



Santa leaves North Pole to distribute gifts, meal kits at Y Thrift Shop

Just prior to Christmas, Santa took time away from the North Pole to travel to Linden Green and the Y Thrift Shop to help distribute holiday meal kits for the families and special gifts for each child during Meals On Main.

Santa took time out for a last-minute check-in with local children before his big night of worldwide deliveries on Christmas Eve.

Making donations were The Salvation Army (hams and turkeys), the NRV Glean Team (potatoes), Next Door Bake Shop and Our Daily Bread (desserts), PetSmart (plush toys for the children).

Meals On Main operates five days a week at five dif-



Santa took time out to hear children's Christmas wishes before he made his deliveries on Christmas Eve.

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As Omicron spreads, health officials urge those with mild COVID cases to avoid already overburdened emergency rooms

RICHMOND, VA – As the Omicron variant spreads and COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations surge, Virginia public health officials and hospitals leaders are urging individuals with asymptomatic or mild coronavirus cases, or other non-serious illnesses to avoid unnecessary trips to already burdened hospital emergency departments.

Hospitals across Virginia have recently experienced an influx of patients seeking emergency department care for asymptomatic or relatively mild COVID-19 infections as well as cases of the flu or other seasonal illness. In many cases, a hospital emergency department is not the appropriate venue for patients with mild to moderate COVID-19 symptoms to seek medical care. Most individuals who contract coronavirus do not need to visit the hospital emergency department and can effectively recover from their illness at home, or by seeking primary care treatment and/or speaking

with their primary care provider.

People with severe COVID-19 symptoms such as significant difficulty breathing, intense chest pain, severe weakness, or an elevated temperature that persists for days unabated are among those who should consider seeking emergency medical care for their condition.

Individuals should not visit the emergency department if the symptoms of their illness are mild to moderate – including a cough, sore throat, runny nose, or body aches – or simply for the purpose of having a COVID-19 test administered. In those situations, people are encouraged to instead consult an outpatient primary care provider.

Unnecessary visits to hospital emergency departments place great strain on hospitals and the frontline clinicians and caregivers who continue to bravely battle the pandemic. These visits can also cause a delay in care

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Volunteers at the Linden Green Community in Christiansburg helped Santa distribute the holiday meal kits and special gifts for children during Meals on Main.

Former Hokies named to SoCon 100th team

In conjunction with the Southern Conference's 100th anniversary celebration, the league office announced Thursday former Virginia Tech standouts Howard Pardue and Chris Smith have been named to its 100th anniversary men's basketball team.

Members of the 100th anniversary team must have met at least one of the following criteria:

- a member of National Collegiate Basketball Hall of Fame
- a member of SoCon

Hall of Fame (for the primary sport)

- a National Player of the Year

- an All-America in two different seasons (not including honorable mention or freshman AA)

- the SoCon Male Athlete of the Year

- the SoCon Player of the Year (coaches or media) in two different seasons

- First-team All-SoCon (coaches or media) in three different seasons

Pardue and Smith qualified based on the final cri-

teria. Pardue (1961-64) and Smith (1958-61) were both three-time All-SoCon first team honorees.

The Southern Conference is the nation's fifth-oldest NCAA Division I collegiate athletic association. Only the Big Ten (1896), the Missouri Valley (1907), the Pac-12 (1915), and the Southwestern Athletic (1920) conferences are older in terms of origination. Tech was a SoCon member from 1921-1965 before withdrawing and competing as an independent.



Howard Pardue (left) and Chris Smith earned First-Team All-Southern Conference three times each as members of the Virginia Tech basketball team.

Search committee for dean of the Pamplin Business College announced

Virginia Tech has finalized the committee tasked with overseeing a national search for the next dean of the Pamplin College of Business.

As the head of the college, the dean sets the academic tenor, promotes a culture of outstanding innovation and scholar-

ship, and represents its faculty, students, and staff to the university and beyond.

The dean also has financial and administrative management responsibility for the college, guides and oversees its annual operating budget, advocates to

the central administration for investment in new initiatives, leads its fundraising efforts, and provides effective leadership for the college's faculty and administrative staff.

