



Governor signs landmark bills to bring passenger rail to NRV, Christiansburg

Virginia Governor Ralph Northam Wednesday signed a pair of landmark bills that authorized the creation of the New River Valley Passenger Rail Station Authority.

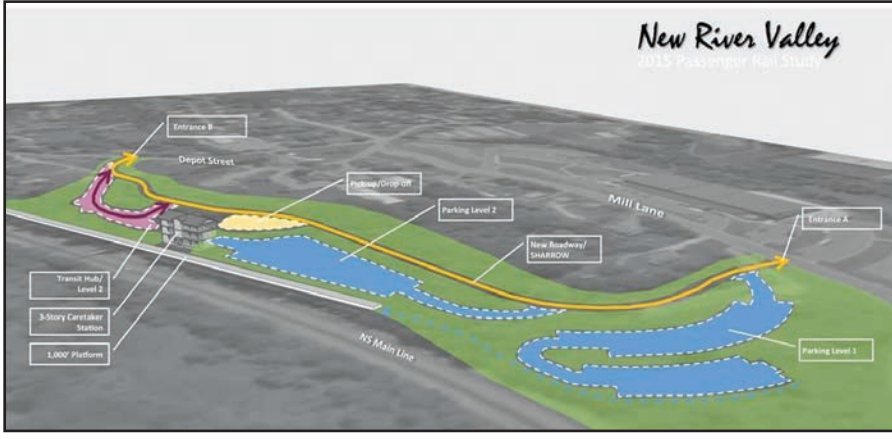
"We are bringing passenger rail service to the New River Valley for the first time since 1970," the governor said in remarks to an assembled crowd in the parking lot adjacent to Regal Cinema. "Today we are committing \$257 million to bring passenger rail service to Christiansburg and Blacksburg and all the way down the line to Bristol," the governor said.

Gov. Northam predicted that with the presence of Virginia Tech and Radford University, "You will see a lot of students riding the rails."

The commitment to rail service in the New River Valley is part of the Transforming Rail in Virginia program. The governor estimated that the program could bring as much as \$2 billion annually into the



Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam signs House Bill 1893 and Senate Bill 1212, which authorized the creation of the New River Valley Passenger Rail Station Authority to assist in the creation and maintenance of passenger rail service in the NRV. Looking on (left to right) are Transportation Secretary Shannon Valentine, Christiansburg Mayor Michael Barber, 21st District Virginia Senator John Edwards, 12th District Virginia House Delegate Chris Hurst, and Virginia Ninth District Senator and gubernatorial candidate Jennifer McClellan.



See Rail, page 5 Conceptual layout for Christiansburg train location

Virginia Tech will host a spring commencement ceremony for the Class of 2020 Wednesday

Virginia Tech will host a Class of 2020 commencement ceremony on Wednesday, May 12, at 1 p.m. in Lane Stadium.

This ceremony is open to all Class of 2020 undergraduates. Class of 2020 graduate students may attend one of the two 2021 Graduate School ceremonies.

Participation in college ceremonies will depend on space available. Fall 2020 undergraduates will have the option to choose between their college's 2021 ceremony and the Class of 2020 ceremony on May 12.

When spring commencement plans were recently announced, feedback from the Class of 2020 showed some alumni wanted to participate in a ceremony this spring.

Members of the Class of 2020 are now eligible to register for commencement ceremonies and will be prompted to sign up by email.

Registration for guests has been underway since April 26. Grads will be contacted by email to register guests. The number of guests will be limited to four. Ceremonies will include social distancing and

masking. Gatherings outside the stadium are also prohibited.

These ceremonies in May will not replace a celebration at a later date for the Class of 2020 and their families. All 2020 graduates will be welcomed back to celebrate together when public health restrictions have eased.

Updates about commencement, including information about signing up to participate this spring and details about a future celebration will be sent by email and posted to the commencement website at vt.edu/commencement.

RU Music Department's International Guitar Festival returns online



Guitarists from around the world showcase a diverse set of playing styles in the 2021 Radford University International Guitar Festival.

The Radford University Department of Music's International Guitar Festival has returned following a one-year hiatus. Last year's event was cancelled due to the pandemic, so this year organizers decided to hold a virtual festival.

The 2021 festival is available online now. Access to the site is free and open to the public.

The online event features a stellar lineup of acclaimed guitarists, musicians and performers from across the globe.

Guitarist and composer Jorge Caballero is the youngest musician and the only guitarist to win the Naumburg International Competition Award, one of the most prestigious and coveted awards given to performers of any instrument.

Khytar 12.6 is a guitar duo composed of Portuguese guitarists Pedro Rodrigues and Miguel Amaral, who perform a unique mixture of classical guitar with Portuguese folk guitar.

Mesut Özgen is a highly accomplished composer and player whose works infuse a deep influence of traditional Turkish music into classical guitar stylings. He is joined by violinist Cihat Askin for his performance.

French guitar phenomenon and author Dr. Thomas Viloteau showcases

his unique and gifted classical guitar work at the festival.

Finishing out the lineup of performers is "Las Flamencas," a traditional Flamenco duo featuring virtuoso flamenco guitarist, vocalist and conductor Marija Temo and acclaimed dancer and choreographer Kerensa DeMars.

The festival is organized by the Southwestern Virginia Classical Guitar Society, which is a club at Radford University open to students of any major.

Dr. Robert Trent, Director of Guitar Studies at Radford University, is the founder of the festival and serves as mentor to the club. He says that developing a fully online show offered a new set of challenges and learning experiences for students involved in orchestrating the event.

"We attempted to bring back as many performers from last year's planned lineup as we could, but some were not available for differing reasons," said Trent. Those who were unable to perform this year were replaced with other international guitarists and performers.

Trent said that this year's lineup showcases the incredible diversity of how guitar music is composed and performed around the world. "We have world-class artists from Europe, Latin

America, and the United States as part of the festival. They feature unique and sometimes unusual combinations of instruments and styles. It shows the incredible breadth and depth of the international guitar scene," said Trent.

This year's online festival is available to anyone interested in learning more about international guitar styles. Trent says that the experience should not be passed over. "Each of the featured artists are amazing performers," he said. "Anyone who watches these performances will broaden their understanding of the guitar. They will travel the world, musically, at a time of their own choosing, from the comfort of their own home for free. Who could say no to that?"

Organizers plan for the festival to return to a live, in-person format again next year. Trent said that he is thankful to be able to hold the performance in a virtual setting but admits that there is nothing quite like being able to appreciate live music in a concert hall.

"Given the circumstances I'm relieved and gratified that all of the people involved in doing the festival this way were willing to help," said Trent. "It took more effort on everyone's part to make it happen as a virtual event, and I'm grateful to everyone who assisted. The results are spectacular."



Woman responsible for Mother's Day was never a mother, turned against it

The official Mother's Day holiday in the United States, observed annually on the second Sunday in May, arose in the 1900s as a result of the efforts of Anna Jarvis, daughter of Ann Reeves Jarvis. Following her mother's 1905 death, Anna Jarvis, who remained unmarried and childless her entire life, conceived of Mother's Day as a way of honoring the sacrifices mothers made for their children.

After gaining financial backing from a Philadelphia department store owner named John Wanamaker in May 1908, she organized the first official Mother's Day celebration at a Methodist church in Grafton, W. Va. That same day also saw thousands of people attend a Mother's Day event at one of Wanamaker's retail stores in Philadelphia.

Following the success of

her first Mother's Day, Jarvis resolved to see her holiday added to the national calendar. Arguing that American holidays were biased toward male achievements, she started a massive letter-writing campaign to newspapers and prominent politicians urging the adoption of a special day honoring motherhood.

By 1912 many states, towns and churches had adopted Mother's Day as an annual holiday, and Jarvis had established the Mother's Day International Association to help promote her cause. Her persistence paid off in 1914 when President Woodrow Wilson signed a measure officially establishing the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day.

Jarvis turned against Mother's Day

Jarvis had originally conceived of Mother's Day as a day of personal celebration between mothers and fami-

See Mother's Day, page 3



The beauty of the landscape in rural Virginia is evident at a glance.

VT researcher on a mission to flip narrative about rural school children to pride, hope

Negative depictions of life in rural America can shake the confidence of promising young people.

From criticisms about how they talk to how they think, the perpetuation of stereotypes can lead children to doubt their own potential.

Amy Azano believes these children deserve to see the value in their hometowns and themselves.

To achieve her vision, the associate professor of adolescent literacy and rural education is leading extraordinary initiatives centered on rural education. Azano will launch the Summer Enrichment Experience at Virginia Tech, offering a new residential opportunity for 80 to 100 students from high-poverty regions in sixth and seventh grades.

She also aims to create sustainable gifted programming in rural Appalachian schools through the Appalachian Rural Talent Initiative. The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation awarded Azano two grants totaling \$760,290 in support of her mission.

"These grants, along with support from the School of Education and the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, will allow us to establish the only enrichment program of its kind in the region," said Azano. "The grants give us the time needed to develop and evaluate the program while also finding ways to sustain efforts in supporting rural communities."

The Summer Enrichment Experience at Virginia

See Rural, page 3

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, May 8:

Virtual Pet Show and Tell
Montgomery Floyd Regional Library online at 11 a.m. Show off your pet. All pets are welcome: cats, dogs, bunnies, horses, rodents, fish, amphibians, reptiles, insects, whatever. No prizes will be awarded, just sharing the joy of having a pet. All ages welcome. Join in virtually for this program on Go-to-Meeting. Registration is required and space is limited. Participants will be emailed a link to the session one day before the program. Email spahl@mfrl.org to register.

