



## Town to hold groundbreaking for new 63-acre park

The Town of Christiansburg will hold a groundbreaking ceremony for the new signature park today, Saturday, May 15, at 2:30 p.m.

The gathering will take place at the construction access point (300 Peppers Ferry Rd. NW) for brief remarks and a groundbreaking ceremony.

There will be a gravel access road at the intersection of Quin W. Stuart Boulevard and Peppers Ferry Road, next to National Tires & Battery

with limited grass parking in this area. Overflow parking is available at Real Life Dental (100 Quin W Stuart Blvd.).

Attendees are asked to use the crosswalk at the signalized intersection of Quin W Stuart Boulevard and Peppers Ferry Road to access the park property from Real Life Dental. The ceremony will be at the base of the valley directly across from the crosswalk.

The signature park project began

in 2013 when the town purchased the property. The 63-acre park will include many new amenities for residents to enjoy including four full-sized rectangular fields, a large scenic pavilion, a splash pad, a small and a large dog park, an inclusive playground, an adult fitness zone, a challenge course, nearly 1.5 miles of trails, and green space for passive recreation.

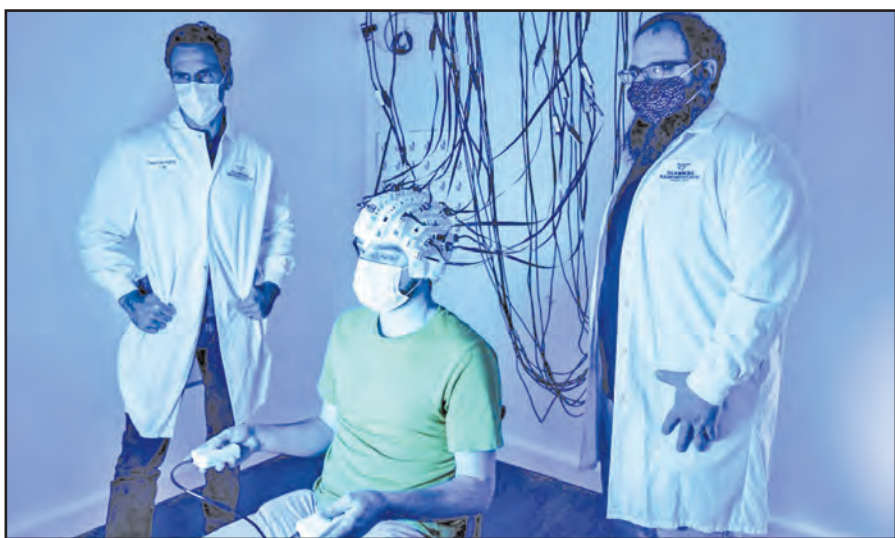
See **Groundbreaking**, page 4

## Virginia Tech launches 'next generation' human brain imaging lab

Researchers at the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute at the Virginia Tech Carilion (VTC) School of Medicine have received a \$2.4 million grant from the National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering to measure the brain's subtle magnetic signals in two research volunteers simultaneously during face-to-face social interactions, capturing the rich complexity of the brain's signaling in real-time.

As you read this story, your brain's cells are generating electrical currents that emit infinitesimally small magnetic fields. Now, Virginia Tech scientists can measure them using a new brain imaging technique called optically pumped magnetometry.

Optically pumped magnetometry devices are wearable, lightweight headsets that measure brain activity while research volunteers can move around, interact, and sit upright. The device, which looks like a hat with wires connected to it, uses quantum sensor chips to



**Read Montague (left), professor and director of the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute at the Virginia Tech Carilion (VTC) Center for Human Neuroscience Research, and Stephen LaConte (right), associate professor at the institute, work with research assistant Chris Huck to demonstrate the new optically pumped magnetometry technology. Photo by Clayton Metz/Virginia Tech.**

measure the strength and originating location of magnetic fields produced by the human brain.

Unlike noisy, cramped MRIs, which require participants to lie down and stay still, the new headset allows for movement. This opens up new doors to study babies and children while they're awake and in motion, as well as

research volunteers who have movement disorders.

"We're giddy to get people outside of magnets and into a setting where we can study social interactions, humans of all ages and sizes, and people in motion with fewer environmental limitations," said Read Montague, principal investigator on

the grant, professor with the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute and Virginia Tech College of Science's Department of Physics, and director of the institute's Center for Human Neuroscience Research. "We've never had the ability to make such sensitive direct mag-

See **Brain Lab**, page 4

## Blacksburg Museum, regional art association present Disks of Encouragement

In conjunction with the artists of the Blacksburg Regional Art Association (BRAA), the Blacksburg Museum and Cultural Foundation at the Black House on Draper Road in Blacksburg is presenting an outdoor, interactive art display designed to involve everyone in the community.

Titled "Disks of Encouragement," the display features more than 200 CD's that have been prepared for painting to create hanging art. Based on a "Take One -- Leave One" idea, the CD's give passers-by the opportunity to share their joy in spring with others or to take home a disk that makes them happy and gives encouragement as the situation in the pandemic gradually gets better.

In other words, art lovers are encouraged to either take a finished disk if it makes them feel happy or to leave a decorated disk to bring happiness to

others.

Prepared CD's and instructions are available at the museum and foundation, affectionately known as the Black House, and at Gillie's and Bollo's restaurants for painting and hanging. Persons with CD's they no longer want may donate them to be decorated by dropping them off at the Black House to be prepared with drilling and a base coat of paint.

The museum and foundation staff welcome the community to share good wishes, encouragement, and spring thoughts through words and art on the five-inch CD's.

The new BRAA Co-Op Gallery, The Art Space@The Artful Lawyer, (between Hokie House and Chipotle) will also have prepared blanks so visitors and artists can decorate one while there and leave them to be picked up weekly by the Black House staff. Artists

can also take a disk home to work on and drop at the Black House. Check the BRAA website <https://www.blacksburgart.org/artspace> for co-op gallery hours. The gallery is currently open on weekends only, Friday through Monday from noon to 4 p.m.

Dave Angle, BRAA member, built a rebar "pergola" as the base of the sculpture in front of the Black House to hold several hundred decorated disks. BRAA members Sue Hossack, Diamond Gabriel, Mary Ratcliff, and Trena Bell have painted disks to get the exchange started. Many disks are already hanging and will stay on the pergola at least through the planned re-opening of the museum in early June.

For CD-to-paint pick-up information, contact Sherry Kurtz, director of marketing and community engagement at the Alexander Black House, [skurtz@blacksburghistory.org](mailto:skurtz@blacksburghistory.org).



**Sherry Kurtz, director of marketing and community engagement for the Alexander Black House, adjusts the hanger for one of the disks on the interactive art sculpture at the front of the house on Draper Road. Photo by Gerri Young**



**Of course, there had to be a happy face on the Alexander Black House pergola. Photo by Gerri Young**



PHOTO COURTESY OF DLANA BODMER

**A bracelet was recently found during evacuation of a site near Meadow Creek that people believe once belonged to Radford University student Gina Hall who was killed in 1980.**

## More bone fragments, bracelet found in Gina Hall murder case

The sister of Gina Hall, a Radford University student killed in 1980, believes she has found body parts and a bracelet that once belonged to her sister.

Dlana Bodmer has been on a mission for the past four years, incorporating new technology and several leads she refers to in a recent Facebook post.

Bodmer says the bracelet is what her sister was wearing when she left to dance at a Blacksburg nightclub. The bracelet

and large bone fragments were found at the Steep Place near Graysontown Road, which has been used as a dump area for the past 20 to 40 years. The same site is located adjacent to a spot reported to investigators where a farmer saw Stephen Epperly and another man cutting up bait.

"The cutting up bait was just his first thought when he saw it, but he was always adamant that what he saw was Epperly and

See **Gina Hall** page 5

## Virginia begins vaccinating those aged 12-15 following federal approval

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) announced Wednesday that providers across the commonwealth could begin vaccinating those aged 12-15 following federal approval of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for use in adolescents.

The vaccine previously was approved for use in those aged 16 and older while two other available vaccines are approved for those 18 and older.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) approved use of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for those aged 12-15 Wednesday, accepting the recommendation of its Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), which met earlier in the day to review safety data for the vaccine in this age group. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on Monday amended the vaccine's Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) to include those aged 12-15.

"Generally, adolescents who contract COVID-19 usually do not develop severe symptoms, but they contribute to the spread of COVID-19," said Dr. Danny Avula, Virginia's vaccination coordinator.

"Vaccinating adolescents, along with the rest of Virginia's eligible population, will help stop the

spread of COVID-19 and make our communities safer," Avula said. "Getting this safe, effective vaccine means that these adolescents won't have to miss school, sporting events or other activities if they are exposed to someone with COVID-19, taking another step toward getting their lives back to normal."

In the Pfizer-BioNTech clinical trial with about 2,000 participants aged 12-15, the vaccine was found to be 100 percent effective in preventing COVID-19 occurring at least seven days after the second dose. It is typical for a new vaccine to be studied in adults first and then to gradually include younger age groups.

"This is great news. Like everyone else, our young people have had their lives disrupted over the past year. Vaccination will allow all of us to come together with the assurance that we are doing everything we can to protect ourselves and each other. I urge families to make vaccination a priority for everyone who qualifies to be vaccinated," said state health commissioner M. Norman Oliver. "Millions of people already have been vaccinated, and the FDA and the CDC continue to monitor COVID-19 vaccines for side effects. This is indeed our shot at ending

See **Vaccines**, page 2

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## Saturday, May 15:

**Caturday Storytime**  
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 around and read. Email shodges@mfri.org for information on the library's Go-To Meeting.

## Monday, May 17:

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

## Tuesday, May 18:

**Dungeons & Dragons**  
Join the Radford Public Library's very first Dungeons & Dragons adventure, a one-shot adventure for level 1 characters at 4:30 p.m. To participate, message the library on Facebook or email duncan.hall@radfordva.gov. Tuesday, May 18 at 4:30 p.m.

## Wednesday, May 19:

**American Red Cross Blood Drive**  
At the Meadowbrook Public Library from 1:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m., the American Red Cross will be having a blood drive at the Waldron Wellness Center-Carilion Community Room. The drive is sponsored by Blue Ridge Church and the Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library. Help save a life by donating blood. Schedule an appointment at [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org). Patrons of the Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library who have fines and donate blood will be forgiven up to \$10 of their debt, 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.

**Art Club Virtual Meeting**  
At the Christiansburg Library from 2:00 p.m. until 3:00 p.m. Create a nature zone and learn about artist John James Audubon.

