



Radford ranked ninth-best place to raise a family in Virginia



Radford has been ranked the ninth-best place to raise a family in Virginia for 2021 by HomeSnacks.com. According to the website, “To narrow down the most fam-

ily friendly cities in Virginia, [HomeSnacks.com] looked at several factors: crime, education, family friendly activities, and percent of households that currently have chil-

dren. The cities also had to have a population of at least 12,000.” Radford’s data show that the city has a lower cost of living and lower crime rates than the national average.

Health district now offering online self-scheduling for vaccine appointments

The New River Health District (NRHD) now offers an online self-scheduling tool to enable those who live and work in the New River Valley to make their appointment to receive a vaccine.

To make an appointment, visit Get an Appointment Now (www.nrvroadtowellness.com/get-an-appointment-now) or call the Vaccine Scheduling Center at 540-838-8222.

“Adding another method to get an appointment helps us vaccinate more people as quickly as possible,” said Noelle Bissell, the district director. “These different options give us flexibility to adapt

to changes in vaccine supply and make sure we can use all of the doses and volunteers we have as efficiently as possible.” The New River Health District includes Montgomery, Giles, Floyd, and Pulaski counties and the City of Radford.

In addition to the online self-scheduling, individuals also may continue to seek vaccine appointments by calling the Vaccine Scheduling Center at 540-838-8222. The center is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and is closed on Sundays. Individuals may also pre-register

any time by visiting www.vaccinate.virginia.gov and providing contact information to receive a return phone call, text, or email to schedule a future vaccine appointment.

“We are still requiring appointments to receive the vaccine for anyone under 65,” said Bissell. “If you are over 65, you may walk in to any of our vaccine clinics with an ID and get your COVID-19 vaccine.”

For information on upcoming vaccination clinics, check www.nrvroadtowellness.com.

For general COVID-19 questions, call 540-267-8240.

Students from RU’s Department of Design show off latest designs in fashion show

Students in Radford University’s Department of Design are letting the world see their latest fashion creations in a virtual spring fashion show.

The fashion show is normally held as a live event on campus but is premiering online this spring as a virtual event. The show was directed by Assistant Professor Rebecca Dias, who oversees graduating seniors as they piece together their final fashion design ensembles at Radford University.

Dias said that she received help from fellow Assistant Professor Dr. Bruce Parsons, who produced and edited the show. A virtual show was initially created for fall 2020’s “Fashion Fete” event; however, as ongoing pandemic protocols continue to limit the size of crowds, the fashion design faculty decided to showcase this event as a virtual show, too, with hopes of returning to live fashion shows in the fall of 2021.

Dias said that the students have done great work and should be proud of their accomplishments. While audiences will watch the unveiling of the collection over the course of only a few minutes, students have been working to conceptualize and create their ensembles for nearly eight months. Students not only design their own garments around a theme of their choice, but they also participate in designing the fashion show itself, including styling the ensembles, selecting locations to shoot, and making other decisions related to the visual presentation of materials.

Senior design student Morgan Gray will unveil her collection called “Hands Off,” which deals with themes of sexual assault. “I’m super-proud of my work. It came out exactly how I wanted it to. I’ve only been sewing for three years, so it was a challenge. I’m proud that I



Senior design major Morgan Gray presents garments from her “Hands Off” collection, which is featured in the Radford University Department of Design’s 2021 spring fashion show.

could pull this off,” said Gray. Gray has also gained a lot of experience using a laser cutter to create components for several of the garments in her collection. She said that she fell into design somewhat haphazardly, but is glad that she ultimately became a fashion design major. She recalls taking an interest in making clothing as far back as when she was 10 years old.

“The first time I wanted to sew was when I watched Adventure Time and I wanted to make Finn’s hat,” she said. She decided to attend Radford University to pursue a business degree, but when she arrived on campus and found out about the fashion design program, she decided to try it out and ended up declaring it as a major.

Fellow senior design major Eleni Tufa will also be debuting her collection titled “Ayne Bego,” which translates to “beautiful eyes” in the Ethiopian language of Amharic. Originally from Ethiopia, Tufa says that she was disappointed that there could not be a

live fashion event, but is excited to be realizing her lifelong dream of being a fashion designer.

“Since I was a child, I would want to take clothes and cut them up and refashion them into new garments,” says Tufa. She began taking fashion design classes when she moved to Texas from Ethiopia during high school. Her experience cemented her passion for the field, and she later chose Radford University specifically for its fashion program. The Department of Design’s small class sizes were advantageous for overcoming communication barriers as she was able to spend more time working directly with her professors.

Tufa’s collection of ensembles takes traditional Ethiopian formal attire and gives it a more modernized look. She says that many formal occasions in Ethiopian culture call for white attire. Her designs introduce colors and patterns to those types of garments. Her goal was to represent her culture while offering something that is different with a more modern style.

Christiansburg PD: Two recent officer impersonation cases were fabrications

In a statement released on Tuesday, April 13, the Christiansburg Police Department reported they have had four calls of motorists being stopped in Christiansburg by someone impersonating a police officer, the last two of which investigation has revealed to be unfounded in that the reported incidents never occurred.

One case involved a juvenile who reported having been stopped in front of a local business. According to the Christiansburg Police Department, surveillance video captured from a nearby security camera confirmed that while the complainant did pass by the location at the reported time, the driver was never stopped, and no other cars passed by the location for several minutes after the complainant.

Because the case involved a juvenile, the police statement said, criminal charges will not be filed and further details about the final case disposition will not be released.

The most recent case reported was also cleared as unfounded, according to the police department, after the complaining witness confessed to detectives that the story was fabricated and that the incident never occurred. That motorist is an adult and has been charged with filing a false police report. Again, further details about motive or intentions will not be released at this time, the statement said, since the criminal case is still pending.

“We are aware that there is a tremendous amount of public concern about these cases and are also aware that there has been considerable social media interest in these cases,” said the department’s statement.

“We want to assure the

community that the Christiansburg Police Department takes these matters very seriously,” the police department said. “Ensuring the safety of the citizens in our community is always our first priority. Our criminal investigations division has devoted countless hours to investigating these cases. Detectives and patrol officers have also spent a great deal of time conducting focused patrol operations, both high-visibility marked patrols and undercover operations. We will continue to devote all available resources to both solving these cases and to ensuring the safety of our community.

“Additionally, the Virginia State Police recently cleared a similar case in Botetourt County that involved a similar vehicle description as that given in some of our local cases. As reported by the news media, the motorist in that case also confessed to fabricating the story.

“An unfortunate side effect to reports of this nature is that they tend to encourage copycat reports,” the police department’s statement said. “These false reports divert time and resources away from actual cases and can delay response to legitimate calls for service. However, the fact that some of these reports have been false does not change the fact that we continue to devote extensive investigative and patrol resources to the unsolved cases and will continue to do so in an effort to ensure that motorists are safe on the highways and streets in Christiansburg.

“We very strongly encourage citizens to report any criminal behavior, suspicious activity or threats to public safety they are aware of to our department.”

Literacy Volunteers of the NRV presents Word Game Weekend April 23-25 to help local adults learn to read



Game on. Choose a word game, challenge friends and family, and have fun raising funds to help local adults learn to read.

Literacy Volunteers of the New River Valley will host the Word Game Weekend Extravaganza April 23 (World Book Day) through April 25 in support of adult literacy.

Participants can play from their homes as they challenge friends or family members to play word games of choice -- at home or online -- and receive a “Words Change Worlds” T-shirt.

“Everyone’s a winner be-

cause donations help local adults learn to read,” said Linda Jilk, Literacy Volunteers’ executive director.

All competitors will be entered into a drawing to win prizes donated by Oriental Trading Company, Cracker Barrel, the Virginia Museum of Transportation, Texas Roadhouse, and local artist Karen Holbert.

Individuals of all ages are invited to pay \$20 to play and receive a T-shirt. Literacy supporters who want

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, April 17:

Radford Farmers Market opening

The Radford Farmers Market will be held each Saturday from April 17 through October 30 from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. in the New River Valley Community Services parking lot (the Old Wade's parking lot) on West Main Street.

Teen Dungeons and Dragons

At the Montgomery Floyd Regional Library online from 2:00 p.m. until 4 p.m. DnD is now virtual on Discord. The staff suggests downloading Discord on your device for ease of access, but this is not required. Join the Discord server, contact shodges@mfrl.org for more info. Ages 11 years and up.

Prices Fork Elementary, Kiwanis Brunswick stew fundraiser

Prices Fork Elementary School and the Kiwanis Club of Montgomery County-Blacksburg are resuming their annual Brunswick stew fundraiser between noon and 2 p.m. at the new North Star Church, 3929 Prices Fork Road. Pre-orders are strongly encouraged at 540-951-5834 or PFESPTA@GMAIL.COM).

This will be a drive-through pickup. Stew costs \$10 per quart or \$9 per quart with the purchase of five quarts or more with payment by cash or check payable to PFESPTA. John Drew Clary will be mixing his famous recipe again. The Kiwanis Club stocks a Pre-K food pantry at Prices Fork Elementary every month by purchasing food from Feeding America Southwest. Kiwanis has also donated to the school's young children's playground.