Saturday, May 8, and Sunday, May 9:

Plein Air Journaling
At historic Smithfield Plantation in Blacksburg from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. Participants will work with local artists Gerri Young and Matt Gentry to learn how to journal with watercolor (or the medium of choice) on site. The workshop is suitable for beginner to intermediate painters, ages 15 and up. The fee is \$15, and the class is limited to 15 students. For more information or registration, email kjewell@historicsmithfield.org.

Monday, May 10:

STEM Club
Montgomery Floyd Regional Library online at 1 p.m. Watch the virtual STEM club. Activity materials may now be picked up through Monday. Email shodges@mfrl.org for any questions.

Tuesday, May 11:

Sons of Confederate Veterans meeting
The Sons of Confederate Veterans, Stuart Horse Artillery Camp 1784, will

meet at 7:00 p. m. at Aly's Family Italian Restaurant on 3204 Riner Road in Christiansburg. Dana Jackson will give a review of the new book, "Patriots Twice," by Samuel Hood. Members of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) are invited to attend. For further information, call 540-320-4315 or 540-239-9864.

Talking About Books: Nonfiction Virtual

At the Blacksburg Library from 11 a.m. until noon. Join for a discussion of "The Feather Thief," by Kirk Wallace Johnson. Call ahead to reserve a copy and learn more.

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, May 12:

Hahn Horticulture Garden Virtual Road Trip
At 2 p.m. from the Wisconsin Arboretum with VT alumnus David Stevens. Register online for this virtual visit, and a zoom link will be provided: https://virginiatech.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cumxRA4Mec96guy.

Chair Yoga for everybody: Virtual

From 2:00 until 2:30 p.m. at the Blacksburg Library. Join Rachel for 20 minutes of chair yoga, a perfect practice for anytime you want a break but can't leave your seat.

Going Out Green

At 3 p.m. from the Montgomery Floyd Regional Library online. Learn about environmentally friendly burial options from

the Funeral Consumers Alliance of the Virginia Blue Ridge. Email Kerri at kcoo@mfrl.org to register.

Evening Book Talk: Virtual Meeting

From 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Christiansburg Library. To be discussed this month is "A Woman of No Importance" by Sonia Purnell.

Thursday, May 13: Radford Army Ammunition Plant community meeting

The Radford Army Ammunition Plant (RFAAP) will hold a Commander's Community Meeting from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Christiansburg Library. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, seating is very limited. The event will be broadcast on Facebook Live from the Radford Army Ammunition Plant Facebook page. These meetings are open to the public and are an opportunity to learn about the plant's modernization and environmental projects. Environmental compliance and corrective actions will be among the topics discussed.

Friday, May 14, and Saturday, May 15:

Lifeguard Training Certification

At the Christiansburg Aquatic Center from 5 to 9 p.m. Friday and from 8 a.m. until noon on Saturday. The cost is \$100.

Caturday Storytime

At the Montgomery Floyd Regional Library online at 11 a.m. Join in and read to Creature the cat. Creature was adopted from the Montgomery County Animal Shelter two years ago by a library staff member and loves to lay and read. Email shodges@mfrl.org for

information on this Go-To Meeting.

Monday, May 17:

Ice Cream Cone Planters
Pick up your own ice cream cone planter kit from the Christiansburg Library at 10 a.m. and watch it grow.

Tuesday, May 18:

Dungeons & Dragons
Join the Radford Public Library's first Dungeons & Dragons adventure at 4:30 p.m. This is a one-shot adventure for level 1 characters. To participate, message the RPL on Facebook or email duncan.hall@radfordva.gov.

Wednesday, May 19:

American Red Cross Blood Drive

At the Meadowbrook Public Library from 1 to 6 pm. The American Red Cross will be having a blood drive at the Waldron Wellness Center-Carilion Community Room sponsored by Blue Ridge Church and the Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library. Schedule an appointment to give blood at www.redcrossblood.org.

If patrons of the Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library have fines and donate blood, the library will forgive up to \$10, redeemable only at the Meadowbrook Public Library. Donors will also be able to select a used library book to take home. Compliments of Friends of the Library-Meadowbrook Chapter.

Thursday, May 20, through Friday, May 28:

Blended learning life-guard training
At the Christiansburg Aquatic Center.

May 20 from 5:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m.: Pre-Test.

May 21 through May 26: Video portion of the training

May 27-28: 8 a.m. until 5 p.m.
The cost is \$200.

Friday, May 21:

United Way Drive-Thru Breakfast

At the Hampton Inn, 680 Arbor Drive, Christiansburg from 6 to 9 p.m. Pick up a breakfast bag for a \$10 donation that will include a breakfast biscuit, fruit, a pastry, a cup of coffee, and a newspaper. Donations can be made to local first responders and teachers, and delivery will be provided.

Monday, May 24:

Radford Chamber of Commerce Golf Tournament: Birdies, Bogeys, and Business

At the Pete Dye River Course at VT with Captain's Choice shotgun at 1 p.m. Registration and lunch starts at 11:30 p.m. The awarding of prizes via social media is at 6:00 p.m. Contests include Hole in One and Closest to the Pin with a \$200 prize. Team registration fee is \$350 per team. Email radfordchamber@govt.com to be emailed a registration form.

Wednesday, May 26:

Hahn Horticulture Garden Virtual Road Trip

At 2 p.m. from Lotusland with Paul Mills and Rebecca Anderson. Register online for this presentation, and a zoom link will be provided: https://virginiatech.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cumxRA4Mec96guy.

Monday, May 31:

Radford Memorial Day Service

Hosted by VFW Post 776 and the Harvey-Howe-Carper Post 30 of the American Legion at 11 a.m. at the Bisset Park gazebo, Radford.

Ongoing:

Through May 14: Young Chef: Ingredient challenge

All day at the Montgomery Floyd Regional Library online. Calling all young chefs to challenge their creativity by making a meal with spring peas, basil, and any kind of cheese (including vegan). They can add more ingredients to their recipe(s), but the meal must include all the ingredients listed. Submit a photo and recipes by May 14. Email shodges@mfrl.org for further questions and for submission.

All month of May

StoryWalk

All the month of May at the Christiansburg Library. Exercise your brain and body as you read and walk the trail. Begin at the library College Street entrance of Downtown Park. This month's book is "If You Give a Pig a Pancake."

Grab-and-Go Crafts

All day at the Meadowbrook Public Library. Drop by the library for take-and-make craft kits. Available for grab-and-go at the library or with curbside pickup. The kits are free but supplies are limited.

Each Saturday through October

Radford Farmers Market

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

WE ARE

CARILIONPROUD

The past year has been a challenge like no one expected. And though it's been tough, there is still much to celebrate.

We've formed stronger partnerships among our communities. We've met every new challenge with innovation. Most of all, we've realized our determination to never give up.

We are team players, hard workers, go-getters and forward-thinkers full of courage and compassion. We are resilient. And we are dedicated to our mission of improving the health of the communities we serve.

We celebrate our employees each and every day, and especially during:

May 6 - 12 Week of the Nurse

May 9 - 15 Hospital and Health Care Week

Thank you for your dedication to our communities. You make us **#CarilionProud!**



CARILION CLINIC

CarilionClinic.org

OBITUARIES

Graves, Norma Jean Taylor

Norma Jean Taylor Graves, 86, of Radford, passed away Saturday, May 1, 2021.

She was a member of the Radford Church of God of Prophecy. Norma was preceded in death by her parents, Marvin and Effie Taylor; her husband, Guy Louis Graves; a son, Tony Graves; a brother, Marvin Taylor; and a sister, Irene Byrd.

Survivors include her daughters, Karen (Robert) Reinke, and Vicki (Mike) Reinke; grandchildren Michael (Leah) Reinke, Matt (Amber) Reinke, Rachel (Deen Carson) Lynn, and Megan (Jachael) Schollenberger; great-grandchildren Cole, Tanner, Mya, Amanda, Jordan,



Amber, Joey, Lilly, and Stan; great-great-grandchildren Kate, Austin, and Wyatt; sisters Sharon Taylor and Mary Brown; and many other relatives and friends.

The family received friends on Friday, May 7, 2021, at the Radford Church of God of Prophecy, followed by funeral services with the Rev. Zane Cox and the Rev. Tom Warren officiating. Interment followed in the West View Cemetery in Radford.

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

Schulman, Robert Stephen

Surrounded by his wife and children, as dusk was falling on April 27, 2021, Bob Schulman, 74, left us for his eternity, after an incredibly brave and all-too-brief battle with lung cancer.

He was born in New York, N.Y. on Jan. 3, 1947, to Maggie and Cy Schulman. When he was 2, his family moved to Washington, D.C., where he graduated from Woodrow Wilson High School in 1964.

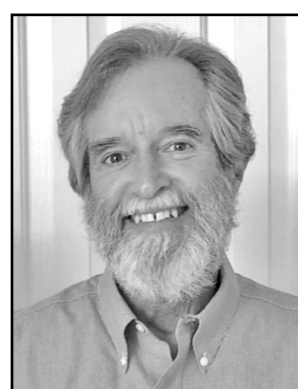
Bob attended Carnegie Tech (now Carnegie-Mellon), and received a Bachelor of Science in mathematics in 1968. While teaching in the public school system in Oxon Hill, Md., Bob earned his Master's degree from the University of Maryland in 1970.