The new dean will replace Robert Sumichrast, the Richard E. Sorensen Chair and dean of the Pamplin College of Business since 2013, who announced his retirement in August. Sumichrast will officially retire at the end of the 2021-22 academic year.

Laura Belmonte, dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, will chair the search committee and guide the application/nomination, candidate review and interview, campus engagement, and final-

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Virginia launches statewide mortgage relief program

Virginia Governor Ralph Northam has announced the launch of a statewide Mortgage Relief Program to help people stay in their homes and help ease mortgage delinquencies, defaults, and foreclosures due to the pandemic.

Applications for the program opened on Monday, Jan. 3.

The Mortgage Relief Program is similar to the Virginia Rent Relief Program which has received national recognition for its success. Virginia was one of the first states in the nation to create a statewide rent and mortgage relief program with federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds.

The commonwealth has implemented rent and mortgage relief programs through designated state and federal resources. Combined, these programs have provided more than \$519.5 million in 106,621 rent relief payments for more than 76,500 households across Virginia. Families with children represent the majority of households assisted by the program.

"Virginia is taking aggressive steps to help people stay in their homes," said the governor. "Owning a home is the American dream, and this new program will help keep that dream alive."

The Commonwealth of Virginia received more than \$258 million through the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Homeowners Assistance Fund to support homeowners facing housing instability resulting from the

COVID-19 pandemic.

"Providing housing stability and supporting Virginia homeowners is of the utmost importance right now as we continue to advance our recovery efforts from the pandemic," said Virginia Housing Chief Executive Officer Susan F. Dewey. "This program will protect homeowners at risk of losing their homes, thereby strengthening our communities and our economy and improving the lives of many Virginians across the commonwealth. Our mission is to help Virginians attain quality, affordable housing and foster successful homeownership, and this program directly aligns with our goals by providing vital financial support to homeowners during a time of great need."

Eligible homeowners must have experienced a reduction of income or increase in living expenses after Jan. 21, 2020, and must currently own and occupy the property as their primary residence. Maximum income limits and other eligibility requirements must be met.

Funds from the Virginia Mortgage Relief Program will be distributed directly to mortgage lenders and servicers, contracts for deed holders, county treasurers or local taxing authorities, property insurance companies, and homeowner and condominium associations.

Utility assistance is not an eligible expense under the Virginia Mortgage Relief Program but is available under other state, local, or private sector programs.



Virginia Tech has finalized its committee tasked with conducting a national search to replace Robert Sumichrast as dean of the Pamplin College of Business.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Now through 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. 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 design, 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. Applications are due Jan. 21, 2022.

Now through Feb. 28:

Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library adult winter reading program

The Montgomery Floyd Regional Library's adult winter reading program challenges patrons to read during January and February and keep track of their reading on the library's Beanstack site. Earn badges with each book read and activity completed. <https://mfri.beanstack.org/>.

Wednesday, Jan. 5:

Computer Basics: Part 1

At the Meadowbrook Public Library; 10:30 a.m. This is a computer class for beginners covering types and parts of the computer and information about hardware, software, and applications. This course will also demonstrate saving and organizing files, safe Internet use, and emailing.

Talking About Books: "Apples Never Fall"

At the Christiansburg Library; 11 a.m. To be discussed this month is "Apples Never Fall" by Liane Moriarty. Meeting in-person and virtually.

Sensory Playtime

At the Blacksburg Library; 2 p.m. All supplies will be provided and all ages are welcome for an hour of sensory playtime.

Oreo Taste Test

At the Christiansburg Library; 3 p.m. Try several new limited Oreo flavors and rate them. Vote for your favorite. All ages are limited, registration is required.

Talking about Books: "The Night Tiger"
At the Meadowbrook Public Library; 6 p.m. To be discussed is "The Night Tiger" by Yangsze Choo. Call (540) 268-1964 for more information or to reserve a copy.

