



## Virginia Tech intends to help students following Town of Blacksburg's act of generosity



A Blacksburg Transit bus on Virginia Tech's campus.

FILE PHOTO

As a result of the CARES Act funding the Town of Blacksburg/Blacksburg Transit (BT) received in 2020 from the Federal Transit Administration, the town and Virginia Tech have agreed to a contract revision allowing the town to credit the university \$4 million for payments not needed to support transit services during this time period.

This credit will help offset the university's contractual obligations in the current year and allows Virginia Tech to provide one semester of relief to students in the form of not having

to pay the mandatory transportation services fee for the spring semester. The credit is pending approval from the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors.

"We are extraordinarily grateful to the Town of Blacksburg for, yet again, being such a great partner and working with us for the sake of everyone in our community," said Senior Vice President and Chief Business Officer Dwayne Pinkney. "The town did not have to do what it did, but in doing so, demonstrated its support and partnership with the university and provided us with an opportunity to

help our students directly. We believe that passing this relief to our students would be the right thing to do."

"Blacksburg Transit is a valuable community resource that greatly benefits the university, the town, and the region," said Blacksburg Town Manager Marc Verniel. "The CARES Act funds helped ensure the financial stability of our transit system during these challenging times. When we learned that there would be a surplus in Blacksburg Transit's budget due to the CARES Act funding, we felt that it was appropriate to provide this credit back to the university, which has been the town's long-time partner in providing Blacksburg Transit service."

Full-time students enrolled in Blacksburg currently pay \$96 per semester for the mandatory Transportation Services Fee, which entitles a student unlimited BT bus service and supports alternative transportation programs at the university.

To provide all Blacksburg-based students relief from that charge, the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors would need to vote and approve a resolution allowing the university to do so. The board will take up this matter no later than its March 21-22 meeting.

If approved by the board, the relief would take the form of a credit on a student's spring semester bill soon thereafter.

## Aspiring drone pilots get a little help earning their wings

Sarah Macey is the training and operations manager at the Virginia Tech Drone Park. Her driving motivation is to make it easier for students who are interested in drones to explore their curiosity and learn to fly capably and safely. The park's latest initiative is offering small grants to help students get more serious about drones by bringing them closer to a key certification.

A Remote Pilot Certificate from the Federal Aviation Administration is the drone equivalent of a driver's license. It's widely known as a Part 107 license — shorthand for 14 CFR Part 107, the federal regulations that cover commercial flights of small drones — and it's required to fly a drone for business or commercial purposes, nonprofit work or education. Under Virginia Tech's drone policy, it's also required for flights on Virginia Tech property or with aircraft the university owns.

"The Part 107 certificate is necessary for so many things," Macey said. "One of my goals at the drone park is to look for ways to support students here, both



Former and current drone park interns Mohsen Roghanizad, Luis Pol, and Emily Pence fly in the Virginia Tech Drone Park, which, at 85 feet, is the tallest in the country. All three got their Part 107 certificates during their internships.

through things like flight training, and education about drones and safety, but also through opportunities that can build their resume and help them in the future, like getting their Part 107."

The certificate requires pass-

ing a knowledge exam that covers basic aviation principles, airspace classification, safety practices, federal regulations for drone use and how to interpret the cryptic avia-

See **Drone pilots**, page 3

## NRV passenger rail update: \$30 million in budget; Virginia House authorizes authority

Passenger rail service to the New River Valley got some good news recently as Governor Ralph Northam has included more than \$30 million in his proposed 2021 budget to help fund the service and the Virginia House last week approved House Bill 1893, which would create a new NRV Rail Authority to oversee the project.

The plan for the authority is now headed to the state senate for its approval before the bill lands on the governor's desk for his signature.

The Town of Christiansburg purchased a site for a platform/station several years ago across from the Christiansburg Aquatic Center. Grading for an overflow parking lot was

completed last year, but no other work has been done on the site that lies along a double-tracked area of rail.

The idea of extending passenger rail service to the New River Valley has been on the table for almost 10 years, but the plan has hit several roadblocks, one of which has been Norfolk Southern's operation of freight service using the same rail lines on which passenger service would travel. A proposed study to look at improvements necessary to make passenger service feasible was halted shortly before COVID-19.

State transportation officials are now optimistic that the study could be completed later this year.

## County, Radford awarded funds for emergency food and shelter

Montgomery County and the City of Radford have been awarded federal funds made available through the Department of Homeland Security Federal Emergency Management Agency under the Emergency Food and Shelter National Board Program.

Montgomery County has been chosen to receive \$27,126, and the City of Radford has been chosen to receive \$6,075. Additional state set-aside funding is available for agencies in both the county and Radford City.

A local board will determine how the funds awarded to the two governmental agencies will be distributed among the emergency food and shelter programs run by local service agencies in the area.

Under the terms of the grant from the national board, local agencies chosen to receive funds must be private voluntary nonprofits or units of government, be eligible to receive federal funds, have an accounting system, practice nondiscrimination, have demonstrated the capability to deliver emergency food and/or shelter programs and, if they are a private voluntary organization, have a voluntary board. Qualifying agencies are urged to apply.

Public or private voluntary agencies interested in applying for Emergency Food and Shelter Program funds should contact the United Way of the New River Valley at 540-381-2066 for an application. The deadline for applications to be received is February 10.

## RU professor's work helps identify hazardous online user-generated content



RU professor Richard Gruss' work helps ID online third-party product liability.

Since the dawn of the Internet, web users have raised questions about who is responsible for a website's third-party content.

It began in the early 1990s with sites publishing user-generated content on bulletin boards. It continues today with social media platforms, like Twitter and Facebook, and online buying and shopping sites such as eBay and Amazon.

It's not only an issue of right and wrong but also a legal conundrum.

In the late 1990s, "legal scholars began to wonder whether Amazon.com was responsible for products from third-party sellers that were shoddy, illegal, unsafe or misrepresented in the product descriptions," said Radford University Assistant Professor of Management Richard Gruss.

"Opinion showed signs of converging on 'yes' just last year," Gruss said, "when a California appeals court ruled that Amazon.com was legally liable for defective products sold on its site by third-party sellers."

That ruling presented a tremendous

challenge for Amazon and others that relied on third-party, user-generated content. How could they hire enough people to monitor the enormous amount of content?

Each day, Amazon sells more than 12 million products, each with descriptive text that may range from a couple of sentences to multiple paragraphs. Social media have the same issue, most recently brought to light with Twitter's rejection of political extremists on its platform. Twitter users send more than 500 million messages a day — roughly 200 billion tweets a year — making it impossible, it seems, for a team of readers to catch all hazardous or problematic content.

The solution, Gruss said, is a solid working relationship between humans and machines.

"It's just not feasible to hire a team of readers given the workload, so we need reliable automated methods of discovering critical information hidden within mountains of text," said Gruss, whose educational background in language, computer science and text ana-

lytics makes him uniquely qualified for this research.

"But when the potential damage from a false negative is high, it's not a good idea to rely entirely on automated methods," Gruss said. "Some optimal combination of machine pre-processing and human judgment is called for."

For nearly a decade, Gruss has been collaborating with scholars from Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, San Diego State University and Virginia Tech to find a solution.

"We applied methods from natural language processing, information theory and supervised machine learning to develop models for identifying safety hazards in Amazon.com reviews," Gruss said. "We went on to demonstrate their efficacy in finding hazards in children's toys, baby cribs, dishwashers and over-the-counter medicines."

Gruss and his fellow researchers recently began an initiative to augment these back-end statistical methods with a browser extension that alerts shoppers

See **Hazardous**, page 2



# UPCOMING EVENTS

## Thursday, Feb. 4:

*Radford Army Ammunition Plant (RFAAP) Commander's Community Meeting* - This is a Facebook Live event from 6:30 to 8 p.m. [www.facebook.com/RadfordArmyAmmunitionPlant/](http://www.facebook.com/RadfordArmyAmmunitionPlant/).  
These meetings are an opportunity to learn about RFAAP modernization and environmental projects, environmental compliance and corrective actions. The meeting is open to the public. For questions relating to the meeting, contact Charlie Saks at 540 731 5785 or visit the RFAAP website at [www.jmc.army.mil/Radford/Radford-Default.aspx](http://www.jmc.army.mil/Radford/Radford-Default.aspx) then "Ask the Commander" in the lower left margin of the home page.

*American Legion Meeting* - American Legion Harvey-Howe-Carper Post 30 will meet at 7 p.m. at the VFW Post Home on 102 Watts St. in Radford. In case of heavy snow or ice, the meeting will be cancelled. For further information, call 250-2283 or 239-9864

## Through Saturday, Feb. 6:

*Make a Valentine for local adult care facilities* - At the Meadowbrook

Public Library. The library has supplies to make a card in a bag. Call to request the bag, and library staff will deliver it curbside. Place the Valentine in the bag that it came in and return it in the book drop at Meadowbrook Public Library by February 6. This will give the library enough time to quarantine and deliver.

## Sunday, Feb. 7:

*Chalk artist at Christ Wesleyan Church* - Christ Wesleyan Church invites everyone to a special service featuring Chalk Artist Evangelist, the Rev. Dwight Haynes. This unique ministry will feature joyous music and a beautifully illustrated Bible message in full color on a large canvas, along with amazing back-light effects. The service will take place at 11 a.m. at the church, 525 Harkrader St. in Christiansburg.  
For more information call 540-998-8788 or read more online at [www.ChalkTalks.net](http://www.ChalkTalks.net).

## Tuesday, Feb. 9:

*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.

## Wednesday, Feb. 10:

*A Beginner's Approach to Garden Photography at noon* - This is a Zoom presentation at noon by Robert E. Lyons, Professor Emeritus at the University of Delaware, former Director of the Hahn Horticulture Garden and a faculty member of the Virginia Tech Horticulture Department.  
This talk is all about using your eyes, your mind and your camera to capture moments in your personal landscapes. They may be your gardens, vignettes from your travels, seasonal records of your favorite plants and/or features of landscape designs.  
The presentation content is example-driven and provides understandable and uncomplicated information to create aesthetically pleasing images in a relatively short period of time.  
While equipment details and

camera mechanics will be mentioned, they will not dominate the presentation. Instead, the impact and exploitation of prevailing light, elements of photographic composition, the power of mastering depth of field and developing a personal style will be emphasized.

