



Virginia unveils statewide COVID-19 vaccine pre-registration system

Virginians may now pre-register for the COVID-19 vaccine online at vaccinate.virginia.gov or by calling 877-VAX-IN-VA. Gov. Ralph Northam announced the launch of the commonwealth's new, centralized system Wednesday.

The system allows individuals to easily pre-register for the free vaccine, confirm that they are on the waiting list, and learn more about Virginia's vaccination program.

Virginians who previously pre-registered for the vaccine through their local health district do not need to sign up again. Those who have already pre-registered have been automatically

transferred to the centralized system, and their pre-registration status will not be affected.

"Virginians have questions about the COVID-19 vaccines, and these new tools will help them get answers, get pre-registered, and most importantly, get vaccinated," said the governor. "While our vaccine supply remains limited, we are doing everything we can to acquire more doses and put shots into the arms of eligible individuals in a safe, efficient, and equitable manner," said Gov. Northam. "I thank everyone for staying patient and continuing to follow public health guidance so we can mitigate the spread

of this dangerous virus."

Virginia's new website and call center are designed to streamline vaccine pre-registration by bringing disparate processes from local health departments together under one unified system.

Virginia is also launching a new call center for those who prefer to pre-register by phone. The call center is open seven days a week, from 8:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. It is staffed by 750 live operators who can answer questions about the COVID-19 vaccine and help people get pre-registered. The call

See **Vaccine**, page 5



Moog, Inc., to expand and create 75 new jobs in Christiansburg

As announced Tuesday by Governor Ralph Northam and reported in the Feb. 16, 2021, edition of the Onward MRV newsletter, Moog, Inc., a designer and manufacturer of high-performance motion control products and solutions, will invest \$10.7 million to transfer existing jobs and equipment from one of its Blacksburg facilities to a larger building in the Falling Branch Corporate Park in Montgomery County.

The company will have an additional 80,000 square feet at its new operation in Christiansburg to accommodate increased customers and demand and focus on production of its slip ring products for the industrial marketplace. Virginia successfully competed with multiple states for the project, which will create 75 new jobs.

"Moog is an important partner in the commonwealth, and it is exciting to see the company grow its capabilities in Mont-

gomery County," said Governor Northam. "The New River Valley has outstanding institutions of higher education and a world-class workforce, and Moog's continued investment is a testament to these assets. We are confident that this expansion will propel the company and the commonwealth's aerospace industry forward."

Headquartered in East Aurora, N.Y., Moog, Inc., is a worldwide designer, manufacturer, and integrator of precision control components and systems. The company's high-performance systems control military and commercial aircraft, satellites and space vehicles, launch vehicles, missiles, automated industrial machinery, and marine and medical equipment.

Founded over 65 years ago with only a few employees, Moog now operates in 26 countries and maintains a large presence

See **Moog**, page 5

Moss Arts Center adds six new events to 'HomeStage' series



Asheville, North Carolina-based band Steep Canyon Rangers joins the Moss Arts Center's "HomeStage" series lineup.

The Moss Arts Center has expanded its "HomeStage" series by adding six new events, including a celebration of the distinct sounds of Appalachia with bluegrass dynamo Steep Canyon Rangers in an exclusive performance streamed live from the stage of the center's Anne and Ellen Fife Theatre.

Tickets are now available for all spring "HomeStage" performances.

Ticket holders will have access to the performances as they happen and to a recording of each event that will remain available for seven days following the performance.

The following events are the newest additions to the "HomeStage" series:

Jake Shimabukuro, ukulele
Thursday, March 4, 2021, 7:30 p.m.

With his out-of-the-box blend of stunning virtuosity and deep musicality, ukulele master Jake Shimabukuro takes the four-string, two-octave instrument to places no one has gone before. He first came to the world's attention with his soulful and original take on The Beatles' "While My Guitar Gently Weeps." His rendition dominated YouTube in 2005 and currently has over 17 million views. This virtual night of music is followed by a question-and-answer session.

Sir Andr s Schiff, piano
Thursday, April 1, 2021, 7:30 p.m.

Sir Andr s Schiff is not only one of music's most revered pianists, he is one of its greatest interpreters and the audience's guide for a journey through remarkable sonatas by Mozart, Beethoven, and Schumann. This superb multicamera stream was recently recorded in front of a live audience in St. Peter's Church in Zurich, Switzerland.

"An Evening with Valeria Luiselli"
Tuesday, April 6, 2021, 7:30 p.m.

The recent works of celebrated Mexican-born author and 2019

See **HomeStage**, page 6

Deployed alumni use Zoom to offer advice and inspiration to Virginia Tech's cadets

The virtual classroom became a special opportunity for cadets to learn from the military service of Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets alumni.

Since 2004, the corps has hosted a Gunfighter Panel each semester, bringing to campus graduates recently returned from a combat deployment to speak about their experiences in the military, lessons learned and leadership challenges faced, and how Virginia Tech and the corps prepared them for life after college.

Rather than cancel this semester's event because of COVID restrictions on gathering, this panel was the first to feature five alumni who are currently deployed with military units around the world. Via a Zoom webinar with the entire cadet regiment, they offered advice and answered questions.

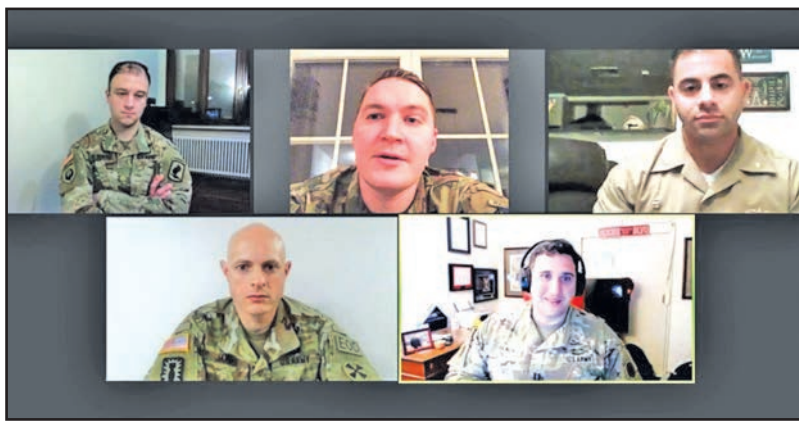
The participants at the Feb. 11 event were:

Army Lt. Col. Ian Jarvis, the deputy G34 (Protection) with the 8th Army stationed in South Korea. He graduated in 2003 with a

degree in sustainable biomaterials from the College of Natural Resources and Environment.

Army Capt. Matt Balach, the

See **Zoom**, page 6



Clockwise from top left: Virginia Tech alumni Maj. Brian Alberts, Maj. Nick Nelson, Lt. Cmdr. Anthony LaVopa, Capt. Matt Balach, and Lt. Col. Ian Jarvis talk with cadets via Zoom.

Officer Micah Pasquarell honored as 2020 VT Police Officer of the Year



From left: Virginia Tech Police Deputy Chief Tony Haga, Officer of the Year Micah Pasquarell, and Chief Mac Babb. Photo credit: Virginia Tech Police Department.

Office Micah Pasquarell has been honored as the 2020 Virginia Tech Police Officer of the Year. He was presented with the award during

a virtual ceremony. Pasquarell was recognized for his hard-working attitude, positive spirit, and ongoing collaboration with campus

community members and for excelling in his role as residence life resource officer within the Virginia Tech Police Department, forging connections with university members, and helping to lead departmental programming. Launched in 2011 by Virginia Tech Police and Housing and Residence Life, the Residence Life Resource Officer Program seeks to build interactive and educational relationships between Virginia Tech Police officers and students who live in campus residence halls.

At its core, the program strives to foster a culture of trust, support, and communication on campus. A team of three resource officers engages with students and housing leaders, delivers educational programs, conducts residence hall walk-throughs with resident advisors, assists in emergencies, and serves as mentors to students who have gone through the conduct process.

Since joining Virginia Tech Police in 2017, Pasquarell has built

See **Honored**, page 2

VT sociologist: Most people fall into violent extremism by accident



PHOTO COURTESY OF VITALINA FROM PEXELS

Violent extremism and domestic terrorism cases are on the rise, and racially motivated extremists are the biggest part of that. Virginia Tech's Ashley Reichelmann says belief in such ideologies often comes without much coaxing.

Recent examples of domestic violent extremism demonstrate that everyday individuals such as neighbors, family, and friends can believe in such ideologies without much prompting or coaxing, according to Virginia Tech sociologist Ashley Reichelmann.

"The Internet has provided a haven for validating one's views and offers an echo chamber," said Reichelmann. "However, recent research also reveals that most people fall into this information by accident. They are not necessarily looking for it, but rather click down a rabbit hole, link after link. Or it is shared with them by friends."

Reichelmann is an assistant professor of sociology and the associate director of the Center for Peace Studies and Violence Prevention at Virginia Tech. Her research focuses on racial

prejudice and white extremism.

"While we often blame individuals for 'falling victim' to conspiracy theories, we rarely discuss the lack of structural forces that could slow their spread and inform individuals of the factual validity of what they are viewing," Reichelmann said. "Given the increasing amount of exposure both younger and older folks have on the Internet, there is a pressing need to educate ourselves on how to become critical consumers of both information on the Internet and general discourse around us."

New federal efforts are aimed at preventing the spread of the disinformation to those who may be vulnerable or lack the skills to recognize it and argue against it.

See **Extremism**, page 3

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Saturday, Feb. 20:

American Red Cross Babysitter's Training

For ages 11-15 from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. at the Blacksburg Community Center, 725 Patrick Henry Dr. The fee is \$65 for residents and \$75 for non-residents. Participants will learn to take care of children and infants. Included is how to be a good leader and role model, making good decisions, solving problems and keeping children safe. Participants should bring a snack and lunch. The training includes American Red Cross certifications for babysitting and for pediatric care.

Teens Cook

1 p.m. at the Montgomery Floyd Regional Library online. Learn to make lemon curd by watching the librarians cook. Contact shodges@mfrl.org for more information.

Family Game Night

5:30 p.m. at the Montgomery Floyd Regional Library online. Join other kids and families for a live, interactive game night. Participants will play jackbox party night games in a family friendly setting. Email shodges@mfrl.org for more information.

Monday, Feb. 22:

Talking About Books: Fiction Virtual

11 a.m. - noon at the Blacksburg Library. Join for a discussion of "The Altruists" by Andrew Ridker. Call ahead to reserve a copy and get the link for virtual participation.

Library Space Camp Kids

3 p.m. at the Christiansburg Library.

Pick up special Library Space Camp kits starting February 22 and make pipe cleaner constellations and moon rocks and learn about the solar system.

Tuesday, Feb. 23:

Virtual Cooking With Your Instant Pot

5:30 p.m. at the Meadowbrook Public Library. Join Angie Helm for a virtual "Instant Pot" session to learn how to use an instant pot to create a quick meal.

Science Fiction and Fantasy Book Club: virtual

6:30 - 7:30 p.m. at the Blacksburg Library Join for a virtual discussion of "The Poppy War" by R.F. Kuang. Call ahead to get a copy of this month's book and to get the link.

Wednesday, Feb. 24:

Introduction to Cross Stitch: Virtual

2 - 3 p.m. at the Blacksburg Library. This class is perfect for those who have always wanted to cross stitch but have never known how to start. In this class, participants will go over what is needed to cross stitch, how to create the basic stitches, and how to follow patterns in order to create beautiful designs. There will even be some history along the way. Anyone interested in attending the virtual meeting can email Sally at sstauffer@mfrl.org.

Friday, Feb. 26:

Teen Creative: Jewelry Making

1 p.m. at the Montgomery Floyd Regional Library Library online. This

month's teen creative video will cover jewelry making and will offer up tips, tricks, and more.

Saturday, Feb. 27:

Outdoor Book Sale

10 a.m. - 4 p.m. at the Blacksburg Library weather permitting. Cost for books is \$5 per bag or \$1 for hardbacks and \$.50 for paperbacks. Gift books will be available for \$2 each. Call the library for more details and to that the sale will be held.

Sunday, Feb. 28:

Blacksburg Disc Golf Fundraiser

This is a two-division trophy-only event. The course has been modified into a temporary 16-hole tournament layout. Registration is \$30 and will include a two-disc player pack. The money raised will be used to reimburse the cost of the installation of the new tee pads at Blacksburg Municipal Park. This is a tee-time event. Final tee times will be posted on the event page after registration closes on the evening of Friday, Feb. 26. Participants should arrive at least 15 minutes before their designated tee time to check in. To register, visit https://www.discgolfscore.com/tournaments/Blacksburg_Municipal_Disc_Golf_Fundraiser_2021.

Tuesday, March 16:

Radford Reads with Monica Rodden

Join the Radford Public Library at 6:30 p.m. for a Zoom conversation with Monica Rodden, author of "Monsters among Us." Email Elizabeth at

elizabeth.sensabaugh@radfordva.gov for details about attending. The library has a limited number of free copies of this book to give away while supplies last, so those wanting a copy should let the staff know.