Thursday, Jan. 6:

River City Quilt Guild
The River City Quilt Guild meets the second Thursday of each month at 9:30 a.m. at Grove United Methodist Church, 1020 Tyler Avenue, Radford. All skill levels of quilters are welcome. For more information call Anna Handy, 540 320 7791.

American Legion meeting
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.

Monday, Jan. 10:

Crafternoon
At the Radford Public Library from 1 to 2 p.m. Bring your supplies for a Crafternoon Delight crafting club for adults.

Radford City Public Schools begin
Classes resume for Radford City Public School students.

City Council meeting
The regularly scheduled Radford City Council meeting will be held at 7 p.m., at 10 Robertson St., Radford.

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.

Wednesday, Jan. 12:

Brown Bag Book Club
At the Radford Public Library from noon to 1 p.m. The club meets on the second Wednesday of each month for a book discussion. Participants may bring a

lunch. Discussed this month is "Nomadland" by Jessica Bruder.

Evening Book Talk: "Save Me the Plums"
At the Christiansburg Library; 6:30 p.m. Discussed is "Save Me the Plums: My Gourmet Memoir" by Ruth Reichl. Meeting in-person and virtually.

Thursday, Jan. 13:

Vision Board Workshop
At the Blacksburg Library; 6:30 p.m. Create a 2022 vision board to serve as a daily reminder of dreams and goals. All supplies are provided, but feel free to bring any personal pictures to add. The program is recommended for adults.

NRV Small Business Relief Program Business Grant Applications due
The New River Valley Small Business Relief Program is making grants of up to \$15,000 available to businesses located in the counties of Floyd, Montgomery, Giles, and Pulaski and the City of Radford, to help offset business impacts during the pandemic. Applications will be accepted until Jan. 13, 2022.

Saturday Jan. 15:

Caturday
At the Christiansburg Library from noon to 1 p.m. 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 to socialize shelter cats. All Ages. Email shodges@mfri.org for more information.

Dyslexia: The Basics
At the Meadowbrook Public Library; 1 p.m. Come learn straightforward information about a very complex and prevalent condition. Vicki W. Brackett, a pediatric speech-language pathologist and dyslexia consultant will give a brief overview of the symptoms and cause of dyslexia. Her presentation will include the myths, the symptoms to look for in both young children and adults, and what can be done to help overcome some of the issues associated with dyslexia. Come develop an awareness of the positive aspects of dyslexia and learn some strategies and programs that may help. Handouts will be provided.

Author Talk: Mary Ellen Campagna
At the Christiansburg Library; 2 p.m. Join local author Mary Ellen Campagna as she discusses her new book "UNA: Queen of Trouble." Books will be available for preorder at

the event.
Teen DND
At the Blacksburg Library; 2 p.m.

Chess Club
At the Blacksburg Library; 3 p.m. Ages 8 years and up are welcome to sharpen their chess skills. Supplies will be provided. All skill levels are welcome.

Monday, Jan. 17:

Crafternoon
Radford Public Library from 1 to 2 p.m. Bring your supplies to this Crafternoon Delight crafting club for adults.

Tuesday, Jan. 18:

Stuffed Animal Taxidermy
Blacksburg Library; 4:30 p.m. Want to create a new wall hanging? Transform stuffed animals into unique works of art. The library will supply all the materials. Recommended for teens. Email mroach@mfri.org with any questions.

Wednesday, Jan. 19:

Computer Basics: Part 3.
Meadowbrook Public Library; 10:30 p.m. This course will cover accessing and utilizing library databases from computers, smartphones, and tablets. Databases include the library digital collections, genealogy and research, career resources, resources for kids, and more.

American Red Cross Blood Drive
At the Waldron Wellness Center-Carilion Community Room, co-sponsored by the Craighill Masonic Lodge. If patrons of the Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library have fines and donate blood, the fines will be forgiven up to \$10. Redeemable only at Meadowbrook Public Library at 1 p.m.

Art Club: Chila Kumari Burman
At the Christiansburg Library; 2 p.m. Explore the art of Chila Kumari Burman and recreate one of her famous sculptures, Eat Me Now. For ages 6 and up.

