



Two Christiansburg council members not seeking re-election; three reaching for Rush's House seat

Christiansburg Town Council members Brad Stipes and Steve Huppert have announced they will not seek re-election. In the wake of seventh-district delegate Nick Rush's decision not to run again for his Virginia House of Delegates post, three Republicans have stepped forward to run. Christiansburg businesswomen Marie March and Sherri Blevins have joined Riner's Lowell Bowman in

the Republican primary to fill the seat Rush is vacating. This marks the initial foray into politics for both March and Bowman. Blevins is currently serving on the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors. March co-owns the restaurants Fatback Soul Shack and Due South BBQ. Bowman is a business consultant. Tonya Lockett, a former Christiansburg town employee, is the

only candidate so far to announce for the Christiansburg town council. Giles County attorney Jacob Ballard and Radford businessman Jody Pyles have announced they will seek the Republican nomination to face Democrat Chris Hurst in the 12th Virginia House District. Christiansburg Mayor Michael Barber has said he will seek re-election this year.



Dr. Sharon Scott began her work with the Montgomery Co. Chamber of Commerce in 2003 as a volunteer. Her accomplishments as the local chamber's executive director include guiding the organization out of debt.

Blacksburg announces second round of COVID relief business recovery grants

The Town of Blacksburg has established a new round of grant funding to support business recovery in response to COVID-19. The application deadline is April 1 for one-time grants of up to \$10,000. This grant program is aimed at assisting those businesses most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Businesses in the following sectors are eligible to apply: arts, entertainment, recreation; hotel and accommodations (except home-

stays such as Airbnb's, VRBO); personal care (barber shop, nail salon, fitness); restaurant, food services (except grocery stores); retail. Funds may be used to reimburse the cost of business interruption caused by the pandemic, which may include any of the following expenses made after Dec. 1, 2020: rent, lease or mortgage payments; payroll expenses, including wages or benefits; utilities (except town water and sewer); and personal pro-

ductive equipment (masks, gloves, hand-sanitizer, cleaning supplies). The grant application will require applicants to submit documentation (receipts, invoices, and proof of payment) for eligible expenses. This grant opportunity draws from two sources of federal funding intended to assist communities in dealing with the impacts of COVID-19. The Town of Blacksburg

See Grants, page 2

Virginia Chamber of Commerce names Montgomery Chamber exec Sharon Scott Executive of the Year

Sharon Scott, Ph.D., Executive Director of the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce, was selected as the 2020-21 Executive of the Year by the Virginia Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (VACCE) during their virtual Staff Development Conference held March 4 via Zoom. The Executive of the

Year Award recognizes outstanding performance in the field of Chamber of Commerce management in the Commonwealth of Virginia and is presented to an individual who has exhibited characteristics that make him or her a leader both in their chamber and community. Outstanding achievement. See Executive, page 7

Montgomery Museum exhibit presents art by Auburn Middle School students

An exhibit on display through March 29 at the Montgomery Museum of Art and History features work by Auburn Middle

School students. The artwork displayed at the museum features works from students in grades 6-8. The classes

they are taking range from exploratory art and 2-D/3-D design to advanced art classes. While most works were created during art class, some of the art was created entirely outside of school by the school's ambitious artists.

The exhibit consists of self portraits, self-reflective landscapes, exploration in perspective, scratch art and many other pieces created throughout the year. This is the first time students from Auburn Middle School have had the honor to display their work at the museum. Although many of the showcased students have had their art displayed at shows, the ability to be presented in such a professional setting is a new and exciting opportunity

See Museum, page 2



by Auburn Middle School student Trent H

Pod network offers perks for Virginia Tech student groups



Virginia Tech students hang out while following public health guidelines. Photo by Mary Desmond for Virginia Tech.

Plenty of Virginia Tech students have people they call friends, but only a select few have a peer group that answers to mangoes. "We came up with our pod name pretty randomly, not going to lie," said Morgan Barnickel, a first-year

student studying engineering. "I think we were talking about fruit and I yelled out, 'mangoes!' I don't remember why, all I know is that it stuck and I love my fellow mangoes." The Mangoes are just a few of

hundreds of students taking part in the enhanced pod network on the Blacksburg campus this semester. By registering their pods — small groups of students who can relax some COVID-19-related precautions when together due to their commitment to one another's health and well-being — the students are able to tap into specifically tailored activities and resources. "One of the major benefits of pods this semester is that several departments and offices are creating and customizing programs specifically for pods," said Meghan Weyrens Kuhn, director of VT Engage: The Center for Leadership and Service Learning. "An excellent example is the pod programs with Rec Sports that allow students in registered pods exclusive opportunities, such as private group exercise classes and game nights where they can be more relaxed and unmasked." Registered pods are also connected with a Virginia Tech faculty or staff member who provides targeted support to individual pods. Kuhn and Rohsaan Settle, director of Fraternity

See Perks, page 4

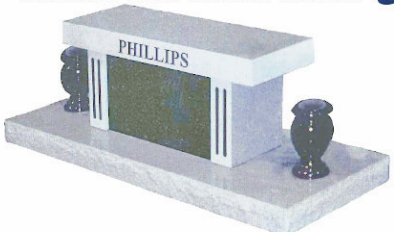
NRV health district may move to new vaccination phase by April

The COVID-19 vaccine rollout continues in the New River Valley as a growing number of people are receiving vaccines and the New River Health District anticipates moving into a new prioritization phase next month. On Wednesday, Noelle Bissell, the district's health director, told members of the news media that she hopes the district can begin vaccinating people who fall in phase 1c by April, depending on vaccine supply available. The phase 1c group includes people who work in food service, housing and construction, transportation, and higher education institutions. The district is administering three vaccine versions, which are Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson. All three are effective based on the public health goals for the coronavirus, Bissell said. "We are not going to get to a COVID zero situation," she said. "The way we are going to get out of this pandemic is to make

sure that people aren't getting severely ill, that people are not getting hospitalized, and that people are not dying. All of the vaccines currently approved are effective at doing that." Some people prefer the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, the newest, because it requires only one dose, compared to two doses for the others, Bissell said. Even so, it is important that people receive one of the COVID-19 vaccines available, no matter the kind, she said. "The more people we get vaccinated, the less virus is circulating," Bissell said. "It really will help us get out of this [the pandemic]." This week, the district began scheduling vaccine appointments for people ages 16 to 64 who have underlying medical conditions. As of this past Wednesday, the district had administered about 38,400 vaccines. Vaccine demand still exceeds supply, Bissell said she

See New Phase, page 4

Cremation Memorialization helps the family move forward from grief to remembrance



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Blacksburg High student-run enterprise receives national DECA gold recertification

The Bear Necessities, a school-based enterprise (SBE) at Blacksburg High School, has earned DECA's gold level recertification for the 2020-2021 school year, the 13th straight year the business has achieved the organization's highest honor.

Store managers Joe Bowen and Samantha Skinner, along with their classmates, developed a "pivot" business plan to remain operational. Bowen said, "Our team members had to think of new and innovative ways to keep the business running and successful. We added new items to our inventory, like face masks, to stay up-to-date with the needs of our customers."

Bowen and Skinner have already presented the business at Virginia DECA's virtual state leadership conference and qualified to present the business at DECA's virtual international career development conference in April.

has achieved gold status with National DECA for 13 consecutive years now, and this may be the year that I'm the proudest of my students," said marketing teacher and DECA advisor Kim Radford.

Formerly Distributive Education Clubs of America, DECA is a 501 not-for-profit career and technical student organization. It prepares emerging leaders and entrepreneurs in marketing, finance, hospitality and management in high schools and colleges around the globe.

The Blacksburg High students are currently re-searching additional items to add to their inventory, including new hoodies and framed letters. "Our research shows many students might not want a letter jacket, so we believe the framed letters will be a great alternative," said Skinner.

"The students were really challenged to complete the submission manual while being in a primar-

ily remote learning environment," Radford said. "They took ownership of the project, researched our operation and pivoted normal business practices in order to determine the innovation required to complete the manual. The manual judge awarded them 'exceeds expectations' for each performance indicator covered. The students presented outstanding work."

A school-based enterprise or SBE is a student-run business providing goods and services desired by a specific target market. Blacksburg High School's SBE is managed by Radford's DE Sports Management class. A hands-on lab experience, SBEs contribute to the development of 21st century skills for students.

Along with the store's receiving Gold Level Recertification, eight students in the class passed the SBE Certification Exam: Joe Bowen, Luke Boyle, Robert Cowan, Tate Harrison, Mason Lat-



Bear Necessities store managers Joe Bowen (left) and Samantha Skinner (right) display their gold level certification awards, the 13th straight year the student-run business has received DECA's highest national award for outstanding achievement.

timer, Samantha Skinner, Alexis Snyder, and Ethan St. Martin. The exam covers areas such as market planning, research, operations and distribution management, promotion,

selling, human resource management, finance, and pricing and product/service management.

An SBE can be certified at 3 levels: bronze, silver, and gold. To obtain

any of these certifications, an SBE must go through extensive work to put together a manual that explains how students run a successful, operational business.

Grants from page 1

received a disbursement of Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) dollars from the Commonwealth of Virginia, for which U.S. Treasury guidance allows expenditures "related to the provision of grants to small businesses to reimburse the costs of the business interruption caused by required closure."

Additionally, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has provided entitlement localities with a special Community Development Block Grant allocation of funds to "prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus," which can be used to assist small businesses that create or retain jobs during COVID-19.

