



With infections falling, vaccinations rising, governor increases capacity limits for outdoor sports, entertainment venues

RICHMOND—Governor Ralph Northam Wednesday announced that as COVID-19 hospitalizations and infection rates continue to decline and vaccinations rise in Virginia, certain outdoor sports and entertainment venues may begin to operate at increased capacity starting Monday, March 1.

The governor amended Executive Order Seventy-Two with the next steps of the “Forward Virginia” plan to

safely and gradually ease public health restrictions while mitigating the spread of the virus.

The key changes in the Third Amended Executive Order Seventy-Two include 1) Social gatherings: The maximum number of individuals permitted in a social gathering will increase from 10 to 25 people for outdoor settings, while remaining at 10 persons for indoor settings. 2) Entertainment venues: Outdoor

entertainment and public amusement venues will be able to operate with up to 1,000 individuals or at 30 percent capacity, whichever is lower. If current trends continue, these venues may be able to operate at 30 percent capacity with no cap on the number of people permitted to attend starting in April. Indoor entertainment and public amusement venues must continue to

See **Capacity**, page 7

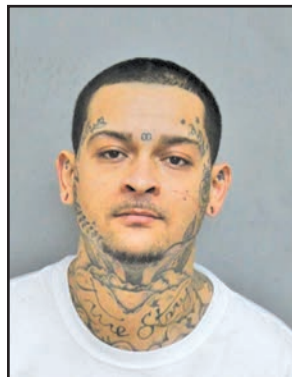
Arrest made in TruHarvest Farms break-in

With assistance from the City of Radford Police Department, the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office Thursday arrested Justin Scott Murphy, 29, of Radford, after “an intense investigation” following Wednesday's break-in at TruHarvest Farms.

The arrest was conducted without incident around 3:00 a.m. in the City of Radford.

Wednesday's break-in was the latest in a series of burglaries that have plagued the local manufacturer of hemp products at 1771 Flanagan Drive in Christiansburg.

Murphy has been charged with breaking and entering, three counts of grand larceny, and possession of a firearm by a felon. He is being held without



Justin Scott Murphy

bail in the Montgomery County Jail.

It is believed Murphy is connected to the previous larcenies at TruHarvest. The investigation continues, however, and anyone with additional information about the crimes is encouraged to call Investigations Lt. Light at (540) 382-6915 ext. 44422.

COVID update: First case of virus variant shows up in Southwest Virginia

CHRISTIANSBURG -- The first case of the SARS-Co-V-2 variant B.1.1.51 has been confirmed in an adult resident of Southwest Virginia who recently returned from international travel.

Dr. Noelle Bissell, the health director of the New River Health District, saw the appearance of the variant as a

call for increased vigilance. “We are in a race to stop the spread of these new variants, and it's time to double down on personal precautions,” Dr. Bissell said in her recent weekly news briefing. “It is critical that all Virginians comply now with mitigation measures. The more people that become infected, the greater the chance the

virus will mutate and a variant will arise that could undermine all our vaccination efforts.”

The health district director pointed out that public health recommendations for stopping the spread of COVID-19 will work for all COVID-19

See **Variant**, page 7

DECA to honor Blacksburg High's Georgia-Kathryn Duncan for service to local, state chapters



BHS senior Georgia-Kathryn Duncan has served as the Virginia DECA's Region 5 Vice President for the 2020-21 school year and will be honored at the state DECA leadership conference in March.

Blacksburg, VA – Blacksburg High School senior Georgia-Kathryn Duncan has drawn praise from the Virginia DECA state advisor, Donna Dail, for her exemplary service to both the Blacksburg High School DECA and to the organization statewide as the Region 5 Vice President during the 2020-21 school year.

“As a leader for the state association, Georgia-Kathryn has gone beyond what anyone could have imagined. When many students are struggling to engage and connect during COVID, VA DECA state officers have exceeded expectations to lead students across the state,” said Dail.

Formerly Distributed

ive Education Clubs of America, DECA is a career and technical student organization that prepares over 13,000 emerging leaders and entrepreneurs who are interested in careers in marketing, finance, hospitality and management. DECA enhances the preparation for college and careers by providing co-curricular programs that integrate into classroom instruction, apply learning, connect to business and promote competition.

Each year, Virginia DECA elects 10 student leaders from across the commonwealth to lead and plan a program of work for Virginia's

See **DECA**, page 7

RU theatre/cinema department presents ‘When She Had Wings’

Students in the Radford University Department of Theatre and Cinema are presenting a virtual production of “When She Had Wings” today, Feb. 27, and Sunday, Feb. 28,

in Pridemore Playhouse.

Online show times are 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. on Feb. 27 and 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 28. This show is appropriate for all ages. Tickets are

on sale now at www.rutheatretickets.com.

Penned by playwright Susan Zeder, this fun and inspiring tale follows the imagination of an insecure nine-year-old girl named B who dreams of flying. Audiences will soar through clouds of whimsy and wonder as B lifts off on her adventures.

Senior theatre major Angellise Pacheco is cast in the lead role of B, the nine-year-old girl whose imaginative exploits drive the story. The role is very physical, with lots of falling, jumping and quick movements, the way many high-energy nine-year-olds play. Pacheco says that doing all of those things while wearing a mask has been one of the more challenging aspects of the production.

One of the driving plot elements of “When She Had Wings” is the nine-year-old girl's disdain for her upcoming birthday, believing that

See **RU Theatre**, page 6



Angellise Pacheco (left) rehearses her role as B on the partially-constructed set of ‘When She Had Wings,’ a tale of high-altitude imagination, in Pridemore Playhouse.

Virginia Tech ranked third in ‘alternative’ college index



Academic factors are surely a dominant factor in choosing a college, but they are not the only aspect of college life to be taken into account.

Match College has recently

completed its 2021 Alternative College Ranking Index, which ranked Virginia Tech third in the country from among 50 of the biggest universities. Six factors other than academics were

used to compile the index.

The six alternative factors used by Match College were quality of life, safety, sustainability, sports participation, registered student organizations and bars within one mile of the campus.

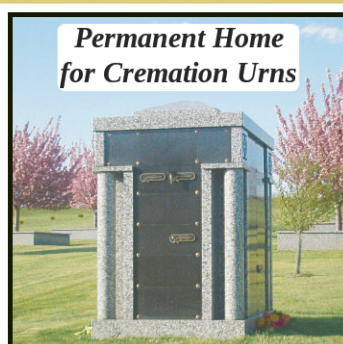
The safety score was based on the number of crimes on campus per 10,000 students since 2001. The sports participation rankings were based on the percentage of students who are part of a sports team. The scores for the student organizations were based on the number of organizations per 10,000 students.

In the index, Virginia Tech finished behind only the University of Michigan and New York University in the ‘alternative’ college rankings. Other colleges in the top ten rankings were the University of Georgia, Penn State University, Iowa State University, the University of Missouri, Washington State University, Auburn University and Oregon State University.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, Feb. 27:

Outdoor Book Sale

10 a.m. - 4 p.m. at the Blacksburg Library weather permitting. The cost is \$5 per bag or \$1 for hardbacks and \$.50 for paperbacks. Gift books are available for \$2 each. Call the library for more details and to confirm the sale is being 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. Arrive at least 15 minutes before your designated tee time to check in. To register, visit https://www.discgolfscene.com/tournaments/Blacksburg_Municipal_Disc_Golf_Fundraiser_2021.

Monday, March 1:

Blacksburg Business License Reminder

Town of Blacksburg business license renewal forms for 2021 are due by Mon, Mar. 1. Businesses are assessed an annual license tax based on the prior year's annual gross receipts.

Taxes and fees must be filed and paid by Mar. 1 to avoid late filing and late payment penalties of 10% each and 10% interest. Renewal packets were mailed in early January. If you have not received the packet, please email businesslicensegroup@blacksburg.gov or call 540.961.1108. For assistance contact the Community Relations Office at 540.443.1090 or email cro@blacksburg.gov.

Tuesday, March 2:

Book Talk: "Monsters among Us"

Author Monica Rodden, a Virginia Tech graduate, has published her first teen novel, and the Radford Public Library has copies available to check out as well as to give away. "Monsters among Us" is a mystery novel with Gothic and feminist themes. It includes aspects of "Wuthering Heights."

Join in for a conversation about the book. For a copy of the book, email Elizabeth.sensabaugh@radfordva.gov. The Lamplighters are funding this author event.

Thursday, March 4:

Noise alert: Corps of Cadets Rifle Practice

The Corps of Cadets' precision drill team, the Gregory Guard, will practice firing a rifle salute at 6 p.m. behind Lane Hall, 280 Alumni Mall. Expect three volleys of shots.

American Legion meeting

The American Legion Harvey-Howe-Carper Post 30 will

meet at 7 p.m. at the VFW Post Home on 102 Watts St. in Radford. In case of heavy snow or ice that day, the meeting will be canceled. For further information, call 250-2283 or 239-9864

Tuesday, March 9:

Sons of Confederate Veterans meeting

The Sons of Confederate Veterans, Stuart Horse Artillery Camp 1784 will meet at 7 p.m. at Aly's Family Italian Restaurant, 3204 Riner Road in Montgomery County. William Reed will present the "History of the 51st Virginia Regiment." Members of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) are invited to attend. In case of heavy snow or ice that day, the meeting will be canceled. For further information, call 320-4315 or 239-9864.