Thursday, Jan. 20:

Talking About Books Nonfiction: "The Good Neighbor: The Life and Work of Fred Rogers"
At the Christiansburg Library; 11 a.m. Discussing "The Good Neighbor: The Life and Work of Fred Rogers" by Maxwell King. Meeting in-person and virtually.

Snow Storm Slime
At the Blacksburg Library; 3:30 p.m. Come make some fun snow storm slime. Supplies are limited. Email mroach@mfri.org with any questions.

Search

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ist selection processes. Search committee members are as follows:

Viswanath (Venki) Venkatesh, professor, Business Information Technology; Nancy McGehee, professor, Hospitality and Tourism Management; Jonathan Everett, assistant profes-

sor of practice, Real Estate; Broderick Turner, assistant professor, Marketing; Beth Osborne, director of finance; Misty Blankenship – administrative academic manager, Marketing; France Belanger, University Distinguished Professor, Accounting

and Information Systems; Richard (Rick) Hunt, associate professor and director of doctoral studies, Management; Quinton Nottingham, associate professor, Business Information Technology; Sarah Stein, associate professor, Accounting

and Information Systems; Yessenia Telez, assistant professor, Finance; Raman Kumar, professor, Finance; Anna-Katherine (A.K.) Ward, associate professor, Management; faculty senator and college Faculty Association president; Michelle Harding, assistant professor, Accounting and Information Systems; Linda Christie, director, Center for Business

Analytics; Bridget Ryan Berman, chair, Pamplin Advisory Council Cabinet; Dana Hansson - director, MBA programs; and Phil Xiang – professor and head, Feiertag Hospitality and Tourism Management Department.

The search committee will be supported by a staff that includes Amy Hogan, assistant provost for Leadership Initiatives; and Leslie Sul-

livan, coordinator for Faculty Affairs.

Virginia Tech is also in the process of securing a firm that will assist with this search process and will solicit and receive nominations for the position. The position description, application/nomination process, and search updates will be available on the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost website.

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Santa

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ferent sites and provides five shelf-stable meals, snacks, and milk to all children under 18.

The 2022 schedule for meal distribution will be as follows: Mondays from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.: Adams Marke Mobile Home Community, 330 Merrimac Rd. Blacksburg.

Tuesdays from 4:45 to 5:30 p.m. Hollins Estate, 301 Givens Lane Lot 143 Blacksburg.

Wednesdays from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., Linden Green Community, 1600 Simpson Rd NE Christiansburg.

Thursdays from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., Y Center, 1000 North Main St. Blacksburg.

Fridays from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., Oak Forest Mobile Home Community, 1156 Hightop Rd., Blacksburg.

Through its Meals on Main initiative, the YMCA at Virginia Tech relieves some of the pressure faced by families facing food insecurity.

Meals on Main currently needs brown paper shopping bags to contain the meals. To donate them, drop them off at the YMCA Thrift Shop at 1000 N. Main St., Blacksburg.

Volunteers are also needed. Sign up at <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090449af929aafa7-meals5>.

Donations can be made to support the Y's community programs from the website at: www.vtymca.org/donate or by sending a check made out to YMCA at VT, to 403 Washington St. SW, Blacksburg, VA 24060.

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Gingerbread house contest winners announced

The annual gingerbread house contest award ceremony in December announced the contest winners.

Janie Holladay with Fern Island took first place. Second place was claimed by Serena with Santa's Light-

house. Hope and Belonging from DePaul Community Resources was the third-place winner.