This presentation is particularly relevant for and geared towards early stage photographers who use a variety of devices including DSLRs and mobile/cell phones or both.  
Register online at [virginiatech.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_4Ymy3HGvrxExkxf](http://virginiatech.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4Ymy3HGvrxExkxf).

## Saturday, Feb. 13:

*Dialogue on Race 2021 Winter Summit* - This event is being held from 10:00 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. online on Zoom or virtually as all Dialogue on Race events will be until further notice. The keynote speakers will be Dr. Abraham B. Hardee III, and Dr. Pete Guerra.  
Subjects include the year in masks, the COVID Pandemic, race and racism, and vaccination and vaccines: What to know and do. Register at [us02web.zoom.us/join/register/WN\\_Jbi-908JMSgq1264cQKX8Eg](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/WN_Jbi-908JMSgq1264cQKX8Eg).

## Ongoing: Throughout February

*StoryWalk* - All through the month of February at the Christiansburg Library. Exercise your brain and body as you read and walk the trail. Begin at the library at the College Street entrance of Downtown Park. This month's book is The Big Red Barn.

## Through Friday, March 5:

*Glencoe Mansion "2020 in Review" Art Show* - The exhibit features the works of artists Cheryl Mackian, the Radford Photo Club and Teresa Regil, all of whose works appeared in the gallery in 2020. The exhibit is now open and is free to the public.

## Through Saturday, April 24:

*'Unbearable Beauty' Exhibit at Moss Arts Center* - Open each Wednesday from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. and on Saturdays from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. through Saturday, April 24. The exhibit is a demonstration of the devastation human activity has wreaked on the environment. The exhibit is free and open to the public.

# Pack 145 Cub Scouts keep Pinewood Derby tradition alive

The Pack 145 Cub Scouts of St. Paul United Methodist Church in Christiansburg suffered a big disappointment in 2020 when their Pinewood Derby races were cancelled because of the coronavirus.

On Saturday and Sunday, though, January 23 and 24, the Scouts revived what has across 68 years of competition developed into one of their favorite activities when they raced and showed off the workmanship of their handmade race cars with the 2021 Pinewood Derby. The derby was held in the activity building of St. Paul United Methodist Church.

Each Cub Scout, aged 5 to 10 years old, was provided a kit with a wood block, plastic wheels and metal axles. With an adult's help, Cubs cut, shaped, sanded, painted and decorated their race cars.

The Cubs raced in small groups within their ranks and dens to allow for safe physical distancing. The Pinewood Derby was live streamed to family members who would have normally

been in attendance cheering on the youngsters. Pack leaders took photos of the experience and the race cars to share with the families.

Cubs raced their driverless wooden cars down Pack 145's 43-foot long sloped track. The racers used the placement of weights up to five ounces to allow gravity to power their race cars from a starting gate, down an incline along aluminum rails to the finish line.

Lion Cub Charles Goodman won the overall pack championship among the first-place winners. He was the youngest to win in Pack 145's history. The Lions program for kindergartners was developed only two years ago by the national Boy Scouts of America, and these races marked the Lions' first opportunity to show off their cars.

The top three fastest racers for each Cub Scout rank were awarded ribbons:

Lion Cubs (Kindergarten, age 5): 1. Charles Goodman 2. Simeon Geromel 3. Jack Phillips.



**Pack 145 Den #3 Bear Cub Scouts display their handmade Pinewood Derby race cars and show their medals. Pictured left to right are Ezekiel Overton, Kenny Pendleton, Liam Worthington-Deeble, Emery Warner, Isaac Hutchins and Henry Rust.**

Tiger Cubs (First grade, age 6): 1. Breiton Hackworth 2. Arcadia Pendleton 3. Gavin Vellines.

Wolf Cubs (Second grade, age 7): 1. Lane Harmon, 2. Charles Phillips 3. Robert Crookshanks.

Bear Cubs (Third grade, age 8): 1. Henry Rust, 2. Emery Warner 3. Isaac Hutchins.

Webelos (Fourth grade, age 9): 1. Alasdair Hackworth and Lilly Withers 3. Draco Custer.

Arrow of Lighters (Fifth grade, age 10): 1. Kellen

Mitchell 2. Christopher Metz 3. Trenton Gurnee.

The designs and styles of the Pinewood Derby cars were evaluated by a secret panel of judges who awarded show medals in various categories to the scouts' cars:

Lion Cubs: NASCAR Ready – Charles Goodman; Most Unique – Jack Phillips; Most Creative – Bree Nestruck; Best Wedge Car - Simeon Geromel; Best Cub Spirit – Westin Malcom; Most Detailed – Tristin Worthington-Deeble.

Tiger Cubs: Best Scout



**Pack 145 Lion Cub Scout Charles Goodman was the overall Pack 145 Pinewood Derby champion.**

Pride – Gavin Vellines; Most Artistic – Breiton Hackworth; Most Awesome – Arcadia Pendleton.

Wolf Cubs: Judges' Favorite - Charles Phillips; Most Patriotic – Lane Harmon; Best Themed Car – Robert Crookshanks; Best Imagination – Jed Metzgar.

Bear Cubs: Classic Car Design – Kenny Pendleton; Eye-Catching Design – Henry Rust; Best Craftsmanship – Ezekiel Overton; Most Decals – Isaac Hutchins; Fast and Furious – Emery Warner; Shiniest

Paint Job – Liam Worthington-Deeble.

Webelos: Innovative Design – Nicholas Horning; Classic Car Design – Alasdair Hackworth; Best Workmanship – Christopher Metz; Coolest Design - Mason Malcom; Best Colors – Lilly Withers; Hot Rod – Draco Custer.

Arrow of Lighters: Sporty-Looking – Trenton Gurnee; Coolest Paint Job – Joshua Stoddard; Best Use of Color – Zathan Burton; Most Aerodynamic – Kellen Mitchell.

# Hazardous

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to suspicious language within the reviews for products in which they may be interested.

"This new sequence of experiments is designed to determine the optimal way to present information to the shopper," Gruss said. "We hope to zero in on the ideal collaboration between computer algorithms and human judgment,

and in the process, we hope to promote public safety."

This system, Gruss said, can have broader application for any hosted content.

"For example, our models could be used to identify inflammatory misinformation that should be automatically removed," he said. "For borderline cases, language

that might be problematic could be highlighted, summarized or aggregated for the user in real time, and they can use their judgment, be better informed and more wary as to the possible dangers."

The identification and removal of erroneous information, "especially those hazardous to physical and mental health, that are posted

on Internet sites, is undoubtedly one of the challenging problems of the 21st century," said Radford University Davis College of Business and Economics Dean Joy Bhadury. "Dr. Gruss's research, based on using natural language processing and artificial intelligence tools, represents a feasible and pragmatic approach to tack-

ling this immense problem. As one of the most active researchers within the Davis College, Dr. Gruss's work underscores both the need for and the significant societal impact of the scholarly efforts of our faculty."

-Chad Osborne, Radford University

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE

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53			54					55				
56		57				58			59			
60					61	62			63			
			64						65			

**CLUES ACROSS**  
1. Baseball team  
11. Actor Jared  
12. Fragrance  
16. Von Bismarck, Iron Chancellor  
17. Nordic God  
18. Weighed down  
19. Coppola's mob epic  
24. Nanogram  
25. Famed street artist  
26. Identifier  
27. 23rd letter of the Greek alphabet  
28. In addition  
29. Micturated  
30. Shock  
31. Accept  
33. Allotment  
34. Eras  
38. Emerges  
39. Cape Verde capital  
40. United Arab Emirates capital  
43. Small amount  
44. Back of the foot  
45. Pakrit language  
49. Home of "60 Minutes"  
50. Condemn  
51. Ailed  
53. Elevated railroad  
54. Rebelliousness  
56. Ancient Greek city  
58. Clothing company (abbr.)  
59. Member of the cabbage family  
60. Softens or smooths  
63. Mass of coagulated liquid  
64. Problems  
65. Irish Republic  
**CLUES DOWN**  
1. Dress  
2. Deadly  
3. Says aloud  
4. PT Anderson film "\_\_\_ Nights"  
5. Teacher (abbr.)  
6. Anesthetized  
7. Anno Domini (in the year of Our Lord)  
8. \_\_\_ and behold  
9. French young women (abbr.)  
10. Scorch  
13. Notre Dame  
14. Express disapproval  
15. Cars need these  
20. Not off  
21. Unit of mass  
22. You  
23. Concealed  
27. Parent-teacher organizations  
29. Approximately 3.14159  
30. Chinese conception of poetry  
31. Satisfaction  
32. College degree  
33. Formerly Ceylon: \_\_\_ Lanka  
34. Effeminate  
35. Something to solve  
36. Horses like these  
37. Intelligence organization  
38. Blood type  
40. Exhibition  
41. Poisonous plant  
42. Aluminum  
44. Possesses  
45. Penetrate w/ a sharp instrument  
46. Ring-shaped objects  
47. Speaks at church  
48. Form in the mind  
50. Selectors  
51. Probability of default  
52. 2001 Spielberg film  
54. Where to get a sandwich  
55. Newts  
57. Modus operandi  
61. Exists  
62. Politico-economic union

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# Farmers, lawmakers support state budget amendment to increase ag research spending

A proposed amendment to the Virginia state budget requesting additional funding for critical agricultural research has gained bipartisan support in the 2021 Virginia General Assembly.

Sponsored by Del. David L. Bulova, D-Fairfax, and Sen. Emmett W. Hanger Jr., R-Mount Solon, the proposal would allocate \$1.92 million to improve technological systems and employee retention across all Agency 229 bodies.

