



Blacksburg town clerk retiring after 41 years on the job

In a letter to the Blacksburg Town Council, town clerk Donna Boone-Caldwell has announced she would be retiring on August 1 after 41 years of service.

Boone-Caldwell said the decision was not an easy one to make, but the timing is right. "I have enjoyed a wonderful career and I'm grateful for the professional opportunities the town has provided me, in addition to the many friendships that I have been blessed with over the years," she said.

When Boone-Caldwell started her clerk career in 1980, she had little experience with local government. "I limped along, valued input from all who were willing to give, and forged ahead," she said.

With a bit of help from her col-

leagues and Mayor Torchy Walrath, she soon took ownership and excelled in her position. In Boone-Caldwell's 41-year tenure, she has seen four mayors, five town managers, and 30 different members of the town council.

Some of her most vivid memories include the launch of Blacksburg Transit; vision and revitalization projects in downtown Blacksburg; the arrival of the Internet with the Blacksburg Electric Village; the town's Bicentennial Celebration; Tour DuPont races through Blacksburg; community shock and healing from April 16, 2007; and, most recently, how well Blacksburg navigated the COVID-19 pandemic.

As for the changes she has seen,

Boone-Caldwell said it has been a wonderful experience. "So much has changed since my first day on the job. Without a doubt, the secret to my longevity has been the willingness to accept change and roll with the flow," she said.

"Donna is vivacious, conscientious, and unfailingly professional," said Blacksburg Mayor Leslie Hager Smith. "For over 40 years, she has served the council and citizens of Blacksburg reliably, and she's made a good many friends along the way. Her institutional knowledge just can't be replaced; in fact, she is an institution herself. Fortunately, Donna will remain in the area and has promised to make herself available to us as we move forward."



After 41 years of service to the Town of Blacksburg as its town clerk, Donna Boone-Caldwell is retiring on August 1.



Based in Blacksburg, Kat Mills is known for her down-to-earth singing style and her powerful voice.

Kat Mills to present free Bisset Park concert Tuesday

The Radford Parks and Recreation Department will offer a free concert featuring Kat Mills at the Bisset Park gazebo on Tuesday, June 29, 2021, from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Mills is a singer-songwriter, wife, mother, and activist based in Blacksburg and known throughout the region for her down-to-earth style and powerful voice. With her vintage Martin guitar, bell bottoms, and soulful original songs, Mills reminds her audiences of another era, but her work is for the here and now.

She has four studio al-

bums, has been a regular at Steppin' Out and Floyd Fest, and has shared stages with Pete Seeger, Dar Williams and Sarah Lee Guthrie. She will present a relaxing, inspiring set, so everyone should bring a blanket and/or a lawn chair and come prepared to sing along.

The Bisset Park concerts may be cancelled should storms approach near the starting time. Persons interested in attending the concerts should contact the Radford Parks and Recreation Department at 731-3633 for updated weather information.

Wilderness Road Chorus picks up regular rehearsal schedule

The Wilderness Road Chorus singers, a women's group that sings four-part a cappella barbershop style, are back at their regular indoors rehearsals after a year of rehearsing wherever and however they could because of the COVID-19 restrictions.

They are back on the usual schedule of Monday night rehearsals at 7 p.m., at Luther Memorial Lutheran Church on Pricess Fork road in Blacksburg.

For more than a year, the chorus has worked with zoom rehearsals, and masked, socially-distanced outdoor rehearsals when the weather was warmer, according to the group's director,

Lavelva Stevens.

"Barbershop harmony is, along with jazz, one of only two styles of music developed in the United States," said Stevens. The four-part harmony, a cappella, barbershop style dates to the 1850s. Its harmonies are specific, creating a sound that barber shoppers call "Ringing the chord." Wilderness Road Chorus emphasizes music education. The singers learn vocal production and performing. The chorus performs at community events such as fairs, and it has sung at such venues as Calfee Park baseball stadium.

Its favorite mission is to sing at assisted living centers and hos-

pitals throughout the year. The chorus takes its name from the road that runs through the communities in which its members live.

Women 16 years of age and older, including newcomers, are invited to visit a rehearsal to learn about the style and the sound. Stevens said being able to read music is not a prerequisite.

"We learn the songs at rehearsal, and recordings are available for singers to practice their parts at home," Stevens said. The chorus is on Facebook at Wilderness Road Chorus, and its website is <http://www.wildernessroadchorus.org>.



The women's Wilderness Road Chorus has been performing at community events for more than 30 years. After a year of COVID-19 restrictions, the chorus is back rehearsing indoors again.

Radford University selects new associate vice president of university relations



Becky Brackin has left Angelo State University to assume her post as RU's associate vice president of university relations.

Becky Brackin, former director of communications and marketing at Angelo State University (ASU) in San Angelo, Texas, has been selected as the next associate vice president of university relations at Radford University.

Brackin started at RU on Friday, June 25. She has a bachelor of business administration degree from Angelo

State.

"Becky brings experience, passion, and personality to the university that we are certain will contribute to continuity for the team while also continuing to elevate the Highlander brand nationally," said Wendy Lowery, the university's vice president of advancement and university relations. "We look forward to connecting her with key partners and the broader university community."

Brackin's appointment culminates a national search to fill the position. She joins the team during a critical moment in the university's history that aligns with the 2018-2023 Strategic Plan. This year, Radford University launched its most ambitious fundraising campaign called TOGETHER – A Campaign for Radford University. This month, the university community broke ground on two large-scale building projects that will change the skyline of Radford: the Artis Center for Adaptive Innovation and Creativity and The Highlander, an upscale boutique hotel. Brackin will continue leading communication and market-

See Brackin, page 4

COVID-19 update: New River District lags behind parts of state in vaccinated percentages

Dr. Noelle Bissell, the health director for the New River District, said at her most recent meeting with the media, only some 70,000 people, or 39 percent, in the district are fully vaccinated.

She delivered the news on the same day Virginia Governor Ralph Northam announced that on average, 70 percent of Virginians ages 18 and older have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. This made Virginia the 16th state in the nation to meet the vaccination goal set by President Joe Biden ahead of the July 4th holiday.

Those percentages mean the district lags behind some areas of the state, and Dr. Bissell said she does not expect the district to reach the 70 percent goal by July 4.

The goal represents herd immunity, which occurs when a majority of a population is vaccinated.

"When you look at getting

control of the pandemic, the way to do that is through herd immunity. The way we get herd immunity is through vaccination," Bissell said.

She went on to explain that there are COVID-19 variants circulating in the state. Still, the district is seeing "strong protection" against serious illness, hospitalization, and deaths, even with the variants, in people who are fully vaccinated for the coronavirus, she said.

"People who are not vaccinated are just as high risk as ever, and because of that we do see that most of our current hospitalizations and more serious illness are in people who are not vaccinated," Bissell said.

Also, the district still hears from people who don't want to receive a vaccine for a variety of reasons, such as a concern that vaccines were developed too quickly.

People need to understand that no shortcuts were taken in developing the vaccines avail-

able, Bissell said. Tens of thousands of people were included in the trials.

Also, the same technology used to develop the vaccines has been used for decades in cancer therapies and in trials involving humans, she said.

Additionally, any side effects to the vaccine may show up within days to months of receiving it. But they are minimal, compared with some of the long-term and chronic problems that people are developing after having had COVID-19, Bissell said.

"We have really good evidence right now that the vaccines that are available are helping people start to get back to normal activity," she said. "They decrease the risk of severe illness, hospitalization, and death. When you are trying to get out of a pandemic like this, that's what we need."

— Written by
Jenny Kincaid Boone

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, June 26:

Outdoor Book Sale

At the Blacksburg Library from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. weather permitting. Books are \$5 per bag or \$1 for hardbacks and \$.50 for paperbacks. Gift books will be available at \$2 each. Call the library for more details and to confirm that the sale will take place.

PRIDE March

Hosted by the RADical Change Commission; 7 p.m. at the Radford Public Library

Sunday, June 27:

Montgomery County-Radford City-Floyd County NAACP meeting

This is a general body meeting at 3:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome. Dr. Noelle S. Bissell, the director of the New River Health District, Virginia Department of Health, will be the guest speaker. She will provide updates on the COVID-19 vaccination efforts and the status of cases in the New River Valley. Register in advance for this meeting at <http://bit.ly/MRF-NAACPJune>.