Kent Jewelers and Rachel Hogan at Nest Realty co-sponsored the event with Hogan matching the funds

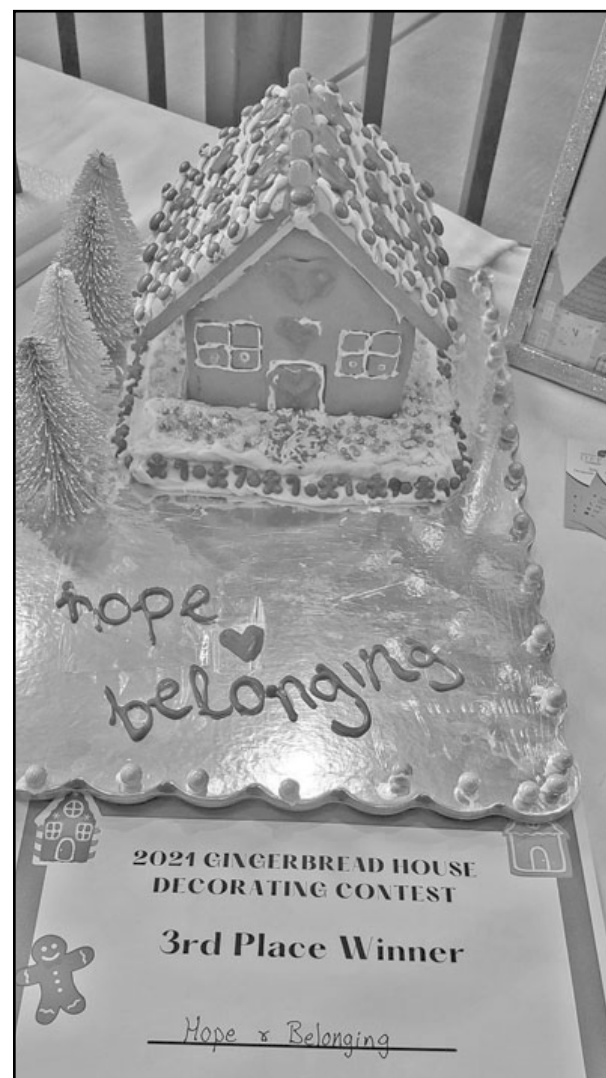
raised for the YMCA at Virginia Tech. The contest raised almost \$1,500 to benefit the Y's community programs.



Janie Holladay with Fern Island won the annual gingerbread house contest, held in December.



Serena with Santa's Lighthouse fashioned the second-place gingerbread house.



Taking third place in the annual gingerbread house contest to benefit the community programs of the YMCA at Virginia Tech was Hope and Belonging from DePaul Community Resources.

Virginia gas prices fall yet again

Virginia gas prices fell 0.8 cents per gallon in the past week, averaging \$3.15/g Monday according to GasBuddy's daily survey of 4,081 stations in Virginia. Gas prices in Virginia are 7.7 cents per gallon lower than a month ago and stand \$1.03/g higher than a year ago.

According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in

Virginia was priced at \$2.71/g Monday while the most expensive was \$3.74/g, a difference of \$1.03/g.

The national average price of gasoline has fallen 1 cent per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.27/g Monday. The national average is down 9.1 cents per gallon from a month ago and stands \$1.02/g higher than a year ago.

"After a pretty long run of falling gas prices, we've seen things stabilize," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis for GasBuddy. "Oil prices have started to rise as Omicron hasn't been as severe as initially feared, leading to optimism that perhaps oil demand will start to rise in the weeks ahead as cases will eventually plateau.

"In addition, Great Lakes states were expected to see a price hike last week, but the hike hasn't happened just yet, leading me to believe it will occur in short order this week and send the national average higher," De Haan said. "For the rest

of the nation, with oil near \$76 per barrel, we will likely see gas price decreases replaced by minor price increases."

GasBuddy is the authoritative voice for gas prices and the only source for station-level data spanning nearly two de-

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

Omicron

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for patients experiencing a true medical crisis and contribute to the depletion of finite resources including medical staff, testing kits, personal protective equipment, and therapeutic treatments.

"More than 15,000 Virginians have died from COVID-19 during the course of this pandemic, and thousands have been hospitalized," said State Health Commissioner M. Norman Oliver. "The best defense against serious illness and hospitalization from COVID-19 is to get vaccinated. If you have not gotten vaccinated or boosted and are eligible, please do so now. Do it for yourself, your family, and your community, including the health care workers we depend on to be there when we truly need emergency care."