Agency 229 provides funding to Virginia Cooperative Extension and the Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station. Through these entities, the agency supports scientists and other specialists who conduct innovative agricultural research at the VAES and its 11 Agricultural Research Extension Centers (AREC). Corresponding data from that research is disseminated to extension agents, who then share the information with farmers and agricultural businesses.

The amendment requests \$500,000 to modernize equipment at agency facilities. The upgrades would improve the efficiency of collecting and processing complex data, studying samples and distributing results.

M.L. Everett Jr., a Southampton County cotton and peanut producer,

said the Agency 229 research data helps Virginia farmers increase their yields, and local research has improved cotton, peanut, soybean and wheat production in Southeast Virginia.

“Their research certainly gives us an advantage as farmers, and without it we aren’t afforded the opportunity to improve our bottom lines,” said Everett, who serves on the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation board of directors.

An additional \$350,000 in one-time funding to expand Internet connectivity across agency offices to improve outward communication also is proposed, as well as \$200,000 in ongoing support for the technology.

Everett said securing full funding outlined in the amendment is critical. “The real take-home point is that these additional monies would keep Virginia farmers on the cutting edge of new technologies and agronomic practices that would keep us competitive in the world markets, help us grow our crops as efficiently as possible and allow us to maximize production.”

Accomack County vegetable and grain producer David Hickman explained the research also is instrumental in providing information to help farmers improve on best man-

agement practices.

“We’re seeing a tremendous return in environmental benefits due to the work being done by these agencies,” said Hickman, who also serves on the VFBF board. “Extension and the ARECs are doing great work in managing nutrient runoff and identifying the proper use of pesticides so farmers aren’t negatively impacting the environment.”

The remaining funds would be allocated to Cooperative Extension to recruit and retain agents with \$470,000 reserved for hiring employees and \$400,000 for competitive salary adjustments among current employees.

Everett said Southampton County, like many Virginia localities, has seen a high turnover rate among extension agents in recent years. He noted that without the additional funding in the state budget, the trend would likely continue.

“It’s hard for extension, with the budget they have, to hold onto these great agents we desperately need,” Everett said. “Farmers struggle with turnover all the time, and we’re always wondering when our agent is going to get snapped up by a company offering better pay. At the end of the day, the ones who pay for it are the farmers.”

## VT food, nutrition expert: COVID-19 pandemic exacerbates concerns of childhood obesity nationwide

Growing concerns surrounding childhood obesity in the U.S. have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic between 2020 and 2021. Research shows that one in five children struggle with obesity nationwide and more experience overweight. Virginia Tech professor Vivica Kraak says the combination of obesity, food insecurity, and COVID have increased children’s risk of poor diet quality and increased obesity.

A recognized expert in U.S. food and nutrition policy, Kraak says that nearly 29 million American adults and 12 million children are at risk of food insecurity, especially families from racially and ethnically diverse communities who also have a higher risk of obesity and chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes that may be complicated by COVID-19.

“The combination of not eating enough healthy foods and healthy beverages, such as water, low-fat or non-fat milk, and being more sedentary by spending hours at home in front of a screen and not taking physical activity breaks may increase children’s obesity risk,” says Kraak.

Kraak also says that children and teens may also be less physically active, especially during the winter months,

which increases their risk for weight gain and obesity.

“Many children are engaged in blended learning, going to school for some days and learning from home other days, or learning remotely from home full-time rather than attending school to reduce the risk of COVID transmission among themselves and to their parents,” says Kraak.

She says that millions of U.S. children who are learning remotely from home may not receive a nutritious breakfast or lunch if they qualified for the federal school meals programs and may receive meals-to-go delivered to their homes or their parents may receive pandemic-EBT benefits to buy nutritious foods for their children in place of the school meals.

“We need to encourage parents to provide a nurturing and structured environment for their children at home including eating meals at a set time every day, encouraging fruits and vegetables and whole grain options as snacks, and to have a set time to go out and be physically active for 30 to 60 minutes a day to maintain a healthy weight,” says Kraak.

Kraak also points to concerns surrounding health equity and populations that could be more at-risk.

“Health equity means all children in the U.S. will have a fair shot at living the healthiest life possible, and no one is disadvantaged because of their social position or circumstances.

“Children in racially and ethnically diverse households whose families are disproportionately affected by job losses, low income and food insecurity resulting from COVID are at highest risk of unhealthy weight gain and obesity,” says Kraak. “Their families need extra help to achieve health equity.”

*VT professor Vivica Kraak has more than 25 years of professional experience combined from academic settings and non-governmental organizations.*

*Her career includes working as a part-time research fellow at Deakin University’s World Health Collaborating Centre for Obesity Prevention and the Population Health Strategic Research Centre, School of Health and Social Development in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia; serving as the nutrition and physical activity advisor for Save the Children’s U.S. after-school obesity prevention program serving rural children in 12 states; and staffing several expert consensus committees convened by the Food and Nutrition Board, Institute of Medicine at The National Academies in Washington, D.C.*

## Drone pilots

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tion weather reports and dense sectional charts that represent aviator-essential features like topographical information, visual checkpoints and airspace classes in an intimidating jumble of coded lines and symbols. Tutorials and study guides for all this are widely available online for free. Drone park staff are happy to help aspiring test takers, too. The test itself, though, costs \$160.

Macey didn’t want that fee to be a barrier that kept a dedicated prospective pilot from getting certified. So she decided to start the grant program, which will refund the test fee for 15 undergraduates this spring (as long as they pass the exam by the end of the semester). To apply, students fill out a one-page form that asks why they’re interested, how they plan to use the certification and how they expect it to advance their career.

Applications are due Feb. 19. Macey expects to announce the winners in early March.

The drone park is managed by the Institute for Critical Technology and Applied Science, which joined forces with the College of Engineering and the Office of the Provost to build the unique facility three years ago. At 85 feet high, it’s the tallest drone park in the country. It has more than 3 million cubic feet of flight space. A drone lending library and adjacent lab make it easy for students to practice their skills and work on projects. Experienced staff provide training and education.

A small cohort of interns helps Macey staff the park.

Three of them have gotten their Part 107 certificates, and more are studying for the exam now. Macey said that going through the certification process builds the students’ confidence and establishes a foundation of safety and regulatory knowledge that helps them move beyond recreational flying to more sophisticated applications. “They feel like they’ve earned a new level of respect in terms of teaching and talking about the technology,” she said.

One of those interns is Luis Pol, a senior computer science major who had never flown a drone before he started working at the park two and a half years ago on a tip from his roommate. Now, he plans to pursue a career in the drone industry after he graduates and is glad to have the Part 107 certificate on his resume.

It has also allowed him to flex his flying skills beyond the boundaries of the drone park, at the Drillfield, Lane

Stadium and other campus locations. His favorite project, he said, was getting aerial footage of Corps of Cadets training exercises that the cadets could use like game tapes to assess their performance.

“It’s a great way to be involved with different parts of the school and explore more outside your area of expertise,” Pol said

of the certificate.

Preparing for the exam typically takes about 20 hours. Pol and two other interns who took the exam with him treated their study sessions as competitions, grilling each other on sectional charts and reciting the NATO phonetic alphabet backwards. All three passed with high scores.

## PETS-OF-THE-WEEK

Each Saturday the paper features pets from the Montgomery County Animal Care and Adoption Center (480 Cinnabar Road, Christiansburg). Those interested in adopting a pet can call 382-5795 or visit [www.montgomerycountyva.gov/acac](http://www.montgomerycountyva.gov/acac). At this time, visits to the Montgomery County Animal Care and Adoption Center are limited to one party at a time in the lobby area. Animal areas are not open to the public. To schedule an appointment to meet a prospective pet call (540) 382-5795 or email [animalcenter@montgomerycountyva.gov](mailto:animalcenter@montgomerycountyva.gov).



**Meet lil Mommie. She is a younger Siamese mix cat with a sweet disposition. She can be a little shy but she is also very gentle. Her purrfect future home would be one that is calm and quiet.**



**Spicy is ready to find her furever home. This spunky gal has a lot of energy and likes to meet new people who are willing to give her belly rubs and affection. Spicy would do best in a home without other dogs. She knows the “sit” command and would benefit from additional training to work on her doggie manners.**

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# OPINION

## Having some fun with what may be the planet’s weirdest, most wicked language

If you will, take a moment, have a little fun, and join me in a romp through what is probably the most wicked and weirdest language on the face of the Earth. Why am I bothering with this? Because I’m twice an English major, once with a bachelor’s and once with a master’s. I love our strange language, and I love discussing its bewildering, inexplicable idiosyncrasies. So why not share the fun?

Here are some examples, courtesy of boredpanda.com and an article titled “67 Hilarious Reasons Why the English Language Is the Worst.” What we have are illustrations of why our native tongue is the most confusing, frustrating, annoying, and vexing language in the world. Don’t worry. I’m just going to use a few reasons, not all 67.

Here’s a game. Read this sentence out loud: "She told him that she loved him." Then, put the word "only" before every single word in the sentence and say it out loud again. You get a sentence with a whole different meaning every time. Seven different sentences.

Have you ever noticed that there are three A's in "Australia" and each one is pronounced differently? The same is true of "eleven" and its three E's.

Try making it through correctly and rapidly pronouncing out loud the words in this sentence without stumbling: English can be understood through tough thorough thought though.

Another word game. Read this sentence out loud: "I never said she stole my money." Now, change the sentence only by putting stress on each word. Believe it or not, simply by stressing different words, you wind up with seven different meanings for the sentence.

A question designed to drive us nuts. Why don't these words rhyme -- cough, rough, though, through -- when pony and bologna do rhyme?

Believe it or not, there is a word in the English language that is spelled with five letters but only one letter is pronounced. Queue.

Here's something designed to make you bang your head against a wall: laid is pronounced like paid but not said and said is pronounced like bread but not bead and bead is pronounced like lead but not lead.