At the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, N.C., he was awarded a PhD in psychology with a specialty in biometrics in 1974. He accepted his first, and only, job in the Statistics Department at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg where he spent the rest of his career and life.

He was inducted into the Virginia Tech Academy of Teaching Excellence and was awarded many certificates of teaching excellence. He had an active consulting career for over 20 years, teaching a three-day intensive short course on "Statistics in Plain English" at hundreds of companies across the United States.

In 1986, Bob met his life companion, Debby Hix, through a blind date, and they were married in Blacksburg on 9/9/89 (so they could easily remember the date). In 1996, they designed and built their dream home, and spent most evenings with a cocktail in hand, enjoying the view across the Ellett Valley. Bob and Debby loved to entertain at their home and hosted dinner parties, house concerts, fundraisers, and lots of other social events. They also frequently went to their waterfront condo at Smith Mountain Lake where they mostly chilled and occasionally took out their boat.

After he retired in 2007, Bob's favorite activities were playing duplicate bridge two or three afternoons a week at Blacksburg's Senior Center, reading story books to children at several local preschools, and playing poker with the same gang of guys every other Thursday evening for almost 40 years.



Bob (often reluctantly) traveled the world with Debby, accompanying her to six continents. He would fuss and fret about a trip and then have a grand time on it. He particularly enjoyed the trips with friends and family – cruises, ski trips, beach vacations – especially Rehoboth Beach and the Outer Banks.

Bob had many titles: professor, award-winning teacher, accidental tourist, avid skier, Storyman Bob, bridge Ruby life master, poker buddy, VT Hokie fan, VT Guy, Bob Humbug, TikTok Grandpa, BS1, Old Timer, Uncle Hershey/Icicle/Flu Bug, but of all his titles, by far his favorites were Dad, Grandpa Bob, and Poppa. He deeply treasured his family, and his biggest regret in leaving us too soon was that he won't get to see his grandchildren grow up and share in their life stories.

Bob had excellent and compassionate medical personnel, and he did everything that was asked of him – every treatment, every appointment, every procedure – even when he didn't feel up to it or didn't want to – that might give him more quality time. "Team Dad" did everything humanly possible to maximize his time with us and the quality of it. In the end, it was too short, but it was always going to feel that way.

Bob is survived by Debby, his wife of almost 32 years; his son Kevin and his wife, Michelle, of Great Falls, Va., and their children, Trey, Finn, Keeley, and Leighton; his daughter Julie and her husband, Ben Hannam, of Chapel Hill, N.C., and their children, Ruby and Beckett; his sister, Susan Kirschenbaum and her husband, Louis, of Kingston, R.I.; and his brother, Jeff Schulman and his wife, Nancy, of Sarasota, Fla.

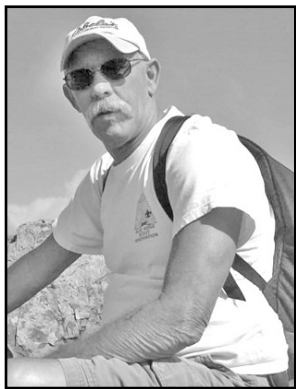
In lieu of flowers, Bob requested you make donations to the Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley, 1217 Grove Avenue, Radford VA 24141, the Town of Blacksburg's Department of Parks and Recreation, 615 Patrick Henry Drive, Blacksburg, VA; or a charity of your choice. He also requested that, if you are so inclined, you perform a random act of kindness in his memory. A celebration of life service will be held in the near future in Blacksburg.

Mabry, Jerry Allen

Jerry Allen Mabry, 73, of Dublin, passed away Monday, May 3, 2021.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Frank E. and Lelia R. Mabry, and his daughter, Dana Rupe.

Survivors include his wife of 38 years, Cindy Mabry; sons Jeremy Mabry and Matthew (MaHayle) Mabry; a daughter, Christin Umberger; a special dog, Polo; special grandchildren Jensen, Leah, Lyden, Olive, MaKenna, and



Radford. www.mullinsfuneralhome.com. Millie; grandchildren Sara, Brad, Jasmine, Chance, Bran, and Cody; several great-grandchildren; father-in-law Richard Richardson; sister-in-law Kimberly (James) Dalton; brother-in-law Richard (Kellie) Richardson; and numerous nieces, nephews and cousins.

Services will be private.

The Mabry family is in the care of Mullins Funeral Home & Crematory in

Raiden, (Margaret) Lorraine

(Margaret) Lorraine Raiden, 74, passed away on April 22, 2021, following a long battle with a neurological illness.

Lorraine was born on Sept. 15, 1946 in the District of Columbia to parents Bernard Roache and Frances Roache.

She is survived by her husband of 52 years, Elwyn Glenn Raiden Jr., and children Michael Glenn Raiden (wife Erica Raiden) who reside in Herndon, Va.; and Renee Raiden Boyer (husband John Boyer) who reside in Blacksburg.

Lorraine and her husband, Glenn, spent most of their life in Northern Virginia, first in Springfield, then later retiring to Philmont. In June 2020, Lorraine and Glenn moved to Blacksburg.

In addition to her husband and children, Lorraine is also survived by her grandchildren, Adeline and Marin Boyer of Blacksburg; siblings Raymond Roache and his wife, Joan Roache of New Smyrna Beach, Fla., Mary Frances Lutzio of Annapolis, Md., Terry Looney and her husband Denny Looney of Ocean City, Md., Bill Roache and his wife, Joan Roache of Ocean City, Md., and Michael Roache of Columbus, Ohio; a brother-in-law John Raiden and his wife Rebecca Raiden of Ft. Worth, Texas; and a sister-in-law, Mary Raiden of Ft. Worth, Texas; nieces and nephews Robert Roache, Kathy Fengya, Christine Morin, Nick Lutzio, Brian Lutzio, Kimberly Looney, Tina



Looney, Kristopher Roache, Eric Roache, Jennifer Lillie, Jessica Roache, Michael Roache, Sara Roache and Heather Raiden.

She loved her large extended family and was preceded in death by her parents, father-in-law and mother-in-law Elwyn and Doris Raiden; brothers Bernie Roache and Jack Roache; brother-in-law Nick Lutzio and nieces Megan Looney and Lori Roache. She also has numerous great-nieces and nephews that she found joy in.

Lorraine spent her life raising her two children, which involved traveling to numerous sporting events and other activities. She always opened her home to her children's friends and in some ways her children's friends were extended family, always welcome, often spending the night, or even accompanying the family on vacations. Perhaps her greatest loves were her two Shetland sheepdogs, Ginger and Brandy. Lorraine will be deeply missed by all who knew her.

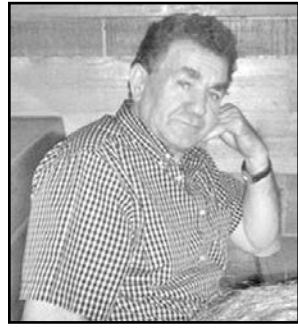
The family will hold a private burial service at Westview Cemetery in Blacksburg. The family will receive guests during a celebration of her life that will be held at the Hahn Horticulture Garden in Blacksburg at a later date this summer. If anyone feels led to donate in her honor, please consider Northern Virginia Sheltie Rescue (nvrs.org).

Arrangements by McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg.

Kadiu, Tafil

Tafil Kadiu, 68, of Blacksburg, died Sunday, May 2, 2021.

Graveside services were conducted on Thursday, May 6, 2021, at 1 p.m. in the Westview Cemetery in Blacksburg. Arrangements by McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg.



Send community news and photos to communitynews@ourvalley.org

Rural

from page 1

Tech, or SEE VT, will provide residential enrichment for rural students from low-income communities. While most of these types of programs are tuition dependent, SEE VT comes at no cost to students and their families, Azano said.

"I'm looking forward to providing rural middle-schoolers with an opportunity to explore Virginia Tech and gain academic and social experiences with peers while also thinking about their rural identities and the sustainability of rural communities," said Azano.

Azano said plans to launch the residential program on campus this summer will be delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, the team will use the time to pilot the curriculum, along with a place-based memoir unit, with regional schools.

As for the Appalachian Rural Talent Initiative, Azano hopes to build onto the experiences learned through another rural-based gifted program. For the past six years, Azano has helped lead research in rural education through a U.S. Department of Education grant called "Promoting PLACE in Rural Schools." She's worked in several school districts in Southwest Virginia and Kentucky.

"When visiting these schools near the end of the grant, teachers and community stakeholders often

asked, 'what now?' They wanted to sustain our efforts and learn about regional enrichment opportunities for students," said Azano. "It's exciting to be able to provide answers."

Schools in geographically remote areas tend to have inadequate staffing levels for gifted resource instruction. Further, traditional practices in identifying students for gifted education often require students to meet exceptionally high standards for eligibility, resulting in schools missing opportunities to cultivate talent, Azano said.

Azano said the initiative aims to increase the number of students eligible for gifted education services in high-

poverty rural Appalachian schools. She will partner with rural schools to provide resources to establish and sustain gifted education opportunities.

Azano said her passion for rural education stems from her childhood.

"My parents were both

first-generation high school graduates and did everything they could to support my educational pursuits while also telling me to never forget my roots," said Azano.

"Popular media and dominant narratives don't always cast rural people or places in a favorable way," Azano said.

"Like all places, rural communities are complex and not without challenges, but young people deserve to see that their rural communities have value. I am hopeful these programs will support youth talent development while also promoting a critical approach to place."

