

# News Messenger

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Saturday, March 27, 2021

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## Last two pipeline tree sitters removed



PHOTO COURTESY OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE  
Despite limited access and steep terrain, work crews were able to extract both tree sitters safely. Here, they remove Claire Marian Fiocco.

In accordance with a Montgomery County Circuit Court order, law enforcement officers Tuesday and Wednesday, on days 931 and 932 of the Yellow Finch tree sits, extracted the last two tree sitters at the Yellow Finch blockade in the path of the Mountain Valley Pipeline.

The Yellow Finch tree-sit blockade was erected on Sept. 5, 2018. Last November, a Montgomery County court issued an injunction against the sitters and supporters on the ground, after which the ground support camp was vacated but tree sitters remained.

Removed and arrested

Tuesday was Claire Marian Fiocco, 23, from Dorset, Vt. She was charged with interfering with the property rights of another. She was taken to the Montgomery County Jail and held without bail.

Extracted and arrested Wednesday was Alexander Samuel Parker Lowe, 24, of Worcester, Mass. He was charged with obstruction of justice and interfering with the property rights of another. He is being held in the Montgomery County Jail with no bond.

The law officers began negotiations with the sitters early Tuesday morn-

See **Sitters**, page 5



## Republican Travis Hackworth wins Tuesday's special election

Republican Travis Hackworth won Tuesday's special election to replace the late Senator Ben Chafin in the 38th District of the Virginia State Senate.

From Tazewell County, Hackworth, defeated Radford's Laurie Buchwald in the election.

In a statement issued Wednesday, Hackworth thanked his supporters and said he is ready to get to work for the district.

"It is the honor of my life to serve our region in

the Virginia Senate," he said. "While the last few weeks have been amazing and humbling as I have connected with voters around the district, now the work begins."

Hackworth said, "I am ready to get started bringing new business to Southwest Virginia, completing the Coalfields Expressway, opening new senate offices in Norton, Richlands, and Pulaski, expanding broadband in our ru-

See **Hackworth**, page 5

## Virginia Tech Board of Visitors sets tuition and fees for 2021-22

The Virginia Tech Board of Visitors has set tuition and fees for the 2021-22 academic year.

Following two years of a tuition freeze that held the in-state undergraduate tuition rate level for three years in a row and an out-of-state undergraduate tuition freeze last year that held that tuition level two years in a row, the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors has approved a 2.9 percent increase in tuition for resident and non-resident undergraduate students for 2021-22.

The board reached this decision after considerable discussion and deliberation.

Tuition and mandatory fees for Virginia undergraduate students will increase \$426, to \$14,175 annually, and out-of-state undergraduate tuition and mandatory fees will increase \$964, totaling \$33,857 annually. This includes a \$90 increase in the comprehensive fee.

Annual room and board charges will increase by 3.3 percent, or \$320 per year, to a total of \$9,876.

When adding tuition and mandatory fees with room and board costs, the total cost in 2021-22 for



a Virginia undergraduate student living on campus will be \$24,051 while the total cost of an out-of-state undergraduate living on campus will be \$43,733. Virginia Tech ranks 10th of the 15 Virginia public universities in terms of total overall cost for resident undergraduate students.

For the first time, the board approved a Graduate Candidacy Status discounted tuition rate for Ph.D. students who have completed their preliminary exam and are engaged solely in research and dissertation work. These students

will receive a 10 percent tuition discount for up to two years to incentivize faster time-to-degree time periods.

To offset increases and to support low- and middle-income families who seek a Virginia Tech education, the university will allocate approximately \$2.7 million in additional resources toward undergraduate financial aid programs next year, raising the total institutional support to more than \$35.5 million for 2021-22.

See **Tuition**, page 7

## Governor Northam signs law repealing death penalty in Virginia

Governor Ralph Northam Wednesday signed legislation abolishing the death penalty, making Virginia the 23rd state and the first in the South to stop executions.

Senate Bill 1165, sponsored by Senator Scott Surovell, and House Bill 2263, sponsored by Delegate Mike Mullin, prohibit the use of capital punishment for any violation of Virginia law.

Governor Northam signed the death penalty repeal into law during a ceremony outside the Greensville Correctional Center in Jarratt, Va. Prior to the bill signing, he toured the facility's execution chamber, where 102 people have been executed since its opening in 1991. The most recent execution in Virginia was carried out in 2017.

"Over our 400-year history, Virginia has executed more people than any other state," said Governor Northam. "The death penalty system is fundamentally flawed. It is inequitable, ineffec-



tive, and it has no place in this commonwealth or this country. Virginia has come within days of executing innocent people, and black defendants have been disproportionately sentenced to death.

"Abolishing this inhumane practice is the moral thing to do," the governor said. "This is a truly historic day for Virginia, and I am deeply grateful to those

who have fought tirelessly and for generations to put an end to capital punishment in our commonwealth."

Virginia has executed over 1,300 people in its history, more than any other state. Studies have shown that a defendant is more than three times as likely to be sentenced to death if the victim

See **Death Penalty**, page 7



With no opposition, Chris Hurst will be returned to Richmond from Virginia's 12th House District.

On Thursday, March 25th at 5:00 p.m., the deadline to qualify for the June Democratic Primary passed. Because no other candidate filed before the deadline, Delegate Chris Hurst has secured the Democratic nomination.

Hurst released this statement:

"I am officially the Democratic nominee for Virginia's 12th House District. I'm excited to continue our campaign this year as we talk about all we've accomplished in

the past two years and what we still have left ahead of us. Thousands of people in the 12th District now have access to broadband Internet for the first time because I helped deliver millions in state funds. Teachers, troopers, state employees and college faculty and staff are set to receive their highest pay raises in a decade. And I'm one of the loudest voices in Richmond fighting for additional school fund-

ing. "The General Assembly has managed the pandemic in a responsible and thoughtful way and Virginia is one of the top states in the country for distributing vaccines," Hurst said. "But now is not the time to rest. Too many businesses are hurting, our students are a year behind and housing problems in the New River Valley are limiting our shot at growth. I'm eager to continue our collective conversation on how we can build the NRV back better than ever."

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# UPCOMING EVENTS

## Saturday, March 27:

**Afternoon at the Pool**  
From 12:15 p.m. until 3 p.m. at the Aquatic Center, 625 Patrick Henry Drive, Blacksburg. Participants will enjoy hours of fun and games in the pool. Events include Corcl races, "rock" hopping and balancing, use of the slide and diving board. Open to ages 8-12. Registration is required. The limit is 15 participants. The fee is \$15.

**Teen Creative: Chapsticks and body scrubs**  
1 p.m. at the Montgomery Floyd Regional Library/Blacksburg Library online. This month's Teen Creative video will cover making chapsticks and body scrubs. Check out a video for tips and tricks.

## Monday, March 29:

**Talking About Books: Fiction Virtual**  
From 11 a.m. until noon at the Montgomery Floyd Regional Library/Blacksburg Library. Join in a discussion of "Little Fires Everywhere" by Celeste Ng. Call ahead to reserve a copy and to get the link for virtual participation.

## Tuesday, March 30:

**Conditional Use Permit for Kent Square**  
The Town of Blacksburg has scheduled a neighborhood meeting for Tuesday, March 30, at 4:30 p.m. in the Roger E. Hedgepeth Chambers to consider a request from Aaron Harris of Pointe

West Management on behalf of Kent Square LLC and Pointe West Management to combine previously approved conditional use permits 11-0002, 11-007, 16-0002 and 18-0002 into CUP 21-0001. The purpose is to increase the maximum allowed ground-floor medical and general office square footage in the DC Downtown Commercial zoning district.

**Science Fiction and Fantasy Book Club: virtual**  
From 6:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. at the Montgomery Floyd Regional Library/Blacksburg Library. Join in a discussion of "The Poppy War" by R.F. Kuang. Call ahead to get a copy of this month's book and to get the link. Discussion will be held virtually.

## Wednesday, March 31:

**Teen Book Club: virtual**  
4 p.m. at the Montgomery Floyd Regional Library/Blacksburg Library. Each month the Teen Book Club meets to discuss the first book in a series. To be discussed this month is "The Fifth Wave" by Richard Yancey. For more information, to get the link for the virtual meeting, and to join the book raffle for the first three books, email bford@mfrl.org or call 540-552-8246.

**Peep Science**  
1 p.m. at the Montgomery Floyd Regional Library/Blacksburg Library online. Watch as the librarians experiment and learn from marshmallow peeps.

## Thursday,

## April 1:

**'One Good Mama Bone' Book Club**  
Bren McClain, author of "One Good Mama Bone," will be visiting library patrons virtually in April. In preparation for her author talk, the Radford Public Library will be hosting a book discussion. Join the meeting with the ID 810-1631-3691 and passcode 570599 at 6:30 p.m.

## American Legion Meeting

The American Legion, Harvey-Howe-Carper Post 30 will meet at 7 p.m. at the VFW Post Home on 102 Watts St. in Radford. For further information, call 250-2283 or 239-9864.

## Sunday, April 4

First Missionary Baptist Church, 7318 Manns Dr., Radford, and its pastor, the Rev. Richard A. Goodman, Sr., announce that the church will reopen its doors Easter Sunday at 11 a.m. in celebration of resurrection Sunday. Everyone is invited but is asked to wear a mask and practice social distancing.

## Thursday, April 8:

**Virtual Author Talk with Ron Peterson, Jr.**  
Bestselling author Ron Peterson, Jr. will discuss his new novel, "Chasing the Squirrel: The Pursuit of Notorious Drug Smuggler Wally Thrasher." Discussion will be virtual at 7 p.m. Taking part in the discussion will be Wally Thrasher's son, Montana Thrasher. "Chasing the Squirrel" is the true story of Pulaski native Wally Thrasher, whose investigation led to the biggest drug bust in Mid-Atlantic United States history in 1986.