Ongoing:

StoryWalk

All the month of February, at the Christiansburg Library
Exercise your brain and body as you read and walk the trail. The walk begins 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 show features artists Cheryl Mackian, the Radford Photo Club, and Teresa Regil, whose works all appeared in the Gallery during 2020. The exhibit is free and open to the public.

Through Saturday, April 24:

'Unbearable Beauty' Exhibit at Moss Arts Center

The exhibit is 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. It is free and open to the public.

Honored

from page 1

a strong rapport with students and employees alike. These bonds have been integral to the continued success of the Residence Life Resource Officer Program. He continues to gain the trust of university members through his empathy, proactive nature, and outstanding listening skills.

These positive traits have been especially key in Pasquarell's efforts

to support students throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since the spring 2020 semester, Pasquarell has made it his mission to seek out students in on-campus housing and help offer them companionship during a difficult and often lonely period of time.

He routinely checks in on students, spending time with them in the residence halls, going on

walks, and meeting with them for coffee.

Pasquarell is an engaged contributor in many police department programs. He is highly involved in university threat assessment efforts, and he is a facilitator for One Love, a program that raises awareness about the warning signs of abuse and activates communities to work to change the statistics about relationship

violence. Further, he is a de-escalation tactics instructor and a member of the Virginia Tech Emergency Response team.

"Since I have worked with Micah, I have witnessed his knowledge, empathy, superior work ethic, sense of humor, and enthusiasm, all of which help elevate and extend the reach of many Virginia Tech Police Department teams and pro-

grams," said Caroline Green, threat assessment team coordinator.

"It is my honor to recognize Officer Micah Pasquarell as the 2020 Officer of the Year for the Virginia Tech Police Department," said Mac Babb, chief of police and director of security at Virginia Tech. "He performs his duties in a way that acknowledges we are all a team and our contributions are not

made to bring attention to ourselves but to benefit those around us. His actions are a testament to the university motto, Ut Prosim."

Pasquarell draws upon a decade of law enforcement in serving the campus community. Before joining Virginia Tech, he was an officer with the City of Alexandria Police Department for nearly six-and-a-half years.



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Conservative talk show host Rush Limbaugh dies of cancer at 70

Virginia Tech assistant professor Megan Duncan, a media expert whose research focuses on news credibility, political news and digital news audience engagement, says conservative radio talk-show host Rush Limbaugh was "a trendsetter and an extremely polarizing figure" whose talk show ushered in a new generation of people flipping their dial over [to AM radio] from the music stations."

Duncan said Limbaugh "found success in his career by

positioning himself as the alternative to mainstream news and developing relationships with audiences that felt personal – and often offensive. His show sounded nothing like public radio and other news radio shows."

The conservative talk-show host died Wednesday of lung cancer. He was 70. USA Today reported that his death was confirmed by his wife, Kathryn, at the beginning of Limbaugh's radio show, from which he had been absent for almost two weeks.

Some media analysts credited him with saving AM radio.

Duncan recognized what a polarizing figure Limbaugh was when she said "regardless of how fact-based my comments on him are, half will think I'm understating his impact on politics and partisan media and the others will think I'm being too soft on his misogyny, racism, and homophobia. He introduced words into the lexicon from "Dittohead" to "soccer mom"



Rush Limbaugh will most be remembered by media scholars for the way he changed how people want their political news delivered. From someone who doesn't hide their bias, who confidently takes pride in their bombastic delivery, according to Virginia Tech's Megan Duncan, an assistant professor in the Virginia Tech School of Communication, in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences.

to pithy, gross insults. And, their prevalence in kitchen-table conversations spoke to the true power he had to command audiences and influence public opinion.

"I think he'll most be remembered by his listeners as someone who explained the

world of politics in a way that engaged him," Duncan said. "I think he'll be remembered by the people who were targeted by his insults and ideological rhetoric as someone who raised the temperature on political bigotry."

OBITUARY

Wall, Samuel Marvin

Samuel Marvin Wall, 73 of Blacksburg went to meet his heavenly father on Feb.16, 2021 at Montgomery Regional Hospital. He was born in Roanoke on June 21, 1947 to the late Samuel Harding Wall and Kathleen Edna Wall. He was preceded in death by his father, mother, and his eldest sister, Phyllis Mae Peachey of Blacksburg.

Marvin was a United States veteran who served three years in Germany. He was a retiree of Moog Components group. Marvin was a member of North Fork Baptist Church in Blacksburg, where he served as deacon, Sunday school teacher, Sunday school superintendent, and a member of the choir. He was a loving man who devoted his life to serving the Lord, caring for his family and culti-



vating his family farm in Catawba Valley.

He is survived by his loving wife of 49 years, Delores Bailey Wall of Blacksburg; brother, Dennis Wall of Blacksburg; and sister and brother-in-law, Sandra Wall and James Givens of Powhatan, Va. He was the devoted father of three children, son Travis Wall and wife Crystal Wall; son Preston Wall and wife Katie Wall; and daughter Alicia Wall and husband Patrick Slate. Marvin was fondly known as "Pappy" to his four grandchildren, Allison Stanley, Lillian Wall, Samuel Wall, and Joseph Wall.

A graveside funeral service will be conducted on Sunday, Feb. 21, 2021 at 2 p.m. at Westview Cemetery with Pastor Danny Collins officiating.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

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CLUES ACROSS
1. Civil rights organization
5. Cause to lose courage
10. Outside entertaining area
14. Botswana currency
15. Comedic Actor Tim
16. Barbary sheep
17. German river
18. Take
19. Catches
20. Eating houses
22. Consumed
23. Lawyers try them
24. Hugs Jackman character
27. Basics
30. No (Scottish)
31. Duct
32. Athlete who plays for pay
35. Unit of distance
37. Female bird
38. Predatory reptile
39. Regions
40. Dishonorable man

41. Dry white Italian wine
42. A way to understand
43. Actors' organization
44. Beach hut
45. Disappointment
46. Police officer
47. Digital audiotape
48. Western Thai people
49. Of a polymer
52. Secret political clique
55. Sound unit
56. Cavalry sword
60. Whale ship captain
61. Eastern Austria spa town
63. Holds food
64. Filippo ___, Saint
65. Holds bottles of milk
66. Intestinal pouches
67. Arab ruler
68. Chicago political family
69. "Transparent" actress Kathryn
CLUES DOWN
1. Detailed drawing
2. Class of comb jellies
3. Musical symbol
4. Hall of Fame ballplayer Rod
5. Pouch
6. Split
7. Having wings
8. Set aside
9. Midway between northeast & east
10. Daughter of Acrisius
11. Periods of time
12. Rapier Ice ___
13. Any of several candies
21. Units of loudness
23. Central nervous system
25. Resinous secretion of insects
26. 007's creator
27. Separate from
28. Exposes to view
29. Harsh squeaking sound
32. Fishing vessel (Naut.)
33. Western Ukrainian city
34. The sea
36. Unhappy
37. Old miserable woman
38. Corn comes on it
40. Guinea pig-like mammal
41. Self-immolation by fire rituals
43. Fifth note of a major scale
44. Automobile
46. Military title (abbr.)
47. Expunge
49. Chadic language Bura-___
50. Something you win
51. Grab
52. Town in Galilee
53. Polite interruption sound
54. Italian Seaport
57. La ___, his own"
58. Tom Clancy hero Jack
61. These three follow A
62. One of Napoleon's generals

OBITUARIES

Gilmore, Stephanie

Stephanie Gilmore passed away peacefully at home, held in love by her family. She had just celebrated her 79th birthday.

Stephanie was the oldest child and only daughter of Della (Cecil) and Robert Gilmore. She is survived by her brothers, Tim Gilmore and Kim Gilmore, and was predeceased by her brother, Jim Gilmore.

Stephanie was born in Des Moines, Iowa, and grew up in the Sonoma Valley in California. She was valedictorian of her eighth-grade class at Dunbar Union Elementary School, graduated from Sonoma Valley Union High School in 1959, and attended the University of Minnesota. She transferred to UC Berkeley and married William Thomas in 1962.

After she graduated from UC Berkeley in 1963 with a degree in English literature, she and Bill went to American Samoa to teach English. Upon their return to California, they had three children: Katie, Eric and Megan. After her divorce, Stephanie attended graduate school at Antioch University and graduated in 1979 with a master of arts with a concentration in urban studies and planning.

She worked in public health for over 30 years, eventually relocating to Columbia, Mo., and retiring in 2004 from her position as the first-ever Chief of the Office on Women's Health for the State of Missouri.

She then moved to Blacksburg and became a beloved and active member of her housing community, Shadowlake Village, and the Unitarian Universalist Congregation. She reveled in being Granny to Eric



and Anna LoMascolo's children, William and Maggie, and developed a deep and affectionate relationship with Anna.

Stephanie later became Granny to Megan and Scott Barr's son, Evan, and built a meaningful connection with Scott around his work in social justice and underserved communities. She connected with Katie's husband, Michael Thomasson,

over their shared love of history and travel. Stephanie often talked about how proud she was of her kids; she loved watching Katie build a non-profit agency and nurture many budding therapists. She delighted in Eric's growth and development into the amazing high school history teacher of 22 years that he is, and she treasured Megan's almost 30-year career as an educator.

She was very close to her three brothers Jim, Tim and Kim, and their wives, Julie Eichenburger, Pamela Wiley, and Sue Katz. She also had close relationships with her eight nieces and nephews, who all adored her.

Stephanie was an adventurous woman, at one point strapping a kayak to the roof of her car and traveling around the U.S. exploring, and later in life living her dream of owning a VW Westphalia Vanagon and setting off on camping and traveling adventures.

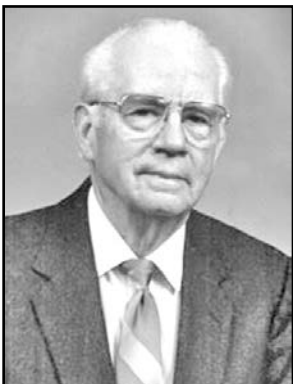
She is remembered by all who knew her as a community-minded, loving and giving soul who shed much light on all around her. A celebration of life will be held this summer at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Blacksburg.

Price, Jr., James Albert

James Albert Price, Jr., 96, of Lynchburg, died, Sunday, Feb. 14, 2021.

He was born in Pembroke on Aug. 24, 1924, to the late James A. Sr., and Cella Johnson Price. He was preceded in death by his loving wife of 67 years, Verna; one son, Bryan Scott Price; a sister Francis Shorter; and a brother, Daniel Price.

He was a veteran of World War II, having served in the United States Army. He received his bachelor's degree from Virginia Tech and his masters and Ph.D. from the University of Virginia. He taught at several schools in the Lynchburg area before becoming a professor in the engineering field at Central Virginia Community College. Jim loved



farming and enjoyed teaching. He was stern but very fair. Above all, he enjoyed watching his grandsons play sports.

He is survived by his son and daughter-in-law, Steve Price and Suzanne; grandsons Stephen Price and wife, Blair, and Eric Price and wife, Allison; two beautiful great-granddaughters, Carleigh Ann and Caroline Rae Price; a sister, Lois Wootton and her husband, Frank; as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

A graveside service will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 23, 2021, at 2 p.m. at Westview Cemetery, Blacksburg, with the Rev. Gary McCoy officiating.

Arrangements by McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg.

Johnson, Lee Warren

Lee Warren Johnson, 82, of Blacksburg, died on Feb. 14, 2021.

He is remembered fondly by his wife of 57 years, Rochelle H. Johnson; by his son and daughter-in-law, Eric and Ali Johnson of Palmyra, Va.; by his son and daughter-in-law, Mark Johnson and Hannah Witman of Vancouver, British Columbia; and by his four grandsons: Quinn and Casey of Palmyra, and Noah and Eli Johnson of Vancouver, B.C. He is also survived by his brothers, Mike of Lafayette, La., Gus of Slidell, La., and Eric of Picayune, Miss.

He was predeceased by his brother, Paul; his sister, Cathy; his mother, Violet; and his father, Warren.

Lee was born in Appleton, Minn., and graduated from Belle Chasse High School



in Plaquemines Parish, La. In 1967, after completing his PhD at Michigan State, Rochelle and he moved to Blacksburg where he began teaching mathematics at Virginia Tech.

In retirement Rochelle and he spent many years creating memories together through extensive travel, spending quality time with family and friends and simply being with each other at home. He very much enjoyed his students, teaching, research and writing mathematics books. He was a loyal Hokie to the end.

His family will miss his kind and loving demeanor, his special sense of humor and the wisdom he bestowed. A memorial service will be held later this year. Arrangements by McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg.

Harris, Brenda McCoy

Brenda McCoy Harris, 77, of Blacksburg, died unexpectedly Tuesday, Feb. 16, 2021, at her home.

