



National high school federation revises guidance on COVID-19 transmission during high school sports; eliminates three-tiered risk categories

INDIANAPOLIS -- After evaluating experiences of schools participating in high school sports during the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) Monday revised its May 2020 guidance document with a new "Statement on Risk of COVID-19 during High School Sports."

The NFHS is the national leadership organization for high school sports and performing arts activities. It writes playing rules for 17 sports for boys and girls at the high school level. Through its 50 member state associations and the District of Columbia, the NFHS reaches more than 19,500 high schools and 12 million participants in high school activity programs, including more than 7.9 million in high school sports.

Highlighting the revised guidance is the elimination of the tiered "Potential Infection Risk by Sport" that placed

sports in high-, medium- and low-risk categories. Instead, the SMAC suggests that state associations and other stakeholders consider five factors in assessing potential for COVID-19 transmission in high school sports.

Two of those factors are that prevailing community infection rates appear to be the strongest predictor for high school athletes being infected, and proven cases of direct COVID-19 transmission during athletics remain relatively rare.

The other recommended factors to consider are that participants in non-contact sports show lower rates of COVID-19 infection than those in contact sports, participants in outdoor sports show lower rates of infection than those in indoor sports, and using face masks for indoor sports results in similar COVID-19 transmission rates to those seen in outdoor sports.

Regarding the discontinuation of

the high-, moderate- and low-risk categories, the committee noted that as "knowledge of the virus that causes COVID-19 has evolved, we have increasingly recognized that transmission depends upon multiple factors that cannot be easily accounted for by simply dividing sports into three distinct categories of risk."

In addition to the shared experiences of many states participating in high school athletics, the SMAC used current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations as well as published and unpublished data in adopting the five factors instead of the tiered infection risk by sport as the best current guidance for participating in high school sports during the pandemic.

"We applaud the great work of the NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory

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PHOTO BY RYAN YOUNG

Kate Langwig is a quantitative disease ecologist and an assistant professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at Virginia Tech.

Vaccine questions, answers: The basics and their history, importance and role in COVID-19

The new coronavirus vaccine may be the key to ending the pandemic. It joins a list of vaccines that over time have prevented serious illness and even death in the United States.

As demand surges for the COVID-19 vaccine, the spotlight now turns to understanding how vaccines, in fact, work.

In an interview with Jenny Kincaid Boone, Kate Langwig, a quantitative disease ecologist and an assistant professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at Virginia Tech, broke down the basics about vaccines, why they are important and how they have protected mankind for decades.

Q. Why are vaccines important?

Langwig: Vaccines are one of the most important ways to succeed in eradicating or controlling any infectious diseases. One of the reasons that humans today have fairly long average lifespans is because of vaccines. Vaccines have been this amazing scientific marvel, the best health care advance that we can even imagine over the last century that has allowed us to combat diseases that were lethal.

Q. What vaccines have been the most effective over time?

Langwig: Smallpox is the only human disease

to date that we have actually eradicated. That is in part because of the very high efficacy of the vaccine. Smallpox was responsible for some of the largest scale disease-caused human mortality events throughout history. We were able to eradicate it through vaccines. Also, polio, which can cause debilitating paralysis, has been eradicated in the U.S. and most of the rest of the world because of vaccines. They are absolutely critical to maintaining our health infrastructure.

Q. What does it mean for a vaccine to be effective? What should it do?

Langwig: Most of the time we expect that vaccines are transmission blocking, although for most studies, vaccines need to be more than 50 percent effective in preventing symptoms of disease. Transmission blocking vaccines protect individuals against becoming infected in the first place.

The COVID-19 vaccines currently licensed in the U.S. are more than 90 percent effective in preventing symptoms of the coronavirus in trials. We just don't know whether they block transmission yet.

Q. What has been most challenging about getting the message out to the public that having the corona-

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Super Bowl ad giants taking pandemic seriously, sitting this one out

Traditional big spenders on Super Bowl ads are sitting this one out and are letting stakeholders know that they take the pandemic seriously, according to Virginia Tech's Nneka Logan. "They want to stop the spread and are willing to put resources towards it. They're putting their money where their mouth is."

Super Bowl LV matching the Kansas City Chiefs and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers will be played on Sunday, Feb. 7, 2021, at 6:30 p.m.

Budweiser, Coke and Pepsi are among the brands refocusing their message in the age of COVID. In the case of Anheuser-Busch, which is donating its Budweiser ad spend to the Ad Council and to COVID Collaborative's Vaccine Education Initiative to increase vaccine awareness, they position the brand as a good corporate citizen, said Logan.

During the Super Bowl game, Anheuser-Busch will still run ads for other beverages in their portfolio of brands, such as Bud Light,

Michelob ULTRA and more. Similarly, while PepsiCo is not advertising its signature cola during the big game, they will still have a strong presence through their sponsorship of the halftime show.

"Coca-Cola recently had layoffs spurred by weak sales resulting from the pandemic," Logan said. "Reallocating dollars away from expensive ad spend may be a great way to show employees that they care. Taking care of your people, your employees – especially during tough times – is one of the best ways for a company to demonstrate a genuine commitment to corporate social responsibility."

"For those brands that have a serious message to share, they have to take special care to communicate in a way that doesn't heighten the audience's anxiety or further dampen spirits," Logan said. "They have to figure out how to communicate in ways that drive home the seriousness of their messages while helping people to feel empowered and hopeful. It's a tough challenge for advertisers, but the creative ones will figure out how to strike the right tone."

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PHOTO BY JESHOOOTS.COM FROM PEXELS

Radford University innovation makes dining experience safer and more convenient for students

Radford University has created a unique and innovative way for students to order and safely pick up food. It involves a phone and a locker.

The new Get & Go Dining Program allows Radford students with a meal plan to order food and drinks from participating restaurants on campus from their phones and pick it up from temperature-controlled lockers

stationed near the dining establishments from which they ordered.

The university, in partnership with Chartwells Higher Education, officially rolled out the mobile ordering Get & Go service at the beginning of the spring semester. Radford University is among the first higher education institutions to pair mobile ordering with a locker pickup service, according to James

Perkins, the director of University Services.

"We wanted to bring Get & Go to Radford for our students' convenience," Perkins said, "and also for safety during the COVID-19 global health pandemic."

Dining at Radford University has traditionally been a communal experience, said Lauren Snelson, senior operations manager for University Services. "Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have had to reinvent the dining experience. This program gives our guests the option to reduce contacts while still enjoying their campus favorites."

It also reduces lines at dining establishments. "It's fast and convenient, and it's so much better than standing in line and waiting," said sophomore Gracie Osborne of Marion, Va. "Plus, it cuts down on meal time, which helps if you're in a hurry to get to class."

Students must have a meal plan or One Card funds to use the Get & Go service. There is no additional charge for using the

system

"This program gives meal plan holders and ONE Card users the exclusive benefit of a one-of-a-kind ordering and pick-up solution," said Jade Sutherland, marketing manager for Chartwells Higher Education Dining Services.

The ordering process through Get & Go is simple, but first, users must download the GET app from the Apple App Store or the Google Play Store. Once the app is downloaded and opened, students select "Search All Institutions" and type in "Radford University."

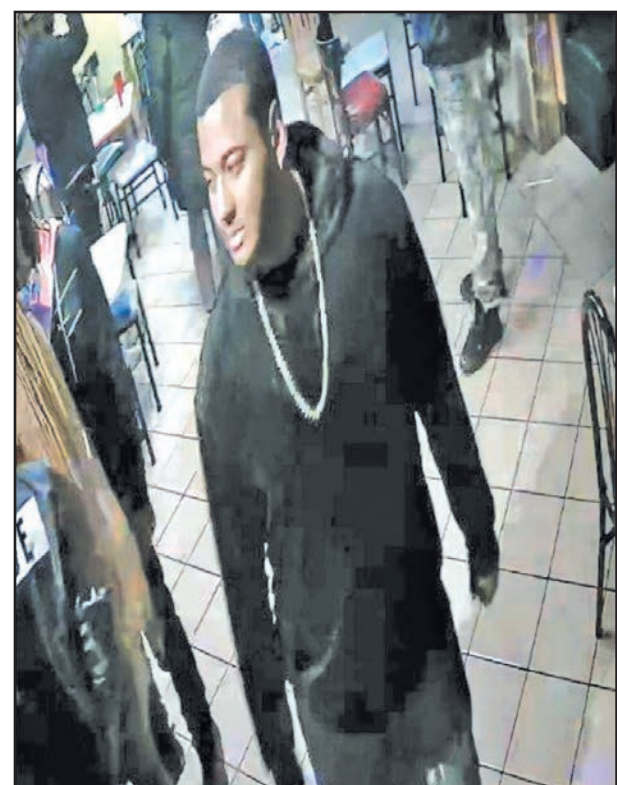
Once Radford University is selected, students must enter their university credentials. Next, the user will scroll down to and click "Start an Order" and select a restaurant from which to order. Students may select a time they want to pick up the order or simply select "ASAP."