## Tuesday, April 13:

**Sons of Confederate Veterans meeting**  
The Sons of Confederate Veterans, Stuart-Horse-Artillery Camp 1784 will meet at 7 p.m. at Aly's Italian Family Restaurant at 3204 Riner Rd. Jonathan McPeak will give a talk on

the "History of the Virginia 45th Infantry Regiment". Members of the United Daughters of the Confederacy are also invited to attend. For further information, please call 320-4315 or 239-9864.

## Wednesday, April 14:

### Hahn Horticulture Garden Virtual Road Trip

The first of a five-stop virtual garden road trip via Zoom will be the Des Moines Botanical Garden in Des Moines, Iowa. Also on the tour are the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center with Tanya Zastrow on April 14 at 2 p.m., the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden with VT alumnus Brian Trader on April 28 at 3:30 p.m.; the Wisconsin Arboretum with VT alumnus David Stevens on May 12 at 2 p.m., and Lotusland with Paul Mills and Rebecca Anderson on May 26 at 2 p.m.

Register online for these visits and a zoom link will be provided:

[https://virginiatech.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_cumxRA4Mec96guy](https://virginiatech.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cumxRA4Mec96guy)

## 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](http://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

**StoryWalk**  
All the month of March at the Christiansburg Library. Exercise your brain and body as you read and walk the trail. The walk begins 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 a felt phone cover. While supplies last.

## 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.

### 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 Monday, April 5:

### Hahn Horticulture Garden Spring Plant Sale

The 2021 spring plant sale, a joint fundraising event between the garden and the VT Horticulture Club, is online this year due to COVID limitations on gatherings. The sale site link is <http://springplantsaleatvt.com/pamy.site>. Ordering will close on April 5 at 5 p.m. Plant pickup days will be April 22, 23, and 24. There are a lot of great plants on the list, but quantities are limited, so order early for best selection.

## Through Thursday, April 15:

### "ART GAWK: Selections from the Radford University Permanent Collection"

The exhibition is a selection of 111 works that range widely in media, artistic styles, and historical periods. The hours of the exhibition are Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. and Saturday from noon until 4 p.m. at the Art Museum at the Covington Center.

## 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.



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## NRV MPO SEEKS PUBLIC INPUT FOR BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN PLAN UPDATE

The New River Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is updating its 2014 Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan as a multimodal systems plan, which includes transit, bicycle, and pedestrian planning. An overview and an opportunity for public input will be provided. Registration and information about the April 6, 2021 online (virtual) event are found at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/nrv-mpo-2021-multimodal-plan-tickets-147016619667>. Further information is also on the NRV MPO website: [www.montgomerycountyva.gov/mpo](http://www.montgomerycountyva.gov/mpo)

**The public can speak or provide written comments** during the April 6, 2021 MPO Multimodal (Bicycle and Pedestrian Update) Plan Public Input virtual meeting between 4:00-6:00 PM. Written comments can also be received until 5:00 PM, **April 13, 2021**.

This public notice and opportunity to comment on the bike/ped plan update meets the program of projects requirements as established by the FTA pursuant to 49 U.S.C. Section 5307(c).

 The NRV MPO ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact Dan Brugh at: [brughjd@montgomerycountyva.gov](mailto:brughjd@montgomerycountyva.gov) or 540-394-2145, TTY/TTD 711.

# Moss Arts Center presents sheer beauty of classical music by pianist Sir András Schiff

The Moss Arts Center will present a program of rich and extraordinary classical works performed by Sir András Schiff, one of music's most revered pianists, Thursday, April 1, at 7:30 p.m.

The program will include works by Bach, Beethoven, and Schumann in a multi-camera stream recently recorded in front of a live audience in St. Peter's Church in Zurich, Switzerland. Ticket holders will have access to the streamed performance as it happens, and for seven days following the event.

Schiff is known for his affinity for Beethoven's sonatas, and in this recital he performs two of them: the dramatic, turbulent Piano Sonata No. 17 in D minor, Op. 31, No. 2, "Tempest" and Piano Sonata No. 26 in E-flat major, Op. 81a, "Les Adieux." Beloved for its themes of farewell and absence, including the musical theme of a horn that signaled arrivals and departures, "Les Adieux" is an expressive, emotional work that ends with an exuberant reunion.



Pianist Sir András Schiff

The evening recital will also feature Bach's "Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue" in D minor, BWV 903, and "Capriccio on the Departure of his Beloved Brother," BWV 992.

Schiff's encore profoundly connects to the rest of the program. Schumann's magical "Arabesque" in C major, Op. 18, delivers beautiful flourishes that change when seen through the differing

shadows cast by the intervening passages.

According to The Washington Post, "To attend an András Schiff recital is to enter a secular temple to music." A world-renowned pianist, conductor, pedagogue, and lecturer, Schiff has inspired music critics and audiences with the masterful and intellectual approach he brings to each piece he performs. Born in Budapest, Hungary, Schiff studied piano at the Liszt

Ferenc Academy with Pál Kadosa, György Kurtág, and Ferenc Rados; and in London with George Malcolm.

Tickets are \$10 for the general public and free for Virginia Tech students. Tickets can be purchased online; at the Moss Arts Center's box office from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday; or by calling 540-231-5300 during box office hours.

# Blacksburg's LewisGale Hospital Montgomery announces \$15.9 million surgical improvement and expansion project

BLACKSBURG — LewisGale Hospital Montgomery, a part of LewisGale Regional Health System, has announced plans to invest \$15.9 million to enhance its surgery department located at 3700 S. Main St., in Blacksburg.

The enhanced surgery department will add 7,500 square feet of new space adjacent to the existing surgery department, including two new, state-of-the-art operating rooms, a 15-bed post-anesthesia care unit, a sterile storage room, and support space. Additionally, 4,800 square feet of existing surgery

department space will be renovated. The new enhancements and expansion of surgical services total nearly \$35 million in capital improvements including a planned cardiac cath lab, advanced medical equipment, new patient safety, and quality efforts

since 2019. "For nearly 50 years, LewisGale Hospital Montgomery has offered the most technologically advanced quality of care in the region," said chief executive officer Alan Fabian. "This expansion is critical in helping us to continue delivering on our com-

mitment as the premier surgical specialty hospital, as well as being recognized as the healthcare provider and the employer of choice in the New River Valley." The improvement and expansion project is scheduled to begin in the first quarter of 2022.

## PETS-OF-THE-WEEK

At this time, visits to the Montgomery County Animal Care and Adoption Center are limited to one party at a time in the lobby area. Animal areas are not open to the public. To schedule an appointment to meet a prospective pet call (540) 382-5795 or email [animalcenter@montgomerycountyva.gov](mailto:animalcenter@montgomerycountyva.gov).



Otis Theodore may look a little rough around the edges on the outside, but on the inside, he's pure happy dog. Otis has some skin issues that are getting some TLC while he is at the Animal Care and Adoption Center, and they shouldn't be an issue in the near future. Every day he shows improvement and a pep in his step as a result. Otis is good with cats and humans of all ages. He is also housetrained.



"I'm Charlie. Pleased to meet you." Charlie is such a charmer. This lovely calico isn't a paw-shaker, but she will gently outstretch her arm when she wants you to pet her. Frankly, it's adorable! She is a sweet girl who loves affection, and she is also known to be a little chatty, letting out little purrs and meows from time to time.

## Grain bins pose a grave danger to farm workers

HANOVER—Grain bins that store loose, dry bulk material like corn can enhance profitability on farms, but they pose a grave danger to farmworkers who access them.

While grain bin entrapments are infrequent, engulfment can happen quickly, requiring emergency rescue. An entrapment occurs when a victim becomes covered in grain beyond the point of self-extrication while an engulfment is when a person is completely submerged beneath the surface of the grain. Approximately half of grain entrapments lead to engulfment, which is almost always fatal.

In 2019, 38 reported entrapments resulted in 23 deaths in the U.S., almost twice as many as in 2017, according to Purdue University.

The Henrico Technical Rescue Team and neighboring rescue workers are prepared to respond to these types of emergencies after recent trainings at the Engel Family Farms in Hanover County. Rescue squad members were instructed on how to use an extrication apparatus provided by Virginia Farm Bureau Federation's Farm Safety Advisory Committee.

This was a rare opportunity for Henrico County's specialty unit, which is trained for unusual rescue situations like extrications or incidents involving confined spaces. At the farm training, the team entered a grain bin partially filled with dry corn. Once inside, they assembled the Great Wall of Rescue, lightweight panels that aligned to form a tube-shaped wall around an entrapped mannequin. Because it can take up to 900 pounds of force to rescue an engulfed 165-pound victim, a drill-powered auger removes grain from the tube prior to extrication.

The training was led by Lt. Charles Smith of Henrico County Division of Fire, Station 1, who grew up on a farm in Hanover and previously worked for the Engel



In 2019, the last year figures are available, 38 farm workers were trapped in grain bins and 23 of them died.

family.

"The family has capacity to store two million bushels of grain at a time," he said to the first round of trainees on March 18. "There are 160 tractor-trailer loads of grain in one bin, which they can't get to market in the same day, so they'll store it."

Robert Harper, manager of Virginia Farm Bureau's grain division, said on-site dry storage is essential to harvest management and marketing.

"The bins pay for themselves from a harvest standpoint," Harper said. "A farmer can put corn in the bin and give himself from September to August to market it, instead of having to market it right at harvest time."