Want to feel really uncomfortable? Run through this list in a hurry and see how many you can pronounce without having to start over: dad and mom, treat or trick, cheese and mac, jelly and peanut butter, white and black, Juliet and Romeo, roll and rock, spice and sugar, Abel and Cain, Jerry and Tom, cream 'n cookies, suffering and pain.

Tear and tier are pronounced the same, but tear and tear are pronounced differently.

Here is really the correct way to spell "potato." 1) If gh can stand for P as in "hiccough," 2) If ough can stand for O as in "dough," 3) If phth can stand for T as in "phthisis," 4) If eigh can stand for A as in "neighbor," 5) If tte can stand for T as in "gazette," 6) If eau can stand for O as in "plateau," THEN THE CORRECT WAY TO SPELL POTATO WOULD BE GHOUGHPHTHEIGHT-TEEAU.

Part of the reason our language is so difficult and confusing is its contorted history. A little history answers a lot of the questions and explains some of the mess. It's called etymology.

So try this, which probably is just going to confuse us all more: "The reason that the plural of goose is geese and the plural of moose is not meese is because goose derives from an ancient Germanic word undergoing strong declension in the pattern of foot/feet and tooth/teeth. However, moose is a Native American word added to the English lexicon only some 400 years ago and thus lacks the etymological reason to be pluralized that way."

Ponder this: "firefly" is the opposite of "waterfall."

Isn't it interesting that the word "monosyllabic" has five syllables?

One person's response to this was "Holy Brain Hurt": Two students, James and John, were given a grammar test by their English teacher. The question was "Is it better to use "had" or "had had" in the sample sentence she provided? The teacher collected the papers and looked over their answers. Okay, get ready. "James, while John had had "had," had had "had had." "Had had" had had a better effect on the teacher."

"Flammable" and "inflammable" mean the same thing. "Fast" can mean "moving swiftly" and "fixed and unmoving."

And can anybody explain oxymorons, figures of speech in which apparently contradictory terms appear in conjunction? Act naturally, bittersweet, farewell reception, jumbo shrimp, small crowd, walking dead.

We can thank linguistics professor Robert Hertz for this gem. "Fight with" can be interpreted three ways. "He fought with his mother-in-law" could mean "They argued," "They served together in the war," or "He used the old battle-axe as a weapon."

We say "in" January but "on" Wednesday and "at" 12 o'clock. Can anybody figure out why?

Okay, I just hope you had a little fun with this perverse tool of ours called the English language. You gotta love it. What else can you do since it's ours whether we want it or not? Well, I guess we could cry in our frustration.

*The author is a man of a certain age who keeps at his desk three dictionaries, one of which has more than two thousand pages; a thesaurus; and a Harbrace College Handbook, which -- Man, talk about some pulse-pounding reading -- is more than 600 pages of nothing but the rules for English grammar. It's a remnant of his long-ago days as a college teacher of English and journalism.*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**Letter to the Editor: OMG... America, I'm calling you out**

America, America.

This is your old eighth-grade teacher and I can't stand it anymore. I'm sick and tired of hearing the language you use. How dare you talk this way. We've taught you better.

This incessant name calling has got to stop. It's disrespectful and hurtful. Yes, I'm talking to you

Democrats, and yes, you

Republicans, and you Independents as well. And media, don't you slink away; you get back over here right now. Your behavior is the worst of all. You should be setting the example, not constantly instigating more trouble. So sit down and listen and listen well.

First, this "OMG" thing. How disrespectful. You are taking God's name in vain. That means you are being disrespectful to God. I don't want to hear it again. "Oh

My Gosh" is fine, but not "Oh My God." Do you understand?

As Americans, have you forgotten that we wouldn't even have a country were it not for the providence of God during the Revolution and the founding of our country? God has blessed us in innumerable ways as a nation and in so doing He has provided us with opportunities never known in the world before. How dare you turn your back on Him, the one who has provided the blessings of being an American.

Second, this calling the President of the United States by his last name. This is so disrespectful. I don't want to hear "Bush," "Obama" or "Trump" again. Is that clear?

It's President Bush, President Obama, President Trump and now President Biden. Respect your elders and respect your leaders. You are free to disagree, but always show the proper respect.

Got it?

And this thing about "cops." You're doing the same thing, purposefully showing disrespect. They're police officers, so address them as such. Anything less is unacceptable and won't be tolerated. Stop labeling people with names and talk to them as your neighbor. Do you understand?

I could go on with lots of

other "Names" we use here in America but you get the idea. And while you're at it, tone down your language and show some maturity, especially you politicians. Your shrieking can be heard all over the building.

And you journalists, I am so disappointed with you. You have shirked your responsibilities to accurately inform the American people to the point that few, if any, of us can discern the real truth. Our founding fathers made it clear that democracy cannot survive without an informed citizenry. You have become political advocates rather than journalists. Shaping the news to fit your political desires is an abdication of your professional calling and does grave damage to our country. Seek out and report only the truth and let the chips fall where they may. And then realize and be proud of the irreplaceable role you play in American life. This alone is reward enough.

Why do you use such vitriolic language? It just serves to inflame us, to poison our political discourse and ultimately to divide us. Choose your words wisely. Do your appointed duty in the service of your country. If you cannot be objective, then leave your profession and find another.

Our country is so divided right now in large part because of this constant lack of

respect. A lack of respect not only in our language but in our actions as well. We are all Americans. We are all family. We share the same future. We all bleed red. We cherish diversity, but the color of our skin is not what makes us Americans. It is our shared ideals and values that unite us all as Americans.

You journalists, our ancestors have fought and died to give us a country where we can all grow and prosper. We only hurt ourselves when we denigrate others because they disagree with us. All people are entitled to their opinions just as you are entitled to yours. Talk to each other about whatever the issue is, but leave the name calling out. State your case and defend your convictions, but be respectful of others.

Change comes in accordance with the law and the majority rules. If you don't like something, then convince enough people and acquire enough votes to change the law. Until then respect the present law. That's the way we do it in these United States and we are United "because we have all agreed to follow the rule of law for the good of us all."

And of all things, I just heard one of you threaten secession. For gosh sakes, you sound like third graders who get mad and want to take their ball and go home. We are Americans and we

are blessed with the world's greatest form of government, but as President Lincoln said, "A house divided against itself, cannot stand."

So this starts now, America. And don't bother to point your finger of blame at others nor say someone else does it more than you; you're all personally responsible. Every single one of us. So straighten up, America! And don't make me come over here again. Your Eighth Grade Teacher from way back when.

*-Joe Hester, Radford, Va.  
(Retired 8th Grade Teacher)*

**Sir,**

I guess we should expect another pro Laurie Buchwald article in next week's "News Messenger." Don't you think two front-page Laurie Buchwald promotion articles with photos is enough?

Mainstream media continue to lose credibility because of their obvious liberal slant. Your newspaper continues to reinforce this notion. Your probable defense is that the latest article announces the endorsement of Governor Northam. This fact is certainly not surprising given they both represent the Democratic party.

*-Bill McKinnon  
1836 Mud Pike  
Christiansburg VA 24073*

## News Messenger

Established 1869

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USPS 016-490 Online: [www.ourvalley.org](http://www.ourvalley.org)

Michael Showell, *Publisher*  
Ed McMinn, *Editor*  
[editor@ourvalley.org](mailto:editor@ourvalley.org)

Heather Bell, *Community News Editor*  
[communitynews@ourvalley.org](mailto:communitynews@ourvalley.org)

Lynn Hurst, *General Manager*  
[lhurst@ourvalley.org](mailto:lhurst@ourvalley.org)

Randy Thompson, *Advertising Consultant*  
[advertise@ourvalley.org](mailto:advertise@ourvalley.org)

**Give us your view:**  
[editor@ourvalley.org](mailto:editor@ourvalley.org)

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

The News Messenger (USPS 016-490) is published twice a week for \$41 a year in Montgomery County, \$50 elsewhere in Virginia, and \$54 out of state by Virginia Media Inc., P.O. Box 429, Lewisburg, WV 24901. Periodical postage paid at Christiansburg, VA. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to NEWS MESSENGER 1633 W. Main St., Salem, VA 24153.

## Correction

An article in the Jan. 30 edition of the News Messenger gave an incorrect phone number for the New River

Health District Hotline. The correct number is 540-838-8222. We apologize for the error.

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# OBITUARIES

## Beatty, Bonnie

On Thursday, Jan. 28, Bonnie Beatty, loving mother of three children, passed away at the age of 80.

Bonnie was born on June 30, 1940, in Winchester to Mildred and William T. Locke. The family moved to Rocky Mount, where she was an investigator for the Franklin County Sheriff's Department until her retirement after many years of service.

Bonnie is survived by her daughter and son-in-law, Elizabeth and Steve Carter, of Fairfax; daughter and son-in-law Ann and Tom Hopkins of Charlotte, N.C.; and son and daughter-in-law, Brice and Julie Beatty of Boones Mill, Va. She also leaves behind two grandchildren, Kenley Carter of Mechanicsville, Va., and Abby Beatty of Boones Mill, Va.; and many nephews and nieces.



The family would like to thank April, Hannah, Latoya, Deanna, Corinne and the rest of the staff at Commonwealth Senior Living in Christiansburg. They provided personalized love and care for our mother and made her a happy home in their facility. Thanks also to Medi Home Health and Hospice for overseeing Bonnie's medical care.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that you please consider a donation to Medi Home Health and Hospice in our loving mother's name. You may send a check to Medi Home Health and Hospice 141 E. Main St., Ste. 500, Pulaski, Va., 24301-5047.

Arrangements by McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg.

## Creed, Gary Douglas

Gary Douglas Creed, of Shawsville, was set free from a valiant battle with Alzheimer's as the snow fell to the ground on Jan. 28, 2021.

The son of Melvin Lewis and Ada Mae Moore Creed, Gary will be remembered by his family, friends and all who knew him as a man who proudly served his community, sang in his church choir and cherished his family. There was close to nothing Gary wouldn't do for his family. If there was ever something his family wanted or needed, he made sure to make it happen. Nothing was impossible when he was on your side.

