to night school for her real estate license. Her children were all taught the proper etiquette involved in answering business calls and taking messages.

She had more time after her children grew up and left, so she enrolled in classes at the local community college and traveled to visit the children and her own family in Austria. At one point, she drove through Europe and into Morocco to visit one daughter who was in the Peace Corps there.

Around 2009, after a long illness, she moved to Blacksburg, and found a new home here in the mountains of Southwest Virginia. She loved nature, walking the local trails and enjoyed the theater and concerts and gardening at her daughter's house.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her siblings, Helga Geringer and Seppi Bohn of Austria, a nephew, Christian Geringer, and a grandson, Peter Modlin.

Survivors include daughters Maria Bruck Modlin (Russell Modlin) of Blacksburg and Maya Bruck of Austin, Texas; twin sons Thomas Bruck (Lindsey) and Max Bruck (Stacey) both also of Austin; grandchildren Cade, Landon, MJ and Kyle Bruck of Austin; and Lydia and Erika Modlin of Blacksburg, a sister, Elke Bohn Ballester of Madrid, Spain; and many wonderful nieces and nephews and great nieces and nephews in Austria and Spain.

The family is grateful for the caregivers from Community Care Solutions (Crystal and Alex), from Interim Health, and others thanked privately for helping make her last years and days comfortable and as independent as possible.

A private funeral mass was held on Dec. 28, 2020, followed by a short graveside service at Memorial Gardens of NRV. Online condolences may be shared at [www.McCoyfuneralhome.com](http://www.McCoyfuneralhome.com).

## Healy, Betty Mitchel

Betty Mitchel Healy passed away Monday, Dec. 21, 2020, in Blacksburg at the home of her daughter and son-in-law, Barbara and Joseph Cox. She was 95 years old.

Betty was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, on May 22, 1925. She was the youngest and last surviving of five children born to Alfred J. and Mary (Hermanson) Mitchel.

She married George S. Yagerman in 1946, and they had three children. After George died in 1962, she married Andrew T. Healy in 1967. Andrew died in 1995.

Betty graduated from Walnut Hills High School in Cincinnati, in 1943. Since she attended high school during a historic time, she recently was asked to donate her yearbook to the Holocaust Museum to become part of a special exhibition documenting American life during World War II.

In 1963 following the death of her first husband, Betty began working at the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Miami Flight Service Station. She managed to raise her three children while working alternating day and night shifts providing weather and other vital data to flight crews. She continued to work for the FAA for about 25 years until her retirement. As she did everywhere, Betty established lasting bonds with her co-workers.

People who helped care for Betty during her later years described her as "feisty," "spunky and smart and a beautiful woman." This is an opinion that was held by all who knew her. She loved keeping in touch with friends and family as a mentor and muse, never lacking for offering advice and encouragement. She also loved feeding the birds and watching the deer, rabbits, chipmunks and other wildlife in her backyard. She adopted a feral, outside cat,



whom she called Izzy. Many people felt similarly nourished and protected by Betty.

While apolitical in her younger years, she became an avid follower of national government and political news as she aged. She enjoyed talking about current events, developed clear opinions, and was always perplexed when others

did not share her views.

In addition to her daughter, Barbara, she is survived by two sons, Daniel E. Yagerman of Tamarac, Fla., and Steven J. Yagerman, of New York City, a daughter-in-law Katherine L. Simmons of Indianapolis, Ind.; granddaughters Rebecca Yagerman Deming and her husband Eric Deming, of St. Petersburg, Fla.; Joanna Yagerman of, Brooklyn, N.Y. and Sarah Yagerman and her husband Durham Finney and their three-year-old daughter of Fiona, New York, N.Y.; and Elizabeth Condon of Charleston, S.C.; and grandson Justin G. Yagerman of Miami. She also is survived by several stepgrandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews. All of them felt a special connection to Grandma (Aunt) Betty.

Betty's family would like to express their sincere gratitude for the loving care she received during her final days. They are especially grateful for the support from Good Samaritan Hospice, Warm Hearth at Home, and the medical staff at LewisGale Hospital Montgomery. Betty will be interred along with her late husband, Andrew T. Healy, Jr., at Spring Grove Cemetery in Cincinnati. A memorial service will be planned at the Spring Grove Cemetery at a future date when health concerns permit travel and gatherings. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations to Good Samaritan Hospice in Roanoke be considered.

## Slusser, Harry Wright

Harry Wright Slusser, 83, of Blacksburg, died Thursday, Dec. 24, 2020.

He was born in Blacksburg on Nov. 13, 1937, to the late Wilbur Wright and Nellie Duncan Slusser. He is survived by his

brother, Jerry Slusser, of Blacksburg, and a sister, Martha Sue Slusser, of Blacksburg.

Services will be held privately. Arrangements by McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg.

## Winters, Faye Eleanor Walker

Faye Eleanor Walker Winters, 79, of Christiansburg, died Dec. 26, 2020, at Carilion New River Valley Medical Center.

She was born in Ellenville, N.Y., to the late John Walton Walker and Beatrice Ury Walker.

She was preceded in death by her husband of 50 years, Carl W. Winters, Jr., and a daughter, Elaine Farrier.

Surviving are daughter and son-in-law Susan and Richard Compton; daughters Sharon Winters and Sarah Winters; and son and daughter-in-law John and Michelle Winters. She is also survived by grandchildren and great-grandchildren Elizabeth and Matthew Fraley, Nataleigh Moses, Carter Fraley, Emerson Fraley, Jessica and Kevin Muniz and Benjamin Muniz; Amy Hoosier and Derek Karr, Alea Marion, Rylee Marion, Garrett Marion, and Bella Albert, Christopher Moses and

Jen Goering, Zoey Moses and James Moses, Jeremy and Kara Compton, Mason Cullop, Cassidy Bond, Wyatt Compton, Troy Price, Trevor Compton, Logan and Victoria Winters, Kenton Drake, Kylan Winters, Hannah Winters, Kallista Winters and Adam Harless and Kyrra Winters.

In addition, she is survived by a brother and sister-in-law, David and Tina Walker, and a sister and brother-in-law, Betty and Robert Page as well as numerous nieces and nephews; and a very special "daughter," Becky Bird.

A memorial service will be held today, Dec. 30, at 11 a.m. at the Alleghany Church of Christ with Minister Porter Riner officiating. The family will receive friends one hour prior to the service.