With hundreds of acres' worth of grain to get off the ground and into stor-

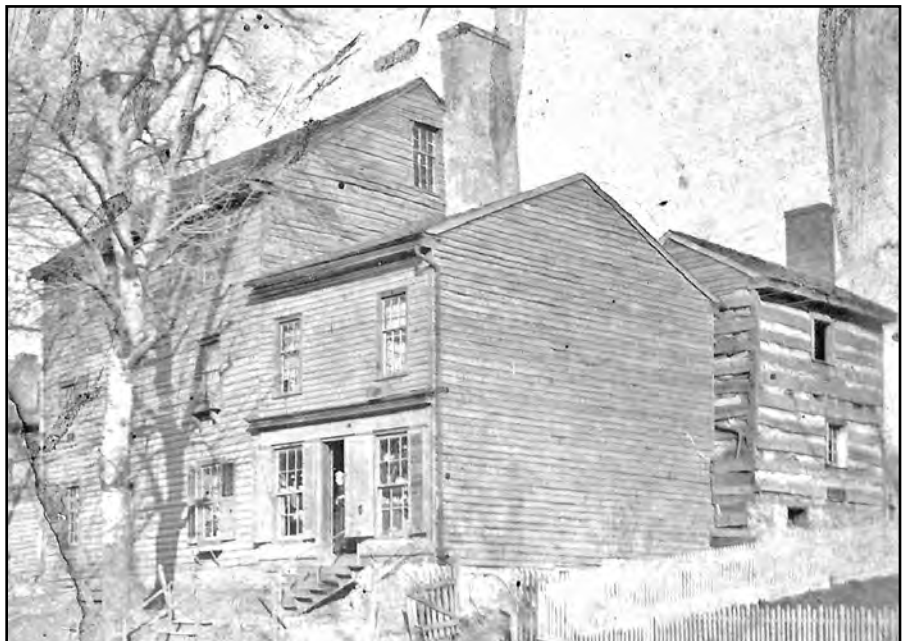
age, sometimes speed is prioritized over safety. And that's when farmers can get in trouble, Smith explained.

Dana Fisher, Virginia Farm Bureau safety committee chair, said Farm Bureau is willing to work with jurisdictions interested in training with the extrication device.

"A neighboring county may not have (one) in their inventory of equipment, but they can at least become familiar with it," Fisher said. "And we're encouraging localities to obtain their own."

The trainings, which were held on March 18 and March 25, coincided with Stand Up 4 Grain Safety Week, March 29-April 2, an awareness initiative of the Grain Handling Safety Coalition. A free webinar on bin safety is scheduled for April 1.

## Historic Montgomery



Built in 1806, the front building on this property, which once stood at 30 West Main St. in Christiansburg, was used as a tavern and a stagecoach and mail stop. The log building at the rear of the house was the kitchen where the tavern's enslaved people lived and worked. Dr. Joseph Edie bought the property in 1841. His office and apothecary shop were on the first floor and his residence was above. Dr. Edie gave the property to his eldest daughter, Jane Edie Wade in 1882. Her family lived in the house, and she operated a sewing notions store in the lower level. Mrs. Wade served as county deputy clerk during her husband's tenure as county clerk. This view was taken in 1906. (This image and many more are available from the Montgomery Museum of Art & History.)

## Goodwill multi-employer virtual job fair set for March 31st

Goodwill's mission services team has organized a multi-employer virtual job fair on Wednesday, March 31, from 9-a.m. until 10 a.m., 11 a.m. until noon, and 1 p.m. until 2 p.m.

The job fair will be an opportunity for individuals to meet with employers from across the Roanoke Valley who are hiring for various positions.

Roanoke Valley area employers scheduled to attend the job fair are Americold, Carilion Clinic, ESS, EvolutionHR, Goodwill, Kroger, Richfield Living, Sodexo, and Waffle House.

"The multi-employer virtual job fair is a safe and convenient opportunity to bring together local businesses and individuals looking for a job or to change jobs," said Zenith Barrett, Goodwill's senior director of business and community engagement.

"We know there are many individuals who lost their job during the COVID-19 crisis," Barrett said. "There are also many area businesses currently hir-

ing. This job fair allows Goodwill to assist in making these connections."

Registration for the job fair is required. Individuals with questions may contact 540-581-0620 Option 1. Businesses interested in being a part of future job fairs may contact Barrett at 540-581-0620 ext. 1266 or [zbarrett@goodwillvalleys.com](mailto:zbarrett@goodwillvalleys.com).



### ONLINE ONLY AUCTION

Ends Thursday, April 8th at 4 PM  
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4-Unit apartment building that has been recently remodeled and updated. The .191 acre property has been well maintained and is beautifully landscaped. There are parking spaces in front of apartments 1 & 2 as well as a large, paved lot behind the building. Each unit has laminate and carpet flooring and laundry hookups along with an electric range, refrigerator and dishwasher. Located in Downtown Christiansburg. Each unit is currently rented. Purchaser shall honor current annual lease until expiration. Contact auction company for rent roll.

- Apartment 1** – 2 BR, 1 BA on the upper/street level and has a parking space in front.
- Apartment 2** – 2 BR, 1 BA on the upper/street level and has a parking space in front.
- Apartment 3** – 2 BR, 1 BA on the lower level.
- Apartment 4** – 1 BR, 1 BA on the lower level.

Preview Date - Saturday March 27 @ 2 PM

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# OPINION

## Governor: Virginia to lift some COVID-related restrictions starting April 1

Virginia Governor Ralph Northam announced Tuesday that as COVID-19 vaccinations continue to rise in Virginia, certain sports and entertainment venues may begin to operate with additional capacity and indoor and outdoor gathering limits will increase starting Thursday, April 1.

Key changes in the Fourth Amended Executive Order 72 include:

(1) Social gatherings: The maximum number of individuals permitted in a social gathering will increase to 50 people for indoor settings and 100 people for outdoor settings. Social gatherings are currently limited to 10 people indoors and 25 people outdoors.

(2) Entertainment venues: All indoor and outdoor entertainment and public amusement venues must continue to operate

at 30 percent capacity. Indoor venues must operate at 30 percent capacity or with a maximum of 500 people, an increase from the current cap of 250 people. Outdoor venues must operate at 30 percent capacity, with no specific cap on the number of attendees. These venues were previously limited to 30 percent capacity or up to 1,000 attendees, whichever was fewer.

(3) Recreational sporting

events: The number of spectators allowed at recreational sporting events will increase from 25 to 100 people per field or 30 percent capacity, whichever is less for indoor settings, and from 250 to 500 people per field or 30 percent capacity, whichever is less for outdoor settings.

(4) In-person graduation and commencement events: Last week, the governor issued preliminary guidance on safe

in-person graduations and commencements, which included a cap of 5,000 people or 30 percent of the venue capacity for outdoor events, whichever is less. Events held indoors may have up to 500 people, or 30 percent of the venue capacity, whichever is less. Attendees must wear masks and follow other guidelines and safety protocols to ensure proper distancing.

## LewisGale Hospital Montgomery stands to benefit from D.C. bill to help rural hospitals stay open

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Sens. Mark R. Warner (D-VA), John Cornyn (R-TX), Marsha Blackburn (R-TN), Rev. Raphael Warnock (D-GA), and Tim Kaine (D-VA) Thursday introduced the Save Rural Hospitals Act of 2021 to fix a flawed formula that results in disproportionately low Medicare payments for hospitals in rural and low-wage areas.

Among the 19 Virginia hospitals that would benefit from the provisions of the bill is Blacksburg's Lewis-Gale Hospital Montgomery.

The bill would provide additional financial support for rural hospitals that are already operating on very thin margins and shutting down at record rates during the COVID-19 crisis. More than 20 rural hospitals closed their doors in 2020 alone.

"In rural communities all over America, having a local hospital, as opposed to having to travel long distances for care, can mean the difference between life and death," said Sen. Warner. "Unfortunately, the COVID-19 crisis has only exacerbated the financial

instability many of these facilities were already facing, putting them at greater risk for closure. That's why we've got to level the playing field for federal reimbursement rates so that rural hospitals have a fighting chance at keeping their doors open and continuing to provide lifesaving care."

"Too often, rural hospitals don't have the necessary support they need to continue providing care for their local communities," said Sen. Kaine. "With the increased pressure they've faced over the last year, it's so important for Congress to pass this bipartisan legislation to ensure rural hospitals across the country — including 19 in Virginia — have access to the necessary resources to stay afloat and continue serving their communities amid COVID-19."

The Save Rural Hospitals Act of 2021 would help curb the alarming trend of hospital closures in rural communities by making sure hospitals are fairly reimbursed for their services by the federal government. The "Medicare Area Wage Index," a formula used by Medicare to reimburse hospitals, is currently much lower for health care providers in rural communities, due to the fact that the formula is based on labor costs, which vary across the country. To make sure rural hospitals are fairly reimbursed, the Save Rural Hospitals Act of 2021 would establish a national minimum "area wage index" of 0.85.

This legislation comes at a crucial time during the unprecedented COVID-19 public health emergency and as hospitals in rural areas already face financial

uncertainty. At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, hospitals in many places, including Virginia, were ordered to postpone profitable elective surgeries in an effort to conserve hospital capacity and scarce supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) for the treatment of COVID-19 patients. Reporting indicates that rural hospitals are now closing at an alarming rate, with more than 130 rural hospitals around the nation having closed since 2010.

According to 2021 CMS data, 19 Virginia hospitals will directly benefit from the Save Rural Hospitals Act of 2021. Those 19 hospitals are Johnston Memorial Hospital, Abingdon; Lonesome Pine Hospital, Big Stone Gap; LewisGale Hospital Montgomery, Blacksburg; Southampton

Memorial Hospital, Franklin; Twin County Regional Healthcare, Inc., Galax; Buchanan General Hospital, Grundy; Sentara Rockingham Memorial Hospital, Harrisonburg; Smyth County Community Hospital, Smyth; Memorial Hospital, Martinsville; Riverside Shore Memorial, Nassawadox; Norton Community Hospital, Norton; Wellmont Mountain View Regional Medical Center, Norton; LewisGale Hospital Pulaski, Pulaski; Clinch Valley Medical Center, Richlands; Russell County Medical Center, Russell; VCU Health Community Memorial Hospital, South Hill; Riverside Tappahannock Hospital Tappahannock; Carilion Tazewell Community Hospital, Tazewell; and Wythe County Community Hospital, Wytheville.

