

News Messenger

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Blacksburg

Christiansburg



Wednesday, May 26, 2021

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USPS 016-490

\$1.00

CHS graduates the Class of 2021

Christiansburg High School held its graduation ceremonies for the Class of 2021 Saturday at 10 a.m. at the football stadium.



Class President Kolby Brown was among the speakers who helped send the Class of 2021 on its way with words of encouragement and best wishes.



Seniors Julia Vaughn (left) and Laynie Woods (right) posed for a quick photo to ensure they will have a reminder of this big day in their lives.



Christiansburg ROTC members bring the flags in for the singing of the national anthem Saturday prior to the start of the ceremonies.

Glencoe Mansion to host rail-themed photography exhibit



Full Steam 611 by Dale R. Carlson

RADFORD - Glencoe Mansion, Museum and Gallery is preparing to open its newest art gallery exhibit, "Mountain Rail Tails," featuring photography by Dale R. Carlson of Bluemoonistic Images.

The exhibit will be on display from June 4 through August 29 and dovetails nicely with the train observatory platform and exhibit found at the edge of the Glencoe grounds Glencoe.

"All across the Appalachian

Mountains, culture has been influenced by railroads," Glencoe Director Scott Gardner wrote in announcing the exhibit. "These iron rails created new communities like Radford, allowed new industries to flourish, and provided convenient transportation for residents. When the railroads ceased all passenger service in this region in the 60s and 70s, many depots were abandoned and the rails were removed. Many of these localities then struggled to find a new identity.

"Fast forward to today and many of those same communities have implemented creative ways to reutilize their railroad heritage to benefit their local economies," Gardner wrote. "Former depots and train cars have been restored and reutilized. Old rail beds have been replaced with 'rails to trails,'

See **Glencoe**, page 3

With early observance perhaps organized by newly freed slaves, Memorial Day began as a way to honor the Civil War dead



Originally known as Decoration Day, Memorial Day, which will be observed this year on Monday, May 31, originated in the years following the Civil War and became an official federal holiday in 1971.

The Civil War, which ended in the spring of 1865, claimed more lives than any conflict in U.S. history and required the establishment of the country's first national cemeteries. By the late 1860s, Americans in various towns and cities had begun holding spring-time tributes to these countless fallen soldiers, decorating their graves with flowers and reciting prayers.

Some records show that one of the earliest Memorial Day commemorations was organized by a group of formerly enslaved people in Charleston, S.C., less than a month after the Confederacy surrendered in 1865. Nevertheless, in 1966 the federal government declared Waterloo, N.Y., the official birthplace of Memorial Day. Waterloo, which first celebrated the day on May 5, 1866, was chosen because it hosted an annual, community-wide event, during which businesses closed and residents decorated the graves of soldiers with flowers and flags.

On May 5, 1868, General John A. Logan, leader of an organization for Northern Civil War veterans, called for a nationwide day of remembrance later that month. "The 30th of May, 1868, is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers, or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village and hamlet churchyard in the land," Logan proclaimed.

The date of Decora-

tion Day, as he called it, was chosen because it wasn't the anniversary of any particular battle.

On the first Decoration Day, General James Garfield made a speech at Arlington National Cemetery, and 5,000 participants decorated the graves of the 20,000 Civil War soldiers buried there.

Many Northern states held similar commemorative events and reprised the tradition in subsequent years; by 1890 each one had made Decoration Day an official state holiday. Southern states, on the other hand, continued to honor the dead on separate days until after World War I.

During World War I the United States found itself embroiled in another major conflict, and the holiday evolved to commemorate American military personnel who died in all wars, including World War II, The Vietnam War, The Korean War and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

For decades, Memorial Day continued to be observed on May 30, the date General Logan had selected for the first Decoration Day. But in 1968, Congress passed the Uniform Monday Holiday Act, which established Memorial Day as the last Monday in May in order to create a three-day weekend for federal employees. The change went into effect in 1971. The same law also declared Memorial Day a federal holiday.

Cities and towns across the United States host Memorial Day parades each year, often incorporating military personnel and members of veterans' organizations. Some of the largest parades take place in Chicago, New York and Washington, D.C.

See **Memorial**, page 5

Here they come again: Make way for the cicadas, Brood X



Periodical cicada Brood X, which dwarfs last year's Brood IX by comparison, is set to cover most of the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States, including Virginia.

As it warms up and people venture outside to enjoy the springtime weather, they may hear a familiar sound: a droning whine, at times louder than a lawnmower, letting everyone know that the cicadas are back again.

This year, that alien-like wail of the insect world will be even more pronounced, as millions of cicadas from Brood X emerge after 17 years underground.

"Communities and farms from the Midwest to our nation's capital that see large numbers of cicadas emerging at once may have a substantial noise issue," predicts Eric Day, Virginia Cooperative Extension entomologist in Virginia Tech's

See **Cicadas**, page 3

Blacksburg seeks feedback on strategies to create more affordable housing

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

Over the next six weeks, the town will be looking for feedback on preferred strategies for future residential development. The increasing lack of affordable housing has become a major topic of community concern, and the town is now taking a close look at a variety of affordable housing strategies to help address this issue.

Citizen feedback will be used to select and prioritize the strategies the town pursues to address its local growth, limited housing supply, and rising home prices. The strategies suggested in this survey were chosen based on best practices used across the country, on what is feasible in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and on the

preferred housing types and amenities identified in phase two of the town's public engagement process.

A report with results from both the first and second rounds of citizen engagement is available on the town's Let's Talk Blacksburg housing affordability project page. In phase two, survey respondents noted their willingness to accept slightly higher levels of residential density and greater diversity in housing types if they result in more affordable housing; if they prioritize housing for permanent residents and not students and investors; if preferred amenities like trails, green space, and parking are still provided in new housing developments; and if moderate standards of housing quality, energy efficiency, and visual appeal are incorporated.

This next and final survey seeks to understand citizen perspectives on

preferred development incentives to achieve the town's desired housing types and strategies to provide more home ownership opportunities for first-time home buyers and affordable rental opportunities for young professionals and wage workers. The survey also looks for feedback on the best way to fund these preferred strategies.

Citizens can provide their input now on the Town of Blacksburg's online community engagement platform called Let's Talk Blacksburg. The town encourages individuals to register on the site to receive project updates and notices about future engagement opportunities on the chosen topic.