Monday, June 28:

Radford City School Board meeting

The Radford City School Board will have a special meeting on June 28, 2021, for a tour of McHarg Elementary with a school board meeting closed session to follow at noon at the School Administration Building. A copy of the agenda can be seen at www.rcps.org.

Talking About Books: Fiction

At the Blacksburg Library from 11 a.m. until noon. Join in for a discussion of "My Dark Vanessa" by Kate Elizabeth Russell. Call ahead to reserve a copy and learn more.

Radford City Council meeting

In the Radford City Council chambers, 10 Robertson Street, at 7 p.m.

Tuesday, June 29:

Science Fiction and Fantasy Book Club

At the Blacksburg Library from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Join in for a discussion of "Vita Nostra" by Marina Dyachenko. Call ahead to get a copy of this month's book.

Radford Public Library

Book Discussion

Author Sarah Warburton will be giving an author talk in July. Join in on Zoom at 6:30 p.m. for a conversation about her book "Once Two Sisters" before the main event next month. Her second book, "You Never Can Tell," will be published in August 2021. Meeting ID: 820 4960 5504 and Passcode: 612772

Wednesday, June 30:

Teen Book Club

At the MFRL Library online at 4 p.m. Each month the club will discuss a new book. This month's book for reading and discussing is "Children of Blood and Bone" by Toni Adeyemi. Email mroach@mfrl.org for more information and to join in the discussion.

Blacksburg Police Hiring Workshop

The Blacksburg Police Department is hosting a hiring workshop from 6 to 7 p.m. at the Blacksburg Community Center, 615 Patrick Henry Drive. For more information contact Sgt. K.V. Craver at 540-443-1438.

Thursday, July 1:

American Legion meeting

American Legion Harvey-Howe-Carper Post 30 will meet at 7 p.m. at The VFW Post 776 building on 102 Watts St. in Radford. For further information, call 250-2283 or 239-9864.

Saturday, July 3:

Teen DnD

At Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library online at 4 p.m. DnD is now virtual on Discord. The library staff suggest downloading Discord on your device for ease of access, but this is not required. Email shodges@mfrl.org for the discord server link.

Teen Game Night

At the Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library online at 5:30 p.m. Join other teens for a live, interactive game night online. Everyone will play jackbox party night games on a family friendly setting. Email shodges@mfrl.org for more information.

Christiansburg July 4th Celebration

The Town of Christiansburg Fourth of July celebration will take place from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. on West Main Street. There will be live music per-

formances by Gate 10, Flannel Jukebox, and Don and the Del-tones Plus. Food and vendors will be along Main Street, and a special Kids Zone will be available.

This event is free, and at 9:15 p.m., fireworks can best be seen from the Uptown Christiansburg or Walmart parking lots.

Sunday, July 4:

City of Radford "Spirit of America" July 4th Celebration

Enjoy a full day of live music, free kids' activities, inflatables, and attractions, food and craft vendors and the best fireworks around to close the event. Music will be headlined by Country Music Association (CMA) Hall of Fame member and Statler Brother Jimmy Fortune. Opening for Jimmy Fortune will be country music singer Wade Hayes.

The schedule of events is as follows: 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. – Rides and Games; 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. – Faithful Praise (gospel); 2:45 p.m. to 3:45 p.m. – Glen Shelton; 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. – The Castaways (beach music); 5 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. -- Opening Ceremonies with Mayor David Horton. The National Anthem will be sung by Glen Shelton, followed by patriotic readings from Dr. Dick Harshberger; 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. -- Wade Hayes (country); 7:15 p.m. to 8:45 p.m. – Jimmy Fortune (country); and 9:30 p.m. – Fireworks sponsored by Third Security

Blacksburg Fireworks Show

The Town of Blacksburg's 2021 fireworks show will take place at 9:30 p.m. rain or shine at the old Blacksburg High School property on Patrick Henry Drive.

Talking about Books

At Christiansburg Library from 11 a.m. until noon. To be discussed is "Deacon King Kong" by James McBride, in person and virtually.

Talking About Books

At the Meadowbrook Public Library at 6 p.m. To be discussed is "The Dutch House" by Ann Patchett. Call to reserve your copy.

Friday, July 9:

Blood Drive

The bloodmobile will be at Professional Rehab Associates, 1200 Tyler Ave., Radford, from 1 to 6 p.m. Call 1-800-RED-CROSS or visit RedCrossBlood.org to schedule an appointment.

Saturday, July 10:

New River Valley Garden Tour

From 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. rain or shine. The cost is \$15. Advance tickets, maps, and brochures are now available at each branch of the Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library.

Tuesday, July 13:

Sons of Confederate Veterans meeting

The Sons of Confederate Veterans, Stuart Horse Artillery Camp 1784, will meet at 7 p.m. at Aly's Italian Family Restaurant on 3204 Riner Road. Members of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) are invited to attend for a discussion on the 50th Virginia Infantry Regiment. For further information, call 320-4315 or 239-9864.

Wednesday, July 14:

Radford Library Brown Bag Book Club

The Brown Bag Book Club is getting together again. Read "Follow the River" by James Alexander Thom and join the group to discuss this book on Wednesday July 14, 2021, at noon. No formal commitment is needed. Just drop in when the book appeals to you.

Ongoing:

Through June 30:

"Seeing Sound" art by Lyndsay LaLonde

At the Blacksburg Library; This art display by local artist Lyndsay LaLonde highlights her unique experience with music and sound. "Synesthesia" or "seeing sound" refers to a way that some people interpret music as colors and shapes. Explore her visual playlist through the month of June at the Blacksburg Library.

Through July 17:

MFRL Summer Reading Program

Sign up in person or online for the Montgomery Floyd Regional Library summer reading program. Participants may choose how long they want to read every day, log the days they read, and win a free book when they read for 10 days, and a raffle entry for prizes when they

read for 15 days. Adults may register online and log their reading to be automatically entered in weekly prize drawings.

Through July 31

Radford Public Library's Summer Reading Program

The Radford Public Library is running its annual summer reading program for kids, teens, and adults. The program promotes reading daily to earn prizes and to earn entries to win raffle baskets. The summer reading program is a fun way to promote literacy, encourage reading as a healthy habit, and help readers experience reading as fun and adventurous.

Through Aug. 29:

Glencoe Mansion, Museum and Gallery exhibit "Mountain Rail Trails"

Glencoe Mansion, Museum and Gallery is now presenting its newest art gallery exhibit, "Mountain Rail Trails," featuring photography by Dale R. Carlson of Bluemoonistic Images.

The exhibit will be on display through August 29 and dovetails nicely with the train observatory platform and exhibit found at the edge of the grounds of Glencoe. Everyone is welcome to visit the museum and there is no admission charge. Glencoe is located at 600 Unruh Dr. in Radford.

Through September:

Blacksburg's Market Square Jam 2021

Blacksburg's Market Square Jam 2021 will continue each Wednesday from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. through September at Market Square Park. This season marks the jam's 10th anniversary.

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 Service (the old Wade's parking lot) on West Main Street.

Christiansburg Farmers Market

Every Thursday through October, the Christiansburg Farmers Market will be held at the Christiansburg Recreation Center parking lot from 3 p.m. until 7 p.m.

Rising VT sophomore dies at home

Zachary Schrock, of Gladys, Va., passed away at his home on June 9, 2021.

Schrock was a rising sophomore majoring in animal and poultry sciences in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. He was 19 years old.

Schrock was born in Lynchburg, Va., on April 8, 2002, the son of Mark L. Schrock and Jennifer Stevens Schrock of Gladys. He was a member of the Kedron Baptist Church and an employee of American Plastic Fabricators.

Zachary was a graduate of XLR8 Stem Academy

at Central Virginia Community College and William Campbell Combined School. He had a passion for hunting, fishing, and rescuing reptiles. His favorite place to fish at Virginia Tech was the Duck Pond.

In addition to his parents, he is survived by a sister, Hannah Claire Schrock; two brothers, Ethan Marcus Schrock and Joshua Len Schrock; his maternal grandmother, Sara W. Shorter; a great-grandmother, Jessie D. Wade; his paternal step-grandmother, Susie Schrock; and numerous aunts, uncles, and cousins.

He was preceded in death by his paternal grandparents, Amos E. Schrock and Lydia I. Schrock.

A funeral service was conducted at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, June 15, at Kedron Baptist Church by the Rev. Shelton Miles with interment following in the church cemetery. The family received friends one hour prior to the service at the church.

Memorial contributions may be made to Friends of Campbell County Animal Control, 1400 Edley Place, Lynchburg, Virginia 24502. friendsofcampbellcounty.org.