Next, users choose food and drink items from the menu. Users can customize an order and add it to their

See **Dining**, page 3



Radford PD offers reward to ID shooting suspect



The Radford City Police Department is offering a reward for information about the suspect pictured above, believed to be involved in the shooting that occurred in the 400 block of Sanford Street on January 24.

The department is offering the monetary reward for information

leading to the identity and arrest of the person responsible for the crime. Anyone providing information can remain anonymous, and anyone having information about the suspect is asked to call (540)-267-3212 or email Jerry.Holdaway@radfordva.gov or Eric.Martin@radfordva.gov.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, Feb. 6:

Teen Dungeons and Dragons
Saturday, Feb. 6 and Feb. 20 at 4 p.m. at the Montgomery Floyd Regional Library online. DnD is now virtual on Discord. Staff suggest downloading Discord on your device for ease of access, but this is not required. Contact shodges@mfrl.org for more information. Ages 11 years and up.

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 features 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. The church's address is 525 Harkrader St., Christiansburg. For more information call 540-998-8788 or read more online at www.ChalkTalks.net.

Monday, Feb. 8:

Radford City Council Meeting
At 7 p.m. in the Radford Council Chambers at 10 Robertson St. in Radford.

Radford Special Education Advisory Committee Meeting
A Special Education Advisory Committee meeting will be held on Monday, Feb. 8, 2021, at 5 p.m. The meeting will be a Google Meet Virtual Meeting. The public is invited to attend. To be invited to the meeting with a virtual meeting link, contact Josh Brown, Chairperson, at 267-3083, or Daniel Hill, Director of Special Education, at 267-3223.

Chocolate Lovers Kit
At 10 a.m. at the Meadowbrook Public Library. Make a sweet chocolate treat for Valentine's Day for someone special or for yourself. Supplies are limited.

Virtual STEM Club Meeting
At 1 p.m. at the Christiansburg Library. Pick up the activ-

ity materials by Saturday, Feb. 6. Email shodges@mfrl.org for information.

Tuesday, Feb. 9:

YMCA at Virginia Tech Souper Bowl Challenge
Join in the first YMCA at Virginia Tech Souper Bowl Contest in partnership with Souper Hero Blacksburg. This is a fundraising event that also supports a new local business, Souper Hero. Tickets cost \$20.21 each and are available until Sunday, Feb. 7 at 5 p.m. Each ticket is for one Souper Bowl Challenge five-soup sampler from Blacksburg Souper Hero (3.5 ounces each) with crackers made by Blacksburg Bagel. The soups will be Seafood Gumbo, Horseradish Shrimp, Vietnamese Noodle, Brunswick Stew and Roasted Garlic and Potato. Purchase a ticket at <https://www.eventeny.com/events/ymcasouper-bowl-1046/>. Collect your sampler on Tuesday, Feb. 9, and enjoy. Return to the site to vote for your favorite flavor and be entered to win prizes. Voting opens at 6 p.m. on Feb. 9. Participants will also receive \$5 off a \$20 future purchase from Souper Hero. Proceeds will support the YMCA at VT local programs including Meals On Main, Senior Connections, International programs, after-school tutoring and sustainability initiatives. A limited number of tickets are available.

Radford City School Board meeting
The Radford City School Board will have a regular meeting at 6 p.m. at the School Administration Building, 1612 Wadsworth St., Radford. A copy of the agenda can be seen at www.rcps.org.

Sons of Confederate Veterans Meeting
Stuart Horse Artillery Camp 1784 will meet at 7 p.m. at Aly's Family Italian Restaurant at 3204 Riner Rd. Camp Commander Will Reed will present a talk on the History of the Fourth Virginia Infantry Regiment. Members of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) are invited to attend. In the event of heavy snow or ice that day, the meeting will be cancelled. For further information, call 320-4315 or 239-

9864.
Talking About Books: Non-fiction Virtual
From 11 a.m. until noon at the Blacksburg Library. This is a discussion of "Whispers from the Steppe" by Mary H. Jakubowski. Call ahead to reserve a copy and learn more.

Wednesday, Feb. 10:

A Beginner's Approach to Garden Photography
This is a noon Zoom presentation by Robert E. Lyons, Professor Emeritus University of Delaware, former director of the Hahn Horticulture Garden and a faculty member of the VT 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. 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 DSLR's and mobile/cell phones or both. Register at https://virginiat-e.ch.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4Ymy3HGvrxExkxf.

Virtual Book Talk
From 11 a.m. until noon at the Christiansburg Library. Discussed virtually this month is Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury.

Chair Yoga for everybody: Virtual
From 2 to 2:30 p.m. at the Blacksburg Library. Join Rachel for 20 minutes of chair yoga. Optional props are a pillow (any size) and a strap (a bathrobe tie works great). Call

540-552-8246 for details.
Talking About Books
At 11 a.m. at the Meadowbrook Public Library. To be discussed is Vanishing Half by Brit Bennet. Call ahead to reserve a copy. For more information call Janet Wren at 540-268-1964.

Thursday, Feb. 11:

Preparing Your Estate Plan
Estate planning is a topic people tend to put off or ignore, but it's also one of the most important things they'll ever do. Properly planning an estate helps prepare a secure future for generations to come. To be discussed is estate planning, including what to consider when creating a will, the benefits of trusts in estate planning, how to reduce estate taxes and how insurance can help protect survivors. Estate-planning attorney Bettye Ackerman will be available to answer questions. This will be a Zoom presentation at 4 p.m. To attend, go to www.zoom.com and enter meeting ID: 965 2535 6165 and Password: 130483.

Friday, Feb. 12

Backyard Bird Count
Friday, Feb. 12 - Monday, Feb. 15, 10 a.m. at the Meadowbrook Public Library. Pick up supplies to make a bird feeder and then count and identify the birds that visit. Supplies are limited.

Saturday, Feb. 13:

Dialogue on Race 2021 Winter Summit
This will be a Zoom presentation from 10:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. All Dialogue on Race events will be on Zoom or virtual until further notice. The keynote speakers are Dr. Abraham B. Hardee III, PhD, and Dr. Pete Guerra, MDA. Subjects include the Year in Masks, The COVID Pandemic, Race and Racism and Vaccination and Vaccines: What to Know and Do. Register at https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Jbi908JMSgq1264c-QKX8Eg.

Craft Supply Swap - Outdoors

At 3 p.m. at the Blacksburg Library weather permitting. Bring unwanted craft supplies and trade them for new stuff. All unclaimed items will be donated to the library or to the New River Creative Reuse Center. Please bring donations to the library at least four days before the event so that items can be quarantined. Call the library to make sure it's happening.

Thursday, Feb. 18:

Discord Comic Book Club
Join the Radford Public Library for an all-ages voice chat discussion of Comic Books via Discord. To be read and discussed this month is Jason Latour's "Spider-Gwen Vol. 1: Greater Power." Check it out on Hoopla at this link: Spider-Gwen <https://www.hoopladigital.com/title/12020853>.

Ongoing in February:

StoryWalk
All the month of February at the Christiansburg Library. Exercise both brain and body by reading and walking the trail. Begin at the College Street entrance of Downtown Park. This month's book is The Big Red Barn.

Through Friday, Mar. 5:

Glencoe Mansion "2020 in Review" Art Show
The show features the works of artists Cheryl Mackian, the Radford Photo Club and Teresa Regil, whose works all appeared in the Gallery in 2020. The exhibit opened to the public on Tuesday, Jan. 26. The event is free.

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.

Vaccine

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virus vaccine is important?

Langwig: One of the core issues that we've been dealing with in terms of vaccines in the last decade or so has been vaccine hesitancy. People have become more skeptical of vaccines and part of that is because we do such a

good job of controlling a lot of these diseases. The public health impact of these diseases is no longer at the forefront of our consciousness.

I think that COVID-19 might affect vaccine hesitancy. By the end of this, I don't know that there will be

anyone left in this country who has not been touched by COVID in some way. I wonder if that will result in sort of a renewed faith and a renewed enthusiasm for vaccinations.