Wednesday, March 10:

Radford Chamber Business over Breakfast

From 8-9 a.m. at the Radford Coffee Company, 333 W. Main St. The guest speaker is Kim Re-pass with the Radford Economic Development department. Pre-registration is requested at www.radfordchamber.com. Please bring a face mask to abide by current COVID-19 state regulations.

Tuesday, March 16:

Radford Reads with Monica Rodden

Join the Radford Public Li-

brary at 6:30 p.m. for a Zoom conversation with Monica Rodden, author of "Monsters among Us." Rodden will read from her book and talk about the publishing process. Email Elizabeth.sensabaugh@radfordva.gov for details. The library has a limited number of free copies of this book to give away while supplies last, so those interested in obtaining a copy should let the staff know.

Ongoing:

Through Friday, Mar. 5:

Glencoe Mansion "2020 in Review" Art Show

The show features the works of artists Cheryl Mackian, the Radford Photo Club, and Teresa Regil, whose works all appeared in the Gallery during 2020. The exhibit is free and open to the public.

Blacksburg free curbside brush collection

The Town of Blacksburg is offering free curbside brush collection for snow and ice storm-related vegetative debris through March 5. Residents are required to call public works at 540-443-1200 to request a special pickup, and collections will be made in the order they are received. Requests will be taken until Friday, March 5, and will be limited to one pickup per household. Pickups will be limited to one dump truck load (10'x7'x3') per location per pickup date. To be picked up, the brush should be cut into

lengths no greater than seven feet and no greater than six inches in diameter and should be stacked outside and away from any fencing, mailboxes, shrubbery, lamp posts, or any other structure or obstacles that may be damaged by town equipment.

Through March 31:

Virginia Tech Parking Survey

Virginia Tech has released a 2021 Parking Survey. All those who utilize parking and transportation in and around the Virginia Tech Blacksburg campus are invited to participate, including visitors and Blacksburg residents. The survey will close March 31, 2021, at 5 p.m.

All responses will remain anonymous and will be analyzed at the aggregate level. The survey should take fewer than 15 minutes to complete. To take the survey, visit

<https://vtnews.vt.edu/notices/adm-evergreens/Transportationsurvey.html>.

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. The exhibit is free and open to the public.

Four NRCC students nominated for 2021 All-Virginia Academic Team



Michael Johnson of Radford



Grace Ankeney of Blacksburg



Eric Pratt of Draper



Elana Dao of Pearisburg

Four New River Community College (NRCC) students, including one from Blacksburg and one from Radford, have been nominated to the Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) 2021 All-Virginia Academic team.

The NRCC students who received the honor are Grace Ankeney, Elana Dao, Michael Johnson, and Eric Pratt. These four students will be recognized at a virtual All-Virginia Academic Team awards event on

April 21, 2021.

The virtual event will be in lieu of the awards luncheon that is normally held in Richmond. Each student will receive a medallion and certificate in recognition of this honor. From the

group of Virginia Community College System students recognized, 10 will be eligible for national awards.

From Blacksburg, Ankeney is currently working on completion of general studies and liberal arts associate degrees. After NRCC, she plans to pursue a four-year degree and study psychology before attending law school and becoming a human rights attorney. She is interested in starting an environmental club at NRCC.

"I had heard great things about NRCC from people I knew in Blacksburg. Upon visiting the school, I was struck by how caring and involved the faculty were," said Ankeney. "I immediately knew NRCC was a place that would equip me for the future and advance my educational goals."

Dao lives in Pearisburg and is working on an associate degree in business management and a career studies certificate in hu-

man resource practices. She plans to continue living in Giles County after graduation and hopes to one day open her own salon.

She serves her community by volunteering at a local animal shelter and helping with Operation Christmas Child by Samaritan's Purse. Dao is also an NRCC Access to Community College Education (ACCE) student. ACCE provides free tuition to NRCC in exchange for local community service. Dao chose to attend NRCC because of the local campus access and because her mother and brother also attended NRCC.

Pratt lives in Draper and is in the engineering associate degree program at NRCC. After completing his degree at NRCC, he plans to transfer to Virginia Tech to study materials science and engineering with hopes of working with carbon-based materials and additive manufacturing.

"I chose NRCC because it is a great opportunity to receive an equal or better education at a far better price, and the small class size allows for more personal education and contact with educators and staff," said Pratt.

Johnson is studying instrumentation and control automation technology, electrical engineering technology, and electronics technology. He lives in Radford and plans to remain in his community after completing his degrees. He hopes to work with programmable logic controllers and robotics technologies.

"I chose NRCC specifically for the instrumentation and control automation program, of which NRCC has one of the best around," said Johnson.

PTK is an international honor society of two-year colleges and academic programs, particularly state colleges and community colleges. The organization's mission is to recognize the academic achievement of college students and to provide opportunities for them to grow as scholars. To be eligible for PTK students must be enrolled at NRCC, have a minimum 3.2 cumulative grade point average, and have completed at least 12 non-developmental credits at NRCC.

More information on PTK at NRCC is available by contacting faculty sponsors Brian Clark at bclark@nr.edu or Ellen Oliver at eoliver@nr.edu.

CROSSWORD

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- CLUES ACROSS**
- Current unit
 - Antidiuretic hormone
 - "What's up?"
 - A female domestic
 - Animal catching device
 - Large tailless primate
 - Forearm bones
 - Agarwood oil
 - Japanese waist pouch
 - 36th President
 - Largest Mediterranean island
 - Nicklas Grossman's birthplace
 - Point that is one point E of NE
 - 1841 Rhode Is. rebellion
 - Largest CA city
 - Michigan
 - Visualized
 - Remain as is
 - The Volunteer state
 - Chinese painter Zhang
 - Small young herring
 - Reverences
 - Cape Verde capital
 - Optically formed duplicates
 - Travel around the world
 - Chills and fever
 - Tennis player Erlich
 - Elicit or derive
 - Small scissors cut
 - Thin continuous mark
 - Prevents harm to creatures
 - Belonging to a thing
 - A boy or youth
 - Old small French coin
 - CLUES DOWN
 - A Dalton (physics)
 - Shopping complexes
 - Chinese transliteration system
 - Lack of normal muscle tone
 - Clobber
 - Pilgrimage to Mecca
 - Divine language of Hinduism
 - A sudden outburst
 - Laborer who does menial work
 - Move to music
 - Unit of loudness
 - Suitable for use as food
 - Financial gain
 - 14760, NY
 - Possessed
 - Saddle foot supports
 - Encircle with lace
 - Hindu religious teacher
 - Haulage
 - Faucet
 - 1509 Portuguese/Indian battle
 - Good Gosh!
 - Frame-ups
 - Penyl
 - Covered with ivy
 - Painting on dry plaster
 - Colombia's 3rd largest city
 - Short fiber combed from long
 - Tolstoy's Karenina
 - Cologne

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BONOMOS

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Health District offers second vaccine doses today, Feb. 27, at RU

CHRISTIANSBURG -- The New River Health District will hold a second-dose vaccine clinic today, Feb. 27, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., at Radford University's Dedmon Center, 101 University Drive in Radford.

Parking will be on the river side of the parking lot. Signs will be posted to direct attendees to the site.

This clinic will offer second doses of Moderna vaccine only to those who received their first

shot on or before January 29. A photo ID will be required, along with the CDC vaccination card given at the time of the first dose. Those who have misplaced their card can wait at the site to have their vaccine information confirmed and will receive a replacement card.

To get the second dose at this clinic, participants must have received their first dose through a pharmacy, a medical provider or a local health department in the New River

Health District. The district includes Floyd, Giles, Montgomery and Pulaski counties and the City of Radford.

"Due to recent weather-related interruptions in vaccine supply, we are hosting this large event with more parking capacity, all the efficiencies of a large-scale event and the support of many local partners," said Noelle Bissell, director of the New River Health District. "We strongly encourage those who are eligible to take advan-

tage of this opportunity to get fully vaccinated."

Participants must also complete a vaccination form. To download and complete the form in advance, visit www.NRVroadtowellness.com.

Those traveling to today's clinic from Christiansburg should note that a portion of Radford Street at the intersection with Badger Street will be closed in both directions for 30 minutes around 11 a.m. It will be more convenient to

take I-81 or another route to the Dedmon Center during this time.

For anyone who is eligible but cannot attend this Saturday's clinic, the New River Health District will continue offering second doses each weekday from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Blue Ridge Church in Christiansburg. No appointment is needed, but participants should bring a photo ID and their CDC vaccination card.

Jumping frost crystals: VT lab seeks to relegate windshield scraping on freezing Virginia mornings to the past

If you have ever gotten up on a winter morning and thrown yourself into the arduous task of scraping frost from a windshield, a Virginia Tech lab is engaging science that could make your life much easier. In research funded by the National Science Foundation, Associate Professor Jonathan Borekyo has led a team in developing a potential solution for frost removal by way of electrostatics.