Women's Mountain Bike

Clinic

Sponsored by Blacksburg Parks and Recreation from 2:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. Proper braking, cornering, and climbing techniques, and how to repair a flat tire are among the topics that will be taught. The ride will be on the Poverty Creek Trail system and, depending on the group, the specific trails may vary. Participants will meet at the Pandapas Pond upper parking lot. For ages 11 and up. The cost is \$20 for residents and \$30 for non-residents.

Saturday, April 17 - Sunday, April 18:

Cadets to march, fire cannon

The VT Corps of Cadets will take a 13-mile march on the Huckleberry Trail from 7:30 a.m. until 8:30 a.m. today. The cadets will be using the trail between the library and Heritage Park. They will follow COVID-19 safety protocols. At the conclusion of the march, Skipper, the VT Corps' cannon, will be fired three times between 2 and 3:30 p.m. from Lane Stadium. The actual time will depend on how long the march takes subject to weather and road conditions. Skipper will also be fired up to 10 times during a training event from 11:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, April 18, at Smithfield Plantation.

2021 Virtual Run in Remembrance

Virginia Tech's 3.2-Mile Run in Remembrance will be offered as a virtual event this year. The university is inviting Hokies across the country and around the world to run, walk or jog on their own and post a picture online using #VT32Run. The decision to not hold an on-campus event for the second year in a row was made to encourage proper distancing and

adherence to state and local public health guidelines related to COVID-19. The virtual Run in Remembrance will be hosted as the Virginia Tech community reflects on the vibrant lives of the 32 students and faculty who were tragically taken from us on April 16, 2007. Registration for the 3.2 for 32 Run in Remembrance is now open. Visit the Rec Sports website for more information. The virtual event features a printable bib and the option to join the Stridekick App's virtual group journey to log participation with other Hokies. This year's event provides the opportunity to purchase a commemorative 2021 Virtual Run in Remembrance t-shirt (at cost) with shipping or local resident in-person pickup options. Register and purchase t-shirts at the VT student affairs website.

Sunday, April 18:

Kayaking skills course: Introduction to whitewater kayaking

From 10 a.m. until noon at the Blacksburg Aquatic Center. Ages 11 and up. Cost is \$20 for residents and \$30 for non-residents. Learn the fundamentals of the roll, bracing, and edge control from experienced staff in an indoor pool. Necessary equipment is provided. Personal equipment is welcome.

Tuesday, April 20:

Radford City School Board meeting

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

Wednesday, April 21:

Art Club: Virtual Meeting

At the Christiansburg Library from 2 p.m. until 3 p.m.

Saturday, April 24:

Family Game Night

Montgomery Floyd Regional Library online. Jackbox party night games will be played in a family-friendly setting. Email shodges@mfrl.org for more information.

Tuesday, April 27:

Radford Zooms with Ron Peterson Jr.

The Radford Public Library hosts Ron Peterson, Jr. for a Radford Reads author talk. He will be discussing a person of local interest from his new book, "Chasing the Squirrel: The Pursuit of Notorious Drug Smuggler Wally Thrasher." Thrasher grew up in Pulaski County.

The library will also present a Meet-the-Author book discussion on Zoom at 6:30 p.m. on May 4.

Chocolate Cheesecake Virtual Cooking With Your Instant Pot

At the Meadowbrook Public Library; at 5:30 p.m. Join Angie Helm for virtual Instant Pot cooking lessons. Learn how to make chocolate cheesecake using an instant pot to create a quick dessert. Visit the YouTube channel at the Montgomery Floyd Regional Library.

Wednesday, April 28, May 12, May 26

Hahn Horticulture Garden Virtual Road Trip

This five-stop virtual tour of gardens and arboreta from

across the country continues on April 28 at 4/28 at 3:30 p.m. with the Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden with VT alumnus Brian Trader. On May 12 at 2 p.m., the tour presents the Wisconsin Arboretum with VT alumnus David Stevens. The tour then concludes on May 26 at 2 p.m. at Lotusland with Paul Mills and Rebecca Anderson. Register online for these talks and a zoom link will be provided: https://virginiatech.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cumxRA4Mec96guy. A recording of the past visit to the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden is available at <https://youtu.be/HT84NkyzHKc>

Ongoing 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.

Throughout April:

Grab-and-Go Crafts

All the month of April at the Meadowbrook Public Library. Call the library to request take-and-make craft kits. They are available for grab-and-go with curbside pickup. They are free but supplies are limited.

StoryWalk

All the month of April, at the Christiansburg Library. Exercise your brain and body as you read and walk the trail. Begin at the library at the College Street entrance of Downtown Park. This month's book is "Move!"

100+ Women Who Care donate \$10,600 to Inmate Family Assistance of the NRV



100+ Women Who Care NRV members (left to right) Sarah Black and her three children, Emily, Elizabeth and Ethan; Debbie Sherman-Lee; Deanna Cox; Alexa Casey; and Connie Froggatt gather with a mockup of their check for \$10,600 to the Inmate Family Assistance of the NRV.

created to help ease the burden on the families of inmates at the Montgomery County Jail. Inmates may use funds for telephone calls, postage, stationery, hygiene items, and extra food.

Deanna Cox, a Women Who Care member and Director of NRV's Inmate Family Assistance, talked to the club on the needs of families who have a loved one incarcerated and are struggling financially. She described how important it is for both the inmate and the family to maintain contact during incarceration and how expensive it can be.

The innate family assistance nonprofit contributes \$40 per month to eligible inmates' accounts on behalf of their family. In statements of thanks, one inmate said, "I've been able to communicate twice with the [social services] case-worker by phone to hear how my daughter is doing." Another inmate described how he used the funds to purchase hygiene items and food and added, "I was able to call my daughter and my

grandson and that meant the world to me. Thank you from the bottom of my heart."

The gift from the 100+ WWC NRV will ensure IFA of the NRV is able to continue to assist the families of inmates at the Montgomery County Jail for another year and also provides the potential for expanding the program to other correctional facilities in the New River Valley.

The 100+ Women Who Care NRV meets quarterly on the third Tuesday of January, April, July and October via Zoom due to the pandemic. All interested women are invited to join the group to support local not-for-profits that make the New River Valley a better place to live.

The group's membership area includes the counties of Montgomery, Giles, Pulaski, and Floyd and the City of Radford. For more information, visit www.100womenwhocarenrv.com or email nrv100www@gmail.com. Their next meeting will be Tuesday, April 20, 2021 at 6:15pm.



BUS OPERATOR OPEN INTERVIEWS

April 19 (9 am - 12 pm) & April 22 (4 - 7 pm)
Blacksburg Transit Office at
2800 Commerce St, Blacksburg

No experience required,
paid training included!

Learn more at
ridebt.org/interview.





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NRCC fall registration open; summer registration continues

Registration for the fall 2021 semester at New River Community College is now open to new and returning students and registration for the summer semester is continuing.

NRCC plans to offer more traditional in-person course offerings in the fall than have been possible recently with hybrid and online courses. The full fall schedule is available at www.nr.edu/schedule/.

The fall 2021 semester includes courses in more than 90 degree, diploma and certificate programs, as well as

short-term workforce development offerings. The traditional 14-week fall semester begins August 23.

NRCC will also offer 10-week and seven-week sessions this fall. The 10-week session begins September 22. The first seven-week session begins August 23, and the second seven-week session begins October 12.

Students who need financial assistance to help cover the cost of tuition have many options, including new G3 and Re-Employing Virginians (REV) funding for certain programs. REV funds are

available to qualifying Virginia residents who have lost their full- or part-time job due to COVID-19 and who filed a claim for unemployment benefits on or after Aug. 1, 2020.

The G3 program is a tuition assistance program for Virginia residents who qualify for in-state tuition and whose family income falls below an identified threshold and who enroll in designated programs leading to jobs in high-demand fields. Specific information about these funding options can be found at www.nr.edu/g3 and www.nr.edu/rev.

nr.edu/rev.

Information for new students is available at www.nr.edu/admissions/register.php or may be obtained by contacting the NRCC Advising Center at (540) 674-3609 or advising@nr.edu.

Summer 2021 class registration is also open to those who need to catch up on class or who want to plan to get ahead in their program of study, or for those students who want to take classes that can transfer to their four-year college or university in the fall. More than 170 classes are scheduled at NRCC this summer including transfer classes in art, biology, chemistry, economics, english, history, math, music, psychology, and religion.

The full summer schedule can be found at www.nr.edu/schedule/. The 10-week summer session and the first five-week summer session begin May 20, and the second five-week session begins June 25.

Short-term workforce development offerings have varying start dates in the summer and fall.

Specific information about these offerings is available at www.nr.edu/fastforward/.

Virginia Tech students answer the call at COVID-19 helpline

Questions surrounding the pandemic are seemingly endless, and Virginia Tech students are providing some answers through the university's COVID-19 helpline.

Every day, six to eight students gather in a cluster of offices tucked behind Lane Stadium to field questions by phone from the community about COVID-19. Since Sept. 2, they've answered more than 4,500 calls.

"The helpline allows the community to feel confident about what Virginia Tech is doing to fight this virus," said helpline worker and Virginia Tech student Alexa Williams. "Getting to be part of such a diverse network is a big testament to how the university quickly mobilized to best care for their students and faculty. The pandemic put me out of work from my other job back in the spring, and I've had a few COVID-19 scares myself. I wanted to help students facing the same complications."