Stop by the library for a curated craft kit and catch a video tutorial on the Christiansburg Facebook Page.

## Thursday, May 20:

**Talking About Books: Non-fiction Virtual Meeting**  
At the Christiansburg Library from 11:00 a.m. until noon. To be discussed this month is "Cleopatra: a Life," by Stacy Schiff.

**A Bedtime Tale with Bedtime Tails with Katarina Illona**  
At the Montgomery Floyd Regional Library online from 6:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. Join a reading and talk with Katarina Illona, the author of "Bedtime Tails: A New Adventure." Bedtime Tails introduces readers to Perkins the cat, who lives with his mom and dad. His peaceful life is flipped upside down when a new addition is added to the family: his new sister, Daisy. Join Perkins as he maneuvers these changes, all while learning how important it is to accept and welcome others. Email Kerri at [kcopus@mfri.org](mailto:kcopus@mfri.org) to register.

## Thursday, May 20 - Friday, May 28:

**Blended learning lifeguard 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 and May 28: 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. The cost is \$200.

## Friday, May 21:

**United Way Drive-Thru Breakfast**  
At the Hampton Inn, 680 Arbor Drive, Christiansburg; from 6:00 to 9:00 a.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.

**Red Cross Blood Drive**  
At the Blacksburg Library from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Sign up at [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org).

**Teens Cook: Pesto**

At the Montgomery Floyd Regional Library online at 1:00 p.m. Watch librarians and try your hand at making homemade pesto.

## 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. Award 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. The team registration fee is \$350 per team. Email [radfordchamber@govt.com](mailto:radfordchamber@govt.com) to be emailed a registration form.

**Talking About Books: Fiction Virtual**  
At the Blacksburg Library from 11:00 a.m. until noon. To be discussed is "On Earth We are Briefly Gorgeous," by Ocean Vuong. Call ahead to reserve a copy and get the link for virtual participation.

**Beans to Plastic**  
At the Montgomery Floyd Regional Library online at 1:00 p.m. Check out the library's STEM video on how to turn beans into plastic.

## Tuesday, May 25:

**MFRL at the Christiansburg Rec Center**  
Christiansburg Library from 2:30 until 4:30 p.m. Miss the library? Want to save a trip? The library will have books available for checkout plus library cards and information about the library available while you work out.

**Science Fiction and Fantasy Book Club: virtual**  
At the Blacksburg Library from 6:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. To be discussed is "Babel 17" by Samuel R. Delany. Call ahead to get a copy of this month's book and to get the link.

## Wednesday, May 26:

**Warm Hearth Village pickle ball court ribbon cutting**  
Sponsored by the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce

from 11 a.m. until noon at Warm Hearth Village, 2387 Warm Hearth Drive, Blacksburg.

**Hahn Horticulture Garden Virtual Road Trip**  
At 2 p.m. from Lotusland with Paul Mills and Rebecca Anderson. Register online and a zoom link will be provided: [https://virginiatech.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_cumxRA-4Mec96guy](https://virginiatech.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cumxRA-4Mec96guy).

## Monday, May 31:

**Radford Memorial Day Service**  
At 11:00 a.m. at the Bisset Park gazebo in Radford. Hosted by VFW Post 776 and the Harvey-Howe-Carper Post 30 of the American Legion.

## Thursday, June 3:

**Chamber of Commerce Eggs & Issues Zoom breakfast**  
From 8:00 a.m. until 9:00 a.m. Register at <http://bit.ly/June2021Eggs>. Once attendees register and pay, they will receive the zoom link 48 hours prior to the program. Space is limited and reservations are required. Register and pay online or contact [programs@montgomerycc.org](mailto:programs@montgomerycc.org). The deadline to register is June 2, 2021 by 4 p.m. Speakers will be Mark Husband, Director of Career and Technical Education for Montgomery County Public Schools, and Mark Rowh, Vice President for Workforce Development and External Relations. The program will begin promptly at 8:00 a.m., but registrants are encouraged to join early from 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. for networking. Admission fee is \$10 for chamber members and \$20 for non-members.

**Montgomery Chamber of Commerce bocce ball tournament**  
From 2:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. at Montgomery County Moose Lodge 1470, 115 Farmview Road, Christiansburg. Register a team at <http://bit.ly/mccbocce2021>, but only a limited number of slots remain open.

## Saturday, June 12:

Department of Wildlife Re-

**sources Boating Safety Class at Claytor Lake**  
At the State Park Water's Edge Building, 6620 Ben H. Bolen Drive, Dublin, from 8:00 a.m. until 5 p.m. Materials and instruction are free of charge. Bring a pencil, a highlighter and lunch. Students may bring food and drink for themselves during the class. Children 12 and under must be accompanied by an adult.

Pre-registration is required. By registering for this class, the student agrees to observe all pandemic protocols including social distancing and mask wearing as required by the governor's most recent executive order. Before entering the class, the student will be asked a short health-related symptom survey and will be asked to affirm that the student will abide by classroom rules including social distancing and mask wearing. RSVP at <https://www.register-ed.com/events/view/167760>. For more information, contact Mendy Harman at 540-494-3569, [mendy.harman@dwr.virginia.gov](mailto:mendy.harman@dwr.virginia.gov).

## Ongoing:

### 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's 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 Meadowbrook Library for Take-and-Make Craft Kits. Available for grab-n-go at the library or with curbside pickup. They are free but supplies are limited.

### Saturdays through October:

**Radford Farmers Market**  
The Radford Farmers Market will be held each Saturday through October 30, from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. at the New River Valley Community Services parking lot (the Old Wade's parking lot) on West Main Street.

# Farmers markets almost back to pre-COVID conditions

RICHMOND—The spring opening of local farmers markets is a welcome return to normalcy for both farmers and consumers.

Last spring many farmers had to shift to online ordering, requiring some to create Internet sites. Market operators had to develop touchless delivery systems and provide hand-washing stations, increase space between booths, and limit in-person attendance.

Most of those restrictions have been lifted or eased under Gov. Ralph Northam's latest executive order regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. But a few remain in place, including physical distancing of vendors and mandatory face masks for vendors and shoppers.

"Compared to this time last year, preorders are down, but all of the farmers that did have or created an online store are continuing to take those

orders," said Ricky Kowalewski, market manager for the Lynchburg Community Market. "We're slowly getting back to pre-COVID attendance numbers."

Customers at the Charlottesville farmers market sites have had to preorder and pick up their produce remotely since last spring. Market manager Justin McKenzie said his vendors are eager to return to face-to-face sales.

"It was nice for producers to know exactly how much to bring" thanks to preordering, McKenzie said. "But this year I see a shift in consumer habits. People are not ordering online as much anymore. People are ready to shop in person and see the product in person."

Adapting to physical distancing is one challenge market operators still need to overcome. Another is pushback from customers who don't want to wear masks.

"With the CDC saying vaccinated people don't need to wear a mask, now it's even worse for us to say, 'You have to put on a mask,'" said Amy Jordan, co-manager of several Hampton Roads markets. "So we're put in a very difficult position. People are screaming in our faces about their rights, and that we're outside, etc."

Kim Hutchinson, executive director of the Virginia Farmers Market Association, said the governor's latest guidelines treat farmers markets as large groups of unrelated people congregating; therefore, masks are still needed. The trade group represents about 350 market sites statewide.

"It's challenging. A market like Charlottesville could have 5,000 people go through it on a Saturday, while some smaller markets may have less than 1,000 people all weekend," Hutchinson explained. "So many man-



agers are opting to keep strict sanitary guidelines in place. We're urging our market managers to be very clear what the market rules are for each site in their advertising and social media posts."

On the bright side, there are more customers than ever, she noted.

"Though sales are not what they were last year at the height of the pandemic, we're continuing to see a 35% to 40% re-

stitution of new customers we picked up last year at farmers markets. I hope that will increase as we start to see seasonal items like fresh tomatoes become available," Hutchinson said.

## Vaccines

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this pandemic and saving lives."

According to the weekly American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) State-Level Data Report, as of May 6, 2021, over 3.85 million children in the U.S. have tested positive for COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic with 102,682 cumulative cases in children in Virginia. Children represented 14 percent of all cases in the U.S. and 15.5 percent in Virginia.

Administration of the vaccine in adolescents will be the same as in adults: given in two doses separated by 21 days. Adolescents are considered fully vaccinated 14 days after receiving the second dose. Side effects in this

age group included pain or redness in the arm where the vaccine is given, fatigue, fever, and muscle aches.

The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is the only one approved for use in those under 18 years of age, so parents and guardians should ensure that vaccine is offered before scheduling an appointment or attending a walk-in clinic. To schedule an appointment, adolescents and their parents or guardians can go to [virginia.gov](http://virginia.gov), and search for locations offering Pfizer-BioNTech, call 877-VAX-IN-VA (877-829-4682), or speak with their primary care provider.

In most cases, adolescents must

have the consent of a parent or legal guardian and be accompanied by a parent, guardian, or someone acting in the place of a guardian to receive a vaccine. In a school setting, written consent is required, but a parent or guardian is not required to be present.

Parents or guardians should check with the facility that is offering the vaccination about consent and who needs to accompany the adolescent. Additionally, sites run by the Virginia Department of Health require the parent or guardian verbally to confirm a minor's date of birth. Other providers, however, may require additional proof of age.



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## PETS-OF-THE-WEEK

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



**Karma has been a resident at the Animal Care and Adoption Center since the end of March and is ready to head home. She'll need a home with adults only as she's had some negative experiences with children. Karma would benefit from some leash-walking lessons. She is food motivated and will gladly settle down for a pawsome treat.**



**Buzzy lives in a community cat room with Wild Thing. The preference is that they are adopted together to the same home. Buzzy is playful and athletic. Rumor has it that he may be a Parkour enthusiast.**

## Grilling food is popular, but it isn't without risk



**Grilling sends 19,700 people to the emergency room annually.**

According to the National Fire Protection Association, an average of 10,600 home fires that send 19,700 people to the emergency room annually are the results of grilling incidents. Thermal burns account for 9,500 of those injuries.

Chris Meyer, a lieutenant for the City of Fairfax Fire Department and a member of the Virginia Farm Bureau Farm Safety Advisory Committee, said many fires are the direct result of grill placement. A common problem is locating the grill too close to combustible construction, such as vinyl siding and wood decks.

"What ultimately happens is if they leave their grill on or the fire gets slightly out of control, the siding starts to melt and will ignite the wood," he said. "It gets hot and moves quickly."

Meyer explained that vinyl siding is petroleum-based and flammable. Fires

can easily spread to attics, which often have blown-in insulation, another combustible product.