In lieu of flowers, please consider memorial contributions to the Alleghany Church of Christ or Christiansburg Rescue.

## Tregellas, Frances Skolaut

Frances Skolaut Tregellas passed quietly into Heaven at the home of her daughter and son-in-law in Radford on Friday, Dec. 11, 2020.

She is survived by her son, Bill Skolaut (Dana) of Buckeye, Ariz.; a daughter, Beverly Zeakes (Sam) of Radford; four grandchildren, Jason Zeakes (Katrin) of Austin, Texas; Nichole Hawkins (Kyle) of Troutville, Va.; John Skolaut of DeSoto, Kan., and Andrew Skolaut of Leander, Texas; and ten great-grandchildren.

Frances was born in Bazine, Kan., at the home of her grandparents, to Ralph and Elsie Timken on Sept. 28, 1926. She married her best friend and soulmate Glen Skolaut in 1946. Glen and Frances were a unique couple. They not only loved to hunt and fish together, but they built a highly successful motor rewind business "Glen's Electric Repair" in Great Bend, Kan., beginning in 1957.

After Glen's death in 1972, Frances completed their dream and in December 1974 expanded the business at a new location on S. 281 Hwy. She operated the business until its sale in 2000. Frances was profiled in several publications including Soroptimist Interna-



ional for successfully owning and operating what was known as a "man's business" and for her business and skills in rewinding motors.

She was a member of Central Baptist Church and the Electrical Apparatus Service Association (EASA), was the Phi Alpha Epsilon advisor, and was a member of Beta

Sigma Phi, Soroptimist International, and the Kansas Walleye Association. It was with the Kansas Walleye Association that she enjoyed participating in many tournaments with her son, Bill. Among other things she enjoyed, she loved playing cards with her great-granddaughters.

In December 1998, Frances married George Tregellas. They relocated to Sun City, Ariz., where they had resided since 2000. They shared many travel adventures and built many wonderful memories with their families. They were the best role models our families could have. George passed away on May 10, 2020, and both are extremely missed.

The family was in the care of Mullins Funeral Home and Crematory in Radford. Please send online condolences by visiting [www.mullinsfuneralhome.com](http://www.mullinsfuneralhome.com).

## Walters, Kelly Brice

Kelly Brice Walters was born on Sept. 16, 1936, in Rogers, Va., the son of the late Vada McGuire and George M. Walters, Jr.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Virginia Gerald Walters.

He is survived by his daughter, Nancy; a grandson, Bradley Hutchenson; two great-grandchildren, Elizabeth Ann and Halley Jo; sisters Brenda Thomas, Shirley Bartlett and Jean Walters; and a sister-in-law, Jane Akers.

Kelly had been a member of the Christiansburg Lifesaving and First Aid Crew, later known as the Christiansburg Rescue Squad, since 1964. He served as captain, first and second lieutenant, treasurer and President of the Board of Directors. He was instrumental in starting Floyd County Rescue.

He was the District 7 VAVRS rescue squad vice president on two different occasions and was a member of the first "Rescue College" Committee, which is now in its fortieth year. He served on the Highway Safety Commission and was past President of the Virginia Association of Volunteer Rescue Squads (VAVRS), a life member of VAVRS, and a member of the "Hall of Fame." Kelly also served as a charter/life member of the Riner Volunteer Rescue Squad, an organization that he was also instrumental in establishing.

Kelly was a member of the Christiansburg Hunting Club and served as president and a member of the board of directors. Kelly had hunting dogs for years and was faithful to the club in seeing that their needs were met in many ways.



Kelly began his work life at the Blue Ridge Overall Factory for four years, then worked for Cromer Furniture in Christiansburg for three years, before becoming the caretaker of the Cemetery Cooperation, where he spent 24 years. After leaving the Cemetery Corporation, Kelly went to work for Montgomery County and served the next 18 years as an Animal Control Officer.

Upon retirement from the county, Kelly became the first full-time paid Rescue Squad Captain for Christiansburg. Kelly served the squad, the town of Christiansburg and county of Montgomery in that capacity for 10 years. He was dedicated to the squad and the community and always went the extra mile for those he served.

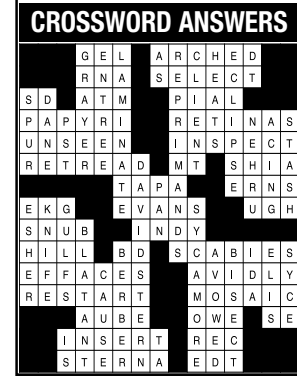
The family would like to thank English Meadows Blacksburg Campus for their care since February.

Funeral Services will be held today, Wednesday, Dec. 30, 2020 at 11 a.m. in the Auburn Baptist Church with Neal Turner presiding. The family will receive friends from 9:30 a.m. until service time at the church. Interment will be in the Sunset Cemetery in Christiansburg.

In lieu of flowers, Kelly requests that donations be made to the Riner Volunteer Rescue Squad at P.O. Box 858 Riner, VA or to the Christiansburg Fire Department 110 Depot St., Christiansburg, VA 24073, or to the Ladies Auxiliary of the Christiansburg Rescue Squad 190 Depot St., Christiansburg, VA 24073.

Arrangements by McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg.

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



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# Ranger Rick: A garish origin story

Dr. Solomon David  
Contributing writer

Every biologist has an origin story. A series of events and people that move us along a path toward the study of living things. For me, reading about a “dinosaur fish” in a children’s nature magazine basically changed my life.

I’ve always been interested in “creatures.” Snakes, frogs, insects, dinosaurs: the more unusual (and in many cases, underappreciated) the better.

Growing up, I’d sit wide-eyed listening to my grandparents’ fascinating stories about Indian wildlife; cobras were my favorite. My parents took me to ponds where I caught turtles, and zoos, where I lived at the reptile house, and museums, where I stood in awe of T-Rex. I chased praying mantises instead of playing kickball at sixth grade recess. Creatures.

Shortly after moving to Ohio at age 11, some neighborhood kids quickly recognized my interest in wildlife and gave me some old nature magazines. Ranger Rick. A kids’ magazine published by the National Wildlife Federation featuring animal stories guided by a raccoon mascot of the same name. Many of you are probably familiar with it; the magazine has been around for more than 50 years.