Success wasn't handed to Gary. He believed and passed on the idea that if you wanted to be the best, you would have to work harder and longer than everyone else, a trait that his family will carry on in his honor. Gary was employed at Shelor Motor Mile for many years and also served on the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors for 15 years.

He had a passion for basketball and enjoyed watching the game, as well as coaching. His advice on the court transferred to real-life advice as those who received it grew into adults. Gary would encourage his players to "Take the shot if you're open. You'll miss 100% of the shots you don't take." Gary encouraged friends and family to take chances when opportunities presented themselves.



He wasn't afraid to take chances and had the ability to create something positive out of a situation that was difficult for others to find the light in.

Lastly, Gary will be remembered for his willingness to stand up for what he believed. He never let the opinion of others sway him from his beliefs and what he thought was right. His community and giving back were important to him as was the success of the younger generation within the community.

Gary was preceded in death by brothers Lewis Creed and John B. Creed, and sisters Mary Huff, Geraldine Carde, and Lorene Brammer.

He is survived by his wife, Linda Creed; a son, Tim Creed and his wife, Barbara; a daughter, Niki Shumate and her husband, John; brothers Wilford Creed and Clyde Creed; a sister, Elizabeth Brammer; granddaughters Bridgette Bradley and her husband, James; Karalee Boggess and her husband Mark; and Karli and Lauryn Shumate; and great-grandchildren Jaxon, Jacob, Holt, Boone and Allie.

Due to COVID-19, the immediate family will have a private memorial service in the spring. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that you hug your child, call an old friend or teach a child to fish. Time waits for no one.

McCoy Funeral Home in Blacksburg is caring for the Creed family.

## McPherson, Anna Louise

Anna Louise McPherson, 68, of Pulaski, passed away Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2021.

She was preceded in death by her parents, William Theodore and Ella Ann Bonds; a brother, Arthur Lee Evans; and a sister, Mary McGuire.

Survivors include her husband of 41 years, Robert Edward McPherson; daughters Mary Belcher (Todd) and Kristy Shultz (Mitchell), all of Pulaski; grandchildren Drew Belcher, Robbie Belcher, Jessica

Belcher, Harley Huffman, Paul Huffman, Brooklynn Lopez and Ryane Lopez; great-grandchildren Kaiden Belcher and Carson Piland; brothers Tommy Bonds and Clarence Evans; a sister Ruby Shrewsberry; and many other relatives and friends.

Memorial services will be held at a later date.

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

## Ohalla (Riveros), Carol Ann



Carol Ann Ohalla (Riveros) was born in Chicago and died in Dublin, Va., 76 years later.

The Ohalla-Riveros family is in the care of Mullins Funeral Home & Crematory in Radford. [www.mullinsfuneralhome.com](http://www.mullinsfuneralhome.com).

## Selvey, Sr., Ben Eugene

On Friday, Jan. 29, 2021, Ben Eugene Selvey, Sr., 88, of Radford, went to be with his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Ben was born in Princeton, W. Va., on Nov. 2, 1932. He was a graduate from Concord College and spent the majority of his career at Virginia Tech, retiring in 1995. In retirement, he enjoyed playing golf and traveling the world with his loving wife. He was an Army veteran, an active member of First Baptist Church in Radford and a member of the Radford Lions Club.

Ben was known for his quick wit, his infectious smile and his compassionate spirit. He was a loving husband, father and grandfather who will be greatly missed.

He was preceded in death by his brother, N. T. Selvey, Jr.

He is survived by his devoted wife



of 66 years, Eileen G. Selvey; a brother, Bob Selvey (Danise) of Richmond; his sons, Ben E. Selvey, Jr., (Debbie) and Richard D. Selvey, all of Pulaski; daughters Paige J. Selvey and Janice E. O'Brien, both of Christiansburg; granddaughters Nikki S. Martin (Matt) and Taylor M.R. Selvey (Joey), all of Christiansburg, and Ashley M. Selvey of Pulaski; great-grandson James Jackson Carter; and many other relatives and friends.

Services will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that contributions be made to the First Baptist Church Memorial Fund, 215 Third Avenue, Radford, VA 24141.

The Selvey family is in the care of Mullins Funeral Home and Crematory in Radford.

[www.mullinsfuneralhome.com](http://www.mullinsfuneralhome.com).

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## Padis, Catherine “Katie” Cacaroukas

Catherine “Katie” Cacaroukas Padis, 90, of Blacksburg, died peacefully on Jan. 29, 2021, and has gone to her heavenly home.

She was born in Monessen, Penn., on Nov. 12, 1930, to Stephen and Maria Cacaroukas. She was the older of two girls and her sister, Amelia Cacaroukas Tselides, preceded her in death in 2004. She was also preceded in death in 1995 by her loving husband of 43 years, Leo Archie Padis.

Katie is survived by two sons and one daughter-in-law, Leo Padis, Jr., of Richmond and Steve and Donna Padis of Roanoke; and one granddaughter, Catherine Olivia Padis, of New Orleans. Also surviving are several cousins, nieces, nephews and friends.

The family would like to recognize her special friends, Chris and Maria Kappas of Blacksburg. Katie lived her last years in her Blacksburg home of 65 years with assistance of caregivers. The family is so thankful to all those who cared for her, but especially three that became her special friends: Jane Smith of Riner, Cheryl Stinson of Shawsville and Juanita Gambill of Christiansburg. Katie relished her time with her family and friends.

Before retiring, she worked at the First National Exchange Bank in Blacksburg. She was an active and long-time member of the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Roanoke, and she served many

years as treasurer of the Philoptochos Society.

She was a devoted wife and mother and dedicated her life to providing a beautiful and loving home. When Leo and Steve were at Virginia Tech, Katie became a second mother to many of their college friends, several of whom would visit her whenever they returned to Blacksburg. One of her great talents was cooking, and she served on several cookbook committees for both the Virginia Tech Faculty Women's Club and the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church and participated in numerous cooking groups. She also loved sports and attended countless Virginia Tech home football and basketball games. She was an avid bridge player and was in many bridge clubs.

Funeral services will be conducted today, Wednesday, Feb. 3, 2021, at 2 p.m. in the McCoy Funeral Home Chapel. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, 30 Huntington Blvd NE, Roanoke, VA 24012.

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## Legal Notice

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC OF PETITION FOR APPROVAL OF A RATE ADJUSTMENT CLAUSE, THE E-RAC, BY APPALACHIAN POWER COMPANY  
CASE NO. PUR-2020-00258

•Appalachian Power Company (“APCo”) has applied for approval of a rate adjustment clause, the E-RAC, for recovery of costs incurred to comply with state and federal environmental laws and regulations.

•APCo requests approval of a revenue requirement of \$31.614 million for its E-RAC for the rate year beginning October 1, 2021, through September 30, 2022. According to APCo, this amount would increase a residential customer's bill using 1,000 kilowatt hours per month by \$2.50.

•Due to the ongoing public health emergency related to the spread of the coronavirus, or COVID-19, the State Corporation Commission will hold a telephonic hearing in this case on June 22, 2021, to receive public witness testimony.

•The Commission will hold an evidentiary hearing in this case on June 23, 2021.

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

On December 23, 2020, pursuant to§ 56 585.1 A 5 e of the Code of Virginia, Appalachian Power Company (“APCo” or “Company”) filed with the State Corporation Commission (“Commission”) a petition (“Petition”) for approval of a rate adjustment clause (“E-RAC”) to recover on a timely basis its projected costs to comply with state and federal environmental laws and regulations applicable to generation facilities used to serve the Company's load obligations.

According to the Petition, APCo seeks cost recovery for certain environmental projects (“Projects”) related to the installation and retrofitting of certain coal ash ponds at the Company's Amos and Mountaineer Plants (collectively, “Plants”), as well as actual and forecast operations and maintenance costs related to compliance with State Solid Waste regulation, the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System, and provisions of the Clean Water Act at the Plants.

APCo states that the Projects are required to comply with the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (“EPA”) rule to regulate the disposal of coal combustion residuals (“CCR Rule”) and the EPA's Steam Electric Effluent Limitations Guidelines (“ELG Rule”). APCo states that the CCR Rule regulates the handling and storage of CCR material in an environmentally responsible manner, and the ELG Rule regulates wastewater discharges for the protection of surface water.

According to the Company, these rules require that, absent an extension, unlined CCR storage ponds, such as the bottom ash ponds at the Plants, must cease operations and initiate closure by April 11, 2021, which would cause the Plants to stop operating by that date. APCo states that after analyzing various compliance options and scenarios, it is seeking approval of cost recovery of CCR and ELG refoits at the Plants, which will allow the Plants to continue to provide capacity and energy value to APCo's customers through 2040. APCo also asserts that its proposed investments are the most cost-effective means of compliance.

In this proceeding, the Company asks the Commission to approve its E-RAC for the rate year October 1, 2021, through September 30, 2022 (“Rate Year”). APCo proposes a total revenue requirement of approximately \$31.614 million during the Rate Year. Specifically, the Company indicates that its proposed revenue requirement comprises three elements: (1) a Forecast Revenue Component of \$30.791 million, (2) an Allowance for Funds Used During Construction Revenue Component of \$0.823 million, and (3) a True-up Revenue Component of \$0.0 million. For purposes of calculating the revenue requirement, APCo states that it used an after-tax rate of return on rate base of 7.072% based on the year ended December 31, 2019 capital structure. The Company further states that this rate of return included the 9.20% return on equity approved by the Commission in Case No. PUR-2020-00015.

APCo states that it seeks to recover the revenue requirement by allocating costs to the Virginia jurisdiction consistent with the Company's methodology in its Dresden G-RAC. If the proposed E-RAC is approved, the impact on customer bills would depend on the customer's rate schedule and usage. According to the Company, implementation of the proposed E-RAC would increase the monthly bill of a residential customer using 1,000 kilowatt-hours per month by \$2.50, or 2.4%, when compared to rates effective November 1, 2020.