Mother's Day

from page 1

lies. Her version of the day involved wearing a white carnation as a badge and visiting one's mother or attending church services. But once Mother's Day became a national holiday, it was not long before florists, card companies and other merchants capitalized on its popularity.

While Jarvis had initially worked with the floral industry to help raise Mother's Day's profile, by 1920 she had become disgusted

with how the holiday had been commercialized. She outwardly denounced the transformation and urged people to stop buying Mother's Day flowers, cards and candies.

Jarvis eventually resorted to an open campaign against Mother's Day profiteers, speaking out against confectioners, florists and even charities. She also launched countless lawsuits against groups that had used the name "Mother's

Day," eventually spending most of her personal wealth in legal fees. By the time of her death in 1948 Jarvis had disowned the holiday altogether, and even actively lobbied the government to see it removed from the American calendar.

Article citation: *History.com Editors, "Mother's Day 2021," April 29, 2011, HISTORY, <https://www.history.com/topics/holidays/mothers-day>*

The National Civil War Artillery Association
in conjunction with Knibb's Battery

has a
Day of Training on Muzzleloading Cannons in the Blacksburg Area
May 15th • 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Cost is \$40 and includes Certification, Manual, NCWAA Membership Card and Lunch

Contact (804) 356-8868, commander@knibbsbattery.org or knibbsbattery@aol.com

OPINION

The times they are a'changin'

Bob Dylan called it way back in 1964 with his album "The Times They Are a'Changin'."

We saw that head-on Wednesday afternoon as some big figures and some lofty hopes and dreams were splashed around in the Regal Cinema parking lot.

"A dream 22 years in the making."

"A historic investment in intercity rail for the first time in Virginia history that could serve 900,000 riders annually."

"This will have a \$2 billion impact on the NRV economy each year."

You know, stuff like that.

The occasion was a rail announcement and bill-signing ceremony at which the guest of honor was Governor Ralph Northam. Transportation Secretary Shannon Valentine was also on hand to take part in the fun.

All the hoopla was about the governor's signing of a pair of bills passed by the Virginia legislature this past session: Senate Bill 1212 and House Bill 1893, which authorized the creation of the New River Valley Passenger Rail Station Authority.

That Authority has the authority to spend money to fully fund the construction of a rail station build-

ing, a parking lot, and roadway access in or near Christiansburg. The long-anticipated dream of passenger rail service to the NRV is going to happen. Or at least it sure looks like it right now.

It's easy to get all excited. This, after all, is a really big deal that almost certainly will change the NRV forever. An influx of an additional two billion dollars annually will change everything massively. The truth is change is about the only thing we can be sure of. Exactly what the change will look like -- well, we can have no idea right now. And that's a little scary.

Much good will come out of all this. But we need to tread carefully after due discussion and consideration of the possible ramifications, good and bad. One of the inescapable lessons of history is that change never comes without a cost. The million dollar question is whether we can manage that change for the benefit of the residents and the natural resources of the NRV instead of letting change manage us. An appropriate image might be change approaching with the speed of a runaway train.

I remind us right now while we can to take a good look around. I have spent most of my life amid unimaginative terrain. Around here, the countryside itself is a natural

wonder.

In my imagination, when God set out to construct Southwest Virginia in general and the New River Valley in particular, he scooped up all his building materials and gave them one massive heave, sort of like tossing a gazillion-ton shotput. Then he surveyed the results -- that is, where and how everything landed -- and declared it good. As well he should have.

So a caution: Even as we get all excited about what could very well turn out to be one of the biggest, most important days in the history of this part of the commonwealth, let's try to be a wee bit cautious. Let's make sure that in our excitement and anticipation we don't mess up what we already have.

The truth is that at this point, we have no idea what's going to happen or what it will look like. We can only be sure that something will. It's up to all of us to make sure that something is what we want.

All aboard. Full steam ahead.

It can be a good thing. It's up to us.

The artist is a man of a certain age who lived in Georgia for practically all of his life until the family and he moved to Christiansburg in 2019. He has been captured by the pristine beauty of the New River Valley, and his worst nightmare is that somehow or other through no fault of our own other than our carelessness, we let something happen to it.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Stop COVID -19

Last week President Biden set the goal of 70 percent of the population in the United States to be vaccinated by July 4.

I would hope the New River Valley could surpass that

percentage.

Getting the shot not only helps individuals, but the community. There are very few reasons why people should not get vaccinated. Considering the millions of individuals who have been vaccinated, there have been few cases with side effects.

No lines. You can walk in and out, 20 minutes and you are done.

In some places people are being bribed to get shots. Gift cards, free hamburgers, in New York free marijuana cigarettes if a person shows his or her COVID-19 card.

I think that is sad and un-

fortunate.

If you have not gotten your shot, go on and do it. You will feel better mentally and physically, and the New River Valley will be a safer place to live.

Let's go for 90 percent by July 4.

Steve Huppert
Christiansburg Town Council

Note: These are my comments and do not represent the opinions of members of the Christiansburg staff or the town council.

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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 hospitals ranked fourth in nation in patient safety; Carilion NRV Med Center achieves "A" grade

The spring 2021 leapfrog hospital safety grades have ranked Virginia's hospital as fourth in the nation in a ranking that focuses on health care quality and patient safety performance.

Thirty-three of Virginia's 66 general acute care hospitals, including the Carilion New River Valley Medical Center, earned "A" grades in the report.

The Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association said the ranking among the nation's best hospitals is a reflection of Virginia hospitals' shared commitment to keeping patients safe and providing exceptional patient care and experience. These rankings, according to a statement released by the VHHA, show a continuing trend of strong patient safety scores by

Virginia hospitals in recent years when the commonwealth has consistently been ranked as a top state for hospital safety.

"For more than a year, Virginia hospitals and their teams of dedicated caregivers have taken extraordinary steps to protect community healthy while working on the COVID-19 frontlines, caring for patients made seriously ill by the virus, and tending to an array of other patient medical needs," said VHHA President and CEO Sean T. Connaughton.

"Through it all, Virginia hospitals have maintained their vigilant focus on achieving excellence in health care quality and safety," Connaughton said. "The latest Hospital Safety Grade rankings from the Leapfrog Group are a

welcome affirmation of the emphasis Virginia hospitals and the health care professionals who staff them place on patient care and safety."

The scores arrived about 14 months after Virginia's first case of COVID-19 was confirmed in March 2020. During that time, Virginia hospitals have treated and discharged about 55,000 patients who contracted COVID-19 and required hospital care, added nearly 3,700 beds to increase patient treatment capacity, administered more than 1.5 million COVID-19 vaccine doses, and pursued effective strategies to boost testing and address shortages while enduring pandemic-associated revenue losses collectively exceeding \$1.8 billion.

Virginia doesn't fare well in WalletHub rankings of best places for nurses

Since National Nurses Week is being observed through May 12, the per-

sonal website WalletHub surveyed and ranked the best places in the country for nurses, and the commonwealth did not fare too well, coming in 36th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Nevertheless, as the website points out, despite the stresses of the occupation, nurses are generally well-rewarded for their life-saving work. Nursing occupations are some of the most lucrative careers with a median base salary of over \$100,000 and some of the lowest unemployment rates in the U.S. In fact, the industry is expected to grow at nearly double the rate of the average occupation through 2029.

To determine the best and worst states for nurses, WalletHub compared the 50 states across two key dimensions: "Opportunity and Competition" and "Work Environment." The website then evaluated those dimensions using relevant metrics.

Those relevant metrics included the monthly average starting salary for nurses (adjusted for the cost of living), the average annual salary for nurses (also adjusted for the cost of living), the quality of the state's nursing schools, the tuition cost per credit for BSN online programs, the nursing job openings per capita, the nurses per 1,000 residents, the projected competition in 2028, the

existence of mandatory overtime restrictions, the ratio of nurses to hospital beds, the nurses' job growth (comparing 2020 to 2016), the quality of the public hospital system (based on data from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services), friendliness toward working moms (based on WalletHub's "Best and Worst States for Working Moms" ranking), the average number of work hours, and the average commute time.