In the fall, Virginia Tech identified the need for a service through which community members could find the answers to all COVID-19 related questions in one place. University leaders realized that it would be much more effective for people to speak with an actual person, rather than typing a question into Google.

Susan Gill, who is director of new media for Virginia Tech University Relations, saw an opportunity to lend her expertise and experience communicating through social media and jumped into action.

"I got together with four colleagues to figure out how we could stand



Anne Scyrkels, a Virginia Tech student, is a member of the university's COVID-19 helpline team. Photo by Lee Friesland.

this thing up," said Gill. "It was an opportunity to make sure our messaging everywhere was consistent. Even the people who have the best intentions need some more education sometimes. Education needs to happen, and that's what the call center is for."

The call center launched in August. It started off with employee volunteers who would simultaneously answer the phones while working their full-time positions.

However, over winter break, Gill noticed that students could provide an even more suitable voice while answering questions as they were experiencing many of the same uncertainties as the callers, so she asked students studying public health to help. Forty-five students joined the team in January. Now, up to eight students work the helpline per day, answering calls from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. throughout the week and from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on weekends.

"I think it really helps students to hear from other students," said Gill. "They have a different mindset than I have. I don't have a college-aged child, but I am a mother, so I feel like I can really be helpful to the parents."

I can speak to parents as a peer. Our students have that same experience with their own peers. They have the best authority when it comes to addressing the student experience."

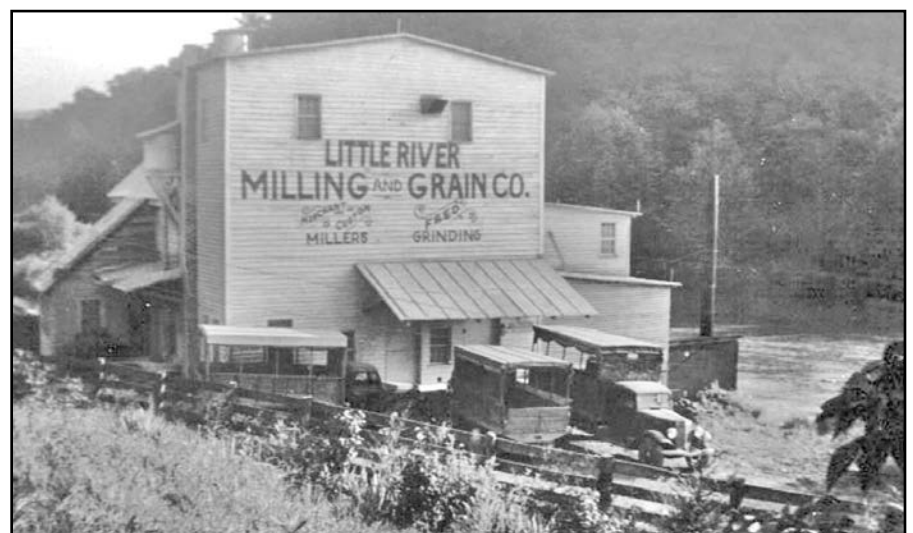
"In the future, I would like to work in an advocacy position working on public health policy or in a clinical setting working in women's or children's health," said Niema Smith, a second-year student at Virginia Tech who is interested in going into the public health advocacy field. "Working at the helpline is a great way for me to practice my etiquette and educating others on the latest public health topics while keeping that information easily digestible."

The students end up answering questions on a very broad spectrum, from how testing works to the length of time for quarantine. Compassion has proved to be the number one asset the students can offer to callers.

"It comes down to being supportive, empathetic, and available," said Gill. "That's all people really want right now, and our students are providing that."

By Rosie Hutchison '21, intern with Virginia Tech University Relations.

Historic Montgomery



Little River Milling and Grain Company, owned by Carson Thompson, was located at Graysontown near where Route 613 crosses Little River into Pulaski County. Dating to the early twentieth century, this mill was similar to the many mills that served community farmers throughout Montgomery County by grinding cornmeal, wheat flour, and livestock feed.

Virginia Department of Transportation road watch

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

MONTGOMERY COUNTY ROUTE 11 BRIDGE

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

limiting each direction to a single lane. The expected completion date is November 2021.

ROUTE 636 BRIDGE REPLACEMENT AT SENECA HOLLOW - Work has begun replacing the bridge on Route 636 over the Roanoke River at Seneca Hollow. A detour is in place. The detour will restrict access to Route 460 at Seneca Hollow and will require travelers to enter/exit Route 460 at Friendship Road near Wheeling Hollow. The project is expected to be completed in late June 2021.

ONLINE ONLY AUCTION

**Ends Thursday April 29th at 4 PM
Ranch Style Home for Sale in Christiansburg VA!
404 Miller St Christiansburg VA 24073**



Bid Online Now at VAAuctionPro.com

Well maintained brick ranch featuring a 1,572 sq. ft. home with a 900 sq. ft. unfinished basement. The home has 3 nice sized bedrooms and 2 full baths. The home would be perfect for a young couple starting out or someone seeking a one level home in town. Has hardwood flooring, ceramic tile in baths. The bedrooms and front room have carpeting. The large family room features a gas fireplace. Town water and sewer. Large backyard with 2 storage buildings.

This property consists of 2 tax parcels which total .41 acre. A lot line revision may be possible and allow for another house site.

Preview Dates - Thursday April 22nd @ 5 PM

General Terms and Conditions - 10% Buyer's Premium, \$2,500 Earnest Money Deposit, Closing in 45 Days. Subject to seller confirmation. Property sold as is where is any and all faults. Buyer is expected to complete their own due diligence. Auction starts ending at 4 PM on April 29th, 2021. Please note that during the last two minutes of bidding, if a new bid is placed, the clock is automatically extended an additional two minutes. Auction ends once bidding ends. Download Bidder Information Pack for complete terms and conditions, purchase contract and maps.

Contact - Broker & Auctioneer Matt Gallimore at 540-239-2585 or email gallimore.matt@gmail.com

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LEGAL NOTICE

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Return of Business Personal Property Due by May 1st, 2021

The Return of Business Personal Property form is due by **May 1st 2021**. You must file or request an extension by this date to avoid a penalty of 5% or \$10 whichever is greater.

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

Business Personal Property Department

businesspp@montgomerycountyva.gov

540-382-5710 and ask for Business Personal Property

755 Roanoke St. Suite 1A

Christiansburg, VA 24073

For online information and forms please go to montva.com click on Elected Officials, Commissioner of the Revenue, Business Personal Property.

OPINION

I share office space with a thing that sits and plans destruction

I have a problem. Gee, isn't that earthshaking news.

I am an analog guy in a digital world.

The world today often confuses me, leaving me wondering "What just happened?"

Nothing makes me ask that question with more frequency than does that godson of Hitler that sits in the cubicle where I work from home. I'm talking, of course, about my computer.

It wasn't really manufactured overseas or somewhere like that by nerds, geeks, or any other allegedly hard-working folks in some assembly-line plant using the latest technological advancements. That's just a myth Silicon Valley concocted to keep us from discovering the cold, hard truth.

And what's the truth? My computer and others just like it were spawned in Hell. And -- trust me on this -- it knows.

It knows exactly when it can inflict the most damage, erase the most files, destroy forever my most creative, soaring work, that which will surely land me a Pulitzer Prize or at least a letter from a miffed Messenger reader.

It waits, carefully plotting its sabotage under the pretense of being helpful and efficient. (If my computer will allow it, I'm going to share one of my favorite etymological tidbits.) "Sabots" are those wooden shoes the Dutch wear a lot of. I have a pair in the house here, if you'd like to see them. Sabotage weren't worn indoors, and they weren't worn as the main footwear. The place where I picked up those sabots was actually below sea level. It was rather disconcerting to look around at the dikes the Dutch had built to contain the water that actually sat at head level, not sea level. Thus, it got pretty damp around there. You couldn't drive into the village. You had to stop and park your car and hike in. The villagers kept the sabots by their front doors to wear over their regular shoes when they left the house.

Here's the story. When the unrest of the Industrial Revolution hit the Netherlands, workers struck a blow against management by tossing their sabots into the machinery, which, as you can imagine,

really gummed up the works. Hence, "sabotage." (This has nothing to do with anything else, but it's perfectly harmless, rather useless information that at least for a moment got my mind off that malevolent terrorist on my desk that's lurking and plotting.)

Anyway, back to the point at hand. One of William Faulkner's characters remarks that mankind isn't really evil; he just doesn't have much sense. Speaking from extremely personal experience, I can't say the same thing about computers.

The series of Terminator movies had it right as far as I'm concerned. It isn't blundering, doltish mankind that will do itself in; it will be the machines. They're smarter than we are to begin with because they lack, glands, hormones and the ability to be distracted by a computer of the opposite sex (or gender if you will).

And much like teenagers who want the car keys or money, they're relentless. They won't quit until they've destroyed all our sanity, our equilibrium, our ability to

function, and our religion. In that respect, they're much like golf.

I am hereby issuing a call to revert to more primitive machines before it's too late. At least they're not planning to render us irrelevant.

I learned to type (with one finger) on an old Underwood rescued from my grandfather's attic. I practically had to ball my fists to press the keys, and the impression from the cloth ribbon was often smudged. But it did exactly what I told it to, and when I rolled that sheet of paper out, I held something I had created. As opposed to a fancy-smancy printer that belches forth whatever it wants to.