As water freezes, positively charged protons and negatively charged electrons separate. Frozen ice crystals become electrified as the top of the frost becomes warmer than the bottom of the frost. This causes charged ions to move from top to bottom (warm to cold), but it turns out that the positive ions can migrate

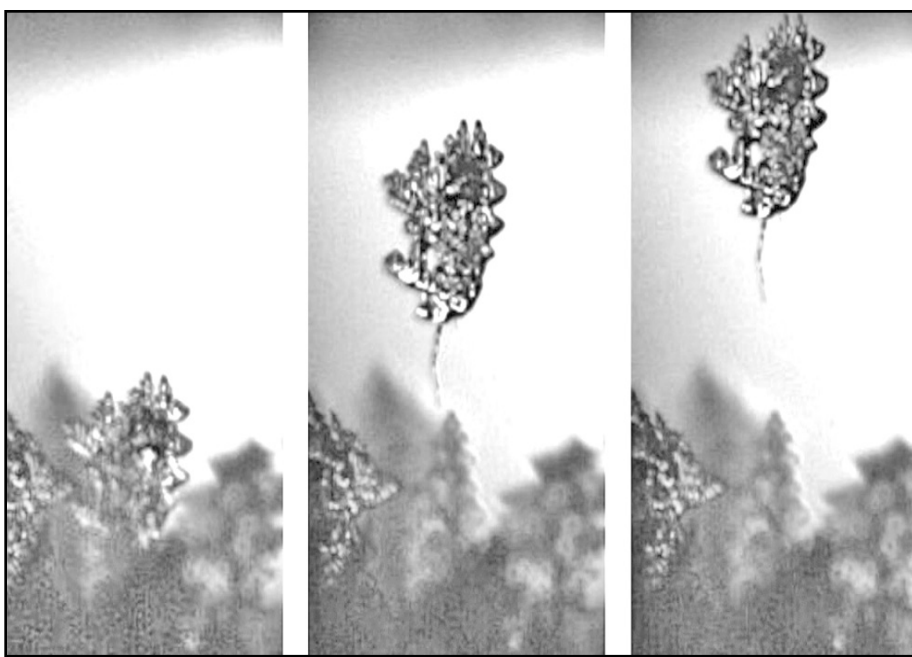
faster. The top of the frost ends up being negatively charged while the bottom is more positively charged, a concept known as charge separation.

Charge separation in frost has been studied in the past, but the effect has never been exploited to remove the frost from its surface. Borekyo's Nature-Inspired Fluids and Interfaces Lab set out to fill that gap. The team started by artificially creating frost on a surface. They then suspended a film of water above the frost using filter paper. Opposites attract, so the negatively-charged top of the frost sheet attracted the positive ions in the water. This generated an electric field that exerted an attractive force on the frost sheet.

Using a high-speed camera, the team observed

frost particles breaking off their substrate and jumping toward the opposing film of water. Frost was grown on both metal and glass surfaces, indicating that the jumping frost effect is possible regardless of the thermal and electrical properties of the object holding the water.

With this data in hand, the team is moving to larger scales in their testing. The ice particles in this experiment were very small in size, each only a few millimeters or less. Borekyo's team is working toward removing large sheets of ice by increasing the amount of charge that comes near the frost. By replacing warm water with actively charged electrodes, the small frost jumps could become large-scale ice evacuations.



Frost breaks off and "jumps" upward due to an electrostatic charge.

"If we can amplify this electrostatic de-icing effect such that entire sheets of ice or frost are in-

stantly ripped away from their surface, it could be a game-changer for the aircraft and HVAC indus-

tries," said Borekyo.

-- Written by Alex Parrish

VT professor urges state's grain growers to watch for rapid price changes

BLACKSBURG — Speaking at the virtual 2021 Virginia Grain and Soybean Annual Conference, Dr. David Kohl, Virginia Tech professor emeritus of agricultural finance and small business management, said the commonwealth's grain growers need to prepare for rapid changes in the price of grain commodities this year.

This comes on the heels of last year's enormous agricultural commodity price drops due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We're going to have inflation creep, particularly in expenses and machinery," Kohl said. "Some of this volatility will be extreme. We can't change what comes out of China or the election results. The things we can control are our business: production, finance, marketing. Really good managers zero in on the things they can control in their business."

The economic volatility Kohl expects will offer opportunities for some producers to prosper, but only if they're willing to take chances on new business. "In this management transition period, entrepreneurs are the ones who will thrive," he said.

Continued uncertainty regarding exports to China and new trade agreements will be driving change in grain markets, Kohl said. While China purchased significant amounts of American soybeans and other small grains last year, farmers shouldn't expect that to continue.

"Don't bet your farm on trade with China," he said, noting that China recently imposed new tariffs on Australian commodities after that country accused China of being the source of the COVID-19 virus. China also has invested more than \$1 trillion in farmland purchases in other

countries, seeking to build its own agricultural supply chain.

Kohl said that many countries are looking for regional trade agreements rather than worldwide treaties. After six decades of increasing farm exports after World War II, global trade share of the U.S. grain market dropped 9% between 2009 and 2017. Unless American farmers want to be left out of those regional markets, Kohl said, they should support joining treaties such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

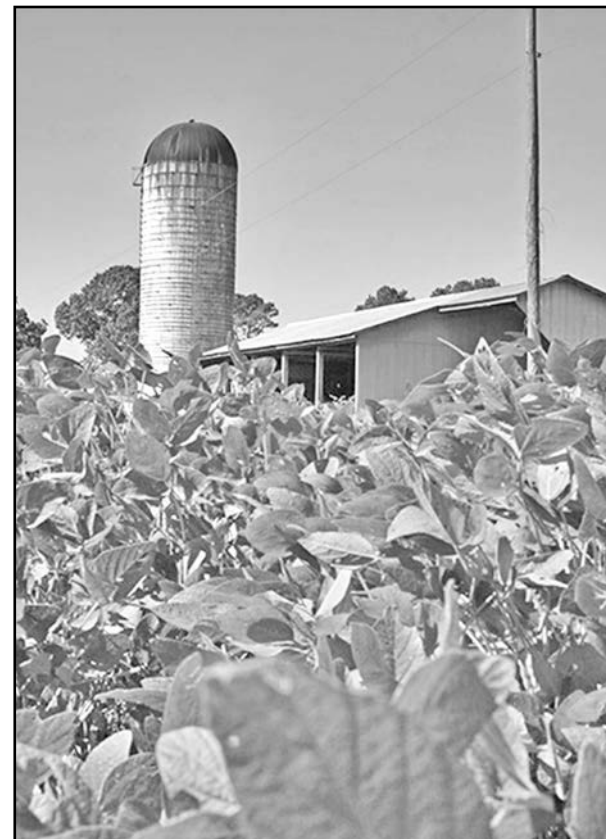
While stronger exports and emergency government supports in 2020 led to improved bottom lines for many grain producers, Kohl warned against taking that for granted this year. "Don't depend on those government payments to continue," he said, adding that increased government support of the farm sector comes with

increased limitations. "When the government writes checks, the government encroaches" in areas such as environmental regulations and taxes.

Other concerns on the radar for 2021 include a possible increase in the federal minimum wage, higher income taxes, the partial disassembly of the U.S. energy fossil fuel industry and de-urbanization trends.

Kohl said the smart farmer will thrive in these market conditions by taking the time to make written production plans, set goals and then follow through on them.

"That's one of the things the pandemic really did: make producers reassess their goals."



Among Virginia's field crops, soybeans provide the second-most revenue for the commonwealth's farmers, about 5% of the state's total agricultural receipts.

LEGAL NOTICE

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

TAX RELIEF PROGRAMS

Real estate tax relief programs are available to County citizens who are age 65 and over as of Jan. 1, 2021 or are totally and permanently disabled. You must own and live in the home (including mobile homes) for which relief is requested.

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For applications and additional information contact the Commissioner of the Revenue's Office

Brenda Winkle, Master Deputy

winklebh@montgomerycountyva.gov

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755 Roanoke St. Suite 1A

Christiansburg, VA 24073

For online information and applications please go to MONTVA.COM click on Elected Officials, Commissioner of the Revenue, Tax Relief.

DEADLINES:

FOR REPEAT FILERS March 1, 2021

FOR FIRST TIME FILERS December 31, 2021

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OPINION

An Empty Nest

I'm not really so much a nature lover as a nature liker. I'm not strictly the indoors type, but I have often considered it likely that John Denver didn't watch out for falling rocks as he should have, what with his Rocky Mountain High and all.

I have never really understood why otherwise perfectly sane people choose -- apparently without coercion or torture -- to leave the comfort of an air-conditioned home complete with a queen-sized bed and a refrigerator packed with yummy foodstuffs to go "commune with nature." If God had intended to condemn mankind to sleeping out in the cold on the ground, he wouldn't have invented the mattress.

I think the cure for camping out happened to me back in my mid-20s. In the army, I was with a special training unit that cranked up the tracks and headed for the German countryside Monday morning before daylight and rattled back into the base Thursday evening after dark. Every week for months.

While we as a battalion (which included my outfit) often spent the week traipsing through the snow and shivering and chattering our teeth in frequent ferocious,

bone-chilling rainstorms, honesty compels me to confess that for the most part my unit had it pretty good.

I was the battalion communications officer. The important fact to recall about that little tidbit is that we had charge of the battalion's classified documents. And when you're in West Germany out in the woods less than thirty miles from East Germany and a gazillion Communist soldiers, classified documents were taken seriously. Very seriously indeed.