"Virginia's caregivers have worked nonstop to serve their communities throughout this pandemic. They are feeling the strain of yet another surge and are looking to the community for support," said Steve Arner, Carilion Clinic Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer and the Chair of the VHHA Board of Directors. "It's crucial for community members to seek the appropriate level of care, ensuring that emergency rooms are reserved for emergencies. Of course, the best support that you can give is to get vaccinated and boosted against COVID-19."

Virginia is in the midst of a fifth coronavirus surge since the pandemic began last year. The peak of this latest surge may not arrive until several weeks after the holiday season concludes, making it likely that its

true impact on public health and the health care delivery system is yet to be fully felt.

Infections have spiked this month – the Commonwealth recently eclipsed 1 million total COVID-19 cases and has documented 51,564 new infections since Dec. 24. Meanwhile, daily COVID-19 hospitalizations rose from 922 on Dec. 1 to 2,101 on Dec. 30, a 128 percent increase in that time.

While these numbers are elevated, they remain below the peak hospitalization numbers Virginia encountered this time last year. That is thanks in part to the widespread availability of COVID 19 vaccines. Data continues to show that the majority of patients currently hospitalized in Virginia for COVID-19 care are unvaccinated.

That is among the reasons why the health care community continues to urge unvaccinated individuals to make a plan to

get the vaccine and to get boosted. U.S. adults 18 and older are eligible to receive a two-dose course of either the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna vaccine. The Pfizer vaccine has also been approved for use in children ages 5-12 and adolescents up to age 17. Adults 18 and older are also eligible to receive a single dose of the Janssen/Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

The available vaccines offer strong protection against illness from COVID-19. And for those who contract a breakthrough case of the virus after being vaccinated, the vaccine reduces the risk of serious illness that leads to hospitalization or death. Please visit vaccinate.virginia.gov, call 1-877-VAX-IN-VA, or visit vaccines.gov to learn more about getting vaccinated. At Community

Vaccination Centers, appointments are strongly encouraged to avoid extended wait times, but walk-ins are welcome.

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OPINION

Buddy King: My New Year's Resolutions

I looked at the calendar and realized it's time to make my New Year's resolutions. It's December 30, and if I don't make my list now, I will get behind on breaking them next week. Could throw the whole year out of whack, but based on 2020 and 2021, I'm not sure what whack looks like. Maybe out of whack would be an improvement. We all feel like we've been whacked, I know that.

Anyway, every year for as long as I can remember (that's not as long as it used to be), I have taken one of the little white pads in our firm's supply room that I use to jot down reminders, and I have made my list of resolutions. I put the little white sheet on the calendar on my desk as inspiration, and I always end up tearing it up after the last goal has gone down in flames. Progress is measured at what point in the year I tear it up. Mid-February is the current record, and just like Joe DiMaggio's 56-game hitting streak, it is one of those that is

unlikely ever to be broken. Just as hitters' skills have declined over the years, so has my resolve.

I am not one of those columnists who can write hilariously funny columns based on imagination. If I have a skill as a writer, it is looking at things that have happened in my life, or around it, and trying to find the humor. Observational humor I call it. Non-fiction with a little bit of literary license. My perspective on events I know about. So, my resolutions are pulled from real life. My real life.

Some of the people I have worked with over the years have probably found this trait of looking for humor in things annoying. In the most serious of meetings, I am known to interject funny comments. My specialty is the play on words. Regardless of my intent, which is usually to keep things from getting too tense, or perhaps to distract an adversary, or to keep myself from getting bored, my profession, the LAW, is not the

ideal arena for this sort of stuff. Most lawyers take themselves way too seriously. My motto has been to take my work very seriously, but not myself. I have not always been perfect at it.

When I think of this issue, I am reminded of the late, great philosopher Willie Davis, centerfielder for the L.A. Dodgers in the glory days of Sandy Koufax and Don Drysdale. Willie would frequently say, "It's not my wife and it's not my life, so why worry?" Having lost my wife to a terrible disease, and having had a few near-misses myself, I think has improved my perspective. I tell people in my office that I have set a very high standard of not worrying about things that others might worry about.