The project page also has access to a link to the recently released New River Valley Regional Housing Study. To start engaging on this issue, visit <https://letstalkblacksburg.org/affordable-housing>.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday, May 26:

Blacksburg virtual Climate Vulnerability Assessment lunch

Blacksburg's Sustainability Manager, Carol Davis, will lead a virtual Climate Vulnerability Assessment Lunch and Learn at noon. Davis will discuss Blacksburg's future climate vulnerabilities and the decisions the town is making now to prepare the community not just to survive in a changing climate, but to thrive. Topics will include infrastructure, land use, transportation investments, buildings, food systems, and public health.

Christiansburg Drive-Thru Job Fair

The Town of Christiansburg will have its first-ever drive-thru job fair on Wednesday, May 26, from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. and from 4 p.m. until 6 p.m. Persons who wish to take part may come by, drop off their resumes, and receive information about full-time and part-time positions available at the town.

Warm Hearth Village pickleball 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

2 p.m. at Lotusland with

Paul Mills and Rebecca Anderson. Register online and a zoom link will be provided: https://virginiatech.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_cumxRA4Mec96guy.

Monday, May 31:

Radford Memorial Day Service

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

Thursday, June 3:

Chamber of Commerce Eggs & Issues Zoom breakfast

From 8 to 9 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. The deadline to register is June 2, 2021 by 4 p.m.

The speakers will be Mark Husband, the 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. to 8:00 p.m. at the 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.

American Legion meeting

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

Friday, June 4:

New Glencoe Mansion art exhibit

The Glencoe Mansion, Museum & Gallery will host its new gallery photography exhibit from June 4 through August 29, 2021. The exhibit is "Mountain Rail Tails" and features the works of photographer Dale R. Carlson of Bluemoonistic Images.

Saturday, June 5 and Sunday, June 6:

Plein air workshop at Smithfield Plantation

A second Plein air workshop will be held at Smithfield Plantation from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. taught

by Matt Gentry and Gerri Young of the Blacksburg Regional Art Association. Register through historicsmithfield.org. The cost is a \$15 donation to Smithfield with all proceeds going to support Smithfield Plantation. A supply list will be provided to registrants. Repeat attendees are welcome. The workshop is for ages 15 and up.

Monday, June 7:

2021 Real Estate Taxes due

Town of Blacksburg Real Estate Tax invoices for the first installment of 2021 have been mailed and are due by Monday, June 7, 2021. If you have not yet received a tax statement, call the Department of Financial Services at 540-961-1105. Payment may be mailed, made in person at 300 South Main St. Blacksburg, or paid online at www.blacksburg.gov/payments. VISA, MasterCard and Discover are accepted. A 10% penalty will be charged if taxes are not paid by June 7, 2021. Interest will be charged at the rate of 10% per year beginning July 1, 2021.

Tuesday, June 8:

The Sons of Confederate Veterans meeting

The Sons of Confederate Veterans, Stuart Horse Artillery Camp 1784, will meet at 7 p.m. at Aly's

Family Italian Restaurant at 3204 Riner Road. Members of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) are invited to attend. William Reed will give a talk on the 12th Virginia Infantry." For further information, call 320-4315 or 239-9864.

Saturday, June 12:

Department of Wildlife Resources Boating Safety Class at Claytor Lake

At the State Park Water's Edge Building, 6620 Ben H. Bolen Drive, Dublin, from 8 a.m. to 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 for this indoor class 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. 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.

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. The walk begins 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 for Take and Make Craft Kits available for grab-and-go at the library or with curbside pickup. The kits are free but supplies are limited.

Saturdays through October:

Radford Farmers Market

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

Thursdays through October

Christiansburg Farmers Market

The Christiansburg Farmers Market will be held each Thursday through October at the Christiansburg Recreation Center parking lot from 3 to 7 p.m.

New River Community Action presents Supporter of Year award to NRV Mask Makers

New River Community Action (NRCA) presented its Community Supporter of the Year Award to the New River Valley (NRV) Mask Makers at the organization's Board of Directors meeting on Thursday, May 20.

NRV Mask Makers was formed by a group of volunteers in response to the statewide mandate

requiring the wearing of masks due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Mask Makers sewed and delivered 18,021 masks to different organizations and schools in the New River Valley from March 2020 through February 2021. Volunteers who could not sew helped deliver the masks and donated supplies to support the operation.

NRV Mask Makers also created a Facebook page that allowed groups to request masks and then used different types of fabric, sizes, and styles to fit each recipient. The masks helped enable residents to work, shop for groceries, visit the doctor, and helped children return to school.

NRV Mask Makers donated 900 washable, handmade masks to NRCA, including 600 child-sized masks for preschool students in the

Head Start Program. The smaller masks ensured Head Start classes would continue in a safe manner. The average cost of each mask was \$6 for a total value of more than \$5,000 in donated personal protective equipment to help NRCA continue its mission in the area.

Working in collaboration with local health and human service partner agencies, volunteers, community, and faith-based organizations,



Head Start children wear child-size masks created and donated by the New River Valley Mask Makers.

NRCA assists approximately 9,000 NRV residents each year through a variety of programs that address local conditions

of poverty and improve the lives of lower-income individuals and families.

-By Tristan Mortensen

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- Light Excavating & Grading
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Montgomery-Blacksburg Kiwanis Club to host fundraiser golf tournament June 5

The Kiwanis Club of Montgomery County-Blacksburg will host its 19th annual golf tournament on Saturday June 5, at Auburn Hills Country Club, Christiansburg.

The club was unable to hold the tournament last year because of COVID and is looking for players/teams as well as sponsors

for its largest fundraiser of the year.

Tee time is 9:00 a.m. with a shotgun start, four-person teams with captain's choice. The cost is \$90 per player or \$360 per team. Lunch will be provided.

For player registration forms or for information about helping to sponsor the tournament, contact Miranda Layne at 540-392-0567 or mlayne@moog.com.

The hole sponsorship levels are as follows: \$100, single-hole sponsor; \$200 nine-hole sponsor; \$300, 18-hole sponsor; and

\$300, event sponsor.

The Montgomery County-Blacksburg Kiwanis Club has as its mission to improve the world one child, one community at a time.

In furtherance of this mission, the club stocks food pantries for at risk Pre-K students at two local elementary schools, reads to kids, donated \$7,500 for the purchase of playground equipment for younger grades at one school, supplies parents of newborn and young children with ID kits, purchases books for at risk pre-school chil-

dren at 10 schools, purchases gifts for 35-40 Christmas angels, contributes to Montgomery County Social Services child abuse and foster care and to the Salvation Army (also volunteering as Bell Ringers), support the Montgomery County Christmas Store and Women's Resource Center, sponsors the Key Club at Blacksburg High School and the Circle K at Virginia Tech, assists with the Special Olympics basketball tournament, and donates to Scouts BSA and Boys/Girls State.