One day while leafing through a well-worn issue, I flipped the page and

something caught my eye: a small illustration of two softshell turtles. At the time, my favorite animals were freshwater turtles, and anything about them commanded my attention.

But when I zoomed out beyond the tiny turtles, I saw the focus of this two-page spread was something else. Something ancient and beastly, like an alligator with fins instead of legs. It was a giant fish called an alligator gar.

My curiosity was piqued by this new “discovery,” its prehistoric appearance, armored scales, and huge jaws with lots of teeth. It reminded me of an aquatic dinosaur. I forgot about the turtles and proceeded to read the short story, “The Mississippi King,” about one of North America’s largest freshwater fishes, and how their lineage has been around since the dinosaurs. This stealthy predator could grow over six feet long, weigh more than 200 pounds, and it breathed air. I was instantly hooked on gars.

As an 11-year-old kid with an ever-expanding interest in all things “creature,” I at some point lost sight of those dinosaur fish. I went back to the turtles. By high school, I even lost that Ranger Rick magazine, but the image of the infamous Mississippi King remained emblazoned in the back of my mind for many years to come.

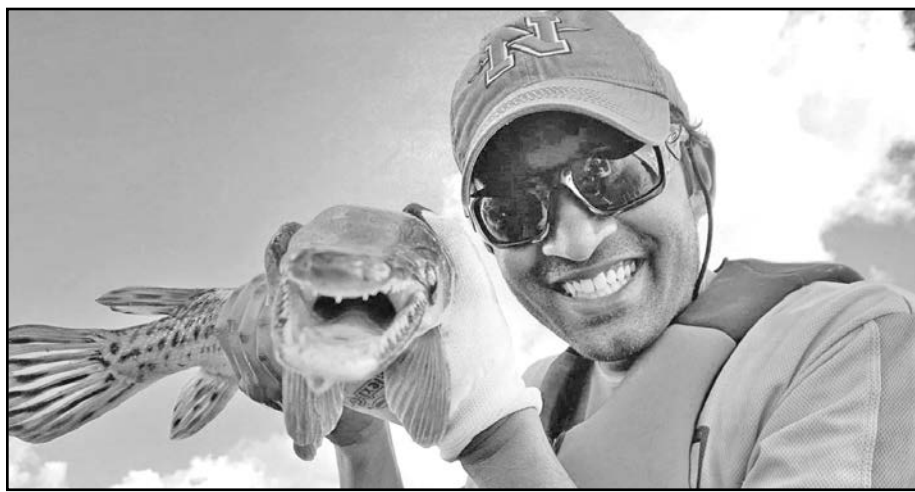
By my junior year as a

pre-med biology major at Ohio Northern University, I had “sneaked” classes like invertebrate zoology and biological photography into my schedule, alongside requirements like human anatomy and physiology. I realized field biology was where my true passion resided, not pre-medicine. I decided to attend graduate school and planned to study herpetology (reptiles and amphibians), including the turtles I’d been fond of growing up.

The following year, however, I took a class called ichthyology (biology of fishes), and my biological focus shifted again. I wanted to study fishes. I was good at identifying and catching them; and fish diversity, particularly in freshwater, fascinated me.

Nearly half of the approximately 32,000 described fish species live in less than 1% of the world’s water. My ichthyology professor was especially fond of an unusual fish; he even had a decal of one on the university field truck. An elongate animal that looked like an alligator with fins instead of legs. Professor Keiser was a fan of gars, and then I recalled that I was too. We never caught a gar in that ichthyology class, but I did well studying other species and earned an A in the course. And I remembered the gars. What cool fish.

I dove deep into all things gar while in graduate



Pictured above with a less-than-warm-and-fuzzy gar, the author had his life changed when he read about an alligator gar, also called a “dinosaur fish,” in Ranger Rick, a children’s nature magazine.

school: gar conservation, gar aquaculture. I even kept gars in aquariums at my apartment. I learned that gars had an undesired, bad reputation. Anglers often called gars “trash fish,” and they were often killed to “protect” more desirable sport fish like bass. Sometimes gars were simply target practice for bowfishers. Through my research and science communication, I wanted to show people that gars were valuable components of native ecosystems, not trash fish.

Several years later, I became an assistant professor of biological sciences at Nicholls State University in Louisiana, where I started GarLab. Our team studies the ecology and conservation of freshwater fish biodiversity, with a primary focus on, you guessed it, gars. I’ve shared my Ranger Rick “origin story” of being

inspired by a fish tale in a kids’ nature magazine and making a career of studying (and defending) these unusual fish.

But there was still another chapter in this story.

Earlier this year (February 2020), Ranger Rick published another story, again with a big alligator gar spanning two pages, but this time the article was written by me. Although the story’s primary focus was the natural history of these living fossil fishes, Ranger Rick’s editors titled it “The Gar Guy” and made sure I incorporated my personal connection with these fishes and the article that started it all.

It’s been a dream come true, and it’s the publication I am most proud of. I hope the latest Ranger Rick gar story helps inspire a new generation of young people to learn more about the natural world, including an appreciation for those lesser-

known, unusual “creatures.”

An avid fan of “primitive fishes” and advocate for native fishes conservation, Dr. Solomon David strives to effectively communicate science to both the research community and general public. Solomon is an aquatic ecologist and assistant professor of biological sciences at Nicholls State University in Louisiana, where his current research focuses on the ecology of migratory and ancient fishes (e.g. gars and bowfins). His graduate research at the University of Michigan focused on conservation ecology of Great Lakes fishes, including projects on Lake Trout, Chinook Salmon, and Spotted Gar. Solomon has also conducted postdoctoral research in fish ecology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Shedd Aquarium, U.S. Geological Survey, and Michigan State University.

# Virginia Tech paleontologists find pterosaur precursors that fill a gap in early evolutionary history of dinosaur flight

Here’s the original story of flight. Sorry, Wright Brothers, but this story began way before your time during the Age of the Dinosaurs.

Pterosaurs were the earliest reptiles to evolve powered flight, dominating the skies for 150 million years before their extinction some 66 million years ago.

However, key details of their evolutionary origin and how they gained their ability to fly have remained a mystery, one that paleontologists have been trying to crack for the past 200 years. In order to learn more about their evolution and fill in a few gaps in the fossil record, their closest relatives had to be identified.

