

PHOTO BY LOGAN WALLACE FOR VIRGINIA TECH.

A member of the Virginia Tech faculty since 2009, Wornie Reed has made significant contributions to the fields of sociology and Africana studies and specialized in the areas of health, race relations, criminal justice, and social policy.

Wornie Reed honored with emeritus status

Wornie Reed, director of the Race and Social Policy Research Center and a professor of Africana studies and sociology in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences at Virginia Tech, has been conferred the title of professor emeritus by the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors.

The emeritus title may be conferred on retired professors, associate professors, and administrative officers who are specially recommended to the board by Virginia Tech President Tim Sands in recognition of exemplary service to the university. Nominated individuals who are approved by the board receive a copy of the resolution and a certificate of appreciation.

A member of the Virginia Tech faculty since 2009, Reed has made significant contributions to the fields of sociology and Africana studies and specialized in the areas of health, race relations, criminal justice, and social policy.

His scholarship included nine books and numerous articles, chapters, and research reports. Among the books he has written or edited are "Racial Profiling: Causes and Consequences" (with R. Dunn, 2011); "Handbook of African-American Health: Social and Behavior Interventions" (with A.J. Lemelle and S. Taylor, 2011); "Blacks in Tennessee" (2008); and

"African-Americans: Essential Perspectives" (2003).

In addition, Reed is an active member of the American Civil Liberties Union-Virginia Board of Directors and a past president of the National Congress of Black Faculty. He provided leadership and inspiration to the broader community through the Dialogue on Race program.

In the classroom, Reed taught numerous undergraduate and graduate courses in the areas of health, race, and social policy. He also mentored and advised several graduate students.

His honors and awards include two regional Emmys — received in 2000 and 2003 — for his work with Public Health Television Inc., on the Urban Cancer Project, a research and video-based project aimed at reducing cancer disparities among African Americans.

Prior to his time at Virginia Tech, Reed was director of the Africana Studies Program at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. Before that position, he was a professor of sociology and urban studies at Cleveland State University where he developed and directed the Urban Child Research Center.

Reed received his bachelor's degree from Alabama State University and his master's degree and Ph.D. from Boston University.

Radford City Schools respond to potential threat involving a firearm

Tuesday morning, Dec. 14, at approximately 7:35, Radford City Public Schools were alerted to a potential threat involving the use of a firearm via social media.

The Radford City Police Department was notified in turn of the threat and responded to school campuses.

All city schools were placed into shelter in place and a message was sent to parents.

Upon investigating the threat, the Radford City Police Department found it originated on social media in another

locality.

"Student safety is a priority for our community and agency," said Radford City Police Chief Jeff Dodson. "Thanks to all of the agencies who aided in our response this morning, Radford City Police Department will continue to keep the safety of our students paramount and will be providing additional security to all school campuses over the following days."

Aiding in the response were the Virginia State Police, the Blacksburg Police Department, the Virginia Tech Police

Department, the Radford University Police Department, and the Radford Sheriff's Office.

"The Radford City School Division prides itself on making students, staff, and school community safety a priority each and every day," said Robert F. Graham, superintendent of schools. "We are grateful for the partnership we have with our local law enforcement agencies and are extremely proud of how our entire school community, students and staff in particular, handled this situation."

A tradition worth its weight in gold

Talking about his father, his father's 1942 Virginia Tech class ring, his mother's miniature ring, and the opportunity to add to his family's legacy with Virginia Tech brought forth all sorts of emotions for Travis "Rusty" Unterzuber.

Six months ago, he and his sisters weren't sure what to do with the rings of their now deceased parents. Then by chance, Unterzuber remembered the Hokie Gold Legacy Program, which allows alumni or families of alumni to donate class rings to be melted to create "Hokie" gold that is included in future class rings.

A family discussion ensued, and they agreed they wanted to be a part of the program.

"I knew the program was there, and I knew we had rings," Unterzuber said. "Never got the two together until about six months ago."

In late November, Unterzuber made the 15-hour drive from his hometown of Davenport, Iowa, to Richmond to visit with family relatives during the Thanksgiving holiday. Then he worked in a visit to Blacksburg to be a part of the ring melting ceremony held at the VTFIRE Kroehling Advanced Materials Foundry on Virginia Tech's campus.

The ceremony, held Nov. 29, has taken place annually since 2012 and even took place last year, though with just the 2022 class president in attendance because of a COVID-related restriction in the number of peo-



Travis "Rusty" Unterzuber recently donated three rings to be melted and used for the making of future class rings while a fourth — his 1972 class ring — will be placed in a time capsule being constructed near Burruss Hall to commemorate the university's 150th anniversary. Photo by Christina Franusich, Virginia Tech.

ple allowed in the facility. This unique tradition of bridging the past and the future started when two class members from the 1964 M Company of the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets — Jesse Fowler and Jim Flynn — came up with the idea.

Laura Wedin, associate director for student and young alumni engagement, coordinates the program, collecting rings from alumni who want their rings melted and removing the stones from them. She also keeps track of donation forms and biographies of ring owners and sends

email verification upon receipt of rings that have been shipped.

In addition, Wedin coordinates the gold melting ceremony, which includes Bugle yearbooks that represent the years of the rings being melted. Donor rings get placed on the open page of an alumnus or an alumna, and current ring design committee members then transfer each of these rings to a graphite crucible, saying the name of the alumnus or alumna or spouse who originally wore the ring and the class

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PHOTO CREDIT: PIXABAY

Virginia Cooperative Extension horticulture agent Adria Bordas says that poor lighting and excessive dry heat in homes make it difficult to maintain festive indoor holiday plants such as poinsettias and the Christmas cactus.

Horticulture expert shares tips on how to care for festive holiday plants

Looking for tips on how to keep your festive holiday plants thriving and attractive in season? Virginia Cooperative Extension horticulture agent Adria Bordas says that poor lighting and excessive dry heat in homes make it difficult to maintain indoor plants that many people purchase for holiday décor.

"To ensure a longer indoor life during the holiday season, plants such as poinsettias, the Christmas cactus, amaryllis, and rosemary require adequate lighting and moist air to maintain their attractive look and vibrant color," says Bordas.

Bordas says the poinsettia is a native of Mexico, so it should not surprise us that it needs a little "helping hand" to ensure a longer, fuller life in our indoor environments and colder climate.

Tips for keeping holiday plants healthy: When purchasing your plant do not leave it in a parked car during cold weather. If it's colder than 50 degrees outside, have

the store wrap it in paper or plastic.

Keep the plant evenly moist. If the soil is dry to the touch, water at the soil/pot. Do not water too frequently; it is important to let the soil dry out before watering again. Keep water off the leaves, bracts and flowers as water will cause the leaves to curl and dry up.

Many holiday plants are tropical plants and prefer temperatures of 65 to 70 degrees. Avoid temperatures below 60 degrees.

Keep plants away from a heat vent and out of a drafty area.

Discard your plant at the end of the season. Composting is a great way to discard your plant and practice sustainability.

Poinsettias

The poinsettia requires bright light and should be kept away from drafts. A temperature between 65 and 70°F is ideal. Avoid temperatures below 60°F and above

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Protect your home from cold-weather disasters when leaving town

RICHMOND—Holiday cheer was put on ice for one Virginia family when they returned home from an extended Christmas vacation to find multi-floor water damage from a burst pipe in the attic.

Ann Hardee, a Virginia Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Co. field claims manager, recalled a stream of water flowing outside from under that customer's front door had turned to ice in the 2018 incident.

"In this case, they turned the thermostat down to 55 degrees while they went out of town for a three-week Christmas holiday, but we had a cold snap right after Christmas," Hardee said. "It was cold as the dickens!"

As in many newer homes, the hot water tank was located in the attic. A pipe leading to the tank had frozen and burst in the cold snap, causing extensive water damage on the second and first floors, resulting in

\$100,000 in losses.

"We had to gut that house back to the stud walls," Hardee said. "And everything had to be removed from the house. It was catastrophic, to say the least."

Even with the thermostat set in the 50s and sink cabinets left open, pipes in the attic can still freeze. Hot water tanks often are installed in attics to enhance the square footage of living spaces.