She was born in Christiansburg on Aug. 19, 1943, to the late Everett Douglas and Pauline Ury Croy McCoy. She was preceded in death by her husband, Ronald Sherwood Harris.

She was a longtime member of Community Christian Church, McCoy, practicing a strong Christian faith in Jesus Christ. Brenda retired from the graduate school at Virginia Tech after over 45 years of dedicated service. She enjoyed being a green thumb raising her beautiful plants and flowers, as well as enjoying feeding and watching the birds outside. Above all else, she had a great love for her children and grandchildren.

She is survived by her daughters and



sons-in-law, Michele and Greg Dudash and Tracy and Mike Freeman; a son and daughter-in-law, Chad and Karen Harris; grandchildren Scott Harris, Bryant Harris, and Owen Freeman; a sister and brother-in-law, Rhonda and Doug Minnix; several nieces and nephews, numerous cousins, and her work family at the graduate school.

Funeral services will be conducted today, Saturday, Feb. 20, 2021, at 11 a.m. at the Community Christian Church, McCoy, with Mr. Chris Brandow officiating. Interment will follow in the Albert-Scott Family Cemetery, McCoy.

The family will receive friends from 10 a.m. until service time Saturday at the church. Arrangements by McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg.

Dudley, Helen Earley

Helen Earley Dudley, 99, of Christiansburg, passed away into the loving arms of her Lord and Savior on Saturday, Feb. 13, 2021. Our family is so grateful for the time we had with her.

She was born in Montgomery County on May 20, 1921, to the late Martha Gordon Earley and George Washington Earley.

She was preceded in death by her devoted husband of 67 years, Melvin M. Dudley; a son, Morris W. Dudley; a daughter, Margaret Dudley Preston; brothers Jim, John, Frank, and Wilson Earley; and sisters Delia Smith, Pearl Akers, Lucy Akers, and Hazel Oliver.

Surviving are her daughters, Carolyn



DeHart (Edgar) and Evelyn Ratcliffe; daughter-in-law Maxine C. Dudley; son-in-law Donald G. Preston; grandchildren Edgar H. DeHart, Jr. (Tabitha), Stephanie Carico, Donald G. Preston, Jr., Brian Ratcliffe (Melissa) and Christina Dudley; and six great-grandchildren.

The family would like to extend their appreciation to Good Samaritan Hospice (especially Denise, Kayla and Brittney) for their outstanding care of our mother during the last three months.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a memorial gift to the Shawsville Rescue Squad or Good Samaritan Hospice. Services will be private. Arrangements by McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg.

Kimbleton, Kenneth Nickles

Kenneth Nickles Kimbleton, 89, of Dublin, passed away Saturday, February 13, 2021.

He was owner and operator of K&K Marina and was formerly with the Radford City Police Department.

He was the last surviving member of his immediate family, having been preceded in death by his parents, Charles and Mary Kimbleton, and his wife, Ruby Albert Kimbleton.

Survivors include his sons and daughters-in-law, Kenny and Sharon Kimbleton of Belspring and Eddie and Terry Kimbleton of Dublin; grandchildren Kim, Josh,



Nick, Justin and Charlea; great-grandchildren, Cal, CC, Colton and Trent; and many other relatives and friends.

Graveside services will be held at 2 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 25, 2021, in the Highland Memory Gardens Mausoleum in Dublin with the Rev. Roger Graves and Bill Dotson officiating.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donations to Good Samaritan Hospice or the charity of your choice.

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

Mallery, Deanna Burnett

Deanna Burnett Mallery, 78, of Radford, passed away Tuesday, Feb. 16, 2021.

Left to cherish her memory is her husband of 43 years, Gary E. Mallery.

Service will be private.

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

Extremism

from page 1

“While groupthink does not explain how individuals come to believe such ideas, it could explain how they can remain captivated with little to no ability to reflect on the ideas’ plausibility or lack of evidence,” the VT associate professor said.

Last fall, FBI Director Christopher Wray testified that domestic terrorism cases are on the rise and that racially motivated extremists are the biggest part of that, particularly those with white supremacist ideologies.

Reichelmann believes that, “In order to more fully understand how extremist forces relate to race and racial animos-

ity, we would need to step back and consider socio-historical changes that have resulted in a feeling of lost community, a lack of discussion

about the historical facts of how the country arrived at its current state and the evolving narrative about racial identity in the United States.”



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OPINION

Do I look like Cupid?

As I continue my romp through my personal Hall of Memories otherwise known as my time loop (Hey, when you're my age, the past is about the most fun-filled place to spend time in because there's so much of it.), one of my favorite memories is of the weekend I helped play Cupid.

You know Cupid. That mostly naked little fat cherub who has a penchant for flying around and shooting folks with arrows. He got me with one a long time ago, and it must have come with a lifetime guarantee. It's still working.

One conviction I have steadfastly maintained over the years is that romance was one of the casualties of

the sexual revolution. When our preoccupation as a culture turned from love to sex, we were cheapened. If Cupid is dead, he died of a broken heart. Poor little booger.

I have done my part to keep romance off life support by consistently spoiling the wife as I did this past Valentine's Day just like every such day for decades. It's one of the greatest pleasures of my life.

But thoughts of romance sent me spiraling back to one special Valentine's Day weekend when romance and love were alive and well, not to mention rare, precious, and beautiful. Cupid was about his business of sling-ing arrows all over the place in the environs of beauti-

ful, touristy, fakey Alpine Helen, a tiny burg in the North Georgia Mountains. Many years ago, someone with vision decided to take advantage of the little town's scenic location and turned it into an Alpine village. Until the powers that be tacked it up, Helen was an incredible place to visit and a surefire location at which to relight the fires of romance.

I know for sure Cupid was alive in Helen that particular weekend because I played his part. Well, actually, I assisted Cupid. Well, actually, I just sort of got out of the way and didn't mess anything up.

Our best friends got engaged that weekend, and they're still at that marriage thing today, years down the road. One thing for sure, it wasn't any spur-of-the-mo-

ment thing. It was, in fact, done up the way you see it in your favorite Hallmark movie or romcom. Completely by surprise.

When dessert was brought to our table at a fancy little restaurant, written out in chocolate was "Will You Marry Me?" with a diamond ring sitting right smack dab in the middle of the strawberry shortcake.

That's not all. The proposal came complete with a dozen red roses, a bottle of champagne with a custom label noting the engagement day and their names, a violinist from the Atlanta Opera (who, by the way, didn't know 'Can't Help Falling in Love.' Maybe after that request, they started doing some Elvis at the opera.), and a bending of the knee.

She said yes. To no one's surprise except her own.

Even the staff at the restaurant was all choked up and crying. The only folks in the place not caught up in the romance were two couples at an adjacent table, both of whom were saddled with infants. They just stared in an all-knowing sort of way.

I've got to admit it was pretty spectacular. Kind of made me feel like something of a piker and an unromantic slob with my three little gifts for my spouse, two of which were purchased on sale. Hey, even Cupid has to pay for his arrows. Gets a volume discount.

I had a small role in the subterfuge, but my greatest feat lay in not spilling the beans for the weeks leading up to the big day. I accom-

plished my part by not engaging the future fiancée in any conversation that didn't run much past "Hello. How are you?"

But lemme tell you. My romantic friend came in second place for the weekend. All he got for Valentine's Day was a fiancée.

I got Jimmy Buffett concert tickets.

The author is a man of a certain age who, as he has admitted in the past in a column or two, is a hopeless romantic, even putting his ManCard constantly at risk by shamelessly watching Hallmark movies and publicly admitting that the romantic comedies Notting Hill and You've Got Mail are among his favorite movies.

Update: COVID-19 vaccine continues rollout in New River Health District

Since December, more than 15,000 people have received first and second doses of the coronavirus vaccine through the New River Health District.

The district continues to schedule vaccine appointments for people in the phase 1a and 1b priority groups, but vaccine supply remains low, Noelle Bissell, the district's health director, said Wednesday during a weekly virtual update with members of the news media.

The district receives 2,000 vac-

cine doses each week from the Virginia Department of Health.

"Vaccine demand still far exceeds our supply," Bissell said. "We simply cannot vaccinate anyone who needs or wants it in short order, so we still have to ask for patience."

Along with its own vaccination clinics, the district is partnering with about 20 local pharmacies and medical providers to administer the vaccine to people age 65 and older, based on the state's prioritization guidelines.

Some CVS Pharmacy locations in the region now are administering the vaccine for people age 65 and older as part of a federal allocation that is not connected with the New River Health District, Bissell said. Some Walgreens and Walmart stores plan to follow suit, she said.

Despite the massive vaccination effort, the coronavirus still is spreading in the community, including in some pockets of college students within the health district, Bissell said.

Even so, she said "that is something that we expected" with the return of students.

Through its business continuity team, the district is working with large employers in the region, such as K-12 schools, to schedule vaccination clinics for employees. Once the district moves to the phase 1c priority group and has available vaccine supplies, it will work with colleges and universities to register and schedule employees for vaccines, and it will plan onsite clinics to accommo-

date thousands, Bissell said.

She expects the district's dosage supply to increase once several new vaccine versions are approved.

"We know that we can run sites to where we can vaccinate thousands of people in a day, so it's just putting all of those logistics together," she said. "And it's having the vaccine."

— Written by
Jenny Kincaid Boone

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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.

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.

Bill authorizes Virginia dentists to administer COVID-19 vaccine

RICHMOND -- Gov. Ralph Northam Wednesday signed emergency legislation allowing dentists and other health care professionals to administer COVID-19 vaccines. With the Governor's signature, the bill became law immediately.

Senate Bill 1445, sponsored by Senator Siobhan S. Dunnivant (R-Henrico) and House Bill 2333, sponsored by Delegate Lamont Bagby (D-Richmond) permits any qualified and available health care provider in Virginia to volunteer to administer COVID-19 vaccines.

Virginia dentists have already been

preparing to apply their experience and expertise toward the collective fight against the coronavirus, according to the Virginia Dental Association, which represents more than 3,900 member dentists across the commonwealth.

"Virginia Dental Association member dentists are eager to step up and help with the COVID-19 vaccine effort," said Dr. Frank Iuorno, president of the Virginia Dental Association. "As additional COVID-19 vaccines become available, the ability to include dentists in local rollout plans gives health districts one more tool to

accelerate distribution. Dentists are highly-trained and probably give more injections than any other health care professional."

Many Virginia dentists have already completed the Virginia Department of Health's COVID-19 Vaccine Provider Intent Form. The form is the first step for any provider interested in administering the COVID-19 vaccine.

Dentists and dental students in good academic standing are now able to volunteer at vaccination events throughout the state and more easily are now able to offer space to host vaccination clinics.

WalletHub study: Virginia is sixth most educated state in America

With many students continuing their education remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic and data showing a correlation between higher education levels, higher income and lower unemployment rates, the personal-finance website WalletHub has released its report on 2021's Most and Least Educated States in America. The study determined Virginia to be the sixth most educated state in the country.

To determine the most educated states, WalletHub compared all 50

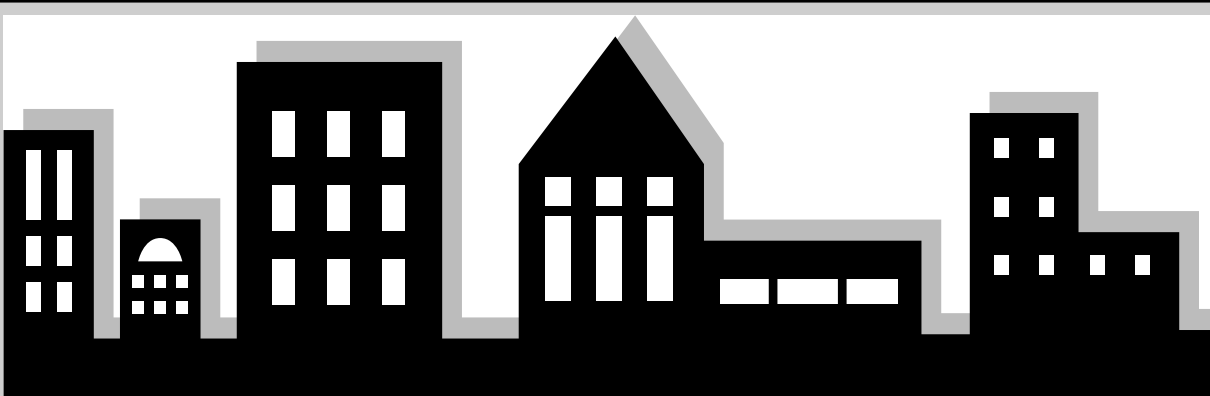
states across 18 metrics that examined the key factors of a well-educated population. The metrics included educational attainment, school quality, achievement gaps between genders and races; the percentage of residents with a high school diploma, an associate degree or college experience, a bachelor's degree, and graduate or professional degrees; the average university quality, and the gender gap in educational attainment.