Zachary Schrock was a rising sophomore majoring in animal and poultry sciences in VT's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

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Radford Woman's Club donates \$2,000 to Books for Bobcats in city schools



With members of the Woman's Club of Radford present, Club President Nancy Kolb presents a \$2000 check for the Books for Bobcats program to Elena Weightman, secretary of both McHarg and Belle Heth Parent-Student associations. Left to right back: Lee Williams-Ratliff, Donna Sams, Betty Overdorf, Vicki Tupman, Nancy Kolb, Elena Weightman, and Michelle Green. In the front row (left to right) are Landis Graham, Silas Graham; Marco, Leo, and Luca Weightman; and Kelly Linken-Hoker.

The Woman's Club of Radford recently presented a check for \$2,000 to the Books for Bobcats program in the Radford City Schools.

This donation was in lieu of the twice yearly Reading is Fundamental (RIF) book distribution which was cancelled due to COVID restrictions.

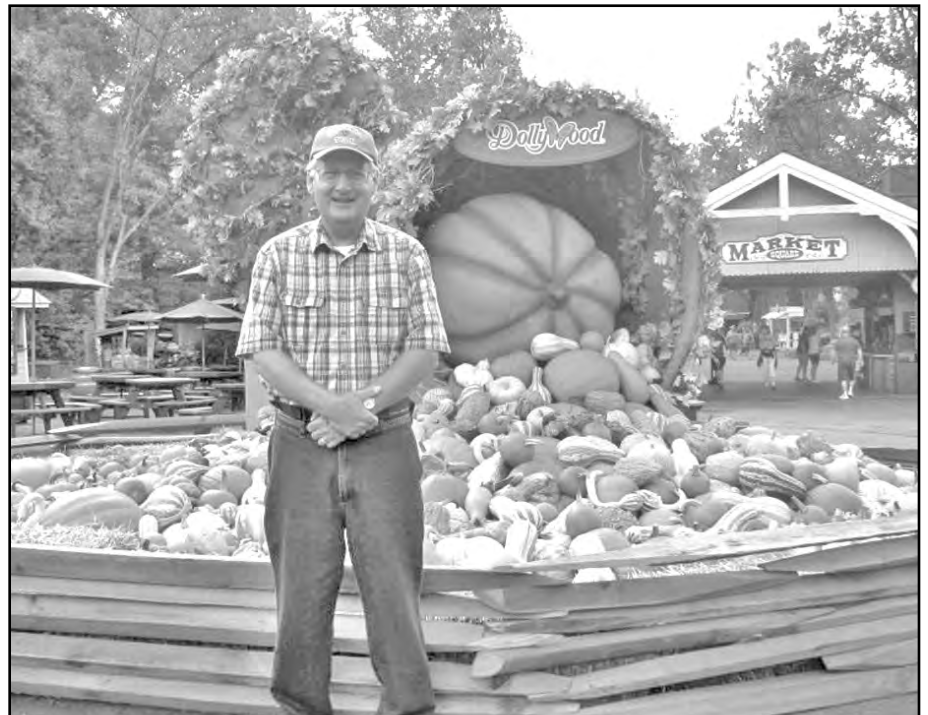
Begun in 2020, Books for Bobcats gives children books to "build their home libraries" and encourage a love of reading. The children choose their own books from a selection ordered by the literacy team composed of the librarians and teachers at McHarg and Belle Heth Elementary schools.

The RIF distributions at Pulaski County's Riverlawn and Snowville Elementary schools were completed in person in the spring of 2021. Children received two books covering both fall and spring for the 2020-2021 school year. The woman's club distributes 1900 books each year through the RIF program. RIF coordinators Betty Overdorf and Vicki Tupman are already planning for the 2021-2022 school year.

'The true embodiment of what it means to be a Hokie': Director of Sustainability Denny Cochrane to retire after 55 years as a proud Hokie



2012: Denny Cochrane was invited onto the field at halftime during the Virginia Tech vs. Clemson football game for Military Appreciation Day. Photo provided by Denny Cochrane.



Denny Cochrane at Dollywood, a special place for his family. Photo provided by Denny Cochrane.

Director of Sustainability Denny Cochrane, who has bonds to Virginia Tech as strong as Hokie Stone, will retire from the university on July 1.

For the past 55 years, Cochrane has been a proud Hokie: as an undergraduate in the Corps of Cadets, a cadet leader in the U.S. Army, a campus administrator, and as a sustainability champion.

In reflecting on his career, he said one thing stands out. "It has been all about the people and the teamwork."

U.S. Army
In the Army, Cochrane fostered bonds on a global scale. Prior to retiring as a colonel, he was stationed all over the world, including Germany, South Korea, Hawaii, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. He served with distinction in the Air Defense Artillery and the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

Cochrane was also stationed at West Point as an assistant professor in the Department of Mechanics teaching thermodynamics to cadets.

His final duty station was at his alma mater as the department head of the Army ROTC New River Battalion, which encompassed both Virginia Tech and Radford Univer-

sity.

Virginia Tech
In 2000, Cochrane transitioned to civilian life as executive assistant to the dean of the then-College of Arts and Sciences, the largest college at Virginia Tech. He helped implement organizational changes to support the formation of the new College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences and the College of Science.

Cochrane would become executive assistant to the vice president for business affairs, interacting with a wide range of university and external stakeholders. In April 2007, he led efforts to establish the university's first governance group focused on sustainability, the Energy and Sustainability Committee. This would be the first of many Virginia Tech sustainability initiatives in which Cochrane would play a key role.

His commitment to service, community, and humble leadership was demonstrated when 32 Hokie lives were lost on April 16, 2007. Cochrane assumed the role of special assistant to Virginia Tech president Charles Steger and assistant to the director of the office of recovery and support, Jay Poole.

He dedicated himself to

the families of those lost on April 16, meeting with them often in the months after the tragedy. He helped lead the university's first remembrance event that August to honor the lives and legacies of the Hokies taken tragically. Thousands of students, employees, friends, and families gathered on the Drillfield in support.

In September 2007, Cochrane was tasked with starting and leading a new unit to Virginia Tech: the Office of Sustainability. He rolled up his sleeves, researched his new line of work, and identified campus leaders to build the team.

One month later, the new office led Virginia Tech's first sustainability collaboration with the Town of Blacksburg and the local citizens group Sustainability Blacksburg that launched Sustainability Week. This annual event was recognized at the state level as a model for a town-gown sustainability partnership and received a Governor's Environmental Excellence Award.

The following year, Virginia Tech was awarded Tree Campus USA status and charter member by the National Arbor Day Foundation. Courtesy of a grant from Toyota North

America, 100 trees were planted on the Blacksburg campus to celebrate the achievement during Sustainability Week 2008.

"The true embodiment of what it means to be a Hokie, Denny Cochrane is truly a cheerleader for the university community. He is the first to share messages of support for his colleagues and their work with a heartfelt 'Bingo!' His positive spirit and dedication to others have made an enormous impact on our division, on sustainability at Virginia Tech, and the university at large," said Chris Kiwus, vice president for campus planning, infrastructure, and facilities.

Over the past 14 years under Cochrane's leadership, the Office of Sustainability has advanced environmental stewardship at Virginia Tech in countless ways. Delivering sustainability engagement opportunities for students, including the award-winning internship program, and the Green RFP program, which has provided university funding for the implementation of 110 student-generated campus sustainability projects over the past decade, are just a couple of highlights.

"Denny's commitment to partnership building

and sustainability were key ingredients in advancing both the 2009 and 2020 Climate Action Commitments. His work bettering the university and the world we live in is what our motto, Ut Prosim, is about," said John Randolph, senior faculty fellow for climate action.

How will he be spending his retirement? Co-

chrane is looking forward to spending time with his family and making quite a few visits to Dollywood in Pigeon Forge, Tenn.

Stop by to wish Denny Cochrane well in his retirement between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. on Wednesday, July 21, in the Latham Ballroom A at The Inn at Virginia Tech. All are welcome.

Be sure to 'Like' the News Messenger on Facebook.

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OPINION

Virginia Beach, Chesapeake land in top 20 of WalletHub's best-run cities in America

The personal finance website WalletHub Thursday released the results of its survey that measured the effectiveness of local leadership through determining a city's operating efficiency.

The website evaluated the quality of services residents received against the city's total budget to measure each city's efficiency.

Virginia Beach and Chesapeake, Va., came out well in the survey, finishing in the rankings

of 150 cities as the 10th and 19th best-run cities in the country respectively.