"We handle many claims related to losses caused by hot water heaters in the attic," Hardee said. "And those claims are more frequent during a warm winter when temperatures suddenly drop down to the 20s."

Inhabitants of newly constructed homes should be aware of this possibility, she said, and take precautions. Bump

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To prevent catastrophic damage to a home in the event of a sudden cold snap when the family is out of town, bump the thermostat into the 60s, not the 50s, let the faucets drip, and have a neighbor or friend check on the home periodically. Then remove any snow from the roof as soon as possible after returning home to prevent the snow from freezing.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Now through Monday, Jan. 3:

United Way Festival of Trees
At the Old Town Mall in Downtown Christiansburg. Visitors may see the beautiful trees in person.

Holiday Trees and Gingerbread Houses on Display in Kent Square Lobby

Get in the spirit, take beautiful photos and enjoy the creativity of this display.

Now through Sunday, Dec. 19

Va. State Police Operation Christmas 2021

The Virginia State Police are accepting donated items for Home Instead Senior Care and Turning Point Domestic Violence Shelter through Dec. 19 at the state police Division VI headquarters at 3775 W. Main St. in Salem. Items being accepted are blankets, sheets, white towels, white wash cloths, canned vegetables, shampoo, conditioner, body wash, lotion, deodorant, baby wipes, size 5 and 6 baby diapers, word-search books, adult coloring books, crayons, and colored pencils.

Now through Wednesday, Dec. 22:

Public voting for Radford holiday display contest

The Radford Chamber of Commerce's second annual holiday display contest is underway, and public voting is through Dec. 22. Vote at www.radfordchamber.com.

Now through Friday, Jan. 21:

Apply now for NRV Master Gardener Program

The New River Valley Master Gardener Program is seeking applicants for the 2022 Master Gardener Training class until Jan. 21, 2022. The classes will be held on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from Feb. 15 through May 5 on the Virginia Tech campus and at the Montgomery County Government Center. Topics covered include basic botany, plant propagation, herbaceous plants, houseplants, vegetables, fruits, pruning, landscape design, floral de-

sign, lawn care, woody plants, entomology, plant pathology, abiotic stresses, soils, and pesticide use and safety. The cost for the course is \$185.00, and participants will be required to perform 50 hours of volunteer service. Contact Wendy Silverman at the Montgomery County Extension Office at 540-382-5790 for more information.

Saturday, Dec. 18:

An Extra Special Elfish 'Cooking with Dave' and a Movie

At the Radford Public Library from 1 to 3 p.m. Enjoy an Extra Special Cooking with Dave, live and in-person and also livestreamed to Facebook. Dave will make the famous Breakfast Dessert Pasta from the movie "Elf." Then participants may stay to watch the movie. The recipe for the pasta is in the book "Eat What You Watch: A Cookbook for Movie Lovers." "Elf" is rated PG for some mild rude humor and language and runs for 97 minutes.

Caturday

At the Christiansburg Library at noon. Sign up at the front desk for a 15-minute slot to read to a cat from the Montgomery County Animal Care and Adoption Center to practice reading and socialize shelter cats. All Ages. Email shodges@mfrl.org for more information.

Gingerbread Houses

At the Christiansburg Library at 2 p.m. Build a personalized gingerbread house for the holidays. Registration is required. Sign up by calling the branch at 540-382-6965.

Teen Dungeons and Dragons

At the Blacksburg Library at 2 p.m. Teens. Dungeons. Dragons.

Sunday, Dec. 19:

Chess Club

At the Blacksburg Library at 3 p.m. Kids and teens ages 8 years and up are welcome to sharpen their chess skills. Supplies will be provided. All skill levels are welcome.

Monday, Dec. 20:

Crafternoon for Adults

Come craft with the Radford Public Library staff including Monika and Morgan from 1 to 2:30 p.m. Participants are welcome to work on any art project they like, and past projects have

included painting, spinning yarn and embroidery.

Pokémon Club

At the Christiansburg Library at 4:30 p.m. Pokémon fans bring your DS or Pokémon cards and get ready to battle, trade, and make new friends. All ages.

Tuesday, Dec. 21:

Movie at the Library

Movie at the Library: "Elf" at the Christiansburg Library at 3:30 p.m. Watch the movie with friends and make crafts like Buddy at the library.

Salt Dough Ornaments Workshop

At the Blacksburg Library at 3 p.m. A special holiday crafting day. Participants will mix up simple ingredients and create salt-dough ornaments. Open to school-age and up with all supplies provided. Registration is encouraged. Call (540) 552-8246.

Wednesday, Dec. 22:

Movie Matinee

At the Blacksburg Library at 2 p.m. When the evil spirit Pitch launches an assault on the Earth, the Immortal Guardians team up to protect the innocence of children around the world. Rated PG. Meltfree snowball sensory craft will be provided.

Wednesday, Dec. 22 and Thursday, Dec. 23:

Christ Wesleyan Live Nativity

Christ Wesleyan Church, 525 Harkrader St. in Christiansburg, will present its third annual live nativity on Dec. 22 and 23 from 6 to 8 p.m. both nights

Thursday, Dec. 23:

Radford Public Library Holiday hours

Upcoming Holiday Closings: Dec. 23-26: CLOSED; Dec. 26-30: EARLY CLOSING at 5 p.m.

Dec. 31 and Jan. 1: CLOSED

Wednesday, Dec. 29:

Teen Nerf Battle

At the Christiansburg Library at 6 p.m. Join in an epic Nerf battle at the public library. To be played are Nerf

versions of capture the flag and humans vs. zombies. Players should bring their own Nerf blasters (some available), and the library will supply the elite style darts. Free snacks will also be provided. Ages 11 to 17. Registration and waiver required.

Thursday, Dec. 30:

American Red Cross Blood Drive

At the Christiansburg Library at 11:30 a.m. Walk-ins are welcome or donors may sign up in advance at <https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/donation-time>.

Thursday, Jan. 6:

American Legion meeting

The American Legion, Harvey-Howe-Carper Post 30, will meet at 7 p.m. at the VFW Post Home on 102 Watts St. in Radford. If Radford City Public Schools are closed on Thursday or Friday of this week due to weather, the meeting will be cancelled. For further information, call 250-2283 or 239-9864.

Tuesday, Jan. 11:

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 Rd. Members of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) are invited to attend. The guest speaker will be Scott Gardner of the Glencoe Museum, who will give a talk on General Gabriel Wharton. If Montgomery County Public Schools are closed on Tuesday or Wednesday of this week due to weather, the meeting is cancelled. For further information, call 320-4315 or 239-9864.

Ongoing:

Free COVID-19 Test Kits

Now available at all branches of the Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library and the Radford Public Library, curbside only: free, rapid at-home COVID-19 antigen test kits. Tests are available at no cost, and no library card is needed. This pilot program is made possible by a partnership with the Virginia Department of Health. Users will need a Wi-Fi connection, a form of ID, and a mobile device or a computer to complete the test.

Protect

from page 1

the thermostat into the 60s, and have a neighbor, friend or family member periodically check on the house. The same goes for secondary homes that are inhabited sporadically.

"Major losses can happen overnight," Hardee added. "Have somebody come by and check things out."

Virginia Farm Bureau's property experts also recommend letting faucets drip during extreme cold and insulating pipes that are most susceptible to freezing, such as those running along exterior walls. Inspect and replace weather stripping,

if necessary, and caulk around windows and doors to ensure your home's interior stays cozy when temperatures plummet.

If a snowstorm hits, use a snow rake to promptly remove accumulated snow to prevent roof damage. In addition, take steps to prevent ice dams—thick ridges of ice that build up along a roof edge and prevent melting snow from draining.

Finally, perform routine roof maintenance throughout the year, inspecting and repairing any damage to fortify your home against winter-weather disasters and extend the life of your roof.

Warm Hearth Foundation's associate director of development receives individual Outstanding Community Service award

Amy Slone, the Associate Director of Development for the Warm Hearth Foundation, received the Individual Outstanding Community Service Award from the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce (MCCC) at its recent annual meeting.