Among the commonwealth's high-

est finishes in the survey was first in the gender gap in educational attainment, fourth in percentage of residents with graduate/professional degrees, sixth in percentage of residents with bachelor's degrees, and eighth in percentage of residents with associate degrees or college experience.

Finishing first through fifth in the survey of the nation's best educated states (in order) were Massachusetts, Maryland, Connecticut, Vermont, and Colorado.

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Vaccine

from page 1

center has English- and Spanish-speaking agents and a call-back service in more than 100 other languages. TTY service is available to assist people who are deaf or hard of hearing. If wait times are long, Virginians can choose to get a call-back and avoid having to stay on hold. Call volume is expected to be very high during the first week of operation.

To complete a pre-registration, callers will be asked to provide some basic information to determine eligibility, including their social security number or their immigration status. Anyone who pre-registers will receive a pre-registration confirmation and a reference code that can be used to verify that they are still on the waiting list. Individuals can also specify whether they prefer to be contacted by phone, text, or email.

Pre-registration gives Virginians the opportunity to get updates about vaccine availability and to make an appointment when vaccine supply allows. It does not provide immediate access to a vaccine. When registered persons become eligible for the vaccine,

they will receive instructions from a local health department on how to schedule an appointment.

More than 12 percent of Virginia's population has now received at least one dose of the vaccine. Across the country, demand for the COVID-19 vaccine currently far exceeds supply, and it is expected to take several months to reach all individuals who want to be vaccinated. The commonwealth is prioritizing individuals who are most at-risk of contracting COVID-19 and those who work in certain critical industries, based on public health guidelines from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Virginians who qualify for Groups 1A and 1B are currently eligible for vaccinations. This includes health care personnel, residents and staff of long-term care facilities, people age 65 and older, frontline essential workers, those living and working in homeless shelters and correctional facilities, and individuals with underlying medical conditions or disabilities that increase their risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

Moog

from page 1

in Virginia with multiple locations totaling more than 1,200 employees.

“Virginia’s aerospace sector is strong, and Moog is a valuable contributor to our leadership position in this sector,” said Virginia’s Secretary of Commerce and Trade, Brian Ball. “We are proud that the company develops revolutionary aerospace technology from its growing operations in Montgomery County. This announcement, and the creation of 75 high-quality jobs, represents an important step forward as we work to rebound from this global health crisis.”

“Moog is excited to be expanding in Virginia and Montgomery County, in particular,” said Janet Byrne-Safer, Vice President of Moog’s Power and Data Sector. “As we look to support our growing business in established and new markets, the focus has been on develop-

ing geographic centers of excellence with ready access to a diverse talent pool. Moog appreciates the assistance and cooperation of Montgomery County and the Virginia Economic Development Partnership and its Virginia Jobs Investment Program in this endeavor.

The Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) worked with Montgomery County to secure the project for Virginia and will support Moog’s job creation through the Virginia Jobs Investment Program (VJIP). VJIP provides consultative services and funding to companies creating new jobs in order to support employee recruitment and training activities. As a business incentive supporting economic development, VJIP reduces the human resource costs of new and expanding companies. VJIP is state-funded, demonstrating Virginia’s

commitment to enhancing job opportunities for citizens.

Moog was recently selected to participate in VEDP’s award-winning Virginia Leaders in Export Trade (VALET) Program. VALET is an application-based, two-year global export acceleration program that provides participating companies with assistance from a team of experienced international service providers to help meet their export goals.

“When an existing company not only decides to stay in our community, but also flourishes to the point of expansion, well, that’s when we know that we are all doing something right,” said Steve Fjalkowski, chair of the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors. “Moog is a growing global company with a strong history in developing advanced technologies. We’re proud that they are a part of Mont-

gomery County.”

“Moog’s exciting news of expansion into Christiansburg is a great example of economic achievement through the hard work of a talented and committed workforce,” said Nick Rush, delegate from Virginia’s 7th House district, which covers Floyd County and parts of Montgomery and Pulaski counties. “I extend my personal congratulations and appreciation to Moog for its local, regional, and global contributions, along with best wishes for continued success.

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

ECKANKAR
Eckankar, the Path of Spiritual Freedom, is located at 1420 3rd St. SW, Roanoke, VA 24016. However, due to COVID-19, the Light & Sound Services and other ECK programs are

Montgomery County

WORSHIP DIRECTORY

All Together

Read Numbers 30:1 through 31:54

The story is told of an anthropologist studying an African tribe. Placing a basket of sweets under a tree, he had the tribe’s children line up some distance away. He told them that the first to reach the candy would get the whole basket, and he shouted, “Go!” The children immediately linked arms and ran as one to the tree, where they all enjoyed the treats. Astonished, the anthropologist asked for an explanation. “We can’t be happy,” they answered, “if one of us is sad.”

God repeatedly encouraged Israel to see themselves as one united people. They were to

all share His blessings, not just a privileged few.

“Divide the spoils equally between the soldiers who took part in the battle and the rest of the community” (Numbers 31:27).

God wants that same sense of community to permeate His Church. We have talents, financial resources, and time the Lord has generously given us. How can we share them with others? How can we use them to lift up the name of Jesus in this world?

Thought for Today: Everything God has given you was intended to bless the world.

Quicklook: Numbers 31:25–31

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

currently available online through Zoom. Visit www.eck-va.org for program listings, www.meetup.com/Roanoke-Spiritual-Experiences-Group, or call 540-353-5365 and leave a message. We will return your call. Also visit www.eckankar.org for more information about how the teachings of Eckankar lead you to spiritual freedom.

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 luthermemorial-blacksburg@gmail.com, or contact the church office, (540) 951-1000. Rev. Monica Weber, pastor.

MULTI-CULTURAL NON-DENOMINATIONAL
Christian Growth Center, 1850 Electric 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.centralmethodist-church.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
Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church, 350 Stafford Drive, Christiansburg, VA 24073, Sunday School 10am, Sunday Worship Service 11am.

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: christwesleyanchurch.org

be able to participate and make comments as set out below.

The City has established the following ways for you to share your public comments with City Council. The deadline to share your comments for the public hearing is Noon on March 5, 2021. Any comments received by that time will be shared with City Council and will be added to the meeting minutes, making them a matter of public record.

When providing your public comments, please be sure to provide:

1. First Name;
2. Last Name;
3. Residential Address; and,
4. Your Comment.

• Ways to submit your public comments:

- Email: Jenni.Wilder@radfordva.gov
- Mail Message to: City Clerk, 10 Robertson Street, Radford, VA 24141
- Voice-mail message: 540-267-3145

Ways to participate in the public hearing:

The public is encouraged to participate in the public hearing scheduled on Monday, March 8, 2021 at 7:00 pm, beginning at 7:00 P.M., Facebook Live at the following links:

<https://www.facebook.com/Radford-City-Government-301072910338>. The public hearing meeting agenda can be viewed at: www.radfordva.gov.

Copies of the agenda may also be obtained by calling the Office of the City Clerk

MONTGOMERY SPORTS

Big South Soccer: RU's Gabi Paupst and Kayla Thomas sweep Preseason Player of the Year honors; RU women picked to finish second; men picked eighth

The Big South Conference has announced that Radford University's Gabi Paupst had been picked as the Big South's Soccer Preseason Offensive Player of the Year and Highlander Kayla Thomas was the pick for the league's Soccer Defensive Player of the Year.

In the league's 2021 preseason poll, the RU women's soccer team was picked to finish second while the Highlander men were picked to finish eighth in the league standings.

The Radford men play their first conference match on February 21 at USC Upstate. The men's conference championship tournament will be played April 14 through April 17.

The Radford women begin their Big South play on Sunday, Feb. 21, at Presbyterian. The women's conference championship tournament runs from April 12 through April 18.

Defending conference champion Campbell was picked as the men's preseason favorite.

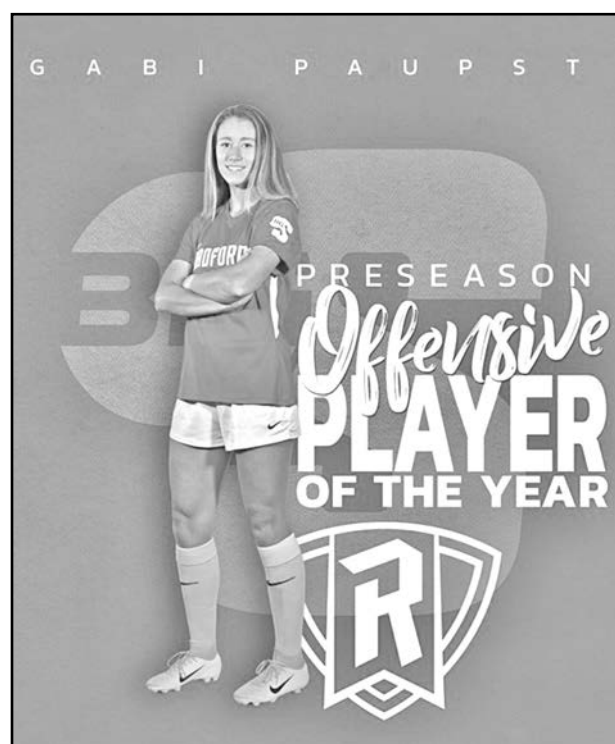
2021 Big South preseason men's soccer poll:

1. Campbell 2. High Point 3. Gardner-Webb 4. Presbyterian 5. USC Upstate 6. Longwood 7. Winthrop 8. Radford 9. UNC-Asheville

For the second time in as many seasons, the Radford women were picked to finish among the league's top two teams. The back-to-back Big South Tournament champs won the regular season most recently in 2018.

The selection of Paupst and Thomas as the women's preseason players of the year marks the first time in school history Radford has swept the preseason awards. It was only the second time in Big South history that teammates were named Preseason Players of the Year in the same season (Liberty - 2016).

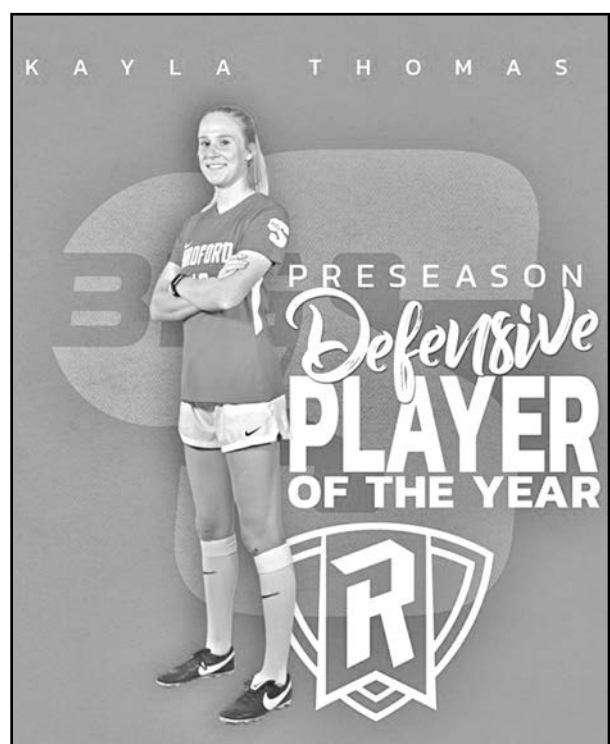
Paupst scored nine goals last season, a career high, and has 18 in her three-year career. The Grimsby, Ontario, Canada native was a First-Team



Big South Preseason Offensive Player of the Year Gabi Paupst

All-Conference member and made the Big South All-Tournament Team last season. A senior, she finished in the top 10 in seven of the league's nine individual offensive categories in 2019.

Thomas has been a First-Team All-Conference member both of her two seasons at Radford. The junior was named Big South Defensive Player of the Year last season. She was also a member of the



Big South Preseason Defensive Player of the Year Kayla Thomas

Big South All-Tournament Team. She has started 42 games at Radford and led the team in minutes played both seasons.

2021 Big South preseason women's soccer poll:

1. High Point 2. Radford 3. Campbell 4. Gardner-Webb 5. Longwood 6. Winthrop 7. Presbyterian 8. Charleston Southern 9. UNC Asheville 10. USC Upstate

--RU Athletics

VT's Amoire named ACC Freshman of the Week



Virginia Tech guard Georgia Amoire has been named the ACC Freshman of the Week. ACC women's basketball weekly awards are voted on by the league's Blue Ribbon Panel.

Amoire was sensational in the Hokies' 75-55 victory at Miami on Feb. 11, scoring 17 points on 5 of 6 shooting from beyond the arc. The Australia native dishd out five assists while committing just a single turnover and also set a career mark with four steals.

The win was the Hokies' fourth straight.

The Ballarat, Victoria, Australia native averages 4.56 assists per game, the fourth-best mark in the ACC. On the season she has 82 assists, by far the most by a freshman in the conference with her closest

competition being North Carolina's Deja Kelly who owns 51 and an average of 2.83 per game.