### News Messenger

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

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## Virginia is state with fourth best taxpayer return on investment (ROI)

With tax day coming up (May 17 this year), the personal finance website WalletHub has released its report on which states receive the best and the worst taxpayer return on investment (ROI) and determined that Virginia is the state with the fourth best ROI.

The website noted that Americans have looked at taxes with especially high scrutiny during the COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, 74% think the government hasn't handled their tax dollars wisely during this crisis, according to WalletHub's Taxpayer Survey. What is clear is the taxpayer return on investment varies where one lives.

To determine which states yield the best and worst return on investment (ROI) for taxpayers,

WalletHub compared the quality of government services received by residents to the total state and local taxes they pay in each of the 50 states.

First, WalletHub analyzed each state across five key government-service categories: 1) education, 2) health, 3) safety, 4) economy and 5) infrastructure and pollution. The categories were further broken down into 30 relevant metrics.

The website then determined each state's weighted average across all 30 metrics to calculate its "Overall Government Services Score."

Finally, WalletHub constructed the Taxpayer ROI ranking by comparing each state's "Overall Government Services Score" to its "Total Taxes Paid per Capita." "Per

Capita" includes the population aged 18 and older.

All that work resulted in Virginia's Overall Government Services Score being the fourth best in the country. The three states with a better ROI than Virginia, according to the survey, were New Hampshire, Florida, and South Dakota. The five states with the worst taxpayer return on investment, according to WalletHub, were Delaware, North Dakota, New Mexico, California, and Hawaii.

Some of the key metrics among the 30 that combined to land Virginia in fourth place and their rank for the commonwealth were total taxes per capita (23), education (5), health (41), safety (8), economy (2), and infrastructure and pollution (9).

## GasBuddy study: Rising gas prices and increased road rage correlate

GasBuddy, the travel and navigation app used by more North American drivers to save money on gas, Thursday released the results of a study that revealed a direct correlation between rising gasoline prices and increased road rage.

Last March, at the start of the pandemic, U.S. traffic disappeared overnight and gas prices plummeted to a point where the national average fell below \$2 per gallon, something that happened only briefly five years ago. But consumers are back on the road, and gas prices have been rising over the past four months. The national average now sits at \$2.86 per gallon, the highest since the peak summer prices in 2019.

According to GasBuddy fuel transaction data, weekly gasoline demand has set a new pandemic high with some daily figures above the pre-pandemic figures for the last couple of weeks.

Corresponding to an increase in gas prices is an increase in road rage, according to GasBuddy.

The study examined millions of GasBuddy Drives data during the first quarter of 2021 when gas prices jumped most rapidly and looked at which cities had the highest frequency of aggressive driving habits like rapid acceleration, hard braking, and speeding.

California dominates both lists with four cities making it onto the top 10 list of cities with the most aggressive drivers and capturing every single spot for the cities with the highest gas prices.

The top 10 cities with the most aggressive drivers, according to GasBuddy's study, are (1) Sacramento, Calif. (2) Los Angeles (3) San Diego (4) Birmingham, Ala., (5) Raleigh, N.C. (6) Memphis, Tenn. (7) Atlanta (8) Charlotte, N.C. (9) San Francisco (10) Detroit.

As already mentioned all of the top 10 cities with the most expensive gas prices are in California. (1) San Francisco (2) San Rafael (3) Santa Rosa (4) San Luis Obispo (5) Los Angeles (6) San Diego (7) Napa (8) Oakland 9) Orange County (10) San Jose.

Ironically, aggressive driving can lower gas mileage by as much as 40 percent, costing drivers as much as \$477 more per year in additional fuel consumption.

"California has amazing sunshine, but gas prices in that state have always been historically high due to state-mandated specially formulated fuel, a carbon management program and high fuel taxes," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy. "All that hard braking could be caused by seeing the rare cheap price at some gas stations."

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P	15			16				17	
O		18		19			20		
U			21				22		
S		23	24				25	26	27
S	28			29	30	31	32		33
Z	35				36				37
W	38		39	40	41	42	43	44	
Z		45		46		47	48		
O			49			50			
R		51	52		53	54	55		56
L	58				59			60	61
E	62			63				64	
D	65				66			67	

- CLUES ACROSS**
- Droop
  - Rested in a chair
  - Thai (var.)
  - Draw out wool
  - Coatis genus
  - Taxis
  - Belge
  - Supplementing with difficulty
  - Capital of Norway
  - A personal written history
  - Cologne
  - Australian flightless bird
  - Lowest freeman; early Eng.
  - 18th C. mathematician
  - Cabinet Dept. for homes
  - Languages of Sulu islands
  - More scarce
  - Before
  - Swiss river
  - Actress & director Lupino
  - Edges
  - Thousand Leaves
  - Soldier hero of Spain
  - EI \_\_\_
  - Gains through work
  - To the front
  - I (German)
  - Price label
  - Barack's 1st lady
  - Drench with liquid
  - Child (scot.)
  - "Aba \_\_\_ Honeymoon"
  - Disappearing shade trees
  - Cricket frog genus
  - Union busting worker
  - A priest's liturgical vestment
  - Previously The Common Market
  - Upper left keyboard keyin tissues
- CLUES DOWN**
- Point midway between S and SE
  - Genus of birds
  - Personal spiritual leader
  - Japanese rice beverage
  - Eared owl genus
  - Wood oil finish
  - Hyphen
  - Competently
  - Equal, prefix
  - Broad-winged soaring hawks
  - A collection of star systems
  - Be in accord
  - Links subject & predicate (linguistics)
  - Paddles
  - Asian river between China and Russia
  - Physicists Marie or Pierre
  - Excessive fluid accumulation
  - \_\_\_ Dunlap, pageant titleholder
  - Made again
  - Norse goddess of death
  - A waterproof raincoat
  - Express pleasure
  - \_\_\_ Lanka
  - Radioactivity unit
  - Clay blocks for building
  - Linear unit
  - Conductor tools
  - Whale ship captain
  - Queen who tested Solomon
  - Good Gosh!
  - A gangster's girlfriend
  - Unstressed-stressed
  - Draw through holes
  - Old Italian monetary units
  - Musician Clapton
  - Ceremonial staff of authority
  - Fabrics of camels or goats
  - A very large body of water
  - Basics

# OBITUARIES

## Shepherd, the Rev. Everett Elwood

The Reverend Everett Elwood Shepherd, 85, of Christiansburg, stepped onto Hallelujah Square on Monday, March 22, 2021. He heard the call of his Heavenly Father saying, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

Everett ministered for over 40 years with unwavering faith doing the work of the Lord in the community that he loved so much.

He pastored for several years at Ellett Valley Pentecostal Holiness Church and most recently at New River Holiness church. Over the years he evangelized at numerous churches and ministered in nursing homes.

He lived his life to the fullest, doing the things he loved most: riding motorcycles and horses, playing his guitar and singing bluegrass gospel. He was a skilled crane operator for many years, a job he enjoyed, retiring from Radford Arsenal. Above all, he loved spending time with family and friends, never failing to talk about his love for Jesus with each and every one.

Everett was preceded in death by his one and only child, Larry Gene Shepherd; his father and mother, Edward M. Shepherd and Helen Caldwell Shepherd; sisters Ruth Moore, Nita 'Eunice' Burk, Louise Sarver, Claudine "Dean" Hender-



son, and Conston Spradlin; brothers Paul 'Harvey,' Archie, and Marshall Shepherd.

Left to cherish and honor his memory are his loving wife of 66 years, Norma "Darleen" Shepherd; granddaughters Lori Tibbs (John) and Anita Bland (Craig); great grandchildren Madison, Haley, Jordan, Hannah, John Isaac and Michaela; great-great granddaughter Zoe; a brother, Jack Shepherd (Dot); a sister Frances Flores (Marcelo); and a daughter in law, Pamela Brumfield.

A funeral service was held on Thursday, March 25, 2021, in the McCoy Funeral Home Chapel with John Tibbs and Rodney Linkous officiating. Interment followed at Roselawn Memorial Gardens, Christiansburg. The family received friends prior to the service.

If there were ever any words that Everett would want to say to friends and family, it would be to make sure you are ready to go to heaven. "And we'll all live forever in Hallelujah Square."

Our family wishes to extend a heartfelt thank you to the staff at Good Samaritan Hospice for their kind and loving assistance with helping our precious Everett make his transition to his heavenly home.

## Sitters from page 1



ing, March 23. Between 7:00 a.m. and 8:30 a.m., deputies went door-to-door to roughly 80 residences in the Cove Hollow Community to pass out flyers to make them aware of what was happening.

Shortly after sunrise, tree-sit supporters rallied at the end of Cove Hollow Road. Over 20 people came throughout the day to show support, holding signs such as "No Pipelines on Stolen Land," "I (heart) Yellow Finch Tree Sits" and "No Pipeline."

Early in the morning, crews began negotiations with the sitters in hopes they would come down on their own. They then spent the morning providing access for and setting a crane in place to assist with removal. The work was hampered because the area is steep and difficult to access.

The work site was closed for safety purposes, but visits were made by both Montgomery County Board of Supervisor member Sara Bohn and Commonwealth's Attorney Mary Pettit. Supervisor Bohn acted as liaison for the local protesters, and Commonwealth Attorney Pettit was consulted regularly for legal guidance since the court order was issued. Legal observers for the protesters were also provided access to observe the work from a safe zone.