So when we arrived at our training site, my comms platoon set up apart from everyone else. Not only that but we strung up concertina wire around our tracks to keep everyone out or at least to provide us fair warning if anyone tried to come in without permission. In case you're not sure about concertina wire, the book definition is that it's "a type of barbed wire or razor wire that is formed in large coils which can be expanded like a concertina. In conjunction with plain barbed wire and steel pickets, it is most often used to form military-style wire obstacles."

I.e., it's pretty nasty

See Nest, page 6

Virginia students again among top 10 in AP exam achievement

According to information released Wednesday by the College Board, Virginia is once again among the top ten states for its scores on Advanced Placement examinations.

The released statistics reflect that 28.6 percent of the commonwealth's 2020 graduating seniors earned a score of three or higher on at least one AP test. The scores ranked the Virginia school system as tenth in the nation for students demonstrating college-level achievement on at least one AP exam.

Nationwide 24.4 percent of graduating seniors achieved scores of three or higher on the exam.

As released by the College Board, the nonprofit organization that manages the AP program, the rankings of the top 10 states with the percentage of their students who demonstrated college-level achievements were (1) Connecticut 34.5 (2) Florida 34.2 (3) Massachusetts 34.0 (4) California 32.4 (5) New

York 31.6 (6) Maryland 31.5 (7) New Jersey 31.3 (8) Colorado 29.0 (9) Illinois 29.0 (10) Virginia 28.6.

"While Virginia continues to rank in the top 10 in AP participation and performance, there are still wide disparities in participation and outcomes when we compare data for different student groups," Superintendent of Public Instruction James Lane said. "As high schools recover from the coronavirus pandemic, equity — including expanding access to AP courses and identifying and encouraging more students with the potential to succeed — must be a priority."

Disaggregated by student group, the percentages of Virginia 2020 graduates who earned a qualifying score on at least one AP examination during high school were Asian students: 52.0%; American Indian students: 12.7%; Black students: 9.1%; Hispanic students: 24.3%; White students: 28.1%.

Virginia students earned quali-

fying scores on 98,556 AP examinations in 2020. According to the College Board, this represents an estimated 295,698 college credits. At an average rate of \$462 per college credit hour, the College Board estimates the total potential cost savings for the commonwealth's students and families was \$136,612,476.

Although colleges and universities set their own policies for awarding credit, a score of three or higher on an AP test is generally accepted as indicative of college-level work.

The 10 most popular AP courses among Virginia's 2019 graduating seniors were — in descending order — English Language and Composition, U.S. History, U.S. Government and Politics, World History: Modern, Psychology, English Literature and Composition, Calculus AB, Biology, Environmental Science and Human Geography.

Virginia has highest vehicle property taxes in country

The personal finance website WalletHub has released its 2021 report on the vehicle property taxes paid in each state and determined that Virginia has the highest vehicle property taxes in the country.

Twenty-three states and the District of Columbia have no vehicle property taxes, according to WalletHub's survey. Virginia has an effective vehicle tax rate of 4.05 percent, more than one-half of a percent higher than the state with the next-highest tax rate, Mississippi.

In Virginia, the annual taxes paid on a vehicle valued at \$25,000 total \$1,012, making Virginia the only state in the country with a tax of four figures.

For vehicle property tax rates, WalletHub examined data for cities and counties making up at least 50 percent of a given state's population and extrapolated this to the state level using weighted averages based on population size. For each state, the website assumed all residents own the same vehicle: a Toyota Camry

LE four-door sedan — 2020's highest-selling car — valued at \$24,970, as of February 2021.

Other locales with the highest vehicle tax rates among the nation's 50 states and Washington, D.C., and their tax rates are 40) Wyoming, Nevada, New Hampshire (1.80%) 43. Kansas (1.94%) 44. Massachusetts (2.25%) 45. South Carolina (2.38%) 46. Maine (2.40%) 47. Connecticut (2.61%) 48. Missouri (2.63%) 49. Rhode Island (3.44%) and 50. Mississippi (3.50%).

News Messenger

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

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WalletHub: Three Virginia cities among America's hardest working

With March 6 being Employee Appreciation Day and the length of the average work day increasing by over 40 minutes during the COVID-19 pandemic, the personal-finance website WalletHub has released its report on 2021's Hardest-Working Cities in America and determined that Virginia Beach sits at number three on the list, Norfolk is number eight, and Chesapeake is number 12.

Said the website in its introduction to the survey, many Americans view hard work as the path to achieving the American Dream. We work so hard, in fact, that we put in more hours at our jobs than several other industrial-

ized countries. The average U.S. worker puts in 1,779 hours per year, 135 hours more than the average in Japan, 241 more than the U.K. and 393 more than Germany. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many people have adapted to work from home, which can end up extending work hours even further.

To determine where Americans work the hardest, WalletHub compared the 116 largest cities across 11 key metrics that were divided into two broad categories: direct work factors and indirect work factors. The six direct work factors the website used to determine its rankings were aver-

age workweek hours, the employment rate, the share of households in which no adults work, the share of workers leaving vacation time unused, the share of engaged workers (employees who are enthusiastic about and committed to their work and workplace as defined by Gallup), and idle youth (ages 16-24).

The five indirect work factors used for the survey were the average commute time, the share of workers with multiple jobs, the annual volunteer hours per resident, the share of residents who participate in local groups or organizations, and the average leisure time spent per day.

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OBITUARIES

Hinkley, Betty Jean Walker

Betty Jean Walker Hinkley, 85, of Radford, passed away Saturday, Feb. 20, 2021.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Clyde Wilmer and Sarah Farris Walker; her husband, John Lee Hinkley, Jr.; a son, Tommy Hinkley; and all 11 siblings.

Survivors include her son, David Hinkley (Belinda); nine grandchildren;



multiple great- and great-grandchildren; and many other relatives and friends.

Graveside services were held on Wednesday, Feb. 24, 2021, at the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Dublin with Pastor Robert Meredith officiating.

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

McKenzie, Katherine Branch

Kay (Katherine) Branch McKenzie, devoted and cherished wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother characterized by trailblazing professional achievements, political activism and spirited commitment to causes close to her heart, passed away peacefully at the age of 85 on Feb. 22, 2021, at the home of her son, surrounded by loving family and her devoted and kind caregiver, Christie Davis.

She was predeceased by her loving husband of 51 years, Harold C. McKenzie, Jr., and her parents, Kitty and Harlee Branch.

A native of Atlanta born on Feb. 12, 1936, Kay was raised in Buckhead where she grew up as the only girl among three brothers during a time of transition for the city and for a woman's role in business and politics. Her adventurous nature, old school standards and genuine southern grace made her a woman for all times, and she was admired as a pioneer and role model in more than one arena.

She was the first registered female lobbyist in the State of Georgia. Her interests and commitment to volunteer efforts included work with Sheltering Arms Daycare, Friends of the Chattahoochee River from its fledgling years to prominence, and hands-on support in the campaigns of many successful elected officials including the first mayoral campaign of the late Maynard Jackson, Atlanta's first African-American elected to the office, as well as the successful campaigns of the late U.S. Congressman John Lewis and President Jimmy Carter.

In 1981, she launched McKenzie and Associates, a public relations firm that became one of the city's leading locally owned agencies. After selling that agency, she became Senior Vice President of another leading public relations firm before taking on what she felt to be her most meaningful professional work, orchestrating communications and creative services for the 1996 Atlanta Paralympic Games. She later served as Vice President of Communications for BlazeSports, the Paralympic Games' legacy organization which established sports programs for the physically disabled in 25 states. Among her many professional affiliations, she was a member



of the International Business Fellows, and with her husband she enjoyed many years playing golf at the Piedmont Driving Club where they were lifetime members.

After living in Buckhead all their lives, Kay and her husband moved to Marietta in 2006 to be with family where they attended St. James Episcopal Church. In 2013, due to illness, she moved to Winston-Salem

with her daughter, Katherine McKenzie Stegall, and her grandchildren, Katie and Beau, to be close to her daughter, Ansley McKenzie Browning and family. This past year she and Katherine moved to Blacksburg to live with her son, Harold, and his wife, Cindi.

Despite her varied interests and commitments, devotion to family remained Kay's priority. Her three children remember their mother as a fun-loving, adoring, hands-on parent and grandparent who delighted in their youthful escapades.

She is survived by her daughters, Katherine and Ansley (William); a son Harold C. McKenzie, III, DVM (Cindi); and grandchildren Elizabeth Browning White (Nick), Tanner Browning (Catherine), Katie Stegall, Ben (Beau) Stegall, Cmdr. Matthew McKenzie (Beth), Erynn McKenzie Layman, MD (Steve) and Kayleigh McKenzie.

She is also survived by her niece, River Branch, and son Quinn; her three brothers, Harlee Branch (Jane) of Sacramento, Calif. and their two children, David Branch (Ginny) of Atlanta and their three children, and Barry Branch (Doreen) of Atlanta and their two children; her nephew, Barry (Andres Navia) Branch Jr.; her seven great-grandchildren, and many loving lifelong friends.

The family would like to thank the employees of Interim Healthcare and Heartland Hospice for their dedication, kindness, and support.

A memorial service will be scheduled for a later date, and interment will take place at St. James Episcopal Church in Marietta, Ga., in the future. If you wish to make a donation in Kay's honor, please consider a hospice of your choice. The McKenzie family is in the care of Mullins Funeral Home & Crematory in Radford. www.mullinsfuneralhome.com.