Q. What is herd immunity and why is it impor-

tant?

Langwig: Herd immunity is this idea that you've vaccinated or protected enough individuals in the population so that you're able to control or even eradicate a disease. As a disease ecologist, we can make these calculations based on some really simple estimates, to know what proportion of the population has to be vaccinated in order for us to achieve a threshold at which we know that the reproductive rate of this pathogen is going to be less than one. It means essentially an epidemic will shrink.

If an individual gets infected, if every member of their group is protected by a vaccine, then that infection will not be transmitted to anyone else. That's the most important goal, assuming these vaccines do block transmission, for us to achieve.

Q. Is herd immunity a goal for all vaccines, not just the COVID-19 vaccine?

Langwig: Absolutely. Our goal for vaccination is always to reach herd immunity, and

that's the way we actually eradicate pathogens or control diseases. For example, measles is this incredibly contagious disease. So, as a result of how contagious measles is, it means we have to have a huge fraction of the population vaccinated. We have to have over 90 percent of our population vaccinated in order to be at herd immunity levels.

Oftentimes, we get pockets of people in specific areas that are below that threshold. For whatever reason, this is part of the vaccine hesitancy issue that has arisen over the last decade. We are seeing U.S. outbreaks of vaccine preventable disease. So we have measles, which can be really well controlled by a vaccine, but we're seeing it take hold through certain communities.

Q. How does getting a vaccine for yourself protect others?

Langwig: We are starting to learn this the hard way. When you get a vaccine, you're not just protecting yourself, you're protecting

others around you.

There are going to be instances where for whatever reason a vaccine doesn't work or maybe an individual can't get it, perhaps due to age or certain allergies. When we decide not to get a vaccine, it means that we're potentially putting another person at risk.

Q. How likely is it that people may have to get the COVID-19 vaccine more than once in the future, similar to a yearly flu shot?

Langwig: A major unknown about this [coronavirus] is how the strains are going to change. As an epidemiologist, what I worry about the most are these new variants that have emerged and are circulating in South Africa and the U.K.

The reason the virus is evolving is because it's having a lot of opportunities to evolve. The bigger your population size, the more opportunities you do have to change. So, as we get better at controlling this, we should have a better idea of what strains will be circulating. As we hopefully shrink the number of people infected, there should be less opportunity for it to evolve.

I would not be surprised at all in the future, if those vaccinated in the first round have to get the [COVID-19] vaccine again, due to mutations in the virus. It's not uncommon at all that a vaccine would go through a change to modify the strains of the virus it targets. We do this for the flu vaccine every year.

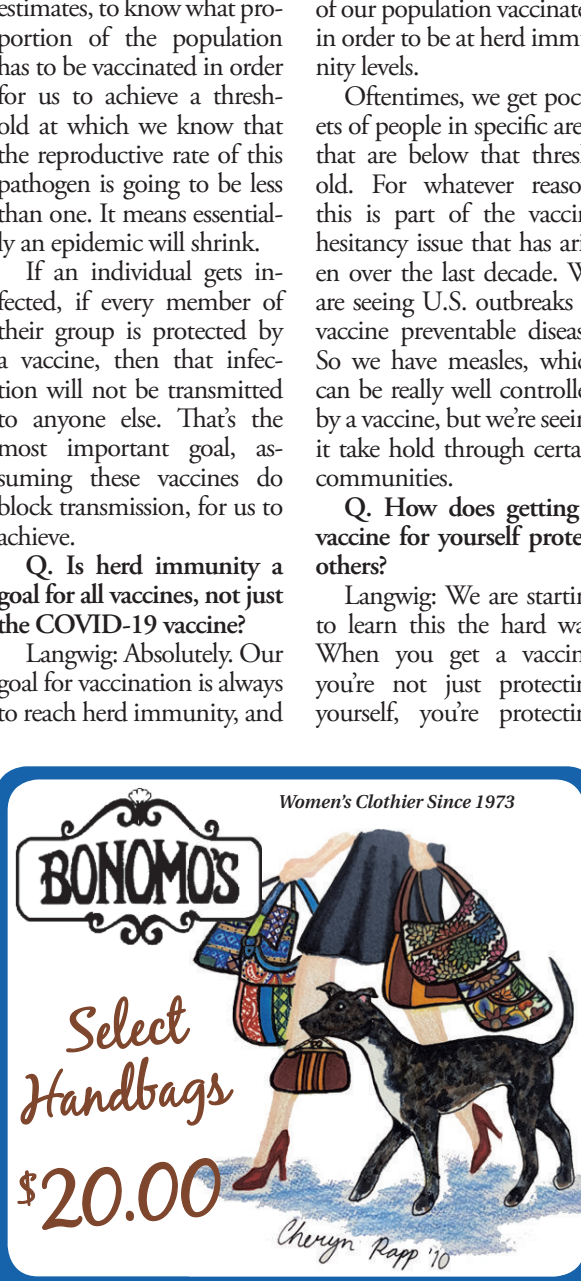
This isn't nearly as complicated as developing the vaccines in the first place, but rather it is making a small modification to vaccines that already exist.

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CLUES ACROSS

1. Chicago time	23. Fishing implement	42. Knot in a tree	17. A waterproof raincoat
4. And hearty	24. Hamilton's bill	43. River in NE Scotland	19. Stared sullenly
8. In a murderous frenzy (var. sp.)	25. An adult female hog		20. Slang for cool
10. Substance that imparts a hue	26. Emergency broadcast network	CLUES DOWN	23. Revolves
11. Italian's capital	27. Transcending national boundaries	1. Drive-in server	24. Don't know when yet
12. Oral flavors	34. Applied by spreading	2. Kiss	25. Sports shoe
13. The Pitt Family artist, Wm.	35. Lower in esteem	3. Red fruit eaten as a vegetable	26. Opposite of beginning
15. Most buffoonish	36. Entered the noneating larval stage	4. Foot and legwear	27. Chevy sedan model
16. A group of 8	37. Nears	5. Changes	28. Communist nickname
17. Overlords	38. Woke up	6. Wind deposited silt	29. 007's Flemming
18. Camera artists	39. Sells	7. Formerly (archaic)	30. Drama awards
21. Resinlike substance in shellac	40. Parts	9. Gold fineness measure	31. Badgered
22. Fundamentally	41. Dry: esp. of vegetation	10. Military snack bar	32. Towards land
		12. Capital of Uzbekistan	33. Leaseholder
		14. Old Tokyo	34. Capital of Gyeonggi-do
		15. Heat in a microwave	36. Yellowstone or Central

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In January, Joseph Cromer was elected to serve as a trustee and the treasurer of Downtown Christiansburg, Inc.

State Farm's Joseph Cromer elected to Downtown Christiansburg board

At its January meeting, the Downtown Christiansburg, Inc., board unanimously elected Joseph Cromer to serve as a trustee and as the organization's treasurer.

Cromer was born in Blacksburg and grew up in Rocky Gap. He graduated from Virginia Tech in December 1999 and shortly thereafter settled in Christiansburg, starting his working career in network marketing and management. He opened his own State Farm

agency on Jan. 1, 2015, starting from scratch. He has joked that his first policy was his own. Actually, it was a transfer policy from another State Farm agency so he didn't receive credit for his own policies.

Downtown Christiansburg, Inc., (DCI) is an all-volunteer organization of dedicated professionals who live in Christiansburg and advocate for the downtown area. DCI's goal is to bring awareness and restart

the dialogue about Downtown Christiansburg as a vibrant, affordable area with a strong history.

DCI promotes and works to help Downtown Christiansburg achieve its full potential through public advocacy, political involvement and community events. The organization fosters sustaining partnerships and creates visibility that enhances Christiansburg and Montgomery County for residents and visitors alike.

NRCC approved to offer heavy equipment operator program

New River Community College recently received state approval to offer a new short-term training program for those interested in operating heavy equipment.

An exact date and enrollment details for the first course offerings in the new program will be announced at a later date.

The heavy equipment operator and core craft skills courses will teach students the necessary basics to start a career as a trade apprentice and heavy equipment operator through a combination of online training and live lab

training.

The heavy equipment operator level 1 course is an 88-hour online class that offers hands-on training using simulators that replicate real-life operating scenarios through rotation-motion platforms and high-resolution 3D displays for excavator and wheel loader equipment. Students in this course will learn orientation to the trade, heavy equipment safety, identification of heavy equipment, basic operational techniques, utility tractors, introduction to earthmoving, interpreting civil drawings and using simulator exercises

for equipment basic controls, loading and unloading, excavating, and trenching.