As the website noted, this year has been a true test of the effectiveness of local leadership as city leaders have had to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, including enforcing restrictions and helping to facilitate the distribution of the vaccine. As new COVID-19 cases continue to drop, these leaders will be responsible for helping the transition back to

normalcy go as smoothly as possible.

Even when the U.S. isn't in a time of crisis, running a city is a tall order, WalletHub noted. The larger the city, the more complex it becomes to manage. In addition to representing the residents, local leaders must balance the public's diverse interests with the city's limited resources. That often means not everyone's needs can or will be met. Leaders must carefully consider which services

are most essential, which agencies' budgets to cut or boost, and whether and how much to raise taxes, among other decisions.

WalletHub used six service categories in determining its rankings: 1) financial stability 2) education 3) health 4) safety 5) economy and 6) infrastructure and pollution.

Among the 38 metrics WalletHub used to determine its rankings were the K-12 school system quality, the infant mortality rate,

the average life expectancy, the violent crime rate, the property crime rate, the motor vehicle fatalities per capita, the unemployment rate, the median annual household income, the annual job growth rate, the share of the population living in poverty, the change in housing prices, the quality of the roads, the average commute time, traffic congestion, the share of residents with Internet, water quality, and air quality.

Gas prices to remain highest since 2014 for 4th of July weekend

The national average price of gas is holding steady at over \$3 per gallon as millions of Americans take to the road for Independence Day weekend.

Rising gas prices have become the theme for the 2021 summer travel season. According to GasBuddy, many drivers will see prices remain above the \$3 per gallon mark in time for the upcoming holiday weekend. Even with some relief from a recent small drop in prices, the national average price of

gas on July 4 is still expected to be \$3.11 per gallon, some 43 percent, or 93 cents more than last year's COVID-induced price of \$2.18.

According to GasBuddy's annual summer travel survey in May, 46 percent of Americans' plans this summer were affected by high gas prices, which had been rising steadily until recently. Prior to the upcoming holiday weekend, Americans saw gas prices spike in early March and again in mid-May due to increasing

demand and the Colonial Pipeline shutdown.

"With the economic recovery from COVID continuing, gasoline demand has been very strong. Amidst lower oil production as oil companies struggle to raise output, gas prices have been higher this summer than in the past few years," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy. "However, once market forces begin to balance, I expect prices to moderate this fall and over

time, oil production will again rise, helping bring gas prices down to earth as soon as this fall, but the road may remain bumpy until the pandemic is behind us."

According to GasBuddy's annual summer travel survey, 74 percent of those planning to take a road trip will be taking at least two, further emphasizing the increased demand for gasoline.

With COVID recovery continuing this summer, oil prices are likely to remain

elevated, keeping gas prices above \$3 per gallon for most of the summer. Labor Day is poised to feature \$3+ prices as well, and should any hurricane disrupt supply chains, prices may rise even further.

GasBuddy is the leading fuel savings platform providing North American drivers with the most ways to save money on gas. GasBuddy has delivered more than \$3 billion in cumulative savings to its users through providing

real-time gas price information at 150,000+ stations. As one of the most highly-rated apps in the history of the App Store, GasBuddy has been downloaded nearly 100 million times. Acquired by PDI Software in 2021, GasBuddy's publishing and software businesses enable the world's leading fuel companies to shorten the distance between the fueling public and their brands. For more information, visit www.gasbuddy.com.

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Virginia's speed-related fatalities reached 10-year high in 2020

According to statistics released Thursday by the Governor's Executive Leadership Team on Highway Safety, despite the significant decline in traffic volume in 2020 because of the pandemic, the number of overall crash fatalities in the commonwealth increased to 847, up from 827 in 2019, and speed-related fatalities jumped to their highest number in 10 years with 406 fatalities reported.

Three hundred and forty-three of the people killed in speed-related crashes weren't wearing their seat belts, according to the leadership team's statistics.

Led by the Secretary of Transporta-

tion and the Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, the Governor's Executive Leadership Team is composed of representatives from the Virginia Departments of Motor Vehicles, Health, Education, Transportation and State Police. They are charged with reducing serious injuries and fatalities on Virginia's roadways and driving change in the commonwealth's highway safety culture.

"Although the number of vehicle crashes decreased during the pandemic, we saw more fatalities related to speed, alcohol, and failure to wear a seat belt," said Secretary of Transportation Shannon Valentine. "These decisions have

heartbreaking consequences that affect families and communities across Virginia. Our transportation agencies are committed to working diligently to reverse these trends so everyone arrives home safely."

"Our state troopers and other first responders encounter the devastating effects of speed on our roadways every day," said Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Brian Moran. "These incidents and others like it could have been prevented by drivers and passengers making the right choice to follow the speed limit and buckling up. These aren't simply statistics; they are people's lives."

Virginia's dentists keep on drilling with normal patient volumes

The latest report from the American Dental Association (ADA) shows that 83%

of Virginia's dental practices are back to normal patient volume.

An ADA survey released in March revealed that more than 70% of dentists nationwide saw an increase of patients experiencing teeth grinding and clenching, conditions often associated with stress. The survey also found that just more than 60% of dentists reported an increase in other stress-related dental conditions, including chipped and cracked teeth and joint disorder symptoms such as headaches and jaw pain.

In another survey last fall, more than a quarter of dentists reported increases in cavities and periodontal disease.

"We know that our oral health affects our overall health and delaying oral health care can have big consequences," said Dr. Frank Iuorno, Jr. president of the Virginia Dental Association.

Research has shown that poor oral health and untreated periodontal disease can lead to an increased risk of cardiovascular disease and stroke. In addition, periodontal disease and inflamed gums can make it harder for diabetics to control their blood-sugar levels.

As it apparently stands right now, Virginia dental offices are open and safe, and patients are returning to them.

A study published in The

Journal of the American Dental Association found the cumulative COVID-19 infection prevalence rate among U.S. dentists was 2.6% as of November 2020, lower than the infection rate of other front-line health care professionals, including nurses and physicians.

The Virginia Dental Association is affiliated with the American Dental Association and has 4,000 members across the commonwealth. The VDA's mission is to represent and serve member dentists by fostering quality oral health care and education. The VDA provides continuing education, advocacy, and practice support for its member dentists to further that mission.

Brackin from page 1

ing strategies as the university works to remain a premier destination for the next generation's leaders.

"I am thrilled to join the Highlander family," Brackin said. "I believe the strategy for the university and the campus itself is thoughtful and sound. On a more personal level, I feel like I'm truly coming 'home' to a group of people who care deeply about student success and each other."

Brackin's office is located in the Office of University Relations where she will report to Lowery. She will serve the critical role of chief communications officer and marketing strategist for Radford University, responsible for overall communication and research-based messaging, as well as marketing and branding activity for the university. Brackin will oversee all aspects of the development and dissemination of the university's public messaging, including branding; marketing and advertising; public and media relations; publications and creative services; and digital and social media strategy in close collaboration with all univer-

sity relations professionals.

"Becky's knowledge of and experience in higher education will be valuable to our team as we continue to move forward," said Tom Lillard '79, associate vice president for university advancement who served as chair of the search committee. "Her passion, dedication and determination will help our team continue to succeed and achieve recognition on campus and beyond."

While at Angelo State, Brackin led her team in the production of award-winning recruiting materials and marketing campaigns in both print and digital categories. She led ASU's web team through a complete redesign of the main website in 2020. Before joining ASU, Brackin was president and publisher of the San Angelo Standard-Times daily newspaper.

"I'm eager to start building new relationships and working with this talented team of professionals. I'm also excited about exploring and learning more about this beautiful part of the country," Brackin said.