Late in the day, the first sitter was extracted as work continued until sunset. The Virginia State Police extraction team worked from a crane-suspended basket



**Alexander Lowe was charged with obstruction of justice and interfering with the property rights of another and was taken to the Montgomery County jail.**



**Claire Marian Fiocco has been charged with interfering with the property rights of another and is being held in the Montgomery County Jail.**

PHOTO COURTESY OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

to remove her safely from both the sleeping dragon to which she had locked herself and the tree. She was then lowered to the ground in the basket and checked by medics. Crews remained on site overnight as did law enforcement personnel from the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office, the Virginia State Police, and the Christiansburg Police Department. Extraction work and negotiations with the second tree sitter ceased at sundown.

The second tree sitter was extracted Wednesday, March 24. Neither of the tree sitters suffered any injuries.

A statement from the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office said, "We are very thankful that both sitters were able to be removed successfully with no injuries to anyone involved. This has been a long process; however, the slow and deliber-

ate planning paid off. We appreciate the patience of everyone involved with the process and especially those living in the Cove Hollow community as we carried out this plan over the past two days.

"We want to express our sincere appreciation to both the Christiansburg Police Department and the Virginia State Police, and specifically the Virginia State Police extraction team who made it possible to safely remove the sitters.

"Lastly, we would like to remind everyone that the Circuit Court injunction remains in effect through November 2021 prohibiting entering, occupying, or otherwise interfering with any of the Mountain Valley Pipelines easements for the project."

-From updates provided by the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office

## Newberry, Charles Shawn

Charles Shawn Newberry, 44, passed away on Thursday, March 18, 2021, at his home in Radford.

He is survived by his wife, Rebecca Newberry; his parents, Basil and Sue Newberry of Belspring; daughters Hailey Harvey of Radford, Gladys Newberry of Belspring, Leighona Newberry of Shawsville, and Destiny and Kyleigh Newberry, both of Radford; a brother and sister-in-law, James and Jessie Newberry of Belspring; a step-



grandson, Aries; nephews James and Andrew Newberry; a niece, Hannah Newberry; and many friends.

The family will receive friends from 2 until 4 p.m. on Saturday, April 24, 2021, at the Parrott Church of God. Memorial services will begin at 4 p.m. with Pastor Kenny Alley officiating.

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

## Teates, Judith Keister

Judith Keister Teates, 79, of Blacksburg, died March 24, 2021, at home with her family.

She was born in Montgomery County on December 30, 1941, to the late James Jonas Keister and Stella Mae Price Keister.

She is survived by her husband, Hunter Bennett Teates, of Blacksburg; her daughters, Andrea Teates Robinson and Jennifer Teates Niemiera; her son, Andrew Bennett Teates; her grandchildren, William Sharpe, Matthew Sharpe, Alexis Niemiera, Olivia Niemiera, and Bennett Niemiera; her brothers Philip M. Keister and Jonathan Keister, and a special sister-in-law, Dorothy Keister.

Judith was born and raised in Prices Fork, Va., and while she lived in other towns and states, Prices Fork was her home. She was a descendant of the earliest New River Valley settlement of the Price family of 1742 that came from the Palatinate region of Germany.

She graduated from Blacksburg High School and from Virginia Tech with a Bachelor of Science degree. She



was a member of the Old Guard at Virginia Tech. Judith was a talented artist and entrepreneur. Over the years, she was involved in and supported several groups and organizations including the Alpharetta Women's Club, the Price Historical Society, St. Michael Lutheran Church, and the Brush Mountain Coalminers Foundation.

She was a friend of the Prices Fork Grange and community.

The family would like to thank the team at Blue Ridge Cancer Center and Good Samaritan Hospice for their kindness and service during these past three years.

Graveside services will be conducted Monday, March 29, 2021, at 11 a.m. at the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Dublin, Va. If you would like to attend services, please arrive at the cemetery by 10:30 a.m.

In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made to the Brush Mountain Coal Miners Memorial or the Good Samaritan Hospice.

Services are being provided by McCoy Funeral Home.

## Hackworth from page 1

ral communities, standing with our law enforcement, and protecting our rights in Richmond."

Buchwald thanked her supporters and said the experience of getting out in the district, meeting people and giving voice to issues has been enriching and she looks forward to the future.

"I have met and spoken to so many people who are pleading for representation for the issues that affect us every single day," she said. "I am proud of the honest campaign we have run, free from mudslinging, and I want to encourage anyone who has ever considered throwing their hat in the

ring, to do so.

"I promise it is worth it, 100 percent," Buchwald said. "I am grateful for the thousands of people who have reached out and shared their concerns with me. Rest assured, I am here for you. My voice will not be silenced."

Hackworth garnered 76% of the vote according to the Virginia State Board of Elections website.

The 38th district includes Bland, Buchanan, Dickenson, Pulaski, Russell and Tazewell counties, the cities of Norton and Radford, and portions of Montgomery, Smyth, and Wise counties.

## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING COUNTY OF MONTGOMERY, VIRGINIA FISCAL YEAR 2021-2022 TAX LEVIES AND BUDGET

Pursuant to Section 58.1-3007 of the Code of Virginia, notice is hereby given that a public hearing be scheduled for 6:00 P.M. April 8, 2021 on the proposed intention to address the below listed local tax levies for Fiscal Year 2021-2022 upon which matter citizens will have the opportunity to be heard. Said hearing will be held at the Montgomery County Government Center Board Room, 755 Roanoke Street, Christiansburg, Virginia.

FURTHER, notice is given of the Board's intention to propose no increases in the following tax levies for Fiscal Year 2021-2022:

- Real Property tax levy remains at \$.89 per \$100 of assessed value.
- Personal Property tax levy remains at \$2.55 per \$100 of assessed value.
- Machinery & Tools tax levy remains at \$1.82 per \$100 of assessed value.
- Merchant's Capital tax levy remains at \$3.05 per \$100 of assessed value.
- Mobile Homes tax levy remains at \$.89 per \$100 of assessed value.

Notice is also given that the Board of Supervisors of Montgomery County scheduled a public hearing for 6:15 P.M. or as soon thereafter, April 8, 2021 on the **Advertised Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Budget** in the amount of \$210,986,555. Said hearing will be held at the Montgomery County Government Center Board Room, 755 Roanoke Street, Christiansburg, Virginia.

BY THE ORDER OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
F. CRAIG MEADOWS  
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

### 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.

Memorial Gardens OF THE NEW RIVER VALLEY



### After You Have Acquired a Cremation Urn from the Funeral Home, the Process is Not Yet Complete Until the Urn is Permanently Placed.

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# What happens if a drone crashes into a car?

A drone slams into a windshield. The drone's shell cracks, and the windshield shudders. Pieces of a propeller snap off. But the windshield doesn't shatter.

Most safe drone flights aren't supposed to end in crashes. But this crash is unfolding in one of Virginia Tech's impact labs, where controlled collisions have been pivotal to producing safer cars, football helmets, and even toys. Here, collisions reveal information about risk and point to ways to reduce it. Now they're helping lead to new ways to use drones.

For years, an important Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulation restricted commercial drone use in urban and suburban areas by prohibiting flying over moving vehicles. The concern was that a drone hitting the windshield of a moving car could obliterate the driver's view of the road or, worse, injure

the occupants.

Data demonstrating that a small parachute-equipped drone wouldn't actually damage a car traveling at typical in-town speed limits provided a counterpoint to those concerns, one convincing enough to the FAA that it granted insurance company State Farm a waiver to operate drones over moving vehicles in 2019.

The data represent the first known example of direct research on drone-automobile collisions, a unique collaboration between drone specialists at the Virginia Tech Mid-Atlantic Aviation Partnership (MAAP), injury biomechanics experts in the university's College of Engineering, and State Farm.

The waiver provided the company with an additional tool to use in processing homeowners insurance claims.

MAAP regularly collaborates with Virginia

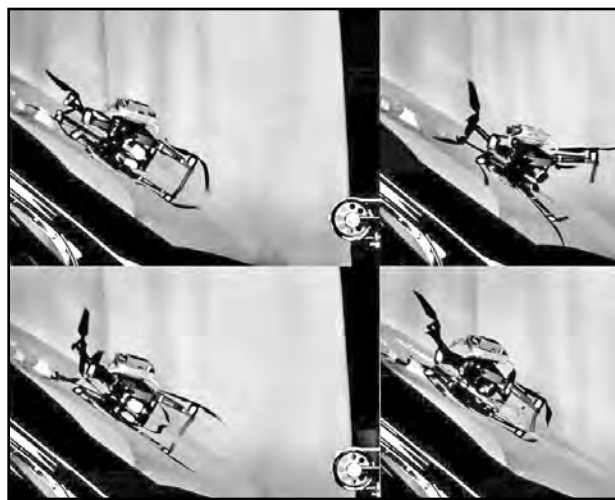
Tech's acclaimed injury biomechanics researchers. The group, led by associate biomedical engineering and mechanics professor Steve Rowson, has earned international recognition for experimental methods that precisely recreate real-world collisions. These techniques offer a realistic and, crucially, reproducible way to quantify the risk of various impacts and evaluate the efficacy of safety measures.

The drone the team used was a DJI Mavic 2 Pro, a small aircraft that weighs just over 2 pounds. State Farm's waiver application specified that during operations the drone would be equipped with a parachute from Israeli company ParaZero, technology that has been tested and has figured in multiple successful applications for waivers to fly over people. The researchers set out to replicate what might happen if, in the unlikely event

of a catastrophic failure, the drone under the parachute was blown directly into the path of a moving vehicle.