Criteria for the Individual Outstanding Community Service Award include contributions of one's time, talents, and resources to the community and the chamber along with the extent of the scope and impact of those contributions.

Slone joined the Warm Hearth Village team in 2016 and became active in the chamber in 2018. Since then she has joined the chamber's ambassador team and has become an advocate and champion for other local businesses and organizations.

Slone is an active member of the Montgomery County-Blacksburg Kiwanis Club and the First United Methodist Church of Pulaski. She volunteers for a number of community service organizations including the Montgomery County Christmas Store, the Salvation Army, Luggage of Love NRV, Hockey Ministries International, the Mountain View Humane Society, the Floyd County Humane Society,



A member of the Montgomery Chamber's ambassador team while serving the Warm Hearth Village Foundation as its associate director of development, Amy Slone received the individual Outstanding Community Service Award at the chamber's recent annual meeting and banquet.

the United Way of the NRV, the Alzheimer's Association and Alzheimer's Impact Movement, Dementia Friends Virginia, RSVP of Montgomery County and Radford, and His Hands on Africa.

She has also spent countless hours educating, advocating, and raising funds in support of seniors in need at Warm Hearth Village. She reacted to the award by saying, "I am so humbled to have

received this honor from my peers. Giving what I have, even when it's just sharing my time and talents, has always felt like the right thing to do, and I am grateful that I have the opportunity to do it."

Slone was recently named to the Board of Directors for Leading Lights NRV, which has as its mission the strengthening of the local community by inspiring a culture of volunteerism.

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PETS OF THE WEEK



When Lil Bit first came to the Animal Care and Adoption Center, she had a skin condition that left her with very little fur. Now, she is on the mend and looking like a happy, healthy pup again. She is a sweet younger dog who is friendly and enjoys attention.



Kitty Babe is a senior gal with a sweet disposition. She doesn't mind being held or carried. And she enjoys a tasty treat from time to time. Her adoption is sponsored by Montgomery County Friends of Animal Care and Control.

VT Dean of Students offers tips on how students can keep their belongings safe over winter break

Virginia Tech Dean of Students Byron Hughes has offered some tips for students who live off campus about how to keep their belongings safe over the winter break.

Hughes suggested students take the following precautions for their apartment or home:

Before they leave (or the last roommate departs) make sure all doors and windows are se-

curely locked. For those on the Blacksburg campus, it is no secret that winter break runs from this week through the middle of January. It is the point of the year when the student population is the lowest. Students in Blacksburg or beyond should double-check to make sure their apartment or home is locked.

If possible, students should take small items with high value

with them.

While outdoor temperatures are not expected to be frigid, students should make sure they set their thermostat at the appropriate level to avoid pipes freezing and causing water damage.

Students should think about temporarily stopping their mail, so it can be held and delivered when they return.

Students should consider closing their blinds, so strangers can't peek inside the apartment or home.

Hughes suggested students disconnect power cords and electrical appliances that will not be in use.

He recommends that if students typically leave a spare key outside, they should consider leaving the key with a trusted

neighbor for safe keeping.

Hopefully, Hughes says, these tips help students keep their apartment or home safe and well-maintained while they are away. He cautions that if students do come home and find signs of forced entry, they should not go inside. Instead, they should contact the police and arrange to meet them before entering the property.

New redistricting plan of Virginia's congressional districts is a fair compromise, says VT expert

Redistricting of Virginia's congressional districts has taken a significant step forward, one that seems to be a fair compromise that Republicans and Democrats should be able to live with, according to Virginia Tech's Nicholas Goedert.

"The most significant change is the dismantling of three Republican-leaning districts in central Virginia, one of which had flipped Democratic when Abigail Spanberger was elected in 2018," said Goedert, an assistant professor of political science working on a broad research agenda related to legislative elections and American politics.

"They are replaced by two more heavily Republican districts and a new Democratic-leaning

district in the Northern exurbs. This puts Spanberger in an awkward position, but doesn't fundamentally change the partisan balance of the map," said Goedert.

The process of drawing new districts stalled out when the Virginia Redistricting Commission failed to reach bipartisan agreement. That's when the Virginia Supreme Court appointed two special masters - a Democrat and a Republican - to resolve the matter.

"It's certainly a mixed bag in terms of the success of the new process," said Goedert. "The court, acting as a backstop, appears to be operating in a conscientious and non-partisan way. So fears that a court controlled by Republican nominees would

implement a blatant Republican gerrymander appear to be unfounded.

"It is my hope that given the divided nature of Virginia's new state government, there may be sufficient pressure for the legislature to reform the commission to be more nonpartisan -- and not include involvement from sitting legislators -- in the future," said Goedert.

Nicholas Goedert has been published in journals including the American Journal of Political Science, State Politics and Policy Quarterly, Election Law Journal, and Research and Politics. He served as an expert witness in the Wisconsin redistricting case Whitford v. Gill (adjudicated by the U.S. Supreme Court

during the summer of 2018) and has also served as a consultant for the advocacy group FairVote

and the Pennsylvania state legislature on election structure issues. He holds a Ph.D. in politics

from Princeton University and a J.D. from the Georgetown University Law Center.



PHOTO CREDIT: VIRGINIA.GOV

Nicholas Goedert, an assistant professor of political science at VT working on a broad research agenda related to legislative elections and American politics, says that the new redistricting plan of Virginia's congressional districts is one Republicans and Democrats should be able to live with.

Gas prices fall ahead of holidays but are closest to highest ever for Christmas

Santa came early this year, delivering lower gas prices just in time for Christmas with the national average price of gasoline down 10 cents per gallon since Thanksgiving, according to GasBuddy.

The national average on Christmas is projected to decline from Thursday's \$3.32 to \$3.25 per gallon. That's just a penny away from 2013's Christmas tally of \$3.26 per gallon, the priciest Christmas. There remains a chance prices in 2021 could still land just above the previous Christmas record.

While the drop in prices is good news, prices remain relatively high, increasing 45% from 2020's \$2.25 per gallon. Prices at the pump are expected to continue to fall into the New Year, providing some much needed relief to drivers in 2022.

"We got a Christmas gift that few should complain about: falling gas prices at a time of year when millions of Americans are spending their hard earned dollars on gifts for their loved ones.

"The last thing they should have to worry about is expensive gasoline," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy. "While we might scrape by a razor under 2013's tally of \$3.25/gal on Christmas, the good news is prices should continue to moderate heading into the last moments of 2021. As for what's coming in 2022, GasBuddy plans to release its annual Fuel Outlook in the days ahead so motorists can plan for the coming year."

GasBuddy offers these tips to motorists on the road this holiday season:

- Take advantage of dis-

counts. Some gas stations offer discounts for paying with cash or offer loyalty and rewards programs. Motorists can also sign up for the free Pay with a GasBuddy card for discounts of up to 25¢ per gallon.

- Slow down. Speeding and hard braking are

things many of us are guilty of, but it pays to calm down literally. A recent study by GasBuddy revealed that drivers in some cities are over 30% more aggressive during the holidays. GasBuddy's Drives feature can help you increase your fuel ef-

iciency by recommending better driving habits.

- Search along your route for the best gas prices. The GasBuddy app makes it easy to plan ahead, so you won't get

stuck paying full price. Whether you're headed across town or out of town, shopping around for gas can save you upwards of 30¢ per gallon.

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OPINION

COVID update: COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations rise after Thanksgiving holiday

Cases of the coronavirus again are rising across the New River Health District, mirroring trends in the state and nationwide in the aftermath of the Thanksgiving holiday, said Noelle Bissell, the district's health director, on Monday, Dec. 13, during a meeting with local news media.

Colder outdoor temperatures are forcing people indoors for gatherings, another factor in the increase in infec-

tions, the health director said.

Currently, there are 36 people hospitalized in the region with the coronavirus, which is up from last week's total, Bissell said. In general, she explained that case numbers don't tell the whole story about COVID-19 infections in the region. "For each reported case, there are three or four or more cases," she said.

So far, the jump in cases in the region is happening across the community, not specifi-

cally among school-age children or college students.