She leads all ACC freshmen with 40 3's this season and is second in the conference with a 42.6% rate from beyond the arc.

Amoire's recognition marks the third time a Hokie has been named performer of the week this season following Elizabeth Kitley (Jan. 18) and Aisha Sheppard's (Feb. 1) recognitions as Player of the Week. This is the first time in ACC history that three different Hokies have earned such honors in the same season.

The Hokies are next slated to play vs. Syracuse at Cassell Coliseum on Sunday, Feb. 21, at noon. That game will be broadcast on RSN.

Veteran defensive coach Jon Tenuta added to VT football staff

BLACKSBURG — Head coach Justin Fuente announced Monday that 40-year coaching veteran Jon Tenuta is joining Virginia Tech as senior defensive analyst.

Tenuta owns 19 seasons of experience as a defensive coordinator and has been associated with programs that have made 19 bowl appearances during his career. He has coached over 40 players who have gone on to play professionally.

Tenuta most recently spent the past four seasons at the University of Cincinnati. He

served as a senior defensive analyst in 2020 after a three-year stint as safeties coach for the Bearcats from 2017-19.

"We're thrilled to bring Jon's wisdom, experience and football background into our program," Fuente said. "Jon could help any program in America, but I'm exceedingly grateful that he's joining us at Virginia Tech. Jon will be a valuable resource for all of us at Virginia Tech, and I'm glad he's here. I know Jon is eager to help our team while also having a front-row seat watching his son, Luke, continue to

grow and develop as a young man and a player."

A redshirt sophomore, Luke Tenuta is an offensive tackle for the Hokies. In 2020, he started eight games mostly at right tackle.

"I appreciate Coach Fuente extending this role to me," Jon Tenuta said. "Football has been very good to me and my family over the years, so the chance to join the program where my son is playing was really an opportunity I couldn't pass up at this stage of my career."

"I've missed a lot of games

and moments to see all of my three sons compete in person over the years, so from a personal and a professional standpoint coming to Virginia Tech was an offer I couldn't refuse," the veteran coach said. "I look forward to getting to work with Coach Fuente, his staff and the Hokies."

In addition to his tenure at Cincinnati, Tenuta's lengthy resume includes coaching stops at Virginia (2013-15), NC State (2010-12), Notre Dame (2008-09), Georgia Tech (2002-07), Ohio State (1996-2000), Oklahoma

(1995), SMU (1989-94), Kansas State (1988), Marshall (1987-88), Vanderbilt (1984-85), Maryland (1983) and Virginia (1981-82).

Fuente was a quarterback at Oklahoma when Tenuta coached the Sooners defensive backs in 1995.

In addition to Luke, Tenuta and his wife, Dori, have two other sons: Zach (married to Jennifer) and Matt. Zach serves as the defensive coordinator at Norfolk State University. Matt is a professional baseball player and is currently with the Monterrey Sultans.

With Auburn High grad on roster, Concord baseball picked second in preseason poll

With Auburn High School graduate Keith Reed on its roster, the Concord University baseball team has been selected by the coaches to finish second in the Mountain East Conference South Division.

Reed is a freshman outfielder.

Concord was able to get 10 games in before the coronavirus pan-

demic halted the season in mid-March. Concord is scheduled for 40 games this spring with 32 against MEC foes. The season gets underway March 5 with a non-conference doubleheader against Wheeling and Salem in Nutter Fort, W.Va.

Mercer County rival Bluefield State is scheduled for March 11

and March 31, and old MEC rival UVa.-Wise is on the slate for a home-and-home match-up on March 17 and April 14.

Concord starts MEC play on March 20 against Wheeling. MEC South Division contests get underway April 10 when Concord visits West Virginia State.

Headlining the returners to the lineup is 2019

consensus all-region selection and All-MEC First Team junior short-stop Anthony Stehlin. During the 2019 campaign, Stehlin batted .369 with 62 runs scored and 17 stolen bases. The Woodbridge, Va., native was on a similar pace last season as he batted .385 in the 10 games.

Junior catcher Chance Davis has played in 20

games behind the plate through his first two seasons at Concord. One-time Charleston transfer sophomore outfielder Richard Ortiz started all 10 games last season and hit one of CU's five home runs.

On the mound, fifth-year senior Trent Abernathy has tossed 132 career innings with 138 career strikeouts. Abernathy

was an All-MEC Honorable Mention performer in 2018.

In 32 career innings, senior pitcher Spencer Hoyt has struck out 38 batters. Second-year pitchers Caleb Hare, Nick Herrerias and Andrew Neff combined for 13.2 innings with 14 strikeouts in their first collegiate seasons in 2020.

Outdoor report: Resist the urge to feed wild animals

I once had a neighbor who was feeding a raccoon. The raccoon became so friendly that it would come up on their porch to take pieces of bread from her hands. The neighbor thought it was cute until the raccoon had babies and brought her youngsters along for the free handouts. It wasn't long before the critters began to beg and squabble over the food. Realizing that she had created a monster, she stopped feeding them.

Believing that wild animals need help to get through the winter, many well-intentioned people put out food for them. It's natural to feel sorry for wild animals especially in the winter when they have to deal with cold and snow, but feeding wild animals, whether in your backyard or in a local park, isn't a good idea. Here's why.

Wild animals have very specialized diets. Human foods don't provide the

nutritional requirements they need to maintain their health and stamina and can cause malnutrition and other serious health problems (especially if they are fed "empty" foods like bread, crackers or French fries).

Their natural fear of humans teaches wild animals to avoid humans. Giving them handouts can erode this fear to the point of making them view certain areas as danger-free. Once animals learn they can panhandle for food, they can become a nuisance, or even worse, a safety risk when they become aggressive in their competition for handouts.

Feeding wildlife can alter their natural movements. A dependency on humans for food can result in decreasing the size of their ranges and impact the timing of their natural movements or migration. Migrating ducks and geese, for instance,

may "stay over" through the winter if food is made available, decreasing their chances for survival in certain areas.

Feeding animals from or near vehicles is dangerous to animals, people and property. Animals can be hit by moving vehicles. If they become accustomed to people feeding them from vehicles, they may often approach to "beg" for food. Bears, in particular, are a danger when they associate cars with food. Determined bears can do a lot of damage to a vehicle if they smell food inside.

Wild animals gathering for handouts can cause unnatural crowding and competition, increasing the likelihood of fighting and injury among the animals. It can also increase the potential for the spread of disease, through feces, bodily fluids or direct contact, some of which may be transmitted to pets and humans.

The Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) does not encourage the feeding of wildlife at any time of year. DWR would like to remind readers that the feeding of some wildlife species is actually illegal:

It is illegal year-round, statewide to feed bears.

It is illegal statewide to feed deer and elk from Sept. 1 through the first Saturday in January and during any deer or elk hunting season. It is also illegal year-round to feed deer and elk in the following counties and the cities/towns within those counties: Albemarle, Buchanan, Clarke, Culpeper, Dickenson, Fauquier, Frederick, Greene, Loudoun, Louisa, Madison, Orange, Page, Prince William, Rappahannock, Rockingham, Shenandoah, Spotsylvania, Stafford, Warren and Wise.

It is illegal to feed any wild animal when the



PHOTO BY JOHN LOV

Feeding wildlife can have serious consequences for the animal.

feeding results in property damage, endangers people or wildlife or creates a public health concern

The bottom line is that, however well intentioned, you're not doing wild animals any favors when you reduce their fear of humans and create a dependency on people for food.

For more information on how to create quality wildlife habitat on your property that will provide natural foods along with adequate cover for numerous species, visit www.dwr.virginia.gov/wildlife/habitat/.

-- Jo Ann Abell,
Virginia DWR

Hokies to play South Carolina and head coach Shane Beamer in 2025 Chick-Fil-A Kickoff Game

Virginia Tech will face the South Carolina Gamecocks and head coach Shane Beamer, whom the university hired on Dec. 6, 2020, in the Chick-fil-A Kickoff Game at Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta on either Sunday, Aug. 31, or Monday, Sept 1, 2025.

The game will be televised by either ABC or ESPN. An exact date and kickoff time will be finalized at a later date.

The contest will mark Tech's third appearance in the Chick-fil-A Kickoff Game series. The Hokies previously played Alabama in 2009 and 2013. The 2025 season opener will mark Tech's first meeting with South Carolina since 1991.

"The Chick-fil-A Kickoff Game has often become a showcase for the SEC and the ACC to face off in a high-profile fight to start the season," said Bob Somers, Peach Bowl, Inc., chairman. "This matchup looks to continue that tradition and renew an old rivalry between two historic programs."

"It's an honor to welcome

Virginia Tech back to the Chick-fil-A Kickoff Game after 12 years, and we're looking forward to hosting South Carolina for the first time in the game," Peach Bowl, Inc., CEO and President Gary Stokan said.

Tech previously announced it would renew its series with South Carolina, which has its roots in the Southern Conference. The Hokies will travel to Williams-Brice Stadium to square off with South Carolina in 2034 with the Gamecocks making the return trek to Blacksburg in 2035.

"We're excited to play in the Chick-fil-A Kickoff Game against South Carolina to open the 2025 season," Tech Director of Athletics Whit Babcock said. "We look forward to showcasing our program in front of a national television audience in one of the nation's premier sporting venues, Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta."

"I'm confident we'll see a strong contingent of our fan base cheering on the Hokies in their inaugural game in that

facility and visiting the College Football Hall of Fame that weekend," Babcock said. "We feel very confident about the strength of our scheduling going forward as well as its appeal to Tech fans across the country."

"Our team always looks forward to the opportunity to play in 'trophy games' and I'm sure our team relishes the chance to compete for 'The Old Leather Helmet' trophy against South Carolina in the 2025 Chick-fil-A Kickoff Game," Virginia Tech head coach Justin Fuente said. "I know our players enjoy playing in NFL venues, and I'm sure our fans will also appreciate cheering on the Hokies as we square off with an SEC opponent in Mercedes-Benz Stadium."

The addition to Tech's schedule of the 2025 Chick-fil-A Kickoff Game against South Carolina brings the total of future games against SEC foes to nine contests. Tech previously announced that Alabama, Ole Miss and Vanderbilt had agreed to home-and-home games with

the Hokies.

Tech currently has 22 non-conference games against Power Five squads on its future schedules, including the resumption of its on-campus series with former Big East rival West Virginia with games in Morgantown (9/18/21) and in Blacksburg (9/24/2022). In addition, the Hokies have six meetings with Notre Dame on the docket, including a visit to Lane Stadium by the Fighting Irish on Oct. 9 this season.

Virginia Tech and South Carolina are both former members of the Southern Conference and have squared off 20 times previously. The series began as VPI registered a 34-0 win over South Carolina in Roanoke on Nov. 18, 1905. The Gamecocks own an 11-7-2 edge in the all-time series. The most recent meeting resulted in a 28-21 win for South Carolina at Williams-Brice Stadium in 1991. Tech's most recent win against South Carolina was a 31-17 win in Columbia on Oct. 12, 1974.

Each team will receive its

own ticket allotment to the game, and additional tickets will be sold through the Peach Bowl, Inc., ticket office. Tickets will be available for public sale early in 2025. For more information, visit Chick-fil-AKickoffGame.com.

Virginia Tech's future power five non-conference opponents: 9/18/2021 at West Virginia; 9/24/2022 West Virginia; 9/9/2023 Purdue; 9/16/2023 at Rutgers; 8/31/2024 at Vanderbilt (Nissan Stadium – Nashville); 9/21/2024 Rutgers; 8/31 or 9/1/2025 South Carolina (Mercedes-Benz Stadium – Atlanta); 9/6/2025 Vanderbilt; 9/19/2026 at Maryland; 9/18/2027 Maryland; 9/16/2028 at Maryland; 9/15/202 Maryland; 9/8/2029 at Arizona; 8/30/2030 Arizona; 9/12/203 Wisconsin; 9/4/2032 Ole Miss; 9/18/2032 at Wisconsin; 9/2/2034 Alabama; 9/16/2034 at South Carolina; 9/1/2035 at Alabama; 9/15/2035 South Carolina; 9/5/2037 at Ole Miss.

COVID restrictions mean empty seats at Montgomery County football games

Marty Gordon
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There won't be a roar of the crowd at the upcoming football games because of the restrictions on student-athletes, coaches, parents, and fans forced by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Montgomery County School Board. According to the school board, those restrictions mean no members of the public will be allowed to attend the games, and only two people per participant will be allowed through the gates.

In addition, the board is requiring that masks be worn by all the players when they are not on the field. If they have a

face shield, they can just keep their helmets. Event staff and coaches will be required to wear masks at all times.

The Virginia High School League recommends fans consider watching sports at home rather than attending in-person sporting events.