They mounted the drone to a pneumatic sled that was propelled down a linear track toward a custom-built windshield frame that contained parts of a salvaged Toyota Camry. By varying the impact speed, which would translate to the speed of a moving vehicle in a real-world scenario, and assessing the damage, the team hoped to identify a threshold below which a drone could safely be flown overhead without risking a smashed windshield if something went wrong. They expected the degree of damage to the windshield to increase steadily as the impact speed rose.

Post-impact inspections showed a more interesting result. At impact speeds between 25 and 62.5 mph, the only signs of the collision were



**In a series of controlled experiments, a drone hits a salvaged car windshield at relative speeds of (clockwise from top left) 48, 57, 62.5, and 67 mph. The greater the impact speed, the more forceful the collision. Only the last crash damaged the windshield, data indicating that a drone like this poses a relatively low risk to a vehicle traveling at moderate speeds.**

streaks of rubber and plastic transferred from the drone as it slid up the glass. When the Mavic hit at 67 miles per hour, a web of cracks shot across the windshield as it bowed inward, spitting shards of glass onto the floor.

The slim margin between a virtually pristine windshield and a de-

stroyed one drew a clear boundary around low-risk scenarios. The waiver application argued that as long as potential relative impact speeds never exceeded 62 mph, flights over moving vehicles presented minimal risk. The FAA agreed.

-- ELEANOR NELSON

## 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

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. Moonsup "Paul" Song (540) 382-2410. Sunday Worship 10 a.m., Sunday School 9 a.m. Live streaming Sunday Service - www.twitch.tv/stpaulumc **Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church**, 350 Stafford Drive, Christiansburg, VA 24073, Sunday School 10am, Sunday Worship Service 11am.

## WESLEYAN

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

# Montgomery County

## WORSHIP DIRECTORY

### Our God of Compassion

Read Judges 9:1 through 10:18

Trina could hardly wait to go off to college and break free from her Christian parents. Her peers seemed to be having so much fun, and she longed to be a member of their partying crowd. In time, she learned that the worship of sensual pleasure wasn't fun after all. Instead, it became a living death.

Enslaved by various addictions, Trina slogged hopelessly through the next decade of her life until an empathetic neighbor led her back to Christ.

Then they got rid of the foreign gods among them and served the Lord. And he could

bear Israel's misery no longer (Judges 10:16).

The minute Trina repented, God reached out to her with sweeping compassion as if He couldn't bear her misery any longer. Yes, sin had left deep scars, and her journey to freedom wasn't easy. But thirty-five years later, Trina is still walking closely with Jesus— completely in awe of the God who freed her from the demons of rebellion.

Prayer Suggestion: Lord, thank You for showing us compassion by reaching out to free us from the misery we bring upon ourselves.

Quicklook: Judges 10:6-16

**If your church is not listed and if you are interested, call Randy Thompson at 540-389-9355 or email at [advertise@ourvalley.org](mailto:advertise@ourvalley.org)**

# Tuition from page 1

“The demand for a Virginia Tech degree is greater than it has ever been, but we will do everything we can to keep costs down and provide an affordable, high-quality education for Virginia residents,” said Virginia Tech President Tim Sands.

“Over the period of six years through the 2021-22 academic year, the university will have kept tuition rate growth at or below inflation as measured by the consumer price index,” the VT President said. “Combined with increased financial aid, our commitment to make Virginia Tech accessible has never been stronger.”

Tuition and fees is the primary source of the university's Educational and General Program (E&G) budget. In the current fiscal year, for example, tuition and fees from both in-state and out-of-state students accounted for \$600.3 million (or 71 percent) of the

\$845.7 million total E&G budget. The state provided \$199.0 million (or 23.5 percent) toward the E&G budget, and an additional \$46.4 million (or 5.5 percent) came from other sources.

Virginia Tech's Funds for the Future program provides 100 percent protection from tuition and fee increases for returning students with a family income of up to \$100,000, resulting in a predictable and unchanging tuition and fee package for all four years of their undergraduate study at Virginia Tech.

The university's Presidential Scholarship Initiative will once again provide full four-year scholarships to 85 incoming Virginia students next year, supporting a total program of 327 students.

Including university-funded support, Virginia Tech undergraduates received \$137.9 million in grants and scholar-

ships last fiscal year.

Virginia Tech will continue to discount undergraduate tuition by 10 percent during the summer session and winter session courses in Blacksburg to help students complete degrees at an accelerated pace during nontraditional times.

Tuition and mandatory fees for in-state graduate students will rise by \$492 to \$16,522 and for out-of-state graduate students by \$896 to \$31,443.

The total annual cost to Virginia and Maryland veterinary students will be \$26,086, an increase of \$651, and the total annual cost to out-of-state (and non-Maryland) veterinary students will be \$55,687, an increase of \$1,119.

Students enrolling at the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine this summer will have a total annual cost of \$56,025, an increase of \$1,605.

# Death Penalty from page 1

of a crime is white, than if the victim is black. In the twentieth century, 296 of the 377 defendants that Virginia executed for murder were black. Of the 113 individuals who have been executed in Virginia since the Supreme Court reinstated the death penalty in 1976, 52 were black.

“After years of fighting to bring Virginia in line with developed countries around the world, abolishing the death penalty today is a huge accomplishment,” said Sen. Surovell. “It would not have been possible without the dogged work of many advocates and partners, as well as significant electoral gains

across the commonwealth and Governor Northam's public support.”

“Eliminating the use of the death penalty here in Virginia is long overdue, said Delegate Mullin. “The evidence is clear. Use of the death penalty is riddled with wrongful convictions, inadequate representation, and racial bias. I am thankful that with the governor's signature today, we have relegated this inhumane practice to the history books.”

The legislation signed by Governor Northam converts the sentences of the two individuals currently on death row in Virginia to life in prison without parole.

Send community news and photos to [communitynews@ourvalley.org](mailto:communitynews@ourvalley.org)



## 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 - Clerical

**Accounting Manager in Elliston, VA.**  
Min. req.: MBA in Accounting. Mail resume to Rowe Fine Furniture, Inc., Attn: Benjamin Jarrell, 2121 Gardner St., Elliston, VA 24087.

## Help Wanted - General

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

## Legals - Montgomery County

### TOWN OF CHRISTIANSBURG, VIRGINIA THE CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION REPORT (CAPER)

The Town of Christiansburg, as a recipient of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding, is required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to prepare the 2019 Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER). The CAPER is an evaluation and performance report detailing accomplishments toward meeting the goals outlined in the 5-year Consolidated Plan. The CAPER compares the actual performance measures with those measures listed in the 2019 Annual Action Plan. Public Comments will be received through April 28, 2021.

**PUBLIC HEARING**  
Town Council will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, April 27, 2021 at 7:00 PM in the Council Room, Christiansburg Town Hall, 100 E. Main Street to receive comments on Council's intention to adopt the 2019 CDBG CAPER. A draft copy of the 2019 CDBG CAPER is available for review ending April 28, 2021 and may be viewed in the Office of the Town Manager, Town of Christiansburg, 100 E. Main Street during normal office hours of 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. In addition, a draft electronic copy is available on the Town's Web Site at <https://www.christiansburg.org/729/Community-Development-Block-Grant>. Any interested party whose participation in this meeting would require reasonable accommodation of a handicap or language services should contact Andrew Warren at (540) 382-6128 ext. 1130 or by e-mail at [awarren@christiansburg.org](mailto:awarren@christiansburg.org).

## LEGAL NOTICE

### County of Montgomery, Virginia Synopsis of Advertised Budget for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2022

This budget synopsis is prepared and published pursuant to Section 15.2-2506 of Code of Virginia, for information and fiscal planning purposes only.

A hearing will be held by the Board of Supervisors on April 8, 2021 at 6:15 P.M. at the County Government Center Board Room, 755 Roanoke Street, Christiansburg, Virginia at which time any citizen of the County shall have the opportunity to attend and state his or her views on the advertised budget.

A copy of the Advertised Budget is available for inspection at the County Government Center, in the County Administrator's Office, 755 Roanoke Street, Christiansburg; the Blacksburg Library, 200 Miller St., Blacksburg; the Christiansburg Library, 125 Sheltman St., Christiansburg; the Meadowbrook Library, 267 Alleghany Springs Road, Shawsville; the Blacksburg Community Center, 725 Patrick Henry Dr., Blacksburg; the Christiansburg Recreation Center, 1600 N. Franklin St., Christiansburg; the Blacksburg Municipal Building, in the Town Manager's Office, 300 S. Main St., Blacksburg; and the Christiansburg Town Hall, in the Town Manager's Office, 100 E. Main St., Christiansburg.