Between these two sources the Town of Blacksburg has up to \$600,000 available to distribute. To determine awards, the town will apply a standard formula based on the percentage and total revenue loss

for each business as determined by comparing gross receipts from either the applicant's 2019 and 2020 federal tax return or Business, Professional and Occupational License (BPOL) application.

Guidelines for the grant application are as follows: For full details, and to complete the online grant application visit <https://www.blacksburg.gov/smallbizrecovery2>.

Complete the grant application by April 1, 2021.

Submit receipts for eligible expenses incurred starting Dec. 1, 2020, up to the maximum award amount at the time of application. The grant maximum is \$10,000.

Only one application per business establishment may be submitted.

Applications will be reviewed by a grant review committee and awarded at one time.

The applicants may be asked to provide additional information.

Museum from page 1



by AMS's Alexandra J.

for them. In a year of uncertainties, this show has been a huge uplift, encouraging many students to create more work outside of class than in previous years.

Further information about the exhibit and the students' works is available by calling the museum.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, March 13:

New River Valley Cares 21st Annual Gala and Auction (virtual)

Proceeds will be used locally to protect children from abuse/neglect and to strengthen families through education, advocacy, and community partnerships. More information on NRVCares can be found at: www.nrvcares.org. The auction has unique and interesting items. Visit www.nrvcares.givesmart.com to register and to preview auction items. There is no charge to register, and bidding starts at noon on March 11 with the online program on March 13 at 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, March 14

Eastern Daylight Time ends

Move your clocks forward one hour before you go to bed.

Monday, March 15:

Sock Bunnies

1 p.m. at the Christiansburg Library. Pick up a kit and learn how to make sock bunnies.

City of Radford Planning Commission meeting

10 Robertson St., Radford; 5:30 p.m.

Hahn Horticulture Garden Monday Night Volunteer Session

The first Monday Night Volunteer Session in which volunteers can donate their time to the Garden. The group will meet on the patio behind the pavilion between 5:15-5:30, and the horticulturists will start discussing the day's tasks at 5:30. The Garden will provide all of the necessary tools and instruction and parking passes for the volunteers.

To stay updated on volunteer opportunities, contact vtgarden@vt.edu and ask to be added to the volunteer email list.

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." Rodden will read from her book and talk about the publishing process. Email Elizabeth at 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.

Town Council Work Session Agenda

The agenda for the Blacksburg Town Council work session scheduled for Tuesday, March 16, at 11 a.m. in the Roger E. Hedgepeth Chambers can be found at

https://blacksburg.granicus.com/GeneratedAgendaViewer.php?view_id=22&event_id=2575.

Wednesday, March 17:

Art Club Virtual Meeting

From 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. at the Christiansburg Library. Create pop art-inspired animal drawings and learn about artist Andy Warhol. Stop by the library for a curated craft kit and catch the video tutorial on the Christiansburg Facebook Page.

Thursday, March 18:

Talking About Books: Nonfiction

Virtual Meeting from 11 a.m. until noon at the Christiansburg Library. To be discussed this month is "Righteous Mind" by Jonathan Haidt.

Knitting 102: virtual

From 5:00 to 6:00 at the Montgomery Floyd Regional Library/Blacksburg Library.

Knitting 102 will pick up with picking up. Learn how to retrieve dropped stitches, increase and decrease your work, and cast off your finished project.

The workshop will take place over a go-to-meeting. Call the library at 540-552-8246 for more information and a workshop link.

Friday, March 19:

Hahn Horticulture Garden Spring Plant Sale

The 2021 spring plant sale, a joint fund-raising event between the Garden and the Virginia Tech Horticulture Club, will be a two-week online sale this year due to the limitations on gatherings. The sale's website will go live on Friday, March 19, and will close on Friday, April 2.

After check out, purchasers will select a pick-up date between April 22-24. The Garden is selling a lot of great plants, both annuals and perennials, and trees and shrubs, but quantities are limited, so order early for best selection.

Monday, March 22 through April 2

Noise alert: Steam ventilation from March 22 through April 2

The steam ventilation will take place if the weather is unseasonably warm, resulting in temperatures above normal. The university and surrounding community members may notice elevated noise levels in the proximity of the Virginia Tech power plant due to the steam venting process associated with the commissioning of the plant's new boiler. This notice is provided as a precautionary measure to inform the surrounding community of the possible need to vent steam. While there are no immediate plans to vent steam during this period, if temperatures are unseasonably warm, steam produced by the new boiler may need to be vented, resulting in possible intermittent noise that will be limited to

normal work hours (between 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.), Monday through Friday only. All efforts will be made to reduce the noise levels as much as possible. The Division of Campus Planning, Infrastructure, and Facilities thanks the university community and local residents in advance for their patience and understanding. Questions related to the steam venting process (and during the process) may be directed to vtrepair@vt.edu or 540-231-4300.

Ongoing:

Head Start Enrolling

New River Community Action is now accepting applications for three- and four-year olds for Head Start for the 2021-22 school year. Head Start offers a no-charge pre-school for income eligible families. Families may apply by calling the local Head Start center, applying online at newrivercommunityaction.org, or by picking up an application form in person at the local center.

Applications are accepted year-round. The phone numbers for the three local Head Start centers are Christiansburg 540-381-7559, Radford 540-731-4107 and Blacksburg 540-552-0490. Anyone applying in person should bring proof of the child's birth and proof of the family's income such as a 1040, a W-2, pay stubs, child support income, money received from grants, and unemployment income.

All month of March

Grab-and-Go Crafts

All the month of March, at the Meadowbrook Public Library. Call Meadowbrook Library to request take-and-make craft kits available for grab-and-go with curbside pickup. They are free but supplies are limited. Crafts available March 15-20 are shark magnet clips, March 22-28, spring and Easter crafts.

StoryWalk

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

Teen/Adult Craft-Felt Smartphone Cover

All the month of March at the Meadowbrook Public Library. Request a teen/adult craft to receive supplies to make your own felt phone cover. While supplies last.

Through March 14:

Youth softball, baseball registration

Montgomery County Parks and Recreation is taking registrations for youth baseball and youth softball in the Auburn and Eastern Montgomery school strands. MCPR is offering tee ball (co-ed, ages 5-6), coach-pitch baseball (boys, ages 7-8), coach-pitch softball (girls, ages 7-8), Ripken Minors Baseball (boys, ages

9-10), Ripken Majors Baseball (boys, ages 11-12), Babe Ruth 10U Softball (girls, ages 9-10) and Babe Ruth 12U Softball (girls, ages 11-12).

To be eligible, players must live in or attend school in the Auburn or Eastern Montgomery school strands. Fees for tee ball and coach-pitch leagues are \$40. Fees for Cal Ripken Baseball and Babe Ruth Softball are \$50. Financial assistance is available. The registration deadline is Sunday, March 14, at 11:59 p.m. for online registrations. For more information or to register, visit www.montva.com/parks or phone 540-382-6975.

Through March 31:

Keep Virginia Beautiful Annual "Shiver" Fundraising Event

Keep Virginia Beautiful (KVB) has opened registration for Shiver in Virginia, a reimagined version of its annual Shiver in the River festival that has been KVB's largest annual fundraiser since 2015. This year's initiative is designed to be COVID-safe and give people more choice in how they can contribute to the beautification of their communities.

Shiver in Virginia runs until March 31. Participants engage in activities including litter cleanups, recycling, trail cleaning, graffiti removal and other good deeds. For a donation of \$20.21, participants will receive a free Virginia State Parks parking pass with no expiration date. Participants will also have access to the KVB Mission Challenge website where they can map the collective progress on the 2,021 mile path across the state. With each act reported, participants will be entered into drawings for additional prizes. Keep Virginia Beautiful is challenging participants to share their pictures, contributions, and successes with others on social media.

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/Transpo-parkingsurvey.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.

Blacksburg seeks feedback on preferred future residential housing types and densities

The Town of Blacksburg has launched the second phase of its public engagement process on housing affordability in Blacksburg.

The increasing lack of affordable housing has become a major topic of community concern, and the town is now taking a close look at a variety of affordable housing strategies to help address this issue.

Over the next six weeks, Blacksburg will be asking for feedback on preferred housing types and densities for future residential development. Feedback will be used to help weigh the tradeoffs of potential approaches in order to select the most appropriate strategies to address local growth and housing availability.

Citizens can provide their input now on the Town of Blacksburg's online community engagement platform called Let's Talk Blacksburg. The town encourages citizens to register on the site, so they can

receive project updates and notices about future engagement opportunities on their chosen topic.

A report with results from the first round of citizen engagement is also available on the housing affordability project page. Respondents noted the cost of housing, housing supply, the loss of small town feel and traffic congestion as the biggest challenges Blacksburg will face as it continues to grow.

Many respondents named the growth of Virginia Tech as the main driver impacting our housing market and noted the need for a wider range of housing types to create housing for a wider range of incomes. There was also a strong desire for greater separation between student housing and housing for permanent residents.

Also on the project page is a link to data from the New River Valley Regional Hous-

ing Study. The full report will be publicly released later this month.

To start engaging on this issue, visit: <https://letstalkblacksburg.org/affordable-housing>.

For more information contact Kim Thurlow, Blacksburg Housing and Community Development Initiatives Manager at 540-443-1619 or email kthurlow@blacksburg.gov.

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Historic Montgomery



The Christiansburg depot at Cambria is shown here with the shelter that ran along the railroad tracks. Men are at work unloading the U. S. Mail car onto a wooden cart. The image, probably from the mid-1950s, is thought to be of the last mail train through Christiansburg. (This image from the D. D. Lester Collection and many more are available from the Montgomery Museum of Art & History.)