Weyer, Carol Frances Dexter

Carol Frances Dexter Weyer, 82, of Radford, passed away Thursday, Feb. 18, 2021. She was surrounded by her family and caregivers in the final days of her life.

She was preceded in death by her parents, William Dexter and Frances Campbell Schwichtenberg, and her husband, James (Jim) F. Weyer.

Survivors include her son and daughter-in-law, Rodger and Lori Wills of Radford; a sister, Betty Jane Morris of Dublin; and a special cousin, Gail Scott of Vinton.

Carol graduated from Radford High School and retired from Poly Scientific in Blacksburg. She enjoyed traveling in a motorhome with her husband and Dobermans for many years, and they made lots of friends throughout their travels. She also enjoyed cooking and collected innumerable boxes of recipes over the years. She was an avid reader of the Bible, and the power of her faith was an inspiration.

She loved all animals and used to take her pet parrot everywhere with her, including physician's appointments. She had other pet birds, but dogs were her true love. She especially favored pit bulls and Dobermans and rescued several throughout her life and



many became her pets.

Carol volunteered with both the Radford and Dublin Humane societies, the Kennel Club, and PAWS. Other hobbies included photography and scrapbooking to which we are forever grateful. Our best memories of/with her will not be forgotten since she left behind many photo albums and scrapbooks dating back to 1959. Even though she is no longer here with us in the flesh, she will forever remain in our hearts and our memories.

Due to the pandemic, the family will remember Carol in a private memorial service at Highland Memory Gardens in Dublin.

In lieu of flowers, Carol had requested that contributions be made to The Jewish Jesus (Rabbi Schneider, PO Box 777, Blissfield, Mich. 49228, a Christian organization) or the local humane societies.

The family would like to especially thank Dawn Whitescarver and Amy Rhodes, her caretakers, and the staff at Carilion Hospital for their dedication and exceptional kindness.

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

Shepherd, Carolyn Dale

Carolyn Dale Shepherd, 69, of Christiansburg, passed away on Friday, Feb. 19, 2021.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Ansel and Eula Mae Shepherd.

Survivors include her son and daughter-in-law, Phillip and Logan Kessinger; grandchildren Kat and Matt Vaughn, Stephen Brubaker III, Brandon Kessinger, Andrew Brubaker, and Keaton

Kessinger; a sister, Sharon Hernandez; a nephew, Allen Odum; a niece and her husband, Gwen and Agustin Gonzalez; and numerous other family members and friends.

Per her wishes, no services will be held at this time.

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

Lawson, Wanda Marie

Wanda Marie Lawson, 77, of Christiansburg, died Tuesday, Feb. 16, 2021, at LewisGale Hospital Montgomery.

She was born in Christiansburg on Jan. 13, 1944, to the late Edward and Loella Slusser Dowdy. She was also preceded in death by her brother, Leighton Dowdy; a sister, Thelma Linkous; and her best friend, Sandra Lawson.

She was a member of New Hope Church of God. She enjoyed gardening and growing flowers and living on James Street with her wonderful friends and family. Above all else, she loved her children, grandchildren, and adopted grandchildren.

She is survived by her husband of 60



years, Manuel Lawson; a daughter and son-in-law, Lisa Lawson and Mark Robertson; sons and daughters-in-law, Mike and Jeanette Lawson and Terry and Tammie Lawson; grandchildren Mikey, Seth, Derek, Hunter, Justin, Andrew, Michael, and Brittany; many great-grandchildren; brother Larry Dowdy and Mary Stephens; a special nephew, Tony Harris; and a special

dog, Charlie.

Funeral services were held on Monday, Feb. 22, 2021, at 2 p.m. in the McCoy Funeral Home Chapel with the Rev. T. Michael Bond officiating. Interment followed at Roselawn Memorial Gardens, Christiansburg.

Oliver, James Dale

James Dale Oliver went to be with His Lord on Feb. 24, 2021.

He was born Sept. 6, 1933, in Glade Spring, Va., and was the son of the late Roy and Stella Oliver. He was predeceased by his sister and brother-in-law, Wilma and Mahlon Wyatt.

He graduated from Liberty Hall High School in 1951 and earned a B.S. Degree in Agricultural Education from Virginia Tech in 1955. He graduated from the Cadet Corps and served two years as a Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Artillery and was discharged as a Captain.

After being discharged from the army, he was appointed as an extension agent in Roanoke County, Va., in 1957. In 1960, he accepted a faculty position in agriculture at Virginia Tech and completed his M.S. degree in 1963 and a Ph.D. degree in 1970 in agriculture economics. He retired from Virginia Tech in 1992.

Dale was a good friend to all who knew him and was always faithful to whatever task he was appointed to do as evidenced by his being a member of the Blacksburg Planning Commission for 35 years, serving on the Board of Appalachian Bible College for 37 years, and being a member of Harvest Baptist Church where he faithfully served as a deacon, a Sunday school teacher and in many other



positions. He was active in many roles in the community and enjoyed Virginia Tech sports.

Dale is survived by his loving wife of 60 years, Patricia Duncan Oliver; his daughters Debbie (Richard) Dustin of Springfield, Ohio, and Brenda Oliver of Blacksburg. He is also survived by two grandsons, Michael (Ashley) and Erik Dustin of Springfield,

Ohio; two great-grandchildren, Georgia and Lincoln; a brother Darius (Sue) Oliver of Abingdon, Va.; and several nephews, nieces, great-nephews and great-nieces.

Viewing is limited to groups of 10 and is from 10 a.m. until noon today, Saturday, Feb. 27, with a funeral service at Harvest Baptist Church in Blacksburg at 1 p.m. A graveside service will be held following the funeral at Roselawn Memorial Gardens. The service will also be livestreamed at harvestofblacksburg.com.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Harvest Baptist Church Building Fund, 201 Lucas Drive, Blacksburg, Va.; Appalachian Bible College, 161 College Drive, Mount Hope, WV 25880; or the J. Dale and Patricia Oliver Scholarship for ALCE undergraduate students at Virginia Tech. Arrangements by McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg.

Woodrum, Davis Eric

Davis Eric Woodrum, 47, passed away at his home in Pulaski County surrounded by his family on Wednesday, Feb. 17, 2021.

He was an employee of the Radford Army Ammunitions Plant.

Eric was preceded in death by his parents, Pete and Peggy Woodrum. He is survived by his loving wife, Renee A. Woodrum; his sons, Tyler Mills (Britne) of Roanoke, Logan Woodrum (Tiersa Wilson) of Radford, and Chase Woodrum of Pulaski; grandchildren Casey, Kaiden and Willow; brothers Russell Woodrum (Debbie) of Dublin, Kelly Woodrum of Radford; and Clancy Woodrum (Courtney) of Portland, Maine.;



a sister, PUNKIN Meeks (Charlie) of Radford; and numerous other nieces, nephews, relatives and friends.

The family would like to thank UVA Medical Center, Intrepid Hospice, friends and family for all their support and care given to Eric during his illness.

The family received friends on Wednesday, Feb. 24, 2021, at the Mullins Funeral Home in Radford, followed by memorial services.

In lieu of flowers, please consider the American Cancer Society.

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

McDaniel, Jr., Joe

Joe McDaniel, Jr., 82, of New River, died Monday, Feb. 22, 2021.

He was born in Blacksburg on April 6, 1938, to the late Joe, Sr., and Easter McDaniel.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Myrtle McDaniel, and his brothers and sisters. He is survived by his nieces and

nephews.

Memorial services were conducted Friday, Feb. 26, 2021, in the McCoy Funeral Home Chapel with the Rev. Arnold Jones officiating. The family received friends prior to the service. Arrangements by McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg.

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- Families have been very appreciative of these services.
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Nest from page 4

stuff. Not something you'd want to be climbing over.

But safely ensconced behind that disagreeable wire, my platoon and I would back our tracks up to each other and connect the canvas covers. Voila. Warmth and shelter from the rain and the snow.

I was blessed with a group of the most resourceful soldiers you can imagine, and one of their primary goals was to make our time in the woods and the rain and the snow as comfortable as possible. One made us a ping pong table. Another figured out how to make an old television set work. (He was a bona fide electronics genius long before the age of computers, etc. We called him "Smuck," and he had such lousy nerves his hands shook. Nevertheless, he was an ace with the soldering iron. Asked how he did it, he would say, "I just solder between the shakes.") And yet another of my troops always managed to show up in the field with a grill and a box or two of bratwurst.

I never did get much out of those German TV shows. (Hint: They were all in German, and the Fatherland's cable companies apparently weren't too keen on running lines to the American GIs in the forests. Reception wasn't the sharpest.) Okay, so it wasn't totally rough-

ing it, but to get back to my point from which I wandered away, it did furnish me enough rubbing knees and elbows with Mother Nature to last me a lifetime.

But one time when the Mrs. and I were living in a little town in Middle Georgia -- perhaps our all-time favorite place we ever lived -- Mother Nature moved right in with us as opposed to my moving out with her. Her agents were a pair of dedicated finches, who scoped out the area, held a family talk over coffee one morning, and decided one of our hanging ferns on the front porch was the perfect place to lease for a while.