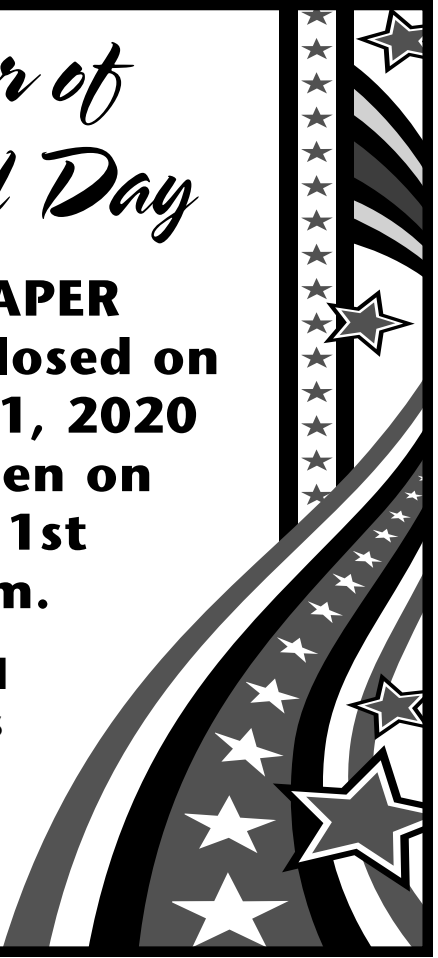


After a year's absence because of COVID-19, the Kiwanis Club of Montgomery County-Blacksburg is sponsoring its biggest fundraiser, its annual golf tournament at Auburn Hills Country Club, on June 5.

In honor of Memorial Day

OUR NEWSPAPER offices will be closed on Monday, May 31, 2020 And will reopen on Tues., June 1st @ 8:30 a.m.

All ads for June 2nd and June 3rd papers need to be in our office by Friday, May 22nd at 12:00 Noon.



NRCC names three Radford students outstanding in their area



Andrew Mann

New River Community College has recognized three students from Radford as Outstanding Students in a Curriculum/Subject Area.

The students who were honored were Kacie Amber Adams, visual communication design; Samuel Lawrence Dent, art and English; and Andrew Ryan Mann, general studies.



Kacie Adams

Students received a congratulatory letter from the college president and a plaque honoring their awards. Students are also being individually recognized on NRCC's social media outlets.



Samuel Dent

The awards were determined by the faculty in the various programs at the college. All students receiving the Outstanding Student in a Curriculum award have

completed requirements for an associate degree, certificate, diploma or career studies certificate and are eligible to graduate from the college this spring or summer.

NRV Regional Commission launches new community engagement platform

Radford -- The New River Valley Regional Commission recently launched a new community engagement platform to reach diverse voices in local and regional government planning.

Called EngageNRV.org, the platform is a new addition to the public involvement opportunities used by local governments in the New River Valley. The need for EngageNRV.org came in response to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions on public gatherings; however, it is proving to be an effective way for people to provide input as restrictions are being lifted.

The New River Valley Regional Commission is one of 21 planning districts in Virginia whose commissions are chartered under Virginia law. The organization encompasses the counties of Floyd, Giles, Montgomery, and Pulaski, and the City of Radford. The purpose of the planning district commission is to promote regional cooperation, to coordinate the activities and policies of member local governments, and to provide planning assistance to local governments.

The new platform was launched in response

to the challenges the past year has presented to engaging with the public on projects. With social and physical distancing in mind, the commission developed EngageNRV.org, an online collaboration tool allowing communities to interact with projects that mean the most to them. Through the variety of feedback and dialogue tools available, the commission now invites diverse voices to the decision-making process to add value to community planning for the region's residents and business owners.

Current opportunities for interaction on the site include the Town of Pulaski's comprehensive plan update and planning for Radford's eastern downtown revitalization.

To kickstart use of the site, the commission is sponsoring a "Smile with Your Eyes" photo contest to encourage users to register and post a masked selfie. Votes from other users will determine the winner of a gift card to a local business of their choice. Anyone who lives or works in the New River Valley is encouraged to visit EngageNRV.org, set up a profile, and begin interacting with the projects on the site.

Historic Montgomery



The front porch is an important part of Southern culture. In this circa 1915 photograph, the Stephens family enjoys its porch. The family (from left to right) included Kate, Margurette, Tosh, Ida, and Nell Stephens. The 1910 census shows that the family lived on Yellow Sulphur Road in Christiansburg. Tosh Stephens was a farmer and his daughters Kate and Margurette were teachers. (This image and many more are available from the Montgomery Museum of Art & History.)

Cicadas

from page 1

Department of Entomology in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. "Hopefully, any annoyance at the disturbance is tempered by just how infrequent — and amazing — this event is."

The scale of these emergence events is astounding with as many as 1.5 million cicadas emerging per acre. Each periodical cicada brood covers a specific geographical region with some areas overlapping. This year Brood X spans Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, North Carolina, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and D.C.

Cicadas — large, clear-winged insects with bulbous eyes — occur either annually (every year) or

periodically (every 13 or 17 years) depending on the species. The timing of a 13- or 17-year cycle is one of the great mysteries of the insect world. Research and mathematical modeling suggest that the length of these brood cycles could be attributed to predatory avoidance. When the cicadas emerge, the amount of biomass they provide could serve as a food source for potential predators to take advantage of. It is theorized that these cicadas have evolved to avoid synching up with predator cycles by having a 13- or 17-year prime number emergence interval.

The noise we hear is the mating call of the males who are attempting to attract females. For most people, the droning song of the cicada is nothing

more than a slight annoyance, or fascination, especially with these large broods which only appear roughly once every two decades. For ornamental tree growers and orchard and vineyard managers, this sound signals potential danger to their juvenile trees, vines, and saplings.

Cicadas do not pose a danger to these plants through feeding, but instead through their egg-laying habits. Cicada females select pencil-width branches or vines, then implant their eggs into them using a sharp egg laying tube called an ovipositor. The nymphs then hatch from the eggs and drop down to burrow into the soil where they begin harmlessly feeding on the plants' roots. The egg implantation causes

the branch or vine to split and wither, a phenomenon known as "flagging" where a group of leaves on an otherwise healthy part of the plant turn brown and die. For a small tree or young vine, too many flagging sections can stunt their growth or even kill them outright. Fortunately, the timeline for mitigating the impact of cicada egg laying is very short, as broods tend to have four-to-six weeks of activity before the generation dies off.