According to WalletHub's rankings, the top ten states for nurses are 1. Arizona 2. Washington 3. Nevada 4. Wyoming 5. New Mexico 6. Oregon 7. Montana 8. Missouri 9. Alaska 10. Maine.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

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- 1. Thick flat pad
- 4. Green regions of desert
- 9. Fill with dismay
- 14. Boxing legend
- 15. Soup
- 16. Your sibling's daughter
- 17. A long thin implement
- 18. Late ESPN anchor
- 20. Motives
- 22. Astronomerology term
- 23. Semitic Sun god
- 24. Small cigar
- 28. Promotions
- 29. Not off
- 30. Line or plaster the roof
- 31. African Indian people of Alberta, Canada
- 33. Rituals
- 37. Chlorine
- 38. Red deer
- 39. Offers a good view

- 41. Post-indictment arrangement
- 42. Blood group
- 43. Razor clams
- 44. Fleshes of animals
- 46. Nipple
- 49. Indicates position
- 50. Electrocardiogram
- 51. Can be disconnected
- 55. Tall military cap
- 58. Cape Verde capital
- 59. Not written in any key
- 60. Creative
- 64. Suffix
- 65. Stacked
- 66. One who consumes
- 67. Not he
- 68. Whiskey and milk are two
- 69. Entryways
- 70. ___ and cheese

- 1. Marketplaces
- 2. Hawaiian greeting
- 3. Mark left by the sea
- 4. Strongly affected by something
- 5. Music and painting are two
- 6. Small coin (French)
- 7. Letter of the Greek alphabet
- 8. A gesture involving the shoulders
- 9. Grey geese
- 10. Meal in the park
- 11. Human beings
- 12. What thespians do
- 13. Allow
- 19. Third-party access
- 21. "Casino Royale" villain Mikaelson
- 24. Painful foot problems
- 25. The very first
- 26. Lawful
- 27. Ceramic jars
- 31. Hind ends

- 32. "Virginia Woolf" author
- 34. Try
- 35. For instance
- 36. Academic terms
- 40. Article
- 41. Religious belief outside the mainstream
- 45. Sound caused by reflection
- 47. Greatly horrify
- 48. Prey
- 52. Forays
- 53. River in eastern France
- 54. Bleated
- 56. Soft food cooked from buckwheat
- 57. Pre-Mayan civilization
- 59. Assert to be the case
- 60. Inches per minute (abbr.)
- 61. "Rosemary's Baby" actress Farrow
- 62. Chinese philosophical principle
- 63. Simpson trial judge

Historic Montgomery



Opened around 1880, the hotel was located across the railroad tracks from the Christiansburg Passenger Station and operated under several different names: the Alleghany Hotel, Akers Hotel, Drummer's House, and Cambria Hotel. Samuel J. Lewellyn took over operation of the hotel in 1912 and his wife, Luria Hedge Lewellyn, continued its operation until the 1940s. (This image and many more are available from the Montgomery Museum of Art & History.)

Clearing up misinformation drives New River Health District's vaccine outreach

About 29 percent of the people in the New River Health District are fully vaccinated. But that's not enough.

In an effort to reach the 75 percent threshold for COVID-19 herd immunity, the New River Health District is continuing to spread the word that coronavirus vaccines are available and that they are safe and effective. The district is going door-to-door in some communities and to local events, answering questions, clearing up misinformation, and offering vaccines on the spot to those who want them.

"This is a huge remarkable community effort, but we still have more unvaccinated than vaccinated people right now, so we still have some work to do," said Dr. Noelle Bissell, the district's health director, during a recent virtual meeting with the

news media.

Largely, the demand for vaccines is declining in the district, and similarly, statewide and nationally, vaccine supply is in line with demand, Bissell said.

Also, she said she hopes that the vaccine will be approved for people ages 12 to 16 by the end of this month.

At her news conference, Bissell offered the following updates regarding local vaccination efforts:

Phasing out large scale vaccination clinics:

Due to low demand for vaccines in the district, the last large vaccine clinic locally will be held May 18 at Lane Stadium. The district, along with local pharmacies and other health partners, will continue to offer vaccines to individuals. People may sign up for appointments at the district's website.

Second vaccine doses:

People are able to receive second doses of vaccine throughout the state, no matter the location of their first dose, Bissell said. For instance, if a college student receives a first dose while in Blacksburg, that student can receive a second dose once they return home for the summer through a local health department or pharmacy, Bissell said. The district will continue to offer vaccines throughout the summer.

Common reasons that people do not want a COVID-19 vaccine:

There are several reasons that people report not wanting a vaccine, Bissell said. They range from beliefs that vaccine development was rushed to concern that the vaccines were created using new technology. These both are false assumptions, Bis-

sell said.

The vaccines were created with the same technology used for treating cancer. Also, though the development process was shorter, the vaccines underwent the same rigorous clinical trial process as others, Bissell said.

Now, more than 1 billion people worldwide have received a COVID-19 vaccine.

"We have good data now that vaccines are safe and effective," she said. "It is important that people make their decision based on true scientific evidence."

Vaccines protect others:

Receiving a vaccine not only protects a vaccinated person, it protects others, Bissell said. Some people may not be able to receive a COVID-19 vaccine due to a medical reason. But if as many people as possible are vaccinated, it keeps the infec-

tion from circulating throughout the population.

This is the concept behind herd immunity, the ultimate goal with vaccines, Bissell said.

"Even if you have a strong immune system, you can still transmit the infection," she said. "We need to break that infection cycle to protect people who can't get vaccinated."

The coronavirus vaccines also are about 70 percent effective against certain variants, she said, adding that the vaccines are 95 percent effective in preventing a COVID-19 infection.

"Some immunity might be enough to give someone that boost that they don't get really sick and they don't die [from COVID-19 or a variant]," Bissell said. "You take all of the immunity you can get."

— Written by Jenny Kincaid Boone

Goodwill Career and Resource Fair set for May 15

Goodwill Industries of the Valleys will host a community Career and Resource Fair on Saturday, May 15, from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. outside at the Goodwill Roanoke Jobs Campus at 2502 Melrose Avenue, NW, Roanoke.

The fair is in conjunction with the Kiwanis Club of Roanoke and Shiloh Baptist

Church's Fun Day at the Kiwanis Centennial Playground beside the Melrose Library at the Goodwill Roanoke Jobs Campus.

Both events are free and open to the community. The fair will be a great opportunity for individuals and families to discover what resources and job opportunities are available

in the community. The Fun Day will provide fun-filled activities, food, and music for all ages.

"The career and resource fair is an opportunity to bring together local businesses and individuals looking for a job and to share local resources and services for individuals and their families," said Ze-

nith Barrett, Senior Director of Business and Community Engagement for Goodwill. "We are excited to be a resource for the Roanoke community alongside the Fun Day presented by the Kiwanis Club of Roanoke and Shiloh Baptist Church."

The events will follow COVID-19 safety protocols in-

cluding social distancing, and face masks will be required for all attendees.

Individuals with questions about Goodwill services may contact (540) 581.0620 Option 1. Businesses interested in being a part of future job fairs may contact Zenith Barrett at (540) 581.0620 ext. 1266 or zbarrett@goodwillvalleys.com.

Rail from page 1



Virginia Secretary of Transportation Shannon Valentine speaks to the crowd at Wednesday's signing that authorized the creation of the NRV Passenger Rail Station Authority. Behind her on the stage (left to right) are 12th House District Delegate Chris Hurst, 21st District Senator John Edwards, Ninth District U.S. Congressman Morgan Griffith, Norfolk Southern Chief Executive Officer Jim Squires, Christiansburg Mayor Michael Barber, and Virginia Governor Ralph Northam.

NRV's economy.

The legislation authorizing the creation of the authority was sponsored in the Virginia House by 12th District Delegate Chris Hurst. His district is comprised of the City of Radford and Giles County and portions of Montgomery County and Pulaski County. The Virginia Senate Bill was introduced and sponsored by Sen. John Edwards of the 21st Senate District, which comprises the City of Roanoke and Giles County, as well as the part of Montgomery County where Blacksburg is located and a small sliver of Roanoke County.

With the signing of the bills, the authority is authorized to enter into revenue sharing agreements and to issue revenue bonds to fully fund the construction of a station building, parking, and roadway access to the station near Christiansburg.

The rail announcement and bill-signing ceremony was the culmination of an agreement between the Commonwealth of Virginia and Norfolk Southern Railway (NSR) to improve rail reliability and expand passenger service to Southwest Virginia, including Christiansburg. The agreement is part of the Transforming Rail in Virginia program and focuses on the rail corridor between the New River Valley and Alexandria, Va. The program includes the Western Rail Initiative, which is the commonwealth's partnership with NSR, and a partnership with CSX Transportation in the I-95 corridor.

As part of the agreement, the commonwealth will purchase a 28.5-mile portion of the NSR Virginia Line (the V-Line) from the Salem Cross-overs west of Roanoke to Christiansburg that includes the existing track and other infrastructure.

Further, in cooperation with CSX Transportation, Virginia will acquire 384 miles of CSX right-of-way and 223 miles of track in rail corridors paralleling I-95, I-64, and I-85. Over the next 10 years, Virginia will build nearly 50 miles of track and implement a series of infrastructure improvements in the corridors.

Estimates for the cost of the completed Transforming Rail in Virginia program run as high as \$3.7 billion, \$525 million for the right-of-way and track acquisition and \$3.2 billion for capital improvements in the RF&P Corridor (Washington, D.C. to Richmond) in Phases 1 and 2. Once the V-Line is purchased in Southwest Virginia, the NSR will develop improvements between Salem and Christiansburg to accommodate passenger rail service. These improvements include a new passenger station and platform near Christiansburg, a new maintenance and storage facility, construction of bypass tracks in the Roanoke Yard so passenger trains can get through the yard, track improvements between Salem and Christiansburg, and a 7-mile siding from Nokesville to Calverton that will result in a continuous 22-mile,

two-track corridor from Manassas to Remington.

According to a press release from Transforming Rail Virginia, the initiative will double intercity passenger service from Washington, D.C., to Roanoke as it extends passenger rail service in the New River Valley. Expected by 2025 is an extension of the two passenger rail road trips from Roanoke to Christiansburg.

In addition to the governor, other speakers at the bill-signing ceremony were Christiansburg Mayor, Mike Barber, who officially welcomed everyone to Christiansburg; Shannon Valentine, the Virginia Secretary of Transportation; Norfolk Southern Chief Executive Officer Jim Squires, who called it "a good day for all of us" and praised the close cooperation between the commonwealth and his railroad; 21st-District Virginia State Senator John Edwards, who called Valentine "the best Secretary of Transportation we've ever had"; and Virginia House 12th-District Delegate Chris Hurst, who said the day would not have been possible without years of work and dedication by local leaders.