I have mentioned in the past that the late Lewis Grizzard was the greatest Southern comic in history. He went to his grave never having used even an electric typewriter. But, Lord, that man could write. Is there a lesson there for the rest of us?

I think I started losing my way about the same time Billy Crystal was in City Slickers trying to figure out how to pro-

gram a VCR. I never did figure it out, and it's been downhill ever since. I don't even trust my remote. Too many buttons to press. Who in the heck can keep up with all of them?

Anyway, I ---- Uh, oh. My computer just blinked, the screen went blank, and my printer started buzzing and whirring, and I'm not responsible for any of that. Could it be? It is ready to launch a computer-driven move for world domination?

Oh, no. It's got me. The mouse just shocked me so badly that ARGHHHHHH-HHHH!

Just kidding.

But I'd keep the lights on if I were you. Computers like the dark.

The author is a man of a certain age who isn't ashamed to admit or to accept the fact that the world has simply passed him by and his time has come and gone. Unlike his wife, who is a full-fledged techno-whiz. She's part of another generation, which explains it. This is her time, not the author's.

Submit letters to the editor to editor@ourvalley.org

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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Montgomery County public schools receive grant for career, tech education programs

The Montgomery County Public Schools are among 16 high schools and technical centers across the commonwealth that have been awarded \$37,500 each to upgrade equipment for and make other improvements in their career and technical education programs.

Virginia Superintendent of Public Instruction James Lane announced the awards Thursday.

"With this funding" Lane said, "the commonwealth continues to carry out its commitment to making the critical investments necessary to give students the tools and training they need to be competitive in the 21st-century economy."

The awards, by school division, are as follows:

Alexandria: Governor's Health Sciences Academy at T.C. Williams High (enhanced virtual and augmented reality technology in healthcare)

Buchanan County: Buchanan County Career, Technology, and Higher Learning Center (adult full-body nursing simulator, virtual monitor and medication scanner)

Chesapeake: Chesapeake Middle School (robotic and drone devices)

Cumberland County: Cumberland High (virtual reality equipment, 3D printer, computer numerical control and laser engraver)

Frederick County: James Wood High and Millbrook High (agricultural bovine breeder, injection and milking simulators)

Giles County: Giles County Technical Center (clinical skills manikin, clinical experiences simulator and multi-pad skills trainer)

Hampton: Kecoughtan High (Wi-Fi enabled prototype creator and equipment for augmented reality)

Henrico County: Advanced Career Education Center at Hermitage High (computer numerical control and waterjet training system)

Hopewell: Hopewell High (stereo zoom microscopes, digital evidence kits, forensic laptops and fingerprint scanners)

King William County: King William High (digital single lens reflex camera, large format printer and cold and compression therapy system)

Louisa County: Louisa County High (solar/wind energy training systems)

Montgomery County: Governor's STEM Academy (computer numerical control and hydraulic guillotine master shear)

Nottaway County: Amelia-Nottaway Technical Center (geriatric, adult and pediatric manikins and auscultation trainer)

Richmond County: Governor's STEM Academy at Northern Neck Technical Center (computer numerical control, plasma machine and laser cutter)

Rockbridge County: Rockbridge County High (computer numerical control, multi-process welder, laser engraver and water chiller cutter)

Suffolk: The College and Career Academy at Pruden (dual skin down-draft paint booth).

Radford SO accepting applications for deputy position

The Radford Sheriff's Office is accepting applications for a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) deputy position.

Candidates must be 18 years of age and a high school graduate or possess a GED certificate. Candidates must also have a valid Virginia driver's license or be able to obtain one within thirty days of their appointment.

Preference will be given to individuals that currently hold a Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services Jailer/civil process service/courtroom security certification, a law enforcement certification, and/or certification as a CIT officer.

This is a full-time position that requires the deputy to work rotating day/night shifts. The starting salary is \$35,475 plus benefits. The pay will increase to \$37,001 after the successful completion of a one-year probationary period. Deputies will receive the City of Radford benefits package that includes VRS-LEOS retirement and health insurance.

Applications are available at the City of Radford Administration Building located at 10 Robertson St. in Radford and at the Radford Sheriff's Office at 619 Second St. Suite 8, in Radford.

Anyone with questions concerning this position, contact Major Charlie Burton at 540-731-5501.

Selected applicants must be able to pass a physical agility and aptitude test that will be given on Saturday, May 22, 2021, at 9:00 am. Applicants will receive notification of selection prior to the date of testing.

Applications should be returned to Major Charlie Burton; Radford Sheriff's Office; 619 Second St., Suite 8; Radford, VA 24141.

The application deadline is Monday, May 10, 2021, at 5:00 p.m.

Word Game Weekend

from page 1

to play but don't want a T-shirt are encouraged to participate and make a donation of any amount.

A list of 50 word games ideas will be sent to all registrants. Word games are available for check-out at the Radford Public Library and the Pearisburg Public Library.

Funds raised through the Word Game Weekend Extravaganza will support programs to give adults the language and literacy skills they need for personal independence and family self-sufficiency.

Literacy Volunteers of the New River Valley is a United Way partner agency that provides free instruction in reading, writing, math, basic computer skills, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and assistance preparing for exams such as the GED, the U.S. Citizenship test, and the driver's license exam. Literacy Volunteers also provides family literacy programming to help parents learn to read to their children and support their children's education.

"Adult literacy is more important than ever," said Jilk. "Our New River Valley neighbors need new literacy, language, and

digital skills to understand critical health information, to access community resources, to obtain basic skills or a GED to secure employment, to perform on-line job searches, to help their children with homework, and to participate in this new virtual world."

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), more than 24,000 New River Valley adults read at or below Level 1, which indicates these adults struggle to read brief texts on familiar topics to locate a single piece of information. More than 38,000 local adults have Level 1 basic math skills. These adults struggle with solving a one-step problem involving counting or per cents.

The Word Game Weekend Extravaganza is being held in lieu of the organization's annual spring Scrabble Tournament, a major fundraiser. The Scrabble tournament will be held Thursday, April 28, from 5:30-8:30 p.m. at the German Club of Virginia Tech in Blacksburg.

For more information or to register, visit www.lvnrv.org/gamesforliteracy, email info@lvnrv.org, or call (540) 382-7262.

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CLUES ACROSS

1. Scarlett's home

5. Mideast confection

20. Severe storm sound

23. Arabian ruler (alt. sp.)

24. 1/100 of a yen

25. Office of Public Information

26. Radioactivity unit

29. Symbol for actinium

30. Chinese ethnic group w/ colorful clothes

32. Alias

33. Ralph Waldo ____

37. Tough Asiatic grass

39. Macaws

40. Swiss river

44. Word formed from initial letters

48. Long fluffy scarf

49. Blighia sapida

51. Anno Domini

53. ____ Dhabl, Arabian capital

54. Patti Hearst's captors

55. Cony

57. Divulge a secret

59. One of the finalists

64. Drunk (slang)

65. But goodie

66. Whale ship captain

68. Take the place of work of someone on strike

69. What is required

70. ____ & Stitch

71. Wife of Saturn

72. Brief carefree

shopping

73. Noisy chatter

CLUES DOWN

1. Steeped beverage

2. Pier, side of porch

3. College army

4. Spurious wing

5. Care program for the terminally ill

6. Protects the wearer's body

7. Readily, willingly

8. Measures electric currents

9. Hymns

10. 1929 Nobel literature laureate

11. 23 ____: go away!

12. Upper arm muscles

16. Filippo ____ Saint

21. Doctors' group

22. Freshwater mussel genus

26. A male sheep

27. Yoruba

28. Former VP Quayle

31. Am. Nurses Assoc. (abbr.)

34. ____ Zedong

35. Grey sea eagle

36. Beam out

38. Sci-Fi writer Koke

41. Goat and camel hair fabric

42. Steal

43. Cologne

45. Give over

46. Motives for an action

47. White toy dog

49. Alloy used to make magnets

50. Take a siesta

52. Dekaliter

54. Plants seeds

56. An awkward person (Yiddish)

57. Groom's partner

58. Flat crusty-bottomed onion roll

60. Goblins (Br.)

61. River into The Baltic Sea

62. Islamic sect

63. Baby powder mineral

67. Derek ____ Harvard

Virginia motorists urged to watch out for farm equipment on roads this spring

Planting season is under-way in Virginia, and drivers should use caution when encountering farm equipment on the state's roadways.

"From now until the end of June, farmers will be transporting equipment like tractors and sprayers pretty regularly as they work to get their crops planted," said Dana Fisher, chairman of the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation Farm Safety Advisory Committee. "These vehicles mostly travel on rural roads where space is limited, so it's important for motorists to be careful when sharing the road with these larger pieces of equipment."

Fisher cautioned drivers about hills and blind curves on rural roads that could obscure approaching farm equipment, which typically is slow-moving.

Virginia law requires operators of vehicles that travel

slower than 25 mph to rear-mount triangular slow-moving vehicle signs when the equipment is being driven on public roadways. Many farmers also use flashing amber lights and reflective decals to alert approaching drivers.

"Once you see that SMV sign, just know that you're going to catch up to that vehicle in a hurry," Fisher said. "Understanding that closing speed is key. If you're coming up on a tractor that's going 10 mph and you're going 50 mph, you're going to close that distance fast."

Amelia County famer Jeremy Moyer said motorists should remember that even though farming equipment can be sluggish, their operators have the same road rights as other drivers.