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Z		48	49					50	51		52	
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D	67						68			69		
E							71			72		

- CLUES ACROSS
- Applies paint lightly
 - House mice genus
 - Bible's Chronicles (abbr.)
 - Old World buffalo
 - Expression of contempt
 - Levi jeans competitor
 - A small-wooded hollow
 - Donkeys
 - River in Florence
 - L. Rukeyser's TV show
 - The abominable snowman
 - Deerfield, IL, Trojans school
 - Be obliged to repay
 - Woman (French)
 - Delaware
 - Fools around (Br. slang)
 - Affirmative (slang)
 - With three uneven sides
 - Tel __, Israel city
 - *As American as apple __
 - Aba __ Honeymoon
 - Fictive
 - Press against lightly
 - Eiderdown filled
 - In the year of Our Lord
 - Obstruct or block
 - A companion animal
 - Political action committee
 - Big man on campus
 - *Frankly my dear, __
 - American Indian group
 - Lots of
 - Life stories
 - Sour taste
 - The Phantom's first name
 - Leading European space Co.
 - Native of Thailand
 - Drive into hard
 - NY state flower
 - CLUES DOWN
 - Male parent
 - Afresh
 - South American weapon
 - Set out
 - Volcano aka Wawa Putina
 - Soviet Union
 - A single piece of paper
 - A bird's foot
 - Of this
 - Restores
 - Paper adhesives
 - Lordship's jurisdiction
 - River in Paris
 - Headed up
 - Sir in Malay
 - Soft-shell clam genus
 - Mega-electron volt
 - Indicates near
 - The central bank of the US
 - Central processing unit
 - Direct toward a target
 - Side sheltered from the wind
 - 6th letter of Hebrew alphabet
 - Form a sum
 - The cry made by sheep
 - Defensive nuclear weapon
 - Clan division
 - Adult male deer
 - Patterned table linen fabric
 - Subtract
 - An imaginary ideal place
 - Chuck Hagel is the new head
 - Round flat Middle Eastern bread
 - Chickpea plant
 - Make obscure
 - Pole (Scottish)
 - Cavities where spores develop
 - Vintage Auto Racing Assoc.
 - Hmong language __: Yao
 - Small head gestures
 - Point midway between S and SE

Welcome rain brings relief for dry farm fields

After a long dry spell in April and May, farmers are welcoming recent rains, but some are still contending with the effects of dry weather on their crops.

The recent rains and thunderstorms have provided relief to some farmers who were facing several weeks of little to no rain. According to the June 14 crop report from the National Agricultural Statistics Service, topsoil moisture is at an adequate level for 77% of Virginia, a positive change from previous reports.

“May was really dry, but June has been better,” said Monte Mason, a farmer in Charlotte County who grows feed corn, wheat, and soybeans. “We’ve got some beneficial rain, and we’ve gotten the rest of our crop in the ground now.”

Mason said his corn and soybeans both “look really good right now,” but he’s worried about the impact of earlier dry weather on his wheat crop. According to the NASS report, 48% of winter wheat is in fair, poor, or very poor condition, and 52% is in good or excellent condition.

“The wheat is not going to be great, I don’t think,” Mason said. “I think it’s going to be a little on the light side. We haven’t been out there to harvest, but we’re getting close. What I checked early, it looks like the grain is going to be really small.”

Also in Charlotte, farmer Bobby Bradley said the dry weather caused his soybeans to be planted three weeks late. He’s since received some rain, but “it’s been pretty spotty. Sometimes I get

lucky and catch a shower, and sometimes I don’t.”

The NASS report noted that 57% of Virginia’s soybean crop is in good or excellent condition, and 43% is in fair, poor or very poor condition.

“At this point in time, I’m not going to have any yield reduction yet,” Bradley said. “They look good for the length of time they’ve been in the ground. It could still turn out to be a bumper crop year. It just depends on the weather for the rest of the year.”

Virginia is known for its variable climate. Robert Harper, Virginia Farm Bureau Federation grain division manager, said conditions in many parts of the state are improving as heavy rains in areas like the Northern Neck and central region have added

enough moisture in the soil now to carry crops for a couple weeks.

“We’ve seen much-needed rain since Memorial Day weekend,” Harper said. “Farmers will tell you they’ll never turn

a rain down in May, June, July, or August. They’re going to want all they can get.”

Harper added that dry spells are preferred earlier in the growing season instead of later.

“It still might damage the yield potential, but it’s doing less damage to the yield potential than if it was later, with the plants much bigger and requiring so much more water,” Harper said.



After several weeks of little or no rain in April and May, June has brought enough rain to raise topsoil moisture to adequate levels across three-quarters of the state.

Record-setting \$7 million from the Cranwell family will benefit international students and wider Virginia Tech community



PHOTO BY J. SCOTT PARKER FOR VIRGINIA TECH

Three 2021 VT graduates, Prem Sai Sarvisetty, Siddhant Kekal, and Chinmayee Schandra celebrate commencement and the end of the spring semester at a Cranwell International Center event.

The Cranwell family has spent decades supporting Virginia Tech’s diverse and vibrant international student population, and their legacy continues with transformative generosity totaling \$7 million to benefit Cranwell International Center. This represents the largest giving in the history of Student Affairs.

This record-setting gen-

erosity developed from Bill Cranwell’s ‘57 desire to contribute to the university’s Boundless Impact campaign in support of international students. After he and his wife, Ellen, made a record commitment to the center, they encouraged their family members to join them. Cranwell’s brother, Bob Cranwell ‘60, and sister-in-law Susie

Cranwell answered the call and soon joined in with a significant gift of their own.

The family’s philanthropy positions Cranwell International Center to expand the depth and breadth of its institutional impact through the development and implementation of a wide range of initiatives. These initiatives are designed to support in-

ternational students while also advancing the development of global and intercultural competence in all students. Currently, the center supports over 4,000 undergraduate and graduate students from more than 100 countries.

Cranwell family gifts have already enhanced several current initiatives, including the Global Fellow in Residence Program, pre-departure programs in China, the International Street Fair, and a range of intercultural training and assessment programs using the Intercultural Development Inventory and the Global Competence Aptitude Assessment.

The funds will also be used to enhance the welcoming environment in the center’s Mozaiko Living-Learning Community, which connects international and domestic students in a diverse community to learn about each other’s culture, immerse themselves in language practice, and prepare for a lifetime of intercultural leadership.

“We are incredibly grate-

ful for the Cranwell family’s generosity to the Cranwell International Center and Student Affairs,” said Virginia Tech President Tim Sands. “Their dedication to the university’s international students is meaningful to all of us. International students enrich our community with unique perspectives, enhance research and teaching, and help Virginia Tech prepare the next generation of world leaders who will work across language, culture, and borders to solve shared global challenges.”

The Cranwell family’s long connection to the center began with the Cranwell brothers attending Virginia Tech in the late 1950s. When Bill learned of the tragic death of an international student during a winter break, he was greatly affected. This planted the seed for him to think about how he and fellow Hokies could do more to create a campus environment for international students that felt like a home away from home. This began a lifelong dedication to the international student population

at Virginia Tech.

“Our family wants international students to know how valued they are by the entire Hokie community,” said Bill Cranwell, speaking on behalf of the family. “Their contributions to Virginia Tech help make our university and the Southwest Virginia region the special place that it is. These gifts represent our family’s promise to international students that the university is committed to building a welcoming community where they can thrive.”

Bill Cranwell’s family generously donated its home to the university in 1986, when the international student population was just over 1,100. For nearly 30 years, the home has served as a nexus on campus for students to connect over events often centered on home-cooked meals and has provided a community gathering space where students could unwind.

Written by Lindsey R. Gleason

Virginia Tech scientist awarded grant to study severe brain disorder

For children diagnosed with severe and debilitating epileptic brain disorders, the prognosis is often grim. Babies born with a rare form of CASK-linked epileptic encephalopathy called Ohtahara syndrome suffer seizures soon after birth. There is no treatment or cure, and children with the disorder typically don’t survive beyond infancy. Those who do have severe neurological, cognitive, and behavioral impairments.

Sarika Srivastava, a research assistant professor at the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute at VTC, believes the loss of CASK gene function could cripple the ability of brain cells to produce much-needed energy and trigger the progressively worse seizures.

Srivastava, who also holds an appointment as an assistant professor in the Department of Internal Medicine in the Virginia Tech Carilion School

of Medicine, is undertaking a five-year study to investigate the mechanisms of CASK loss-of-function mutation associated epileptic encephalopathy, funded by a \$2 million grant from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, a part of the National Institutes of Health.

Researchers are still learning the diverse functions of the CASK gene. The gene is found across the animal kingdom, and its dysfunction is associated with neurological, cognitive, and developmental problems. Because the CASK gene is located on the X-chromosome in mammals, the loss-of-function mutations more severely affect males, who have one copy of the X-chromosome. Females have two copies of the X-chromosomes, so as long as the gene is normal in one copy of the chromosome, they are less severely affected.

Srivastava hypothesizes

that one of CASK’s roles is to control the function of mitochondria, tiny structures that serve as energy powerhouses of the cell. Mitochondria convert chemical energy from the food we eat into an energy form that the cell can use. When mitochondria stop functioning, the cell is starved of energy. Neurons require large amounts of energy and are affected the most by defective mitochondria.