"It doesn't take anything for an outside grill fire to burn the siding and get into the roof before the occupants have any clue that their house is on fire," Meyer said.

He said another common issue, particularly in rural areas, is the use of inappropriate ignition sources to start a grill.

"Instead of using lighter fluid, an electric starter or a charcoal chimney starter, people will get gasoline or diesel since it's readily available on the farm," Meyer said.

According to the NFPA, gas grills contribute to more fires than their charcoal counterparts, with most problems caused by gas leaks or breaks. If a gas smell is detected, have it checked out, Meyer said.

And when finished grilling, let things cool down, he stressed.

"People will put their charcoal briquettes that are still hot into a plastic container, a paper bag, or a plastic trash can," Meyer said. "That's how a significant number of fires start on the charcoal grill side."

To stay safe this grilling season, follow these safety tips from the NFPA:

Propane and charcoal grills should be used outdoors only. Never grill on a balcony.

The grill should be placed well away from the home and deck railings, and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.

Keep children and pets at least three feet away from the grill area.

Keep your grill clean by removing grease or fat buildup from the cooking racks and trays below them.

Never leave your grill unattended.

Always make sure your gas grill lid is open before lighting it.

## Five ways the Hokies responded to the challenge of the year of the pandemic



**Fernanda Gutierrez and other members of the COVID Crushers group hand out masks, hand sanitizer, and resources in downtown Blacksburg. Photo by Ryan Young for Virginia Tech.**

Thousands of Hokies visited Lane Stadium this past year, but it wasn't to watch a football game, nosh on turkey legs, and hear the Corps of Cadets' Skipper cannon fire. It was to receive a COVID-19 test, a vaccine, or both.

This change in identity for Virginia Tech's iconic Lane Stadium underscores the enormous shift that the academic year took in Blacksburg and at universities around the world.

The year of the coronavirus pandemic was historic. It changed the way students learned and interacted, the way professors taught classes, the way employees worked, and the way campus and community operated at Virginia Tech locations around the state.

Still, the Hokie Nation persevered. This fall, the majority of classes will be held in person and campus operations will return to more normal levels.

Here are five ways that Virginia Tech maneuvered a challenging academic year and emerged stronger as a result:

### Tracking and testing

As coronavirus cases grew across the country, Virginia Tech put a plan in place for managing the virus and its spread on campus. Students returned in the fall to mandatory COVID-19 testing at Lane Stadium for those living on campus.

As for testing throughout the semester, the university contracted with ARCPoint Labs, a national third-party provider of diagnostic testing services, and opened a testing center at Lane Stadium for surveillance and prevalence testing for students and university employees. With the help of numerous Virginia Tech students who were employed there, the site performed about 800 tests a day.

Additionally, Schiffert Health Center performed tests for students with COVID-19 symptoms who were not included as part of surveillance and prevalence testing.

### Supporting Students

Virginia Tech designated New Hall West and East Eggleston Hall as isolation and quarantine spaces for students who tested positive for COVID-19 or were in close contact with someone with the virus.

But it wasn't easy for students to spend 10 to 14 days in isolation or quarantine. That's when some new programs to support students came to life.

In the spring semester, Virginia Tech added welcome desks, manned by Student Affairs employees, at the entry ways of each hall. They served as concierge desks for students who needed certain supplies as well as spaces to receive food and other deliveries from outside.

Additionally, a new fenced courtyard served as an outdoor respite for students who wished to use it for specific designated times daily.

Employees throughout the university also volunteered as student advocates. Each advocate was assigned to a student in quarantine and isolation, helping and communicating with them during the 10- to 14-day period.

### Getting Creative

The Division of Student Affairs launched the pods network during the spring semester. Pods are small groups of students who can relax some COVID-19-related precautions when together with a shared commit-

ment to one another's health and well-being. Students registered their pods, named them, and participated in certain programs together, such as private group exercise classes and game nights.

Also, professors and students found ways to teach and learn safely in person from the Virginia Tech Chamber Singers rehearsing in the Perry Street parking garage to outdoor labs for Wildlife Field Biology and Mammalogy courses taught by Kevin Hamed, a collegiate assistant professor in the Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation.

### Students standing for public health

From volunteering at testing centers to helping with vaccinations and spreading the word about COVID-19 safety, the Virginia Tech community played a big part in pushing out the public health messages this past year.

A group of Hokies studying public health, coined the COVID Crushers, were particularly visible in the fall as they took to the streets of downtown Blacksburg on Fridays and Saturdays to distribute face masks and hand sanitizer, and talk with people about public health guidelines during the pandemic. The students also created a COVID-19 themed podcast.

Students and Virginia Tech faculty and staff also served in the Medical Reserve Corps in the New River Valley, which is an arm of the Virginia Department of Health. The MRC consists of volunteers stationed throughout the commonwealth who help with public health initiatives and other needs.

Some Hokies invented products to help with COVID-19 communication. One example is TranparenSee, a group of students in the engineering and Master of Public Health programs who designed a clear, fog-resistant face mask to allow for better communication with the deaf and hard of hearing community. They have designed more than 1,000 masks and distributed them for free to schools and families across the country.

### Vaccines for all

Once the coronavirus vaccines were available for Virginia Tech employees and students, the university sprung to action, working with the New River Health District to make the vaccines as accessible as possible.

Lane Stadium served as the site for large vaccination clinics with the first held April 15 and organized and overseen by the New River Task Force and the health district. Students received first doses of the Moderna vaccine at what was considered the largest vaccination clinic ever held in the New River Valley.

The clinic enlisted more than 140 volunteers from the Virginia Tech community with about 40 percent of those being students.

"This is how we've done the entire New River Valley; it's been one continuous outreach project," said Anthony Wilson, Blacksburg police chief, on April 15. "If folks want to know the secret to how we got so many folks vaccinated and how we were able to have such a successful clinic today, it's this combination of everybody from all different walks of life coming together to make sure we all do it."

— Written by Jenny Kincaid Boone

## Historic Montgomery



**Digital scan of photograph of Cambria Depot freight agent J. Albert Woolwine with wagons of U. S. Mail at the depot. (This image and many more are available from the Montgomery Museum of Art & History.)**

### NOTICE RADFORD RESIDENTS

The deadline for paying **REAL ESTATE TAXES** (first installment) for 2021 is **JUNE 7, 2021**.

All taxes must be paid no later than June 7, 2021 to avoid additional fees, penalty, and interest starting June 8, 2021.

All payments made by mail must bear a postmark no later than June 7, 2021 to avoid penalty and interest.

Taxes may be paid in person, online or by mail:

Treasurer's Office  
619 Second Street, Rm 164  
Radford, VA  
8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
Monday-Friday

### Authorized by:

**Janet H. Jones, Treasurer**  
City of Radford, Virginia

# OPINION

## WalletHub ranks Virginia among safest states during pandemic

The personal finance website WalletHub Wednesday released its latest rankings of the safest states during the pandemic, and Virginia came in among the top tier, at No. 16 among the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

The website noted that the good news for the country is that as of Wednesday, May 12,

around 35% of the population has been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 as efforts continue to pick up speed.

To identify the safest states during the COVID-19 pandemic, WalletHub compared the 50 states and the District of Columbia across five key metrics: 1) Vaccination Rate 2) Positive Testing Rate 3) Hospi-

talization Rate 4) Death Rate and 5) Transmission Rate.

That methodology resulted in the determination that the ten safest places during the pandemic have been and are 1) Hawaii 2) Vermont 3) Massachusetts 4) Maine 5) New Hampshire 6) Nebraska 7) Rhode Island 8) Connecticut 9) District of Columbia and

10) California.

Among those five metrics, according to WalletHub's report, the states with the highest vaccination rates are 1) Vermont 2) Massachusetts 3) Hawaii 4) Connecticut and 5) New Hampshire.

The states with the lowest positive testing rates are 1) California 2) Vermont 3) Mas-

sachusetts 4) Rhode Island and 5) Hawaii.

The states with the lowest hospitalization rate are 1) Hawaii 2) Vermont 3) California 4) Rhode Island and 5) Nebraska.

The states with the lowest death rate are 1) Mississippi 2) Alabama 3) Hawaii 4) South Carolina and 5) Wyoming.

## WalletHub: Virginia has 2021's seventh smallest drug problem

As the war on drugs continues unabated and is only getting worse, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the personal finance website WalletHub assembled a report to determine where the problem is the worst. Virginia emerged from the report as one of the states with the smallest drug problem, seventh in the nation with the highest numbers being the smallest problems.

According to Wal-

letHub, there were over 88,000 drug overdose deaths in 2020, up around 27% from the previous year. In an effort to help bring these numbers down, the government included \$4 billion for substance use and mental health programs in the American Rescue Plan stimulus.

WalletHub's report sought to answer the question as to where drug abuse is most pronounced and which areas are most

at risk.

The report compared the 50 states and the District of Columbia across key metrics ranging from arrest and overdose rates to opioid prescriptions and employee drug testing laws.

With the higher numbers representing the smallest problems, Virginia's standings in several of the key metrics were as follows: 1) Share of teenagers who used illicit drugs in the past month:

41; 2) Share of adults who used illicit drugs in the past month: 44; 3) Opioid pain reliever prescriptions per 100 people: 37; 4) Drug overdose deaths per capita: 29; 5) Drug arrests per capita: 18; Share of adults who couldn't get treatment for illicit drug use in the past year: 32.

Other metrics used to determine the rankings included the share of teenagers who tried marijuana before age

13; the share of teenagers offered, sold or given an illegal drug on school property in the past year; the share of children who lived with anyone who had a problem with alcohol or drugs; the number of clandestine drug laboratories or dumpsites; drug arrests on college campuses per 1,000 students; prescription drug monitoring laws; and admissions to substance abuse treatment services per 1,000 people using il-

licit drugs.

According to the report, the ten places with the worst drug problems were the District of Columbia, West Virginia, Missouri, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, Delaware, Michigan, Indiana, and Kentucky.

The only states that ranked ahead of Virginia in terms of having a smaller drug problem were Nebraska, Iowa, Idaho, Minnesota, Utah, and Hawaii.

Submit letters to the editor to editor@ourvalley.org

### News Messenger

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## Virginia's individual income tax filing and payment deadline is Monday, May 17

The Commonwealth of Virginia's deadline for the filing and payment of individual income taxes is Monday, May 17.

"This year, the typical May 1 filing and payment deadline was extended by a few weeks to match the new IRS deadline," said Virginia Tax Commissioner Craig M. Burns. "We are, as always, encouraging taxpayers to file electronically and request a refund, if they have one coming, via direct deposit."