Meanwhile, the highly contagious omicron variant of COVID-19 has not been detected in the New River Valley, though it has been reported in the northwest portion of Virginia. Bissell told the media that she suspects it is here.

The good news is there are no reported deaths from the omicron variant in Europe, the United Kingdom, and South Africa, where the vari-

ant is spreading, she said.

"This follows the typical pattern where viruses will be more transmissible but less deadly as they mutate," Bissell said. "Right now, it's probably everywhere. It's COVID, so the same prevention and protection measures work."

She expects that eventually, COVID-19 will be considered endemic, which means that it will always be present.

As for coronavirus vaccines, the FDA recently approved

booster vaccines for 16 and 17 year olds, the health director told the media.

"We have to accept that COVID is still here and that COVID's not going away," Bissell said. "We still need to encourage people to do everything we can to keep people and their families safe. The data are clear. The people who are ending up with serious complications, including death, are those who are not vaccinated."

Virginia Supreme Court rules VADOC can proceed with termination of medical services contract

RICHMOND — On Saturday, Dec. 11, the Supreme Court of Virginia denied an emergency motion to stay and petition for review filed by the Virginia Department of Corrections' (VADOC) outgoing medical services contrac-

tor, Armor Correctional Health.

The ruling meant the department could proceed with the termination of its existing contract with Armor. The department's new contract with VitalCore Health Strategies began

at midnight on Sunday, Dec. 12. The move was part of the effort by the Department of Corrections to de-privatize healthcare services in its facilities by assuming full responsibility for delivering healthcare service to the nearly 25,000 in-

mates in state custody.

The decision followed one from the Circuit Court for the City of Richmond, which stated that VADOC did not act arbitrarily and capriciously in its decision to cancel the contract with Armor. The ruling from

Judge Phillip Hairston also stated that the vendor did not meet any of the factors necessary to grant a temporary injunction.

"The ruling was a victory for the quality of healthcare in our facilities," said Harold Clarke,

director of the Department of Corrections. "Our goal has always been to provide the constitutionally-mandated level of healthcare in our facilities, and this transition will ensure that we are able to continue to do so in the future."

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Last Meeting

Last Tuesday, after twelve years, was my last meeting on the Christiansburg Town Council. I feel good about the accomplishments the council and the town have achieved during my tenure.

Two of the biggest achievements were the development of the Marketplace, which is located in the commercial center of Christiansburg. Eight new restaurants have been added, along with a bank, and a grocery store (The store will open on 1/12/2022.) In the future, two hotels with a retirement home will also be located there. The Marketplace development is the greatest project the town has ever experienced.

The second major improvement is the new 60-acre park that is being constructed behind Walmart. In the first phase of the development, four all-purpose fields (soccer-lacrosse-football) are being created, along with a hiking trail and splash and dog parks with two all-purpose play-

grounds. This park will be good for the people of the town and help stimulate the town's economy, as tournaments in different sports will be held in the park.

The park has the support of the majority of the members of the town council who have visions for the town's future.

I have constantly been impressed with the attitude and work ethic of the members of the Christiansburg staff. They have the desire and determination to make the Town of Christiansburg the place to play, work, and live.

While I have been on the council, there have only been two things that I felt strongly about that were not supported by other members of council: gun control and the Rosa Peters Park.

I have nothing against guns, but there is a time and place for them. I do not feel that guns should be allowed in the Christiansburg Town Council chambers. At times, things get tense; we don't need to have someone with a gun lose control and create chaos. But no one else on the council felt that way. The motion died in less than a minute.

If you have read my 'letters to the editor' in the past, I have written several articles concerning guns and gun use. After the letters were

printed, I had numerous people come to me with contrasting opinions. My big thing is I don't feel that automatic weapons need to be in the hands of the general public.

An example of what I am talking about happened at the beginning of December, at Oxford High School in Oakland County, Michigan, which is just north of Detroit. A 15-year-old student killed four other students with a semi-automatic weapon. His father had purchased the weapon the week before. Unfortunately, things like this are becoming common. Someone is killed or injured in Roanoke by a gun almost every weekend.

The newspaper of Dec. 12, 2021, carried a story concerning six more states that no longer require residents to hold a permit to carry a concealed firearm. Fortunately, Virginia was not one of them. Gun supporters state it is the right of Americans to do what they feel is right. Carrying a gun permit or not is one of them.

My point is we need additional gun control. People in Oakland County and around the country will say what a terrible tragedy it was and then it will be forgotten. That is the way I see it, and I know that I'm pre-

ty much by myself, but I know something needs to be done. (Roanoke City has formed a committee to discuss gun control; we all know how much help that is going to be).

My second disappointment is the Rosa Peters Park, which is above Depot Park (Depot Park is behind Christiansburg Kroger.) For years I have tried to consolidate RP (Rosa Peters) with Depot Park, the skateboard park, and the Christiansburg Aquatic Center. What a wonderful park that would be, and the cost would be minimal. But today RP stays closed ninety percent of the time. It is just a waste.

I have suggested that the entire area (the three parks) be named after Rosa Peters. A plaque could be put into place. People could become aware of who she was and what she did.

Well, that's it. I appreciate people who have been reading my stuff over the years. My goal was to make Christiansburg a better place to live and to keep people informed.

Thanks,
Steve Huppert

The attached comments are mine and do not represent those of the Town of Christiansburg or the Christiansburg Town Council.

News Messenger:

Your Dec. 15 front-page article about the "Montgomery County - Blacksburg Kiwanis Club along with Buddy King's article "Ringing the Bell For the Salvation Army" made my day.

And Marty Gordon's article about the heart-felt connection many of us have between VT (upcoming Pinstripe Bowl) and the New York Yankees is intriguing - and true.

These writings add to the rich history of our area since the founding of your paper nearly 153 years ago. Interesting news selections by excellent writers result in an outstanding local newspaper. Keep up the fine work.

Ben Crawford, Board Chair
Salvation Army Post of the NRV

P. S. From bell ringers to writers to everywhere, where would we be without VOLUNTEERS?

Holiday Plants

from page 1

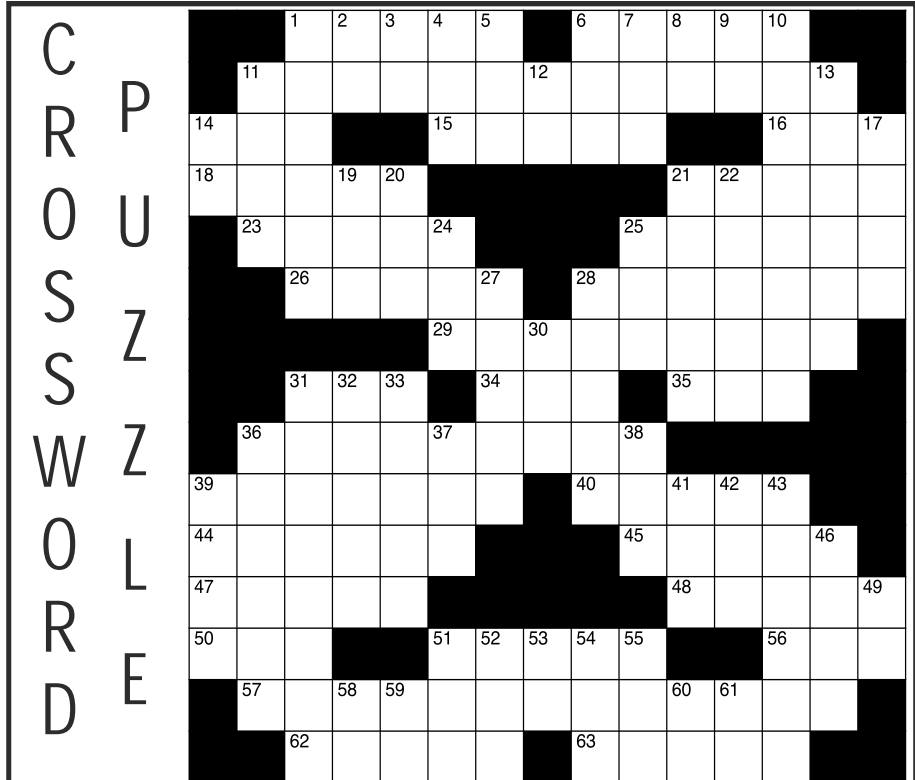
75°F. Keep plants well watered but do not overwater. Let the soil dry between watering. Some of the newer, long-lasting varieties can be kept attractive all winter. Gardeners frequently ask whether they can carry their poinsettias over to bloom again next year. The quality of home-grown plants seldom equals that of commercially grown plants.