With the help of newly discovered skulls and skeletons that were unearthed in North America, Brazil, Argentina, and Madagascar in recent years, Virginia Tech researchers Sterling Nesbitt and Michelle Stocker from the Department of Geosciences in the College of Science have demonstrated that

a group of “dinosaur precursors,” called lagerpetids, are the closest relatives of pterosaurs.

“Where did pterosaurs come from?” is one of the most outstanding questions in reptile evolution; we think we now have an answer,” said Nesbitt, who is an associate professor of geosciences and

an affiliated faculty member of the Fralin Life Sciences Institute and the Global Change Center.

Their findings were published in Nature.

Fossils of Dromomeron gregorii, a species of lagerpetid, were first collected in Texas in the 1930s and 1940s, but they weren’t properly identified until 2009. Unique to this excavation was a well-preserved partial skull and braincase, which, after further investigation, revealed that these reptiles had a good sense of equilibrium and were likely agile animals.

After finding more lagerpetid species in South America, paleontologists were able to create a pretty good picture of what the lagerpetids were; which were small, wingless reptiles that lived across Pangea during much of the Triassic Period, from 237 to 210 million years ago.

And in the past 15 years, five research groups from six different countries and three continents have come together to right some wrongs in the evolutionary history of the pterosaur, after the recent discovery of many lagerpetid skulls, forelimbs, and vertebrae from the United States, Brazil, Argentina, and Madagascar.

What gave paleontologists the idea to take a closer look at lagerpetids as the closest relatives of pterosaurs? Paleontologists have been studying the bones of lagerpetids for quite some time, and they have noted that the length and shape of their bones were similar to the bones of pterosaurs and dinosaurs. But with the few fossils that they had before, it could only be assumed that lagerpetids were a bit closer to dinosaurs.

What really caused a shift in the family tree can be attributed to the recently col-

lected lagerpetid skulls and forelimbs, which displayed features that were more similar to pterosaurs than dinosaurs. And with the help of new technological advances, researchers found that pterosaurs and lagerpetids share far more similarities than meet the eye.

One stark and mystifying finding was that the flightless lagerpetids had already evolved some of the neuro-anatomical features that allowed the pterosaurs to fly, which brought forth even more information on the origin of flight.

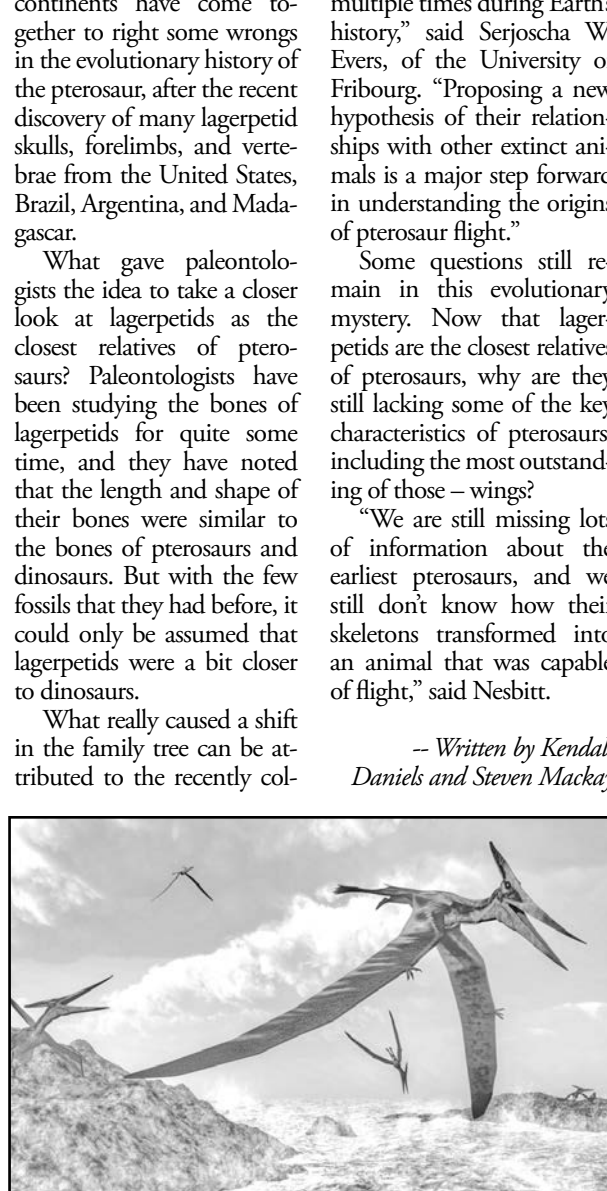
Ultimately, the study will help bridge the anatomical and evolutionary gaps that exist between pterosaurs and other reptiles. The new evolutionary relationships that have emerged from this study will create a new paradigm, providing a completely new framework for the study of the origin of these reptiles and their flight capabilities.

“Flight is such a fascinating behaviour, and it evolved multiple times during Earth’s history,” said Serjoscha W. Evers, of the University of Fribourg. “Proposing a new hypothesis of their relationships with other extinct animals is a major step forward in understanding the origins of pterosaur flight.”

Some questions still remain in this evolutionary mystery. Now that lagerpetids are the closest relatives of pterosaurs, why are they still lacking some of the key characteristics of pterosaurs, including the most outstanding of those – wings?

“We are still missing lots of information about the earliest pterosaurs, and we still don’t know how their skeletons transformed into an animal that was capable of flight,” said Nesbitt.

— Written by Kendall Daniels and Steven Mackay



A high flying Pteranodon, a genus of pterosaur that included some of the largest known flying reptiles. Illustration courtesy of Elenarts / Adobe Stock.

## Legal Notice

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC OF A PETITION BY  
APPALACHIAN POWER COMPANY, FOR APPROVAL OF A  
RATE ADJUSTMENT CLAUSE PURSUANT TO  
§ 56-585.1 A 5 b OF THE CODE OF VIRGINIA  
CASE NO. PUR-2020-00252

Appalachian Power Company (“Appalachian”) requests a total of \$6,748,421 for a rate adjustment clause (“DR-RAC”) to recover costs related to its former and current peak shaving riders. According to Appalachian, this amount would increase the monthly bill of a residential customer using 1,000 kilowatt hours per month by approximately \$0.23.

A Hearing Examiner appointed by the Commission will hear public witness testimony on the case on April 20, 2021, at 10 a.m.; and testimony and evidence of the Company, Staff, and any respondents on April 21, 2021.