"Implementation of the heavy equipment operator program will assist local business and industry in securing skilled employees," said Ross Matney, workforce training coordinator at NRCC. "The CAT simulators will offer realistic operating situations while the course curriculum also includes employable skills to assist students in obtaining employment opportunities."

The program will also include a 70-hour online core craft skills

course. The competencies covered in this class are basic safety, introduction to construction math, introduction to hand tools, introduction to power tools, introduction to construction drawings, basic communication skills, basic employability skills, and introduction to materials and handling.

After completing these classes, students will be eligible to sit for the Heavy Equipment Operator Level 1 Certification exam and the Core Craft Skills Certification exam under the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) accreditation

agency.

The program will be administered by NRCC's workforce development office as one of its FastForward offerings, which are low-cost, short-term training programs that prepare students for in-demand careers. Typically, students who take FastForward programs pay only one-third of the normal cost of training. Additional funds are also available to help offset training costs.

For more information, contact NRCC workforce development at (540) 674-3613 or email WFDtraining@nr.edu.

VT launches fully online MBA

Virginia Tech is launching its newest MBA program option: the Online MBA.

Responding to the changing needs of students and the workplace in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Pamplin College of Business intentionally designed this new program to deliver a deep understanding of business principles and practices to a wider range of working professionals through the flexibility of fully online delivery.

While fully online, delivery of the new program will be evenly split between synchronous and asynchronous experiences. "While students appreciate the flexibility of asynchronous learning, many shared with us that meeting synchronously best mirrors an on-campus experience. It allows students to participate actively in class discussions and study teams, develop working relation-

ships with their peers, and engage with Virginia Tech's top-notch faculty," said Dana Hansson, Virginia Tech's director of MBA programs.

The program is cohort-based, which means that students complete their studies in lockstep and have the opportunity to build meaningful professional relationships with their classmates. "We often hear that it's this cohort format that allows students to work closely with their peers and create a professional network that serves them well long after earning their degree," said Hansson.

Students can also choose to specialize their MBA curriculum in subject areas where Pamplin and Virginia Tech have a strategic emphasis and significant expertise, such as cybersecurity, entrepreneurship, health information technology and business data analytics. These topic

areas are popular choices for those seeking better jobs and career growth, said Parviz Ghandforoush, VT's associate dean for graduate programs.

The students will also have the option to study abroad, through the international business specialization. Optional international travel provides an opportunity to examine global business in action and take part in an immersive in-person experience with fellow MBA classmates.

As with all of Virginia Tech's MBA programs, the Online MBA will be taught by experienced Pamplin College of Business faculty steeped in scholarly research with practical applications. "Our faculty are at the forefront of research on emerging issues and technologies in their fields," Ghandforoush said, "and they are able to provide students with



PHOTO BY ERIN WILLIAMS

MBA students attend a class at the Northern Virginia Center taught by management associate professor Bill Becker, whose course was offered in a hybrid format (a mix of in-person and online classes). The new fully online MBA seeks to offer the best possible educational experience for students who value consistent interaction with their classmates and also want the flexibility of an online format.

current insight into private and public industry, government, and entrepreneurial solutions."

Beyond faculty, Online MBA students will also share the support and resources available to all Virginia Tech MBA students. Hansson said this includes

access to an established MBA alumni mentoring program, personalized academic advising, and membership in Virginia Tech's vast alumni network.

"We're excited to provide this new opportunity to professionals across the globe who want to further

their careers and join our talented group of students and alumni who are proud to call themselves Hokies," Hansson said.

Applications for the inaugural cohort will be due May 1 with classes starting in July and graduation expected in May 2023.

Transmission

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Committee throughout the past year to provide state associations and high schools with well-considered information during the pandemic," said Dr. Karissa Niehoff, NFHS executive director. "We appreciate the committee's most recent attempts to reassess how student-athletes can participate in sports moving forward. While we have to be concerned about transmission of the virus first and foremost, we also must consider the mental health of students who have been unable to play sports thus far this year."

The final factor for consideration moving forward is based on accumulating evidence that the majority of sports-related spread of COVID-19 appears to occur from social contact, not during sports participation.

The committee noted that preventing spread of the virus from social contact remains paramount to the continuation of sports during the pandemic. As a result, social distancing, use of masks, staying home when ill and proper hygiene must continue to be emphasized in the locker room, on the field

and court while traveling and interacting in the community.

In addition to the five factors to consider in assessing the potential for COVID-19 spread in high school athletics, the SMAC listed three other resources for consideration: materials from the CDC, the American Medical Society for Sports Medicine (AMSSM) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

The NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee, a 15-member body, is composed of medical doctors,

certified athletic trainers, high school coaches and officials, research specialists and state high school association executives that regularly develops position statements related to medical aspects of conducting high school ath-

letics.

"If the medical profession has learned anything in the past year, it is that we have to be open to regularly assessing all available evidence and make appropriate changes in policies and procedures in

places of business, schools and athletics," said Dr. Michael Koester, chair of the NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee. He practices pediatric and adult sports medicine at the Slocum Center in Eugene, Ore.

Dining

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cart. Once ordering is complete, the users select "View Cart." Then, they verify that the order is correct, select "Meal Plan and ONE Card" as the payment method and select "Place Order."

Full instructions for getting the app and using the ordering program are available on the Radford University Dining Services website.

Students may select from five different on-campus dining establishments: Au Bon Pain, Hissho Sushi, Papa John's, Starbucks and Wendy's.

Once an order is ready for pickup, students receive a text message with a pin code or link to a QR code. They then go to one of the four easy-to-find Radford-red pickup lockers that correspond with their order. Once at the locker, students can enter their pin codes or scan their QR codes and the locker doors open. Each locker is controlled to keep orders hot, cold or at room temperature,

which is a novel feature and represents the latest in contactless ordering technology.

Locker units are located in Dalton Hall for Au Bon Pain, Papa John's and Wendy's; the College of Humanities and Behavioral Sciences Building for Starbucks; and the Bonnie for Hissho Sushi.

"The program gives our

students one more layer of safety and comfort," Perkins said. "They know they can use the program to order and pick up food safely. This is just another measure we are putting in place to help our students stay and feel safe."

-- Chad Osborne

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OPINION

American Family Publishers: God has a mailing address

I read recently that some time back, the geniuses at American Family Publishers entered God in their sweepstakes. I kid you not. Sent him a notice and everything. They even came up with his address: a post office box in Bushnell, Fla., about 60 miles from Tampa. Apparently the Sunshine State really is God's country.

At the time, God must have been a member in good standing of the Bushnell Assembly of God Church since the church actually had the box.

Massive bonehead mistakes like that are just too good not to make fun of. Full speed ahead.

Wouldn't you like to be in a church that claims God as a member? Well, they all claim that God is present since it's his church to begin with, but how many churches not only have God on their mailing list but actually get mail addressed to him?

Kinda puts a little extra pressure on the preacher, doesn't it? I've been in the pulpit, and I never caught God actually sitting in my congregation taking notes -- Would he be a pillar of fire, which, I think, would certainly put the church building in peril, or a pillar of cloud as he was when he led the Israelites out of Egypt into the

Promised Land? -- but I can tell you the notion of God being physically present (Even as a burning bush?) and grading my sermons is enough to drive me to my awed knees babbling insensibly. But I guess God did judge my message every time I preached now that I think about it. I must have done all right; I'm still here and still praying for forgiveness.

"God, we've been searching for you," the sweepstakes notice exclaimed. Haven't we all? Welcome to the 21st century and modern times.

But the publishing folks apparently didn't do much homework

and learn an awful lot about the nature and characteristics of the Almighty. They didn't seem to realize that God has more than a few resources at his disposal because they trumpeted that if God were to win, "What an incredible fortune there would be for God! Could you imagine the looks you'd get from your neighbors?"

Like God needs a measly few million bucks. And seeing as how God does indeed hang out with a better class of folks -- those angels and all -- I can't imagine Heaven's suddenly gonna be overrun with envy because the creator of all there is won a stupid contest.

And what would God need with all those magazines anyhow? As if he needs to read them to find out what's going on.

One thing I never did find out, though, that would have been mighty interesting to discover: Who was the chump who got the duty of telling God he didn't win the sweepstakes? Oh, that's right. Nobody. God already knew.

The author is a man of a certain age who is a devout Christian but who nevertheless isn't shy about poking fun at the foibles and the foolishness pulled off by both the folks who worship God and those who don't.