Generally, up to four weeks are required to process an electronically-filed return with up to eight weeks required to process a paper

return. However, COVID-19 protocols in place mean even more time than eight weeks will probably be necessary to move a paper return through the system.

As a result of this year's filing and payment extension, no penalties or interest will apply so long as a return is filed and full payment is made by Monday, May 17.

Taxpayers whose income was \$72,000 or less in 2020 are eligible to file their taxes for free.

For taxpayers who miss the filing deadline, Virginia has an automatic, 6-month filing extension. No application is required. Taxpayers will still need to pay any

taxes owed on time to avoid additional penalties and interest.

To make a payment, taxpayers have several easy-to-use options available including online, directly from their bank account; check or money order; and credit or debit card, both of which incur an additional fee.

For secure, online self-service, taxpayers can create and log onto an online individual account. This allows taxpayers to track their return or refund. They can also check the status of their refund by calling 804.367.2486, or using the Where's My Refund application on the Virginia Tax website.

## Brain Lab

from page 1

netic measurements, and now we're applying this transformative technology in the social domain."

Over the past three years, Montague and his team have established one of the nation's first optically pumped magnetometry laboratories in Roanoke at the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute.

Co-principal investigator Stephen LaConte, associate professor and an expert in advanced neuroimaging at the Fralin

Biomedical Research Institute, said they aim to use optically pumped magnetometry sensors to conduct movement-tolerant brain imaging simultaneously with two research volunteers.

"It is difficult to overstate the importance of face-to-face interactions for human neuroscience," LaConte said. "Face perception is one of the most critical functions in social interactions and is one of the most vital human perceptual skills." LaConte is also an associate professor of biomechanical engineering and mechanics in Virginia Tech's College of

Engineering.

Optically pumped magnetometers are incredibly sensitive, picking up subtle magnetic fields on the quantum scale of femtoteslas, about a billion times smaller than the Earth's magnetic field. The optically pumped magnetometry sensors work by passing a laser beam through a glass cell filled with vapor. Magnetic fields generated by the brain shift the vapor's atomic energy levels in the cell, either enhancing or fading the light current. The cell's sensor detects changes in the laser beam and produces an electric

current proportional to the amount of light passing through it, converting a magnetic signal into an electric one.

But for the sensors to work, the researchers need to eliminate interfering signals that muddy the data. Nearby automobile traffic, a piece of misplaced metal, and even the Earth's core all produce interfering magnetic signals. That's why the new laboratory is set inside a magnetically shielded room made of mu-metal, a nickel-iron alloy. The researchers use additional coils to further shield remnant signals and help refine the data.

## Groundbreaking

from page 1

This will be an outside event, with plenty of space to spread out. Attendees should wear masks and follow all safety best practices. Masks will also be provided on site.

In case of inclement weather, the ceremony will be on Saturday, May 22, at 2:30 p.m.

In 2013, the Town of Christiansburg paid \$2.5 million for 63 acres of former farmland off Peppers Ferry Road, with the intent of ultimately building a park in the location. The property is known by the name of its late owner Truman Wilson, who lived, farmed and operated a sawmill there. Since the purchase of the property and while planning efforts for the park were underway, the town leased the land for cattle grazing.

In 2016, the town unveiled a conceptual master plan for the park, and in 2018, the town received an unsolicited Public-Private Education Facilities and Infrastructure Act (PPEA) design and construction proposal to build the park. This legislation was passed in 2002 by the Virginia General Assembly to allow localities to form partnerships with the private sector. Through these partnerships, the public and private sectors work together to complete major projects like building new schools and parks. The town council chose to accept this proposal for consideration and directed town administration to advertise for competing proposals.

The town received additional proposals from two design-build teams and initiated the process to review the three proposals. After consideration of the proposals, the

town selected the proposal submitted by the Falconer Construction team and entered into an interim agreement to design the park to the 80% completion stage and establish a Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) for the park construction.

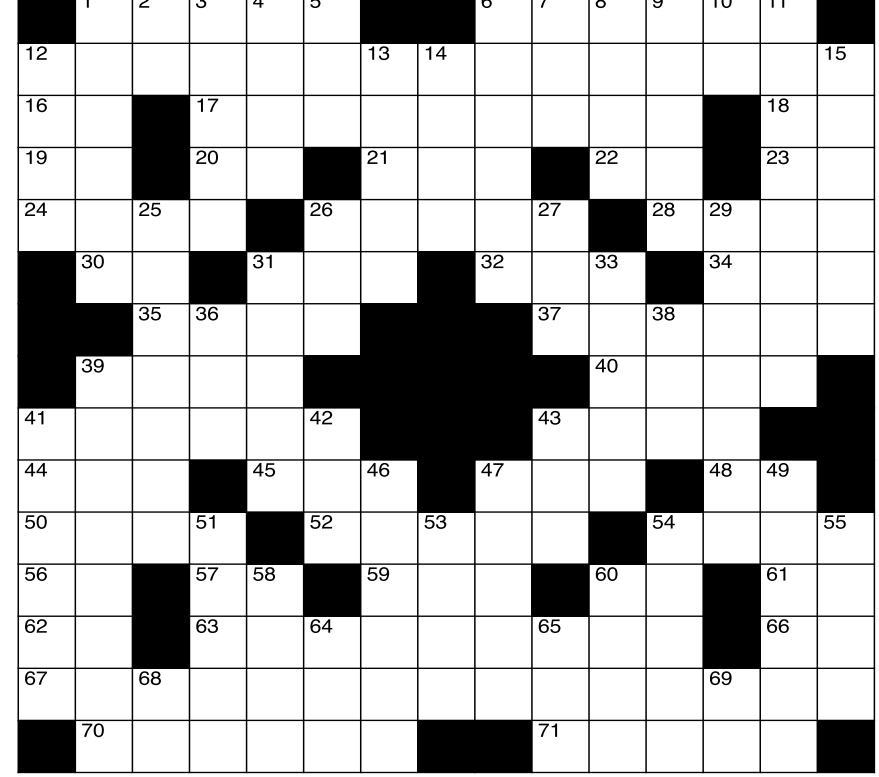
At its Nov. 10, 2020, meeting, the town council approved a budget amendment to the Fiscal Year 2020-2021 budget, which includes funding for the park, moving the project forward. At its Dec. 8, 2020, meeting, the council voted to enter into a comprehensive agreement with Falconer Construction Company to build the park.

Since December, 2020, the town staff has worked with the Falconer Design Team to finalize the park construction plans. The plans include the initial extension of the Booker T. Washington Parkway to the park entrance that will eventually connect to Cambria Street and North Franklin Street in the future when funds are available.

All rights-of-way and permits have been secured. The town signed and approved the final plans on May 10, 2021. Construction will unofficially begin today with the official groundbreaking ceremony.

The park is estimated to cost a total of \$17,995,000 and will be paid for by a combination of monies from the town's general fund, town reserves, private contributions and sponsorships, revenue from the sale of commercial outparcels on the park property, grants, and bonds. The town expects to borrow roughly \$9.3 million to complete the project.

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE



- CLUES ACROSS**
- 1. Member of Jamaican religion
  - 6. Explodes
  - 12. "Waiter White" produced this
  - 16. Promo
  - 17. In a harmful way
  - 18. Aluminium
  - 19. Cerium
  - 20. Female title
  - 21. Singer DiFranco
  - 22. Beloved alien
  - 23. Free agent
  - 24. Tax
  - 26. Change
  - 28. Heaviness
  - 30. Third note of the solfège
  - 31. Printing speed measurement
  - 32. Pouch
  - 34. Brew
  - 35. Female of a horse
  - 37. Platforms
  - 39. Type of hemline
  - 40. "Traffic" actor Guzman
  - 41. Counts on
  - 42. Inhabitant of Media
  - 44. Pitcher's statistic
  - 45. Beloved dish \_\_\_ and cheese
  - 47. An association of criminals
  - 48. Samarium
  - 50. Describes an action
  - 52. About oviduct
  - 54. Holy fire
  - 56. Audio frequency
  - 57. Stephen King novel
  - 59. Rocky peak
  - 60. South Dakota
  - 61. Gallium
  - 62. Larry and Curly's buddy
  - 63. One-dimensionality
  - 66. Soldier
  - 67. Act of foretelling future events
  - 70. Envisaged
  - 71. Establish by law
- CLUES DOWN**
- 1. Regain possession of
  - 2. Indicates position
  - 3. Con games
  - 4. Checks
  - 5. Atomic mass unit
  - 6. Large groups
  - 7. Utah athlete
  - 8. Abnormal sound
  - 9. Scandal vocalist Patty
  - 10. Atlanta rapper
  - 11. Takes without permission
  - 12. Apple computers
  - 13. Hymn
  - 14. Clue
  - 15. Makes happy
  - 25. Close to
  - 26. Mimic
  - 27. Cool!
  - 29. Simplest
  - 31. Preface
  - 33. Represents the Tribe of Judah
  - 36. Boxing great
  - 38. Birth control means
  - 39. English cathedral city
  - 41. Refurbish
  - 42. Test for high schoolers
  - 43. "Boardwalk Empire" actress Gretchen
  - 46. Most adorable
  - 47. Large Pakistani tribe
  - 49. Enemy to grass
  - 51. Along the outer surface of a hull
  - 53. Travels on water
  - 54. Innermost Greek temple sanctuaries
  - 55. Fire and \_\_\_
  - 58. Singer Turner
  - 60. "\_\_\_ the Man" Musial
  - 64. \_\_\_ de plume
  - 65. Frozen water
  - 68. An alternative
  - 69. Intensive care

# Center for Food Systems and Community Transformation works to address food system inequities

Two major challenges are at the forefront of society this year: COVID-19 and social equity disparities.

Both issues highlighted shortcomings in food systems across the country, and the Center for Food Systems and Community Transformation at Virginia Tech, created in late 2019, saw the opportunity to address these issues through projects and programming on racial justice, equitable food access and availability, and community resiliency.

“The reality of systemic racism in society and how it is interconnected to the food system became even more apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic,”

said VT’s Kim Niewolny, associate professor in the Department of Agricultural, Leadership, and Community Education and director of the center, which is in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

“As a land-grant institution, we have a responsibility to dig deep to better understand how and why racial disparities occur so that we may part of the solution to dismantle the attitudes, practices, and structures that hold racism in place as a step toward creating a more just and sustainable food system that works for everyone,” Niewolny said.