"Just because a car can go faster than a tractor doesn't mean you're allowed to cross double solid lines to pass

them," Moyer said.

Motorists should make sure they're visible at all times, and avoid risky passing maneuvers. Dangerous or illegal passing can cause collisions if an operator of the equipment makes a wide turn or isn't given enough time to brake for slowing traffic ahead.

Moyer noted farmers will yield to faster traffic when possible, and most will try to move their equipment during times that minimize interactions with commuter traffic.

"Our farmers are doing the best they can to stay out of the way, but they've also got to get their crops growing so everyone can eat," Fisher said. "That may mean there's going to be a little bit more slow-moving traffic on the roads this spring. But in the end, waiting behind a tractor for that extra 30 seconds is well worth it to make sure everybody gets home safe."



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

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

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

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

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

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

CHURCH OF CHRIST
Blacksburg Church of Christ, 315 Eakin St., 552-1331. Sun. Bible Classes 9:30 a.m., Sun. Worship 10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m., Wed. Bible classes, 7 p.m., Outreach Minister Curt Seright, Community Minister Tom Gilliam.
Faith Christian Church of Christ, 305 3rd Street, Christiansburg, David Rhudy, Minister, 382-4628, Sunday School 10 am; Worship 11 am; Evening Worship 6:30 pm; Wednesday night Bible Study for Women and Men 6:30 pm. We welcome you to any and all of our services.

CHURCH OF GOD
New Hope Church of God, 1404 Mud Pike Rd., C'Burg. Rev. T. Michael Bond, pastor, 731-3178. Sun. School 10 a.m., Worship 10:50 a.m., 6 p.m. Thurs., 7:00 p.m.
West Radford Church of God, 1824 West Main Street, Radford, VA 24141, Sunday School— 10:00A.M. Morning Worship— 11:00A.M., Children's Church 11:00A.M. Sunday Evening – 6:00P.M., Wednesday Night – 7:00P.M., Pastor Danny Newman, Church Office – 540-639-6562 or 804- 921-0828.

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN
Christiansburg Church of the Brethren, 310 South Franklin Street. Pastor: Paul J. Stover Jr. 540-797-5015. Sunday School 10 a.m.; Morning Worship 11 a.m.; Bible Study 10:30 a.m. Tuesdays. Website: www.christiansburgcob.org. A loving family, fueled by the Holy Spirit, grounded in God's Word, and delivering Jesus forgiveness and love to all people. Come as you are... you are welcomed!

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

Montgomery County

WORSHIP DIRECTORY

Obeying God

Read 1 Kings 4:1 through 6:38

King Solomon was so wise that kings all over the world heard about Him and sent their people to listen to him. Solomon wrote many songs and proverbs. He knew a lot about animals and plants. He also wrote the Book of Ecclesiastes, which teaches us that knowing and pleasing God are more important than being wise.

Solomon decided it was time to build a temple for God. So, four hundred eighty years after the Israelites left Egypt, Solomon began construction on the temple. He finished it just seven years later. It was beautiful—made of stone, carved wood, and a lot of

gold. God made a promise to Solomon:

"If you follow my decrees, observe my laws and keep all my commands and obey them, I will fulfill through you the promise I gave to David your father. And I will live among the Israelites and will not abandon my people Israel" (1 Kings 6:12-13).

God values obedience above all other virtues. That is how we show God we love Him. In return for our obedience, God blesses us and will not forsake us.

Thought for Today: Blessing will come from God when you obey His rules.

Quicklook: 1 Kings 6:11-14

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

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

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

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

PENTECOSTAL HOLINESS
Merrimac Pentecostal Holiness Church, Rev. Richard Hall (540) 552-7194. pastorhall29@gmail.com. Sunday School at 10 a.m. and morning worship is 11 a.m. Evening service at 6 p.m. and Wednesday at 7 p.m.
Radford Worship Center, 1820 Second Street, Radford, 639-6287, Our music is passionate, our worship is real, and Pastor Hal Adams brings relevant messages for everyone at any place on their journey, Sunday Worship Experience at 9:00 AM & 10:45 AM, Wednesday Family Night at 7 PM, Children Ministry provided for all services, join us as Love, Grow, Serve, find us on facebook and Instagram
Walton Pentecostal Holiness Church, 4003 Morning Glory Rd., off Walton Rd. on Rt. 114. 731-1755. Lee Sarver, pastor. Sun. School 9:30 a.m., Worship 10:30 a.m. & 6: p.m., Wed., 7 p.m.

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

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

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

St. Paul United Methodist Church, 220 W. Main St., C'Burg. Rev. 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

OBITUARIES

Sutphin, Carol F.

Carol F. Sutphin, 55, of Christiansburg, was called home by her Heavenly Father on Sunday, April 11, 2021.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Lawrence and Arlie Sutphin, and her older brother, Larry Sutphin.

Carol is survived by her significant other, Dorothy Clements of Christiansburg; a son, Brooks Sutphin of Christiansburg; a stepson, Jason Clements of Roanoke; siblings Debbie Van Dyke of Christiansburg, Sherry Vaughn (Donald) of Inman, S.C., Paul Sutphin (Ron Wight) of Wilmington, N.C., and Daryl Sutphin of Christiansburg; grandchildren Brooklyn Sutphin, Alannah Clements (Jeremiah Roldan) and Sydney Clements; nephews Charles DiRico (Karen) of Charlotte, N.C., Tony Rowland (Ashley) of Inman, S.C., and Cody Vaughn (Claudia) of Boiling Springs, S.C.; niece Lauren Sutphin (Carless Harris) of Christiansburg; great-niece Alexis Rowland; great-nephew Colton Harris; as well as numerous aunts, uncles



and many cousins. Special friends of Carol's family include Leslie and Wayne Hetherington, Brenda Moore and family and a host of other numerous friends and neighborhood friends.

Carol loved her furry companion, Luke. She was a lover of the outdoors and could often be found outside doing yardwork. She loved spending time with her family. She was known for being a hard worker and for the way that she adored her son, Brooks.

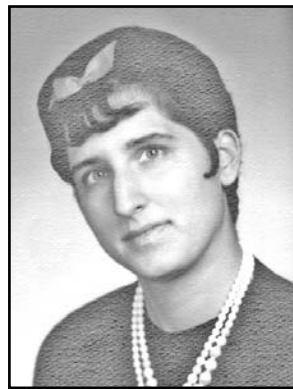
The family will receive friends from 11 a.m. until noon today, April 17, 2021, at Wesley Memorial Church located at 350 Stafford Drive in Christiansburg. A memorial service will directly follow with Pastor Charles DiRico officiating.

The family kindly requests that those in attendance wear a mask/face covering. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to the GoFundMe account established in order to assist with Carol's service expenses. Arrangements with Horne Funeral Home & Crematory.

Jaworski, Debra Ann

Debra Ann Jaworski, 70, of Radford, passed away peacefully in her sleep at Radford Health and Rehabilitation. She was born in Worcester, Mass., and moved to Farmingdale, Long Island, where her father taught high school. She worked various jobs on Long Island and in Florida and retired with her parents to Las Vegas. She moved to Radford in 2015. She loved the fall colors.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Mitchell and Concetta Jaworski.



She is survived by a twin sister, Denise Mathews of Radford, a sister, Roberta D. Lorenzo of Babylon, N.Y., and a brother Mitchell "Jay" Jaworski, of Las Vegas.

A graveside service will be conducted today, April 17, 2021, at 12:30 pm in West View Cemetery in Radford.

Horne Funeral Home in Christiansburg is in charge of the arrangements. Online condolences can be expressed at hornefuneralservice.com.

Sartin, Cynthia Lynn Blackburn

Cynthia Lynn Blackburn Sartin, 67, passed away Thursday, April 8, 2021, at her home in Radford.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Hazzard and Minnie Pearl Blackburn, and her husband, Leroy Wayne Sartin.

Survivors include her sons, Jamie (Shannon) Duncan of Christiansburg, Keith (Vanessa) Duncan of Radford, John Duncan of Radford, and Ron Duncan; 11 grandchildren, two of those being special to her, Hazzard Duncan and Jr. Duncan; eight great-grandchildren; sisters Margaret P. Blackburn of South Carolina and Linda Blackburn of



Toledo, Ohio; a brother, Vernon Blackburn of Radford; and many other relatives and friends.

The family received friends on Sunday, April 11, 2021, at the Mullins Funeral Home in Radford. Memorial services followed with the Rev. Vernon Landreth officiating.

In lieu of flowers, please make contributions to Mullins Funeral Home to help

defer funeral expenses. The Sartin family is in the care of Mullins Funeral Home & Crematory in Radford. Online condolences may be expressed at www.mullinsfuneralhome.com.

Davis, Ione Anna

Ione Anna Davis, 77, passed away on April 7, 2021.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Vance and Ione Leeson; her husband, Phillip Eugene Davis; a daughter, Vance Carolyn Davis; and a sister, Joan Leeson Pearman.

She is survived by her daughter, Jean Lena Davis; and a nephew, John Gilbert Pearman.

Memorial services will be private.

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

Vaughn, Susan Betsy

Susan Betsy Vaughn, 75, formerly of West Bridgewater, Mass.; passed away at Roanoke Memorial Hospital on Saturday, April 10, 2021.