Even if you are not a fruit tree grower or vineyard manager, it is likely you will experience some sign of these cicadas. You may hear them, find their cast skins on trees, or even see them congregating. While large, cicadas do not bite, and are largely harmless, even to cats and dogs.

This emergence, as well as the emergence last year of Brood IX, are natural occurring events entomologists have been looking forward to for years.

"This insect is really fascinating, and if you don't

have fruit trees or grapevines to protect, you can enjoy this phenomenon while it lasts," said Doug Pfeiffer, a professor and extension specialist in Virginia Tech's Department of Entomology.

Glencoe

from page 1

permitting hiking and biking where it was not possible before. 'Mountain Rail Tails' explores these revitalized aspects of our rail heritage through imagery, evoking its former and current power."

Photographer Carlson grew up in the waning days of passenger rail service and says he "retained a strong fondness for that mode of travel with its terminals, passenger cars, and their rumble over the rails."

Carlson is originally from the Midwest, and, according to Glencoe, has "practiced his passion for photography for over 40 years in both his professional and artistic careers."

Carlson says when he and his wife, Becky, moved to the Blue Ridge Mountains, his photography shifted to focus on the local region. His works have been featured in numerous publications, including Western North Carolina (WNC)

and Blue Ridge Country magazines. Carlson and his wife founded their photography business, Bluemoonistic Images, in 2008 to offer his fine art

photography online.

Everyone is welcome to visit the museum at 600 Unruh Drive in Radford, and there is no admission charge.



Southern 6133 by Dale R. Carlson

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2

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Send community news and photos to communitynews@ourvalley.org

OPINION

WalletHub names Virginia best state for military retirees

With May being Military Appreciation Month and the U.S. planning to withdraw all troops from Afghanistan this year, the personal finance website WalletHub Monday released its report on 2021's Best and Worst States for Military Retirees and ranked Virginia number one among the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

To determine the best and worst states for military retirement, WalletHub compared the 50 states and the District of Columbia across three key dimensions: 1) economic environment, 2) quality of life and 3) health care.

The website then evaluated those dimensions using 30 relevant metrics. Among those metrics were the state

tax on military pensions, the job opportunities for veterans, military bases and installation per 100,000 veterans, the total VA expenditure per number of veterans, the presence of state help for returning veterans, the presence of academic credit for military service, the share of homeless veterans, the number of VA health facilities per number

of veterans, the quality of the VA hospitals, and the veteran suicide rate.

Virginia's ranks in some of the key metrics were 1) veterans per capita -- third; 2) percentage of homeless veterans -- second; 3) veteran job opportunities -- fourth; 4) housing affordability -- 30; 5) percentage of veteran-owned businesses -- third; 6) number

of VA benefits administration facilities per number of veterans -- seventh; and COVID-19 positive tests in the past week per capita -- 16.

States two through ten ranked by WalletHub as the best places for military retirees were South Carolina, Florida, South Dakota, Alaska, Alabama, Maryland, Wyoming, Missouri, and New Hampshire.

Virginia's gas prices fell last week

According to GasBuddy's price reports issued Monday, Virginia's gas prices fell by 0.9 cents per gallon in the past week to a statewide average across 4,081 stations of \$2.95/g.

Gas prices in Virginia are still 22.8 cents per gallon higher than a month ago and stand \$1.16/g higher than a year ago.

According to GasBuddy's

survey, the cheapest station in Virginia is priced at \$2.57/g while the most expensive is \$4.09/g.

The national average price of gasoline has fallen 1.9 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.02/g Monday. The national average is up 14.0 cents per gallon from a month ago and stands \$1.07/g higher than a year ago.

"In the lead-up to Memorial Day, we haven't seen gas prices come down much, though with oil's recent move lower, we should start to see more drops at the pump materialize in the days ahead," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis for GasBuddy.

"With the Colonial Pipeline situation continuing to improve in Southeastern

states, fueling up for the holiday weekend shouldn't be too challenging, save for a few pockets in Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina, where outages remain a bit higher than neighboring states," De Haan said. "For those hitting the road, we should see prices inch lower in the coming week through at least Memorial Day, so motorists need not rush to fill

their tanks as the drop in oil prices should manifest into lower gas prices as we begin the summer driving season."

GasBuddy's survey updates 288 times every day from the most diverse list of sources covering nearly 150,000 stations nationwide, the most comprehensive and up-to-date in the country. GasBuddy data is accessible at <http://FuellInsights.GasBuddy.com>.

Virginia's recidivism rate second-lowest in country

RICHMOND—Governor Ralph Northam Monday announced that Virginia's recidivism rate is the second-lowest in the country at 23.9 percent, behind only South Carolina's rate of 21.9 percent.

This is the fifth year in a row that the commonwealth has had the lowest or second lowest recidivism rate in the nation.

Recidivism refers to an individual's committing a new offense within

a specified follow-up period that results in a new sentence.

"We all benefit when the individuals in our correctional system have the opportunity to learn, grow, and return to society as productive citizens," said Governor Northam. "Our success is the direct result of effective reentry programs and strong partnerships across our commonwealth. I remain grateful to the hardworking professionals at the Virginia Department of Corrections who are dedicated to rehabilitation, transforming lives, and building safer communities."

The Virginia Department of Corrections (VADOC), which operates state corrections facilities and state proba-

tion and parole offices, customizes its programming and supervision to address each individual's criminogenic risks and needs. VADOC offers more than 125 programs to offenders who are in prison and those who are under community supervision. This includes substance abuse treatment, mental and behavioral health services, career and technical education, skills training, and employment and housing assistance.

"Virginia continues to be a leader in the field of corrections, on both a national and international scale," said Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Brian Moran. "Virginia's ability to maintain a low recidivism rate means

increased public safety for families, neighborhoods, and the entire commonwealth."

Of the 12,551 state-responsible inmates released from incarceration in Virginia in fiscal year 2016, 2,997 were re-incarcerated within three years. Virginia waits at least four years to calculate the three-year re-incarceration rate to ensure all court orders are included. All state-responsible sentences after release are counted as recidivism in Virginia, including technical violations and sentences for offenses that occurred prior to release.

"Virginia's recidivism rate has remained low because of the hard work of both correctional staff and inmates," said

Virginia Department of Corrections Director Harold Clarke. "Especially important is the evidence-based programming offered to inmates, probationers, and parolees, from cognitive skills programming to academic and vocational education to substance abuse treatment, and the best practices followed in our facilities and district offices."