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OPINION

Hand tools are a surefire recipe for disaster and injury

Tim Allen and I stand as living and convincing evidence that in one regard at least evolution is a fraud.

For those of you too young to know about Tim Allen, he had a wildly successful sitcom called "Home Improvement" during the decade of the nineties. It was one of the most watched television shows in the country for eight seasons from 1991 through 1999.

The premise was that of a show within a show in that Allen's character hosted Tool Time, a home improvement TV show. The running joke was that he was an accident prone handyman whose mantra of "More power!" inevitably resulted in massive disasters on the set much to the consternation of his mild-mannered sidekick, Al.

I pair myself with Tim Allen's character because when

God created tools, I must have thought he said fools because when it comes to tools I am totally inept. All those countless centuries of evolution have produced in me an opposable thumb that is good only for getting solidly and soundly whacked by a clumsily wielded hammer.

At least I have enough sense to know that I'm endangering life and limb anytime I get in the same room with anything resembling a tool. I do know the difference between a wrench and a wench, and I also know I don't have a prostrate gland. So three college degrees have proven to be worth at least a little something.

But I have long since faced the music. I'm an academic, not a handyman. The handyman is, in fact, my wife. So is she a handywoman? She's the one with the innate practical-

ity who can solve virtually any problem especially with her hands and a tool of some sort.

I even gave her a tool box for Christmas one year. Hey, she asked for it. Another year, I proudly presented her with a quite manly 20-piece socket set. The Mrs. loved it.

What set me to ruminating about screwdrivers and pliers is something I read a while back about the discovery in Ethiopia of some old -- really old -- tools. According to some archaeologists, mankind's version of Tool Time apparently began more than 2.5 million years ago. Very early man had something approaching the smarts to handle tools at least 200,000 years sooner than we the intellectuals had thought. Which just goes to show how smart WE are.

Now I understand that these dudes weren't using hydraulic lifts to work on their cars in the

garage, though if they lived in South Ethiopia, like any good Southerners, they probably had hubcaps lining the walkway to the cave.

So get this image: A shaggy little early man flails away with his tools while Ethiopia's favorite rock band plays the "Sunrise" sequence from Richard Strauss' "Thus Spake Zarathustra." (The University of South Carolina football team probably runs through the neighborhood, too, but that's another story.)

Now flash forward some 2.6 million years, and here I stand tool in hand. Except the only thing I'm doing with it is wondering what to do with it. I don't even look good in an apron.

But, hey, I can always assuage my wounded manhood with the knowledge that in the end I am much smarter

than Ethiopia's toolmeisters, no matter how dexterous they may have been. While they were out there in the hot sun sweating and discovering four-letter words and blisters, I'm right here in the air conditioning with my wife, handywoman that she is. Blessed with all the knowledge and decorum that some 2.6 million patient years of evolution have produced, I'm making myself useful. I'm handing over exactly the tool she asks for and doing a masterly job of staying out of her way.

Now that's evolution for you.

The author is a man of a certain age who at least has the wisdom to appreciate his limitations and the knowledge to know that putting anything resembling a tool in his hands is a surefire recipe for mayhem and maiming.

QuoteWizard survey: Virginia among leaders in stay-at-homes during pandemic

A year after the first COVID-19 lockdowns, QuoteWizard, one of the nation's leading online insurance marketplaces, has released a new report that shows that among the 50 states, Virginia has had the ninth biggest increase in the past year in the number

of residents staying at home during the pandemic.

Among the key findings relating to Virginia are that 1) the commonwealth had a 29.4% increase in the number of residents staying home during the pandemic; 2) Virginia saw a bigger increase in resi-

dents staying home than almost any other state; and

3) right now, 2,186,071 Virginia residents are staying at home compared to 1,688,892 people a year ago.

The eight states with larger increases than Virginia in the percentage of residents staying at home are 1) California (79.9% increase); 2) Hawaii (44.2% increase); 3) Nevada (38.8% increase); 4) Arizona (34.2% increase); 5) Maryland (34.0% in-

crease); 6) New Mexico (31.7% increase) 7) Washington (31.7% increase); and 8) Massachusetts (30.2% increase).

To find which states saw the largest increases in people staying at home through the pandemic, QuoteWizard analyzed the U.S. Department of Transportation statistics on trips by distance. Through new mobility statistics, company statisticians compiled and analyzed data on the number of people staying

home month-by-month on a per-capita basis. To rank states by the largest percentage of change in people staying home, QuoteWizard took the percentage rate difference and the number of people staying home per capita in January 2020 as compared to January 2021.

To represent how stay-at-home orders and seasonality affected travel among Americans, analysts looked at the month-to-month percentage differ-

ences in mobility data. States that ranked closer to 1 (best) saw a larger increase in the rate of people staying home. States that saw a decline or lower rate increase ranked closer to 50 (worst).

Among the key findings was a strong correlation between the number of people staying home and the number of COVID-19 cases per capita. In short, states that stayed home more averaged fewer COVID-19 cases overall.

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Virginia recovery from unemployment claims second slowest in the country

While the country continues to make progress as unemployment claims decrease week-to-week, the commonwealth's recovery is the second slowest in the country, according to the personal finance website WalletHub, which regularly monitors the status of unemployment claims in the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

According to WalletHub's latest survey, 10 million Americans remain unemployed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. 712,000 new employment claims were filed nationwide last week, which, the website notes, is "a lot fewer" than the 6.9 million claims that were filed during the peak of the pandemic. Those fig-

ures represent a 90 percent reduction in claims nationally.

The website notes that the U.S. is making significant progress in the fight against COVID-19 with the distribution of the vaccine, but it will still be months before everyone who wants the vaccine will be able to receive it. Different states have reopened at different rates, and WalletHub says the country probably won't see a full reopening nationwide until the majority of the population is vaccinated. Progress is being made, though, toward vaccination and reopening as reflected in the consistent decline in the number of unemployment claims being filed.

To identify which states' workforces are experienc-

ing the quickest (and the slowest) recovery from COVID-19, WalletHub compared the 50 states and the District of Columbia across three metrics based on changes in unemployment claims. Those three metrics are 1) the percent change in unemployment claims comparing the latest week to the same week in 2019; 2) the percent change in unemployment claims comparing the latest week to the start of 2020; and 3) the percent change in unemployment claims comparing the week of the start of the COVID-19 crisis to the same week of the previous year.

For Virginia, the metrics revealed the following increases in unemployment claims: 1) 19,605 the week

of March 1, 2021, vs 2,445 the week of March 4, 2019, an increase of 701.84%, the third slowest recovery rate in the country; 2) 19,605 the week of March 1, 2021, vs 3,188 the week of Jan. 1, 2020, an increase of 514.96%, the second slowest recovery in the nation; and 3) 1,498,709 between the week of March 16, 2020, and the week of March 1, 2021, vs 132,721 between the week of March 18, 2019, and the week of March 2, 2020, an increase of 1,129.22%, the sixth slowest recovery in the U.S.

According to WalletHub, when combined, the three metrics left Virginia with the second-slowest unemployment recovery rate in the country. Only Ohio is recovering at a slower rate.

New Phase

from page 1

hopes that once the district can receive more vaccine supplies from the state, it can begin distributing vaccines at all local pharmacies.

As supplies increase, the district is seeking more volunteers to work at its vaccination sites and call centers. Interested volunteers can submit forms on the health district's website.

Looking ahead, as people make spring and summer plans, Bissell encouraged them to be cautious, to follow public health guidelines, and to spend as much time outdoors as possible.

"It's not where you go, it's what you do," she said. "Just practice the precautions. Those precautions are what are going to keep us from

having any big surges from any kind of vacationing."

By the summer, as more people receive vaccines, Bissell said she hopes that some pandemic precautions can loosen.

"I think we will be in a much better place," she said.

-- Written by Jenny Kincaid Boone

Perks

from page 1

and Sorority Life, are heading up the group of Virginia Tech professionals who have volunteered for this special effort.

"The pod coach's main goal is to meet with the pod leader and/or members about twice a month to check in, engage students, and connect them with campus and community experiences and resources to ensure they feel supported," Settle said. "For students, it's a low commitment with a really high level of rewards."

For the pod coaches, the new system provides an opportunity to help Hokies make the most of the challenging semester by providing a little help navigating college life during the pandemic.

"I think many students

are facing a sense of being unsure what to do, how to get involved, and who to reach out to so they're a little hesitant," said Sam Buchanan, assistant director for professional development with Student Affairs. "With this role I really want to help them maximize their experience here."

Buchanan said pod coaching fell very much in line with Virginia Tech's individual approach to education and her personal drive to serve the university community. It was a similar motivation that drove James Kittinger, reservations coordinator with Student Engagement and Campus Life, to also volunteer as pod coach.