“No one has studied this connection,” Srivastava said. “It’s completely unknown how CASK controls or regulates mitochondrial function.”

Srivastava will conduct the key parts of the study in her laboratory, but studies of the brain’s electrical signals will be carried out by her collaborators on the grant, including Howard Goodkin, professor of neurology who studies pediatric epilepsy at the University of Virginia School

of Medicine, and Konark Mukherjee, assistant professor at the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute at VTC who researches the effects of

CASK mutations.

“Our goal is to find a potential treatment strategy for a highly devastating neurological disease,

for which there is no cure,” Srivastava said, “but it could help to alleviate these patients’ symptoms and prolong their lives.”



Sarika Srivastava, a research assistant professor at the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute at VTC, has been awarded a \$2 million National Institutes of Health grant to study the disease mechanisms of an early infantile onset epileptic encephalopathy.

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Providing health care in the digital age to rural, underserved communities



PHOTO PROVIDED BY ELHAM MORSHEDZADEH

Members of the transdisciplinary research team developing training systems for telemedicine cart users pose with a cart and mannequin from the first phase of their study.



Health equity and access, especially in rural, underserved communities, is a complex problem, and complex problems require innovative solutions. That's why one transdisciplinary research team is working across traditional academic barriers to increase health care access to vulnerable populations.

The integrated Translational Health Research Insti-

tute of Virginia (iTHRIV) has selected Elham Morshedzadeh and Melinda Schriver as the principal investigators working to create an interactive training system for telemedicine cart users to increase health care access across Virginia. Morshedzadeh currently serves as assistant professor of industrial design in the School of Architecture and Design, while Schriver serves as the

director of Digital Health at Carilion Clinic. iTHRIV is a collaborative program funded by the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Telemedicine is a broad term that refers to health care from a distance. Ranging from a simple phone call to video conferencing, telemedicine allows physicians and specialists to interact with patients from across the state, country, or world. As Morshedzadeh explains, in addition to audio-visual technology, "telemedicine carts have peripheral devices and attachments that can collect vital data of patients like heartbeat and breathing quality. They can look into the ear and eyes, the same way that a doctor or a nurse practitioner would in a routine exam."

If there's a silver lining to the ongoing pandemic, it's that the need to interact from afar has given rise to innovative technology.

"COVID-19 has broken

a lot of the barriers," explained Andre Muelenaer, a team member and professor of practice in biomedical engineering. During his 40 years of clinical work, the Virginia Tech alumnus witnessed the evolution of telemedicine at Carilion, from the early days of over-the-phone telepsychiatry to the multifaceted and interactive full examinations made possible by telemedicine carts.

But while the technology is becoming more accessible, practitioners learning and becoming comfortable with the technology is still a barrier to underserved areas.

"The equipment and devices are being designed and made available, but with a lack of proper training, they are not being used to their full potential," Muelenaer said.

That's where the research team is concentrating its efforts. Focusing on pediatric nurses and medical practitioners, the first phase of the project began

last summer by identifying "pain points" for users — the specific areas of concern with using the carts. Pain points for nurses included specific problems with the cart design and communication concerns. This issue identification led to plans for designing an initial training system integrating experiential learning and augmented reality, for which the team hopes to involve live patients in the next phase.

Ultimately, the project is about establishing trust among researchers across fields, the users of technology, and the populations in need.

"We are working to create an experience that builds trust," Morshedzadeh said. "When community members trust this technology, they will share their experience with other community members. This acceptance is crucial to building greater health care access."

-- Written by
Phil Miskovic

ANGLICAN CATHOLIC

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

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

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

BAPTIST

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

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

CHURCH OF CHRIST

Blacksburg Church of Christ, 315 Eakin St., 552-1331. Sun. Bible Classes 9:30 a.m., Sun. Worship 10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m., Wed. Bible classes, 7 p.m., Outreach Minister Curt Seright, Community Minister Tom Gilliam.

Faith Christian Church of Christ, 305 3rd Street, Christiansburg, David Rhudy, Minister, 382-4628, Sunday School 10 am; Worship 11 am; Evening Worship 6:30 pm; Wednesday night Bible Study for Women and Men 6:30 pm. We welcome you to any and all of our services.

CHURCH OF GOD

New Hope Church of God, 1404 Mud Pike Rd., C'Burg. Rev. T. Michael Bond, pastor, 731-3178. Sun. School 10 a.m., Worship 10:50 a.m., 6 p.m. Thurs., 7:00 p.m.

West Radford Church of God, 1824 West Main Street, Radford, VA 24141, Sunday School— 10:00A.M. Morning Worship— 11:00A.M., Children's Church 11:00A.M. Sunday Evening — 6:00P.M., Wednesday Night — 7:00P.M., Pastor Danny Newman, Church Office — 540-639-6562 or 804- 921-0828.

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

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

ECKANKAR

Eckankar, the Path of Spiritual Freedom, is located at 1420 3rd St. SW, Roanoke, VA 24016. However, due to COVID-19, the Light

Montgomery County

WORSHIP DIRECTORY

The Night Season

Read Psalms 62:1 through 68:35

George A. Young, a bivocational preacher in the nineteenth century, ministered mainly to rural churches while he supplemented his income as a carpenter. After many years of struggle he was able to build a home for his family with his own hands. While away from home in ministry, some who disagreed with his preaching burned his house to the ground. Shortly thereafter he wrote the hymn, "God Leads Us Along."

Come and hear, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me. I cried out to him with my mouth; his praise was on my tongue (Psalm 66:16-17).

The Psalmist's words speak to us when we are going through life's challenges. And Pastor Young speaks to us of praising God in the night seasons of life: "Some through great sorrow, but God gives a song, in the night season and all the day long."

Like Pastor Young, we can pray and we sing in the night. Prayer plus praise equals power. Focus on God's presence and power and don't let sin cut the lines of communication.

Prayer Suggestion: Lord, we are thankful that through the challenges, we can still sing praises to You.

Quicklook: Psalm 66:13-20

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

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

LUTHERAN

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

MULTI-CULTURAL

NON-DENOMINATIONAL

Christian Growth Center, 1850 Electic Way, Christiansburg, VA 24073 (beside Hubbell Lighting). Sunday Worship: 9:30am Prayer, 10:00am Service *Nursery Available. Lead Pastor: Todd Hallinan. Founding Pastor: Rob Sowell. Mission: Sow, Grow, & Go Sow Faith! Grow in Righteousness! Go into all

the world in the authority of the believer! 540-382-2908.

PENTECOSTAL HOLINESS

Merrimac Pentecostal Holiness Church, Rev. Richard Hall (540) 552-7194. pastorhall29@gmail.com. Sunday School at 10 a.m. and morning worship is 11 a.m. Evening service at 6 p.m. and Wednesday at 7 p.m.

Radford Worship Center, 1820 Second Street, Radford, 639-6287, Our music is passionate, our worship is real, and Pastor Hal Adams brings relevant messages for everyone at any place on their journey, Sunday Worship Experience at 9:00 AM & 10:45 AM, Wednesday Family Night at 7 PM, Children Ministry provided for all services, join us as Love, Grow, Serve, find us on facebook and Instagram

Walton Pentecostal Holiness Church, 4003 Morning Glory Rd., off Walton Rd. on Rt. 114. 731-1755. Lee Sarver, pastor. Sun. School 9:30 a.m., Worship 10:30 a.m. & 6: p.m., Wed., 7 p.m.

UNITED METHODIST

Asbury United Methodist Church, 500 Stuart Street, Christiansburg. 540-382-0743. Rev. Ryan Schaeffer. Sunday School, 10:15 a.m., Sunday Worship,

11:30 a.m., Wednesday Bible Study 7pm, alternating month's with Schaeffer Memorial Baptist Church, Senior Bible Study Thursday, 10:30 a.m. All are welcome.

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

St. Paul United Methodist Church, 220 W. Main St., C'Burg. Rev. Mooncup "Paul" Song (540) 382-2410. Sunday Worship 10 a.m., Sunday School 9 a.m. Live streaming Sunday Service - www.twitch.tv/stpaulumc

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

Ramping up conservation: VT researchers are helping an Appalachian delicacy stay on the menu



Virginia Tech researchers are working to save the wild, delicious, beloved, and smelly ramps in Appalachia.