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

On November 13, 2020, Appalachian Power Company (“Appalachian” or “Company”) filed with the State Corporation Commission (“Commission”) this petition (“Petition”) pursuant to § 56-585.1 A 5 b of the Code of Virginia (“Code”) for approval of a rate adjustment clause (“DR-RAC”) to recover costs related to the Company’s former and current peak shaving riders.

Specifically, Appalachian requests that the Commission authorize the collection of a Virginia retail revenue requirement of \$6,748,421. According to the Company, the proposed DR-RAC, if approved, will increase the monthly bill of a residential customer using 1,000 kilowatt hours of electricity per month by \$0.23. Appalachian requests that the Commission authorize the DR-RAC to go into effect on August 1, 2021.

Appalachian states that the amount requested is comprised of the following:

•\$1,053,876 of uncollected balances associated with the Company’s Peak Shaving Demand Response Rider and Peak Shaving and Emergency Demand Response Rider;

•\$2,719,351 of costs through October 2020 of the Company’s Rider D.R.S.-RTO Capacity; and

•\$2,975,194 of projected costs associated with the one customer currently subscribed to Rider D.R.S.-RTO Capacity through May 31, 2024, at which point the contract ends. These costs are comprised solely of bill credits for monthly demand credits net of any customer monthly or annual non-compliance charges.

Appalachian also requests the Commission’s approval to defer for future recovery the costs associated with the Company’s Rider D.R.S., if the Commission approves the modifications in Appalachian’s triennial review. Interested persons are encouraged to review the Petition and supporting documents for the details of these and other proposals.

TAKE NOTICE that the Commission may apportion: revenues among customer classes and/or design rates in a manner differing from that shown in the Petition and supporting documents and thus may adopt rates that differ from those appearing in the Company’s Petition and supporting documents.

The Commission has taken judicial notice of the ongoing public health emergency related to the spread of the coronavirus, or COVID-19, and the declarations of emergency issued at both the state and federal levels. In accordance therewith, all pleadings, briefs, or other documents required to be served in this matter shall be submitted electronically to the extent authorized by 5 VAC 5-20-150, *Copies and format*, of the Commission’s Rules of Practice and Procedure (“Rules of Practice”). Confidential and Extraordinarily Sensitive Information shall not be submitted electronically and should comply with 5 VAC 5-20-170, *Confidential information*, of the Rules of Practice. For the duration of the COVID-19 emergency, any person seeking to hand deliver and physically file or submit any pleading or other document shall contact the Clerk’s Office Document Control Center at (804) 371-9838 to arrange the delivery.

Pursuant to 5 VAC 5-20-140, *Filing and service*, of the Commission’s Rules of Practice, the Commission has directed that service on parties and the Commission’s Staff in this matter shall be accomplished by electronic means. Please refer to the Commission’s Order for Notice and Hearing for further instructions concerning Confidential or Extraordinarily Sensitive Information.

The Commission entered an Order for Notice and Hearing that, among other things, scheduled public hearings on Appalachian’s Petition. On April 20, 2021, at 10 a.m., the Commission will hold a telephonic hearing, with no witness present in the Commission’s courtroom, for the purpose of receiving the testimony of public witnesses. On April 16, 2021, any person desiring to offer testimony as a public witness shall provide to the Commission (a) your name, and (b) the telephone number that you wish the Commission to call during the hearing to receive your testimony. This information may be provided to the Commission in three ways: (i) by filing into a form on the Commission’s website at [sec.virginia.gov/pages/Webcasting](http://sec.virginia.gov/pages/Webcasting); (ii) by completing and emailing the PDF version of this form to [SCCinfo@sec.virginia.gov](mailto:SCCinfo@sec.virginia.gov); or (iii) by calling (804) 371-9141. This public witness hearing will be webcast at [sec.virginia.gov/pages/Webcasting](http://sec.virginia.gov/pages/Webcasting).

On April 21, 2021, at 10 a.m., either in the Commission’s second floor courtroom located in the Tyler Building, 1300 East Main Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219, or by electronic means, a hearing will be convened to receive testimony and evidence from the Company, any respondents, and the Commission’s Staff. Further details on this hearing will be provided by subsequent Commission Order or Hearing Examiner’s Ruling.

Electronic copies of the Petition and other supporting documents, as well as the Commission’s Order for Notice and Hearing, may be obtained by submitting a written request to counsel for the Company, Noelle J. Coates, Esquire, 3 James Center, American Electric Power Service Corporation, 1051 East Cary Street, Suite 1100, Richmond, Virginia 23219, or [ncoates@aep.com](mailto:ncoates@aep.com). Interested persons also may download unofficial copies from the Commission’s website: [sec.virginia.gov/pages/Case-Information](http://sec.virginia.gov/pages/Case-Information).

On or before April 14, 2021, any interested person may file comments on the Petition either electronically by following the instructions on the Commission’s website: [sec.virginia.gov/casecomments/Submit-Public-Comments](http://sec.virginia.gov/casecomments/Submit-Public-Comments) or by filing such comments with the Clerk of the State Corporation Commission, c/o Document Control Center, P.O. Box 2118, Richmond, Virginia 23218-2118. All comments shall refer to Case No. PUR-2020-00252.

On or before February 10, 2021, any person or entity wishing to participate as a respondent in this proceeding may do so by filing a notice of participation with the Clerk of the Commission at: [sec.virginia.gov/clk/cfiling](http://sec.virginia.gov/clk/cfiling) or Clerk of the State Corporation Commission, c/o Document Control Center, P.O. Box 2118, Richmond, Virginia 23218-2118. Such notice of participation shall include the email addresses of such parties or their counsel. A copy of the notice of participation as a respondent also must be sent to counsel for the Company. Pursuant to 5 VAC 5-20-80 B, *Participation as a respondent*, of the Commission’s Rules of Practice, any notice of participation shall set forth: (i) a precise statement of the interest of the respondent; (ii) a statement of the specific action sought to the extent then known; and (iii) the factual and legal basis for the action. All filings shall refer to Case No. PUR-2020-00252. For additional information about participation as a respondent, any person or entity should obtain a copy of the Commission’s Order for Notice and Hearing.