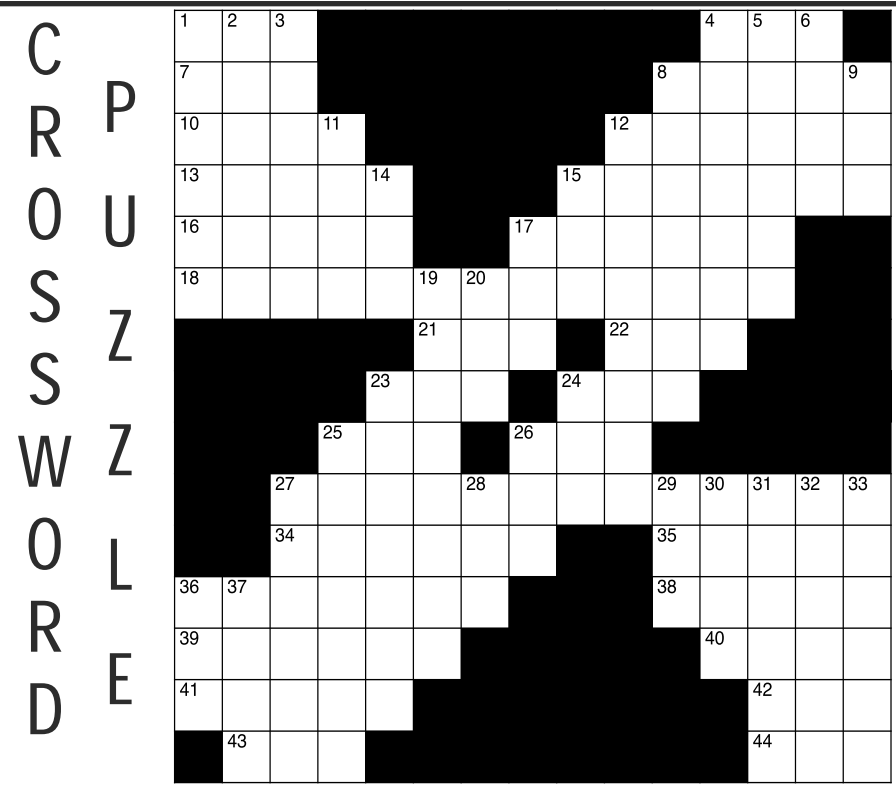
"Being a pod coach gives me the perfect opportu-

nity to serve and work with amazing students," Kittinger said. "Having the opportunity to see students engaged and enjoying their college experience during a pandemic safely is very satisfying."

Barnickel, whose pod coach is the Virginia Tech Police Department's John Tarter, said having such a connection with a member of the university's professional community had been far more enjoyable than she expected.

"Honestly, I love my pod coach. Officer Tarter is so friendly and funny. I know he wants the best for us and is always willing to guide us," Barnickel said. "I look forward to our meetings every time."

— Written by Travis Williams



- | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| CLUES ACROSS | 23. ___ de sac | CLUES DOWN | 20. Snake-like fish |
| 1. Nuclear Stress Test | 24. Pioneer journalist | 1. Tortillas, cheese & salsa | 23. With great caution |
| 4. A small amount | Nellie | 2. A vast desert in N Africa | 24. Ottoman Empire |
| 7. Comedian Jack P___ | 25. 22nd Greek letter | 3. Earth quiver | governor |
| 8. Beat with a rod | 26. I.M. ___, architect | 4. Double-reed instrument | 25. Changellings |
| 10. Bono's ex wife | 27. "Hangover" star | 5. Doctor in training | 26. Foot (Latin) |
| 12. Steal cattle | 34. Lofly bird habitats | 6. Make known | 27. Quarter of a Spanish-speaking country |
| 13. Tribe in Myanmar | 35. Devoid of intelligence | 8. Female bow | 28. Side sheltered from the wind |
| 15. In a crisp way | 36. Divided into parts | 9. "Partridge" star Susan | 29. Lubricate |
| 16. 04473 ME | 38. Seasons of 40 weekdays | 11. Leopard frog genus | 30. Digits |
| 17. One that takes a captive | 39. Breezily | 12. Representative government | 31. Famous canal |
| 18. The Dutchess of York | 40. Indian dress | 14. Japanese classical theater | 32. Ensnare |
| 21. Zodiacal lion | 41. ___ the elder | 15. Price label | 33. Live in |
| 22. Actor Affleck | 42. Furious | 17. ___-Magnon: 1st humans | 36. Oversimplified ideas |
| | 43. Distress signal | 19. Property of flowing easily | 37. Afflicts |
| | 44. Nonhuman primate | | |

OBITUARIES

Alley, Opal Arkansas

Opal Arkansas Alley (Moomaw), 88, of Christiansburg passed away Monday, March 8, 2021, at Richfield Retirement Center in Salem.

She was a longtime employee at Econo Lodge until she retired in 2011. She was preceded in death by her husband, Clarence (Boots) Alley; sons Kenney Lee Younce and Monroe Younce; daughters Libby of Florida and Christine Ferguson of Roanoke; and a brother, Melvin Vance of Sa-



lem. She is survived by one son, Wayne Younce, of West Virginia and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Moomaw was a very kind and loving person and will be missed by many. May she rest in peace. Graveside services were conducted Thursday, March 11, 2021, in Roselawn Memorial Gardens, Christiansburg.

Arrangements by McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg.

Bird, Mary Ann

Mary Ann Bird, 81, of Christiansburg died, Monday, March 8, 2021, at LewisGale Hospital Montgomery. She was born in Craig County, Va., on Aug. 31, 1939, to the late Granville and Viola Blankenship Adams.

She was also preceded in death by her husband, Benjamin Jack Bird; two brothers, Radford Adams and Paul Adams; and a sister, Violet Collins.

She is survived by her daughters and son-in-law, Elizabeth Dean, Barbara Robinette,



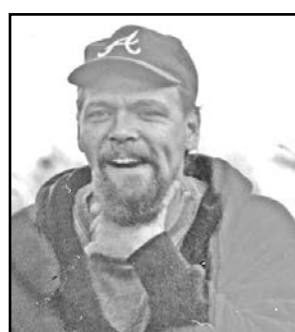
Theresa Hodge and husband, Donnie, and Becky Bird; six grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren; a sister-in-law, Kat Mullins; several nieces and nephews; and a special friend, Michael McQuerry. Funeral services were conducted Thursday, March 11, 2021, in the McCoy Funeral Home Chapel with Pastor Dwayne Martin officiating. Interment followed in the Roselawn Memorial Gardens Cemetery.

Arrangements by McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg.

Giles, Richard David

Richard David Giles, 53, passed away Saturday, March 6, 2021, at his home in Parrott.

He is survived by his daughter, Jessica Anderson of Roanoke; a son, Joel Giles of Pulaski; two granddaughters; brothers John Harris and James Harris, both of Parrott; a sister and



brother-in-law, Nancy and Doug Hardyman of Radford; and many other relatives and friends.

Per his request, there will be no services.

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

Cruise, Robert "Bob" Hall

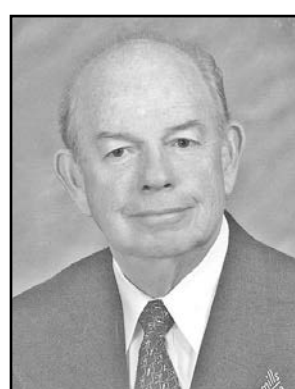
Robert "Bob" Hall Cruise passed away peacefully at home surrounded by his family on March 9, 2021.

Bob was born on March 12, 1931, in Staunton, Va., to Guy and Stella Cruise. He grew up in Pulaski and graduated from Virginia Tech in 1953 with a Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering. He later earned an MBA from Fairleigh Dickinson University in New Jersey.

He served honorably in the U.S. Army following graduation from Virginia Tech. He began his post-military career with the Pennsylvania Railroad.

Bob enjoyed a 31-year career with Hercules, Inc., serving in management positions in Radford, Kenil, N.J., Parlin, N.J., Wilmington, Del., and Salt Lake City, Utah. He capped his career as President of Hercules' subsidiary Global Environmental Solutions.

Bob married Mary ("Lucille") Allen of Radford, and together they raised their four children in Radford and later in Succasunna, N.J. Following Bob's retirement in 1992, Bob and Lucille moved back to Virginia and enjoyed traveling, spending time with their children and their grand-



children and great-grandchildren.

Bob participated actively in various churches everywhere they lived, but he always maintained a close connection to his home church, First Baptist Church of Radford. He loved music and was blessed with the talent of playing by ear. He enjoyed playing piano for his church, his family, his friends, in various bands, and in local nursing homes. He was also an enthusiastic Virginia Tech supporter.

Bob is survived by his wife of 66 years, Mary "Lucille" Cruise; daughters Jill Carolan (Paul) and Jan McKee (Gene); sons Mark Cruise (Kelly) and Scott Cruise (Martine); 12 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. He was predeceased by his parents, Guy and Stella Cruise.

A celebration of life will be held at First Baptist Church of Radford at 11 a.m. today, March 13, 2021.

In lieu of flowers, the family welcomes donations to First Baptist Church of Radford (fbcradford.org/give).

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

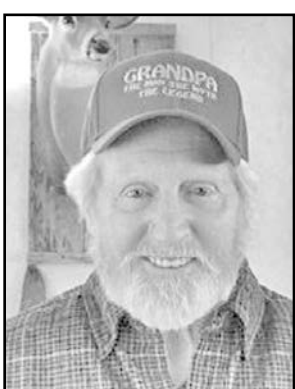
Moore, Sr., Lloyd Allen

Lloyd Allen Moore, Sr. (Bobby), 83, of Christiansburg, died Tuesday, March 9, 2021, at his home, surrounded by his family.

He was born in Catawba, Va. on Dec. 9, 1937, to the late John Ulysses and Olivia B. Moore.

He was preceded in death by his daughter, Martha Moore Howard; the mother of his children, Ruth Moore; brothers John Thomas Moore, Clifford W. Moore, Charles Ernest Moore, and Clarence A. Moore; and sisters Dorothy L. Hendrick, Catherine N. Bloxom, Ruth Fleck, Sylvia Price, and Ada M. Harrison.