Factors such as mental health impairment and drug use are associated with recidivism. Inmates with a history of testing positive for both opioids and cocaine, for example, had a re-incarceration rate substantially higher than those with no history of testing positive for opioids or cocaine.

News Messenger

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

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Virginia's employment rate dropped to 4.7 percent in April

Governor Ralph Northam announced Friday that Virginia's unemployment rate fell 0.4 percentage points to 4.7 percent in April. Virginia's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate continues to be below the

national rate, which rose to 6.1 percent.

"Virginia's unemployment rate has decreased every month since last June and is edging closer to pre-pandemic record lows," said the governor. "More people are working, businesses are hiring, and our economy is getting even stronger as more and more Virginians receive their COVID-19 vaccines. Our administration remains focused on ensuring there is opportunity for every Virginia resident in every part of our Commonwealth so we can all move forward."

Total nonfarm payroll employment increased by 2,400 jobs in April. The labor force decreased by 12,422 to 4,225,614, and the number of unemployed residents decreased by 17,097 to 197,338. The number of employed residents rose by 4,675 to 4,028,276. Virginia's over-the-year job gain of 7.7 percent was less than the 10.9 percent increase

nationwide.

"It's great to see more Virginians getting back to work, and industries that were hard hit by COVID-19, like tourism and hospitality, making a comeback," said Secretary of Commerce and Trade Brian Ball. "We know we still have work to do, but this decrease in the unemployment rate is welcome news."

"The commonwealth enjoyed a strong and vibrant economy prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the decreasing unemployment rate demonstrates that we are on a solid path to recovery," said Chief Workforce Development Advisor Megan Healy. "With over 63 percent of adults in Virginia fully vaccinated, workers are growing more confident to go back to school or rejoin the workforce. Our focus moving forward will be to ensure that they have the skills, training, and support they need to thrive in the post-

pandemic economy."

In April, the private sector recorded an over-the-year gain of 289,800 jobs, while employment in the public sector lost 11,100 jobs. Compared to a year ago, on a seasonally adjusted basis, nine of 11 major industry divisions experienced employment increases. The largest over-the-year job gain occurred in leisure and hospitality, up 114,000 jobs, or 52 percent. The next largest over-the-year job gain occurred in trade and transportation, up 67,300 jobs, or 11 percent. Education and health services experienced the third largest over-the-year job gain of 38,200 jobs, or seven percent. Government experienced the largest decrease, falling by 11,100 jobs. Local government employment fell by 10,100 jobs, and state government employment was down 3,400 jobs while the federal government added 2,400 jobs.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

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62					63					64		

- CLUES ACROSS**
- 1. A group of sheep
 - 5. Of she
 - 8. This (Spanish)
 - 12. A type of sorcery
 - 14. A team's best pitcher
 - 15. Port in southern Japan
 - 16. Makes very happy
 - 18. Trigonometric unit of measurement
 - 19. From a distance
 - 20. Winged nut
 - 21. Consumed
 - 22. "Heat" director
 - 23. In all places
 - 26. Made improvements to
 - 30. St. ___ Girl: brand of beer
 - 31. A type of "seat"
 - 32. Wood
 - 33. A brief treatise on a subject of interest
 - 34. Approval
 - 39. Basics
 - 42. Where judges sit
 - 44. W. African religion
 - 46. Commentators
 - 47. Having many different functions
 - 49. Member of a Semitic people
 - 50. Flightless, fast-running bird
 - 51. After the seventh
 - 56. Small N. Zealand tree
 - 57. Health care pro (abbr.)
 - 58. Playground mainstay
 - 59. Expressing relief
 - 60. Records brain activity (abbr.)
 - 61. Fishing net
 - 62. Beer
 - 63. Tooth caregiver
 - 64. Japanese beverage
- CLUES DOWN**
- 1. Garden tools
 - 2. Early Syrian kingdom
 - 3. 500 sheets of paper
 - 4. Information
 - 5. Beloved comic strip character
 - 6. Distinct form of a plant
 - 7. Replenishment
 - 8. Semitransparent glassy substance
 - 9. Expedition to observe animals
 - 10. One who held landed granted by Anglo-Saxon king
 - 11. Obtain in return for labor
 - 13. Inheritably genetically
 - 17. One who rescues
 - 24. Doctor of Education
 - 25. Liberal arts
 - 26. Shock treatment
 - 27. Disfigure
 - 28. When you hope to get there
 - 29. Peacock network
 - 35. Part of (abbr.)
 - 36. The 21st letter of the Greek alphabet
 - 37. Not just "play"
 - 38. Former CIA
 - 40. Reduced to a sloping edge
 - 41. Restricted the development of
 - 42. Sciences degree
 - 43. Sea eagles
 - 44. Saturated
 - 45. Joints
 - 47. Sailing boat
 - 48. Respiratory organs
 - 49. Guitarists use them
 - 52. Disco act: Bee ___
 - 53. First Chinese dynasty
 - 54. Intentionally lose
 - 55. Muslim people of China

Submit letters to the editor to editor@ourvalley.org

OBITUARIES

Baber, Gerald Leslie

Jerry Baber, 70, of Radford, took his last breath on this Earth and returned to the Lord on Thursday, May 20, 2021.

Jerry was born March 4, 1951, to the late Charles W. Baber Jr. and LaRue Koogler Baber of Waynesboro, Va. He was preceded in death by his brother, Charles "Chuck" William Baber III.

Left to cherish his memories are his devoted wife of 40 years, Wanda Penland Baber; his daughter, Rachael Baber McNeill; her husband, Troy McNeill; a sister-in-law, Sherry Baber; and various uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews, cousins, extended family, and friends.

Jerry proudly served in the U.S. Navy as an Aerographer's mate AG2 from 1971-1975, where he was stationed at Midway Island and the Fleet Numerical Weather Center in Monterey, Calif. After an honorable discharge, he graduated with a BFA in photography from Ohio University. Jerry was the former medical research photographer at the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine for 29 years and opened his own business, Baber Photography NRV, until 2015, when he retired.

Jerry was described by many to have the kindest and warmest soul with his witty and dry sense of humor. He was deeply devoted to his family and was a



true animal lover. He loved the Lord and often would send words of encouragement to those who needed them.

Jerry found beauty everywhere he traveled and had this amazing talent to share that beauty through his photography. One of the things he enjoyed talking about the most was his time in the U.S. Navy and living on Midway Island from 1972-1974. He loved to share his photography work with others, especially of nature and the gooney birds of Midway Island.