Health district director: High demand for COVID-19 vaccine creating anxiety, frustration

Good news: COVID-19 cases are declining in the New River Valley.

Bad news: The public's anxiety and frustration about receiving a coronavirus vaccine is reaching new heights.

The frenzied search for a vaccine needs to stop, said Dr. Noelle Bissell, health director of the New River Health District, during Wednesday's virtual meeting with members of the news media.

She said some people who are eligible to receive the vaccine in phase 1b are making multiple appointments with different providers. This creates a bottleneck in the system and takes too much time to reconcile, an estimated

400 hours for the district so far, she said.

Right now, demand for a vaccine exceeds the dosage amount that the district receives weekly from the Virginia Department of Health.

"There's just not enough vaccine for everyone who needs it or wants it, and we get that," Bissell said. "I'm asking that everyone be a part of the solution and let us do the appointments as smoothly as we can."

Last week, the district's appointments for phase 1b were scheduled through March.

Bissell also called on people to be patient if they are not yet eligible to receive a vaccine. Right

now, the district is vaccinating people in the phase 1b priority group, which includes those older than 65 and essential workers such as teachers and police officers.

"We're going to ask that everyone cheer every vaccine that's given, even if it's not in your arm," she said. "Every dose is a shot against this pandemic, and every dose is a dose closer to herd immunity. That's the light at the end of the tunnel."

The district receives about 2,000 doses a week from the Virginia Department of Health, and Bissell said she doesn't expect that amount to increase until late March. Additional supplies could

come from several new vaccine versions that are nearing approval.

The district keeps a standby priority list at its vaccine clinics, and if there are extra vaccine doses at the end of the day, staff will contact people on that list, Bissell said. Though a vial of the Moderna vaccine contains 10 doses, and a vial of the Pfizer vaccine has five doses, at times a vial may contain an extra dose, Bissell said.

"We use every single dose every single day," she said. "We will not waste a single dose of vaccine."

National pharmacy chain CVS announced this week that it will ad-

minister the COVID-19 vaccine, and Bissell said the commonwealth is communicating with the chain now to understand how that will work. The district already is working with several local pharmacies to administer the vaccine to people in the phase 1b group.

Overall, Bissell said, she is pleased that there has not been a significant spike in positive COVID-19 cases in the region since students returned to Virginia Tech and Radford University last month for the spring semester.

"The universities are continuing to do a good job of reminding students to remain vigilant," she said.

COVID-19 cases in the New River Health District overall are down, following a bump after the holidays, Bissell said.

She reiterated that there continues to be limited evidence of coronavirus spread in K-12 schools when universal masking and other mitigation measures are in place. She added that vaccinating school staff in phase 1b is an important step.

"I do think we are in a good position to look at getting our schools back into session," Bissell said.

People who fall in phases 1a or 1b must pre-register for the vaccine at www.nrvroadtowellness.com or by calling the district's hotline at 540-838-8222.

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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.

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Virginia hospitals have administered 435,000+ COVID-19 vaccine doses so far

RICHMOND -- Virginia hospitals have administered 435,358 doses of the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines since the commonwealth received the first shipment of doses in mid-December.

That total reflects doses administered by hospitals as of Tuesday, Feb. 2, and it represents a 37 percent increase from the more than 317,000 administered doses reported by the Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association (VHHA) the week before.

Progress on vaccine administration in Virginia is contingent on a steady, predictable supply of doses available to hospitals and other health care providers participating in the vaccination effort. Federal government officials have indicated that Virginia can expect to receive roughly 100,000 vaccine first doses per week for the foreseeable future, though the Biden administration has indicated it plans to boost weekly vaccine distribution to about 122,000 doses per

week.

Virginia recently modified its vaccine distribution plan. The commonwealth is now sending vaccines to local health departments for distribution. Hospitals are no longer receiving direct vaccine dose shipments. As a result, Virginia hospitals currently have about 22,000 first doses remaining after the recent allocation from local health departments. That is the equivalent of a few days' supply of doses, which will soon be exhausted.

Virginia House passes automatic expungement legislation

RICHMOND, -- The Virginia House Democratic Caucus Wednesday passed HB 2113, a bill that would establish a process for automatic expungement by the Virginia House of Delegates. Automatic expungement is one of the House Democrats' priorities in their ongoing efforts to eliminate systemic racism from the commonwealth's criminal justice system and create a more equitable Virginia.

"A clean slate is essential to help Virginians who are trying to turn their lives around," said House Democratic Majority Leader Charniele Herring. "For too long our criminal justice sys-

tem has failed our most vulnerable communities, disproportionately impacting communities of color, while at the same time uplifting the privileged. I am proud to sponsor this necessary legislation that will change the lives of so many in Virginia. People who have served their sentence and gone on to be upstanding members of society should not continue to be punished for past mistakes. Instead, they should be allowed to fully reintegrate into society and contribute to our commonwealth"

The legislation would allow those with certain non-violent felony and misdemeanor convictions and charges

in Virginia to have their records expunged. HB 2113 creates a process that will give thousands of Virginians a second chance and allow them to create stronger futures.

Automatic expungement has been studied and endorsed by the Virginia Crime Commission. Automatic expungement does not require applicants to file a court petition and pay legal fees, making it a more equitable approach since it does not favor those with greater resources and connections.

According to the Virginia Crime Commission, five other states have already enacted automatic expungement.

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Virginia Tech recognized among best workplaces for commuters in 2021



The Hokie Bike Hub offers the university community a free center to fix their bikes, learn new skills, and connect with fellow cyclists. Meishel Desouto for Virginia Tech.

Virginia Tech has been cited as one of the 2021 Best Workplaces for Commuters in offering outstanding commuter programs and benefits to students and employees.

Best Workplaces for Commuters is an innovative membership program that provides qualified workplaces, universities and sites with national recognition for providing exceptional commuter benefits.

Virginia Tech is one of 41 universities to receive the honor in 2021.

The Virginia Tech Alter-

native Transportation Department offers the campus community a range of commuter benefit options and programs:

Free access to the award-winning Blacksburg Transit bus system with a Virginia Tech ID.

The Hokie Bike Hub, a free, self-service bike repair and maintenance facility for students, faculty, and staff.

Ride matching and a Guaranteed Ride Home program through RIDE Solutions.

Free bus service between

the Blacksburg campus and the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine and Research Institute on the Roanoke campus.

The department promotes safe cycling by offering cycling safety courses, hosting events and providing educational materials throughout the year. The department also launched the Heads Up Hokies safety campaign to encourage Hokies and community members traveling across campus on foot, by bike, e-scooter, bus or car to keep their heads up, act predictably and pay attention to their surroundings.

“The Alternative Transportation Department is proud to once again earn a spot on the Best Workplaces for Commuters list. It shows that we remain committed to offering our community the best services and options for commuting,” said Nick Quint, transportation network manager and interim Fleet Services manager.

OBITUARY

Spradlin-Harvey, Micajahala Lynne

Micajahala Lynne Spradlin-Harvey, 82, of Blacksburg, died Thursday, Jan. 28, 2021, in her home.

She was born in McDowell, Ky., on August 4, 1938, to the late William Cager and Lucy Hall Spradlin. She was preceded in death by her husband, Franklin D. Harvey. She is survived by her daughter, Rebecca Seagraves; two sons, A. Stephens Harvey and Dan-

iel Harvey; a sister, Cindy Carlisle; 11 grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.

Memorial services were conducted on Thursday, Feb. 4, 2021, at 2 p.m. in the McCoy Funeral Home Chapel. Memorial contributions may be made to Good Samaritan Hospice.

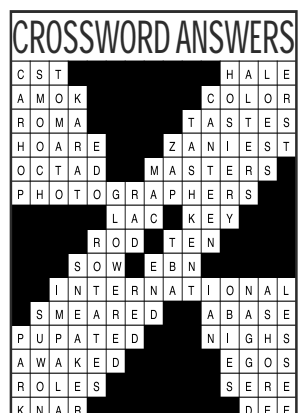
Arrangements by McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg.

Super Bowl

from page 1

VT associate professor Nneka Logan's expertise is focused in public relations, organizational communication, corporate discourse, race and diversity. Her work has been published in the Journal of Public Relations Research, Public Relations Review, Public Relations Inquiry, the Journal of Business Eth-

ics and in other scholarly outlets. Prior to earning her doctorate, she worked in a variety of communication roles for a multibillion-dollar corporate organization and its subsidiaries for more than nine years, managing internal, external and executive communication strategies, tactics, programs and projects.