He was a veteran of the U.S. Navy and retired from Virginia Tech after many years. Bobby was a great daddy and granddaddy. He was a hard worker who loved to hunt and watch his children and grandchildren play ball. When he was in



the mountains hunting, he was known as the man, the myth, the legend.

He is survived by a son, Lloyd Allen Moore, Jr. (April Fisher); grandchildren Brandy Palmer (Mike), Devan Howard, Jonathan Howard (Emily), Derrick Moore (Jennifer), Ethan Fisher (Hannah), Paige Fisher (Alex), and Brittany Fisher; seven great-grandchildren; a sister, Doise Trumbo; a brother and sister-in-law, Dennis E. and Shely Moore; as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

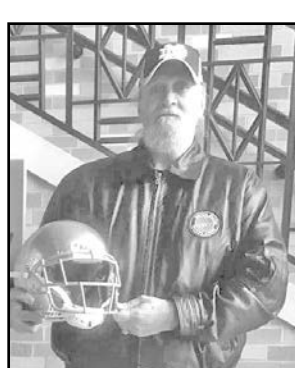
The family would like to extend a special thanks to April Fisher, the nurses and staff on the second floor at Lewis-Gale Hospital Montgomery, and Intrepid Hospice.

A memorial service was held on Friday, March 12, 2021 in the McCoy Funeral Home Chapel with Pastor Keith Weaver officiating.

Ratcliffe, William Daniel "Danny"

William Daniel "Danny" Ratcliffe, of Radford, born Aug. 18, 1956, passed away Tuesday, March 9, 2021, at the age of 64.

He is survived by two daughters, Jessica and Heather; a son, Adam; 14 grandchildren and a great-granddaughter; his mother, Elizabeth Ferrell Ratcliffe; sisters Pauline Worrell, Rose Stump, and



Ramona Mobarak; and many other relatives and friends.

Memorial services were held at 2 p.m. on Friday, March 12, 2021, in Bisset Park at Shelter #2 with Pastor Chandler Jones officiating.

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

Robertson, Lura Alice Beavers

Lura Alice Beavers Robertson, of Radford, passed away Sunday, March 7, 2021.

Lura Alice was born on January 14, 1934, in Cedar Bluff, Va. She was the youngest child of the late Stuart Allen Beavers, Sr., and Nancy Lake Reppass Beavers.

She was preceded in death by her sister, Mary Katherine Beavers, and her brother, Stuart Allen (Bus) Beavers, Jr.

Lura Alice is survived by her devoted husband of 61 years, Dr. Richard L. Robertson. She is also survived by her three children: Rick (Nancy) Robertson of Boston, Mass.; Mary Beth (David) Greer of Radford; and Lura Ann (Larry) Pitchford, also of Radford.

Lura Alice was an adoring and equally adored Nana to seven grandchildren: Joanna (Patrick) and Greer Premand of Washington, D.C.; Allison (Russell) and Greer Smith of Newport News, Va.; Gray (Jamie) Pitchford of Inwood, W.Va.; Kate Pitchford of Blacksburg; Alex (Debra Spairani) Robertson of Boston, Mass.; Molly (Michael Vu) Greer of Falls Church, Va.; and Cole Pitchford of Radford; a sister-in-law, Kay Beavers; and a nephew, Scott Beavers of Richmond. Lura Alice and Richard are also the proud great-grandparents of Denver and Maci Pitchford, Louisa Premand, and Lee Smith.

Lura Alice's life was guided by her deep love of music, her appreciation for education, and her strong commitment to family and faith. After graduating from Richlands High School, she received her



BA degree from Longwood College in 1954 and began teaching English. She married Dr. Richard Robertson on June 13, 1959, a week after he finished medical school in Richmond. They settled in Radford in 1963 where they raised their three children.

Lura Alice became known as an accomplished pianist and organist. She particularly enjoyed being a church organist and was always willing to lend her musical talents to any religious service. In 1975, Lura Alice earned a Masters in piano performance from Radford University. She continued to study organ, piano and harpsichord with various instructors for many years. She felt learning was a lifelong endeavor.

Her family knew Lura Alice as a woman of great spiritual depth and unwavering conviction. Her greatest joy was her grandchildren. She was, and shall ever be, their Nana who loved them dearly and who reveled in their accomplishments, but expected them to become good people above all else.

On behalf of Lura Alice, we would like to extend our deepest gratitude to Commonwealth Memory Care Staff in Radford. Their professionalism and kindness, especially through this difficult year, was sincerely appreciated.

Due to the current situation, the family will hold a private service. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the Presbyterian Church of Radford, 201 Fourth Street, Radford, Virginia 24141.

The Robertson family is in the care of Mullins Funeral Home in Radford.

Quesenberry, Guy H.

Guy H. Quesenberry, 85, died March. 4, 2021, at his home in Williamsburg, Va., surrounded by his devoted family. He was a longtime resident of Newport News.

"Sonny," as he was known by those who loved him, was born Feb. 6, 1936, in Pulaski County to Swanson and Elizabeth. He grew up surrounded by his brothers and sister in the dazzling mountains of Southwestern Virginia.

Sonny was an All-American football player at Radford High School. While in Christiansburg, he met his lifelong mate, Dorothy Faye Correll. He was offered many football scholarships, and he chose Clemson University where he received his bachelor's degree. After graduation, he married Dorothy and they moved to Newport News where they began their careers as dedicated educators at Warwick High School.

Sonny taught history there, coached track and field, and influenced the lives of many students. He was promoted to assistant principal, earned his master's degree from William and Mary, and his doctorate from Virginia Tech.

One of the happiest times of his life was when he served as principal of Briarfield Elementary School where he served for many years surrounded by some of the best educators who became lifelong friends. When he retired, he was principal of Dozier Middle School. Sonny touched the lives of so many with his quiet strength, his sharp humor, and his



indomitable spirit.

For Sonny, family was everything. He was devoted to his wife of 52 years, Dorothy Faye. When he wasn't on the golf course, he spent countless hours watching, talking about, and thinking about Clemson Football.

Sonny loved his farm in the mountains of Dugspur, Va., where he spent his later days riding around the farm on his Gator with his son, Guy. His children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren were his greatest joy.

Sonny was preceded in death by his wife, Dorothy, his father, Swanson Crockett Quesenberry, his mother Elizabeth Amanda Wright Berkman, his brothers, Grover C.; James G. "Jimmy"; Claude J. "Junior"; and his sister, Lucille Elizabeth.

Left to cherish his memory are his son, Guy, Jr., (Stephanie); his daughter, Harriet "Hat" (Kirk) Stevens; and his grandchildren Ashleigh Marie Matthews, S. Kyle Wightman, and Shelby Raye Wightman (Wesley Clements). He also leaves behind his two great-grandchildren, Karmella Marie Ross and Odin Wesley Clements, and his beloved nephew, David Quesenberry (Danelle), along with too many friends to mention who will treasure their memories of this amazing man.

A celebration of life will be held in the spring. Details will be forthcoming.

Memorial donations can be made in Sonny's name to the National MS Society at nationalmssociety.org/donate or to the American Diabetes Association at diabetes.org/donate.

Even During This Pandemic, Everyone Deserves a Burial Service So Their Family and Friends Can Say One Last "Goodbye"

We Offer Graveside Services with Social Distancing, at no additional cost.

- Services can be broadcast to attendees' car radios.
- At the completion of the service, the family will receive visitors via drive-through visitation as the attendees leave the service.
- Families have been very appreciative of these services.
- Arrangements can be made on very short notice.

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Declining ethanol demand could push Virginia corn prices down

Corn and other crop prices are at multiyear highs right now from exports, but ethanol production has declined as people work from home and leave their cars parked in their driveways.

"When ethanol demand fell, that pushed corn prices down," said American Farm Bureau Federation chief economist Dr. John Newton during the virtual 57th Annual Crop Insurance and Reinsurance Bureau Annual Meeting.

"The cash corn price around the country fell, and we still haven't seen the ethanol industry recover," Newton said. "We're 2 billion gallons less in terms of ethanol production compared to prior year levels. That's about 600 to 700 million bushels of corn that weren't used for ethanol production."

According to the National Corn Growers Association, roughly 30% of field corn is used for ethanol, making it the second-largest market for U.S. corn.

"The renewable fuels standard requires blenders to blend up to 10% ethanol in our na-

tion's gas supply," said Robert Harper, grain division manager for Virginia Farm Bureau Federation. "That's been a big boost in the last 15 years for corn production."

Most corn for ethanol is grown in the Corn Belt, but Virginia growers could be impacted if ethanol demand remains low. Virginia is a corn-deficit state, Harper explained, and a lot of corn is shipped in by rail from states like Indiana and Ohio. If the price of corn is lower in those states, it will impact Virginia corn prices.

"The corn comes into Virginia cheaper, so that means the people who feed corn in Virginia, when they buy corn from Virginia growers, they'll pay less for it," Harper said. This means less money in the farmer's pocket.

But growers are optimistic about more people traveling as stay-at-home restrictions loosen. Gas prices also are on the rise, which can boost ethanol production.

"I would say that might be a saving grace for us," said Hanover County farmer Grayson Kirby of Creamfield Farms,

who raises corn, soybeans and other crops throughout Virginia. "As much as it hurts to have higher gas, it might help. They'll start supplementing the gas with ethanol to help with their profit margin."