On or before February 10, 2021, each respondent may file with the Clerk of the Commission, either electronically or at the physical address set forth above, and serve on the Commission’s Staff, the Company, and all other respondents, any testimony and exhibits by which the respondent expects to establish its case, and each witness’s testimony shall include a summary not to exceed one page. In all filings, respondents shall comply with the Commission’s Rules of Practice, as modified by the Commission’s Order for Notice and Hearing, including, but not limited to: 5 VAC 5-20-140, *Filing and service*, and 5 VAC 5-20-240, *Prepared testimony and exhibits*. All filings shall refer to Case No. PUR-2020-00252.

Any documents filed in paper form with the Office of the Clerk of the Commission in this docket may use both sides of the paper. In all other respects, except as modified by the Commission’s Order for Notice and Hearing, all filings shall comply fully with the requirements of 5 VAC 5-20-150, *Copies and format*, of the Commission’s Rules of Practice.

The Commission’s Rules of Practice, the Company’s Petition, the Commission’s Order for Notice and Hearing, and other documents filed in this case may be viewed on the Commission’s website at: [sec.virginia.gov/pages/Case-Information](http://sec.virginia.gov/pages/Case-Information).

APPALACHIAN POWER COMPANY





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## Legals - City of Salem

**Notice is hereby given to** all interested persons that the Council of the City of Salem, at its regular meeting on Monday, January 11, 2021, at 6:30 p.m., in the Community Room of the Salem Civic Center, 1001 Roanoke Boulevard, in the City of Salem, Virginia, will hold a public hearing, pursuant to Sections 15.2-2204 and 15.2-2285 of the Code of Virginia, as amended, to consider approval of the following requests relative to the CODE OF THE CITY OF SALEM, VIRGINIA:

1) Request of Barry E. and Valerie T. Dick, property owners, for the issuance of a Special Exception Permit to allow a 1,288 SF detached garage on the property located at 1737 Amy Lane (Tax Map #212-1-10).

2) Request of Derbyshire Real Estate, applicant, and Sunset Ridge Holdings, LLC, property owner, for the issuance of a Special Exception Permit to allow a two-family dwelling on the property located at 703 E. Riverside Drive (Tax Map #232-2-9).

Copies of the proposed plans, ordinances or amendments may be examined in the Office of the City Planner, Community Development, 21 South Bruffey Street, Salem, Virginia.

At said hearing, parties in interest and citizens shall have an opportunity to be heard relative to the said requests.

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SALEM, VIRGINIA  
BY  
James E. Taliaferro, II  
Clerk of Council

## Legals - Craig County

### TRUSTEE SALE OF 99 Laurel Hill Pass, New Castle, VA 24127

In execution of the Deed of Trust dated September 5, 2017, in the original principal amount of \$125,190.00, recorded as Inst. 170000491, assigned as Inst. 200000407, in the Clerk's Office of the Circuit Court for the County of Craig, Virginia, default having occurred in the payment of the indebtedness thereby secured and at the request of the holder of the note, the undersigned, as Substitute Trustees, either of whom may act, will sell at public auction at the front entrance of the Circuit Court for the County of Craig on January 7, 2021, at 11:00 a.m., the property located at the above address and described as Lot 2, containing 4.026 acres, together with a 25 foot access easement as shown on plat recorded in Deed Book 114, pages 274-277, County of Craig. TERMS: CASH. PROPERTY SOLD AS IS WITH SPECIAL WARRANTY OF TITLE. A deposit of \$12,000.00 or 10% of the successful bid amount (whichever is lower) will be required immediately of the successful bidder, in cash, cashier's check or certified funds only payable to "BRIAN DOLAN LAW OFFICES, TRUSTEE", balance due within 15 days from date of sale. No personal checks accepted. Sale is subject to post sale confirmation and audit of the status of the loan including, but not limited to, determination of whether the borrower filed for and obtained bankruptcy protection, entered into any repayment agreement, reinstated or paid off the loan prior to the sale. In any such event, or if trustee is unable to complete the sale, or if it is set aside or not fully completed for any reason except purchaser's default, the sale shall be null and void, and the purchaser's sole remedy, in law or equity, shall be the return of the deposit without interest. Upon purchaser's default, the deposit shall be forfeited and the property resold at the risk and costs of the defaulting purchaser. Sale is subject to all prior liens, easements, restrictions, covenants, reservations and conditions, if any, of record, as well as inchoate liens and any other matters which would be disclosed by an accurate survey or inspection of the premises. Real estate taxes will be adjusted to the date of sale. All costs of conveyance, deed, examination of title, recording charges, grantor's tax and possession will be at the expense of the purchaser. All risks of casualty immediately pass to the successful bidder. Time is of the essence. Additional terms may be announced at the time of sale. THIS IS A COMMUNICATION FROM A DEBT COLLECTOR. ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. For Information Contact: Brian Dolan Law Offices, PLLC, and G. Benny Moore Substitute Trustee(s) 12610 Patrick Henry Dr., Ste. C, Newport News, VA 23602; (757) 320-0255

Publish On: December 23 & 30, 2020

## Legals - Montgomery County

### ORDER OF PUBLICATION

Commonwealth of Virginia VA. CODE § 8.01-316  
**Case No. JJ004492-01-00 & JJ004492-02-00**  
RADFORD J&DR- JUVENILE DIVISION Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court Commonwealth of Virginia, in re BOWLING, ALAYNA DAWN RENEE HILL, STEPHANIE /v. BOWLING, DAVID H.

The object of this suit is to: LOCATE PARENTS.

It is ORDERED that DAVID H. BOWLING appear at the above-named Court and protect his or her interests on or before 1/19/2021 2:00pm.

11/16/2020  
Sally Davis Clerk

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# MONTGOMERY SPORTS

## 2020 memorable year for sports, NOT; the Marty awards

At the end of the year, sports editors try to look back at what were the memorable sports stories. This year is no different or is it? Sports will never be the same after COVID-19 has taken its toll on the world as we know it.

Almost 280 days have passed since we last saw high school competition in any sport. I feel sorry for the student-athletes who have sat at home and wondered what could have been. Also, kids under the age of 11 have been in limbo. There has been no T-ball, flag football or basketball.

Most of our recreation centers have all been closed during this pandemic.

COVID has forced organizers to scratch their heads over new sanitizing protocols and do things they would have never thought about.

I hurt because of the lack of sports.

College football games have become scrimmages with no fans,

and journalists have had to learn how to cover schools without even being in the same location. I have seen television commentators call games from secondary locations while learning to cover the competition via Zoom.