ANGLICAN CATHOLIC

St. Peter the Apostle Anglican Church, 230 W. First St., Christiansburg, VA. Fr Peter Geromel OHI Th.M., Vicar. Fr. Alex Darby, “Associate”, 540-382-0432/540-270-9166. Sundays: 8:00 am & 10:00 am Holy Eucharist followed by Christian Education and refreshments. Holy Communion most Thursdays at 12Noon, other Holy Days as announced. Traditional services use the 1928 Book of Common Prayer and 1940 Hymnal. Handicapped accessible. All are welcome. Come worship with us! Website: www.stpetersacc.org. Follow us on Facebook

St. Philip’s Anglican Church, 306 Progress Street, NE, Blacksburg, Virginia 24060, (540) 552-1771, www.stphilipsblacksburg.org. Reverend Fr. Wade Miller, Priest. Eucharist Sundays at 11am and Wednesday’s at 12pm.

St. Thomas Anglican Church - located at 4910 Hubert Rd, NW Roanoke, Va. Traditional Liturgical Lenten Services, Sunday at 10:30 am. Call (540) 589-1299 or visit www.sttofc.org for midweek masses and events. (In Roanoke, go E on Hersherberger, L on Hubert to 4910).

BAPTIST

First Baptist Church on 3rd Ave., 215 Third Ave. at the corner with Downey St. We are committed to personal spiritual growth and to providing leadership in community ministry. We celebrate the dignity and worth of all persons, created in the image of God. Sunday Bible Study Groups - 9:45, Sunday Worship - 11:00. Website: www.fbradford.org, 540-639-4419. Worship is broadcast live on JOY radio, 93.1 FM and 890 AM.

Trinity Community Church, 1505 N. Franklin Street, C’burg. John Altizer, Lead Pastor, Brian Cockram, Associate Pastor, 382-8121. Worship at 10:45 a.m., Outreach Ministries - 6:00p.m. Wednesday, Growth Groups - 5:00p.m. Sunday, Youth and Children’s Ministry - 5:00p.m. Sunday, www.trinitycburg.org

CHURCH OF CHRIST

Blacksburg Church of Christ, 315 Eakin St., 552-1331. Sun. Bible Classes 9:30 a.m., Sun. Worship 10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m., Wed. Bible classes, 7 p.m., Outreach Minister Curt Seright, Community Minister Tom Gilliam.

Faith Christian Church of Christ, 305 3rd Street, Christiansburg, David Rhudy, Minister, 382-4628, Sunday School 10 am; Worship 11 am; Evening Worship 6:30 pm; Wednesday night Bible Study for Women and Men 6:30 pm. We welcome you to any and all of our services.

CHURCH OF GOD

New Hope Church of God, 1404 Mud Pike Rd., C’burg. Rev. T. Michael Bond, pastor, 731-3178. Sun. School 10 a.m., Worship 10:50 a.m., 6 p.m. Thurs., 7:00 p.m.

West Radford Church of God, 1824 West Main Street, Radford, VA 24141, Sunday School— 10:00A.M. Morning Worship— 11:00A.M., Children’s Church 11:00A.M. Sunday Evening – 6:00P.M., Wednesday Night – 7:00P.M., Pastor Danny Newman, Church Office – 540-639-6562 or 804- 921-0828.

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

Christiansburg Church of the Brethren, 310 South Franklin Street. Pastor: Paul J. Stover Jr. 540-797-5015. Sunday School 10 a.m.; Morning Worship 11 a.m.; Bible Study 10:30 a.m. Tuesdays. Website: www.christiansburgcob.org. A loving family, fueled by the Holy Spirit, grounded in God’s Word, and

Montgomery County

WORSHIP DIRECTORY

Families Deserve Respect

Read Numbers 1:1 through 2:34

In our fragmented families today, it is difficult to understand the closeness of Israelite families. They worked together, lived in the same area, and had tribal leaders who counseled them, taught them God’s Law, and arbitrated their disputes. God appointed a leader from each tribe to help Moses count the men of his tribe. God also told them where to arrange their tents so each tribe lived together. By living so closely together, they must have learned a great deal about getting along with one another.

So the Israelites did every

thing the Lord commanded Moses; that is the way they encamped under their standards, and that is the way they set out, each of them with their clan and family (Numbers 2:34).

In today’s society, respect is often a missing ingredient in families. Often, families intentionally live a distance from each other so they don’t have to spend much time together. Maybe we should return to the Israelite model and learn to appreciate and depend on one another more.

Thought for Today: The family structure is important to God.

Quicklook: Numbers 2:32–34

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

delivering Jesus forgiveness and love to all people. Come as you are... you are welcomed!

LUTHERAN

Luther Memorial Lutheran Church ELCA, 600 Prices Fork Rd, Blacksburg. Weekly Online Worship at www.lmlc.org. We are a Reconciling in Christ congregation that welcomes and affirms all people just as they are. For information on Bible studies and Wednesday Vespers, email luthermemorialblacksburg@gmail.com, or contact the church office, (540) 951-1000. Rev. Monica Weber, pastor.

MULTI-CULTURAL

NON-DENOMINATIONAL Christian Growth Center, 1850 Electic Way, Christiansburg, VA 24073 (beside Hubbell Lighting). Sunday Worship: 9:30am Prayer, 10:00am Service *Nursery Available. Lead Pastor: Todd Hallinan. Founding Pastor: Rob Sowell. Mission: Sow, Grow, & Go Sow Faith! Grow in Righteousness! Go into all the world in the authority of the believer! 540-382-2908.

PENTECOSTAL HOLINESS Merrimac Pentecostal Holiness Church, Rev. Richard Hall (540) 552-7194. pastorhall29@gmail.

com. Sunday School at 10 a.m. and morning worship is 11 a.m. Evening service at 6 p.m. and Wednesday at 7 p.m.

Radford Worship Center, 1820 Second Street, Radford, 639-6287, Our music is passionate, our worship is real, and Pastor Hal Adams brings relevant messages for everyone at any place on their journey, Sunday Worship Experience at 9:00 AM & 10:45 AM, Wednesday Family Night at 7 PM, Children Ministry provided for all services, join us as Love, Grow, Serve, find us on facebook and Instagram

Walton Pentecostal Holiness Church, 4003 Morning Glory Rd., off Walton Rd. on Rt. 114. 731-1755. Lee Sarver, pastor. Sun. School 9:30 a.m., Worship 10:30 a.m. & 6: p.m., Wed., 7 p.m.

UNITED METHODIST

Asbury United Methodist Church, 500 Stuart Street, Christiansburg. 540-382-0743. Rev. Ryan Schaeffer. Sunday School, 10:15 a.m., Sunday Worship, 11:30 a.m., Wednesday Bible Study 7pm, alternating month’s with Schaeffer Memorial Baptist Church, Senior Bible Study Thursday, 10:30

a.m. All are welcome.

Central United Methodist Church, 803 Wadsworth Street, Radford. 639-3529. 8:30 a.m. Sunday Services: 8:30am (interpreter provided); 9:45am Sunday School (interpreter provided); and 11:00a.m. Wednesday Bible Study: 6:30p.m. Child care is provided. www.central-methodistchurch.com.

St. Paul United Methodist Church, 220 W. Main St., C’burg. Rev. Moonsup “Paul” Song (540) 382-2410. Sunday Worship 10 a.m., Sunday School 9 a.m. Live streaming Sunday Service - www.twitch.tv/stpaulumc

WESLEYAN

Christ Wesleyan Church, 525 Harkrader Street, C’burg. Facebook LIVE service Sundays at 9:00 AM., Public Worship service at 11:00 AM. Sunday School for adults - 10:00 AM. Pastor: Gale Janofski 574-306-7682. Website: christwesleyan-church.org

OBITUARIES

Hayes, Phyllis Anne Deitz

Phyllis Anne Deitz Hayes, 87, of Claytor Lake, passed peacefully on February 1, 2021, surrounded and supported by her family and caregivers in the final days of her life.

She was preceded in death by her parents Violet and Lloyd Deitz, siblings Anita and John, and her loving husband of 64 years, Charles.

Phyllis was born in Homestead, Fla., on Jan. 15, 1934. She attended Homestead High School and the University of Florida.

Phyllis worked for many years in the banking industry from First and Merchants teller to Crestar Vice President. She was always a Southern lady and hostess, sensitive to other's feelings and gracefully putting them at ease. Her wit, cheerful spirit and unflinching kindness will be sorely missed by all who knew her. She enjoyed participating in many activities from cooking, golfing and playing cards to sharing travel adventures with her husband. She loved animals, freely petting any dog she encountered. She enjoyed feeding birds and watching the ducks on the lake from her porch.