Christmas Cactus
The Christmas cactus has become increasingly popular with the development of several new varieties. At least three related species are sold in addition to a number of cultivars. All have similar cultural requirements.

The secret of good bloom is influenced by nighttime temperature and photoperiod control. Christmas cacti will develop buds and bloom if given bright light, short days, and night temperatures between 55 and 65°F. Christmas cacti bloom best when

somewhat pot-bound. Repotting is necessary only about once every three years. Full sunlight is beneficial in midwinter, but excessively bright light during the summer months can make plants look pale and yellow.

Amaryllis
The secret of growing amaryllis is to keep the plants actively growing after they finish blooming. Keep the plants in full sun, with a night time temperature above 60°F. As soon as the danger of frost has passed, set the plants in the garden in a semi-shaded spot and continue to water. Bring them in during the first part of September. Stop watering to allow old growth to die back, and store in a cool, dark place to rest. Your amaryllis will be ready to force again about Nov. 1. Bring them into a warm, well-lighted room and water moderately to begin a new growth and flowering cycle.



- CLUES ACROSS**
- 1. Syrian president
 - 6. Grand Caravan brand
 - 11. Immeasurably small
 - 14. Myriagram
 - 15. Yellow-fever mosquito
 - 16. Radioactivity unit
 - 18. Anklebone
 - 21. Adobe house
 - 23. Direct to a source
 - 25. Piper __ actress
 - 26. Leuciscus leuciscus
 - 28. Moral excellences
 - 29. Describes distinct concepts
 - 31. Rubberized raincoat
 - 34. Inhabitants of the Earth
 - 35. Distressed signal
 - 36. Destroyed by secret means
 - 39. Skin abrasions
 - 40. Caesar or tossed
 - 44. Supplied with a chapeaux
 - 45. Fictional elephant
 - 47. Forced open
 - 48. Pole (Scottish)
 - 50. Browning of the skin
 - 51. Boy Scout merit emblem
 - 56. British thermal unit
 - 57. Decomposes naturally
 - 62. Freshet
 - 63. Lawn game
 - 7. Former CIA
 - 8. Didymium
 - 9. Gram
 - 10. Audio membranes
 - 11. 8th Jewish month
 - 12. Touchdown
 - 13. Madames
 - 14. Metric ton
 - 17. Fabric colorants
 - 19. Capital of Bashkortostan
 - 20. Extra dry wine
 - 21. An Indian dress
 - 22. Expenditure
 - 24. Ribbed or corded fabric
 - 25. Can top
 - 27. So. African Music Awards
 - 28. Weather directionals
 - 30. A scrap of cloth
 - 31. Gin & vermouth cocktails
 - 32. A way to lessen
 - 33. Contended with difficulties
 - 36. Egyptian beetle
 - 37. CNN's Turner
 - 38. A quick light pat
 - 39. Shipment, abbr.
 - 41. Resin-like insect secretion
 - 42. Goat and camel hair fabric
 - 43. Superficially play at
 - 46. Network of veins or nerves
 - 49. Atomic #44
 - 51. Wager
 - 52. The time something has existed
 - 53. Physician's moniker
 - 54. Talk excessively
 - 55. Pre-Tokyo
 - 58. Out of print
 - 59. Ducktail hairstyle
 - 60. Carrier's invention
 - 61. Canadian province
- CLUES DOWN**
- 1. Fished in a stream
 - 2. Left heart there
 - 3. Yes in Spanish
 - 4. Nursing organization
 - 5. Cease to live
 - 6. River in NE Scotland

Extend the life of your leftover eggnog

RICHMOND—Eggnog has a limited shelf life, but consumers can still indulge post-Christmas cravings, and do so safely, with a few kitchen hacks.

Mary Rapoport, consumer affairs and educational director for the Virginia Egg Council, shared some tips in an episode of Virginia This Morning on CBS 6 News Richmond.

“It’s a wonderful time of year, because I love eggnog,” she said on the broadcast. “But if you make homemade eggnog, it doesn’t keep a long time. It will turn in about a week. And even with store-bought eggnog, you can’t keep it forever.”

Rapoport added that with inflation the way it is, consumers can’t afford to waste anything.

Her solution: an egg-nog-infused quick bread. Rapoport demonstrated how she mixes flour with a

box of vanilla instant pudding, baking powder, salt, and nutmeg. In a separate bowl, she whipped butter, sugar, and eggs.

“And if you have a situation where there’s a cup and a half of eggnog left, use it,” Rapoport said, finishing the whipped mixture with a splash of spiced rum and a few handfuls of leftover cranberries.

She combined the mixtures and baked it in a parchment paper-lined pan, resulting in a decadent-looking quick bread studded with bright cranberries.

“The pudding makes it almost cake-like,” she said.

Rapoport also recommended making popsicles with the leftovers for an off-season eggnog fix. Thoroughly wash an egg carton and pour leftover eggnog into the cups. Freeze the carton for about an hour and insert

halved popsicle sticks into the partially frozen eggnog to make freezer-ready eggnog pops.

“I was eating those this summer,” she said. “They were still good.”

Because homemade eggnog typically consists of milk, sugar, spices, and raw eggs, food safety mindfulness is key, Rapoport said.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend refrigerating foods containing eggs promptly after cooking. Symptoms of bacterial salmonella exposure usually appear within six hours to six days, causing digestive distress or worse for those with compromised health.

Eggnog made with cooked custard can eliminate those concerns.

“Years ago, when folks weren’t concerned about

salmonella, they just used raw eggs in eggnog,” Rapoport said.

Today, most recipes call for a cooked custard. To make one, simply stir

the eggnog mixture over medium heat until the eggs thicken, heated to 160° or higher, Rapoport said. Cover, and refrigerate to chill the

eggnog thoroughly. Eggnog and other recipes are listed at virginiaeggcouncil.org/recipes. The quick bread recipe is at bit.ly/3s8DU2Z.



Before the days of concern about salmonella, it seems difficult to believe that folks used raw eggs in their eggnog recipes.

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, Dean Meadows, Campus Minister.

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

CHURCH OF GOD

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

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

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

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

ECKANKAR

Eckankar, the Path of Spiritual Freedom, is located at 1420 3rd St. SW, Roanoke, VA 24016. However, due to COVID-19, the Light & Sound Services and other ECK programs are currently available online through Zoom. Visit www.eck-va.org for program listings, www.

Montgomery County WORSHIP DIRECTORY

THE CHOICE IS MINE

Read 1 Samuel 25:1 through 27:12

David, a fighting machine, was not squeamish about shedding blood. However, before he went into battle, his habit was to seek the Lord’s direction. He forgot this wisdom when one fool’s decision enraged him.

Nabal, a wealthy man, refused to feed David’s men although they had protected Nabal’s shepherds. His arrogant remark infuriated David. Blinded by anger, he bypassed the Lord and ordered his men to arm themselves for battle. The plan: Wipe out Nabal and his entire household.

Meanwhile back at the estate, a servant begged Abigail, Nabal’s wife, to do something because David had been good to them. She immediately sent food to David and then followed to ask for mercy.

“May you be blessed for your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging myself with my own hands” (1Samuel 25:33).

When we are wronged, instead of plotting revenge, we could seek the Lord’s help to set aside anger and leave vengeance to Him. We should also pray for the offender.

Thought for Today: I can focus on God’s blessings or the offense. I can pray or scheme. The choice is mine.

Quicklook: 1 Samuel 25:32–34

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

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.