Zoom has also become the new way to conduct interviews.

I never even knew what Zoom was until this year. Emailing questions to coaches has also become the new norm. I don't know if we will ever go back to in-person, face-to-face press conferences.

Positive COVID cases have taken down sporting events despite the fact we were able to see college and professional football. College basketball has also been drastically affected by the virus. But we were able to see some games and provide some positive vibes in this chaos.

Typically, I usually take this time of the year to present the "Marty Awards" to those in the sports world. Again, COVID-19



### From the Sidelines

Marty Gordon

has made this difficult. The "Marty's" are given to sports figures and programs for making a difference in the past year.

Let me first say, I was one of the many individuals who had COVID-19. I was blessed that it was not the worst like many people in our community. For the months afterward, I continued to lose my sense of taste and smell. In the past two weeks, those have gotten back to normal.

But the year has taken its toll on everyone including myself. My hope is that the New Year will be better and that we will see sports competition. In so many ways, we need a distraction.

So, here are the "Marty's" for

2020:

The Rusty Wallace Racing Experience has saved Motor Mile Speedway and Dragway. The Radford facility had been scheduled to be closed this coming year, but thanks to a management agreement, we will have local racing this spring and summer.

Matt Hagan deserves a Marty award for picking up another NHRA Funny Car World Championship.

Virginia Tech football player Khalil Herbert is another Marty award winner after putting together a great season on the heels of transferring from the University of Kansas.

Virginia Tech Athletic Director Whit Babcock receives a Marty for cutting corners and maybe making the biggest decision in keeping football coach Justin Fuente.

A Marty goes to Shane Beamer for being hired as the head coach at the University of South Carolina. Make us proud, Shane.

A Marty goes to Radford High School's Connor Lytton who signed a letter of intent to play college football at Boston College. Make us proud, Connor.

A Marty goes to Nick Yopp and the Christiansburg Recreation Department, who managed to pull off a "Trout Rodeo" this past summer honoring the late Tony Huddleston.

A Marty is given to Auburn High School's boys' basketball team for being named co-state champions for a shortened season.

A Marty goes to the Radford High School boys' basketball team for another state title run.

A special Marty award goes to all the athletic trainers, doctors and medical personnel who have been working overtime to put student-athletes back on the court, field and/or the mat. Thank you.

Let's just hope we will see sports in some form or fashion in the next few weeks.

## Hagan's Funny Car championship one of top stories of 2020

Riner's Matt Hagan and his "demon-possessed" Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Redeye have earned the 2020 National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Drag Racing Series Funny Car World Championship title and the national event win at the season-ending Dodge NHRA Finals presented by Pennzoil in Las Vegas.

The title marked Hagan's third championship crown after wins in 2011 and 2014 and was the sixth Funny Car class victory for the Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) team in 18 years.

The victory and championship make Hagan's story possibly the top story of the year, at least in active sports despite fighting a pandemic this year.

From the No.-2 position on the eliminations ladder, the Montgomery County native earned his third Wally trophy in a season dominated by the DSR stable of HEMI®-powered Funny Cars. The DSR foursome of Hagan, Tommy Johnson Jr., Jack Beckman and Ron Capps finished 1-2-3-4 atop the Funny Car standings and combined for a NHRA season "sweep" in which a Dodge Char-

ger SRT Hellcat won every national event to extend the team's undefeated streak to a record 14 consecutive victories since October 2019.

"It's been just an unbelievable season," said Hagan. "My guys have put an unbelievable car behind me with Pennzoil, Dodge SRT and Mopar. Everybody who supports us. It's great to win for Camping World and their first championship. My guys have worked so hard all season long. I can't say enough about them, and I thank them for all they did. Three wins, a championship, it's just special.



This past month, Riner's Matt Hagan was crowned the 2020 NHRA Funny Car World Champion.

I can't wait for next season."

But it might have been his success off the track

that gives Hagan something positive to watch going into the new year.

His hemp growing op-

eration is completing its first year and seems well-placed in the expanding world of CBD oil.

## Virginia Tech Football announces 2020 team awards

Head coach Justin Fuente and the Virginia Tech football coaching staff announced the Hokies' team awards for the 2020 season on Wednesday.

The following awards were voted on by the players:

- Most Valuable Player – Running back Khalil Herbert
- Outstanding Defensive Lineman – Amaré Barno
- Outstanding Linebacker – Rayshard Ashby

- Outstanding Defensive Back – Safety Divine Deablo
- Outstanding Offensive Lineman – Christian Darisaw
- Outstanding Offensive Receiver – Tré Turner

- Outstanding Offensive Back – Running back Khalil Herbert
- Outstanding Specialist – Kicker Brian Johnson

The following awards were voted on by the coaching staff:

- Outstanding Senior Award – Safety Divine Deablo
- John William Schneider Award – Punter Oscar Bradburn

Given in memory of former player William Schneider, who was killed in an automobile crash. It goes to a player who excels in athletics, scholarship and leadership.

- Paul Torgersen Award – Linebacker Rayshard Ashby

Given in honor of former Tech President Paul Torgersen, who served the university with distinction for three decades in a variety of capacities. The award goes to a player

who shows a commitment to hard work and great effort every time he takes the field.

- Williams – Moss Award – Running back Khalil Herbert

Named in honor of John E. Williams, a former dean of the college, and Joseph S. Moss, a former player and coach at Tech. The award goes to the player who demonstrates the highest quality of leadership and character.

- Paul Frederick Cobb Award – Tackle Tyrell Smith

This award is given in memory of former Tech player Freddie Cobb, who was awarded the Navy Cross for heroism in Vietnam. It goes to the most spirited player.

- Lawrence R. White Award – Defensive tackle Jarrod Hewitt

Given in honor of the late Lawrence White, a former Tech lineback-

er who excelled in the weight room and was a positive role model for all Tech football players. It is given to the team's most outstanding strength and conditioning athlete.

- Wes Worsham Award – Kicker Brian Johnson

Named for longtime Tech supporter Wes Worsham, this award is given to a player who exceeds expectations and surprises everyone with his performance.

- Edward G. Ferrell Award – Offensive linemen Austin Cannon and Zachariah Hoyt

Given in honor of the late Eddie Ferrell, whose hard work, sense of humor, devotion and unselfishness touched thousands of athletes during his 28-year career as a trainer at Tech. It is given to the player who best exemplifies hard work and unselfishness.