Jerry is no longer suffering and is soaring high with the goonies and having the best reunion of his life with his parents, his brother, and late friends. From his family: We'll keep you in our hearts, until we meet again. From his Midway Island Naval family: Fair winds and following seas, shipmate. We have the watch.

The family received friends from 1 until 2 p.m. on Tuesday, May 25, 2021 at Mullins Funeral Home in Radford. Graveside services with full military honors followed at 3 p.m. at the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery, 5550 Bagging Plant Rd, Dublin, Va.

The family would like you to "pay it forward" to others with love and kindness.

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

Howery, Alfred Preston

Alfred Preston Howery, 76, of Blacksburg, died May 21, 2021 at his home.

He was retired from the United States Postal Service after 30 years of service. He was an avid outdoorsman and enjoyed hunting, fishing, pitching horseshoes, and playing softball.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Dee and Gladys Howery, and his brother, Winston Howery. He was also preceded in death by his first wife, Diane Johnston Howery.

He is survived by his wife, Viola Howery; his son and daughter-in-law, Chris and Cindy Dowdy; his grandchildren, MaKayla and Bryce Dowdy; his sisters and brothers-in-law, Loretta and Eddie Broyles, Madeline



and Jake Frazier and Patsy Duncan and Janet Dowdy. He is also survived by a host of nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were conducted Tuesday, May 25, 2021, at the McCoy Funeral Home chapel with Jerry Dowdy and Gary McCoy officiating. Burial followed at the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Dublin.

The family would like to express special thanks to the staff of Intrepid USA Hospice for their care over the last few months. In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorials be made to the National Hospice Foundation at <https://www.nationalhospicefoundation.org> or the Blacksburg Interfaith Food Pantry.

Wade, James Clark

James Clark Wade, 82, husband of Patty Scott Wade, passed away at his home in Montgomery County on Friday, May 21, 2021.

He was the son of the late James D. and Hazel S. Wade.

In addition to his wife of 61 years, he will be missed and remembered by his children, Russell C. Wade, Sarah Wade Underwood (Bob), Perry R. Wade (Anna), and Mark D. Wade (Myra); grandchildren Daniel Wade Underwood (Shanon), Jamie M. Underwood, Hailey M. Wade, James D. Wade, and Josie A. Wade; a great-grandchild, Millie B. Underwood;

sisters Rachel White, the late Bevin Marshall, Joan Heffron, and Glenna Mitchell; and his brother, Roger Wade.

J.C. worked at the Radford Arsenal for 32 years.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the Riner Rescue Squad, 1610 Auburn School Drive, Riner, VA 24149.

Graveside services were held on Sunday, May 23, 2021, at the Big Sand Cemetery in Floyd.

The Wade family is in the care of Mullins Funeral Home and Crematory in Radford.

Criner, Lawrence Douglas

Lawrence Douglas Criner, 85, of Blacksburg, died May 19, 2021, at LewisGale Medical Center, Salem.

He was born on Friday, Sept. 6, 1935, to the late Ernest Brown and Marine Criner.

Doug worked and retired from the Radford Army Ammunition Plant, as an Acid Vessel Repairman after 33 years of service. Retirement wasn't for him; he went to work part time at Wade's on North Main Street, Blacksburg.

He loved Virginia Tech Hokies football. He enjoyed NASCAR (go #2 Brad Keselowski). He loved working in his yard and took pride in its beauty, especially the rose bush he planted in front of the picture window.

He was preceded in death by his parents; a sister, Doraine Martin (Phil); brothers Donald Criner and Wallace "Crow" Criner (Jo Ann); and special



brothers-in-law, Sammy, Mac and Earl.

He is survived by his wife of 63 years, who he was totally devoted to, Katie Criner; his only child, Diane Matusevich (Eric); a sister and brother-in-law, Dolphine Lowe (Clinton); sisters-in-law, Fern Echols, Lo Fisher, and Brenda Allen (Sayford), who were sisters in his heart; grandchildren, who were his pride and joy, Tracy Shelton (Andy Dandy) and Wayne Shelton (Brittany); special nephews Reggie Caldwell, Timmy Shupe, and Cory D.; a special niece, Cathy Martin; a special brother-in-law, Sayford Allen and Coy Shupe (Terry); and a host of other nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were conducted on Monday, May 24, 2021, in the McCoy Funeral Home Chapel, with Randy Jarrells officiating. Interment followed in Roselawn Memorial Gardens. Arrangements by McCoy Funeral Home.

Fisher, Joseph Paul

Joseph Paul Fisher, 69, passed away at his home in Radford on Tuesday, May 11, 2021.

He was a U. S. Marine veteran.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Edward Eugene Fisher and Ethel Virginia Jewell Fisher; a son, J. P. Fisher, Jr.; three brothers and a sister; and two nephews.

Survivors include his grandchildren, Michah Collins, Zachary Taylor, Hallie Fisher



and Angel Fisher; a sister, Mary Price of Radford; a brother, Dean (Matt) Fisher of Rocky Mount, N.C.; a daughter-in-law, Jennifer Hinkley; and many nieces, nephews, relatives, and friends.

A memorial service with military honors will be held at 3 p.m. on Thursday, May 27, 2021, at the Mullins Funeral Home in Radford.

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

Ratcliffe, Curtis Andrew

Curtis Andrew Ratcliffe, 80, of Fairlawn, passed away Wednesday, May 19, 2021.

He was a retired Pentecostal Holiness minister. He was preceded in death by his parents, Paul and Lillian Ratcliffe; a son, Aaron Ratcliffe; and a sister, Bonnie Covey.

Survivors include his loving wife of 56 years, Sherian Ratcliffe; a daughter and son-in-law, Kim and Robert Hudgins; a

brother, James Ratcliffe; and many other relatives and friends.

Graveside services will be held at 11 a.m. today, Wednesday, May 26, 2021, in the Appalachian Conference Grounds Cemetery in Dublin.

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

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MONTGOMERY SPORTS

News Brief: Drew Lloyd leads 10 Blue Demons named all-region

Marty Gordon
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

Defensive end Drew Lloyd leads a host of Christiansburg High School football players named Friday to the All-Region D football team. Lloyd was named first-team on the defensive side of the ball and as a second-team running back.

Joining him on the second-team were

defensive tackle Aiden Lacombe, receiver Travis Altizer, and defensive back Jaxson Clark.

Honorable mention Blue Demons were MJ Hunter, offensive all-purpose; Tyrique Taylor, defensive end; Eli Brubaker, offensive line; Casey Graham, defensive all-purpose; Thaxton Henley, linebacker; and Kenyon Johnson-Buchannon, running back.