EPISCOPAL

Grace Episcopal Church, 210 4th Street, Radford, 639-3494. A friendly, mission-oriented spiritual community sharing the Word of God. ALL ARE WELCOME. In person and live-streamed services 10:30AM Sundays. Holy Eucharist twice a month. Morning Prayer twice a month. Fellowship and refreshments follow services. Find us on Facebook: Grace Episcopal Church and www.graceradford.org.

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.

Compassion Church, 1820 Second Street, Radford, 639-6287, Our music is passionate, our worship is real, and Pastor Chandler Jones brings relevant messages for everyone at any place on their journey, Sunday Worship Experience at 9:30 AM & 11:00 AM, Wednesday Family Night at 7 PM, Children Ministry provided for all services. Our vision is to see all Saved. Freed. Restored. Fulfilled. 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. Dr. Patricia Jones. Sunday School, 9:45 a.m., Sunday Worship, 11:00 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. Mike Derflinger (540) 382-2410. Sunday Worship 10 a.m., Sunday School 9 a.m. Live streaming Sunday Service - www.twitch.tv/stpaulumc
Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church, 350 Stafford Drive, Christiansburg, VA 24073, Sunday School 10am, Sunday Worship Service 11am.

WESLEYAN

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

OBITUARIES

Cochran, Frances

Frances Cochran passed away on Nov. 28, 2021.

She was 94 years old. Born in Blacksburg in 1927 to Anna Bowles and Army Sergeant Birman Craig, she was the only child of a poor family, but food was always on the table, she was loved, and she was taught right from wrong.

She especially adored her cousin, Sue Dillon.

In fact, they were more like sisters who enjoyed such adventures as riding their bikes all the way from town to Lusters Gate to swim among the snakes at a swimming hole. They also loved going to Shirley Temple movies at the Lyric, paying their five cents to get in, and very occasionally having enough money for a candy bar, too.

Frances enjoyed school and was thrilled to be invited to the wedding of her sixth-grade teacher, Miss Mary Robeson, to Robert Wood. Frances's teacher honored her excited students with front-row seating and a photo of the occasion. Later, she would learn that Wood had been killed serving his country in World War II. Her seventh-grade teacher was Miss Margaret Beeks, who traveled extensively during summers, sending post cards back to students.

Frances found her professional calling in high school when she realized how much she liked learning secretarial skills. This led to her work at VPI in the College of Agriculture, and for the rest of her life, she spoke fondly of her bosses, particularly Drs. Wilson Bell and E. P. Johnson. Her life as a young single adult was fun. She now bought clothes downtown on layaway, took voice lessons with Miss Luster, and sang in the Blacksburg Baptist Church choir.

In 1950, Donald G. Cochran, a young and very good looking master's candidate in Entomology appeared in Price Hall. On Sept. 7, 1952, he and Frances were married and headed off to New Brunswick, N.J., where Don pursued a Ph.D. at Rutgers. Frances loved working as a secretary on campus and making friends with women of various international backgrounds. She especially enjoyed taking music appreciation with librarian Jan Szendrey, returning home with her to enjoy her mother's homemade Hungarian pastries. While in New Brunswick, she also attended a poetry reading by Robert Frost.

Frances gave birth to Victoria Ann in 1954, and when Dr. James Grayson invited Don to join the Entomology faculty at VPI, the three Cochrans returned to Blacksburg where they lived with Frances's widowed mother on Houston Street. Frances again worked on campus while her mother, now called "Mamam," took care of Vickie. When Megan Lee was born in 1958, Frances decided to remain home, devoting herself to her family. In 1963, Christopher Craig was born, and in 1964, Frances and Don asked Mamam to come live with them and their three children in a new home they had built.

Frances supported Don's two careers, one as a research scientist and the other as an officer in the Army Reserve Medical Corps, from which he eventually retired as a Full Colonel. Frances was a perfectionist when it came to cleaning the house and preparing food, particularly delicious and beautiful desserts, for receptions for Don and his colleagues. Like her father, she was also a top sergeant, barking orders at her children, whom she adored. She served as room mother, scout leader, chaperone, Sunday school piano player, and any other position she could fill to help her children thrive. She drove them and their friends everywhere, encouraging their pursuits. Perhaps more excited than they were when the Beatles arrived on the scene,



she raced out to buy the 45 RPM of "I Want to Hold Your Hand" for them.

Later, she especially enjoyed taking Chris to and from Hargrave where he finished high school. She and Don liked playing bridge and square dancing. Frances had many dear friends, such as Margaret Grayson, Marilyn Brna, and Virgie Holt.

They loved outlet shopping and flower shows.

Frances later drove Virgie and many more friends to cancer treatments. When her own mother's health began going downhill, she devoted herself completely to Anna until she passed away in 1975. Frances, Don, Megan, and Chris travelled to Larmor-Plage, France, in 1984 to attend Vickie and Christian Le Corre's wedding in a medieval Breton church. Don's leaving her in 1987 was devastating, but Frances bounced back.

Her neighbor, Lorraine Potter, befriended her, and they served the Blacksburg Baptist Church in every way they could. They also took aerobics together. In 1992, the family attended Megan and Harris Kinsler's wedding in a Chicago hotel. This occasion allowed her to spend time with her sisters and brothers-in-law, Elna, Verland, Hazel, and Bud.

She also loved her nieces and nephews and later enjoyed hearing from them and about their spouses, children, and grandchildren. When Frances's only grandchild, Shannon Frances Christiane, moved from France to Blacksburg with her parents in 1995 when Shannon was seven, the two were inseparable. Frances got to know the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles' movie script and the Spice Girls' lyrics by heart during their ump-teen sleepovers. She also drove Shannon and her friends to basketball, soccer, and other activities. And she looked forward to flying with Shannon and a friend of her choice to spend a week in Chicago with Megan each summer.

She was extremely alert mentally and doggedly independent until the end, and she herself arranged to have caregivers come in two to three times a week. When Frances stopped driving, she became a back-seat driver to her helpers, especially to Jo Ann Price, as she continued to maintain her car because she never wanted to cause wear and tear to anyone else's vehicle. She also enjoyed keeping her house as spotless and arranged as ever, but now with the help of her caregivers and her handyman, Tony Bane.

More importantly, she concentrated on being contented and grateful. When, at 80, she developed breast cancer, she was very thankful for such drivers as Rosie Ratliff, who took her to radiation treatments. As she got older, she cherished other helpers as well: Martha Repass and Charlene Simpkins. Frances now became fond of watching Hallmark Christmas movies at any time of year, keeping up with the news, balancing her checkbook, and having Daina Aistrop fix her hair each week.

She loved talking to Megan daily, speaking with Chris and Rosie regularly, visiting with her beloved Sue D. Elliott and hearing about her family, and visiting with Vickie. She enjoyed Sue, Christian, and Charlene's cooking, and she savored the odd glass of French champagne. She especially looked forward to family Christmases.

She is survived by her three children and a granddaughter. The Blacksburg Baptist Church Senior Pastor, Dr. Tommy McDearis, conducted a comforting service for her at McCoy Funeral Home prior to her cremation. The date of a spring 2022 memorial service will be announced at a future time. Arrangements by McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg.

Whitlock, Annie Lorena

Annie Lorena Whitlock, 90, passed away at her home in Radford on Tuesday, Dec. 14, 2021.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Donald T. and Pansey H. Whitlock; and brothers James, Maynard, and Preston "Tommy."

Survivors include her sister and brother-in-law, Viola and Marshall Ellis; and many other relatives and friends.

The family will receive friends from 10



until 11 a.m. today, Saturday, Dec. 18, 2021, at the Mullins Funeral Home in Radford. Funeral services will begin at 11 a.m. at the funeral home with the Rev. Frankie Graham officiating. Interment will follow in West View Cemetery in Radford.

The Whitlock family is in the care of Mullins Funeral Home & Crematory in Radford. www.mullinsfuneralhome.com.

Cannon, Robert Woodrow

Robert Woodrow (Woody, Bobby) Cannon passed away Dec. 14, 2021.

Woody lived with his sister Sandra Parson, of Blacksburg, and formerly lived in Denton, Md. and Milford, Del. He is survived by a son, a daughter and her spouse, four grandchildren, a sister, a niece, nephews, and four grand-nephews.