I was slow to catch on, but I finally noticed an inordinate amount of ornithological activity right outside my front door. Once I caught on, however, my joy and my delight began.

Our little nest because the repository for three little eggs, which hatched into three little demanding feathery balls. Mom and Dad were dedicated parents, willing to go the proverbial nine yards: you know, worms, Little League, tap lessons.

And eventually, the most reluctant of the trio took to the friendly skies, joining his two siblings who had previously set off to see the world.

We were left with an empty nest on our doorstep, and a memory that warms my heart to this day of a delightful interlude that Mother Nature gave us for free.

I recall that TV Guide once picked the top television episodes of all time. There weren't nearly enough episodes of The Andy Griffith Show on the list. (How could those cretins omit Barney's sidecar?) But one of the top shows of all time was the episode in which Opie kills a mother bird and then nurses the baby and is reluctant to let the little one fly off.

After Opie frees the fledgling, he looks at the cage and comments that it sure looks empty.

"But don't the trees seem nice and full," the ever-wise Sheriff of Mayberry says.

And for a little while in our little town, the trees around my house seemed a little nicer and fuller than usual themselves. And even today, decades later, so is my life because of the memory of those birds and how much fun they brought my wife and me, if only briefly.

The author is a man of a certain age who warns everyone within listening distance not to get him started telling soldier stories. He has a bunch of 'em.

RU Theatre from page 1

the transition to a double-digit age will mean that she is becoming old. Pacheco says that she was excited to be cast in the role because she felt like she could relate to the character. "I could relate to how B feels about turning ten. I cried when I turned ten," she said.

The character is one of the bigger roles that Pacheco has played, and she says that she has learned a lot through the experience. "It is a lot of responsibility," Pacheco said. "Some of my lines are cues for other characters and actions, so I've really had to step up how I prepare for this production."

The production team decided to use creative movement by dancers to personify B's rapidly changing moods and experiences. Senior theatre major Travis Sykes is directing the production, and he says he enjoys creating a story that sees the world through a child's eyes.

"There are so many

things I love about this play," he said. "We went through the script and marked every moment where imagination is in play and incorporated dancers to illustrate this through motion."

The theatre program requires a number of safeguards to protect against transmission of the coronavirus. Students are always masked when working together. They are required to turn in a daily symptom tracker before each rehearsal. Props are assigned to specific cast members and cannot be shared. Frequent hand washing is also required when they are working together.

Both Sykes and Pacheco agree that "When She Had Wings" is a story that can be enjoyed by audiences of any age. Younger audience members will be swept away by the imaginative production while older viewers will have a chance to revisit their childhood again.

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!

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Joe had lived in the country his entire life. Life on his parents' dairy farm was predictable and comfortable. Now he was leaving for college, and a whole new world lay ahead. When Joe's parents dropped him off at the university on orientation day, he reeled from the culture shock. This sure is going to be different, he thought.

The Israelites had a similar experience as they prepared to enter the Promised Land.

The land you are entering to take over is not like the land of Egypt, from which you have come (Deuteronomy 11:10).

After forty years of wandering in the desert, the Israelites were not familiar with cultivating crops. Even their knowledge of Egyptian agriculture, which relied on slave labor and the Nile for irrigation, would provide little help. In their new home, God himself would provide water for their fields and vineyards, as long as they continued to trust Him to do so.

Times of transition can be difficult, but if we rely on God, He will help us navigate each new season of life.

Challenge for Today: Pray for someone you know who is facing a major change in his or her life.

Quicklook: Deuteronomy 11:8-17

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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.

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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. Mooncup "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

Variant from page 1

variants. These include wearing masks correctly, practicing physical distancing, avoiding crowds and prolonged close contact, washing hands often, getting vaccinated for COVID-19 when it is your turn, and staying home if you are infected with COVID-19 or if you have had close contact with someone with COVID-19.

In addition to this case of the B.1.351 variant, two other cases of the B.1.351 variant and 12 cases of the SARS-CoV-2 B.1.1.7 variant have now been identified in Virginia, according to Dr. Bissell in a recent interview. As COVID-19

surveillance continues, additional cases with SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern will likely be identified.

Dr. Bissell reported that the B.1.351 variant is associated with increased person-to-person transmission of COVID-19, and that there is no evidence that infections with this variant cause more severe disease. To date, the B.1.351 variant has been identified in nine other U.S. states, the health district director said.

All contacts of the case have been identified and appropriately managed, the health district chief told the media.

Capacity from page 1

operate at 30 percent capacity with a cap of 250 people. All entertainment venues were previously limited to a maximum of 250 individuals. 3) Dining establishments: The on-site sale, consumption, and possession of alcohol will be permitted until midnight, extended from 10:00 p.m. All restaurants, dining establishments, food courts, breweries, microbreweries, distilleries, wineries, and tasting rooms still must be closed between midnight and 5:00 a.m. 4) Overnight summer camps: As of May 1, overnight summer camps will be able to open with strict mitigation measures in place. Registration can begin now.

The new guidelines will be effective for at least one month and mitigation measures may be eased further if key health metrics continue to improve. Current guidelines for retail businesses, fitness and exercise, large amusement venues, and personal grooming services will remain in place. Individuals are strongly encouraged to continue teleworking if possible.

“Thanks to the hard work and sacrifice of all Virginians, hospitalization and positivity rates across the commonwealth are the lowest they have been in nearly three months,” said the governor. “As key health metrics show encouraging trends and we continue to ramp up our vaccination efforts, we can begin to gradually resume certain recreational activities and further reopen sectors of our economy.”

“Even as we take steps to safely ease public health guidelines,” Northam said, “we must all remain vigilant so we can maintain our progress. The more we stay home, mask up, and practice social distancing, the more lives we will save from this dangerous virus.”

The commonwealth will maintain a Safer at Home strategy with continued strict health and safety protocols including physical distancing, mask-wearing requirements, gathering limits, and business capacity restrictions. The current modified Stay at Home order will expire on Sunday, Feb. 28.

VT researchers receive grant to investigate cancer evolution

A team of Virginia Tech researchers across multiple disciplines has received a \$1.4 million grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to investigate tumor development within a natural environment.

With vital backing by the NIH, the study could provide information key to unravelling the mystery of cancer evolution and, in turn, establishing more effective cancer treatments.

“This research project focuses on the early evolution of cells after they double their genome. It is believed that many cancer cells go through this genome doubling during their evolution,” said Daniela Cimini, a professor from the Department of Biological Sciences in VT’s College of Science. “We don’t know what happens in between the time the cancer cells double their genome and proliferation of a tumor.”

The unnatural genome doubling, called tetraploidization, is thought to be an intermediate step toward aneuploidy, or abnormal chromosome numbers. Instead of the usual 46 chromosomes, the cells feature at least one less or one too many chromosomes. Cancer cells almost always display the multiple chromosome characteristic.

These extra centrosomes may play a pivotal role in cancer development, but they were also found to disappear in standard cell culture conditions outside a living organism. The Cimini research group documented this in a prior study.



Daniela Cimini examines her notes about centrosome activity in cells with a doubled genome. A centrosome is a structure involved in the process of cell division. Whole-genome doubling involves the duplication of a complete set of chromosomes and is a common feature of cancer genomes. Cimini’s team’s current project focuses on the relationship between centrosomes and the microenvironment during the development of cancer. Photo courtesy of Alex Crookshanks.

“In contrast to a petri dish, other factors within a living organism may change the extra centrosomes’ behavior to promote tumor development,” said Cimini, who is also co-director of the BIOTRANS program within the Fralin Life Sciences Institute.

Her team’s current research aims to solve the mystery of the disappearing centrosomes while studying the tumor microenvironment.

“Think of the tumor tissue as an ecosystem. The cancer cell really doesn’t exist by itself, but it exists in the context of this ecosystem,” said Scott Verbridge, a professor from VT’s Department of Biomedical En-

gineering and Mechanics in the College of Engineering. “The development of malignant cancer is really characterized by tumor cells adapting to a very stressful tissue environment,” Verbridge said. “The hope is that when you understand the dynamics of how the tumor cell becomes like it does in vivo, you then might be able to identify weak points or ways of targeting the cancer cell.”

If scientists and medical professionals know what is important for tumor progression, they may know what weak points to target for future cancer treatments beyond just killing the cancer cells.

Traditional cancer

therapies, although sometimes successful, involve toxic drugs that can also damage healthy cells and not affect the remaining, more lethal cancer cells.

“For the ovarian cancer cells, you kill some off and the others develop strategies to avoid toxicity,” said Eva Schmelz, a collaborator in the project, professor from the Tech’s Department of Human Nutrition, Foods and Exercise in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and an affiliated faculty member of the Fralin Life Sciences Institute. “For one, that has a lot of side effects, but it’s also not that successful. Developing strategies to treat them earlier would be much better.”

DECA from page 1

13,000+ members. Duncan is one of those student leaders for the 2020-21 school year.

Virginia DECA state officers, including Duncan, will be honored for their achievements at a virtual recognition during the organization’s state leadership conference on March 3.

Duncan is a four-year member of the Blacksburg High School DECA and has served

in various leadership roles for the chapter.