For those unable to attend this spring's games in person, Radford, Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Giles, Narrows, and Pulaski all will have local radio broadcasts of their games. Eastern Montgomery and Auburn will not.

In addition, all of the Montgomery County schools have installed the National Federation of High School Sports

(NFHSS) cameras that will show video from each game. The Pixellot cameras will be located on each school's press box near the 50-yard line and will move with the action on the field.

The Pixellot camera-system is a global leader in automated sports production, and its technology uses a multi-camera array to cover the whole field of play, capturing all the action and streaming it straight into sports venues and homes. Pixellot does not require a camera operator, and an auto-tracking feature allows the cameras to follow the action, panning and zooming. Score graphics are synced with the venue's scoreboard.

The NFHS charges a subscription fee, which typically is \$10.99 monthly or \$69.99 for the year. Each school will receive 10 percent of that revenue.

Danny Knott, the director of Human Resources for the Montgomery County school system, said the school system has installed the NFHS Network's Pixellot cameras at all of its stadiums.

"We hope that by the time we are able to play, the cameras will be installed in all four high schools," Knott said. "This will allow anyone in the country to watch any of our schools play."

The Pixellot system is nothing new as many schools have been using a

similar unit as part of its Huddle football broadcasts to highlight games and individual players.

In addition to the remote benefit and revenue sharing, each school can make money off sponsorships and advertising. Audio play-by-play can be added to each broadcast.

For more information on the remote broadcasts, contact the local schools or go to the National Federation of High School sports broadcast site for schedules.

The Virginia High School League (VHSL) has made several changes for this football season. The team boxes will be extended on both sides of the field to the 20-yard

lines to allow for more social distancing space for the teams.

Uniforms, towels and/or equipment cannot be shared.

The ball should be cleaned and sanitized throughout the contest, and ball holders must maintain six-feet of social distancing at all times.

Plastic shields covering the entire face shall not be allowed this season.

Gloves are permissible.

In addition, the VHSL is telling schools to extend timeouts between quarters to allow for the sanitizing of balls.

The coin toss can include only one coach from each team and an official.

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High school football opens amid uncertainty

Marty Gordon
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The spring season of fall football is slated to open on Monday, Feb. 22 or is it? There has been plenty of snow on the ground, and the mercury is lingering below freezing, making this a season like no other.

Not only are local schools still dealing with COVID-19 restrictions, they are also dealing with ongoing winter sports where many of their top athletes who would be on the gridiron are still playing basketball and wrestling. Throw into the mix that we are still in the winter months, and there are too many speed bumps that could affect the six-

game schedule.

Both Blacksburg and Christiansburg will have turf on their side when it comes to dealing with the weather. Thus, most games will be played despite white stuff being in the forecast at any given time.

Eastern Montgomery will have the additional problem of darkness in the first part of the schedule with 2 p.m. contests scheduled for most Saturdays. Blacksburg and Eastern Montgomery will also play two games in the first six days of the spring football schedule, which is allowed. Auburn will play all of its games on Saturdays.

The Virginia High School League previously adopted the “Champion-

ships + 1” schedule for the latter part of the winter months to include: Season 2 (Fall) February 4 – May 1 (First Contest Date – February 20), competition cheer-leading, cross country, field hockey, football, golf, and volleyball.

“We have received invaluable input from our school communities, parents, and students who say the physical and mental health benefits of getting our students back to a level of participation is extremely important,” said VHSL Executive Director Dr. John W. “Billy” Haun. “The Championships + 1 schedule will provide sports in all three seasons.

“The VHSL Executive

Committee acknowledges that no plan is perfect. We are in unprecedented times in which we have been forced to create a temporary new normal. We understand this plan, or any plan, will not meet the expectations for those wanting a normal fall, winter, and spring sports season. This plan, however, will allow student-athletes and academic activity participants the opportunity of having a season and playing for a state championship.”

Predictions for the spring football season:

Blacksburg 4-2; Christiansburg 4-2; Auburn 5-1; Radford 6-0; Eastern Montgomery 3-3.

District play:
River Ridge: 1) Salem



PHOTO BY KYMN DAVIDSON-HAMLEY

2) Pulaski 3) Blacksburg 4) Christiansburg 5) Patrick Henry 6) Cave Spring 7) Hidden Valley
Mt. Empire: 1) Auburn 2) George Wythe 3) Ft. Chiswell 4) Grayson 5) Galax 6) Bland

Three Rivers: 1) Radford 2) Glenvar 3) James River 4) Alleghany 5) Giles 6) Floyd 7) Carroll County
Pioneer: 1) Narrows 2) Covington 3) Eastern Montgomery 4) Parry McCluer 5) Bath County

Auburn hopes to build on 2019’s 6-6 record

Marty Gordon
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Auburn head football coach Cam Aker admits COVID-19 has certainly been challenging for all high school coaches in Virginia.

“We have worked to be creative and make football important and continue to train,” he said earlier this week.

His Auburn Eagles finished 6-6 last season and made a run into the regional playoffs. Depth could be a key this season, though, with only 28 players on the roster including nine underclassmen.

Akers said his guys are excited about getting back to work. “We have to control what we can control, and win each day,” he said.

The team will have to replace Carson East, who had 111 carries in 2019 for 756 yards with nine touchdowns. On the defensive side of the ball, he was also one of the team leaders with 64 tackles, including 31 solo stops, seven for a loss and three sacks.

Also, gone is Will Kelley with his 52 total tackles including three sacks.

Senior Rusty Marshall could be a key for the Eagles as he had 65 total tackles in the last season with two interceptions. He is expected to be a starter at free safety.

Andy French, who is a three-year starter at center, returns to anchor an offensive line that includes seven players over 200-pounds. The 5-8, 215-pound French is joined by Mike Royal (6-4, 260), Jayda Dradras (5-11, 263) and second-team all-state Justin Otey (5-10, 179).

All of that size will help the four-year starter at quarterback, Payson Kelley, who rushed 178 times in 2019 for 814 yards with 14 touchdowns. He also had 321 yards passing.

Expect Kelley to look for Preston Harris, who at 6-2, 170, provides the size needed at the wideout position.

The backfield could be a platoon situation with seniors Micah Sutphin (5-11,175), Trevor Young (5-8, 164), John Keith (5-6, 141) and Ronnie Worth (5-9, 168).

Otey could also play a role on defense from his inside linebacker posi-



FILE PHOTO

Payson Kelley has been a four-year starter for Auburn High School at quarterback and will lead the team back this spring with an offensive line that averages 200 pounds.

Auburn High School 2021 football schedule

Saturday, Feb. 27, at Eastern Montgomery
Saturday, March 6, Ft. Chiswell
Saturday, March 13, at Grayson County
Saturday, March 20, at George Wythe
Saturday, March 27, Galax
Saturday, April 3, Bland

AUBURN VARSITY FOOTBALL 2021 (SPRING)						
Jersey	First	Last Name	Grade	Position	Height	Weight
1	Jacob	Rutledge	12	SE/CORNER	5'9"	145
2	Jackson	Brockman	11	TE/DL	5'10"	147
3	London	Black	12	SE/CORNER	5'9"	155
4	Micah	Sutphin	12	RB/CORNER	5'11"	175
5	Rusty	Marshall	12	RB/FS	5'11"	181
6	Payson	Kelley	12	QB/OLB	6'1"	190
7	Jeremiah	Thompson	9	QB/OLB	5'11"	170
8	Brady	Hale	9	RB/FS	5'6"	140
9	Isaih	Keith	9	RB/CORNER	5'6"	125
10	Trevor	Young	12	FB/ILB	5'8"	164
11	John	Keith	11	RB/OLB	5'6"	141
17	Elijah	St. Clair	11	QB/ILB	5'6"	158
20	Preston	Harris	12	SE/CORNER	6'2"	170
22	Kaleb	Duff	9	SE/CORNER	5'7"	120
24	Carter	Shelor	12	SE/CORNER	5'9"	145
31	Robert	Young	10	SE/ILB	5'6"	125
32	Ronnie	Worth	12	FB/OLB	5'9"	168
33	Isaac	Jenkins	9	TE/DL	5'10"	155
45	Coahan	Gordan	9	FB/DL	6'1"	170
52	Austin	Stump	9	OL/ILB	5'11"	205
54	Justin	Otey	12	OL/ILB	5'10"	179
55	Drew	French	12	OL/DL	5'8"	215
56	Mike	Royal	12	OL/DL	6'4"	260
57	Damion	Underwood	10	OL/DL	6'2"	205
60	AJ	Reece	11	OL/DL	6'4"	260
62	Jayden	Dadras	11	OL/DL	5'11"	263
70	Bryce	Gill	9	OL/DL	6'5"	225
80	Dylan	Fizer	9	SE/DL	5'7"	135

tion.

Akers admits his coaches are stretched thin right now. “We will have to focus on fewer installs and better execution,” he said.

Auburn opens the spring on February 27 at Eastern Montgomery and should be one of the favorites in a loaded Mt. Empire District. All of Au-

burn’s spring games will be played on Saturday including the opener against the cross-county rival in the “Golden Helmet” contest, which Auburn has dominated for the past six years.

On the schedule are home games against Ft. Chiswell, Galax and Bland. Road games will be at Grayson County and George Wythe.

New Christiansburg High field house stands ready for use

Marty Gordon
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A multi-million dollar project at Christiansburg High School, the construction of a new field house, was completed during the slowdown associated with COVID-19 and is now ready for use. Ongoing restrictions related to COVID-19, however, will not allow them to use the showers in the facility, nor will fans be allowed the full use of a new concessions booth on field level.

The facility is Phase III of a much larger project that included a new turf field two years ago and upgrades to both the softball and baseball fields.

During a recent tour

of the field house, Christiansburg Athletic Director Tim Cromer was excited about the future of the facility.

“This is something we have needed for a long, long time,” he said.

Until this year, football teams at Christiansburg High took a long walk from almost 2,000 yards away to get to the field and its facilities.

“Now, once we are able to get out from under the restrictions associated with COVID, we simply don’t have to make that long trip. Nor do the visiting teams,” Cromer said.

The project was paid for by special funding from the Montgomery County School Board.



A new field house is ready for use by athletic teams at Christiansburg High School.



PHOTOS BY MARTY GORDON

The field house includes locker rooms for both home and visiting teams.

Both Blacksburg and Christiansburg open football season with Salem

Brian Hoffman
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(Editor’s note: The Bruins and the Blue Demons will find out quickly what they might have this spring football season, having to face state-power Salem in their season openers only five days apart next week. Here’s a look at the Spartans and what to expect.)

It’s a week and a half after the Super Bowl and Monday Night Football is already back. This time, however, it’s the high school kids.

Salem High will open the 2020 football season in 2021 Monday, Feb. 22, with a home game against Blacksburg. Christiansburg will then open its season Friday, Feb. 26, at home against those same Salem High Spartans.

When it comes around, Salem’s offensive line should be pretty good. This year’s “Mules” will feature two of the team’s four captains, senior center Will Clemons and right guard Alex Haley, another returning senior. Cameron Martinsdale, a 265-pound junior, is the likely starter at right tackle, but he was wrestling at Virginia Beach two days before the football season opener after winning the Region 4D mat title at heavyweight.

Senior Brandon Torian is the left guard, and the left tackle spot is a battle between senior Filip DeHaven and 6-3, 250-pound sophomore Andrew Lutes.

These guys will be opening holes for two talented running backs, fullback Cam Leftwich and tailback Zavione Wood. Those two are the other Spartan captains, and they form a formidable duo. Leftwich, a junior, was second on the team last year with 12 touchdowns while rushing for 600 yards on 120 carries. Wood, a senior, carried the ball 65 times for 519 yards and nine touchdowns.

Salem will rotate a variety of wideouts in and out of the lineup with many doubling on the defensive side of the ball. Junior Chauncey “Deuce” Logan, Jr., is the top returnee with 13 receptions

while senior Shawn Collins had the most yards, 205, and touchdowns, four, among the returning Spartans. Also seeing time will be Amarri Edwards, Chase Greer, and Virginia Tech-bound twins Jayden and Jordan McDonald.

As of this past week, the quarterback position was still up in the air with junior Logan and sophomore Da-Ron Wilson battling for the starting position. The two have thrown one varsity pass between them as Logan was one for one for a 50-yard touchdown last year, and Wilson was the quarterback on the jayvee team. During a scrimmage, Logan picked off a Wilson pass while playing defense, then later in the scrimmage he hauled in a perfect Wilson bomb for a touchdown.

On defense, Martindale and 296-pound junior Stacy Williams give Salem excellent size at the nose-guard/tackle positions. Massey and Ky’Juan Waller are slated to be the ends.

Wood is a talented linebacker on the defensive side of the ball. He was second on the team to graduated Bobby Pinello in tackles last season with 73 total, including a team-leading 11 tackles for loss. Waller was third on the team last year with 57 total tackles.