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 entered an Order for Notice and Hearing in this proceeding that, among other things, scheduled public hearings on APCo's Petition. On June 22, 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 or before June 17, 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 filling out a form on the Commission's website at [scc.virginia.gov/pages/Webcasting](http://scc.virginia.gov/pages/Webcasting); (ii) by completing and emailing the PDF version of this form to [SCCinfo@scc.virginia.gov](mailto:SCCinfo@scc.virginia.gov); or (iii) by calling (804) 371-9141. This public witness hearing will be webcast at [scc.virginia.gov/pages/Webcasting](http://scc.virginia.gov/pages/Webcasting).

On June 23, 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, the Commission will convene a hearing to receive testimony and evidence related to the Petition 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.

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 should 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.

An electronic copy of the Company's Petition may be obtained by submitting a written request to counsel for the Company, Noelle J. Coates, Esquire, 3 James Center, American Electric Power Service Corporation, 1051 East Cary Street, Suite 1100, Richmond, Virginia 23219, or [njcoates@aep.com](mailto:njcoates@aep.com). On or before June 15, 2021, any interested person may file comments on the Petition by following the instructions found on the Commission's website: [scc.virginia.gov/casecomments/Submit-Public-Comments](http://scc.virginia.gov/casecomments/Submit-Public-Comments). All comments shall refer to Case No. PUR-2020-00258.

On or before March 12, 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 State Corporation Commission, c/o Document Control Center, P.O. Box 2118, Richmond, Virginia 23218-2118, or by filing electronically at [scc.virginia.gov/clkc/efiling/](http://scc.virginia.gov/clkc/efiling/). Such notice of participation shall include the email addresses of such parties or their counsel. The respondent simultaneously shall serve a copy of the notice of participation on counsel to the Company. Pursuant to Rule 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. Any organization, corporation, or government body participating as a respondent must be represented by counsel as required by Rule 5 VAC 5-20-30, *Counsel*, of the Rules of Practice. All filings shall refer to Case No. PUR-2020-00258.

On or before April 9, 2021, each respondent may file with the Clerk of the Commission at the address above or electronically at [scc.virginia.gov/clkc/efiling/](http://scc.virginia.gov/clkc/efiling/), 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, including 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-2020-00258.

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 Company's Petition, the Commission's Rules of Practice and the Commission's Order for Notice and Hearing may be viewed at: [scc.virginia.gov/pages/Case-Information](http://scc.virginia.gov/pages/Case-Information).

APPALACHIAN POWER COMPANY



### For Rent - Apartments

**2, 3, 4 BR Townhouse Style**  
accepting applications. Short waiting list, HUD subsidized, W/D hookups, private patio, water & trash incl. Fairfax Village Apts. 332 Fairfax St., Radford Cambridge Square 1805 Whipple Dr. NW Blacksburg 540-731-1786 EHO TDD #800-828-1120



### For Sale - Firewood

**FIREWOOD**  
Mixed Hardwood  
Call 540-529-2745  
Delivery in Botetourt only

### For Sale - Misc

**FOR SALE**  
Unprinted end rolls of newspaper. Great for packing & shipping, moving & storage and for art projects. Various sizes available. Stop by the Salem Times-Register 1633 West Main St. or call (540)389-9355 for details.

### For Sale - Seasonal Items

**Use ToneKote®**  
for cats & dogs to stop shedding, scratching and insure a warm winter coat!!!! H&H Outdoors 254-2420.  
(www.kennelvac.com)

### Help Wanted - General

**Part Time Newspaper Production Help**  
The Salem Times-Register has openings for afternoon/evening shift work inserting, labeling and bundling newspapers for delivery. No experience necessary. Hours may vary. Will train. \$7.50 per hour. Contact Lynn Hurst, General Manager, Salem-Times Register (540)389-9355 or email lhurst@ourvalley.org

**Experienced grocery shopper, Prep cook, cook, meal planner, and dietitian.**  
66 year old bachelor living in efficiency apartment, one block from Radford University. Will employee at \$20 per hour for two days per week for Skilled, efficient, trustworthy person. Must have car. Call 540-577-8564 Any time Leave message

**Handyman**  
Must be able to climb stairs and ladders, carry objects up to 50 lbs., Work well with others and independently, use a riding mower and weed eater, use power tools  
Saturday's 10-5  
\$15 an hour Cash  
Fincastle  
**Phone calls ONLY**  
Curtis  
540-598-6664

### Legals - Botetourt County

**SPECIAL COMMISSIONER'S SALE OF**  
**58 Lakeland Circle, Troutville, VA 24175**  
**Tax Map #108(A)(1)BK2-19**  
The Special Commissioner will offer the above-described property for sale to the highest bidder at

### FARM LABORER

The farm laborer at Hollow Hill Farm in Paint Bank, VA will attend to livestock and produce crops. Duties may include feeding, watering, herding, grazing, weighing, catching, and loading animals. May maintain records on animals; examine animals to detect diseases and injuries; assist in birth deliveries; and administer medications, vaccinations, or insecticides as appropriate. Crop planning, planting, and harvesting. Contact Hollow Hill Farm at 540-897-5786 to apply.

### Legals - Botetourt County

public auction on the date and time referenced below.

Lot 19, Block 2, according to the Map of Blocks 2 through 7, of Rainbow Forest, property of Botetourt Development Corporation, Botetourt County, Virginia, made by C.B. Malcolm and Son, S.C.E.'s dated August 15, 1960, of record in the Clerk's Office of the Circuit Court of Botetourt County, Virginia in Plat Book 4, page 102.

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

Terms: CASH; a deposit in the form of certified funds in the amount of \$10,000 or 10% of the sale price, whichever is lower. Final settlement is subject to Court approval of terms. Time is of the essence.

#### OPTIONS:

1. All costs of conveyance, examination of title, recording charges, etc. will be at cost of purchaser with the exception of the grantor's tax. Neither the Special Commissioner nor any other party guarantees or covenants to deliver or in any way to obtain possession of the premises for any third party purchaser.

2. The Special Commissioner reserves the right to reject all bids, extend the time to receive bids or withdraw the property from sale at any time. In addition, should the Special Commissioner be unable, for any reason, in its sole discretion, to convey title, the successful bidder's sole remedy in law or equity shall be the return of his deposit. Upon refund of the deposit, the sale shall be void and of no effect.

Additional terms may be announced at the time of the sale. The Special Commissioner will convey the above-described property to the purchaser(s) by Special Warranty deed at settlement and makes no additional representations or warranties of any kind regarding the title to said property.

John K. Prillaman, Esq.

Special Commissioner

For Information Contact:  
John K. Prillaman, Esq.  
OPN LAW  
3140 Chaparral Drive  
Roanoke, Virginia 24018  
(540) 725-8194

### VIRGINIA: IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE COUNTY OF BOTETOURT COUNTY OF BOTETOURT, VIRGINIA,

a Political Subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia,  
**Case No. CL19-619**  
Complainant,  
v.  
GARLAND L. BROWN, ET AL,  
Respondent(s).  
**ORDER OF PUBLICATION**  
The object of this suit is to enforce the lien of the Complainant, County of Botetourt, Virginia, for delinquent real estate taxes against certain real property located in the County of Botetourt, Virginia, described as follows:  
Tax Map Nos. 107A(7)BK1-1 and 107A(7)BK1-4  
Account Nos. 13419 and 13458

All those certain lots or parcels of land, together with any improvements thereon and appurtenances thereunto belonging, lying and being situate in the County of Botetourt, State of Virginia and being more particularly described as follows:

### Legals - Botetourt County

BEGINNING at an iron pin on the south side of Cloverdale Avenue, (S.R. 1004), said pin being the front corner of Lots 2 and 3, proceed with the south line of Cloverdale Avenue S. 33° 23' W. 102.6 feet to the northwest corner of Lot 1; thence with the west line of Lots 1 and 4, S. 43° 40' E. 165.50 feet to the southwest corner of Lot 4; thence with the south line Lot 4, N. 46° 20' E. 150.00 feet to the Southeast corner of Lot 4, being located on the west line of First Avenue (S.R. 1002); thence with said west line N. 43° 40' W. 50.00 feet to the Northeast corner of Lot 4, said point being the Southeast corner of Lot 3; thence with south line of Lot 3, S. 46° 20' W. 50.00 feet to the Southwest corner of Lot 3, said point being the Southeast corner of Lot 2; thence with the east line of Lot 2, N. 43° 40' W. 138.50 feet to point of BEGINNING of this description and containing 0.464 acres, more or less, and being shown on a plat made by Lewis A. Hickman, Jr., C.L.S., dated May 24, 1973, attached to a deed of partial release dated August 16, 1973, from Lucille R. Taylor, and Being all of Lots one (1), two (2), and four (4), Block 1 (1), Udpick Addition as shown on a plat made by Smith, Bradford & Co., Engineers, which map is recorded in the Clerk's Office of the Circuit Court of Botetourt County, Virginia in Plat Book 1 at Page 45; and Less and except 0.006 acre conveyed to the Commonwealth of Virginia recorded in the Clerk's Office of the Circuit Court of Botetourt County, Virginia, in Deed Book 420 at Page 291; and

Being the same property conveyed to Garland L. Brown from Lisa McFarland Snow by Deed dated May 18, 1999 and recorded May 26, 1999 in the Clerk's Office of the Circuit Court of Botetourt County, Virginia in Deed Book 569 at Page 1496.

This description is made subject to all easements, conditions, agreements, restrictions, and reservations of record which affect the property herein described including but not limited to those recorded in Deed Book U at Page 350, Deed Book R at Page 387, Deed Book N at Page 451, Deed Book O at Page 71, Deed Book 420 at Page 291.