"The local officials have delivered for your people," Hurst said. "We are literally putting the NRV on the map today. This is something worth celebrating. We are doing amazing things in the NRV. In Richmond, they know as now as a dedicated community and not just some big region."

Peter Hayes earns nursing home administrator license

Peter Hayes, administrator of Showalter Center, which is part of the Warm Hearth Village comprehensive retirement community, recently passed his national and state Nursing Home Administration licensure (LNHA) exam, according to an announcement from Warm Hearth Village.

Hayes is already a licensed Assisted Living Administrator (ALF) who has been at Showalter Center for two years. "I chose to pursue the LNHA licensure to broaden my knowledge base in the long-term care field and better serve Warm Hearth Village," he said.

Hayes, his wife, son and daughter live in Christiansburg.



Warm Hearth Village is a nonprofit senior living community in Blacksburg that provides a full con-

tinuum of living options on its campus and in the home.

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Class of 2021: Ryan Stoddard caps off a 20-year military career with a doctoral degree

Ryan Stoddard is a rare combination of soldier, pilot, philosopher, teacher, scientist, and leader. He has engaged all of these identities over the last 20 years, taking him from the cockpits of planes to the docket of mechanical engineering Ph.D. recipients for the Class of 2021.

In July 1994, at 17 and as the son of a World War II Navy corpsman, he entered the U.S. Naval Academy, graduating four years later with a commission as an ensign. He was offered graduate education at Georgia Tech while still in the Navy, so he took that opportunity to earn a master's degree in mechanical engineering. He later received his wings at flight school.

He was then selected to fly the E-6B Mercury, an airborne command post jet and the biggest plane in the Navy's inventory. Three years later, Stoddard moved to Pensacola, Fla.,

to teach new pilots the skills he had learned.

He next took a step away from planes and turned toward boats, serving for two years as an assistant navigator aboard the USS John C. Stennis. This assignment placed him in the North Arabian Sea and the Arabian Gulf, earning Stoddard a promotion to lieutenant commander. He later was assigned to U.S. Central Command in Tampa, Fla.

"Not long after that move, the request went out to the headquarters staff that General Mattis needed a new aide," Stoddard said. "I threw my name in and did a handful of interviews. The next thing I know, I got an email that said to come upstairs, things are going to change."

Stoddard served as the aide-de-camp to Gen. James Mattis in Tampa for over a year, accompanying him to Washington,

D.C., and other locations around the globe.

"After that, I was planning to retire, but I was only at the 19-year mark in my career," Stoddard said. "I had to do one more year to make it to 20, so the Navy sent me to the Pentagon. President Trump was elected a year after I got there, and General Mattis was chosen as the secretary of defense. Several weeks after he became secretary, I got a phone call suggesting I should come talk to the chief of staff and think about a job change."

Stoddard's appointment as junior military assistant to the secretary of defense came as a result of his service to Mattis in Tampa. The general had come to appreciate his junior officer's ability to sum up a room and speak plainly to him, assets that became critical to a secretary of defense.

"I needed someone

who knew me well enough that he would challenge what was going on," Mattis said. "If he thought something had to be said, he would tell me. Trust is the coin of the realm in high-ranking positions. Ryan knew that, and he knew how to build trust. He knew how to reassure people."

Stoddard was in line for another promotion, but his time as an instructor and mentor had instilled a sense of purpose in teaching, and his quest for learning drove him to pursue a higher academic degree. He turned his eyes toward Virginia Tech.

"One of the reasons I came to Virginia Tech was that I had a front row seat to history in my Navy jobs," Stoddard said. "I saw a lot of energy-rich, but governance-poor regions in the Middle East. It convinced me that energy is extremely important, and it was an area where



Ryan Stoddard in the cockpit of the E-6B Mercury. Photo courtesy of Ryan Stoddard.

I wanted to pursue education."

In pursuit of his Ph.D., Stoddard studied non-wetting surfaces and their applicability in power plant condenser conditions. His objective was to shed new light on making the workhorses of power generation more efficient and sustainable.

While working on his doctoral dissertation, Stoddard was also the executive officer at the Vir-

ginia Tech Navy ROTC, making him the second-in-command of the largest source of Navy and Marine Corps officers in the U.S., after the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis.

After graduation, Stoddard will don his leadership hat as the dean of engineering at Rose State College. The campus is just outside Oklahoma City, not far from the familiar environment of Tinker Air Force Base.

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. Mooncup "Paul" Song (540) 382-2410. Sunday Worship 10 a.m., Sunday School 9 a.m. Live streaming Sunday Service - www.twitch.tv/stpaulumc

Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church, 350 Stafford Drive, Christiansburg, VA 24073, Sunday School 10am, Sunday Worship Service 11am.

WESLEYAN

Christ Wesleyan Church, 525 Harkrader Street, Christiansburg. Public Worship service at 11:00 AM. Sunday School for adults - 10:00 AM. Pastor: Gale Janofski 574-306-7682. Website: christ-wesleyanchurch.org

Montgomery County

WORSHIP DIRECTORY

On Guard

Read 1 Chronicles 7:1 through 9:44

It was a great privilege and honor to be one of the men chosen to be gatekeepers at the entrance to God's house. Even more awesome was the responsibility of four principal gatekeepers who guarded the rooms and the treasuries.

They would spend the night stationed around the house of God, because they had to guard it; and they had charge of the key for opening it each morning (1 Chronicles 9:27).

No doubt some nights must have felt especially long, but falling asleep while on duty was not an option. The gatekeepers needed to remain

alert to any sound or movement that might indicate the treasures they guarded were in danger.

Today many churches install electronic security systems, although they probably rely on a person to make sure all the windows and doors are locked each night. But when it comes to guarding that which is most important—our children and youth—nothing can replace the prayers of parents and the church family.

Challenge for Today: Ask the Lord for the name of a young person He wants you to safeguard with prayer.

Quicklook: 1 Chronicles 9:22-27

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

Medical school moms find support in each other, families, and school community

Nerves are common on the first day of medical school. Will the curriculum be as tough as expected? What will my classmates be like? For two students at the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine (VTC-SOM), their first day almost three years ago brought additional stress. They also were about to be new moms.

“My due date was right around the time school was starting. Some people told me I should defer a year, but I had waited so long to be here and I was so excited that it didn’t matter what anybody said,” said Jane Gay, now a third-year student at the VT Carilion School of Medicine. “I just wanted to start medical school and be able to pursue what I wanted to do for my whole life.”

Gay’s new classmate, Rebecca King, was also pregnant that first day, but was much earlier on with no apparent baby bump. “I remember seeing Jane on our first day of orientation and she was visibly pregnant,” King said. “I went up to her and, I think she thought I was being rude, but I thought, ‘I’m so excited. I’m not the only one.’”

“I still remember when Rebecca came up to me. I had never met her before, so I had no idea that she was pregnant. And I was scared out of my mind. To be completely honest, I felt really alone,” Gay said. “Then Rebecca told me she was pregnant, too. The feeling of loneli-

ness lifted, knowing that someone else was also going through it.”

Gay had her baby, Desmond, a couple of days later. She missed only the end of orientation week and was back the following Monday to start the first official week of studies with her class.

King had a little bit more time to get acclimated, completing more than half of the first year of study.

“At that point, I knew more about how med school works, how to study, what the schedule is like, what the expectations are. I had a sense of what I needed in order to stay caught up while I was out,” King said. “I felt really supported by all my classmates. We had a great time guessing when I would actually deliver. There was a whole white board with everybody’s guess of the due date and time.”

When her son, George, arrived, King took a couple of weeks off, but came back quickly to stay on track. Her husband, Chris, is self-employed and works from home. He was able to adjust his work to care for George so King could get back to her studies.

Her classmates also supported her during the two-week leave and the transition back. “My problem-based learning group recorded all their sessions for me so that I could watch them while I was out,” King said. “Even when I came back, the research class allowed me to do it online the last couple of weeks



Rebecca King (left) and Jane Gay (right) are currently third-year students at the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine. They had their sons during their first year of study and bonded over the shared experience.

of the block.”

King and Gay also found a support system in each other. “Even just the simple fact of having someone to pump with,” King said. Gay said, “Some of our best memories are sitting in the pump room and pumping together, which sounds crazy.”

Many times pumping together was spent focused on their studies. “We could study, quiz each other,” Gay said. But it became more than being productive.

“You just didn’t feel alone,” King said. “I

think that was helpful too, for my mental health, helping remember what drives you. Having each other just helped.”

The Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine has had other students become new moms and dads during their tenure at VTC-SOM, but Gay and King are the first women to give birth during their first year of study.

“Balancing motherhood and medical school has been difficult and quite stressful at times,” Gay said. “It has taken

hard-work, determination, sacrifice, and a strong support system to make it possible. There is no sugar-coating that, but I am doing what I love, which makes it worth it.”

Both women are nearing the end of their third year of medical school, often viewed as a more challenging year when students rotate through major specialties within the hospital and outpatient clinics. This year was even more complicated because of schedule changes and protocol related to the COV-

ID-19 pandemic. They will apply to residency programs next year. Both are open to pursuing a couple of different specialties, but add that becoming a mother has shifted their perspective.

“Having a baby changed me, and I wasn’t expecting it,” King said. “Some things in medicine are more emotional than I feel they would have been before I was a mom. I feel like some people might look at it as weakness, but I’ve had some of the faculty tell me to see it as more of a strength.”