Junior Noah Collins will be the other linebacker, and junior Carson Williams will play the hybrid “robber” position. Williams will switch from last year’s number-4 jersey to the coveted number 3, which tells what the coaches think of him. Who decides who gets to wear 3? “I do,” responded head coach Don Holter.

Greer, Logan, Shawn Collins and the talented McDonald twins will handle the secondary. Jayden McDonald had four interceptions last year to lead the team and Collins had three.

Three Spartans are battling for the place kicking job: sophomores Ashton Cornett and Caleb Wright and freshman Wesley Cross. Logan returns to punt.

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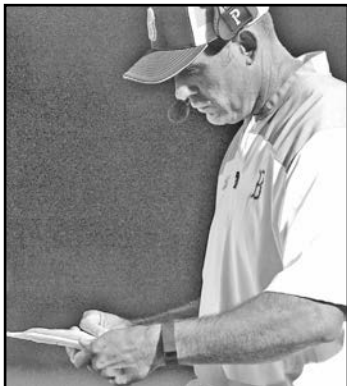
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With only five starters returning, is it rebuilding or reloading for Blacksburg's Bruins?



Junior Parker Epperley will lead a Blacksburg team woefully short of returning starters: one on offense and four on defense.



Blacksburg's head coach, Eddie Sloss, has compiled a 19-6 record after returning to his alma mater following a short stint at Carroll County.

Blacksburg High School schedule for 2021 football season

Monday, Feb. 22, at Salem
Saturday, Feb. 27, Patrick Henry
Friday, March 5, Franklin County
Friday, March 12 at Pulaski
Friday, March 19, Radford
Friday, April 2, Christiansburg

Blacksburg Football Varsity Roster					
Number	Name	Position	Height	Weight	Year
1	James Poland	K	6'2"	185	12
2	Ethan Walker	RB/DB	5'11"	165	10
3	Luke Paff	WR/DB	5'7"	130	9
4	Stephen Rittenaur	RB/DB	6'0"	170	11
5	Addrian Barr	WR/DB	5'11"	143	9
6	Trayon Roberts	WR/LB	6'0"	199	11
7	Malcolm Shorman-Collins	RB/LB	5'10"	175	11
8	David Oliver	QB/DB	5'9"	175	9
9	Kaydon Peoples	RB/DB	6'0"	190	11
10	Hector Gomez	WR/DB	5'7"	160	10
11	Eric Motrey	WR/DL	6'0"	155	9
12	Parker Epperley	QB/LB	6'0"	190	11
14	Spencer Campbell	QB/DB	6'0"	160	10
15	Aydan Eldridge	WR/DB	5'9"	145	9
17	Road Kirk	WR/DB	5'10"	174	12
18	Liam Moore	WR/DB	5'11"	155	9
19	Jack Thompson	RB/DB	6'0"	173	11
21	Kai Marshall	WR/LB	5'11"	160	11
24	Carter Ackerman	RB/LB	5'11"	165	10
25	Lucas Turman	K	5'10"	140	10
27	Julian Thompson	WR/DB	5'11"	165	9
30	Michael Bauen	RB/LB	5'8"	180	10
31	Liam Moore	K	5'7"	140	9
32	Ryan Hale	WR/DL	6'1"	190	11
41	Gordon Grisham-Vaden	RB/LB	5'8"	160	10
42	Bryce Forquan	RB/LB	6'0"	205	11
44	Andrew Gwynn	WR/DL	6'1"	220	11
52	Lucas Daudy	OL/DL	5'11"	220	12
55	J'mare Hairston	OL/DL	6'1"	300	11
58	Jahnnathan Surface	OL/DL	5'10"	280	11
62	Jahn Jarab	OL/DL	6'0"	245	12
64	Thamar DeMari	OL/DL	6'4"	270	10
65	Alex Lafan	OL/LB	6'0"	180	12
66	Brady Wiatt	OL/DL	6'2"	195	11
68	Jake Molo	OL/DL	6'2"	230	10
70	Nash Smith	OL/DL	6'1"	210	11
77	William Thamar	OL/DL	6'1"	220	12
78	Zack Early	OL/DL	6'1"	290	12
81	Jace McDaniel	WR/DB	5'9"	145	9
84	Trevor Duncan	WR/DB	5'10"	160	10
Head Coach: Eddie Sloss					
Assistant Coaches: Ronald Eakin, Vaughn Phipps, Adam Tarachko, Jay Mathis, James Sholar, Allen Childress, Richard Lago, Lyndal Price, David Crist, Derrell Beatty, Kevin Miller, Phillip Reese, John Cramer					
Manager: Gary Smith					
Athletic Trainer: Daniel Clark					
Cheerleading advisors: Kolroy Tarpley, Heather Riquenti					
March: Bruin					
Superintendent: Dr. Mark Mear					
Principal: Guylene Wood-Sotzer					
Athletic Director: Peter Lyell					

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The 2021 spring football season will have a lot of uncertainties, and especially is that true of the Blacksburg Bruins. The big question for head coach Eddie Sloss is who he will put on the field since the team returns only one starter on offense and four on defense.

Will the team rebuild or reload after a 6-5 season last year?

If the past is any example, it simply could be a reload. Last year, the Bruins finished 6-5 and fell in the opening round of the regional playoffs. But this year could be more successful than that despite the loss of so many starters given the team's consistency year after year.

Thanks to graduation, the team lost the bulk of its offense in running back Brian Mitchell (111 carries for 820 yards and 10 touchdowns, 7.4 yards per carry) and receivers Josh Gholston (22 receptions for 435

yards for 19.77 yards per catch) and Karim Mohamed (41 receptions for 676 yards, 16.49 yards per catch).

Mohamed was also a key cog on special teams with 14 kickoff returns for 404 yards for a 29.5 average with a long of 91 yards.

Last year, Parker Epperley split time at quarterback with Luke Goforth, but this year, it's all his.

Defense, though, could be where Epperley, a junior, will be depended on the most after racking up 71 total tackles, including 27 solos with 15 for loss last season.

Will Thomas (6-1, 220) is a returning offensive lineman and defensive end, and big men Zach Early (6-1, 290) and Jmare Hairston (6-1, 300) will be returning as defensive linemen.

The team should have an advantage in the trenches with 11 players over 200 pounds, four over 250.

One of the biggest returners could be kicker James Pollard who has two years of play under his belt

and has been one of the most reliable kickers in Southwest Virginia.

Sloss said the COVID-19 situation has been a challenge "but the players have responded well."

The team, according to Sloss, did lose some players during the extended break. "However, the players that persevered are ready to play."

The roster shows 41 players, making it one of the deepest in the areas, but again the question comes back as to how they will perform without any true preseason or scrimmages given the squad's relative inexperience. Instead, the team will have to learn on the fly to match the consistency the program has enjoyed over the past eight seasons.

The season doesn't start on an easy note for the Bruins as they will open at Salem on February 22.

Games against Cave Spring and Hidden Valley have been replaced by Franklin County and Radford on this year's schedule.

Bruins take to new turf field for 2021

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Blacksburg High School will no longer have to fight a muddy field on Friday nights after a new synthetic turf field was completed last spring.

Because of COVID-19's shutting down athletics, the field is still waiting to be used for the first time.

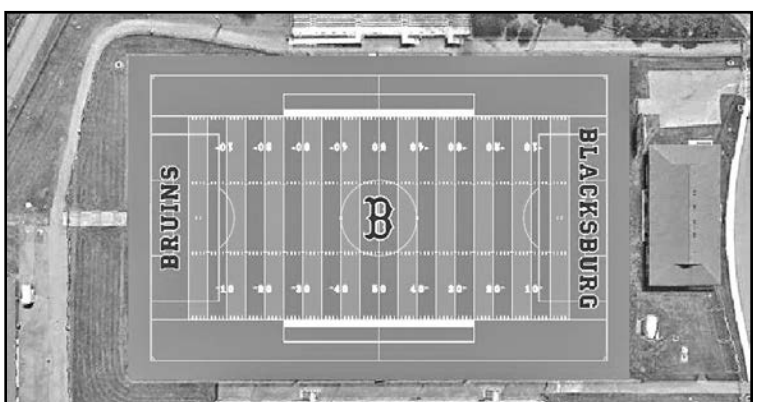
For the past few years, the

school has had to deal with poor field conditions, even playing several home playoff games on the road at Christiansburg's new turf field.

The Blacksburg Athletic Boosters raised \$350,000, and the Montgomery County school board matched the amount to fund the field. It stretches from fence to fence (120' X 265') at the current Bill Brown Stadium. The

school already has a synthetic track on an alternate site so no work was done to the current paved track at the football stadium, thus making the project cheaper in comparison to CHS where a track was included in the renovation.

Soccer and lacrosse teams could take to the new field later this spring with an official dedication expected sometime this football season.



FILE PHOTO

Blacksburg High School's new turf football field is ready to go this spring.

Hunter leads Blue Demon squad depending on big linemen, players from undefeated JV team for improvement

Christiansburg Varsity Football Roster				
#	Name	Position	Height	Weight
	Allen, Reid	11 LB/ATH	5'4	145
	Altizer, Curtis	10 LB/F	5'8	185
2	Altizer, Travis	11 DB/Z	5'7	147
	Altizer, Kavon	10 DB/WR		
	Barrett, Bradv	12 LB/OL	5'10	188
50	Berg, Caden	12 DL/OL	6'3	169
	Blount, Brody	9 LB/TE		
	Brubaker, Eli	11 DL/OL	6'0	224
53	Caldwell, Eliot	12 DL/OL	5'10	193
75	Carter, Caleb	12 DL/OL	5'9	217
5	Clarke, Jaxson	11 DB/WR	6'1	172
	Conley, Ayden	10 DL/OL	6'4	263
	Conner, Spencer	9 DB/W/K	5'10	
43	Cunningham, Christian	12 LB/W	5'10	175
13	Dickerson, Alan	10 DB/WR	6'2	175
	Dixon, Jonathan	11 DL/OL	5'10	208
	Evans, Tanner	9 LB/QB	5'7	150
	Fernandez, Max	9 LB/W		
	Filipiak, Nathan	11 DL/OL	5'9	192
	Garrison, Dishon	10 DL/TE	6'1	167
	Gordon, Brady	11 K/DL/TE	6'0	193
8	Graham, Casey	11 DB/QB	5'11	180
11	Henley, Caleb	12 ATH/WR	5'11	185
12	Henley, Thaxton	10 LB/W	5'11	160
19	Howery, Gabe	12 LB/W	5'9	166
7	Hunter, MJ	12 DB/QB	5'9	170
42	Johnson-Buchannon, Kenyon	11 DL/F	6'0	215
76	LaComa, Aiden	11 DL/OL	6'1	235
9	Lloyd, Drew	11 LB/W	6'2	215
	McCrea, Robert	10 DL/OL	6'1	184
	Myrthil, Stephan	11 LB/F	5'8	177
60	Partain, Dillon	11 DL/OL	5'7	227
	Pence, Harrison	10 DL/OL	5'5	177
	Poole, Jackson	10 DL/OL	5'11	231
	Shippee, Nathan	10 LB/OL	5'10	185
	Snider, Rannik	10 DB/W	5'9	145
87	Taylor, Tyrique	11 DL/TE	6'2	230
	Thompson, Jayron	10 DB/ATH	5'6	145
62	Troutt, Tylor	12 DL/OL	6'6	350
	Vazquez-Ayala Jr., Antonio	11 DL/OL	5'5	160



FILE PHOTO

MJ Hunter returns to lead Christiansburg after a season when he was the all-county/all-city athlete of the year.

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MJ Hunter is one of those student-athletes who plays multiple sports. He recently finished basketball and went directly to the football field.

In 2019, Hunter (5-9, 170) had 116 carries for 619 yards rushing with eight touchdowns. He also passed for 773 yards with 13 touchdowns and was

fifth in the River Ridge District in rushing.

Now, he will lead a Blue Demon team that finished 5-6 and returns four starters on offense and six on defense. The team will have to replace all five offensive linemen, but that shouldn't be a problem with 14 players over 200 pounds. Head coach Alex Wilkens (7-22 in four seasons at CHS) also has a lot of talent from an undefeat-

ed junior varsity team that included some beef from the trenches.

Wilkens is proud of how his team has responded during the COVID-19 restrictions. "It has given us more time to get better," he said. On the other hand, Wilkens said, his team has had less time to break in new starters and to iron out the wrinkles.

"We expect a competitive group that plays hard every rep. Our schedule is tough, but that's every year. We have to finish games and play for 48 minutes to win any game. We'll be ready," Wilkens said.

Senior Caleb Henley returns after suffering a season-ending knee injury halfway through the 2019 season. Before going down, he had 16 catches for 300 yards.

On the ground, the team will return Drew Lloyd (6-2, 215) and Kenyon Johnson-Buchannon (6-0, 215), both of whom are both expected to lead the rushing attack after losing tailback Matson Stanley (181 carries, 1,063 yards with 10 touchdowns). Also, running back Stephan Myrthil (5-8, 177) is expected to show some of the talent he flashed on the junior var-

sity squad.