He was active in church and was chosen Man of the Year for his work with the Cub Scouts. He loved cars and was a mechanic at Jarvis and Beck Chevy and the

Maryland State Police Barracks in Centerville, Md. He was president of both Maryland and Delaware antique car clubs and judged shows in numerous states.

Graveside service will be conducted Monday, Dec. 20, 2021, at 2 p.m. in Roselawn Memorial Gardens, Christiansburg. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Good Samaritan Hospice, 1160 Moose Dr., Christiansburg, Va. 24073. Arrangements by McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg.

King, Karen Matherly

Karen Matherly King, 61, of Fairlawn, passed away Monday, Dec. 13, 2021.

She was a member of Fairlawn United Methodist Church. Due to her selfless nature, she was a Certified Nurses Assistant for over 30 years, spending the last 15 years with Carilion NRV Hospice.

She was preceded in death by her father, Conrad Norris Matherly. Survivors include her husband of 43 years, Michael "Snuffy" King; daughters Bryce Smith and her husband, Michael, and Michelle "Bean" King and her wife, Kathryn Jones; grandchildren Madison "Baby Suggie," Ethan, Thomas, and

Mathew; her mother, Mary Matherly; a sister, Lisa Chrisley, and her husband Mark; a brother, Brian Matherly, and his wife, Wanda; and many other relatives and friends.

The family received friends from 4 to 6 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 17, 2021, at the Mullins Funeral Home in Radford. Funeral services were private.

In lieu of flowers, please make donations to the Women's Resource Center or the charity of your choice.

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

Swartz, Charles Ray

Charles Ray Swartz, 80, of Radford, passed away Monday, Dec. 13, 2021.

He retired from the Radford Army Ammunition Plant after many years of service as a mechanic. Charles enjoyed the outdoors and being in the mountains of West Virginia. He liked to play Bingo, buy lottery tickets, and watch Western movies.

He was preceded in death by his parents, John and Sophie Swartz; and his brother, John Swartz.

Survivors include his daughters and son-in-law, Lisa Swartz of Christiansburg, and Theresa (Chris) Evans of

Richmond; sons Charles "Andy" Swartz (Sarah Hoeller) of Missouri and Kenny Swartz of Radford; a granddaughter Alexandra Evans; a brother, Jerry Swartz of Pulaski; and numerous other pets, family members, and friends.

Charles was a loving father and a generous man and was always kind to others. He will be sorely missed by all who knew him.

Services will be held at a later date. The Swartz family is in the care of Mullins Funeral Home & Crematory in Radford. www.mullinsfuneralhome.com.

Tradition

from page 1

year before dropping the rings into the cylinder-shaped object.

Unterzuber brought three rings to be melted: his father's class ring, his mother's miniature ring, and wife Doris's engagement ring. Unterzuber and his wife were married in 1972, the same year in which he graduated.

His father's class ring had been given to his younger sister, Kaete, by their mother after his father's passing, and Kaete Unterzuber agreed to donate the ring for melting. His mother's miniature ring had been left to his wife after his mother's passing, and Doris Unterzuber agreed to donate that ring for the proceedings.

Unterzuber's father came to Virginia Tech on a football scholarship in 1938, was a member of the Corps of Cadets during his time at Virginia Tech, and after graduating with a degree in agricultural engineering, went on active duty. His father and mother

married in 1942 with the miniature ring serving as the engagement ring.

Unterzuber also donated his class ring. Next year marks the 50th anniversary of his graduating from Virginia Tech. His ring, though, was not one of the eight melted. Instead, Virginia Tech plans to store his ring in a "time capsule" being constructed near Burruss Hall as part of the university's sesquicentennial celebration commemorating its 150-year anniversary.

Now retired after following in his father's footsteps and graduating with a degree in agricultural engineering before working in the farm equipment industry, Unterzuber attended the ceremony along with a handful of members of the ring design committee and the 2023 class president. Once filled with rings, the crucible gets taken into the foundry where Alan Druschitz, an associate professor in materials science engineering, oversees the process.

The crucible ultimately is placed into a small furnace heated

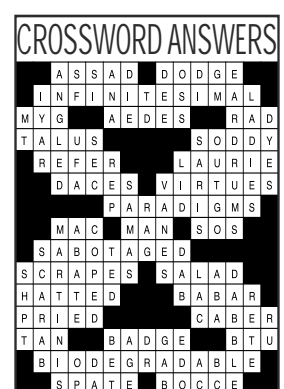
to 1,800 degrees, and within 20 minutes, the gold turns into liquid form.

The gold bar from the eight rings weighed 6.315 ounces. Wedin then ships this gold bar to Balfour, the company that makes Virginia Tech's class rings, and workers there refine the gold, using it to cast Virginia Tech's class rings for the upcoming year. They also reserve a very small amount from each melt to include in future years' ring melts.

Each gold class ring today consists of 0.33 percent "Hokie gold." Thus, each student symbolically is connected to Virginia Tech alumni from the past.

Photos and videos were taken during and shared on social media platforms, educating friends, classmates, and the general public about a tradition that few seem to know. More importantly, the evening stirred reflection among the students in attendance about their future legacies and possible participation down the road with their own class rings.

- By Jimmy Robertson



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MONTGOMERY SPORTS

Hokies pick up 19 commits in early 2022 signing group

Virginia Tech football head coach Brent Pry welcomed his first signing class as the Hokies added 19 players to the squad during the early signing period that ended on Dec. 15.

Tech's early signing list included 11 players who completed their prep careers in Virginia, the best haul of in-state talent for the Hokies since 2014.

The 2022 early signing group is composed of players who competed at the prep level from eight different states in addition to one player from Washington, D.C. In addition to Virginia, other states represented were Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Texas, and South Carolina.

Wednesday's list of signees includes six defensive linemen, four offensive linemen, two tight ends, two defensive backs, a quarterback, a running back, a wide receiver, a linebacker, and a kicker.

Tech's tradition of siblings following older brothers also continued on Wednesday. DL Braelin Moore is the younger brother of current G Kaden Moore. The Moore brothers both prepped at Freedom High School in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

The traditional National Signing Day will be on Wednesday, Feb. 2, 2022.

Committing to the Hokies were Keyshawn Burgos, defensive end, (6-5, 235) Chesterfield, Va.

Played defensive end and offensive tackle at Mataoca High School. Mataoca went 9-2 during the fall 2021 season. Burgos led the Warriors with 13 sacks as a senior and had 45 tackles, including 21 tackles for loss. Also forced a fumble and blocked a punt in 2021. Had a 75-yard fumble recovery return as a junior. Rated as a three-star prospect by 247Sports Composite. Ranked as a top 25 high school player in Virginia by 247Sports

Mansoor Delane, Safety, (6-1, 178) Silver Spring, Md.

Played cornerback and wide receiver at Archbishop Spalding High School in Severn, Md. Archbishop Spalding went 10-1 during the fall 2021 season. Ranked

as the No. 14 high school player in Maryland by 247Sports Composite. Rated as a three-star prospect by 247Sports Composite. Chose Virginia Tech over Maryland, Michigan State, and Virginia.

Johnny Dickson, Offensive Lineman (6-3, 310) Corpus Christi, Texas

Played tackle at Flour Bluff High School. Flour Bluff went 12-2 during the fall 2021 season. Threw for a touchdown for the Hornets in 2021. Ranked as a top 25 interior offensive lineman recruit in the country by 247Sports Composite. Also played basketball and was a member of the track and field squad at Flour Bluff. Four-year starter on the offensive line. Two-time first-team all-district. His mother is an active service member in the U.S. Navy.

Bryce Duke, Running Back (5-11, 196), Leesburg, Va.

Played running back at Tuscarora High School in Leesburg. Tuscarora went 11-3 during the 2021 fall season. Named The Washington Post's 2021 All-Met Team Offensive Player of the Year. Totaled 322 carries for 2,852 yards with 36 touchdowns. 2021 Dulles District Co-Offensive Player of the Year. All-Dulles District First-Team. Averaged nearly 220 rushing yards per game. Recorded 17 receptions for 256 yards with five touchdowns. Has also played linebacker and safety at Tuscarora.