She was preceded in death by her parents, C. Donald and Grace Ross. She retired from LewisGale Hospital Montgomery after a lifelong career as a nurse.

Susan is survived by her loving husband, Posey Franklin (Frank) Vaughn; her children, William A. (Gemma) Skelton IV of Bremerton, Wash., Geoffrey S. Skelton of Floyd, and Melissa A. (Kenneth Ford) Skelton, of Elliston; her step-children, Robin (Robert) Jones, Neal (Tonya) Vaughn, and Joel (Beth) Vaughn; her siblings, Jane (Rodney) Taylor, Kathleen (Cesar) Elias, William (Tom) Everette (Sandra) Vaughn, and Emma Catherine Vaughn Pauley; her grandchild-



dren, Janice (Matt) Benson, John Lontoc, William Skelton V, Jonas (Kylee Kanon) Skelton-Smith, Julivete (Tyler Haas) Skelton, Eli Smith, Zachary Skelton, Geoffrey Skelton Jr, Anthony Caudill, Nikki Jones, Travis (Ashley) Jones, Zachary Ward, Gabbie Vaughn, Alivia Vanover, Wyatt Jones, Payton Jones, and Briar Vaughn; her great-grandchildren, Madden Benson, Troy Benson, Dezmund Benson, and Nicole Jones; along with many other family and friends.

The family wishes to express its gratitude for the prayers, support, and kind words during this difficult time.

A memorial service will be held at a later date.

Susan Vaughn is in the care of Mullins Funeral Home & Crematory in Radford.

Simmers, Sr., Garnett Edwin "Eddie"

Garnett Edwin "Eddie" Simmers, Sr., 71, of Fairlawn, passed away, Thursday, April 8, 2021.

He was preceded in death by his father and mother, Garnett and Clarabell Simmers; his sister, Rebekah Simmers; and his grandson, Garrett Simmers.

He is survived by his wife, Juliana "Julia" Oliver Simmers. He is also survived by his sons and daughters-in-law, Garnett "Eddie" Simmers, Jr., and Mendy, Kelly Simmers and Rachel, and Daryn Simmers and Ashley; four grandchildren, Carter Simmers, Kailee Simmers, Lillian "Lilli" Simmers, and Grant Simmers; his brothers, Benjamin "Benny" Simmers, Sr., and Gary "Steve" Simmers; and a sister Carolyn Glade.

He was a devoted and loving husband, father, grandfather, friend and neighbor. He was a committed member of Morgan's Chapel United Methodist Church and more recently,



Fairlawn Baptist Church, where he enjoyed singing in the choir. Eddie, Sr., believed in sharing the gospel in word and deed, and did so regularly.

He was always willing to help others, especially with home, car and equipment repairs. He enjoyed hunting, fishing and spending time outdoors, most of all at the family hunting cabin with family and friends. He will be greatly missed by many, but in true Simmers fashion, the stories of Eddie, Sr., will live on through those who love him.

Funeral services will be conducted Saturday, April 17, 2021, at 2 p.m. in the Fairlawn Baptist Church. Entombment will follow in the Highland Memory Gardens. The family will receive friends from 1-2 p.m. prior to the service at the church.

Arrangements by McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg.



Marketplace

[ourvalley.org](http://www.ourvalley.org)

The Fincastle Herald

The Vinton Messenger

The New Castle Record

Salem Times-Register

News Messenger

Radford News Journal

For Rent - Apartments

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



For Sale - Misc

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

Help Wanted - General

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

Legals - Montgomery County

ABC NOTICE
Los Amigos, Inc., trading as Amigos, 3631 Radford Rd, Christiansburg, Montgomery County, Virginia 24073-6147.

The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) AUTHORITY for a Wine and Beer On Premises license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages.

Sixto Perez-Lopez, President

NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

Legals - Montgomery County

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING TOWN OF CHRISTIANSBURG PROPOSED WATER FEE INCREASES

A public hearing will be held on Tuesday, May 11, 2021 at 7 pm in the Council Chamber Room of the Town of Christiansburg Town Hall, 100 East Main Street, Christiansburg, Virginia for the purpose of discussing the proposed water fee increase.

Effective Date: July 1, 2021
Authority: Code of Virginia § 15.2-2119

WATER RATES:
Within Corporate limits: First 0-1,000 gallons, from \$8.00 to \$9.00 additional 1,000 gallons from \$10.00 to \$11.00 Gallons in excess of 50,000 from \$7.50 to \$8.25

Outside Corporate limits: First 0-1,000 gallons, from \$12.00 to \$13.50 additional 1,000 gallons from \$15.00 to \$16.50 gallons in excess of 50,000 from \$11.25 to \$12.38;

This proposal may be examined during regular business hours at the office of the Town Manager. 100 E. Main Street, Christiansburg, VA between the hours of 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday through Friday. All interested citizens will have the opportunity to give written or oral comments.

Randy Wingfield
Town Manager

Legals - Montgomery County

LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Christiansburg Planning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on Monday, May 3, 2021 at 7:00 PM in the Council Chambers of the Christiansburg Town Hall, 100 E. Main Street, Christiansburg, Virginia 24073. The purpose of the public hearing is to receive public comments concerning:

1. A request by Aztec Rental (Applicant), on behalf of Curtis Properties, L.L.C. (Landowner), for a Conditional Unit Permit to operate a business involving the outdoor display, storage and rental of contractor equipment and machinery, such as mini backhoes and excavators, within the B-3 General Business zoning district. The subject property is approximately 1.1 acres in size, is located at 415 Roanoke Street, and is identified as Tax Map Number 527-(A))-204 (Parcel ID 018724). The property is designated as Business/Commercial on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan.

2. A request by Peed and Bortz, L.L.C. (Applicant), on behalf of John D. Elmore (Landowner), for a Conditional Use Permit to operate a contractor storage facility within the B-3 General Business zoning district. The subject property is an approximate 1.15-acre portion of a 4.409-acre parcel, located

Legals - Montgomery County

at 710 Peppers Ferry Road, N.W., and is identified as Tax Map Number 435-((A))-23 (Parcel ID 021274). The property is designated as Residential on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan.

Town Hall will be open and available to receive public comment in-person at the time of this Public Hearing. Additionally, the meeting will be streamed live on the Town of Christiansburg's YouTube channel at www.christiansburg.org/youtube and will be posted on the Town's YouTube page following the meeting. For information on contactless methods for submitting public comment, please visit www.christiansburg.org/publichearings.

Copies of the applications are available for review at the following link: www.christiansburg.org/publichearings. A copy of the applications, the Town's Zoning Map, Zoning Ordinance, and Future Land Use Map may be viewed in the Planning Department Office, 100 E. Main Street, Christiansburg, VA 24073 during normal office hours of 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Contact Margaret Barden, Planning Director, at (540) 382-6120 ext. 1117 or by email at mbarden@christiansburg.org with any questions or if you require reasonable accommodations.

Legals - Montgomery County

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To enforce our owner's lien(s) by Craft Self Storage, 540-260-9563, 100 Roger St. Christiansburg VA, per 55-416 Code of Virginia, Virginia Self Storage Act; the following units will be sold by absolute auction unless payment in full is made to Craft Self Storage prior to auction start:


Units D-06 and G-29. Auction date April 25th 2021 at 10:00 A.M. Only registered bidders will be allowed into facility. Register at main office beginning at 9:30 am. No Parking in Bank or B&K lots allowed. Call for make-up date in case of bad weather.

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MONTGOMERY SPORTS

Blacksburg's boys and girls, Radford's girls run to region cross-country championships



Pictured above are Blacksburg High School's Region 4D cross-country champions. Girls' team members are Mary Finch, Mari Garza, Annika Griggs, Dulaney Hudgins, Mia Jones, Audrey Link, Allie McDonald, Lily Rascher, and Ella Semtner. Boys' team members are Zachary Bibeau, Landon Dinkel, Jonathan Goerlich, Jonas Roach, Vance Ruiz, Conner Rutherford, Ben Schmitt, Harrison Tracy, James Wallace, and Harrison Whitfield.

Marty Gordon
Contributing writer

Blacksburg High School ran away with the Region 4D cross-country championships Tuesday as both the boys and the girls won the region titles on Blacksburg's home course while the Radford girls claimed the region 2C cross-country championship and the Bobcat boys qualified for the state meet with a second-place

finish. Radford's William Hartig won the boys' race.

Blacksburg finished ahead of Jefferson Forest in the girls' competition by a 22 to 40 margin. Salem was third, and Halifax County finished fourth.

The home team took three of the top four spots in the individual results with Annika Griggs second, followed by teammates Mia Jones and Audrey Link. Mari Garza crossed

the finish line in sixth place, and Mary Finch ran her way to a seventh-place finish.

In the boys' race, Blacksburg eased by Jefferson Forest 29-34. Pulaski finished third while E.C. Glass was fourth.

Blacksburg's Landon Dinkel brought home a second-place medal with teammate Jonathan Goerlich in tow for third place. Ben Schmitt finished fifth for the Bruins with Conner Rutherford sixth.

Blacksburg will race next at the Class 4 state championship in Leesburg.

In Region 2C competition, Radford High School's girls' team took top honors by outdistancing Alleghany 40-58. Glenvar was third with 73 points.

Emma Hastings-Crummey and Abby Barnes took individual spots two and three for Radford, and Ellie Buskill was sixth. Glenvar's Carly Wilkes

came in first.