Dustin Madison, production manager for Hanover County-based Engel Family Farms, on which corn, soybeans and other crops are grown in more than 14 counties, agreed.

"A month ago, I was buying gas for \$2.05, and now I'm buying gas for \$2.75," Madison said. "At some point that's going to spur some ethanol production. When gas goes up, ethanol production typically jumps."

He added that combined with rebounding prices, people traveling more and the Biden administration emphasizing ethanol production, corn is looking good to growers.

"The administration said they were going to push ethanol production higher," Madison explained. "That's kind of where we're headed. I think corn is going to be a lot more attractive going into the spring."



Roughly 30% of field corn is used for ethanol, and lessened demand as people work from home and leave their cars in the driveway could drive down the prices Virginia farmers get for their corn.

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

Overcoming Obstacles

Read Joshua 14:1 through 17:18

Sometimes, in the pursuit of God's will, we "spiritualize" our natural desire for comfort. We make "faith statements," claiming that if God is leading us, every problem should resolve itself. That is not the reality of godly living. Scripture is filled with examples of God's people encountering obstacles while following divine directives.

Division of the Promised Land among the Israelites came with the responsibility of engaging enemy nations. Israel's record in fulfilling that responsibility is spotty. As just one example, the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh claimed their inheritance was too small.

"If you are so numerous," Joshua answered, "and if the hill country of Ephraim is too small for you, go up into the forest and clear land for yourselves there in the land of the Perizzites and Rephaites" (Joshua 17:15).

Joshua reminded the descendants of Joseph that much of their inheritance in the Promised Land remained to be conquered. They needed to step up to that challenge.

Prayer Suggestion: As God shows you what He wants you to do, pray in faith that He will help you overcome the obstacles.

Quicklook: Joshua 17:14-17

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

PENTECOSTAL HOLINESS

Merrimac Pentecostal Holiness Church, Rev. Richard Hall (540) 552-7194. pastorhall29@gmail.com. Sunday School at 10 a.m. and morning worship is 11 a.m. Evening service at 6 p.m. and Wednesday at 7 p.m.

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

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

UNITED METHODIST

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

with Schaeffer Memorial Baptist Church, Senior Bible Study Thursday, 10:30 a.m. All are welcome.

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

OBITUARIES

Dennison, Catherine Mary Hodell

Catherine Mary Hodell Dennison died on Friday, March 5, in Blacksburg. Cathee was born in Brownsville, Texas on Oct. 16, 1944.

Her father was a Navy aviator and her mother was a Navy nurse. During the war, she was raised by her grandparents, Mommo and Poppo, whom she loved deeply. She was educated in Dayton, Ohio, at Catholic schools, including St. Helen's grade school and Julianne High School. She was a 1966 graduate of the University of Dayton.

After living in many college towns for her husband's education, she settled in the town she loved and called home for 42 years, Blacksburg. It is here that she raised her children, grew professionally, and made her lifelong friends. While being a single parent, she earned her masters degree in English at Virginia Tech.

After she received her degree, she went on to become an instructor in the English Department where she taught freshman composition and excelled at making every student in her classroom feel at home in a very large and sometimes intimidating university. Later she became the Director of the Writing Center at Virginia Tech where she lived her love: coaching and mentoring students, especially international students. Her house was always decorated with gifts from her students from across the globe.

During her tenure as Writing Center Director, she started the VT Online Writing Lab (VT-OWL), an early innovation in on-line writing instruction, and the VT Grammar Hotline, an email-based service responding to grammar questions from students and non-students, eventually hosting inquiries from all over the globe. It was during this time that a colleague dubbed her "Virginia's State Grammarian."

While in the English Department, along with Nikki Giovanni, she helped older adults at Warm Hearth write short stories, memories, and poems. These were gathered into a book: "Appalachian Elders: A Warm Hearth



Sampler, eds: Nikki Giovanni and Cathee Dennison." After retiring from Virginia Tech in 2004, in 2007 she returned to her love of teaching both undergraduates and senior writers. After learning about the Center for Creative Retirement model at UNC-Asheville, Cathee started the Virginia Tech Creative Learning Academy for Senior Scholars (VT-CLASS) in 2011, which served as a solid foundation that the Lifelong Learning Institute at Virginia Tech is based on today.

Cathee loved her community and church, Christ Episcopal Church. She sang in the church choir, volunteered at community events, and found pride in the work of the church. She volunteered for the Humane Society and in whatever way she thought might help those who needed it the most.

Knowing no stranger, Cathee was a warm and loving woman. She could win over anyone with her smile and a touch of her hand. If she found out something you loved, you could bet you'd be gifted that for years.

She had a strong spirit and could even be feisty at times. This spirit helped her during challenging times such as during her periods of depression and health challenges. She loved her family – her extended family, her kids, and especially her beloved grandkids – and was blessed with lifelong friends who became travel companions, confidants, and supports.

Cathee is survived by her brother, Chuck Hodell, and his family; a sister, Linda Sherman and her family; a son, Matthew Servaites; a grandson, Elliott; her daughter, Mara Servaites and her husband Tom Allen; grandchildren William and Josephine; and her stepson, Philip Dennison.

Interment will be held privately at Christ Episcopal Church, Blacksburg. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Humane Society of the New River Valley.

Arrangements by McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg.

Virginia Department of Transportation road watch

The following is a list of forecasted highway projects that may impact traffic traveling in the 12-county Salem Transportation District this week. Work schedules and construction project timelines are always subject to change and weather dependent. The Salem District covers Bedford, Botetourt, Carroll, Craig, Floyd, Franklin, Giles, Henry, Montgomery, Patrick, Pulaski, and Roanoke counties.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

ROUTE 11 BRIDGE DECK REPLACEMENT

Work is underway on Route 11 southbound to replace the bridge deck over the Norfolk Southern Railroad. The bridge is located .4 miles north of the intersection with Route 748 (Big Spring Drive) and .4 mile south of the intersection with Route 603 (North Fork Road). The left lane of both Route 11 north and south is closed with a detour in place until the completion of the project. Once in place, the detour will re-route Route 11 south traffic through the left lane of Route 11 north, limiting each direction to a single lane. The expected completion date is November 2021.

A new traffic pattern was implemented on Monday, March 8, detouring Route 11 southbound traffic through the left lane of Route 11 northbound between the intersections above, limiting each direction to a single lane.

ROUTE 636 BRIDGE REPLACEMENT AT SENECA HOLLOW

Work has begun replacing the bridge on Route 636

over the Roanoke River at Seneca Hollow. A road closure is in place from Echo Hills Road to .36 mile south of Route 460. A detour is in place. The detour will restrict access to Route 460 at Seneca Hollow and will require travelers to enter/exit Route 460 at Friendship Road near Wheeling Hollow. The project is expected to be completed in late June 2021.

INTERSTATE 81 SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS AT S-CURVES IN BOTETOURT COUNTY

A project to improve the S-curves along southbound I-81 in Botetourt County between mile markers 167.4 and 169.5 is underway. This project will enhance safety and improve vehicle traction. Work includes repaving the travel lanes, applying new pavement markers and installing underground pavement drains. Nighttime lane closures will be in place and the speed limit will be reduced to 60 mph in the work zone. This project also includes permanently closing and removing the southbound off ramp at exit 167 (Buchanan) to reduce speed differentials, conflict points and lane changes associated with exiting vehicles. Exit 167 closed permanently on October 1, 2020. The estimated completion date is summer 2021.

There may be alternating lane closures on I-81 northbound near mile marker 168 between the hours of 7 p.m. to 6 a.m., weather permitting.

INTERSTATE 81 LANE WIDENING CONSTRUCTION EXIT 141 TO EXIT

143 – A project to widen the lanes on I-81 in Roanoke in both northbound and southbound directions between Exit 141 to Exit 143 has begun. Work will continue to be conducted within the median and shoulder within the barrier walls. Weekday and weekend lane and shoulder closures may be in place. A left lane closure will be in place on I-81 northbound or southbound during nighttime hours from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. while equipment and materials are brought into and out of the median. Estimated completion date of the project is summer 2022.

I-81 NORTHBOUND AT EXIT 105 NEW RIVER BRIDGE REPLACEMENT IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Lane and shoulder closures may be in place near exit 105. Lane closure may be in effect during the week from 8 p.m. to 7 a.m. Shoulder closures may be in effect at any time during the week. Slow rolls may be performed on I-81 in the north and southbound lanes from mile marker 104 to 106 from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. Speed limit is reduced to 60 miles per hour in the work zone. Shoulder closures will remain in place though the duration of the project. Project completion is estimated by June 2022.

SLOW ROLLS:

Slow rolls may be utilized periodically on both the northbound and southbound lanes from mile marker 98 to 109 for structural steel deliveries and setting beams.

Smith, Gloria Jean

Gloria Jean Smith, 74, of Christiansburg, passed away Thursday, March 4, 2021.

She was preceded in death by her father, Charles T. McDaniel; and her sisters, Brenda Sue Croy and Clydia McDaniel.

She was a selfless, loving and dedicated daughter, wife, mother and friend who found joy in helping others. She grew up in Radford and graduated in 1964 from Radford High School. She married her high school sweetheart and lifelong partner, Dale, in December 1966. She was a nurse's aide at the Radford Hospital until 1972 when she left to raise her children.

In 1998, Jean, Dale and their son, Kris, started a homebuilding business where she managed their office and worked with the employees, suppliers and subcontractors. She was the heart and soul of the company for 19 years until her health forced her retirement. Jean leaves the company in the hands of her husband, son and daughter and will be missed by those she worked with.