Phyllis was full of curiosity, always appreciating the most unusual things as if it was her responsibility to make everything feel loved. She cherished her neighbors and was a loyal friend.

She was an active member of the General



William Campbell Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. She served the chapter as treasurer from 2004-2007 and corresponding recording secretary through 2010. This would have been her twentieth year of service.

Phyllis is survived by her children, Chuck Hayes and his wife, Valerie, of Christiansburg, Bob Hayes of Christiansburg, Joe Hayes and his wife, Bonnie, of Radford, and her daughter, Mary Heavener and her husband, Chuck, of Blacksburg. She was also blessed with four grandchildren: Bryan, Hillary, Ashley and Kevin; and three great-grandchildren, Elijah, Hudson and Ryder.

Due to the pandemic, the family will remember Phyllis in a private memorial service. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that contributions be made to your local SPCA or The American Cancer Society. We would be honored if on a pleasant day you would pay your respects at West View Cemetery where she will be laid to rest with Charles.

The family would like to thank Phyllis' English Meadows family and Medi Home Health and Hospice for their dedication, kindness and love.

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

Raffensberger, Jr., Jack

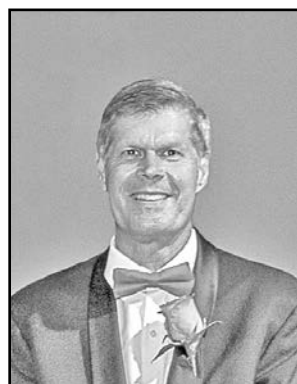
Jack Raffensberger, Jr., 62, passed away unexpectedly on Saturday, Jan. 30, 2021, at Carilion Roanoke Memorial, due to complications from Mantel Cell and T cell Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. He was recently diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma.

Jack was born on Jan. 2, 1959, in Girard, Penn., the son of Jack, Sr. and Janet (Hayes) Raffensberger.

Preceding him in passing were his parents, Jack and Janet Raffensberger; his paternal grandparents, Raymond and Evelyn (Daggett) Raffensberger; his maternal grandparents, Robert and Thelma (Lawrence) Hayes; and an uncle, Jerry Raymond Raffensberger.

Jack graduated from Girard High School, Class of 1977. Following graduation, he worked for the Girard School District for 29 years and continued his hard work ethic with the Montgomery County School District until his diagnosis with lymphoma in June 2020.

Survivors include his loving wife, Cristal Huff Raffensberger; Cristal's children and Papa Jack's grandchildren, Cristy (Keith) Keiper, grandchildren Zachary Huff and Kaylin Keiper of Dublin, Va., and Sabrina (Andy) Rutledge and grandson, Colton, of Narrows; Jack's daughter, Alicia Raffensberger Tellers (Michael) and Papa Jack's



grandchildren, Anthony, Owen and Cecilia Tellers of Erie, Penn.

Jack is also survived by his six siblings, Debra (Thomas) Karwoski, Sue (Paul) Frey, Sandy, Karen and Sheri Raffensberger; and his brother, Jeffrey (Denise) Raffensberger. He is survived also by many nieces and nephews, as well as his uncles and aunt, Richard and Dottie Hayes of Albion, Penn.

Jack was mostly known for his quick wit and big heart to all those he was in contact with, especially the special needs students. He was one of the "Good Guys," always positive and happy-go-lucky. He will forever be loved and cherished through the countless (funny) memories we have all made with him through the years.

The family would like to thank the staff and children at Auburn Elementary School for all of the love and support they provided "Mr. Jack." In lieu of flowers, please plant a tree in Jack's memory.

A memorial service will be Saturday, Feb. 20, 2021, at 4 p.m. in the McCoy Funeral Home Chapel with the Rev. Neal Turner officiating. The family will receive friends from 3 p.m. until service time.

Arrangements by McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg.

Southern, Leo Kenneth

Leo Kenneth Southern, 88, of Christiansburg, went home to be with his Lord and Savior on Thursday, Jan. 28, 2021.

He is survived by his wife of 66 years, Clara Vest Southern; daughters Patricia Southern Hughes (Barry) and Debra Southern Starner (Steve); seven grandchildren: Steven (Sarah), Lauren Starner Rowland (Matt), Ashley Hughes Stevenson (Nate), Erin Hughes Hong (Sung), Sarah, Austyn and Hannah; six great-grandchildren: Abby, William, Scarlet, Leonardo, Riley and Zoey; brothers Freddie (Frances) and Allen; sister Peggy Southern Schmidt (Bill); and numerous nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents, John Wesley Southern and Grace Lawson Southern; brothers Henry, Gene, Jerry, Earl and Johnny; and sisters Ida, Louise, Ruby and Catherine.

Leo served in the Army and was honorably discharged from the Korean Conflict. He



was a 50-plus year member of Faith Missionary Baptist Church where he served for many years as a deacon and Sunday school superintendent.

In 1969, he and his wife established Southern Printing Company, Inc., in Blacksburg. The business is still in operation, serving the printing needs of the surrounding area.

Funeral services were held on Thursday, Feb. 4, at 11 a.m. at Faith Missionary Baptist Church, with the Rev. Mike Vest and the Rev. Kenneth Wells officiating. Visitation was held one hour prior to the service. Interment followed at Sunset Cemetery.

Social distancing and the governor's mandates were observed. Face coverings were required.

The family was served by McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to Good Samaritan Hospice, Inc.

Shafer, Gairey Marcen

Gairey Marcen Shafer, 75, of Blacksburg died Wednesday, Feb. 3, 2021.

He was born in Giles County on May 14, 1945, to the late William Harold and Phoebe Merrix Shaver. He was preceded in death by his sisters, Paulette S. Kinsley and Joyce J. Shaver.

Gairey was a veteran of the U. S. Army. He is survived by his sister, Charlotte Ann Albert; a niece, Carrie Ann Hawks and her husband, Richard; a great-niece, Deanna Hawks;



a special friend, Larry R. Cook; and numerous other family relatives.

Funeral services will be held today, Feb. 6, 2021, at 11 a.m. in the McCoy Funeral Home Chapel with the Rev. Neal Turner officiating.

Burial will follow in the Memorial Gardens of the New River Valley. The family will receive friends from 10 a.m. until service time at McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg.

Yearout, Geraldine Cole

Geraldine Cole Yearout of Blacksburg went to be with the Lord on February 3, 2021. She was preceded in death by her first husband, John P. Cole

She is survived by her husband of 46 years, Bob Yearout; her sons, Mike Cole (Freda) and Joe Cole (Angela); a daughter, Pat Cole Cundiff (Bev); seven grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren; sisters Bernice Cordle



and Joan Bishop (Harry); several nieces and nephews; a close great-nephew, Matthew Wade; and many special lifelong friends.

A family memorial will be held at a later date. No visitation will be held due to COVID. In lieu of flowers, consider a donation to the Blacksburg Volunteer Rescue Squad.

Arrangements by McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg.

Weiss, Alta Frances King

Alta Frances King Weiss, 86, of Fairlawn, passed away Saturday, Jan. 30, 2021.

She worked for many years as a certified nursing assistant.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Arnold Robert King and Ella Agee King; her husband, Charles Andrew Weiss, Jr.; and sons and daughter-in-law, Charles Alan and Alice Weiss and Clifford Arnold Weiss.

Survivors include her daughter and son-in-law, Anita and Scott "Tater" Weiss-Jones; son and daughter-in-law Scottie Lee and Trina Weiss; brother



Phillip (Martha) King; nine grandchildren: Phillip (Amanda) King, Jr., Shannon (Bryan) Cook, Crystal (Chuck) King, Andy (Paula) Weiss, Tanya (Jason) White, Misty (James) Breeden, Brandy Weiss, Alisha Weiss and Noah Weiss; 18 great-grandchildren; and many other relatives and friends.

Graveside services were held at noon on Thursday, Feb. 4, 2021, in the mausoleum in Highland Memory Gardens in Dublin.

The Weiss family was in the care of Mullins Funeral Home in Radford. www.mullinsfuneralhome.com.