IT APPEARING that an Affidavit has been made and filed stating that due diligence has been used, without effect, to ascertain the identity and location of certain parties to be served, that the last known addresses for the Respondents herein are as follows: Garland L. Brown, who is believed to be deceased and whose last known address is 8 Cloverdale Ave, Cloverdale, Virginia 24077; and that any officers, heirs, devisees, and successors in title of the Respondent named herein are made parties Respondent to this action individually and/or by the general description of Parties Unknown, it is hereby ORDERED that the parties herein and all Parties Unknown and/or whose

### Legals - Botetourt County

location cannot be ascertained appear on or before February 23, 2021 in the Clerk's Office of the Circuit Court of the County of Botetourt, Virginia, and do what may be necessary to protect their interests in this cause.

Entered on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2021.

Joel R. Branscom  
Judge

I Ask For This:  
Gregory L. Haynes, Esq. (VSB No. 37158)  
John A. Rife, Esq. (VSB No. 45805)  
Jeffrey A. Scharf, Esq. (VSB No. 30591)  
Mark K. Ames, Esq. (VSB No. 27409)  
Andrew M. Neville, Esq. (VSB No. 86372)  
Paul L. LaBarr, Esq. (VSB No. 91609)  
Taxing Authority Consulting Services, PC  
P.O. Box 31800  
Henrico, Virginia 23294-1800  
Phone: (804) 864-0080  
Facsimile: (804) 545-2378  
TACS No.: 570639

### Legals - City of Salem

#### ORDER OF PUBLICATION

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

1-4-2021  
Jennifer Vest  
Deputy Clerk

#### LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given to all interested persons that the Board of Appeals (Building) of the City of Salem, Virginia will hold public hearings, in accordance with the provisions of Section 18-38 Code of City of Salem, Virginia, on February 24, 2021, at 3:00pm in the Community Room at the Salem Civic Center, 1001 Roanoke Boulevard, in the City of Salem, Virginia. The purpose of the meeting and hearings shall be to determine if certain structures are dangerous to the inhabitants of the City and whether such structures should be ordered to be repaired or demolished. The structures are located as follows:

(1) A dilapidated structure located at 625 Union Street, Salem, Virginia (Tax Map # 161 – 7 – 5); and  
(2) A dilapidated structure located at 329 Chestnut Street, Salem, Virginia (Tax Map #144-9-6).

All parties in interest at the public hearings will be given an opportunity to be heard, present evidence, and show cause why action by the City and Board to remedy a

### Legals - City of Salem

potential dangerous situation should or should not be granted. For additional information, contact the Building Official's Office, 21 South Bruffey Street, Salem, Virginia (Phone 375-3036).

THE BOARD OF BUILDING APPEALS OF THE CITY OF SALEM

BY Troy D. Loving  
Troy D. Loving,  
Building Official

#### LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given to all interested persons that the Board of Building Appeals of the City of Salem, Virginia will hold a public hearing, in accordance with the provisions of Section 36-105 Code of the State of Virginia, on February 24, 2021, at 3:00pm in the Community Room of Salem Civic Center, 1001 Roanoke Boulevard, in the City of Salem, Virginia, regarding the following:

Appeal the decision of the building official regarding the property located at 901 S. Colorado Street (Tax Map #184-4-8).

At the hearing all parties in interest will be given an opportunity to be heard, present evidence, and show cause why the decision should or should not be upheld. For additional information, contact the Building Official's Office, 21 South Bruffey Street, Salem, Virginia (Phone 375-3036).

THE BOARD OF BUILDING APPEALS OF THE CITY OF SALEM

BY Troy D. Loving, CBO

Troy D. Loving, CBO,  
Building Official

### Legals - Craig County

#### ABC NOTICE

Lemon Hotel LLC, trading as Lemon Hotel LLC, 9 Hotel Lane, Paint Bank, Craig County, Virginia 24131-8058.

The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) AUTHORITY for a Wine and Beer On premises and Mixed Beverage on premises license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages.

Stephen H. Cutler, Vice President/Secretary

NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at [www.abc.virginia.gov](http://www.abc.virginia.gov) or 800-552-3200.

### Legals - Montgomery County

#### NOTICE OF JUDICIAL SALE

Pursuant to an Order of Sale entered in United States vs. Aimee E Reese, and Randall J. Reese, Civil Action No. 7:19-cv-00645, United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia Roanoke Division, the United States will offer for sale at public auction, to the highest bidder, according to law and pursuant to the terms and conditions set in herein, the property described below:

Date: February 25, 2021  
Time: 10:00AM

Sale Location: Front of the Montgomery County Courthouse 1 E Main Street Christiansburg, Virginia 24073. All prospective bidders will be required to wear a face mask and maintain a social distance.

Title Offered: The property shall be offered for sale at public auction, free and clear of all liens and interests of the parties to this action.

Description of Property: Being all of Lot 45, containing approximately 1.978 Acres, The Ridges Subdivision Phase 6, located in Montgomery County, Virginia. Parcel ID number 140178. Pin number 045-9-45.

Property May Be Inspected at: Drive by only

For information about the sale: Call Sara Wright at 865-274-7349

Minimum Bid: \$7,800

The Terms of Payment: See Below

Form of Payment: All payments must be by Certified or Cashier's Check made payable to the United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SALE:

No bid (except for bids made by the United States) shall be accepted by the IRS, unless the same is accompanied by a certified check or cashier's check, in the minimum amount of \$1,560 made payable to the United States District Court for the Western District of Virginia. Before being permitted to bid at the sale, all bidders shall display to the IRS proof that they are able comply with this requirement. No bids will be received from any person who has not presented proof that, if he or she is the successful bidder, he or she can make the deposit required by the Order.

The successful bidder shall tender the balance of the purchase price, in certified funds payable to the United States District Court, at the office of the IRS on or before March 25, 2021.

In the event the successful bidder defaults on any of the terms contained in the Order, the deposit shall be forfeited and retained by the IRS as part of the proceeds of sale, and the real

### Legals - Montgomery County

property shall again be offered for sale, without further permission of the Court, under the terms and conditions of the Order, or, in the alternative the real property shall be sold to the second highest bidder.

The United States may bid as a creditor against its judgments without tender of cash.

The sale of the real property shall be subject to confirmation by the Court. Upon confirmation of the sale and receipt of the entire purchase price, the Court shall issue and the IRS shall deliver to the purchaser, a deed conveying the real property to the purchaser. Upon confirmation of the sale, all interests in, liens against, or claims to, the real property that are or may be asserted by any of the parties to this action are discharged and extinguished.

The United States reserves the right to reject any and all bids and to withdraw the property from sale.

#### \*\*\*\*\*IMPORTANT INFORMATION\*\*\*\*\*

This is not an advertisement of a sale of administratively seized property. This is an information notice only regarding a sale being conducted by the Internal Revenue Service as a result of the foreclosure of an Internal Revenue Service Federal Tax Lien by the Department of Justice.

#### ORDER OF PUBLICATION

Commonwealth of Virginia VA CODE § 8.01-316  
**Case No. JJ018725-06-00**  
Montgomery County Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court  
*In re Dejah Moser*  
Montgomery County DSS /v.  
Telisha Leigh Moser Gebhart  
The object of this suit is to: Terminate the residual parental rights of Telisha Moser Gebhart legal parent of Dejah Moser a minor, in that said parent has, without good cause, failed to correct the conditions which resulted in the child entering foster care and it is not reasonably likely that they will be able to do so in a reasonable amount of time, failed to maintain continuing contact with the child and substantially plan for the child's future. Residual parental rights include, but are not limited to the right to visitation, consent to adoption, the right to determine religious affiliation, and the responsibility for support. The termination of residual parental rights will permanently end all of your rights and responsibilities to the child named in the petition. It is ORDERED that Telisha Leigh Moser Gebhart appear at the above-named Court and protect her interests on or before February 16, 2021.  
1-12-21  
Amie Blankenship Clerk

### C.H. "Hank" Partin, Sheriff MONTGOMERY COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE 1 East Main Street Christiansburg, Virginia 24073 Tel: 540-382-6915 Fax: 540-381-6869

In accordance with Section 2-13 of the Code of Montgomery County, the Montgomery County Sheriffs Office will be holding a public display of unclaimed property prior to disposing of the property. The display will be available on Wednesday, February 24, 2021 from 1pm to 2 pm at the Sheriffs Office.

The items to be displayed are as follows:

Pistol (2012-003369)	Pistol (2017 -013465)
Knife (2016-008611)	Backpack, knife, money (2013-001546)
Two pistols, gun magazines, badge, Tactical bag, knife (2014-002843)	Jewelry (2015-002376)
Knife (2014-001212)	Pistol, magazine (2017-000296)
Kent Bicycle (2018-012088)	Two knives (2012-002371)
Socket set (2012-002004)	Schwinn Bicycle (2017-007462)
Kent Bicycle (2016-014558)	Ring (2016-015823)
Knife (2015-001261)	Leaf blower (2020-014036)
Pistol (2017-007034)	Shotgun (2015-001964)
Cash (2018-010212)	Tile saw (2014-000994)
Television (2017-000323)	Pistol & holster (2013-002647)
Five Knives (2018-012137)	Knives (2015-002103)
Knives (2019-018922)	Coins (2014-002664)
Coins (2013-001546)	Necklace (2017-006830)
Rifle (2007-001520)	Compressor (2014-000688)
Kent Bicycle (2018-015382)	Huffy Bicycle (2014-000589)
Roadmaster Bicycle (2014-001197)	Huffy Bicycle (2020-000118)
Raleigh Bicycle (2020-001628)	Dyna Craft Bicycle (20 17-0 14863)
Necklaces, ring, bracelet (2018-022727)	Silverware (2018-022667)
Pistol, magazine (2019-003133)	Coins (2015-001759)
Two jackets (2019-018717)	Battery powered grease gun (2018-024165)
Coins, binoculars, camera (2016-015899)	Pistol (2012-002370)
Cell phones (2017 -006327)	Knives (2016-015980)
Drill, vacuums (2019-004610)	Paint, paint kit, door kits, comforters, clothing, Knife (2018-016829)
iPad (2016-006994)	Camera, faucet set (2018-015997)
Box cutter (2018-011507)	Knife (2018-022118)

The purpose of this display is to locate the owners of the listed items. Anyone claiming ownership of an item must provide adequate proof of ownership. **This is NOT a public sale of these items.**

Please feel free to contact G. R. Teaster, Evidence Technician or S. T. McMillan, Investigator, at 540-382-6915 extension 44424 with any questions.