Through Virginia Cooperative Extension’s

Community, Local, and Regional Food Systems Program Team, the center collaborated to offer a variety of resources and training. One such collaboration included the Virginia Food System Council and the Virginia Farmers Market Association in statewide efforts to address emergency food access and farmer and food business support during food system disruptions. Further collaborations included a virtual Virginia farm-to-table program led by Lenah Nguyen, an Extension agent in Fauquier County.

To further impact the community and its citizens, the Center for Food Systems and Community Transformation



**The Center for Food Systems and Community Transformation works at the nexus of food, agriculture, and society through a values-based and systems approach to cultivate more resilient and socially just food systems in Virginia and beyond.**

utilizes in-depth learning circles, projects, events, and fellows in its quest to address these

and other food systems issues. The in-depth learning circles are a monthly space for con-

versation, peer-to-peer learning, and reflection around issues at the heart of food systems.

## Gina Hall

from page 1

another man cutting up Gina...not bait,” Bodmer said. “I found out early last year about the cliff dumpsite that locals call the Steep Place,” she said earlier this week.

“After the human remains detection dogs confirmed Meadow Creek and other positive areas, I decided to excavate the Meadow Creek dismemberment site and the Draper Valley site with Dr. Vass on site scanning the buckets with his Quantum Oscillator Instrument as we dug,” Bodmer said.

Dr. Arpad Alexander Vass is a University of Tennessee professor who has invented a machine to detect DNA buried beneath the surface of the ground, and it is playing a role in the 40-year-old murder case. Bodmer contacted Vass and brought him to the New River Valley in hopes of finding her sister’s resting place. In this case, she thinks it has pointed to at least eight spots where family DNA was found.

The “Grave-Detection Machine,” or Inquisitor machine as Vass refers to it, has been put to the test in graveyards and many criminal cases. A patent was approved four years ago for the machine that is based on quantum physics and locates remains on a sub-atomic level by matching a reference sample such as fingernail clippings from a living relative.

One police chief describes the process and machine as a “bloodhound on steroids.” Other anthropology experts assert it is unproven.

Vass has also been developing a forensic science technique called “decomposition odor analysis,” which he claims will help to identify over 400 body vapors which emanate from a decaying and decomposing human body. He said the database of such vapors would in theory enable federal investigative teams and cadaver dogs to detect the location of human remains.

According to Bodmer, the recent site seems to be her sister’s final resting place. On Feb. 26, 2021, she brought cadaver dogs up from Florida, and they led investigators to two separate places. Both alerts aligned with the instrument’s positive signals. Recently, Bodmer and others removed shale rock and debris, about two feet under which they found the bracelet.

“We dug and scanned for hours and found three significant sized bones that will be analyzed by a forensic anthropologist. Once that report comes back, it should confirm the bone has been cut,” Bodmer said.

The discovery comes days before another parole hearing for the convicted killer in the case, Stephen Epperly. He was recently moved from a maximum-

security prison in Richmond to a medium-security one in Lawsonville and will appear before a parole board on Monday.

There has been some speculation that the 69-year-old Radford man could receive geriatric parole because of his age. Thousands of prisoners received their release last year because of the ruling from Gov. Ralph Northam’s office.

Pulaski County Commonwealth’s Attorney Justin Griffith and Epperly’s original prosecutor, Everett Shockley, plan to attend the parole hearing to “implore” the board to keep the murderer behind bars “the rest of his natural life.”

“I am strenuously and unequivocally opposed to his parole, under any circumstances,” Griffith wrote in a letter to the parole board. “Freedom should not now be nor should it ever be an option for [Epperly]. He forfeited that right with his actions and the sentence recommended by a jury of his peers.”

Bodmer agrees with Griffith. “This year, I am making a straightforward request based on new and relevant information pertaining to Stephen Epperly and his nature. Information that might be of interest when decisions are made regarding the safety of Virginia citizens,” she said in a letter to the parole board.

Bodmer is hoping an analysis of what was recently found will point to the fact that her sister’s body was dismembered and scattered at many locations. “Forensic bone analysis will be done, and this process will take time,” she said.

She knows there are skeptics, especially in the use of the new resonance frequency machine that has pointed to several locations with DNA remnants from her sister. Cadaver dogs have strengthened this finding in several locations including the new one, and Bodmer is determined to prove her sister was not the only victim in the case.

She cites the Lester Farm near the Izaac Walton League in Hiwassee where cadaver dogs confirmed several areas of

interest. Those, according to Bodmer, include the final resting place for Angela Rader, a Roanoke teen who came up missing in 1977.

During a visit to Epperly’s former home, investigators including Bodmer found bone fragments beneath the floor of a closet where he slept. The new owners of the home allowed Bodmer and others to examine a lead from the quantum oscillator machine.

Analysis has not yet been done of the fragments, but Bodmer hopes to change that soon. The remains include parts of fingers from at least four other individuals.

“Of course, I am relieved that we found bone hopefully large enough to test for DNA,” Bodmer said. “I would not even

test if it were not for the doctor and his instrument. I am following through because people need to know the quantum oscillator works and that it can help so many people. If it were not for wanting to help him, I would just bring my sister home and praise God for all he has done to make this happen,” she said.

Bodmer has actively been involved in Epperly’s parole process since the early 90s, but she is expressing some concern because of the recent releases of others who were convicted with life sentences.

He will receive a one-to-three year review and also a geriatric review, so he could face the parole board again next year.

A decision from Monday’s hearing is not expected until next month.

### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

#### TOWN OF CHRISTIANSBURG FISCAL YEAR 2021-2022 BUDGET

A Public Hearing will be held by the Council of the Town of Christiansburg on Tuesday, May 25, at 7:00 P.M. in the Council Room of the Town Hall, 100 East Main Street, Christiansburg, Virginia for the purpose of discussing the Proposed Budget for FY 2021-2022.

The tax rate will remain 16 cents per \$100 of assessed value. The following fees are proposed to be increased: WATER RATES: Within Corporate limits: First 0-1,000 gallons from \$8.00 to \$9.00 Increase rate from 1,001-50,000 gallons, from \$10.00 to \$11.00 per 1,000 gallons and from 50,001 gallons and above, from \$7.50 to \$8.25 per 1,000 gallons;SEWER RATES: Within Corporate limits: are unchanged from fiscal year 2020-2021 at the following rates First 0-1,000 gallons, \$10.00. No change. For all over 1,000 gallons, no change in rate from \$10.25 per 1,000 gallons thereafter; Outside corporate limits water and sewer fees are 150% of the in town rates.

#### SYNOPSIS OF PROPOSED BUDGET TOWN OF CHRISTIANSBURG FISCAL YEAR 2021-2022 BUDGET

REVENUE	
Revenue General Fund	28,522,689
Use of Carryover General Fund	6,682,674
Use of reserves	3,171,384
Cemetery Fund	92,000
Special Revenue Fund	1,522,590
Special Revenue Fund Carryover	129,308
Capital Project Funds	17,640,237
Water and Sewer Enterprise Fund	11,763,500
Use of Carry over Water and Sewer	2,425,255
Revenue Storm Water Utility Fund	2,706,291
Use of Carry over storm water fund	627,827
<b>Total Revenue/Sources</b>	<b>75,283,755</b>

APPROPRIATIONS	
General Fund	28,417,177
General Fund Capital Acquisitions	3,124,148
Cemetery Fund	297,098
Cemetery Fund Capital Acquisitions	15,000
Cemetery Perpetual Care	35,500
Capital Project Funds	23,193,048
Special Revenue Fund	1,651,898
Water and Sewer Enterprise	8,561,205
Water and Sewer Enterprise Capital Acquisitions	5,627,550
Storm Water Utility Enterprise	845,644
Storm Water Utility Enterprise Capital Acquisitions	3,515,487
<b>Total Expenditures/appropriations</b>	<b>75,283,755</b>

The Proposed Budget may be examined on weekdays at the office of the Town Manager, 100 East Main Street, Christiansburg, VA, between the hours of 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. and on the Town Web Site, www.christiansburg.org. Interested citizens will have the opportunity to give written or oral comments.

Randall Wingfield Town Manager

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# VT travel, tourism expert offers tips for post-pandemic travelers planning summer vacations

Post-pandemic vacation goers might be eager to make travel plans this summer, but Virginia Tech travel and tourism expert Mahmood Khan says the greatest challenge facing summer travelers will be to resist temptations to go full-speed.

Khan is a professor and director of the Pamplin College of Business Master of Science in Business Administration/Hospitality and Tourism Management program in the Washington, D.C., metro region.

Major areas of his research include hospitality franchising, services management, customer relationships, food service and operational management, and consumer preferences in hotels, restaurants and institutions.

“Fully vaccinated individuals may be tempted

by herd mentality prior to herd immunity,” says Khan. “Seeing friends, relatives, and colleagues travel may cause a psychological feeling of safety. Other temptations will be the many reasonable packages that are being floated to encourage travel and vacations this summer.”

In any case, Khan says that people deserve a break after a prolonged lockdown. “Select a destination that is not crowded and located in a natural, sustainable environment with access to fresh, nutritious, and safe food,” says Khan. “The hospitality industry is very sensitive to consumer needs, and several people are planning relaxed and leisurely vacations of a short duration, combining business with pleasure.”

Recognizing that we are still not out of the

woods, Khan warns that careful planning is warranted with double masks, safe distancing, and hand-washing.

“Travelers should avoid crowded places such as airport lines, hotel lobbies, cinema theaters, concerts, beaches, and sports arenas,” Khan cautions. “Preference should be for touchless, contactless, or virtual services wherever possible. When selecting hotel rooms, preference should be for larger rooms with limited clean amenities and good air circulation. Prefer rooms away from elevators and ice dispensing machines.”

When it comes to international travel, careful planning and securing information about travel restrictions is a must.

“Things are still fluid in many countries and rules change based on the



PHOTO FROM PIXABAY

prevalence of the virus or its strains. It is important to understand that airlines are testing passengers at the airport or onboard in planes,” says Khan. “Get the vaccination passport and keep all documents verifying the type of vac-

cine used and the dates. Also arriving passengers at many airports are subjected to checking or quarantines. It is not worth spending time in isolation while on vacation.

“Although the regulations seem to be rather

strict, there are numerous destinations which are still pristine and waiting for visitors both within the USA and abroad,” says Khan. “Planning short vacations with close family members will provide well-deserved relaxation.”

## 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](http://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](http://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.sttof.org](http://www.sttof.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](http://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](http://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](http://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

# Montgomery County WORSHIP DIRECTORY

## Presence Bread

Read 2 Chronicles 1:1 through 4:22

Solomon also made all the furnishings that were in God’s temple: the golden altar; the tables on which was the bread of the Presence (2 Chronicles 4:19).