EXPENDITURES:	FY 2021 Budget	FY 2022 Advertised Budget	Increase (Decrease)
<b>GENERAL GOVERNMENT:</b>			
Board of Supervisors	\$ 270,632	\$ 282,425	\$ 11,793
County Administration	\$ 1,956,788	\$ 2,104,749	\$ 147,961
County Attorney	\$ 382,368	\$ 383,225	\$ 857
Financial & Management Services	\$ 1,225,460	\$ 1,018,450	\$ (207,010)
Insurance	\$ 208,195	\$ 210,695	\$ 2,500
Information Technology	\$ 2,015,760	\$ 2,135,796	\$ 120,036
Commissioner of the Revenue-State	\$ 561,856	\$ 588,651	\$ 26,795
Assessment-100% County	\$ 479,677	\$ 490,370	\$ 10,693
Treasurer-State	\$ 482,702	\$ 492,165	\$ 9,463
Collections-100% County	\$ 531,481	\$ 506,505	\$ (24,976)
Electoral Board/Director of Elections	\$ 485,484	\$ 473,570	\$ (11,914)
Commonwealth Attorney	\$ 1,249,358	\$ 1,282,063	\$ 32,705
Courts	\$ 262,008	\$ 267,247	\$ 5,239
Clerk of the Circuit Court	\$ 715,542	\$ 779,147	\$ 63,605
Sheriff-State	\$ 8,066,081	\$ 8,213,115	\$ 147,034
Sheriff-100% County	\$ 7,178,602	\$ 7,323,178	\$ 144,576
Fire Departments and Rescue Squads	\$ 1,487,781	\$ 1,494,981	\$ 7,200
Animal Care and Adoption Center	\$ 631,681	\$ 652,869	\$ 21,188
General Services	\$ 6,348,344	\$ 6,685,685	\$ 337,341
Children's Services Act	\$ 1,651,969	\$ 1,651,969	\$ -
Human Services	\$ 378,338	\$ 392,725	\$ 14,387
Public Health Department	\$ 604,488	\$ 604,488	\$ -
Social Services	\$ 6,228,024	\$ 6,364,979	\$ 136,955
Parks & Recreation	\$ 1,257,701	\$ 1,296,123	\$ 38,422
Regional Library	\$ 2,246,303	\$ 2,347,680	\$ 101,377
Planning & GIS	\$ 948,750	\$ 948,167	\$ (583)
Economic Development	\$ 434,156	\$ 460,975	\$ 26,819
Other Agencies	\$ 2,708,739	\$ 2,762,426	\$ 53,687
Contingencies-General	\$ 526,307	\$ 536,307	\$ 10,000
Contingencies-Special	\$ 7,836,404	\$ 526,000	\$ (7,310,404)
Revenue Refunds	\$ 195,000	\$ 195,000	\$ -
<b>Subtotal:</b>	<b>\$ 59,555,979</b>	<b>\$ 53,471,725</b>	<b>\$ (6,084,254)</b>
<b>Law Library</b>	<b>\$ 17,600</b>	<b>\$ 17,600</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>SCHOOLS:</b>			
School Operating	\$ 113,745,153	\$ 121,984,741	\$ 8,239,588
School Capital	\$ 2,146,173	\$ 2,195,645	\$ 49,472
School Nutrition	\$ 5,228,004	\$ 4,633,474	\$ (594,530)
<b>Subtotal:</b>	<b>\$ 121,119,330</b>	<b>\$ 128,813,860</b>	<b>\$ 7,694,530</b>
<b>County Capital</b>	<b>\$ 3,531,173</b>	<b>\$ 3,580,645</b>	<b>\$ 49,472</b>
<b>Debt Service</b>	<b>\$ 24,722,725</b>	<b>\$ 24,722,725</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>Economic Development</b>	<b>\$ 380,000</b>	<b>\$ 380,000</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>COUNTY TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 209,326,807</b>	<b>\$ 210,986,555</b>	<b>\$ 1,659,748</b>
<b>RESOURCES:</b>	<b>FY 2021 Budget</b>	<b>FY 2022 Advertised Budget</b>	<b>Increase (Decrease)</b>
<b>REVENUE:</b>			
<b>General Undesignated Revenue:</b>			
Current Property Taxes (1)	\$ 101,562,376	\$ 103,807,971	\$ 2,245,595
Delinquent/Other Property Tax Revenue	\$ 2,996,000	\$ 2,996,000	\$ -
Sales and Use Tax	\$ 10,301,540	\$ 10,081,222	\$ (220,318)
Undesignated Consumer Utility Tax	\$ 1,659,000	\$ 1,628,000	\$ (31,000)
Motor Vehicle Licenses	\$ 800,000	\$ 800,000	\$ -
All Other Local Taxes	\$ 1,370,000	\$ 1,325,000	\$ (45,000)
Interest on Investments	\$ 895,999	\$ 113,268	\$ (782,731)
All Other Undesignated Revenue	\$ 546,384	\$ 620,384	\$ 74,000
<b>Total Undesignated Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 120,131,299</b>	<b>\$ 121,371,845</b>	<b>\$ 1,240,546</b>
General Designated Revenue	\$ 20,009,464	\$ 14,833,608	\$ (5,175,856)
Law Library Designated Revenue	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ -
School Operating Designated Revenue	\$ 62,326,540	\$ 68,516,128	\$ 6,189,588
Other School Designated Resources	\$ 5,228,004	\$ 4,633,474	\$ (594,530)
Debt Service Designated	\$ 1,613,900	\$ 1,613,900	\$ -
<b>Total Designated Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 89,192,908</b>	<b>\$ 89,612,110</b>	<b>\$ 419,202</b>
Law Library Fund Balance	\$ 2,600	\$ 2,600	\$ -
<b>Total Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$ 2,600</b>	<b>\$ 2,600</b>	<b>\$ -</b>
<b>TOTAL RESOURCES</b>	<b>\$ 209,326,807</b>	<b>\$ 210,986,555</b>	<b>\$ 1,659,748</b>

(1) Real Estate Tax Rate based on \$0.89 per \$100 of Assessed Valuation.  
Personal Property Tax Rate Based on \$2.55 per \$100 Assessed Valuation.  
By Order of the Board of Supervisors:  
Craig Meadows, County Administrator  
County of Montgomery, Virginia

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# MONTGOMERY SPORTS

## Due to COVID-19 precautions, Tech Athletics will not host spring football game

BLACKSBURG – Virginia Tech Director of Athletics Whit Babcock announced on Tuesday that Tech Athletics is not planning to host a traditional spring football game in 2021.

Following the local and state guidelines and in consultation with campus officials, the athletic department said that it would not be able to provide the traditional fan experience, and it would not be in the best interest of the Blacksburg and Virginia Tech communities to hold a spring game in 2021.

Babcock and Tech officials have said they are hopeful that state and local health department restrictions limiting capacities at outdoor sports venues in Virginia will be further eased to allow fans to return to Lane Stadium in greater capacities this fall.

“Regrettably, given the current restrictions in place and out of concern for the health and well-being of our community, our student-athletes and our fans, we have made the decision to not have a spring football game,” Babcock said. “We

realize this is disappointing for many and certainly for our football team, but we believe that it is the proper decision for the Virginia Tech community and the town of Blacksburg.

“Additionally, we did not want to provide our fans with an experience which would be far less than they are accustomed to at Lane Stadium, including no tailgating,” Babcock said. “We certainly hope and expect this fall that they can enjoy our full gameday environment with Hokie Village, the Hokie Walk, the Marching Virginians, the Corps of Cadets, the VT Spirit Squads, tailgating and more.

“The final element of conducting a spring game that proved problematic was determining an equitable way to allocate the very limited amount of tickets we would have been permitted to issue,” the VT Director of Athletics said. “With the limit at 1,000, it would have been limited to guests of student-athletes and would not have provided an opportunity for many fans to come to Lane Stadium anyway. Even if the appropriate officials

and agencies were to move to an increased attendance protocol in the near term, it’s just too soon to jump back into it. I wish we could and we will soon; when it’s appropriate.

“We will be offering our fans enhanced, behind-the-scenes features from spring football practices and our creative team will deliver exclusive interviews and other special features to our donors and fans throughout spring ball,” Babcock said.

“Lane Stadium was not the same without Hokie Nation last year,” said head football coach Justin Fuente. “Our coaches and student-athletes are working hard to be ready for the start of the 2021 season and are excited to have spring practice again. We cannot wait to have our fans jumping in Lane Stadium this fall and I am looking forward to running out of our tunnel with ‘Enter Sandman’ playing. Our entire team is looking forward to seeing and hearing our fans in full force this season.”

Tech Athletics is making enhancements at Lane Stadium in preparation for the 2021 football



season. Those improvements include the installation of over 200 hand sanitizing stations, contactless concession options, and preparations for socially distanced seating (if necessary).

Tech is scheduled to host seven games at Lane Stadium this season, kicking the year off with a conference clash with North Carolina on either Thursday, Sept. 2, or Friday, Sept. 3. The Hokies will begin the season with North Carolina for the first time since 1946. In a se-

ries that dates back to 1895, the Hokies own a 24-13-6 all-time advantage against the Tar Heels. Tech has won its last two home meetings against North Carolina, including the longest game in ACC history, a six-overtime, 43-41 victory in 2019.

Tech and Notre Dame will square off for the fourth time and only the second time at Lane Stadium when the Fighting Irish visit on October 9. Six of Tech’s first seven games in 2021 are at home.

## Radford’s Prioleau headed to VT; Hokies get commits from McDonald twins

**Marty Gordon**  
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

P.J. Prioleau, one of the area’s top high school football players, is tak-

ing his game to the next level.

Earlier this week, the Radford running back announced plans to attend Virginia Tech in the fall.

On Twitter, he said: “Proud to say I will be continuing my academic and athletic career at Virginia Tech.”

As a sophomore, the 5-11, 160-pounder rushed for 1,725 yards on 231 carries with 20 touchdowns and was named the All-county/All-city player of the year and was this year’s pre-season pick for the same honor.

Prioleau follows in the

steps of another former Radford tailback in Tommy Edwards, who played at Tech from 1991-92.

Prioleau also has some familiarity in the Hokie coaching staff as his father Pierson is the director of player development. The elder Prioleau had coached his son for several years as an assistant at Radford and has plenty of experience for him to learn from. Pierson was a three-year starter for Tech before being drafted by the San Francisco 49ers in the 1999 NFL Draft. He spent 12 years in the league, playing in 160 games for five dif-

ferent teams including the New Orleans Saints with whom he earned a Super Bowl Bowl ring in 2009.

Prioleau’s decision came on the same day that two other area athletes signed with the Hokies.

The Hokies added Salem’s Jayden and Jordan McDonald to their 2021 signing class, bringing the number of signees in this group up to 27. The twin brothers are both listed as “athletes,” and the Virginia Tech coaching staff will determine their positions once they arrive on campus in the summer.