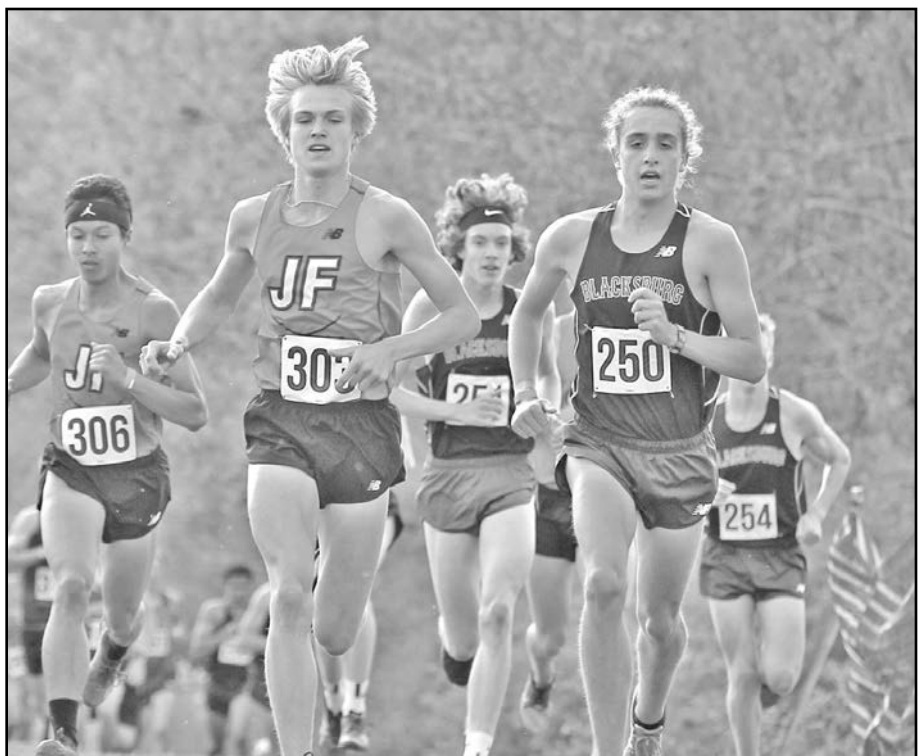
Radford finished second in the boys' competition with 35 points as Alleghany claimed the team title, and James River was third.

William Hartig of Radford claimed the gold with a time of 16:39. Teammate and brother Cyrus Hartig finished fourth.

Both Radford squads advance to next week's state meet to be held at Green Hill Park in Roanoke.



Blacksburg's Annika Griggs (241) races with teammates Mary Finch (center back), Mia Jones (right back), and Allie McDonald (left back) at the region championship meet. Griggs placed second with Jones finishing third to lead Blacksburg to the region title.



PHOTOS BY JON FLEMING

Landon Dinkel (250) led the Blacksburg boys to the cross-country region championship Tuesday with a second-place finish.

12 Blacksburg High athletes will continue sports careers in college

Blacksburg High School recently recognized 12 student-athletes who are planning to further their sports careers in college.

The 12 athletes and their colleges and/or universities to which they are committed are Julie Anderson, the College of William & Mary; Diego Elias, Johns Hopkins University; Sam Helton, Chatham University; Abby Hunter, Western Illinois University; Claire Jenkins, The University of Mary Washington; Amanda Lowe, Virginia Tech; Lexi Nussbaum, The College of William & Mary; Grace Reynolds, Radford University; Lewis Rockwell, Carnegie Mellon University; Ashley Rutherford, Bridgewater College; William Thomas, Hampden-Sydney College; and Nicholas Zolovick, Case Western Reserve University.

A senior swimmer, Anderson plans on majoring in neuroscience or psychology. She is a four-year state-qualifier and letter winning athlete. She was first-team All Timesland her sophomore and junior years. As a senior this past season, she was team captain and she led her team to a state title. She also swam the butterfly leg of the state record-setting 200-yard medley relay and the anchor leg of the state-winning 400-yard freestyle relay.

A senior center back and

central midfielder for the Bruins' soccer team, Elias will major in economics. Elias was a part-time starter as a sophomore and had earned a starting position as a junior in 2020 when the season was subsequently canceled due to the pandemic. In 2019, he was voted by his teammates as Blacksburg's most improved player as the recipient of the Jim Gwazdauskas Memorial Soccer Award.

A senior shortstop on the BHS baseball team, Helton received the Best Defense award as an eighth grader on the Blacksburg JV squad. As a freshman, he was captain of the BHS JV baseball team and was named the squad's Most Valuable Player. With the varsity as a sophomore, he was a team captain and was selected to the All-District Honorable Mention team. He looks forward to leading the Bruins onto the baseball field this season.

Hunter, a senior golfer, plans to major in business. She has played on the Bruins' varsity team since her freshman year, and has earned three letters. Her junior season, she earned First-Team All-District honors and was named to the Roanoke Valley Hall of Fame Junior Girls team. She has her sights set on a state title this spring.

A senior setter and right-

side hitter for the BHS volleyball team, Jenkins plans to major in accounting. A three-year starter and varsity-letter winner, Jenkins played on the past two Bruins' 4A state semifinal teams. She was named to Second-Team All-District and Second-Team All-Region as a junior. As they headed into the regional playoffs this season, the Bruins had a 12-0 record. Jenkins has been the starting setter for her travel volleyball teams for the past seven years. For the last four years, she has played with the River Valley Juniors travel team out of Blacksburg. She also made the 2019 Prep Volleyball Denver Showcase Standout List at a Colorado Crossroads National Qualifier.

Lowe is a senior outside hitter and four-year starter for the Blacksburg volleyball team. She has earned First- and Second-team all-state honors and all-region and all-district designations. The Roanoke Times named her to its All-Timesland first- and second-teams during her career. During her junior season, Lowe received recognition for 1000 career kills. She has played travel volleyball with the River Valley Juniors for the past five years and with the Alabama Juniors the three years before that. She garnered national recognition by being named to the 2018, 2019

AVCA Phenom Watch Lists.

Nussbaum, a senior swimmer, plans on majoring in biology with a minor or double major in kinesiology. Nussbaum is a four-year state qualifier and a four-year letter-winning athlete. She specializes in the breaststroke, in which she placed sixth this year at the state competition. She was also part of the school record-setting 200 medley relay at the state meet, where she swam the breaststroke leg each year for three years. Her relay broke the school record for three consecutive years: 2019, 2020, and 2021. In 2018, she won the BHS Most Outstanding Swim award.

Reynolds is a senior sprinter who will be running the long sprints and the hurdles at Radford. She has been running track since the seventh grade. Her senior year she was a part of the 4x200 meter relay that won the indoor state championship title.

A senior swimmer, Rockwell, is a four-time state qualifier, a 15-time state finalist, a 4-year letter winner, and the holder of two Blacksburg High School records. He specializes in sprint freestyle, the backstroke, and the butterfly. He served as a captain on the squad that won its third straight state championship this past season.

Rutherford, a senior set-

ter for the Bruins volleyball squad, plans to major in biology with a minor in psychology. Ashley was a two-year starter for the Bruins and has been a setter for nationally competitive club teams in Texas and Virginia. As a junior transfer, 2019 was Ashley's first season with Blacksburg, and she helped Blacksburg achieve a season record of 25-5, win the Region 4D championship, and make it all the way to the state semifinals. This season Ashley contributed with a cadre of senior teammates to the team's 12-0 finish in the River Ridge District.

Thomas, a senior member of the Blacksburg High School varsity football team, played on the offensive and defensive lines for the Bruins for four seasons. He will major in the humanities with a concentration in English.

Zolovick, a senior swimmer, competed in club swimming with the Hokies for 14 years and has competed up to national level meets. While at Blacksburg High School, he has scored points in the state competition all four years of participation and contributed to the team's winning the state title the last three seasons. He specializes in the backstroke and both the middle distance free- and the individual medleys. Zolovick plans to major in engineering.

Local volleyball team qualifies for national competition

The River Valley Juniors 13s of Christiansburg emerged as Old Dominion Region champions recently after they went undefeated against teams from Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, New York, New Jersey, Ohio, and Texas in the Northeast Qualifier, American Division. They thus earned a bid to the USA Volleyball Junior National Championships June 26 through July 5 in Las Vegas. The team represents the middle schools of Blacksburg and Christiansburg, Dalton Intermediate School in Radford, Macy McClagherty Elementary School in Pearisburg, and the home-school community. Pictured are (front row, left to right) Abby Neel, Sophie Russell, Jasmyn Charlton, Reese Hall, and Ela Shepherd; (back row left to right) Assistant Coach Lara Meador, Ellie Eddleton, Mattox Adams, Jaylyn Holt, Claire Hudson, Sophie Taylor, Nalanie Neal, and head coach Ellen Sloss.