The bread of the Presence, also called showbread, was considered sacred. The literal Hebrew name (lechem hapanim) means “bread of the face.” Some references make it plural, rendering it “bread of faces.” Made with the finest flour, it was baked into twelve loaves. They were set out on a special table, called the table of the Presence, in two rows of six each. The table was made of acacia wood and overlaid with pure gold. Every Sabbath, the priests removed the loaves and replaced them

with freshly baked ones. They would eat the old loaves in the holy sanctuary area.

The bread of the Presence, which sat on the table of the Presence, has divine significance for all believers. Besides the obvious connection to the twelve tribes of Israel, the showbread represents a deeper truth about the manifest presence of God: His face is always before His people—and we are always before Him. We can have no greater assurance in Him.

Prayer Suggestion: Thank You, Lord God, for always watching over me.

Quicklook: 2 Chronicles 4:19–22

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

& Sound Services and other ECK programs are currently available online through Zoom. Visit [www.eck-va.org](http://www.eck-va.org) for program listings, [www.meetup.com/Roanoke-Spiritual-Experiences-Group](http://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](http://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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://www.centralmethodist-church.com).

**St. Paul United Methodist Church**, 220 W. Main St., C’burg. Rev. Moonsup “Paul” Song (540) 382-2410. Sunday Worship 10 a.m., Sunday School 9 a.m. Live streaming Sunday Service - [www.twitch.tv/stpaulumc](http://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](http://christ-wesleyanchurch.org)

# OBITUARIES

## Dobbins, Brian Craig

Brian Craig Dobbins, 58, passed away Sunday, May 9, 2021, at his home in Christiansburg.

He was retired from Volvo Trucks. He was preceded in death by his father, Billy Ray Dobbins.

Survivors include his sons, Brandon Dobbins of Christiansburg and Matt Dobbins and his wife, Rachel, of Bonaire, Ga.; grandchildren Lucas and Lottie Dobbins; his mother, Peggy M. Dobbins of Christiansburg; a brother, Daren Dobbins, and his wife, Rhonda, of Texas; a niece, Nichole Dobbins; and many other relatives and friends.



The family received friends on Wednesday, May 12, 2021, at the Fairlawn Church of God. Funeral services followed with the Rev. Marcus Harrison and the Rev. Keith Covey officiating. Entombment followed in the Highland Memory Gardens Mausoleum in Dublin.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Alzheimer's Association, Central & Western Virginia Chapter, 355 Rio Road West, Suite 102, Charlottesville, VA 22901.

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

## Meadows, April Rene

April Rene Meadows, 42, of Christiansburg, passed away peacefully on May 10, 2021, and is re-joining in Heaven.

She was born in Radford on June 29, 1978, to Bruce and Anita Meadows of Christiansburg (previously of Blacksburg).

April was universally loved by everyone who knew her as a person who was the epitome of friendliness and sweetness with a little spunk mixed in, and a whole lot of stubbornness at times. She kept everyone entertained throughout her younger years with her unintentional pranks and innocent actions (once she ate a Christmas bulb).

She was beloved by her teachers as she went through school and graduated from Blacksburg High School in 2000. She was always very social with friends and family, and her favorite activities included family dinners, birthdays, baby showers, weddings (for the cake), and dressing up for Halloween parties. She especially enjoyed playing football and having sleepovers with her nieces and nephews.

April loved her time with her VT buddies, and IDA leisure activities such as bowling, swimming, cheerleading, cooking and craft classes, and letting loose at the dances. She loved participating in Special Olympics track and field events, where she won plenty of ribbons over the years, including one for her 13-inch standing long jump.

For the past 22 years April worked at Hardee's for several hours per month as what her family affectionately termed a "lobby specialist." She loved her free cheeseburger meals and won several awards for being a dedicated employee.

At home she spent time watching her favorite TV shows and movies like "I Love Lucy" and "The Wizard of Oz," listening to Elvis or the Inspirations, copying Bible verses, doing workbooks, and practicing the electric guitar. She did regular cooking and crafts including holiday ornaments, making cookies and cheesecakes, dyeing Easter eggs, and tie-dyeing clothing for the entire family.

April rooted for the Dallas Cowboys and the VT Hokies football team, except when they played UVA, when she rooted for both teams because UVA was "her hospital." She loved God and was very involved in church activities including choir and Sunday night class. She talked often about her preachers (Pastor Mike and Preacher Dewey), and her favorite verse was . . . the whole Bible.



April collected dolls, stuffed animals, "I Love Lucy" and Coca-Cola items, and anything purple. She traveled happily to Dollywood to ride roller coasters and to the beach for the ocean and hot tubing. Her humor, hugs, and smile will be greatly missed by the whole family and all of her friends.

April is survived by her parents, her grandparents Mary (Bill) Powell of Goose Creek, S.C. brothers and sisters-in-law Aaron (Koren) Meadows and Kevin (Emily) Meadows all of Christiansburg; sisters and brother-in-law Katie (Jordan) McCoy of Christiansburg and Rebekah Meadows of Lynchburg; nephews and nieces Riley, Alaina, Audrey, and Ethan Meadows, Fletcher McCoy, and baby McCoy, all of Christiansburg; numerous aunts, uncles, and cousins; special friends Virginia Moseley, Katie Lemmon, and Melissa Starnier; and Willow the cat.

She was predeceased by her grandparents, Oscar (Annabelle) Meadows of Dublin and Johnny (Betty) Mills of Newnan, Ga; several friends, and numerous fondly remembered pets.

Visitation will be held via a Facebook memorial page:

<https://www.facebook.com/In-Memory-of-April-Rene-Lucy-Meadows-100288755582974>

A private family graveside service will be held at Sunset Cemetery in Christiansburg. Funeral services are provided by McCoy Funeral Home in Blacksburg.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in her memory to the Intellectual Disabilities Agency (IDA) of the New River Valley P.O. Box 42, Christiansburg, 24068. This is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. [www.idaofthenrv.org](http://www.idaofthenrv.org).

The family would like to thank all of the doctors, nurses, and staff from LewisGale Montgomery Regional Hospital that took such great care of April during her illness. Thanks also go to her Hardee's family, all of her MCPS teachers and helpers over the years, the wonderful medical staff at UVA hospital, and also the IDA of NRV for all the friends, good times, and recreational activities that kept her fit and entertained. And a special thank-you goes to Riley for the Sprites.

Proverbs 18:34: "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly; and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

One of April's famous quotes was "I'm not tired, I'm happy!"

## Lester, Betty Jo Hanks

Betty Jo Hanks Lester, 92, of Christiansburg, passed away on Monday, May 10, at Kroontje Health Care Center in Blacksburg.

Born April 1, 1929, she was a faithful wife and loving mother and grandmother. She was a member of Grove United Methodist Church and was involved in the Walk to Emmaus and Radford/Fairlawn Daily Bread.

She was a former Radford branch manager at Charter Federal Savings Bank for many years and was a past president of the Radford Chamber of Commerce.

Betty Jo loved cooking, sewing, gardening, serving others, and being with her family, especially her grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her husband of 70 years, Marvin E. Lester, and her parents, Clyde L. and Bertha Ward Hanks.



Survivors include her sons, Mel Lester, and his wife, Dena of Shawsville, and Jay Lester and his wife, Michele, of Christiansburg; grandchildren Chelsea, Joelle, Hannah, Kellen, Ellery, Shaye, and Ellen; nine great-grandchildren; and a brother, Elray Hanks, and his wife, Joretta, of Harrisonburg.

An informal memorial celebrating Betty Jo's life will be held outside at the Grove United Methodist Church pavilion in Radford at 1 p.m. today, Saturday, May 15.

Dessert will be served. The service will follow Virginia COVID-19 guidelines for outdoor social gatherings.

Interment at the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Dublin will be private. The Lester family is in the care of Mullins Funeral Home & Crematory in Radford. [www.mullinsfuneralhome.com](http://www.mullinsfuneralhome.com).

## Talbert, Cory Alan

Cory Alan Talbert, 28, of Dublin, passed away Tuesday, May 11, 2021.

He was a member of the Dublin Church of God. He was preceded in death by his mother, Doris Gail Talbert; his father, Donald Lee Mundy; his maternal grandparents, James Preston and Ruth Cox Talbert; and an uncle, Big Mike Talbert.

Survivors include his twin sister, Jessica Talbert; a beloved niece, Emmagail Martin; aunts Donna (Roger) Marshall, Frances (Dino) Wickline, and Regina Talbert; cousins Gary (Leslie) Harris, Jr., Mikie (Angela) Talbert, and Cara (Curtis) Smythers; special loved ones Mark and Gwynne Witt and James Bugg (Pappy); canine companions Liken and Winnie; and many other relatives and friends.



The family would like to especially thank the Davita Dialysis Center in Radford and all of his close friends.

The family will receive friends from 10 a.m. until noon today, Saturday, May 15, 2021, at the Mullins Funeral Home in Radford. Funeral services will begin at noon with the Rev. Mike Talbert officiating. Interment will follow in Highland Memory Gardens in Dublin.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donations to the funeral home to help with funeral expenses.

The Talbert family is in the care of Mullins Funeral Home & Crematory in Radford. Online condolences may be expressed at [www.mullinsfuneralhome.com](http://www.mullinsfuneralhome.com).

## Stuart, Ronnie Lee

Ronnie Lee Stuart, 56, of Christiansburg, died Tuesday, May 11, 2021.

He was born in Pulaski on July 10, 1964. He was preceded in death by his father, Everett Randall Stuart, and his grandparents, Lee and Clara Alley and Maurice and Florence Stuart.

Ronnie pastored and evangelized at many churches in the New River Valley. He is survived by his wife, Sheila Kipps Stuart; his mother, Hazel Stuart; a daughter and son-in-law, Kristlyn and Jason Hounshell; a son and daughter-in-law, Derek and Courtney Stuart; stepsons Hunter Price and Teresa Bryant, and Micah Price and Jada Quesinberry; grandchildren Jae'Lynd, Courtlee, Bryar, and Ryder; step-grandchildren Daniel and Blaine; brothers and sisters-in-law, Donnie and Sandra Stuart, and David and Melinda Stuart; mother-in-law and father-in-law, Wanda and Bob Thompson; father-in-law, Gary Kipps; brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Clayton and Regina Kipps; and several nieces and nephews.



Funeral services were conducted Friday, May 14, 2021, in the McCoy Funeral Home Chapel with the Rev. Clayton Kipps and the Rev. Kenneth Alley officiating. Interment followed in Sunset Cemetery.