“While Georgia-Kathryn is widely recognized for her leadership ability, I believe it is her dedication to the community that really tells the story for her,” said Kim Radford, BHS market teacher and the DECA advisor at the high school. “[Georgia-Kathryn] has logged over 400 service hours being a Counselor-In-Training at

Camp Seafarer, volunteering for various BHS programs like Home for the Holidays, Junior Assembly and Bruin Quest, as well as advocating for public policy changes for persons with food allergies.

“I am so proud of Georgia-Kathryn,” Radford said. “She is a shining star for our BHS DECA program.”

Duncan is a 4.09 GPA student who has also found time

to start her own business, Beads by Georgia. She is the daughter of David and Edith-Anne Duncan of Blacksburg and plans to attend Wake Forest University in the fall on the pre-business track.

During this year of COVID, the student leaders stepped out of the ordinary process to create innovative, safe ways for DECA members to engage in community service, complete

competitive events and achieve new levels of success. For example, with Duncan as an integral member of the team, a yearlong community service effort, #VADECACares, provided opportunities for Virginia DECA members to focus on kindness, anti-bullying, and mental health through a variety of virtual events, social media challenges, and local activities.

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Legals - City of Radford

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CITY OF RADFORD, VIRGINIA

The Radford City Planning Commission will hold a public hearing to receive comments regarding a request from the Ellett Valley Investments LLC, for a Special Use Permit to develop residential dwellings above the main floor, Tax Parcel’s 5-(1)-62T, located 1129 East Main Street, Radford VA 24141.

The hearing will be held on Monday, March 15, 2021 beginning at 5:30 P.M. E.S.T, at 10 Robertson Street, Radford, VA. Interested parties are invited to attend the public hearing and present their views on the proposed Special Use Permit. Written comments may be sent to 10 Robertson Street, Radford 24141; please allow adequate mailing time: Melissa Skelton, Community Development Director

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Public Notice

The Christiansburg Town Council will hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday, March 9, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Room, Christiansburg Town Hall, 100 E. Main Street.

Pursuant to Va. Code §§ 15.2-1800, 15.2-1813, 15.2-2100(A), and § 15.2-2006, the purpose of the public hearing is to receive comments on: (1) a conveyance of an access easement from the Town of Christiansburg over and across a portion of Tax Parcels 435 (A)-1, 2, 2A & 3 to benefit Tax Parcel 435 (A) 34 (owned by Jalaledin and Joni L. Dadras); (2) a conveyance by quitclaim of any interest of the Town in 0.093 acres, more or less, of the abandoned right of way of Route 658 adjacent to Tax Map No. 435- A 34 (owned by Jalaledin and Joni L. Dadras); (3) a conveyance to Miller Land Company, Inc. by quitclaim and boundary line adjustment of 0.089 acres, more or less, consisting of (a) the abandoned right of way of Route 658 adjacent to Tax Map No. 435- A 39A (owned by the Miller Land Company, Inc.), and (b) a portion of Tax Parcel 435(A)-1, 2, 2A, & 3; (4) a conveyance of a stormwater management easement from the Town of

Legals - Montgomery County

Christiansburg on Tax Parcel 435(A)-1, 2, 2A, & 3 for the benefit of Tax Parcel 435(A)-39A owned by the Miller Land Company, Inc., et al.; (5) dedication of a conservation easement on 0.868 acres, more or less, of Tax Parcel 435 (A)-1, 2, 2A & 3; (6) dedication of a conservation easement on 5.018 acres, more or less, of portions of Tax Parcel 495-2 A. (Diamond Hills Park); and (7) dedication of a conservation easement on Tax Parcel 496-A101A (10.406 acres, more or less adjacent to closed Wades Lane Landfill).

The purpose of the conveyances and dedications on Town of Christiansburg owned property is related to the development of the Town of Christiansburg Signature Park located on Peppers Ferry Road.

Information on the preceding items, the Town’s Zoning Map, Zoning Ordinance, and Future Land Use Map may be viewed in the Planning Department, 100 E. Main Street, Christiansburg, VA 24073-3029 during normal office hours of 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. For more information, contact Andrew Warren by phone at (540) 382-6120 ext. 1130 or

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by email at awarren@christiansburg.org. Run: Saturday, February 27, 2021

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MONTGOMERY SPORTS

Radford seeded No. 2 for Big South men's basketball tourney

The seedings and pairings for the upcoming Hercules Tires Big South Conference Men's Basketball Championship have been determined following the conclusion of the conference's regular-season schedule Wednesday evening, and the Radford Highlanders nabbed the no.-2 seed with their 12-6 conference record.

For this season only, the seedings were determined by a conference-developed ranking index formula with the league winning percentage weighted at 75 percent and the percent of conference games played at 25 percent to address partial team schedules not played to due COVID pauses.

Defending Champion Winthrop captured the outright Big South regular-season championship at 17-1 and is the no.-1 seed in the conference tournament for the first time since 2017. Radford is the No. 2 seed after finishing with a 12-6 Big-South record, followed by Campbell (11-6) at No. 3. UNC Asheville's 9-5 Big South-record earned the Bulldogs the no.-4 seed above Longwood and Gardner-Webb, who tied for fifth-place in the league standings at 10-10. Longwood received the no.-5 seed based on its 2-0 series sweep of GWU.

Hampton (9-9) Big South) is the seventh seed, High Point is number eight at 6-11, USC Upstate (5-11) landed in the ninth spot, and Presbyterian College is no. 10 (5-12). Charleston Southern (2-15 Big South record) would have been the No. 11 seed but will not compete in the tournament due to a COVID pause.

First-round action begins today Feb. 27, with Hampton hosting Presbyterian and High Point hosting USC Upstate. The winners of the two games advance to Monday's quarterfinal

round, which begin at 6:00 p.m. with Winthrop facing the winner of High Point/USC Upstate and no. 2-Radford hosting the winner of Hampton/Presbyterian.

At 7:00 p.m., Campbell will host Gardner-Webb followed by UNC Asheville playing Longwood. The semifinals are scheduled for Thursday, March 4, at the home site of the higher seed with the highest remaining seed hosting the championship game on Sunday, March 7. Contingency plans to complete the tournament are in place and will be implemented as appropriate.

Today's first-round games will be broadcast live on ESPN3 as will the quarterfinals on Monday, March 1. The semifinals on Thursday, March 4, will air on ESPN+ while the championship game on Sunday, March 7, will be televised live on ESPN and broadcast on Westwood One Sports at noon. The Big South's tournament champion receives an automatic bid to the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament.

The conference championship schedule is as follows:

First Round – Saturday, Feb. 27 – ESPN3: #10 Presbyterian at #7 Hampton, 2:00 p.m.; #9 USC Upstate at #8 High Point, 4:00 p.m.

Quarterfinals – Monday, March 1 – ESPN3: #8/9 winner at #1 Winthrop, 6:00 p.m.; #5 Longwood at #4 UNC Asheville, 7:00 p.m.; #7/10 winner at #2 Radford, 6:00 p.m.; #6 Gardner-Webb at #3 Campbell, 7:00 p.m.

Semifinals – Thursday, March 4 – ESPN+: semifinal Game 1 – 6:00 p.m. (higher seeded host team); semifinal Game 2 – 7:00 p.m.

Championship – Sunday, March 7 – ESPN at highest remaining seed, 1 at noon.

RU picks up non-conference win

The Radford men's basketball team had a solid second half en route to a 74-51 win over Mount Aloysius on Wednesday night at the Dedmon Center.

The game was tied at the half, but Radford (14-11) outscored Mount Aloysius (0-1) 41-18 in the second half and pulled away through the final 8:22 with a 21-6 run.

The Highlanders shot 51.9 percent from the floor in the first half but were bested by the Mounties' 54.2 percent. Mount Aloysius hung around by knocking down 4-of-10 (40 percent) 3-pointers.

The Highlanders also shot over 50.0 percent in the second half with an even better 54.2 percent from the floor. Radford shot 38.5 percent (5-of-13) from long range in the second half. Bryan Hart had three of them and he notched 13 points, the most he has had in a Radford uniform.

Defensively, the Highlanders held the Mounties to just 26.1 percent shooting in the second half with only six made field goals. Four of the six field

goals were 3-pointers.

Radford forced eight turnovers in each half but scored only six points off those turnovers in the first half and tallied 14 points off those turnovers in the second half.

Four Highlanders were in double-figures, led by Shaquan Jules' 14 points. He was one rebound shy of a double-double. He went 7-for-7 in the game and had a 25 in the +/- column. Hart also contributed 13 points while Chyree Walker and Dravon Mangum had 12 points each.

Stat of the Game All of Hart's points came in the second half. He knocked down a career-high three 3-pointers.

Inside the Box Score Radford ended the game shooting 52.9 percent from the floor while Mount Aloysius finished shooting 40.4 percent. Mount Aloysius held a lead for 1:02 of the game, early in the second half.

Radford outrebounded the Mounties 39-19 and outscored them in the paint 42-18.

--RU Athletics



Blacksburg's Andrea Leng won the Class 4 50-yard freestyle title with a time of 24.04 Tuesday evening at the Christiansburg Aquatic Center.



Blacksburg senior Julie Anderson placed second in the Class 4 100-yard butterfly championship and also anchored the winning Bruins' 400-relay team.

Blacksburg rolls to boys, girls state 4A swim titles; Christiansburg claims regional indoor track championship



PHOTOS BY JON FLEMING

Following up on the boys' team victory earlier in the day, Blacksburg seniors Katie Highfield (left) and Julie Anderson hold the Class 4 girls swim championship trophy after the team racked up 450.5 points in Tuesday's meet in Christiansburg.