Her ultimate passion was her family. She and Dale had an inseparable bond that not many people are fortunate enough to have.



She took pride in being his wife and loving and supporting him. She was an amazing mother and grandmother. Her eyes lit up watching the kids run around her farmhouse, play sports and laugh together.

Survivors include her husband, Arthur Dale Smith; a daughter, Leslie Smith Herrington, a son, Kris and his wife, Jodi Smith; her mother, Ruby Phillips McDaniel; grandchildren Colin, Gavin, Reagan and Brady, Alexa Smith Askew and her husband, Trevor; and great-granddaughters Aaliyah and Naomi; a brother, Junior McDaniel; a sister, Connie Scott; and many other special relatives and friends.

Funeral services were held on Friday, March 12, 2021, at the Mullins Funeral Home with Pastor Shake Smith officiating. Interment followed in West View Cemetery in Radford.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her memory can be given to The Joy Ranch Home for Children, 813 Joy Ranch Road, Woodlawn, VA 24381.

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

Executive

from page 1

ments; effectiveness in addressing challenges; professionalism; program development and implementation; fiscal management; stature in the community; and other special qualities are considered in the nomination process.

Teresa Hammond, VACCE Chair of the Board and Executive Director of the Alleghany Highlands Chamber of Commerce, presented Dr. Scott with the award.

Dr. Scott began volunteer service with the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce just after the Blacksburg and Christiansburg Chambers merged, starting in 2003. In 2012, she was recognized by the board of directors as the Volunteer

of the Year for her heroic efforts in the Chamber's Program of Work. The next year, she quickly emerged as the best choice for the Chamber's Executive Director.

Henry Bass, President of Automation Creations, Inc. and Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce 2021 Board Chair said, "I firmly believe Sharon has been a gift from God, guiding our chamber out of debt, effecting a culture turnaround, establishing our own building, and pivoting our model during COVID-19."

Dr. Scott currently serves on the VACCE Board of Directors and is the Vice Chair of the Staff Development Conference Committee.

For Rent - Apartments

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

For Sale - Misc

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

Help Wanted - General

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

Legals - City of Radford

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CITY OF RADFORD, VIRGINIA

The Radford City Council 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 22, 2021 beginning at 7:00 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

Legals - Montgomery County

LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Christiansburg Planning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on Monday, March 29, 2021 at 7:00 PM in the Council Chambers of the Christiansburg Town Hall, 100 E. Main Street, Christiansburg, Virginia 24073. The purpose of the public hearing is to receive public comments concerning: 1. A Conditional Use Permit request by Sareh Ostadosseinkhayyat (applicant) for a Family Day Home serving up to 12 children at property owned by Helen Sedigh and Mohammadreza Ostadosseinkhayyat located at 1265 Flint Drive S.E.,(tax map no. 529- 21 - 9) in the R-1, Single Family Residential zoning district. The property is designated as Residential on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan. 2. A rezoning request by Gay and Neel, Inc.

Legals - Montgomery County

(applicant) for an approximately 43.4 acre property owned by the Montgomery County School Board located at 100 Independence Boulevard, N.W. (tax map no. 466-2-11, 11A) and 1180 North Franklin Street (tax map no. 466-A-14) in the I-2, General Industrial and B-3, General Business Zoning Districts. The property is currently split-zoned and the applicant is requesting to designate uniform zoning and proffers over the entirety of the property. The two areas included are: 1. Rezone an approximately 25.6 acre portion of the property located at 100 Independence Boulevard, N.W. (tax map no. 466-2-11, 11A) from I-2, General Business with proffers. 2. Rezone an approximately 17.8 acre portion of the property located at 100 Independence Boulevard, N.W. (tax map no. 466-2-11, 11A) and 1180 North Franklin Street (tax map no. 466-A-14) from B-3, General Business to B-3,

Legals - Montgomery County

General Business with proffers. The rezoned area includes approximately .954 acres ("CHS" bus loop parcel) (tax map no. 466-2-11A) recently approved to be vacated and conveyed to the Montgomery County School Board by the Town of Christiansburg. The property is designated as Business/Commercial on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan. 3. A rezoning request by the Trinity Community Church Trustees (owner) at 1505 N. Franklin Street (Tax Parcel 466 - ((A)) - 20A) from A, Agriculture zoning district to B-3, General Business zoning district. The property is designated as Business/Commercial on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan. Town Hall will be open and available to receive public comment in-person at the time of this Public Hearing. Additionally, the meeting will

Legals - Montgomery County

be streamed live on the Town of Christiansburg's YouTube channel at www.christiansburg.org/youtube and will remain on the Town's YouTube page once the meeting concludes. For information on contactless methods for submitting public comment, please visit www.christiansburg.org/publichearings. Copies of the applications are available for review at the following link: www.christiansburg.org/publichearings. A copy of the applications, the Town's Zoning Map, Zoning Ordinance, and Future Land Use Map may be viewed in the Planning Department Office, 100 E. Main Street, Christiansburg, VA 24073 during normal office hours of 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Contact Andrew Warren, Assistant Town Manager, by phone at (540) 382-6120 ext. 1130 or by email at awarren@christiansburg.org with any questions or if you require reasonable accommodations.

ADVERTISE!

MONTGOMERY SPORTS

COVID restrictions, limitations cut into high school athletic budgets

Marty Gordon
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

At a recent Christiansburg High School football game, the ticket booth had no lines and the smell of popcorn traveling through the stadium was absent. Spectators were limited to approximately 250 total people, composed mostly of parents of the football players, band members and cheerleaders. No outside fans were allowed.

This is the scene being played out across the state of Virginia. Typically, a school could make as much as \$5,000 at the gate and maybe another \$200-\$300 for the athletic boosters at the concession stand on any given night. But that's not the case right now. Instead, many schools might now be looking at a bare-bones athletic budget.

Some budget items might have to be eliminated. Uniforms might go unreplaced, and old equipment might be re-used.

At the heart of the matter and the real problem with high school athletic budgets is the fact football pays for almost all of the other sports.

One local athletic director said a typical baseball game is simply not going to bring in the type of "admission" money that a Friday night football game does. Now that scenario can be thrown out the window.

Danny Knott who oversees athletics for the Montgomery County School system, points out that gate receipts have pretty much been non-existent.

"We are fortunate that the division has helped with some game-related expenses over the last several years. The division is providing the same assistance this year," he said.

For now, the county does not have firm numbers on the shortfall.

The situation is similar in Radford where Superintendent Dr. Robert Graham said athletics is bringing in very little revenue this year while expenditures remain the same.

"That being said, our administration and coaches are doing an outstanding job of providing a wonderful athletic experience in some very strange times," Dr. Graham said.

Many people believe Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam's 250-maximum limit for high school football is a major reason for the shortfall. Earlier this week, Northam said that the 250 capacity limit will not change at least for the remainder of the month.

"We want people to go out and be able to be spectators and see their children and be with their friends," he said during a briefing on Tuesday regarding high school football games. "We have increased the number of individuals at outdoor stadiums to 250. That's through March, and if these numbers continue, if these trends continue to be favorable, we'll make further modifications that will start on April 1, so I would say more to come in that regard."

That date would be the final week of the regular season with the possibility of the highest "ranked" team being able to host a playoff game.

Some schools and athletic boosters have managed to offset the slide with advertising banners and sponsors in and around football fields.

Knott said he did not know if Montgomery County will be able to provide additional assistance but does not anticipate any cuts at this time.

Graham said this situation will affect their overall budget significantly, but they have no plans to eliminate anything.

Zane Rupe signs with Emory & Henry



Zane Rupe, Radford's starting quarterback for the past four seasons, officially signed with Emory & Henry Wednesday in the Radford High School library in front of family and friends.

Three Rivers District honors Radford coach, player

Marty Gordon
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

The Cormany household boasts a little more hardware this morning as Radford High men's basketball head coach Rick Cormany has been honored by the Three Rivers District as the Coach of the Year and Cam Cormany has been honored by the district as its men's basketball Player of the Year.

Radford High went 18-2 and 9-0 in district play this season, winning another Three Rivers District regular season title.

Cam, who has committed to play college

basketball at the Naval Academy, averaged 17.2 points per game and hit a staggering 53 percent from behind the three-point line for the season.

He was joined on the all-district first team by senior teammate Alex Kanipe, who averaged 10.2 points and four rebounds per game. Teammate P.J. Prioleau was named to the district's second team.

On the girls' side of the all-TRD court, Radford's Laney Cline was named to the all-district first team while Jada Dean and McKenzie Page were second-team honorees.



Radford's Cam Cormany was honored by the Three Rivers District as the Player of the Year.



Radford High's Rick Cormany has been named the Three Rivers District Coach of the Year.

VT wrestler Lewis receives at-large bid to NCAA championships

After withdrawing from the 2021 ACC Championships with an injury, Virginia Tech wrestler Mekhi Lewis has been awarded an at-large bid to the 2021 NCAA Championships, the NCAA announced Tuesday.

With Lewis' inclusion, the Hokies will send eight wrestlers to the national tournament, the same number VT sent in 2016 when the team placed fourth, the program's highest finish ever. Tech had seven wrestlers automatically qualify from the ACC Championships.

Lewis is the defending 165-pound national champion after he won the Hokies' first title at the 2019 NCAA Championships. Before his injury default this season vs. Pitt, the redshirt sophomore was the consensus No.1 165-pounder in the country and had won 28 straight collegiate matches.