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Legals - City of Radford

II. NOTICE OF INTENT TO PURCHASE GOODS, SERVICES OR EQUIPMENT FOR THE CITY OF RADFORD, VIRGINIA.

DATE OF POSTING: May 08, 2021
The City of Radford will accept proposals from qualified contractors to supply and/or perform services listed in this notice and identified herein as:

Legals - City of Radford

any and all proposals and to waive any informalities is herewith reserved exclusively by the City.

A pre-proposal meeting will be held on ___/___/___ at N/A, in the City Manager’s office at 619 2nd street, Radford, Virginia, for the purpose of reviewing the proposal/bid requirements. Only those proposers registered at that meeting will be allowed to bid.

Legals - City of Radford

by the City, or which could be accomplished by Change Order after the contract is awarded. If such negotiations result in a contract price within available funds, the City may award the contract based thereon, but reserves to itself the right to reject the same for any reason deemed sufficient by it, in which event the project may be re-advertised or not, as the City deems to be in its interests.

Legals - Montgomery County

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

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Virginia Department of Transportation and the Board of Supervisors of Montgomery County, in accordance with Section 33.1-70.01 of the Code of Virginia, will conduct a joint public hearing in the Montgomery County Government Center, 755 Roanoke Street, Christiansburg, Virginia at 7:15 p.m. on Monday, May 10, 2021. The purpose of this public hearing is to receive public comment on the proposed Secondary Six-Year Plan for Fiscal Years 2021/2022 through 2026/27 in Montgomery County and on the Secondary System Construction Budget for Fiscal Year 2021/22. Copies of the proposed Plan and Budget may be reviewed at the Christiansburg Residency Office of the Virginia Department of Transportation, located at 105 Cambria Street, Christiansburg, Virginia or at the Montgomery County Government Center located at 755 Roanoke Street, Christiansburg, Virginia. All projects in the Secondary Six-Year Plan that are eligible for federal funds will be included in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), which documents how Virginia will obligate federal transportation funds. Persons requiring special assistance to attend and participate in this hearing should contact the Virginia Department of Transportation at (540) 381-7201. Persons wishing to speak at this public hearing should contact the Montgomery County Government Center at (540) 382-6954.

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.

PROCUREMENT ITEM (S).

PROCUREMENT: Single-Phase 32-Step Voltage Regulator with Digital Controls (Quantity of 3 each)

PROCUREMENT NUMBER: 408101MAY25.21
CITY BUDGET EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT NUMBER: 505-9901-408101

Bids will be opened publicly at the time and place specified in this announcement. All bids are the property of the City of Radford and are available for public inspection. The City is required to handle each proposal so that disclosure of the identity of any offerer in the contents of any proposal to competing offerers during the process of bidding or negotiation does not occur. Therefore each bid proposal shall be provided by the bidder in a plain envelope and shall be clearly marked as follows:

Legals - Montgomery County

LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Christiansburg Planning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on Monday, May 17, 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:

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

The complete procurement package is available upon request to: T.A. Logwood Director of Electric Utilities Radford Electric Department 701 17th Street RADFORD, VIRGINIA 24141

Written proposals must be received not later than 2:00 PM local prevailing time on 25th day of May 2021 at the City of Radford Electric Department at 701 Seventeenth Street, Radford, Virginia 24141, for consideration.

PROPOSAL FOR: Single-Phase 32-Step Voltage Regulator with Digital Controls (Quantity of 3 each)

Note: Facsimile or Electronic Mail bids will not be accepted.

The City will not be held responsible for proposals not appropriately marked. Until and unless the responsive proposal from the lowest responsible proposer is rejected or cancelled, the City reserves the right to negotiate with the apparent low proposer for the lower contract price in the event the proposal from the lowest responsible proposer exceeds funds made available for the purchase by the City. Changes or modifications may be made or authorized by the City, in the requirements of any of the contract documents, including the plans and specifications, which may be deemed appropriate

1. A request by Aztec Rental (Applicant), on behalf of New River Community College (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 2.441 acres in size, located at 412 Roanoke Street, and consists of two parcels identified as Tax Map Numbers 527-((A))-200, 202 (Parcel IDs 032021, 032023). The property is designated as Business/Commercial on the Future Land Use Map of

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MONTGOMERY SPORTS

Auburn, Eastern Montgomery dominate all-district volleyball teams

Marty Gordon
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

Allyson Martin and head coach Sherry Millirons of the state champion Auburn High School Eagles were named

Tuesday as the Mountain Empire District and Region 1C volleyball player and coach of the year respectively.

From Eastern Montgomery's Mustangs, Elli Underwood was named the Pio-

neer District's Player of the Year, and Haley Duncan was named the district's co-Coach of the Year.

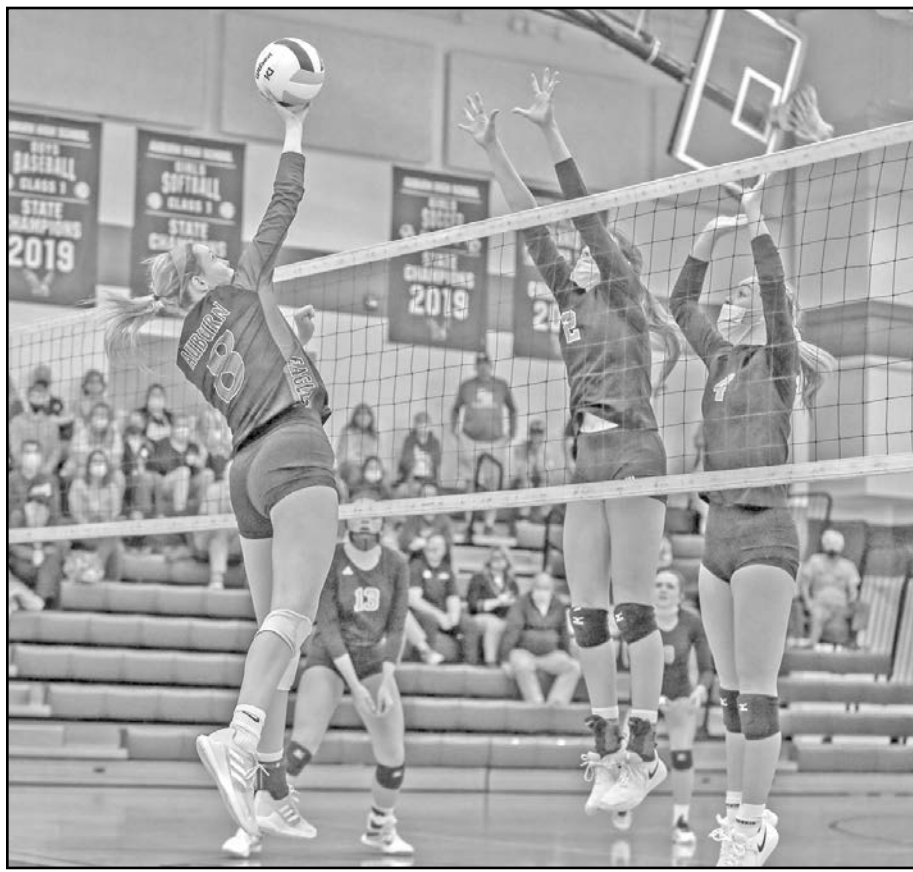
Martin was named to the MED first-team along with teammates Sara Nichols,

Anna McGuire and Madeline Lavergne. Avery Zuckerwar and Kaitlyn Lytton represented Auburn on the district second team.

Lilly Underwood and Morgan Bahnkan joined Elli Un-

derwood from Eastern Montgomery on the district's first team. Lake Smith was named to the second-team.

Bahnkan was also named to the second-team all-region squad.



Auburn's Allyson Martin was named the Mountain Empire District's volleyball Player of the Year Tuesday.



Eastern Montgomery's Elli Underwood was honored Tuesday as the Pioneer District's volleyball Player of the Year.

Proposed new Redskin team name list is lengthy



From the Sidelines
Marty Gordon

I still refer to the football team in Washington D.C., as the Redskins, and I think others will for many years to follow. But there continues to be a search to find just the right name to lead the National Football League into the future.

Over the past few weeks, the team has sent a list of names being considered to loyal fans, who are being given the opportunity for their input into the decision.

In 2020, the franchise cut ties with the name "Redskins" because of its negative attention to Indians in general.

The long-rumored favorites within the organization are the Warriors, Renegades and Redtails.

The list is vast with 37 names on it for consideration.

So here goes:

Aces, Ambassadors, Anchors, Archers, Armada, Aviators.

Beacons, Belters, Brigade, Commanders, Defenders, Demon Cats.

First City Football Club, Football Team, Griffins, Guardians, Icons, Majors, Monarchs.

Pilots, Presidents, Razorbacks, Redtails, Red Wolves, Red Hogs, Renegades, Riders, Rising, Royals, Rubies, Swift.

Warriors, The Washington DC Football Club, Washington Capital City Football Club.

Wayfarers, Wild Hogs, 32FC.

I really don't know what a lot of the names' connection to my favorite team is or will be, but I prefer the "Sentinels," which was the name of the football team in the movie The Replacements.

In the movie, the Sentinels sported a red, white and blue color scheme similar to the ones of the New England Patriots. Actor Keanu Reeves played the role of Shane Falco, the star quarterback.

Former RU coaches land new jobs

Marty Gordon
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

Three Radford University former coaches all have new positions.