On the defensive side of the ball, Henley had three interceptions before suffering the injury and will be counted on this season in a secondary that had problems against the pass.

Hunter will also play a role for the defense after picking off two passes and typically covering the opponent's top receiver on any given night.

Jaxson Clarke (6-1, 172) and Travis Altizer (5-7, 147) will also have to step up in the defensive backfield to shut down offenses. Johnson-Buchannon, Tyrique Taylor (6-2, 230) and Aiden LaComa (6-1, 235) should help with that as they combined for seven sacks, 12 quarterback hurries and four turnovers last season. LaComa will be late to the game as he is still participating in the school's extended wrestling season.

Youngsters like Casey Graham (5-11, 180) could play a sleeper role for the Blue Demons.

The key is whether Wilkens can keep building on the past that includes a successful middle-school program.

Christiansburg will host Salem in the home opener on February 26.

Christiansburg High School 2021 football schedule

Friday, Feb. 26, Salem
Friday, March 5, Pulaski
Friday, March 12, Floyd
Friday, March 19, at Patrick Henry
Friday, March 26, Giles
Friday, April 2, at Blacksburg



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Returning starters lend optimism for Eastern Montgomery season

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With seven starters returning on offense and eight returning on defense for this year's football team, Head Coach Jordan Stewart and his Eastern Montgomery Mustangs are optimistic they can improve on last season's 2-9 record and last-place finish in the Pioneer District.

Stewart came back to his alma mater with hopes of building a winning tradition, but through his first six seasons the Mustangs have struggled with a 12-50 record.

COVID's wiping out the fall season left the team still wondering what this season could bring.

Eastern Montgomery is no different from other area schools in that the pandemic has changed everything about high school football. Stewart said the main way it has affected his team is the shutdown of school facilities and the inability to do anything over the summer.

"Also, students being remote during the school year has made it hard to keep up with grades and build better relationships with certain players," the head coach said. The extended time off has also affected a strength program Stewart has built from the ground up. "Our lifting numbers have dropped since the fall of last year. The inability to be in the weight room has put us behind the 8-ball," Stewart said.

He will also have to replace All-county/All-city performer Dylan Owens, who rushed 125 times in 2019 for 890 yards with nine touchdowns. Also gone is All-Pioneer District defensive and offensive lineman 6-4, 220-lb. Cole Shepherd, who had 55 solo tackles last season with two sacks and 19 tackles for loss.

But Eastern Montgomery returns three-year starters Shawn Benjamin (5-11, 294 lbs.) and Brandon Work (5-5, 202 lbs.). Eight seniors make up a squad of 27 players that also includes seven tenth graders and three ninth graders. Stewart hopes some of the youngsters grow up quicker than expected.

One or two injuries with a small squad and a condensed schedule, according to Stewart, could make or break the season. "A guy being out one or two weeks. Well, there went one-third of the season," he said.

One of the biggest factors on Eastern Montgomery's side is the return of 6-2, 167-lb. quarterback/safety Adam Bahnken. He was second on the team in total tackles with 66.5.

"We are returning several players on both sides of the ball. However, we have some key positions to fill, and without any scrimmages and with a shortened pre-season there are a lot of question marks rolling into week one," Stewart said. "We will have to evaluate guys during regular-season games versus a scrimmage. I think condition-

ing and cold weather are going to affect game outcomes. One or two extra turnovers can swing a ball game in a hurry," the head Mustang said.

The spring squad will have seven players over 200 pounds, three over 300 pounds, including 6-1, 335-lb. offensive lineman Brandon Edwards and Noah Vishneski (6-1, 357), both seniors.

One of the biggest contributors could come thanks to the girls' soccer team as sophomore Lilly Underwood will step up to take the role of kicker this season. She was the Pioneer Player of the Year for girls' soccer this past spring when the Lady Mustangs put together the best season in the program's history.

"She has done very well in pre-season and is a good kicker," Stewart said.

Eastern Montgomery is slated to open the season on February 22 at home versus Covington.

Eastern Montgomery High School 2021 football schedule

Monday, Feb. 22, Covington
Saturday, Feb. 27, Auburn
Saturday, March 6, at Bath County
Friday, March 13, Narrows
Saturday, March 20, at Bland
Friday, March 27, at Parry McCluer

Eastern Montgomery Football - Varsity Roster (as of 02-10-21)					
Number	Name	Position	Height	Weight	Year
2	DARION MOORE	RB/DB	5'6"	159	12
3	Ryan Williams	WR/DB	5'11"	139	12
4	ADAM BAHNKEN	QB/DB	6'2"	167	12
6	LUIS MARTINEZ	RB/LB	5'5"	160	11
8	Alec Elkins	WR/DB	5'9"	132	10
10	CJ Rakes	WR/DB	5'9"	155	10
11	Lance Elkins	TE/LB	6'2"	170	11
12	Gage Akers	QB/DB	5'	140	9
13	Lilly Underwood	K	5'6"	135	10
13	Benjamin Via	WR/DB	5'8"	159	11
19	Kobe Phoenix	RB/LB	5'11"	176	10
26	Seth Burleson	RB/LB	6'	207	11
32	Corey Lynch	WR/DB	5'9"	123	0
34	Eli Brown	RB/LB	5'9"	236	11
44	Anthony Travota	RB/LB	5'10"	174	10
50	Xavier Brown	OL/DL	5'10"	253	9
52	Gunner Lawson	TE/DL	6'2"	173	9
53	Brandon Edwards	OL/DL	6'1"	335	12
54	BRANDON WORK	OL/DL	5'5"	202	12
55	Shawn Benjamin	OL/DL	5'11"	294	12
57	Wyatt Stallard	OL/DL	6'	200	11
60	Tyler Rice	OL/DL	6'1"	251	12
70	Brandon Kingery	OL/DL	5'10"	274	10
75	Jose Mejia Martinez	OL/DL	5'7"	207	9
77	Noah Vishneski	OL/DL	6'1"	357	12
84	Angel Ramos-Mendoza	TE/DL	5'9"	195	10
84	JUSTIN TYREE	WR/LB	6'	153	12

School Colors: Maroon and Black
Nickname: Mustangs
Head Coach: Jordan Stewart
Assistant Coach: Mike Williams, John DeWeese, Josh Burgess, Lee Hale, Harold Osborne, Karl Brockenborough
Athletic Trainer: Krista Milton
Cheerleading advisors: Brittany Hawley
Mascot(s): Mustangs
Superintendent: Dr. Mark Miear
Principal: Todd Lewis
Asst. or Associate Principals: Matt McDaniel
Athletic Director: Kirk Litton, CAA
Band Director(s): Stanley Bragg

Prioleau returns to loaded Radford Bobcat lineup this spring

Radford High School schedule for 2021 football season

Monday, Feb. 22, Giles
Friday, March 5, at James River
Friday, March 12, at Alleghany
Friday, March 19, at Blacksburg
Friday, March 26, Floyd
Friday, April 2, at Carroll County

Radford High School Football Roster					
#	Name	Height	Weight	Position	Class
1	XAVIER COBBS	5'6"	146	WR/DB	12
2	DARIUS WESLEY-BRUBEC	5'11"	188	RB/LB	11
3	GILLIAM LARD	5'10"	163	WR/DB	12
4	KAMAREE TANNER	5'8"	145	WR/DB	12
6	LANDEN CLARK	5'9"	151	WR/DB	9
7	PJ PRIOLEAU	5'11"	161	RB/DB	12
8	MARCELL BAYLOR	5'11"	185	RB/DB	10
10	BRENT MABRY	6'5"	178	WR/LB	12
12	ZANE RUPE	6'3"	213	QB/DB	12
14	ALLEN HAMBLIN	5'9"	132	WR/DB	11
15	KEITH TABOR	5'11"	162	WR/DB	10
18	MAX KANIPE	5'11"	143	WR/DB	9
21	MENI MORRISON-STEWART	5'11"	168	RB/DB	10
22	TYREL DOBSON	5'9"	201	OL/LB	11
36	MASON SPROULE	5'10"	166	WR/K	12
44	ADDISON LESTER	5'10"	167	WR/DL	12
50	REECE MABRY	6'4"	188	OL/DL	12
51	SPENCER PERDUE	5'9"	226	OL/DL	12
52	CHARLIE DAVIS	5'10"	202	OL/LB	9
54	BRAD MARION	5'10"	425	OL/DL	11
55	BRANDON THOMPSON	6'	181	OL/DL	9
56	ALEX KANIPE	6'3"	195	OL/DL	12
57	JORDAN MOORE	5'9"	245	OL/DL	10
58	JACK WOODARD	6'2"	260	OL/DL	11
59	DAWSON MARTIN	6'	188	OL/DL	9
60	ANDREW MOORE	6'2"	236	OL/DL	10
62	BRIAN LACASSE	5'10"	244	OL/DL	11
65	JAKE RITCHEY	6'3"	215	OL/DL	12
66	ZACH WILSON	5'8"	177	OL/DL	11
74	LANCE DUNCAN	5'10"	176	OL/DL	9
76	JOHN HAYES	6'	202	OL/DL	12
77	SAM KENNEDY	6'2"	257	OL/DL	12

Head Coach: Matthew Saunders
Assistant Coaches: Cameron Sellers, Josh Smith, Grayson Howard
Roger Hollins, Wesley Hallett
Athletic Director: Greg Wade
Principal: Jeff Smith
Assistant Principal: Darden Freeman
Athletic Trainer: Andrew Waff

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Radford High School's football head coach Matthew Saunders said COVID-19 has not directly affected his team, but overlapping seasons have.

"We have a lot of student-athletes that play multiple sports at Radford. I think that is great, but due to COVID the team and I can't interact with the players playing another sport," the boss Bobcat said. "I am able to go over some things with them getting one-on-one practice, but they can't be with the other football players."

The team that finished 9-3 last season, losing in the state quarterfinals, returns eight starters on both sides of the ball.

"Because of injuries, we started and played a lot of people (last season)," Saunders said.

The coach has put together a 92-63 mark at his alma mater and has been a constant in the state playoffs year in and year out.

The extended time off has had its negatives for this year's team.

"We are not where we want to be at this point," Saunders said. "We are a little behind where I want to be strength and conditioning wise."

Radford did lose three big cogs down in the dirt with the graduation of All-county/All-city lineman of the year Ben Cox, Andrew Olgerson and

Kip Green.

Cox is now at Vanderbilt, Olgerson at Averett and Green at Coastal Carolina. Also lost was Ethan Hoffman who had 55 solo tackles with 27 for loss and seven sacks.

The team also lost a key piece of last year's team in the form of kicker Connor Lytton who left school early to attend Boston College. Lytton was 39 of 40 on PATs and hit many key field goals with a long of 48 yards. Also, 72 percent of his kickoffs were touchbacks. He was named the All-County/All-City defensive and specialist of the year.

Radford also lost running back Justice Marshall (528 yards on 100 carries, 19 catches for 206 yards with three touchdowns) to graduation. Marshall did not finish last season because of an injury and will be missed on both sides of the ball this spring.

Saunders will regain the services of all-world running back P.J. Prioleau who suffered a season-ending knee injury in a preseason game in 2019. He sat out the entire season. As a sophomore, the 5-11, 160 pounder rushed for 1,725 yards on 231 carries with 20 touchdowns.

6-3, 210-lb. quarterback Alex Rupe is back. Last year he completed 59 of 128 passes for 878 yards and nine touchdowns. He also rushed 132 times for 953 yards and 16 touchdowns. He combined for 1,831 all-purpose yards and was involved in 96 of the team's

points last season.

Darius Wesley-Burbeck is also back after rushing 105 times for 707 yards with nine rushing touchdowns. He also had seven catches for 133 yards with another touchdown.

Temporarily, both Prioleau and Wesley-Burbeck will be unavailable to the football team as both are playing on the basketball team that moved on to state semi-finals last week.

The Bobcat offensive line will have a lot of size with 10 players on the roster over 200 pounds and three over 250. Jake Ritchey (6-3, 215), Sam Kennedy (6-2, 257), John Hayes (6-0, 202) and Spencer Perdue (5-9, 226) are all seniors.

On the defensive side of the ball Kamaree Tanner, who had 33 solo tackles last season with three interceptions, is back and will be counted on a lot more this season. Look for senior defensive back Xavier Cobb to also play a big role for a team that is known for its stopping power.

Mason Sproule will step up to take over kicking duties.

Saunders does not believe the shortened season will affect his team and expects them to make a run deep into the playoffs when they get everyone back into playing shape.

"I think we can make a long run in the playoffs if things go our way," he said.

Radford opens the spring 2021 season at home against Giles.



P.J. Prioleau returns to the football field for the Radford Bobcats this year after missing the 2019 season with a knee injury.



Kamaree Tanner had 33 solo tackles with three interceptions last season.



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