On a cool April morning in the fold of the Catawba Valley, leaves crunched underfoot and the air smelled of spring. Through the brown detritus on the forest floor, spikes of green foliage sprung from the earth, telltale signs of the changing of the seasons.

searchers stepped over streams and fallen trees as they reached their destination: a slope of a hill. Tool in hand, Jim Chamberlain, a research forest product technologist with the U.S. Forest Service, reached into the dirt and carefully pulled up what looked like a wild onion.

There to harvest ramps, as these wild leeks are colloquially known in Appalachia. They were there to make sure that ramps are here for future generations to enjoy, just as they have in the South for centuries.

It is here, at the Catawba Sustainability Center, that Virginia Tech researchers work

with the U.S. Forest Service to find the best growing methods for ramps to allow the delicacy to last far into the future.

Ramps are steeped in regional history. Back in the 1750s, people from Europe – especially Ireland and Scotland – brought knowledge to their newfound homeland of a plant they harvested in their homeland called ramsons. They found a similar plant in Appalachia, harvested it, and called it ramps.

Around 100 years ago, community and civic groups started to have festivals to celebrate the arrival of spring that coincided with the harvesting of ramps – one of the first plants to arrive that season.

That cultural tie has only strengthened in the years since the festivals began and are deeply engraved in Appalachia, where festivals celebrating the springtime plant each year.

Ramps have blossomed elsewhere, too.

The '90s saw the plant featured prominently in The New York Times. Now, you can find hikers throughout Appalachia looking for the plant on the slopes of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

But an increase in popularity has led to a concern for overharvesting of this delicacy.

To fight this over-loving of ramps, the team of researchers is developing methods to grow ramps in contained environments. These studies could allow farmers to grow on land that isn't used for current crops, boosting profits while lessening the burden on wild ramp populations.

Pabitra Aryal, a Ph.D. candidate in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences' School of Plant and Environmental Sciences, is researching the onion's cousin by growing ramps from seed and bulb to study the germination time of the plant.

Aryal, along with her Ph.D. mentor John Fike, a professor in the

School of Plant and Environmental Sciences, Adam Taylor, manager of the Catawba Sustainability Center, and Chamberlain, puts forgotten land to use – slopes of hills covered in dense foliage that farmers wouldn't otherwise use.

"We want to see if Endomycorrhizal fungi can speed up this process to make it more economically and logistically viable for farmers," Aryal said.

Catawba Sustainability Center, located in the Catawba Valley near Hokie favorite McAfee Knob, is a 377-acre farm that serves as a laboratory to advance environmental stewardship and community engagement and is part of Outreach and International Affairs. The center provides a learning environment for the research, teaching, and demonstration of sustainable practices in agriculture, forestry, and land management.

Researching ramps at the center was a logical choice, Taylor said.

OBITUARIES

Adkins, Ann Fisher

Ann Fisher Adkins, 75, of Radford, passed away Sunday, June 20, 2021.

She was a member of Central United Methodist Church in Radford and was an office manager with Bondurant Realty. Ann was preceded in death by her parents, Ernest and Irene

Fisher; a grandson, Kevin Adkins, Jr.; and a brother, E. P. "Buddy" Fisher, III.

Survivors include her sons, Kevin Adkins of Radford and Kenneth L. Adkins of Charlotte, N.C.; a daughter and son-in-law, Kristi and Joe Rorrer of Radford; her longtime companion, Eddie Carpenter of Radford; grandchildren Bessie Ann Clay, Callie Adkins, Andrew Phipps, and Izzy Rorrer; a great-granddaughter, Evelyn Clay; a brother, Steven (Janice)



Fisher of Northern Virginia; a sister-in-law, Daisy Swem Fisher of Fairlawn; and many other relatives and friends.

The family would like to thank Cozy Home Haven for all the love and care they gave to Ann during her time with them.

The family received friends from 3 p.m. until 5 p.m. on Thursday, June 24, 2021, at Central United Methodist Church in Radford. Memorial services began at 5 p.m. with Pastor Don Smith officiating.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that contributions be made to Central UMC, PO Box 611, Radford, VA 24143.

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

James, Jr., James Hurst

James Hurst James, Jr., 80, of Dublin, passed away Thursday, June 17, 2021.

He was a member of Dublin United Methodist Church and a graduate of Virginia Tech. He was preceded in death by his parents, James H., Sr., and Mildred Fleenor James.

Survivors include his wife, Annie Laurie James of Dublin; a daughter and son-in-law, Laura James Carter and Joe of Raleigh, N.C.; a son and daughter-in-law, Dr. Jay James and Laura of Roanoke; a sister and brother-in-law, Donna and Bill Copenhaver of Salem; grandchildren Reed James Carter, Joan-



na Carter, and Ella, Jake and Annaleigh James; and many other relatives and friends.

The family received friends on Sunday, June 20, 2021, at the Mullins Funeral Home in Radford, followed by funeral services with the Rev. Don Shelor officiating. Interment was private in Forest Hills Memory Gardens in Abingdon.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that contributions be made to Dublin United Methodist Church.

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

Clark, Agnes Marie

Agnes Marie Clark transitioned on June 15, 2021, at the age of 102½. She was born on Oct. 8, 1918, to Sam and Addie Lewis of Radford.

Agnes was a lifelong resident of Radford. She worked and retired from facilities management at Radford University in 1984. A member of New Mount Olive United Methodist, Agnes was active in the choir and was the "Mother" of the church. She had a keen sense of humor and enjoyed spending time with family and friends.

Ms. Ag, as she was affectionately called, was preceded in death by her beloved son, Clarence Clark, and a granddaughter, Tracy Rouse; brothers Robert Lewis, Harry Lewis, Albert Lewis, Herbert Lewis, Willie Lewis, Samuel Lewis, and Rudolph Lewis; sisters Ocie Lewis, Mary Palmer, Savannah Haley, Lucile Reed, and



Louise Lewis.

She is survived by sons Thomas Lewis (Loretta) of Pueblo, Colo., Jerry Clark (Bertha) of Radford, and Kenneth Lewis of Plantation, Fla.; daughters Brenda Cobbs (Glenn) of Radford, Daphene (John) Cox of Randallstown, Md., Constance (Kenneth) Sherman of Radford, and Joyce (Harry) Calfee of Roanoke. Agnes is also

survived by 37 grandchildren, 54 great-grandchildren, 37 great-great grandchildren, and 20 great-great-great grandchildren. She leaves behind a host of nieces, nephews, and cherished friends who visited often.

The family received friends on Tuesday, June 22, 2021 with the Homegoing Service immediately afterwards at the New Mount Olive United Methodist Church. Interment was held at Sunrise Burial Park in Fairlawn.

Franklin, Dolores Bell

Dolores Bell Franklin, 92, passed away Monday, June 21, 2021, at her home in Riner.

Her memory will be cherished by her loving and caring sisters, Rosalie Paige and Carol (Lewis) Ware; seven children, Fred R. "Butch" Franklin III, Lyndon J. (Janice) Franklin, David Franklin, Steven (Michelle) Franklin, Mary F. (Waymon) Pack, Becky F. Brooks, and Carolyn Teele; her grandchildren, DiAngelo Brooks, Angela D. Pack, Waymon F.



Pack, Pamela E. Pack, Vivian Franklin, LaVonda Franklin, and JaNell Franklin. She is also survived by seven great-grandchildren, a host of other relatives, and many friends.

Mrs. Franklin graciously donated her body to science.

In lieu of flowers, please donate to your favorite charity.

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

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Terms – Bidding opens on August 26th. 10% Buyer's Premium will be added to final high bid to arrive at contract price. Buyers are expected to complete due diligence prior to bidding. Earnest Money Deposit of \$150,000 required on day of sale. Close in 60 Days. Subject to seller confirmation. Property sold as is where is any and all faults. Auction starts ending at 4 PM on September 9th 2021. Please note that during the last two minutes of bidding, if a new bid is placed, the clock is automatically extended an additional two minutes.

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

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OBITUARIES

Long, Brian Anthony

Brian Anthony Long, 52, a lifelong resident of Blacksburg, went to be with the Lord on Thursday, June 17, 2021, after a courageous battle with metastatic kidney cancer.

Brian leaves behind his loving wife of 28 years, Michelle T. Long; two sons, Colton Long and Billy Long; two daughters, Whitney Akers (Justin) and Josie Long; two grandsons, Connor and Sawyer Akers; his parents Buford and Shirlene Long; a brother, Robbie Long (Amanda); a niece Dana Long; and countless close friends.