Eleven Hokies named to All-ACC preseason teams



PHOTO COURTESY OF VT ATHLETICS

Virginia Tech defensive end Amare' Barno is among 11 Hokies named to the four Athlon All-ACC preseason teams.

Eleven Virginia Tech football student-athletes were recognized by Athlon Sports on Thursday as members of its 2021 All-ACC Preseason football teams.

Defensive end Amare' Barno, tight end James Mitchell, and cornerback Jermaine Waller headlined Tech's honorees on Athlon's first-team unit; cornerback Chamarri Conner and guard Lecitus Smith were named to the second team. Defensive tackle Norrell Pollard, tackle Luke Tenuta, and all-purpose performer/wide receiver Tre' Turner were named to the all-league preseason third team while offensive lineman Brock Hoffman, wide receiver Tayvion Robinson, and defensive tackle Jordan Williams were picked for the fourth team by Athlon.

FIRST TEAM

Defensive end Amare' Barno

A converted linebacker, Barno made an immediate impact in his initial season playing defensive end for the Hokies in 2021. He recorded 43 total tackles on the season, including 28 solo stops. The Blythewood, S.C., native led the ACC and ranked third among Power Five players with 16 tackles for loss. He tied with Tech DE Justus Reed for eighth in the league with 6.5 sacks.

Tight end James Mitchell

A second-team All-ACC selection of PFF College in 2020, Mitchell caught 26 passes for 435 yards with a team-high four touchdowns. A true tight end who doesn't shy away from blocking, Mitchell registered a career-high 103 receiving yards with one touchdown and a rushing touchdown last season at North Carolina. The Big Stone Gap, Va., native has seen action in 36 career games (18 starts) for Tech, catching 47 passes for 796 yards with four touchdowns. He has also rushed for five scores.

Cornerback Jermaine Waller

A 2019 All-ACC Honorable Mention selection,

Waller was limited to a pair of starts due to injuries in 2020. In 2019, the Washington, D.C., native tied for the Tech lead with three interceptions and tied for fifth in the ACC with 13 passes defended. He enjoyed a breakout game with two interceptions, five tackles, and half a sack at Miami. In 27 career games (12 starts) with Tech, he owns 63 tackles (48 solo), 3.5 tackles for loss, 1.5 sacks, 15 passes defended and a forced fumble.

SECOND TEAM

Guard Lecitus Smith

A member of the Hokies' talented offensive line, Smith was a key ingredient in helping running back Khalil Herbert have such an outstanding season in 2020. He started all 11 contests for the Hokies at left guard. He was named to the PFF College National Team of the Week after the Hokies racked up 260 yards and four rushing scores at then-No. 8 North Carolina. Smith was part of a Tech offensive front that helped the squad lead the ACC in rushing a year ago.

Defensive back Chamarri Conner

Virginia Tech's leader in tackles in 2020, Conner started all 11 games and registered 81 total tackles (60 solo). He had 3.5 tackles for loss, two interceptions, four breakups, four quarterback hurries, and one forced fumble. Conner was recognized twice as the ACC Defensive Back of the Week. The Jacksonville, Fla., native has played in 37 games (24 starts) during his Tech career, posting 162 tackles (113 solo), 13.5 tackles for loss, 5.5 sacks, three interceptions, 15 passes defended, 12 quarterback hurries, and a pair of forced fumbles.

THIRD TEAM

Defensive tackle Norrell Pollard

Pollard has played in 24 games (13 starts) in his first two seasons with the Hokies. The Apopka, Fla., product registered 30 total tackles, as well as 4.5 tackles for loss and 2.5 sacks in 2020. He earned second-team All-Freshman honors from PFF College in 2019 after posting 22 tackles, four tackles for loss, 3.0 sacks, three quarterback hurries and a fumble recovery in 2019.

Tackle Luke Tenuta

Tenuta makes the move to left tackle in 2021 after anchoring the right tackle post for Tech in 2020. The massive offensive lineman started nine contests at right tackle a year ago and earned PFF College National Team of the Week honors after

Tech rolled up 314 rushing yards vs. NC State. Tenuta was a key part of an offensive front that helped RB Khalil Herbert register 1,182 rushing yards as the Hokies set a school record by averaging 5.58 yards per carry last season. Tenuta was a third-team All-ACC selection by both PFF College and ACC Network's Eric Mac Lain in 2020.

All-purpose/wide receiver Tre' Turner

Turner makes the Athlon squad as an all-purpose performer/wide receiver. A second-team All-ACC selection of PFF College in 2020, Turner started 10 games at wide receiver a year ago. The Greensboro, N.C., native ranked second on the squad with 34 receptions for 529 yards (15.6 avg.) and tied for second with three touchdowns. In 33 career games (26 starts) at Tech, Turner owns 94 catches for 1,617 yards with 11 touchdowns. He also has 41 carries for 392 yards with four touchdowns. He needs six more receptions in 2021 to become the 15th player in school history to reach the 100-catch plateau.

FOURTH TEAM

Offensive lineman Brock Hoffman

A 2020 first-team All-ACC pick of ACC Network's Eric Mac Lain, Hoffman started all 11 contests at center and helped the Hokies rush for 240.1 yards per game, which led the ACC a year ago. An honorable mention pick on the official All-ACC squad, the Statesboro, N.C., native was part of an offensive line that helped Tech score 27 rushing touchdowns on the season in 2020. In total, the Hokies amassed better than 200 rushing yards eight times, 250+ six times and 300 or more rushing yards on three occasions a year ago. Hoffman was named the ACC Offensive Lineman of the Week twice last season.

Wide receiver Tayvion Robinson

Robinson started all 11 games a year ago, leading the Hokies with 38 receptions for 592 yards, while ranking second on the squad with three touchdown catches. He also returned 10 punts for a total of 21 yards and rushed the ball seven times for 48 yards. The Virginia Beach native tied a season-high with five receptions for a career-best 98 yards, including a 60-yard touchdown vs. Virginia. In 24 career games at Tech (18 solo), he owns 69 catches for 996 yards with four touchdowns.

Defensive tackle Jordan Williams

Williams joined Tech as a graduate transfer after racking up 55 total tackles, 9.5 tackles for loss, 4.0 sacks, two pass breakups, and a forced fumble over the past three seasons at Clemson. The Virginia Beach native played in 38 games (three starts) for the Tigers, participating in 673 total snaps. He played in 11 games (three starts) in 2020, including appearances in the ACC Championship Game vs. Notre Dame and the Sugar Bowl vs. Ohio State.