Running back Khalil Herbert was named the Hokies' Most Valuable Player for 2020.

## Despite the times, Hokies give back to NRV community

Though the Hokies wished it could have been in person, they had to adjust to the times due to CoVID-19 protocols and change their annual event with the Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley that takes place around the holiday season.

After hosting the event inside the Hahn Hurst Basketball Practice Center last December with over 15 families in attendance and gift openings taking place, it was a little quieter this

December with there being no young children's joyful voices being heard and emphatic laughs being multiplied with one another. However, it still was a worthwhile gathering for the team Sunday night, as the players wrapped up presents that were bought to give to the children in an effort to brighten their holiday season.

"We had a great time wrapping the presents for them," guard Wabis Bede said. "It makes the holidays 10 times

better when you're giving because that is the whole point this time of year. We hope they love their presents."

The Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley is a non-profit service organization with the mission of implementing individual and social change for a violence-free community. The organization provides programs and services to adult and child victims of sexual and domestic violence.



VT's men's basketball team had to make adjustments this year for their annual event with the Women's Resource Center of the NRV.



# Christian Darrisaw earns AP All-America honors

Virginia Tech offensive tackle Christian Darrisaw was named to the Associated Press second-team All-America squad on Monday.

Darrisaw had previously earned a spot on the CBS Sports/247Sports first-team All-America squad. The Upper Marlboro, Md., native has also been named a second-team All-America selection by The Athletic and PFF College for his play during the 2020 season.

A first-team All-ACC selection, Darrisaw started 10 of the Hokies' contests at left tackle where he anchored the left side of Tech's offensive

line and was part of a blocking unit that helped propel the squad to six 250-yard rushing games. The Hokies registered 27 rushing touchdowns, the squad's best total in a decade. The offensive line paved the way for running back Khalil Herbert, who posted six 100-yard rushing games in 2020.

Darrisaw was named the ACC Offensive Lineman of the Week following Tech's 38-31 victory at Duke (10/5). He becomes the first Tech player to garner a spot on an AP All-America squad since linebacker Tremaine Edmunds, who earned third-team status following the 2017 season.



Tech offensive tackle Christian Darrisaw has added another honor to his growing resume.

# Tech coaches announce schedules for men's and women's golf

Virginia Tech men's golf head coach Brian Sharp and women's golf head coach Carol Robertson Monday released the spring schedules for their respective teams.

The Virginia Tech men's golf team will compete seven times this spring prior to the ACC Championship. The Hokies will open their 2021 campaign at the Camp Creek Seminole Invitational hosted by Florida State. The three-day tournament is set for Jan. 17-19 at Camp Creek Golf Club in Watersound,

Fla.

Tech then continues up the east coast with the George Washington's Oldfield Invitational, Feb. 8-9. The two-day event will be held at Oldfield Golf Club in Bluffton, S.C.

After a three-week break in competition, the Hokies tee it up at famed Pinehurst No. 2 for the Wake Forest Invitational. The Demon Deacons will host their tournament, March 1-2. Pinehurst No. 2, widely known as golf course designer Donald Ross's masterpiece, is the

first U.S. Open anchor site, and is scheduled to host the championship again in 2024.

Two weeks later, Tech returns to the General Hackler Intercollegiate hosted by Coastal Carolina, March 14-16, at The Dunes Club in Myrtle Beach, S.C. The Hokies close out March at the Tar Heel Intercollegiate (March 27-28) at UNC's Finley Golf Course in Chapel Hill, N.C.

Once again, Tech is entered into the field at the Augusta Haskins Award

Invitational. Forest Hills Golf Club will serve as the host course for the two-day tournament (April 3-4) in Augusta, Ga.

The final tune-up for the ACC Championship will be the Stitch Intercollegiate hosted by NC State, April 9-10, at MacGregor Downs Country Club in Cary, N.C.

For the first time in its history, the ACC Championship will be held at Capital City Club (Crabapple Course) in Atlanta. The four-day championship runs April 23-26 and will debut a new format. Three rounds of stroke play on the first two days will cut the field to the four lowest scoring teams for the semifinals and finals of match play to determine the ACC champion. The format change was made to more closely mirror the NCAA Championship.

The NCAA Regional round is May 17-19 with the NCAA Championship to be contested at Grayhawk Golf Club in Scottsdale, Ariz., May 28-June 2.

Robertson announced that the 2021 spring schedule for the women's golf team will feature five regular-season tournaments capped by a match-play event hosted by Vir-

ginia.

"We are all looking forward to seeing this schedule be put into action," Robertson said. "The challenges we are currently facing have been frustrating, while also bringing forth extra excitement to compete again as a team. This team has continued to be focused on their games and will be ready and honored in February to compete once again for the Hokies."

The Hokies will open their sixth season of competition at the Heroes Ladies Intercollegiate hosted by Purdue. The three-day tournament is set for Feb. 7-9 at The Founders Club in Sarasota, Fla.

For the first time in program history, Tech will compete at the College of Charleston's Palmetto Spring Intercollegiate. Turtle Point Golf Course in Kiawah Island, S.C., will welcome the tournament field Feb. 21-22.

Tech returns to the Valpar Augusta Invitational, March 13-14 for the first time since 2018. The Hokies tied for sixth in their most recent appearance at the tournament, which is hosted by Augusta at the Forest Hills Golf Club.

To conclude the stroke-

play portion of its regular season, Tech will compete at the Clemson Invitational, March 26-28, held at The Reserve at Lake Keowee in Lake Keowee, S.C.

The penultimate event prior to the ACC Championship will be the Cavalier Match Play hosted by Virginia, April 6-7, at the recently-renovated Birdwood Golf Course.

Originally scheduled to debut its format change in 2020, the ACC Championship rolls out its new format at Sedgefield Country Club in Greensboro, N.C., on April 15-18. Three rounds of stroke play on the first two days will cut the field to the lowest scoring four teams for the semifinals and finals of match play to determine the ACC champion.

The NCAA Regional round is May 10-12 with the NCAA Championship to be contested at Grayhawk Golf Club in Scottsdale, Ariz., May 21-26. Tech has competed in the NCAA Regionals twice (2018 and 2019) under Robertson with Amanda Hollandsworth advancing to the NCAA Championship as an individual in 2019 and finishing fifth nationally.

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