Brian was born in Radford on Dec. 16, 1968. He was a hard-working man with many talents such as heavy equipment



operator, concrete specialist, rock/brick mason, carpenter, farmer, and hunter. He was a dedicated friend to so very many and taught his children many valuable lifelong skills. He was a dedicated employee and retired concrete foreman of the Town of Blacksburg for nearly 21 years.

Brian was laid to rest on his farm in a handmade cedar casket crafted by himself and his dear friend, Davy Price. Visitation with family and friends was held on Sunday, June 20, 2021, at McCoy Funeral Home in Blacksburg, followed by a funeral service officiated by Pastor Jay Law. Burial at the Long family farm followed the service.

Linkous, Elizabeth "Betty" Atkinson

Elizabeth "Betty" Atkinson Linkous peacefully passed into the gates of Heaven on June 18, 2021.

Betty was born on July 11, 1930, to Helen and Macil Atkinson. She was predeceased by her parents, her husband of 65 years, former Christiansburg Mayor Harold G. Linkous; her brother, Lewis Atkinson and his wife, Ann; and a niece, Gail Atkinson Palmarini.

Surviving to cherish her memories are her son and daughter-in-law, David and Brenda Linkous, and beloved granddaughter, Elena Linkous, all of Christiansburg. She is also survived by a first cousin, Gerald Pendleton (England); and nieces and nephews Carol (Jack) Nienke (North Carolina), Linda Atkinson (Botetourt), Sara Boehme (California), Cyndi Graham (Blacksburg), Carol Mangold (Arizona), Mary Lou Merkt (South Carolina) Trever (Morgan) Nienke, Taylor Nienke, Lucy Treado, Lucia (Jushe) Torres, and Nina Palmarini; and a very special friend, Wilma Snuffer, of Christiansburg. She is also survived by her grand-dogs Saydi, Chance, and Maverick.

Betty was retired from the Virginia Tech Extension Service and was a lifelong member of St. Paul Methodist Church



where she served in many positions, on many committees, and in many church activities. Upon retirement, Betty enjoyed traveling with Harold to destinations that included Hawaii, Alaska, and the Caribbean, but she most enjoyed annual family trips to the Outer Banks of North Carolina.

Betty loved family get-togethers during the holidays and any other time. She also enjoyed many family breakfast cookouts on the Blue Ridge Parkway. More than anything else, she loved her family and spent every minute she could with them. She was truly a source of love and inspiration to all who knew her.

Until we see you again Mom, we will always love you and be inspired by you. You will forever be in our thoughts and memories.

Visitation was Monday, June 21, at McCoy Funeral Home. A celebration of Betty's life was held at the McCoy Funeral Home Chapel on Tuesday, June 22.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to the Christiansburg Fire Department, 110 Depot Street, Christiansburg, VA 24073 or The League for Animal Protection, PO Box 561, Fin-castle, VA 24090.

Lyons, Sr., James Edison (Buck)

James Edison (Buck) Lyons, Sr., 87, of Dublin died Thursday, June 17, 2021. He was born in Floyd County on March 26, 1934, to the late Walter and Magalene Hol-landsworth Lyons.

He was preceded in death by his wife of 64 years, Evelyn Hutchison Lyons, and a grandson, Daniel Moore.

Buck was a dedicated law enforcement officer at Radford University where he served as Police Chief. He also served at the Radford City Sheriff's Department and the New River Community College Security Department. He also owned and operated Lyons Drive-in in Christiansburg, but most of all he loved to camp in the Great Smokey Mountains.

Those left to cherish Poppie's mem-



ory are his daughters and sons-in-law, Wanda and Jack Moore and Melissa and Richard Stuart; his sons and daughters-in-law, Jody and Polly Lyons and Terry, Sr. and Martha Lyons; nine grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; sisters and a brother-in-law, Willadean Lindsey, Darlene and David Francisco, and Regina Talbert; brothers and a sister-in-law, Ted Drexel Lyons, and Gerald and Cheryl Lyons.

Funeral services were conducted Friday, June 25, 2021, at 2 p.m. in The Bridge Foursquare Church, Christiansburg, with the Rev. James Edison Lyons III and the Rev. Debbie Courtney officiating. Interment followed in Highland Memory Gardens. Arrangements by McCoy Funeral Home,

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THE FINCASTLE HERALD The Vinton Messenger THE NEW CASTLE RECORD SALEM TIMES-REGISTER News Messenger RADFORD News Journal

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Legals - Montgomery County

ABC NOTICE

Om Agni LLC, trading as Duck In Deli 4, 1250 W Main St, Christiansburg, Montgomery County, Virginia 24073-4608.

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

Ekta Patel

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

Legals - Montgomery County

ABC NOTICE

Om Agni LLC, trading as Duck In Deli 6, 900 Lusters Gate Rd, Christiansburg, Montgomery County, Virginia 24073-4608.

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

Ekta Patel

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

Legals - Montgomery County

ABC NOTICE

ISH Aqua LLC, trading as Duck In Deli 8, 920 N Main St, Blacksburg, Montgomery County, Virginia 24060-3557.

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

Manishkumar Soni

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

ABC NOTICE

Vansh Air LLC, trading as Duck In Deli 5, 4120 Roanoke St, Christiansburg, Montgomery County, Virginia 24073-4608.

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

Kirtesh Patel

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

ABC NOTICE

Vansh Air LLC, trading as Duck In Deli 7, 809 Glade Rd, Blacksburg, Montgomery County, Virginia 24060-2717.

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

Kirtesh Patel

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

ABC NOTICE

ISH Aqua LLC, trading as Duck In Deli 9, 2307 W Main St, Radford Virginia 24141-1695.

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

Manishkumar Soni

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MONTGOMERY SPORTS

East Mont Lady Mustangs are soccer state champs



The Eastern Montgomery High School girls soccer team captured the 2021 Class 2 state championship on Wednesday.

PHOTO COURTESY OF EMHS

Auburn softball advances to state title game



The Auburn High Eagles celebrate Wednesday after getting the last out and advancing to the state 1A championship game against Rappahannock.



Kylie Smith gets a fist bump from first-base coach Tim Smoot. Her hit scored the first two runs in for the Eagles in Wednesday's semifinal win.



Kirsten Fleet struck out 16 batters and had two hits for Auburn in the win.



Emma Greenhalgh lays down a perfect bunt for Auburn as the Eagles are 15-2 on the season and are playing for the 1A state championship.



Hannah Shepherd continued her hot hitting for Auburn in Wednesday's playoff game.

PHOTOS BY ASHLEY AKERS

Blacksburg's 4X400 and 4X800 relay teams win state championships



Blacksburg High School's 4x400 relay team of (left to right) Ben Hager, Eliot Howard, Oscar Coddington, and Vance Ruiz is the Class 4 state champion.



The 4x800 relay team from Blacksburg High School (left to right) Zack Bissau, Oscar Coddington, Vance Ruiz, and Ben Schmitt has won the Class 4 state championship.

Wytheville native joins RU women's basketball staff

Marty Gordon
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

Robert Yonce grew up playing basketball and football in Wytheville, and now he is returning to the area as an assistant women's basketball coach at Radford University.

"His (RU women's basketball head coach Mike McGuire's) success at Radford has been nothing short of remarkable," Yonce said. "I hope to help build on and contribute to it. I'm honored to be a part of the exciting future ahead for this program and grateful for the opportunity to join an exceptional staff. And not to mention being closer to home. Thank you to all who have been a part of this journey."

Yonce spent the past year

as an assistant at Weber State and had previous stops at Southern Utah and Emory & Henry.

"Robert is a welcomed addition to our coaching staff," said McGuire. "I am excited that we have added someone that is familiar with Southwestern Virginia and Radford University. Robert has had great experience at Southern Utah, Emory & Henry, and Weber State that will help our staff tremendously."

"[Robert] is a person of high character and is an excellent communicator," McGuire said. "He has a versatile skill set that will allow him to help our student-athletes in several ways. He also loves to study the game as well as the analytics, and that will provide great insight for our program moving forward. I

look forward to working with him and having our coaching staff back to full strength."

In 2012, Yonce graduated from the University of Tennessee with honors while attaining his BS in logistics with a minor in psychology. While he was in Knoxville, Yonce was a practice player under legendary coach Pat Summit, which gave him the opportunity to see practices and talk with the coaching staff daily.

He also walked on to UT's football team after starting two years at receiver and defensive back at George Wythe High School where he earned First-Team All-District and All-Region honors as a senior.

As a senior, he helped George Wythe to the basketball state championship.



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