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# Marketplace

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THE Vinton Messenger
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For Rent - Apartments	Help Wanted - General	Legals - Montgomery County	Legals - Montgomery County
<p><b>2, 3, 4 BR Townhouse Style</b> accepting applications. Short waiting list, HUD subsidized, W/D hookups, private patio, water &amp; trash incl. Fairfax Village Apts. 332 Fairfax St., Radford Cambridge Square 1805 Whipple Dr. NW Blacksburg 540-731-1786 EHO TDD #800-828-1120</p>	<p><b>Part Time Newspaper Production Help</b> The Salem TimesRegister has openings for afternoon/evening shift work inserting, labeling and bundling newspapers for delivery. No experience necessary. Hours may vary. Will train. \$7.50 per hour. Contact Lynn Hurst, General Manager, Salem-Times Register (540)389-9355 or email <a href="mailto:lhurst@ourvalley.org">lhurst@ourvalley.org</a></p>	<p><b>LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING</b> The Christiansburg Planning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday, June 1, 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:</p> <p>A. An amendment of proffers for conditional zoned property for The Reserve at Round Meadows by Shah Development LLC (applicant/property owner). The change of proffers would allow an increase of five (5) additional lots for a total of no more than 56 single-family detached dwellings. The development is adjacent to Round Meadow Drive on Tax Map Nos. 494 - ((A)) - 62 and</p>	<p>63, Tax Map 495 - ((A)) - 64, and Tax Map 494 - ((A)) - 55E1 - 55E3.</p> <p>B. Conditional Use Permit request by Shah Development LLC (applicant/property owner) for a revision to The Reserve at Round Meadows subdivision previously approved 51 single family detached dwelling Planned Housing Development to add five (5) additional single-family dwellings on property located adjacent to Round Meadow Drive on Tax Map Nos. 494 - ((A)) - 62 and 63, Tax Map 495 - ((A)) - 64, and Tax Map 494 - ((A)) - 55E1 - 55E3.</p> <p>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 <a href="http://www.christiansburg.org/">www.christiansburg.org/</a></p>

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# MONTGOMERY SPORTS



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF VT ATHLETICS

Virginia Tech head diving coach Ron Piemonte is retiring.

## Long-time Virginia Tech diving coach to retire

After 36 years of coaching, 15 of them with the Hokies, head diving coach Ron Piemonte is retiring from Virginia Tech.

From ACC medals, MVP's and All-Americans to Coach of the Year, Piemonte has an impressive list of accomplishments from his tenure with the Hokies.

He has coached 11 ACC gold medalists, nine silver medalists, and 15 bronze medalists. Under Piemonte, six Hokies have been recognized as the Diving MVP at the ACC Championships and four have received the ACC Diver of the Year award.

As head diving coach, he has led 38 Hokies to All-American honors, 18 of them honorable mentions. Piemonte was also the ACC Women's Dive Coach of the Year in 2014 and 2015.

In his own athletic career, Piemonte competed at the national level from 1974 to 1985 at Arizona State University. He was a Pac-10 champion, runner-up, and NCAA finalist.

Piemonte not only made an impact on the athletic careers of his athletes, but also left an incredible culture for the diving program by maintaining a close-knit team environment.

Head Coach Sergio Lopez Miro, the Director/Head Coach of the men's and women's swimming and diving teams, said of Piemonte, "It is hard for me to express in a few words what Coach Ron means to Virginia Tech and to me personally. Ron is one of the top diving coaches in the country, and his divers have performed at the highest level in the ACC and NCAA Championships since he came to Blacksburg almost 15 years ago.

"The way Ron treats his divers and all the swimmers and coaches during practice, at meets, and outside of the water is exceptional," Miro said. "He is always looking out for the well-being of the person and is always ready to help and support anyone. I have watched him coach for the last three years on the

pool deck almost daily, and it always impresses me the way they train and execute practices.

"It is a big loss for the Virginia Tech swimming and diving team, but I could not be happier for Ron, his wife Tina and his whole family," Miro said. "He has done so much for the sport of diving and also for the Virginia Tech swimming and diving team that he deserves now to focus on his life and spend time with his wife doing everything that they have planned.

"Personally, I could not be more thankful for Ron and Tina for opening their home to my family and convincing me to be their neighbor. Both of them have been one of the big reasons why Sandy and I are so happy here, and I am looking forward to continuing our friendship for many years."

Junior Hokie diver Izzi Mroz said of his coach, "Ron has been one of the most amazing coaches. He has taught me so much more than just learning how to enter the water and do big dives. He has taught me to believe in myself. I am beyond blessed that I have had the opportunity to be coached by him these past three years.

"Although he is moving on in life, he will forever be the genius in diving," Mroz said. "Thank you, Ron, for the best three years of my college diving career."

And junior Hokie diver Noah Zawadzki had this to say about his retiring coach: "One thing that Ron always said to me was that, 'you are only as good as you believe you are.' This stuck with me in a way that I could have never imagined.

"Ron was a phenomenal coach and an even better person. A lot of coaches out there will preach perfection, but Ron preaches confidence over anything else, and that is why he is one of the best coaches I have ever had. I am going to miss him a lot, and I am grateful to have been able to dive for him these past three years."

## Former Blacksburg assistant Michael Crist takes over Radford football program

**Marty Gordon**  
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

Radford High School has a new football coach.

Former Blacksburg assistant Michael Crist is returning to the area after spending the past eight seasons at Virginia High in Bristol where he compiled a 33-49 record with five playoff appearances.

The 42-year-old Crist is a 1997 graduate of Blacksburg

High School who grew up in the shadows of his father, Dave, who spent 40 years at the helm of the Bruins. He served as an assistant under his father before coaching stops at Brookville, Warren County, Amherst and Virginia High.

Crist succeeds Matthew Saunders who stepped down last month. The Radford school board approved the hiring by a 5-0 vote on Tuesday night.

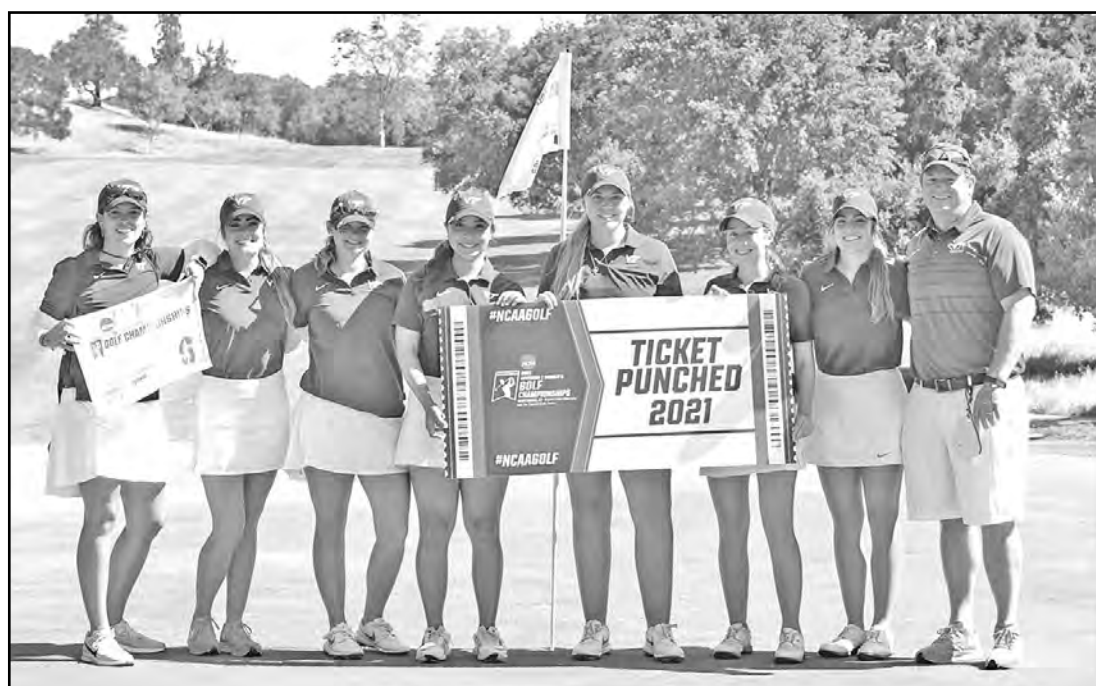
He will be officially intro-

duced to players and the media during a press conference on Monday in the Radford gymnasium.

Crist will also teach physical education at the school.

Radford finished the spring season with a 4-2 mark including a 41-12 playoff loss to Appomattox in Region 2C.

While Crist was at Virginia High, the team qualified for the state playoffs in 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018.



## VT women's golf team punches ticket to first-ever national championship

STANFORD, Calif. — In just its sixth season of intercollegiate competition, the Virginia Tech women's golf team has qualified for its first-ever national championship after placing fourth at the Stanford Regional, which concluded Wednesday afternoon at the par 71, 6,291-yard Stanford Golf Course.

The 14th-ranked Hokies, the four seed in the regional, finished with a three-day total of 4-over 856 (282-283-291). Host and fifth-seeded Stanford ran away from the field, finishing at 28-under 824.

Top-seeded Wake Forest took second at 2-over 854 while second-seeded Oklahoma State claimed third at 3-over 855, one shot ahead of the Hokies. Arizona (857) and Southern California (860) claimed the final two spots to advance to the nationals.

Tech was led by a trio of Hokies who finished at par or better. Emily Mahar paced the Maroon and Orange at 2-under 211 to tie for sixth. Fellow All-ACC golfer Becca DiNunzio tied for 10th at 1-under 212. The sophomore logged a team-best six birdies during her final

round, including three straight on holes 15-17.

Keeratriya Foocharoen finished at even-par 213 to tie for 12th while Alyssa Montgomery tied for 45th at 221. Jessica Spicer rounded out the Tech lineup with a 230 to tie for 78th.

The 2021 NCAA Women's Golf National Championship is scheduled for May 21-26 at Grayhawk Golf Club in Scottsdale, Ariz. Tech is one of four ACC teams advancing to the nationals. Duke, Wake Forest, and Florida State will also be in Scottsdale.

## Linebacker Dax Hollifield crowned VT's overall 2021 hard hat champion



BLACKSBURG — Head coach Justin Fuente and Associate AD for Strength and Conditioning Ben Hilgart presented the top performers in Tech's 2021 strength and conditioning program with hard hats in a recent team meeting with linebacker Dax Hollifield named the overall 2021 Hard Hat Champion.

Overall, a record 62 players earned the highly coveted hard hats based on a number of criteria established by Fuente, Hilgart, and the staff. Attitude, enthusiasm, and leadership, as well as meeting or exceeding physical performance and testing goals, were factored into the equation to determine the hard-hit recipients.