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one days. Hilton Oliver, Attorney (Facebook). 757-490-0126. Se Habla Espanol. BBB Member. https://hiltonoliverattorneyva.com.

**Brown v. Board of Education SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE**

ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS THROUGH MARCH 26, 2021

The Brown v. Board of Education Scholarship Program was established by the Virginia General Assembly in 2004 to provide educational opportunities for persons who were denied an education in Virginia due to the closing of the public schools during Massive Resistance between 1954 and 1964. The program is open to new eligible applicants for the 2021-2022 school year. For applications and information on eligibility, visit:

**BROWNSCHOLARSHIP.VIRGINIA.GOV**

or contact Lily Jones, Division of Legislative Services, at (804) 698-1888.

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# MONTGOMERY SPORTS

## Michael Wray, Jr., is marketing an improved version of a football board game he first created 38 years ago

**Brian Hoffman**  
[bhoffman@ourvalley.org](mailto:bhoffman@ourvalley.org)

When he was in the eighth grade, Michael Wray, Jr., came up with an original football game. Now, 38 years later, he is marketing a beautifully crafted, improved version of that same board game called “You’re the Coach.”

Football games for kids and adults have made great advancements over the years, and in the days of COVID-19, fun games to play at home are in great demand.

Most kids back in the ‘60s had an electric football game with a vibrating board that moved the players around. Some had a game called “Fo-to-Electric” football. One player had a group of offensive plays on sheets of paper with the lines drawn where the players went. The other player had defensive formations on a separate sheet of paper. The players put plays

on a light table and turned the light on. The play ended when the ball carrier touched a defensive player.

Those games are sophomoric compared to today’s computer games. Kids and adults alike play the Madden NFL game and the players not only look like their real counterparts, but they move like them, too.

That’s not good enough for Michael Wray, Jr., whose board game “You’re the Coach,” puts a player’s knowledge of football to the test.

“It’s more a game of the mind than just hand-eye coordination,” he said. “It’s more about what you know, and you can visualize the action in your head.”

Anyone who has played APBA baseball or Stratomatic games will recognize the concept. In Michael’s game, players go head-to-head sitting on opposite sides of a

professionally done football field playing board. The offensive player calls a play with several options, and the other player counters with a defense that he thinks will outsmart his opponent. A dice roll determines the outcome with probabilities geared to what might actually happen in a real game.

The offense has many plays to choose from, and each play has several options in itself. An entire game can be played in anywhere from an hour and a half to two hours or maybe a little longer for novices.

“If you love football you’ll love this game,” said Wray. “Actually, the toughest people to play against are people who don’t know football because there’s no way you can guess what they’ll do.”

Wray is originally from Salem and still has family there. His great-grandfather, Bill “Pops” Garlick, a former NASCAR chief steward, lives in Salem and at age 90 still maintains a garage in Roanoke.

Wray went to high school at Liberty High and played on the football team for the Minutemen. He always loved football, and in the eighth grade he was assigned to do a project for school. So “You’re the Coach,” was born. He started out with a very primitive version and has continued to improve it over the years.

“I played it all the time,” he said. “My mom used to refer to it as ‘my little corner

of the world.”

A long-haul trucker by trade, Wray now lives in Missouri with his fiancé, Chrissy White. He has a 26-year old daughter, Christine, and a grandson, Grayson, 4.

Michael’s one-man trucking business is named “You’re the Coach Transport.” His cab is colorfully decorated with a copy of his game and testimonials from people all over the country who have enjoyed it.

As he travels around the country, Wray promotes his game, offering to play it to demonstrate how realistic it is. His favorite teams are the NFL’s Green Bay Packers and the Virginia Tech Hokies. He was a big fan of Tech defensive coordinator Bud Foster and claims more than one person has told him he resembles Bud.

Once he had the game perfected to his satisfaction, Wray was able to get his game manufactured. Scott Printing of Rolla, Mo., and SMC Packaging of Springfield, Mo., did the work to make the game marketable.

“Everything is made in the USA,” he said.

So far, Wray says he has sold about 180 copies of the game and has given away many others. He figures he needs to sell about 350 to break even from his initial manufacturing costs. The game sells for \$29.95 and is available online from Amazon or Ebay. Shipping adds another 10 or 15 dollars to the cost. It’s also available on



PHOTO BY BRIAN HOFFMAN

**Originally from Salem, Michael Wray, Jr., has created a football board game called “You’re the Coach.”**

Facebook, and Michael was recently able to convince White’s Travel Center, on I-81 in Raphine, Va., to sell the game in its store.

Michael’s dream opponent would be Frank Beamer, but he’s yet to lure him into a contest. He has played against former Tech tight end Joe Jones, who is quoted as saying it’s “hard to quit playing” in a list of testimonials.

Mike Scharnus, who won four VHSL state championships coaching football, is a big fan of the game, and Joel Hicks, a state champion coach at Pulaski County, called the game “very realistic.”

Of course, with family here, Wray tries to get back to Virginia as much as he can. In his most recent visit he hooked up with former Amherst coach Mickey Crouch and played the game with him.

“He was Amherst and

I was Salem, and I stopped him on the five-yard line,” said Wray with a chuckle. “He still likes to run the ball.”

Due to copyright issues Wray can’t name the football players in the game. However, he has a tablet of game statistic sheets on which players can write in the names themselves. He even has different rules for high school, college and the pros to make the game as realistic as possible.

What began as a high-school project has turned into a lifetime passion for Wray, and if determination will make it a big success he has it.

“People are amazed at how I’ve stuck with it all these years,” he said. “My goal is for the game to be in every home in America. I hope to be on (the TV show) “Shark Tank” someday. I think anyone would go for it if they heard my pitch.”



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While she can assist with a range of behavioral health issues such as anxiety and depression, her expertise is in the treatment and protocols dealing with addiction.

Ms. Hayes also volunteers as a Court Appointed Special Advocate, working with judges to help find the best placement for children after a family crisis.



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## Is Tech becoming a basketball school?



**From the Sidelines**

Marty Gordon

Have Hokie fans been paying attention to what has been going on the past two months in Blacksburg? The top two teams in the ACC men’s basketball standings are not Duke and North Carolina. Instead, it’s UVA and Virginia Tech.

This weekend, Virginia Tech proved they deserved to be there with a 65-51 win over UVA in the Commonwealth Clash. The team from

Blacksburg is ranked in the Top 20 and is making a lot of noise nationally. You might say Virginia Tech is becoming a basketball school. Yes, basketball has been played at Tech for a long time, but it’s in 2021 that no opponent is taking the Hokies for granted any more.

Coach Mike Young has established a new culture in Blacksburg, and Hokies fans should welcome it. But Young says that while the win over UVA was significant, let’s hit the brakes.

“It’s late January and they’re not putting a crown on anyone’s head in January,” Young said Saturday

after the UVA game. “We have a bunch more of these head-knockers to go starting with Pittsburgh on Wednesday. It was a great win for us, we played a good ball game against a really good Virginia team, but let’s hang on; we’ve got a lot more to look forward to, we hope.”

With the defeat of the Cavaliers, the Hokies moved to 13-3 overall and 7-2 in the ACC, their best start in school history through nine conference outings. Virginia fell to 11-3 overall and 7-1 on the season with their first conference loss.

On the offensive end, forward Keve Aluma notched a career-high 29 points and grabbed 10 rebounds for his fourth double-double of the season. Sophomore Hunter Cattoor added 15 points on 71% shooting from the field and nailed three triples. As a team, Tech hit nine 3-point shots, one of their highest totals of the season.

With defense becoming its strong suit, Tech allowed the Cavaliers to score only 51 points, tied for the fewest points an opponent has scored against the Hokies all season (1/27/21 Notre Dame). Tech held the Wahoos to just 36% shooting from the field and 35% from behind the arc. The Hokies came up with two steals and four blocks and forced nine Cavalier turnovers.

With just under eight minutes of action left, the Hokies got red hot and streaked to a 19-0 run that put them up 63-47 and clinched the win.

“It’s a big win for us,” Cattoor said in a post-game interview. “Coming in, we had a great scout from our coaches and we executed it. We played well as a team. I thought it was a great team win and a great win to keep moving forward in ACC play.”

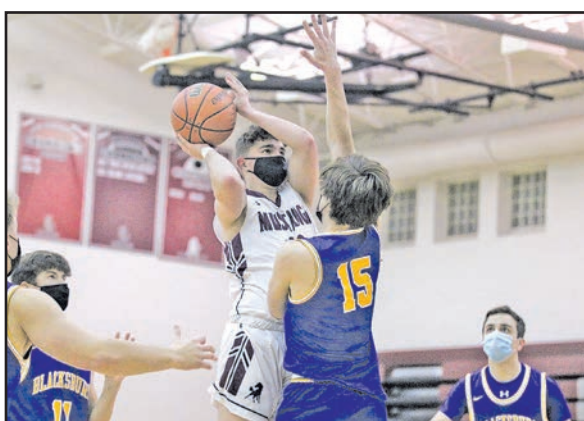
This was Young’s first win against the Cavaliers and head coach Tony Bennett, ending a four-game losing streak to the Wahoos. The last Tech win was a 61-60 overtime game on Feb. 10, 2018.

## Blacksburg boys defeat Eastern Montgomery



PHOTOS BY JON FLEMING

**Blacksburg guard Brooklyn Vick (left) led all scorers with 20 points in the Bruins’ 88-44 victory over East Mont Friday evening in Elliston.**



**Eastern Montgomery’s Gavin Worrell spots up in the lane for a shot as Blacksburg’s Matt Joyce defends during the first half of Friday night’s game, won by the Bruins. Jacob Price led Eastern Montgomery with 13 points. Joyce had 13 points for Blacksburg.**