Devin Farrell, Quarterback (6-0, 192), Alpharetta, Ga.

Played quarterback at Milton High School. Milton went 12-1 during the 2021 fall season ... Completed 140 of 215 passes for 1,983 yards with 24 touchdowns. Also carried the ball 111 times for 875 yards with 10 touchdowns. As a junior, helped lead Milton to an 11-1 record by completing 125 of 198 passes for 1,812 yards with 13 touchdowns and rushing 102 times for 553 yards with five touchdowns. Played cornerback as well and played basketball for Milton.

Johnny Garrett, Offensive Tackle (6-5, 265), Scituate, Mass.

Played both tight end and defensive end at Bos-

ton College High School in Dorchester, Mass. Ranked as the No. 10 high school player from Massachusetts by 247Sports Composite. Also played basketball at BC High.

Gunner Givens, Defensive Line (6-5, 270), Daleville, Va.

Played both tight end and defensive end at Lord Botetourt High School. Lord Botetourt went 8-4 during the fall 2021 season, including a 5-0 mark in league play. Rated as a four-star prospect by 247Sports Composite. Ranked as the No. 7 high-school player in Virginia. Earned first-team All-Blue Ridge honors as a tight end and defensive end following the 2021 season.

Benji Gosnell, Tight End (6-5, 240), Hillsville, Va.

Played quarterback, tight end, and linebacker at Carroll County High School. Rated as a four-star prospect by 247Sports Composite. Ranked as the No. 15 high-school tight end in the country and the No. 12 high-school player from North Carolina by 247Sports Composite. Began his high school career at East Surry High School and went to three straight North Carolina state championship games. Chose Virginia Tech over Georgia, North Carolina, Notre Dame, and Ohio State. Also played basketball and baseball.

Tucker Holloway, Wide Receiver (6-2, 178), Andrews, N.C.

Played wide receiver at Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School in Rabun Gap, Ga. Rabun Gap-Nacoochee went 8-3 during the 2021 fall season. Led the team in receiving with 33 receptions for 635 yards with six touchdowns. Also carried the ball 10 times for 143 yards with two touchdowns. As a junior, helped lead the Eagles to a 7-2 record and led the team in receiving with 23 receptions for 460 yards with five touchdowns and rushed seven times for 127 yards with three touchdowns. Also played cornerback for Rabun Gap-Nacoochee.

Cam Johnson, Cornerback (6-0, 165), Washington, D.C.

Played cornerback at St. Frances Academy in Baltimore, Md. St. Frances went 8-1 during the fall 2021



PHOTO COURTESY OF VT ATHLETICS

Virginia Tech coaches J.C. Price (left) and Brent Pry celebrate some early signings at the Merriman Center in Blacksburg.

season. Rated as a four-star prospect by 247Sports Composite. Ranked as the No. 8 high-school player in Maryland by 247Sports Composite. Chose Virginia Tech over Michigan, Penn State, Ole Miss, and Texas A&M. Began his high school career at DeMatha.

Lemar Law, Jr., Defensive Tackle (6-5, 280), Virginia Beach, Va.

Played defensive tackle at Green Run High School in Virginia Beach. Green Run went 13-1 during the fall 2021 season. Helped Green Run win its first regional championship in school history this season. Named first-team All-Beach district defensive tackle. Chose Virginia Tech over Michigan, Virginia, and Maryland.

John Love, Kicker (5-11, 155), Spartanburg, S.C.

Served as the kicker and punter at Spartanburg High School ... Helped Spartanburg to a 9-4 record during the fall 2021 season. Rated as a five-star kicking prospect by Kohl's kicking. Ranked as the No. 14 high-school kicker in the country by 247Sports. Also played soccer at Spartanburg.

Hunter McInain, Offensive Lineman (6-4, 290), Daleville, Va.

Played offensive tackle and guard at Lord Botetourt High School. Lord Botetourt went 8-4 during the fall 2021 season. Four-year starter on the offensive line. Rated as a three-star prospect by 247Sports. Has also played on the defensive line for Lord Botetourt. Earned second-team all-district honors as a junior follow-

ing the spring 2021 season. Originally committed to Richmond before choosing the Hokies. Was a prep teammate of fellow Tech signee, DL Gunner Givens. Had offers from Kentucky and Iowa State.

Brody Meadows, Offensive Tackle (6-6, 280), Bluefield, Va.

Played offensive tackle and defensive tackle at Graham High School. Graham went 13-1 during the fall 2021 season. Named a U.S. Army First-Team All-American. Ranked as the No. 14 high-school player in Virginia by 247Sports Composite. Rated as a three-star prospect by 247Sports Composite. Originally committed to Virginia before choosing Virginia Tech.

Braelin Moore, Defensive Line (6-3, 290), Bethlehem, Penn.

Played guard and defensive end at Freedom High School. Freedom went 12-3 during the fall 2021 season. Ranked as the No. 19 high-school player in Pennsylvania. Tied for second in the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference with 10 sacks on the season. Younger brother of current Tech guard Kaden Moore.

Kyree Moyston, Defensive End (6-4, 220), Portsmouth, Va.

Played defensive end and tight end at King's Fork High School in Suffolk, Va. King's Fork went 11-2 during the fall 2021 season. Ranked as the No. 21 high-school player in Virginia by 247Sports Composite. Led King's Fork in sacks in 2021 and ranked second on the

team in tackles with 23, including 10 for loss with four sacks during King's Fork's 2021 playoff run. Committed to Virginia Tech over Arizona, Arizona State, Michigan State, and Pitt.

Rashaud Pernell, Defensive Tackle (6-4, 250), Henrico, Va.

Played defensive end at Highland Springs High School in Highland Springs, Va. Highland Springs went 10-4 during the fall 2021 season. Ranked as the No. 17 high-school player in Virginia by 247Sports Composite. Helped Highland Springs to the Virginia Region 5C Championship in 2021. Earned first-team all-region honors this season.

Reid Pulliam, Linebacker (6-3, 220), Highland Springs, Va.

Played middle linebacker and free safety at Life Christian Academy in Chester, Va. Chose the Hokies over Maryland and Duke. Started his high school-career at Belton High School in Belton, Texas, before moving to Plant High School in Tampa, Fla., and concluding at Life Christian Academy. Rated as a three-star prospect on Rivals.com.

Harrison Saint Germain, Tight End (6-4, 230), Centerville, Va.

Played tight end at Westfield High School in Chantilly, Virginia. Westfield went 6-6 during the 2021 fall season. Rated as a three-star recruit by 247Sports Composite. A unanimous first-team all-district selection in 2021. Also played lacrosse at Westfield.

Pulaski girls roll to win over Christiansburg



Niqua Banks (left) nabs a rebound and holds onto it for the Blue Demons who fell 68-14 to Pulaski Tuesday.



PHOTOS BY KYMN DAVIDSON-HAMLEY

Sathara Kane puts up a shot in Tuesday's loss as Christiansburg fell to 1-2 on the season. Katie Hoover led the team with six points.

Hole in one at Auburn Hills



PHOTO COURTESY OF AUBURN HILLS

Earlier this week, Jim Wolfe made a hole in one at Auburn Hills Golf Course on hole #3.

Blacksburg boys defeat Hidden Valley



Blacksburg's Matthew Joyce slices through the Hidden Valley defense for a first-quarter layup. After a close first half, Blacksburg pulled away in the second half and won 78-52.



Blacksburg's Tucker Halsey scores one of several 3-pointers in the third quarter to stake the Bruins to a big second-half lead over Hidden Valley.

PHOTOS BY JON FLEMING

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- ★ December 7: Pearl Harbor Day
- ★ January 6: U.S. Capitol Day

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Auburn downs Bland 73-48



Auburn's Michael Wilson takes the contact, finishes the layup, and then shoots one for the foul in his team's 73-48 win Tuesday night over Bland. Wilson had 14 points for the night.

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Ethan Millirons cuts through four Bland County defenders for the layup. He finished with 17 points in the win. Auburn is now 1-1 on the season.

PHOTOS BY JAMES PERKINS



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