Wide receiver Luke Bussel and defensive tackle Norell Pollard came in right behind

Hollifield in the standings.

COVID-19 wiped out spring practice and the Hard Hat Awards for Tech in 2020. In 2019, the last time the awards were presented, 44 players received the honor with defensive tackle Jarrod Hewitt winning the overall title.

The top ten finishers were Hollifield, Bussel, Pollard, quarterback Braxton Burmeister, center Brock Hoffman and offensive guard Lecitus Smith (tie), running back Marco Lee, defensive tackle Josh Fuga, linebacker Keshon Artis, and defensive tackle Maxx Philpott.

The additional Hard Hat Award winners in alphabetical order were Eli Adams, Amare Barno, Emmanuel Belmar, Raheem Blackshear, Cole Blaker, Connor Blumrick, Tink Boyd,

Sam Brooks, Jordan Brunson, Nikolai Bujnowski, Armani Chatman, Chamarrri Conner, DaShawn Crawford, Tae Daley, Drake DeJulius, Silas Dzansi, Ty Eller, Tahj Gary, Jaylen Griffin, Jalen Hampton, Jesse Hanson, Ny'Quee Hawkins, Jalen Holston, Jalen Hoyle, Trevor Jackson, Matt Johnson, Nyke Johnson, Jaylen Jones, Knox Kadum, Mario Kendrick, Keshawn King, Keondre Ko, Da'Wain Lofton, James Mitchell, Kaden Moore, Nashun Overton, Jaden Payoute, Wilfried Pene, Nasir Peoples, Michael Peterson, Justin Pollock, John Ransom, Tayvion Robinson, John Parker Romo, Noah Sage, Oscar Shadley, Luke Tenuta, Nadir Thompson, J.R. Walker, Jermaine Waller, Byron Whitehead, and Robert Wooten.

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# Motor Mile Speedway standings

**Late Model**  
 1) Kres Vandyke 265 points 2) Kyle Dudley 260 3) Bryan Reedy 195 4) Karl Budzevski 175 5) Zeke Shell, 150 6) Ryan Wilson, 140 7) Trenton Kilgore 105 8) Justin Carroll 75.  
 9) Mike Looney, Nik Williams 70 10) Mike Dame 55 11) Conner Jones 45 12) Jonathan Worley 45 13) Chad Flinchum 40 14) Bobby Gilliespie 40 15) Matt Gould 25.

**Limited Sportsman**  
 1) Cory Dunn 380 2) Kyle Barnes 365 3) Brian Sutphin 325 4) Charles Smith 300 5) Daryn Cockram 275 6) James Sweeney 275 7) Wesley Thomason 270 8) Richard Caldwell 245.  
 9) Dale Cline 240 10) Alex Posey 11) Chase Ratcliff 12) Ryan Collins 13) Tyler Hash 14) Wyatt Underwood 15) Brad Foy.

**Mod-4**  
 1) Brittany Cockram 145

2) Doodle Lang 130 3) A.J. Sanders 105 4) Jessie Yopp 95 5) Johnathan Hall 90 6) Scott Foley 90 7) Tony Sarver 85 8) Kevin Canter 75.  
 9) Drew Holdren 70 10) Daniel Bentley 70 11) Josh Phillips 55 12) Ricky Hall 50 13) Taylor Asberry 45 14) Jason Quintell 25 15) Tanner Young 15.

**Super Street**  
 1) Ray Sowers 155 2) Scooter Hollandsworth 155 3) Matt Gusler 145 4) Tristen Barnes 125 5) Hank Turman 95 6) Norm Weaver 80 7) Wayne Corpew 65 8) Dewey Smith 55 9) Keven Cox 50 10) Jessica Gusler 45.

**U-Car**  
 1) Peyton Howell 125 2) Jamie Lafon 110 3) Cary Thomason 90 4) John Songer 65 5) Cristopher Amos 50 6) Blake Gordon 50 7) Andrew Amos 35 8) Zane Reed 35 9) Joe Vaught 30 10) Kyle Akers 25.

# Fuente announces additions to Tech's personnel, recruiting staffs

Virginia Tech head coach Justin Fuente recently announced three additions and/or changes to Tech's football player personnel and recruiting staffs.

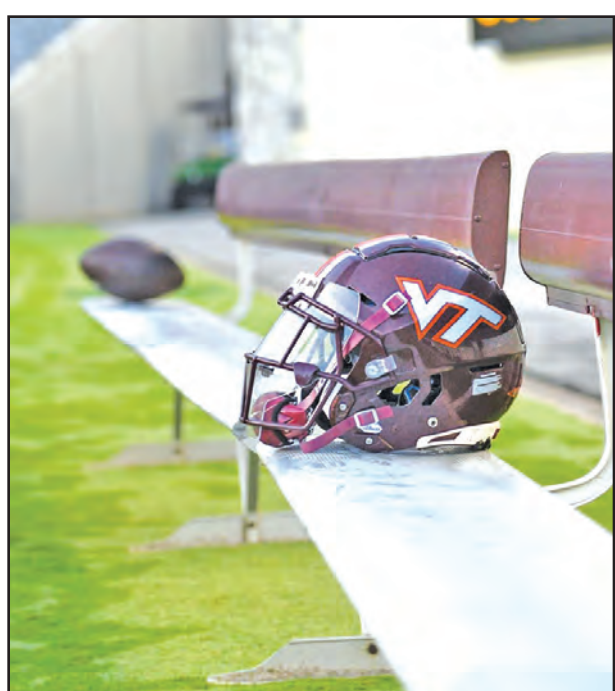
Beau Davidson has been promoted to director of recruiting, Leah Joseph joins the staff as director of on-campus recruiting, and Lino Lupinetti will serve as assistant director of personnel and recruiting.

Davidson originally joined Tech as an offensive quality control coach in 2018 and spent the 2020 campaign as assistant director of player personnel. The Katy, Texas, native has been instrumental in helping the Hokies land numerous talented players from across the country. During his stint as a quality control coach for the Hokies, he worked closely with Vance Vice and Tech's offensive line unit. He joined Tech after spending the 2017 season as defensive coordinator

at Howard Payne University in Brownwood, Texas.

Joseph is a familiar face in Blacksburg, and she begins her first season assisting with Tech's football recruiting efforts after previously working as the director of operations for Virginia Tech's volleyball program since the spring of 2017. In that role, she assisted with day-to-day volleyball operations, scheduling, team travel and business office logistics. Additionally, Joseph worked as a liaison with equipment and nutrition and assisted with game management.

Lupinetti moves into a new role with Tech after spending the past two years as a recruiting assistant for the Hokies. Among his numerous responsibilities in that role, he was part of the team that planned and executed all prospect visits to campus, including official, unofficial, camps and game-day



visits. He also assisted coaches with the player evaluation process and the management of Tech's recruiting board.

He is also well-versed in graphic design space and helped coordinate individualized recruiting plans for student-athletes that included personalized edits, mail, social media and other components. He joined the Hokies after serving as a student assistant in the Pitt football recruiting office from 2016-19. While at Pitt, Lupinetti worked under the direction of current Tech director of player personnel Mark Diethorn and current VT director of football creative media Zach Lantz.

# RU's Nichols rounds out his basketball coaching staff with two additions

Radford University men's basketball head coach Darris Nichols announced the addition of his final two assistant coaches Thursday as James Haring and Timothy Peete join the staff.

Haring spent time with the Dayton men's hoops staff as Director of Basketball Operations in July 2019. He joined the Flyer staff from Jacksonville State where he had been coordinator of basketball operations since 2017.

Haring spent the 2016-17 season at the University of Illinois as head coach John Groce's director of basketball operations. He also served the two seasons as a graduate assistant with the Fighting Illini.

Haring is a summa cum laude graduate of West Virginia University where he was a four-year team manager for Bob Huggins' Mountaineer basketball program. Haring was head manager as a senior.

A native of New Lenox, Ill., Haring earned his bachelor's degree in sport management from West Virginia in 2014 and his master's degree in educational policy studies from Illinois in 2016.

Timothy Peete joins the Highlander staff after one season as an assistant coach at Missouri Western State University in St. Joseph. Coaching under Will Martin, he helped the Griffons go 14-11 with a 13-9 mark in Mid-America Intercollegiate play, earning the team an at-large berth in the NCAA Division II Tournament for the first time in 11 years. Peete developed four All-MIAA standouts last season.

The 2019-20 season featured Peete in a director of player development role at UNC Greensboro under head coach Wes Miller. The Spartans went 23-9 that year, including an impressive 13-5 league record while leading the country in turnover margin (+6.4) and ranking in the top six nationally in steals per game (9.3). UNC Greensboro boasted the Southern Conference Player of the Year and Defensive Player of the Year in Isaiah Miller and the SoCon Freshman of the Year, Keyshaun Langley.

Peete was an assistant coach at Chipola College in 2018-19, joining Brendan Foley's staff at one of the nation's perennial powerhouse junior college programs. The Indians rolled to a 27-5 record in Peete's only season in Marianna, Fla., ranking in the top 25 of the national polls for a majority of

the season. Chipola College generated six all-conference honorees and made it to the state semifinals.

Peete was also a high school coach at Arlington, Tenn., High School and a skills trainer in Memphis, where he worked with athletes from all levels, including Ian Clark, DJ Stephens and Mardracus Wade.

The Memphis native spent two years of a first stint at UNCG from 2016-18, serving as a graduate assistant under Miller. Peete was a part of 52 victories in that two-year span that also saw a pair of SoCon regular season championships and the 2018 SoCon Tournament title.

That led to the school's first NCAA Tournament appearance in 17 years, a slim 68-64 setback at the hands of Gonzaga. The program had previously qualified for the National Invitation Tournament in 2016-17, winning a school-record 25 games.

Peete worked closely with five All-SoCon student-athletes, including 2017-18 Defensive Player of the Year James Dickey as Miller garnered SoCon Coach of the Year honors in 2017-18.

A four-year letterwinner at the University of Tulsa, Peete played 129 career games under head coaches Doug Wojcik and Danny Manning. During his senior campaign, he started all but one game as the Hurricane swept the Conference USA regular season and tournament championships and qualified for the NCAA Tournament.

He won the Conference USA Spirit of Service Award during the 2013-14 season, honoring him for significant community service endeavors, good academic standing, and participation in their sport.

Peete graduated from Tulsa in 2014 with a bachelor's degree in business management. He then earned his master's degree in applied arts and sciences in 2018 from UNC Greensboro.

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