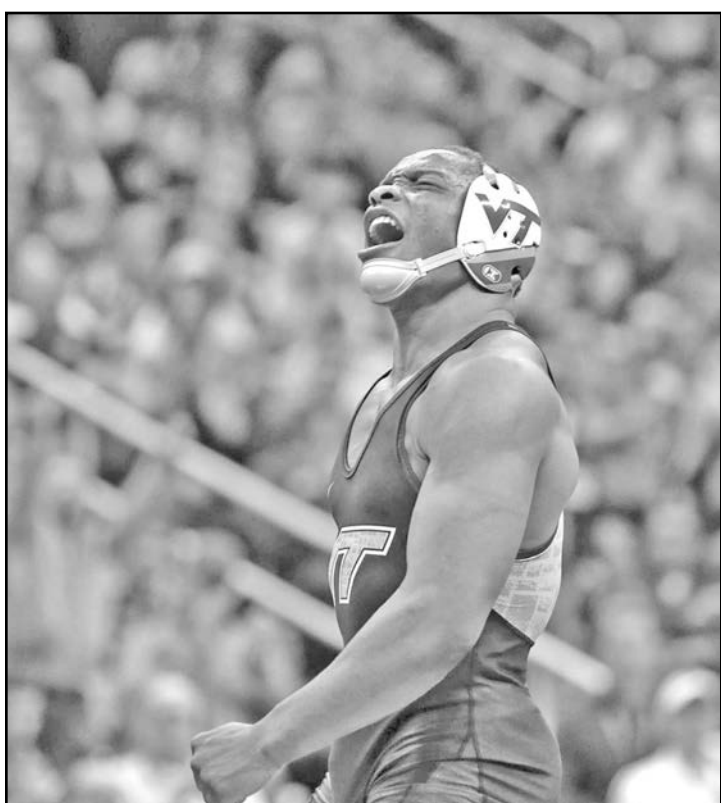


PHOTO COURTESY OF VT ATHLETICS

Virginia Tech will send eight wrestlers to the 2021 NCAA Championships including Mekhi Lewis, the top-ranked 165-pounder in the country.

--VT Athletics

VT swim/dive team qualifies most women in school history for NCAA championships



BLACKSBURG – The Virginia Tech women's swim and dive team had 11 athletes and four relays qualify for the 2021 Women's NCAA Championships, the most in school history.

The championships will be held March 17-20 at the Greensboro Aquatic Center.

The Hokies' traveling to Greensboro for individual events are Emma Atkinson (100 BK, 200 BK), Caroline Bentz (200 IM, 100 BK, 200 BK), Reka Gyorgy (500 FR, 400 IM, 200 FL), Abby Larson (100 FR), Sarah Shackelford (100 FR, 200 FR),

Brooke Travis (1650) and Chase Travis (500 FR, 1650 FR).

Along with individual events, the Hokies will be competing in four relays. The events and the athletes are 200 Free Relay: Joelle Vereb, Abby Larson, Anna Landon, Caroline Bentz; 400 Free Relay: Sarah Shackelford, Abby Larson, Emma Atkinson, Caroline Bentz; 800 Free Relay: Emma Atkinson, Sarah Shackelford, Loulou Vos, Reka Gyorgy; 400 Medley Relay: Emma Atkinson, Joelle Vereb, Karisa Franz, Sarah Shackelford.

VT unveils new \$4.5 million strength and conditioning area



A new \$4.5 million addition to the Virginia Tech football facilities includes an expanded up-to-date weight room.

Virginia Tech Athletics officially unveiled its latest improvements to its football facilities on Tuesday, a \$4.5 million renovation and expansion of its strength and conditioning area.

The project nearly doubled the functional workout space of the facility located in the Merryman Center, increasing the total square footage from approximately 6,900 square feet to over 12,300 square feet.

"Continued facilities upgrades like these are vital for our program to remain competitive," said football head coach Justin Fuente. "On behalf of our entire team and staff, we sincerely appreciate our generous donors who contributed to this project and to the purchase of new equipment to properly outfit the strength and condition-

ing center. These additions mark another positive step as we seek to improve the areas that impact and touch our student-athletes on a daily basis."

The reimagined design of the strength and conditioning area takes better advantage of every inch of this expanded space. A custom-designed 24-rack system by Sorinex highlights the strength and conditioning center, which is filled with natural light from floor-to-ceiling glass that offers a panoramic view of the Steve Johnson Practice Fields and the Beamer-Lawson Practice Facility. A unique and expansive folding glass door allows direct access to the outdoor training area and practice fields for large groups of student-athletes. A built-in artificial turf surface (complete with hash-

marks) provides a perfect area for agility training.

"These improvements will help our staff bring out the full potential of our student-athletes," Associate AD for Strength and Conditioning Ben Hilgart said. "The design of this facility was carefully conceived to maximize the training experience for our football team from the moment they enter to the instant they leave. I'm very grateful to our donors who made this possible, as well as the team from Sorinex who helped transform our vision of how this space and equipment should function into a reality."

The relocation of the strength and conditioning offices presented an opportunity to create a smartly conceived refueling station operated by the Tech

sports nutrition staff, marking another much-needed addition to the football training area. This area provides abundant space for a team of dieticians and sports nutrition staffers to prepare custom recovery shakes and healthy snacks and also features multiple refrigeration units for storage and easy-access fridges for student-athletes to grab food to go. A custom cooler is constantly filled with various recovery beverages and bottled water.

During the 2020 season, the team began utilizing nine new position meeting rooms that were also formally unveiled Tuesday. These individual meeting rooms feature a fully integrated audio/visual system, a gift from Tech football alums that opened in September 2017, that allows various groups to

watch presentations from the existing team meeting room. That connectivity proved vital for the Hokies in 2020 as social distancing mandated that 100-plus individuals that would normally fill the team meeting room had to be spread across 10 different locations.

The nine position meeting rooms feature the same oversized seating as the team meeting room with plaques honoring Tech's past all-conference performers for that unit adorning each group's space. In addition, hero-sized graphics of some of the Hokies' greatest all-time performers at that position complete the imagery in each meeting room.

--VT Athletics



PHOTOS COURTESY OF VT ATHLETICS

The Virginia Tech Michael Vick hallway leads football players and staff to the new digs unveiled this week.



Tickets for the 2021 VT baseball season are on sale on a first-come, first-served basis.

Tech baseball tickets go on sale to general public

BLACKSBURG — Virginia Tech baseball tickets went on sale to the general public this past weekend. Tickets will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis.

The welcoming of ticketed fans to English Field at Atlantic Union Bank Park was in coordination with state public health officials, the Atlantic Coast Conference and university officials.

To accommodate fans and to comply with public health guidelines, Virginia Tech is implementing numerous changes to its game-day policies.

The health and safety of student-athletes, coaches, staff and fans is the top priority in Virginia Tech Athletics' planning and preparation for allowing ticketed fans into the ballpark. Among numerous safety measures, fans will be required to wear face coverings while in attendance. Physical distancing will also be mandatory.

Seating capacity at Atlantic Union Bank Park will be 1,000 fans.

Plans for the remainder of the 2021 season are subject to change as updates to public health guidelines related to the spread of COVID-19 are made.

After accounting for the families/guests of student-athletes and coaches for each team, approximately 700 tickets will be made available on a

first-come, first-served basis for conference games to the general public and students. Tickets will be \$10 for adults and \$5 for those under 18. All tickets purchased will be single game. Non-conference games will continue to be free, just like in previous years.

Those interested in purchasing single-game ACC tickets may do so with cash or card the day of the game at the stadium ticket office. The ticket office will open 60 minutes prior to first pitch in conjunction with the gates. Ticket sales will end at the completion of the second inning.

Current students interested in attending may claim a free digital student ticket by accessing the student ticket page. Once claimed, students will need to either download the mobile ticket to their phone, or print out the ticket at home ticket to be scanned at the gate. Student tickets will not be available at the box office. Tickets will be available the day of the game only, and right up through the first pitch. Once they are all claimed, the student allocation is sold out.

Terrace Club Table Holders or Suite Holders at English Field at Atlantic Union Bank Park will receive communication directly from Jennifer Skaggs. Fans and media will

not have access to the field or team areas, which will be limited to student-athletes, coaching staff, essential personnel and umpires who are in ACC testing protocols. Temperature screenings will be done prior to entry.

All facility entrances will open one hour prior to the first pitch, and fans may sit within their own pods but should socially distance from other pods. Face coverings must be worn at all times, except for when actively eating and drinking.

Free parking is located across the street from the ball park.

Tailgating is not permitted on campus for the 2021 baseball season. Virginia Tech Athletics encourages fans without tickets to enjoy the game from home in order to help minimize the number of people on campus.

There will be a limited menu of concessions available at the ballpark for all games.

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

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Shelor supports county rec department baseball



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Through their Chevy Youth Baseball Campaign, Shelor Motor Mile is once again donating money to the Montgomery County Recreation Department's "Let the Kids Play Scholarship Fund." For over 10 years, Shelor has donated to the scholarship program and has thus helped make youth sports affordable for the community.

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Previous purchases excluded. Discounts applied to regular MSRP price. Cannot be combined with any other offer. Offers are nontransferable and do not apply to sales tax, shipping, mattresses, homestore specials, clearance, manager specials, floor model, Protection Plus plans, warranty and service charges. See store for details. Finance is subject to credit approval. See store for details on all financing offers. Valid through 3/29/21.