Former head baseball coach Joe Raccuia, who had been serving as an instructor in the New York Mets organization, will serve as bench coach at the Mets' Double-A affiliate.

The Binghamton Rumble Ponies have officially announced the 2021 coaching staff that includes Raccuia, who will get his first experience in the minor leagues after coaching on the college level for 14 years. He was the head coach of Marist from 2004-2005 and the head coach of Radford from 2008-2019. He led his teams to the NCAA Regional three times

and a conference championship twice.

Bath County high School (Ohio) has announced the appointment of Kristin Holt as athletic director. She is a 1987 graduate of the university and previously had served as women's coach at Radford University, Colorado State and Texas-San Antonio.

Tajama Abraham-Ngongba, currently in her eighth season as an assistant coach on George Mason University's women's basketball team, was named the USVI National Team's coach. She replaces veteran coach William "Wilo" Colon, who last coached the U.S. Virgin Islands during the 2019 Pan American Games in Lima, Peru.

Abraham-Ngongba was a four-year starter at George

Washington where she led the Colonials to four straight NCAA Tournament appearances between 1994-1997. She still holds the program record for career scoring (2,134 points) and blocked shots (326).

She went on to play two seasons in the WNBA for the Sacramento Monarchs in 1997, and the Detroit Shock in 1998 as well as one year for Cavigal Nice Basket in France's Nationale Feminine 1 (NF1) league.

Abraham-Ngongba earned her first head coaching job at Radford University. In five seasons, she compiled a 62-85 record that included a 22-11 mark in 2010-2011, which earned her the Big South Conference's coach of the year award. Her contract was not renewed in the final season at Radford.

Chase Gibson catches record-setting musky



PHOTO COURTESY OF WVDGF

Just across the border in West Virginia, angler Chase Gibson, pictured above, earlier this week caught a new West Virginia state record for muskellunge (musky), measuring 54 inches and weighing 39.6 pounds. The fish, which was caught at Burnsville Lake, was tagged and released.

VT students team with Salem Red Sox to broadcast 2021 games

The Salem Red Sox have teamed up with the Virginia Tech School of Communication ahead of the 2021 baseball season to broadcast all 2021 Red Sox home games.

Kevin DiDomenico, a junior sports media and analytics major at Virginia Tech, will serve as broadcaster for the return of Salem baseball. He is currently the broadcast coordinator of 3304 Sports and the home radio voice for men's and women's basketball at Radford University.

DiDomenico served as the 2019 road voice for the Pulaske Yankees, the advanced rook-

ie league affiliate of the New York Yankees. He also serves as a play-by-play broadcaster for the ACC Network Extra for Virginia Tech baseball, lacrosse, soccer, and softball.

"I am thrilled to be joining such a storied organization," said DiDomenico. "I look forward to telling the story of the 2021 season to all of Red Sox nation, and after missing a full season of Sox baseball, I'm excited to be getting back behind the mike. I know Sox fans look forward to getting back to Salem Memorial ballpark."

3304 Sports is the multimedia online platform for stu-

dent sports journalism and the digital home of JMC 3304, the Sports Play-by-Play class at Virginia Tech. Members of the 3304 Sports team cover major college sporting events, giving them the opportunity to learn and grow in a professional environment.

Sports media and analytics students at Virginia Tech study sports journalism and work in the school's digital broadcast studio, newsroom, and media lab. Students learn in real-world environments through extensive field work on campus and at stadiums and arenas throughout the

ACC and the country.

"We are thrilled that our talented students in sports media and analytics will have this opportunity with the Salem Red Sox this upcoming season and in the years to come," said Robert E. Denton, Jr., director of the university's school of communication. "The sports media and analytics program continues to see rapid growth since it officially became a major in 2020. This is just another example of the exciting experiential activities available to our students in the school of communication."

"The best classroom is a baseball stadium," said ESPN and Westwood One broadcaster Bill Roth, who serves as a Professor of Practice in Virginia Tech's School of Communication. "We're excited that undergraduate students in our SMA program will have the opportunity to broadcast professional baseball in Salem and to learn, grow and develop their skills as part of the Red Sox organization."

The 2021 Salem Red Sox Opening Day is set for May 11. Games will be aired on streaming services and MiLB.com.

From sleeping on the streets to VT's football staff: Marc Lewis's incredible journey

Marc Lewis, Virginia Tech football's assistant director of strength and conditioning and the director of sports science, heard "Enter Sandman" blare and felt Lane Stadium shake.

Maroon- and orange-clad football players surrounded him in the moments before the team rushed onto the field.

Right then, Lewis knew he had come full circle from a homeless childhood to the U.S. Army to the staff of Virginia Tech Athletics.

On May 15, after a lifetime of overcoming seemingly impossible odds, Lewis will earn his Ph.D. from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences' Department of Human Nutrition, Foods, and Exercise.

He was born in Bluefield, W.Va., to a mother who struggled with substance abuse and a father he never knew. Struggling financially, his mother abandoned him in the trailer they were living in to go with a guy to Atlanta.

His biological grandmother took him in temporarily while he was in the court system. She pursued custody, but his mother returned, filed for custody herself and was denied. The mother then lied, telling law enforcement that the grandmother was abusing Lewis, and Lewis ended up in the foster care system, bouncing from home to home for years.

Lewis finally ended up with a family he considered his own, but because his mother refused to sign the adoption papers, he was sent back to live with her. His mom disappeared for long periods, leaving Lewis with random people. Lewis had his first memories of physical abuse from a babysitter, and he ended up back in social services.

Finally, Lewis lived with his grandmother again, who had relocated to Roanoke with her husband, a blue-collar railroad worker who took Lewis to Virginia Tech football games and was a positive influence.

In 2001, when Lewis was 14, he walked into his step-grandfather's room and found him lying on the floor. "I tried to give him CPR," said Lewis. "I didn't know he was already dead. With what happened to my grandmother, I didn't have anyone to live with."

Lewis moved in with another foster family in Roanoke, but the man who lived there had a short fuse and drank excessively.

"We got into a fight, and there was a fireplace with some chimney poker nearby. He grabbed one and came at me and caught me a couple of times," Lewis said. "He got me once on the neck. I left and went out on my own."

Lewis was around 15 years old when he began to sleep on the streets. "I slept wherever I could find shelter, such as under bridges in Roanoke," Lewis said.

"One thing that amazed me was how I was surrounded by drugs – like coke and meth – and by the grace of God I never partook in any of it," Lewis said. "I easily could have done drugs and become addicted because that's all I was around, and I had nothing."

Eventually, Lewis went to an adult education center in Bluefield to study for his GED where he caught the eye of a military recruiter.

Lewis passed his GED on the first try, just weeks

after starting classes at the adult education center. That opened the door to the military, which, in turn, would open the door to college courses.

Lewis started in the infantry, excelled in boot camp, and was promoted to airborne infantry in short order. It was the height of the war in Iraq and the Middle East, and the unit to which he was assigned was already deployed. He signed his will, had his wisdom teeth pulled, and was off to war.

He arrived in the middle of the night, caught some shuteye, and awoke to gunshots. They were under attack.

About three months after his arrival, he was in a Humvee manning the machine gun when the vehicle ran over an improvised explosive device (IED). Lewis was ejected out of the turret and knocked unconscious.

Just a month later, he was with a team that was at a stop directing traffic when they were fired upon. "The next thing you know people are dying and you're carrying them to the med tent and blood is everywhere," Lewis said. "You look at a guy's eyes as you carry him, and he's dying as you try to get him to the med tent."

Lewis had joined the military to get a college degree, so when he returned to the United States, he made that his top priority. Near the end of his time in the military, he got into physical conditioning and training.

Lewis took remedial courses at West Virginia University to make up for not having a formal high school education and then was admitted to the university's exercise physiology program.

He applied to the University of North Carolina, Wake Forest University, and the University of Virginia and was admitted to all of them with scholarships at each one. He accepted a full academic ride to Wake Forest.

Lewis worked with Wake Forest's strength and conditioning coach for the women's soccer team and did personal training outside of his other responsibilities to keep one foot in research and one in application. He graduated in 2014 and went on to earn his master's from the University of South Carolina.

When Lewis' biological grandmother was diagnosed with colon cancer, he decided to come to Virginia Tech to pursue his Ph.D. to be close to her. Before he started his Ph.D., Lewis earned two master's degrees, one in public health and another in higher education, at Virginia Tech.

Lewis interned with Greg Werner and the Virginia Tech women's basketball team, which in turn introduced him to the Virginia Tech football team. He joined the staff as the assistant director of strength and conditioning and the director of sports science.

"Grit and perseverance are two of the qualities we emphasize frequently in our football program," said VT head football



PHOTO COURTESY OF VT ATHLETICS

Touching the Hokie stone upon exiting the football tunnel at Virginia Tech has taken on a whole new meaning for Marc Lewis.

coach Justin Fuente. "There's no shortage of guys on our team who have rebounded from injuries, hardships, or other obstacles to enjoy success on the football field. However, I'd suggest that perhaps no one else currently associated with Virginia Tech football has overcome bigger odds in life to achieve what Marc Lewis has done."

After earning his Ph.D. from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Lewis will become a tenure-track professor at Valdosta State University in Georgia. "I'm getting my Ph.D. 45 minutes from where I

was homeless and from where I was abandoned as a baby in a trailer," he said. "It's surreal to be able to do this."

-- Max Esterhuizen, VT Athletics

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