Marty Gordon
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

Blacksburg High School claimed the 2021 state 4A swim championship for both the boys and the girls Tuesday at the Christiansburg Aquatic Center.

The Blacksburg boys rolled up 450.5 points. Monacan finished second with 237 points. The Blacksburg girls notched a win with 375 points, outswimming second-place Hanover's 222 points.

On the boys' side of the pool,

Eli Babcock led a Blacksburg contingent that took all four top spots in the 1-meter diving event. David Roethlisberger was second followed by teammates Brady Semner and Theo Villanueva.

Andrea Leng took state gold in the girls 50-yard freestyle.

The Blacksburg boys and girls won the 200-yard medley relay while the girls picked up the win in the 400-yard freestyle relay.

Meanwhile on the track, both Christiansburg boys and the girls won the Region 3D indoor track meet, slipping by Abingdon in

both competitions. The Christiansburg boys scored 117 points to Abingdon's 100 while the girls' squad tallied 140 points to Abingdon's 120.5.

Jesse Hudnall won the region in the 1,000-meter run for the Blue Demons while Lily Shepherd claimed the long jump with a mark of 14-10.5. Amara Okonkwo won the girls triple jump.

The Christiansburg boys took the 4X800 and 4X400 relay events, and Tyler Trout won the regional championship in the boys' shot put with a heave of 35-2.5.

Tech baseball rolls past Radford Highlanders 22-2



PHOTO COURTESY OF VT ATHLETICS

TJ Rumfield, (No. 7 celebrating with teammates), hit two home runs in Virginia Tech's defeat of Radford University Tuesday.

Virginia Tech baseball beat the Radford Highlanders Tuesday, 22-2, at English Field at Atlantic Union Bank Park.

The win was the Hokies' (3-0) fourth straight over Radford (2-2). Tech leads in the all-time series 49-15. The 22 runs were the most scored by the Hokies in series history.

Ryan Okuda (1-0) got the call for Tech, his first start since March 10, 2020. His last appearance was against William and Mary when he struck out eight and allowed only two runs in five innings.

The Hokies scored 22 runs on 17 hits, including a home run from

Cade Hunter and two home runs from TJ Rumfield.

Radford jumped out to an early 1-0 lead in the top of the first inning, but the Hokies answered in the bottom half of the inning to tie the game. Four hits in the bottom of the third, including Rumfield's bomb to right field, improved Tech's lead to 4-1. The Hokies would add 17 more runs in the late innings to secure the 22-2 outcome.

Okuda pitched three strong innings, striking out three and not allowing an earned run.

Tech's relief pitchers threw six innings against the Highlanders notching eight strikeouts and al-

lowing only one earned run.

NOTES

Rumfield's home runs were his first in a Hokie uniform and the first of his career. His five RBIs were a career high and matched Carson Taylor's game-high last season versus William and Mary.

The previous mark for most runs scored in the series was set on March 26, 1997, when the Hokies beat Radford, 21-4.

In the last five years, Dalton Harum in 2017 is the only player other than Rumfield to hit more than one home run in a game.

--VT Athletics

Two Hokies earn top seeds in ACC wrestling championships

Two Virginia Tech wrestlers, Sam Latona and Hunter Bolen landed the top seeds of their respective weight classes for Sunday's ACC wrestling championships.

Latona wrestles in the 125-lb. weight class; Bolen takes to the mat in the 184-lb. Weight class. The Hokies finished the regular season undefeated. Both Latona and Bolen finished the year at 8-0. Bolen was the only

Hokie to go 5-0 in ACC competition.

Bolen is the consensus No. 1 184-pound wrestler in the country and the defending ACC 184-pound champion. In his first season starting at 125 pounds, Latona defeated reigning ACC Freshman of the Year Jakob Camacho and is ranked No. 5 nationally by InterMat.

Earning the second seed at their respective classes were

Bryce Andonian, Mekhi Lewis and Korbin Myers.

In his sixth year of college wrestling, Myers finished 6-0 on the season and beat three ranked ACC opponents by major decision. Andonian and Lewis each only have one loss on the year with both coming to the respective top seeds of the class.

As top-two seeds, the five Hokies will each have first-

round byes Sunday.

Redshirt freshman Connor Brady and redshirt junior John Borst each earned the no.-3 seed at 157 pounds and heavyweight, respectively. Borst earned third place at the 2020 ACC Championships, automatically qualifying him for the 2020 NCAA Championships. In his first season as a starter, Brady went 3-2 in ACC play and 5-3 in dual matches.

Rounding out the remaining seeds for the Hokies are Dakota Howard (no. 4 at 174 pounds), Sam Hillegas (no. 5 at 141 pounds) and Stan Smeltzer (no. 5 at 197 pounds).

Hosted by NC State, the 2021 ACC Championships are scheduled to start Sunday at 11 a.m. with the championship matches scheduled for 7 p.m.

--VT Athletics

Former All-Conference players Price, Tyler paying it forward for Hokies

Head coach Justin Fuente promoted Jack Tyler to linebackers coach and brought former Tech defensive tackle J.C. Price back to Blacksburg as co-defensive line coach/defensive recruiting coordinator earlier this year, bringing the number of former players working with Tech Football up to seven.

Tyler and Price conducted virtual media sessions Wednesday.

A third-team All-America selection for the Hokies as a senior in 1995, Price was a four-year starter who captained Tech's 1995 Big East championship team that defeated Texas in the Sugar Bowl. He returned to his alma mater after spending the past nine seasons at Marshall University, most recently as co-defensive coordinator (2019-20).

Here are some notable takeaways from Price's session.

On the facility upgrades that have taken place since he last worked at Tech in 2002 as a grad assistant:

"The donations that people have made for things to help our student-athletes were needed. The upgrades have been incredible. The whole ambience of the place is very conducive for our student-athletes to achieve what they want to achieve athletically and academically."

On building a relationship with Coach Bill Teerlinck:

"I think Coach Teerlinck and I will get along great. We took some time one Saturday afternoon to meet and talk football. The next thing you know, four hours later we're still talking about football."

Recently, current Tech defensive coordinator Justin Hamilton discussed the rapport that he built with Price while he was coaching at Marshall. What Price revealed Wednesday was that at one point Marshall actually offered Hamilton a position on the Thundering Herd staff. Instead, Hamilton came back to Tech in 2018 and in 2021 played an integral role in bringing Price back to Blacksburg.

Tyler began his career at Virginia Tech as a walk-on linebacker before eventually earning a scholarship and developing into an All-ACC linebacker for the Hokies. A four-year letterwinner from 2010-13, the Oak-

ton, Va., native played in Tech's 2010 ACC Championship Game win over Florida State and was part of squads that compiled 37 wins during his playing career, including a 4-0 mark against in-state rival Virginia.

Tyler returned to his alma mater as a graduate assistant on defense for the 2017-18 campaigns before taking on a role as defensive quality control coach in 2019 and 2020.

Here are some notable takeaways from Tyler's media session.

"It's a dream come true for me to be back at my alma mater, coaching a position that I love at a place that I love. I'm so appreciative of Coach Fuente and Coach Hamilton, as well as Coach (Tracy) Claeys and Coach (Bud) Foster for how they've molded me and gotten me to the place I am now." Claeys retired as the VT linebackers coach in January after one season in Blacksburg.

On the influence of Bud Foster on his coaching style:

"If there were a person you said I could be a carbon copy of, it would be Bud Foster. That's as high of a compliment that I could receive. Obviously I learned so much from him in terms of linebacker play and defensive play."

On linebacker Dax Hollfield playing the middle linebacker spot:

"He's a leader of the defense, he's the quarterback of the defense, that's what the MIKE role is. You're right in the middle, you're getting everyone lined up, you're making sure everyone knows their responsibilities to the field or the boundary. He's amazing at that. He's another coach on the field."

"All you have to do is tell Dax and he's going to get it done. That's so valuable in today's football because we're not like the NFL where they have (speakers) in the helmets where you can communicate to that guy on the field. We don't have that."

"Being able to communicate on Tuesday this is exactly what we want in a certain situation and if it occurs on Saturday, we want you to do it this way and he can get that done, that's as valuable of a resource as you can have."

Tyler also discussed a crazy week of preparation leading up to last season's 38-31 win at Duke. Tech was extreme-



Former VT defensive tackle J.C. Price (left) has joined the VT staff as co-defensive line coach/defensive recruiting coordinator, and head coach Justin Fuente has promoted Jack Tyler (right) to linebackers coach.

ly short-handed on the defensive side of the ball both in terms of coaches and players. With Justin Hamilton and Ryan Smith unable to be in the building or travel to the game, a heavy load of responsibility was placed on Tyler's shoulders and he was ready for the moment.

The Virginia Player of the Year at Oakton High School as a senior in 2008, Tyler set a school record with 147 tackles before enrolling at Tech and redshirting in 2009. He went on to play in 54 games for the Hokies, finishing his career with 286 tackles (124 solo), 8.5 sacks and 32.5 tackles for loss. Tyler led Tech in tackles in both 2012 and 2013. He was a first-team All-ACC selection in 2012 and a second-team All-ACC pick in 2013.

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