Salem High School began its 2021 spring season on Monday, Feb. 22 with a 50-0 win against Blacksburg after not playing football in the fall of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Spartans are currently 4-0 on the season.

The McDonalds are playing for head coach Don Holter at Salem, who finished the 2019 campaign with a 12-2 record that ended in the VHSL Class 4 state semifinals vs. Tuscarora. They were also members of Salem’s 2017 Division 4 Virginia state championship team coached by Holter.



FILE PHOTO

In the middle of his senior football season at Radford High School after suffering a season-ending knee injury two years ago, P.J. Prioleau is taking his game to VT in the fall.

## Tech announces 2021 football ticket options

The Virginia Tech athletics department announced Thursday all expected ticket packages for the 2021 football season ahead of the Hokies’ high-

ly-anticipated 2021 home slate.

In released statements, department staff and personnel have expressed the hope that Hokie Nation

can return to Lane Stadium in 2021 while keeping the health and safety of Hokie student-athletes and fans in mind. In the meantime, athletics department

staff are hard at work as sanitization enhancements in Lane Stadium are ongoing. They include the installation of over 200 hand sanitizing stations, contactless concession options, and preparation for socially distanced seating and lines.

Season tickets are still available and offer the best value when compared to various packages.

Additionally, should capacity restrictions impact the number of fans allowed in Lane Stadium this fall, current season-ticket holders and Hokie Club members will have priority access to tickets ahead of the general public. The best chance to guarantee admission to all seven of Tech’s home games is by purchasing season tickets. They can be secured for as little as 1% down along with a flexible payment plan.

The Hokie Scholarship Fund benefits giving deadline is Wednesday, March 31. This is the deadline for all Hokie Scholarship Fund gifts to be made to receive benefits for the upcoming year.

Due to the continued uncertainty surrounding capacity at Lane Stadium, the ticket packages will not be available for purchase until additional clarity has been provided by government officials, the NCAA, and health organizations. These packages will be made available prior to the sale of single-game tickets, which will be offered first to Hokie Club members before the general public.

Due to anticipated demand, single game tickets to Tech’s matchup with Notre Dame will be extremely limited.

### 540 ZONE SEASON TICKETS

540 Zone season tickets are available exclusively to Tech fans within a 75-mile radius of Blacksburg. This package includes two season tickets to all seven home games for \$540 along with the required per-seat gift to the Hokie Scholarship Fund. Seats will be located in Sections 508-510. A limited number of 540 Zone season tickets will be available, and accounts may purchase no more than six tickets.

### 4-GAME MINI PLAN

This fall’s four-game mini plan includes tickets to Tech’s games against Middle Tennessee, Notre Dame, Syracuse and Duke, all for \$300. Outside of full season tickets, the four-game plan is the only other option to guarantee tickets to the game against Notre Dame. Seat locations will be determined 48 hours prior to kickoff.

### 3-GAME MINI PLAN

The three-game mini plan offers the flexibility of choosing any three of Tech’s home games except Notre Dame for \$180. Seat locations will be determined at the time of purchase.

### FLEX TICKETS

Flex ticket packages include six tickets to be used in any combination for any of the Hokies’ home games this fall except for Notre

Dame for \$360. Additional tickets may be added for \$60 each. Fans who purchase a flex ticket package will be sent digital vouchers to redeem prior to the day of the game.

### FAN 4-PACKS

This package includes four tickets to one game and is available only for Tech’s games with Richmond (\$120) and Syracuse (\$220). Limited quantities and locations will be made available.

### RECENT GRADUATE PROGRAM

An exclusive package for recent graduates of Virginia Tech who are Hokie Club members, this mini-plan includes tickets for the Hokies’ home matchups against Pitt and Duke. Details on seat locations and pricing will be released at a later date.

### STUDENT SEASON TICKETS

Information on Virginia Tech student season tickets for the 2021-22 academic year will be released sometime this spring.

### 2021 SCHEDULE

Virginia Tech will host seven games at Lane Stadium this season, kicking the year off with a conference clash with North Carolina on either Thursday, Sept. 2, or Friday, Sept. 3. In addition to ACC home games with Pitt (Oct. 16), Syracuse (Oct. 23) and Duke (Nov. 13), the Hokies will also host Notre Dame (Oct. 9), Middle Tennessee State (Sept. 11) and Richmond (Sept. 25).

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# Rochard, Brown guide No. 19/16 Hokies past UVA, 7-0

BLACKSBURG – Facing its in-state rival at home on Wednesday in the Commonwealth Clash, No. 19/16 Virginia Tech softball came away with a 7-0 victory over Virginia at Tech Softball Park thanks to a one-hit, complete-game shutout by pitcher Keely Rochard.

Rochard (12-1, 0.88 ERA) was lights out once again, rolling up nine strikeouts in 7.0 innings of work against the Cavaliers (8-16, 4-13 ACC), who lost their 11th straight game to the Hokies (16-4, 10-4).

The righty had a no-hitter with one out left in the bottom of the seventh, but a slow-roller to second base was beaten out by UVA's Abby Weaver to end the no-hit bid. Rochard, who was named NFCA and ACC Pitcher of the Week earlier this week, has now tossed four consecutive one-hitters.

At the plate, left fielder Kelsey Brown (.421 BA, 11 SBs) had her A-game, racking up a game-high three hits on the day and posting an RBI as well. Fellow outfielder Emma Ritter (.306 BA, 9 SBs) also had a multi-hit day herself, turning in two hits, a grounder to third base she beat out and a liner to right center.

### QUOTING TECH PITCHER KEELY ROCHARD

On what's been working for her so well as of late:

"Really, everything. Everything is really working pretty well recently. The rise (ball) is just working better this past week. And then my defense behind me has been really good, too."

### QUOTING TECH OUTFIELDER KELSEY BROWN

On what has made the team so successful this year:

"I think the culture has been really good. We have

a great group and everyone really gets along. We know how to hit and play defense, and we pitch well. Our coaches are great, too. I feel like we respect the game. And because of that, the game respects us and we do well."

### HOW IT HAPPENED

Rochard went to work in the first inning, getting the Wahos three up, three down. She induced a grounder to third the first at-bat, then got consecutive swinging strikeouts.

A quiet two innings at the plate then happened for Tech, but the Hokies woke up after that by scoring in four straight innings. Brown opened the door in the bottom of the third, with a single up the middle to plate Ritter with the game's first run.

Designated player Grace Chavez followed in the next frame with a solo home run to straightaway center. Then Michigan transfer Morgan Overaitis lifted a sacrifice fly to right, scoring pinch runner Maija Louko to make it 3-0 after four innings.

Chavez got another RBI in the fifth with a sac fly to right to score pinch runner Maddy Federico. Then the biggest scoring inning of the day came in the bottom of the sixth when Overaitis hit a blast to right center for a solo home run, catcher Mackenzie Lawter doubled to left center, scoring Ritter, and center fielder Darby Trull reached first on an error by the second baseman, allowing Lawter to cross home with the game's final run.

Two flyouts to the outfield began the bottom of the seventh, then on a 1-2 count, Weaver hit a little ground ball just by Rochard towards second and Overaitis made a great play to run in, scoop it and throw it across her body to first base, but



Keely Rochard (left) threw a one-hit shutout, and left fielder Kelsey Brown had three hits to lead the Hokies to a 7-0 defeat of Virginia Wednesday.

Weaver beat it out to ruin the no-hitter.

### NOTES

With her nine strikeouts on the day, Rochard is now just 26 strikeouts away from passing Jasmin Harrell (2010-13) for the fifth-most in school history. Harrell racked up 588.

Brown, who transferred from James Madison University and is

in her second season in Blacksburg, posted her second three-hit game of the season (Feb. 19, Clemson) and the fifth of her career. The Haymarket, Va., native is tied with sophomore Jayme Bailey for the team lead in hits this season with 24.

Third baseman Kelsey Bennett hit her first triple of the season and the fifth

of her career, a liner down the right-field line. The Georgia native is slugging at a team-high .846 clip, which ranks fourth in the ACC.

Tech coach Pete D'Amour improved to 7-0 against UVA. The Hokies have outscored the Cavaliers 37-0 during D'Amour's tenure and lead the all-time series 47-22.

### CROSSWORD ANSWERS

S	A	G	S	A	T	D	A	I					
S	L	U	B	N	A	S	A	C	A	B	S		
E	C	R	U	E	K	I	N	G	O	S	L	O	
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C	E	A	U	E	M	U							
C	E	O	R	L	E	U	L	E	R				
H	U	D	S	A	M	A	S	R	A	R	E	R	
E	R	E	A	A	R	I	D	A					
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M	I	C	H	E	L	L	E	O	B	A	M	A	
S	O	A	K	B	A	I	R	N	D	A	B	A	
E	L	M	S	A	C	R	I	S	S	C	A	B	
A	L	B				E	E	C			E	S	C

# Blacksburg dominates cross-country meet

Blacksburg High School is taking advantage of the shortened cross-country season and is running away from the competition. Wednesday Blacksburg racked up victories against Christiansburg and other River Ridge District schools.

Blacksburg scored 15 points to claim the girls' 5,000-meters on their home course.

The Bruins also took the boys' competition 36-20 over second-place Christiansburg.

Blacksburg took the top five spots in the girls' event as Audrey Link scored the win followed by Annika Griggs, Mia Jones, Mari Garza and Mary Finch. Christiansburg's McKenna Spaulding was sixth.

Landon Dinkel led a Blacksburg contingent that finished one-two-three in the boys' event. Teammates Jonathan Gorerlich and Connor Rutherford were second and third. Christiansburg's Lawson Mecom finished fourth.

Send community news and photos to [communitynews@ourvalley.org](mailto:communitynews@ourvalley.org)



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