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<p>FOR SALE Unprinted end rolls of newsprint. 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.</p>	<p>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</p>	<div style="border: 2px solid black; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; background-color: #eee;"> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">SELL IT FAST</p> <p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">IN THE CLASSIFIEDS!</p> <p style="font-size: 1.1em; margin: 0;">To place your ad, call 389-9355</p> </div>		

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Pulaski unveils baseball name: the River Turtles

Marty Gordon
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

Appalachian League baseball teams started unveiling their new nicknames this week, and Pulaski's team will be known as the River Turtles.

When Major League Baseball announced this past fall it would be pulling team affiliations from the historic Appalachian League that included Pulaski, fans were left to wonder what name would be associated with a new "wood play" league.

The change meant small towns like Pulaski, Bluefield, Kingsport and Bristol would still have some semblance of minor league baseball with rising college freshmen and sophomores spending summer in the area. But it also meant that nicknames associated with major-league teams like the Yankees, Mets, Blue Jays and Twins would no longer be a part of the minor league teams' names.

Pulaski General Manager J.W. Martin said when it came to considering the new nickname, the franchise weighed feedback from the local baseball community, Calfee Park's history and other teams' locations in the New River Valley.

"After thoughtful consideration, we wanted a brand that represents what our ballpark is really all about," Martin said. "We have a welcoming, fun, family environment that puts smiles on faces. We think this brand captures that."

Pulaski's new brand identity is part of the evolution of the restructured Appalachian League. In September, the league announced it would transition to an elite, wood-bat summer league for the top 300 college players in America. Structurally, the Appalachian League will serve as an entity of Major League Baseball and USA Baseball's Prospect Development Pipeline for the 2021 season and beyond.

Bristol will be the "Stateliners," a play on the fact the city lies on the boundary of two states: Virginia and Tennessee. Burlington will be known as the "Sock Puppets" to tie in with the town's rich history in making textiles and socks.

The Johnson City team will be the "Doughboys." Zac Clark, the team's general manager,

said the inspiration for the name came from a statue in Memorial Park, which is just behind TVA Credit Union Ballpark. The statue is called "The Spirit of the American Doughboy" and was dedicated in 1935. Doughboy was a nickname given United States infantry men during World War I. The Doughboys players will stay in the dorms at East Tennessee State University during the summer.

Elizabethon baseball unveiled its new identity as the River Riders, reflecting the high level of recreation in the area. Other Appy League teams are expected to make announcements by next week.

"Our focus (in Pulaski) is to continue to build on the solid foundation of success this organization has enjoyed since 2015," said Martin. "Our fans and corporate partners are an integral part of that success, and we hope everyone will join us in making the first season of River Turtles baseball a memorable one."

The Appalachian League will become a part of the Prospect Development Pipeline (PDP), the effort between MLB and USA Baseball that establishes a player development pathway for amateur baseball players in the United States and will be part of the identification and development process for the USA Baseball Collegiate National Team and other future national teams.

Appalachian League players will be looked at by scouts from major league clubs. They will get instruction from former major league players and educational programming designed to prepare them for careers as professional athletes.

Dan Moushon, the President of the Appalachian League, said, "The communities of the Appalachian League have supported baseball since our founding in 1911. We are grateful to Major League Baseball and USA Baseball for bringing this exciting opportunity to our fans and look forward to welcoming players, coaches, major league scouts and fans into our cities next summer."

Plans include a 54-game regular season and an annual All-Star Game. Major League Baseball and USA Baseball will provide support for the league's staffing, player participation and administrative functions.

Auburn picks up close win over Christiansburg



Christiansburg's Matt Simmons drives to the hoop for a layup in the Blue Demons' 58-55 loss to Auburn. Simmons finished with 10 points. Tyrique Taylor led the Blue Demons with 12 points.



Michael Royal's free throws late in the fourth quarter gave Auburn the slim victory. Royal scored eight points in the win. Daniel Brotherton led Auburn with 15 points as 11 players contributed in the contest for the defending Class 1 state champions.

NHRA 2020 world champion, Riner's Matt Hagan won't relax in 2021



Riner native Matt Hagan drove his Mopar/Pennzoil/Sandvik Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat to the 2020 National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) world championship.



Three-time world champ Matt Hagan is ready for the 2021 National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) season to start.

After winning the National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Camping World Drag Racing Series Funny Car world championship and being part of a dominant season with Don Schumacher Racing, Riner's Matt Hagan isn't planning on relaxing.

Instead, the three-time world champ is eager to try and keep that momentum going in 2021 when the NHRA Camping World Drag Racing Series season begins March 11-14 with the Amalie Motor Oil NHRA Gatornationals in Gainesville.

"I'm very driven and goal-oriented and so is this entire team, and we want to see DSR, Mopar, Pennzoil, all of them stay on top," Hagan said. "There will be a lot of teams to watch out for, but I don't see us missing a lick when we come out there."

2020 was truly a year to remember for Hagan, who drove his Mopar/Pennzoil/Sandvik Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat to three victories and five final-round appearances en route to the championship. He was also an

integral part of DSR's sweeping the entire 11-race season in Funny Car, a streak that now stands at 14 straight victories for the organization.

Hagan doesn't take that streak lightly, even as DSR will field only two cars in the class this season. Hagan and former champ Ron Capps will face the challenge of keeping the organization's run of dominance going, but Hagan doesn't mind the added pressure, especially with star crew chief Dickie Venables in his corner.

"It doesn't change anything in my dynamic," said Hagan, who has 36 career victories. "I love teaming with Capps. When I first got started in Funny Car, he took me under his wing and showed me the ropes. As far as our team, Dickie is incredible, and I don't think we'll miss a lick."

That camaraderie and chemistry have driven Hagan to elite territory. With another championship, he would move into a tie for second place in Funny Car history, joining legends Kenny Bernstein and Don Prudhom-

me with four titles.

Much will have to go right in 2021 for Hagan to reach that level, but his team continues to operate at a high level. Despite nearly five months of downtime with no racing last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Hagan and his team returned in outstanding fashion, winning the first two races in Indy when the NHRA returned last July.

That success has left Hagan confident about what the team can accomplish this year.

"We all had to adapt, but we were all excited to get back out there," Hagan said. "We were prepared because our core group of people made sure we were prepared, and it's your core people who keep you moving forward."

"When I crawl in that car, I'm confident everything is done right," Hagan said. "I'm just blessed to be around those types of people."

—Josh Hachat, NHRA

Blacksburg High sweeps Region 4D swimming titles

Marty Gordon
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

Blacksburg High School dominated Wednesday's Region 4D championships at the Christiansburg Aquatic Center with wins over Salem, Pulaski, E.C. Glass and Amherst County.

The Blacksburg boys won with 213 points. Salem finished second with 144 points, E.C. Glass totaled 70 points to finish third, and Amherst County wound up fourth with 32 points.

On the girls' side of the pool, Blacksburg rolled to a 274-78 win over second-place Salem. E.C. Glass was third with 77 points, Amherst fourth with 35, and Pulaski finished with 18 points.

In the Region 3D competition, host Christiansburg finished fourth in the girls competition and eighth on the boys' side.

For the Blacksburg boys, Nick Fillo won the boys' 200-yard individual medley and 100-yard breaststroke, and Lewis Rockwell placed first in the 50-yard freestyle and the 100-yard butterfly. Sam Reilly won the boys' 500-yard freestyle.

Blacksburg's boys claimed the top four spots to sweep the diving competition with Eli Babcock taking the top spot. The Bruins also won four of five relay events.

Julie Anderson led Blacksburg with first-place wins in the girls' 200-yard freestyle and the 100-yard butterfly. Anderson also jump-started the girls' 400-yard relay, teaming with Madeline Combs, Andrea Leng and Emma Davis for the win. Anderson also teamed with Lexi Nussbaum, Norah Gulliot and Leng to win the girls' 200-yard medley.

Meghan Anderson claimed the girls' 200-yard individual medley

while Leng finished first in the girls' 50-yard freestyle and the 100-yard backstroke. Emma Davis led a contingent of Blacksburg swimmers to the win in the girls' 100-yard freestyle. 14-year-old Madeline Combs took the top spot in the girls' 500-yard freestyle. Grace Fillo won the 100-yard breaststroke, and Ella Semtner was first in the girls' 1-meter dive.

Earlier in the 3D competition, Christiansburg claimed the top three spots in the 1-Meter Dive. Natalie Jones was first, followed by Teaghan Wilson and Karlie Hall.

Hidden Valley took the girls' championship ahead of Cave Spring and Lord Botetourt. Christiansburg tallied 73 points for its fourth-place finish.

William Byrd claimed the boys' regional title with 126 points. Cave Spring was second with 109 points. Christiansburg finished with 19 points.

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