Coaching veteran Mike Jones hired as Tech associate head coach



Mike Jones, a 22-time USA basketball coach, has been hired as associate head coach for the Virginia Tech men's basketball team.

Mike Jones, the head coach at DeMatha Catholic High School in Maryland since 2002-03 and a 22-time USA Basketball coach, has been named associate head coach of the Virginia Tech men's basketball team, head coach Mike Young announced this week.

"Virginia Tech is first and foremost getting a great person who not only fits our program but embodies what our University is about," Young said. "Mike Jones is a tremendous basketball coach who brings a wealth of success from DeMatha and USA Basketball. I have had the privilege of watching Mike over the years and have continually been impressed with his ability to teach the game of basketball and mentor players. We are excited to add him to our family and look forward to continuing on what we have built over the past two seasons."

Jones arrives in Blacksburg after a 19-year stint at national prep powerhouse DeMatha where he won a national title in 2006. He owns an impressive all-time record of 511-119 (.811 winning percentage) as the head coach of the Stags.

Jones has won nine Washington Catholic Athletic Conference regular season titles, eight WCAC Tournament crowns, and four Maryland Private School Tournament championships. During his stint as the head coach at DeMatha, Jones has coached six athletes who went on to play in the NBA.

"I am extremely excited to be joining Coach Young, his staff, and Hokie Nation," Jones said. "This is a tremendous opportunity to learn from a great coach in Coach Young and to provide our student-athletes with a passionate coach who is fired up about joining the Virginia Tech community and ready to continue the upward trajectory of our men's basketball program."

"I'm very honored to have received such a warm welcome through texts, calls, and social media from many who don't even know me. I can already tell this place is special."

In addition to his experience of developing players at the prep level, Jones brings extensive ties to USA Basketball, most recently as the 2021 USA Men's U16 National Team head coach.

After serving in three coaching roles with

USA Basketball alone in 2019, Jones was named a co-recipient of the 2019 USA Basketball Developmental Coach of the Year award. He led the 2019 USA Basketball Men's U16 National Team to a gold medal at the FIBA Americas U16 Championship in Brazil, was a lead coach at the 2019 USA Men's Junior National Team July minicamp, and was a court coach at the 2019 USA Men's Junior National Team October minicamp.

Jones has also served as head coach of the USA Nike Hoop Summit Team three times, and he served as the USA's Hoop Summit assistant coach in 2012 and 2017.

He got his start with USA Basketball as an assistant coach for the 2004 Youth Development Festival East Team. He won three gold medals with USA Basketball men's junior national teams. Prior to 2019, he was a coach at the annual USA Basketball Men's Junior National Team October minicamp eight times.

"This has been a real emotional few days for myself and my family," Jones said about leaving DeMatha. "It's not easy saying goodbye to a place that is a big part of who I am. The players, the coaches and the program mean so much to me. This was one of the most difficult decisions I've had to make in my life."

A standout player at Old Dominion University from 1991-92 through 1994-95, Jones was a member of the All-Colonial Athletic Association second team and earned CAA All-Tournament team honors in his senior season. Jones led the Monarchs to NCAA Tournament appearances in 1992 and 1995, and he finished his ODU career with 1,166 points.

He earned his bachelor's degree in human services and counseling from Old Dominion in 1995.

Following his career at ODU, Jones played professionally in the Continental Basketball Association and the International Basketball Association, where he was all-league first team in 1997. He has also played professionally in Portugal, Hong Kong, Finland, and the Dominican Republic.

He is married to Stayce and has a daughter, Maya, and a stepson, Jacques.

Lady Hokies advance to super regional with walk-off win over BYU

For the second time in program history, the Virginia Tech softball team has advanced to the NCAA super regionals behind an 11-3 win in five innings over BYU in Saturday's Tempe Regional final.

Sophomore Alexa Milius delivered a walk-off, solo home run in the bottom of the fifth inning to send the No. 21/22 Hokies (36-13) into the next round with a run-rule victory. Junior pitcher Keely Rochar (29-8) picked up her third win of the regional, throwing another complete game and holding the Cougars (38-17) to three runs on six hits.

The Hokies hit five home runs in Saturday's contest, tied for the second-most all season with April 18's game versus Georgia Tech and behind the program-record eight homers hit at NC State on March 14. Kelsey Bennett hit her second homer of the regional and ended the weekend going 9 for 11, including 7 for her last 7 at-bats.

Tech last advanced to the super regionals in 2008 when they moved on to the Women's College World Series. However, this year marks the first time ever that the Hokies went undefeated (3-0) in an NCAA Regional.

"It's hard to describe what winning a regional means to us," Tech head coach Pete D'Amour said. "I told the ladies prior to game 1 that 'they earned the right to play well' this weekend. It hasn't been an easy year. They've done everything I've asked of them and more. I'm thankful to my staff, our support staff, and our players. I'm looking forward to leading this team next weekend."

THE GAME

After the Hokies got their first two batters aboard in the bottom of the first inning, Milius hit an infield single and Kelsey Brown came home from third to get Tech on the board early. Two batters later, Bennett

singled to right field, and Cameron Fagan scored to double the first-inning lead.

Tech got another run in the second inning from a Darby Trull RBI bunt single before doing some real damage in the bottom of the third. Bennett opened the scoring spree with a solo homer to center field, and then Grace Chavez hit a pinch-hit, two-run bomb over the right field wall to put the Hokies up six. Tech would take a 7-0 lead into the fourth inning after Brown hit an infield single, scoring Trull from second base.

Jayne Bailey put the Hokies up by eight in the bottom of the fourth with a solo blast to right center field. However, Tech needed to go to the bottom of the fifth inning after BYU scored three runs in the top half. Fagan answered for the Hokies with a two-run homer that scored Brown before Milius ended it in the next at-bat to send Virginia Tech to the super regionals.

Rochar was nearly flawless through the first four innings, surrendering just three hits to the Cougars and not allowing a runner past second base. She ended the game with 11 strikeouts and just one walk.

Bennett finished her second-career regionals with an .818 batting average, two home runs, and four runs batted in. The sophomore led the team in the regular season with 11 homers.

In her first time in the NCAA regionals, Milius led the team with five runs batted in on the weekend. She tied with Bennett and Fagan for the most homers for the Hokies in Arizona with two.

Rochar got the win in all three of Tech's regional victories, throwing 19 innings with 27 strikeouts and just seven runs allowed.

In this weekend's NCAA super regionals, Tech will play the winner of the Los Angeles Regional hosted by the No. 2 national seed, UCLA.

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

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