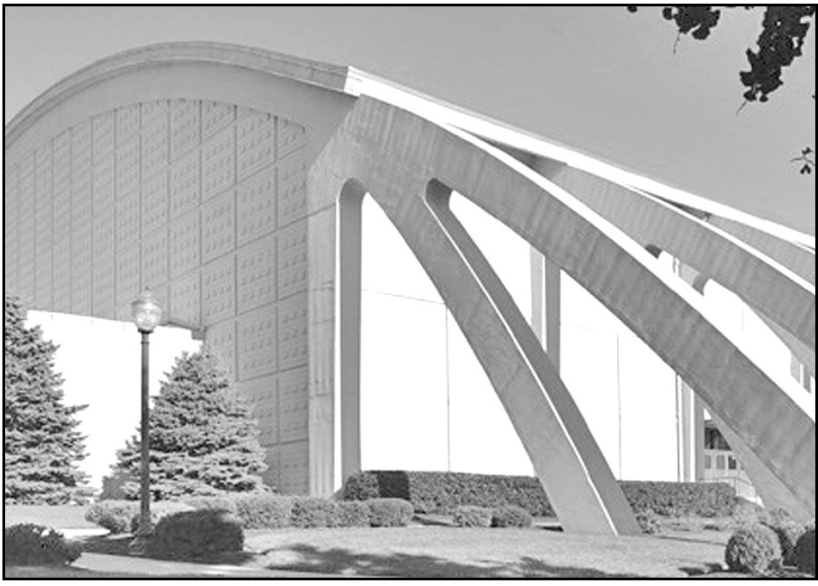


SUBMITTED PHOTO

In retrospect, season was a good one for Mike Young’s basketball Hokies

Most fans would surely take what happened for the Virginia Tech men’s basketball team in head coach Mike Young’s second season of 2020-21. The Hokies finished 15-7, 9-4 in the ACC, which was third in the conference, tying the highest finish in school history. They beat third-ranked Villanova, eighth-ranked Virginia, No. 19 Duke, and No. 24 Clemson, and defeated Syracuse in the Carrier Dome for the first time in school history. They beat Wake Forest by 38 points, the biggest margin of victory for an ACC game in school history. They beat Miami in overtime when Hunter Cattoor buried a three at the buzzer to tie it and then hit clutch free throws in the extra period to seal the 80-76 win.

They made the NCAA Tournament for the fourth straight time (No tournament was held in 2010.) as a No.-10 seed, which made Young the fastest coach in school history to make it to the Big Dance. He was named the ACC Coach of the Year, becoming just the second-ever coach at Tech to earn the prestigious honor. He also would be tabbed the district Coach of the Year. Keve Aluma earned second-team all-league honors. Sophomore Tyrece Radford was named ACC honorable mention. Five Hokies -- Justyn Mutts, Jalen Cone, Hunter Cattoor, Wabissa Bede



and Nahiem Alleyne -- were named to the All-ACC Academic Team. All this happened despite the complications and delays presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. The season opener was delayed by two weeks, but the Hokies nevertheless finished 8-1 in December. They then had the season interrupted once again in February as coronavirus protocols forced the cancellation of four games. As a recap of the season from the athletic department put it, “Overall,

HokieNation must feel pretty proud of a job well done by Young and Co., especially when you put in perspective it all was happening during the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.” While the season ended on a disappointing note with the first-round loss to seventh-seeded Florida in the NCAA Tournament, it was nevertheless a year worth remembering. “Looking back,” the athletic department noted, the players and the staff “will hold their heads high.”

Radford’s Trevor Price, Auburn’s Caleb Wallace qualify for state golf meet

Marty Gordon
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

Floyd County took this week’s Class 2 Region C golf title with a score of 331 and will advance to the state tournament later this month as the lone team from the region while Radford High’s Trevor Price will move on to the state tournament as the region’s co-medalist. Auburn’s Caleb Wallace also qualified for the state meet by finishing third in the Region 1C championship. Price and Chatham’s Matt Arnold each shot 3-over-par 75’s at the region championship at the

Pete Dye River Course in Radford to finish as medalists. Floyd finished three-strokes ahead of Giles for the team win. Patrick County was third and Radford finished fourth. The Bobcats were led by Price’s 75. Other team scores were Jack Davis 81; Brody Shull 90; Graham Minarik 94; Lucas Beeler 95; and Parker Prioleau 97. George Wythe claimed the Mt. Empire District golf title earlier in the week with a 287 with Galax second (370) and Auburn third (375). GW also won the Region 1C title Tuesday at the Pete Dye River Course.

Hokies’ 2021 football schedule released

The Atlantic Coast Conference Monday released Virginia Tech’s 2021 football schedule.

The season will kick off on Friday, Sept. 23

against North Carolina at Lane Stadium. Kick-off time and the televising network will be announced later. Tech’s game against

the Tar Heels will mark the first of seven games at Lane Stadium in 2021. 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) in Blacksburg. Tech’s ACC road schedule features contests at Georgia Tech (Oct. 30), at Boston College (Nov. 6) and at Miami (Nov. 20). The Hokies will close out the regular season with a Commonwealth Clash game at Virginia on Nov. 27. Tech has won 20 of the past 22 games

with the Cavaliers, including nine of the last 11 contests in Charlottesville. VIRGINIA TECH 2021 FOOTBALL SCHEDULE Sept. 3: North Carolina Sept. 11: Middle Tennessee State Sept. 18: at West Virginia Sept. 25: Richmond Oct. 2: Open Oct. 9: Notre Dame Oct. 16: Pitt Oct. 23: Syracuse Oct. 30: at Georgia

Tech Nov. 5: at Boston College Nov. 13: Duke Nov. 20: at Miami Nov. 27: at Virginia Dec. 4: ACC Championship Game in Charlotte, N.C. For as little as 1% down, Tech fans can secure season tickets in Lane Stadium for the Hokies’ 2021 home slate. Flexible payment plans are also available, including the option to defer future payments to May of 2021.

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Marci Byers looks back at her first volleyball season at Virginia Tech

When new volleyball head coach Marci Byers walked onto the Virginia Tech campus for her first day on the job in January of 2020, nobody could have predicted what the next 14 months were going to look like.

Byers made the short move across the New River Valley to Blacksburg as the winningest volleyball coach in Radford University history. Her first spring was quickly cut short with the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, which crippled her ability to work hands-on with her student-athletes.

“It was a year like none other just because of COVID-19 and having to work with that,” Byers said about the unique year. “We were on campus probably in the gym with them about 22 days or so, and we did get a chance to do a spring match with James Madison University, and then after that we got shut down until basically August from being able to work with [the players].”

One thing that never wavered was the buy-in from the team, something she is grateful for.

“The kids really bought into what we were doing, and if it had not have been for that buy-in, I don’t think we would have gotten as far along as we did,” she said.

The Hokies finished the season 6-11 overall and 5-11 in the ACC. They finished 12th in the league, up from a last-place mark in 2019.

Tech won the first match of the Byers era with a 3-0 straight-set victory over The Citadel and carried that momentum to a weekend split against visiting North Carolina, earning her first ACC win.

The Hokies next defeated Virginia twice, 3-1 each time, marking the program’s first winning streak against their rivals in over three years. At the time, Tech was 4-1 and 3-1 in the ACC.

After a win at No. 14 Duke, the program dropped its last three matches of 2020 and the fall portion of the season to stand at 5-4, 4-4 in the ACC.

By the time the team got back on the court in mid-March, it had undergone a pause due to COVID-19 protocols and was trying to find its rhythm again.

“It was really hard,” Byers reflected on coming back after such a long

absence. “We started out in January not having everybody when we came back from our first testing group. We had kids who ended up being sent home in quarantine the very first day we came back to school, so that was 14 days. We practiced with what we had, and then we finally got everybody back after that two weeks and trying to go into our opening weekend. Then we practiced only to get ready to leave for Louisville and get shut down again.”

Losses to ranked Notre Dame and Georgia Tech and a 3-1 defeat at Florida State met the program on their return to the court.

“We got back and finally got everybody back going for our home weekend, and that was when we were actually able to see some things put together,” said Byers.

The Hokies got back in the win column with a 3-2 victory over Syracuse on March 21 with three players – Kaity Smith, Marisa Cerchio and Ashley Homan – tallying double digit kill numbers. That win would be the last of the 2020-21 season, however, as losses to Miami, Boston College, Pitt and Clemson closed out the season.

“We really felt like, even with everything that was going on, we would be able to finish somewhere in the 8-10 range in the league,” Byers said. “To finish as we did is disappointing, even though for the players who finished 15th last year, that’s an accomplishment for them.”

Still, despite the struggles of the unique season, there were some positives that Byers saw in her squad that serve as a foundation for her belief that Hokies and she will meet with more success in the future.

Asked about the positives to come out of the pandemic, Byers was quick to point out communication.

“It allowed us to be able to communicate more,”

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Marci Byers’s first season at Tech was devastated by the pandemic.

she said. “Obviously, it wasn’t in-person, but we were on Zoom calls a lot, FaceTime, that’s the one thing that’s changed in the last year. No one picks up the phone and makes a regular call anymore. It’s either Zoom or its FaceTime or Skype. You’re always looking at

someone face-to-face, so that’s definitely changed. I think the communication started with that and changed.” The program has gained some momentum in the offseason with the addition of two transfers, Griere Hughes from Iowa and Mekenzi Heck-

mann, who last played at SMU.

“Hopefully they can come in and provide some stability for us,” Byers said. “Hughes is coming from the Power Five level and she was a starter there most of her career, and then Mekenzi is a big, physi-

cal kid who we think is going to be able to help us right away.” Tech is also looking forward to the incoming freshman class, some of whom Byers expects will be given the opportunity to play right away.

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