Back to my resolutions for 2022. I am tempted to call them aspirational, but delusional is probably more accurate. If I was any good at this, the list wouldn't look the same every year. Well, here goes with 2022.

LOSE WEIGHT. I "hover" around 200 lbs. In high school, one of my football coaches told me that if I weighed 195, I could play major college. I have made it, but 40 years too late. I got down to 169 a few years ago after my heart attack, but I decided it wasn't worth the sacrifices. Plus, I looked bad.

EXERCISE MORE. I am pretty good with this one, subject to the occasional laziness which sometimes can set in for several years. I read once that you add 10 seconds to your life for every set of stairs you climb. The problem is that you spend all that extra time climbing stairs. A bad trade-off.

DRINK LESS BEER. This one does come under the category of delusional, perhaps more accurately, fanciful, or even pure fantasy. After my heart problems in 2017, I went six months without a beer, a cookie, a piece of candy, or a chip. Pretty sure that is what hell is like. This resolution always goes on the

list and is usually the first one broken.

CURSE LESS. Always a good goal. Usually broken on New Year's Day during the bowl games. If not then, the first UVA basketball game of the new year. Do what I say, not what you hear me saying.

GET SERIOUS ABOUT RETIREMENT. My closest friends at my place of work of the last 40 years have gotten serious about it. Many have done it. I don't buy the "busier than when I was working" line. Why retire then? Or you must not have had a very challenging job. Anyway, I may try to keep this one this year.

STAY OR GET IN TOUCH WITH OLD FRIENDS AND DO MORE WITH FAMILY. Laudable, attainable, doable. This resolution takes on increased value each new year. I'm getting better at it. As they say, no one goes to their grave saying, "Gosh, I wish I'd spent more time at the office."

Well out of time, leaving the office, going home to fix some sauerkraut and black-eyed peas. Happy New Year.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Where am I on Sunday?

Someone said that you can tell a lot about a person by where they are on

Sunday morning. Well my favorite spot on Sunday morning was sleep-

ing in til ten or so. Usually I woke up around 8, but then I would slump back into coziness, realizing I could sleep not one but even two more hours. After working super hard from Monday to Friday and then scurrying around on Saturday getting done all the things I didn't have time for between M and F, the extra sleep on Sun was precious time indeed. Only problem was, there was always this twinge of guilt or regret. A feeling that I should have been elsewhere. But that was years ago.

Fast forward to present. Now I am up at 8 or so and in Sunday School by 10. And I'm loving it! On one of those Sunday mornings I had finally come to realize where I needed to be...in church.

You might be asking that same question "Is it a problem that I'm in bed on Sun morn?" (or on the golf course or the lake or wherever). Well the old saying is that "If you're asking yourself if you have a problem, you probably do". It's God's way of telling you that you should be with him instead.

So....what now??? You're next thought might be "I haven't been

to church in years, or even, "I've never been to church, ever!". So now you're asking "How do I go to church?" Well let's look at some common questions and concerns:

When I walk in, will there be a big "Gong" and an announcement that "SO AND SO has finally come to church"? No, no, nothing like that. Ha. Just kidding. We like to kid around too...ha. Trust me. Nobody will make a big scene. Not at all. Churches love to have people visit. Most likely there will be others visiting too. No need to worry!

Do I have to be a member? No. Everybody at first starts out as a non-member. It's up to you when and if you want to officially join a church....

and that can be months or even years down the road.

Do I have to make a reservation? Absolutely not, we're open every Sunday, come anytime. No reservations are ever required. You have an open invitation to come whenever you like.

Where do I go when I get there? To the sanctuary. The sanctuary is the large auditorium type room with pews for seating, stained glass windows, and a speakers stand and so forth in front.

Do I have to dress up? No. You can if you like, but in most churches now days, more casual dress is the norm.

Do I have to do or say anything? No. Just have a seat anywhere in a pew. Often an usher will hand you a bulletin before you enter. It's like a program. It lists what will take place during the worship service, what hymns will be sung etc. It's yours to keep. On the back of the pew in front of you, you will find hymnals and often a Bible. Hymns are listed in the Hymnal by page number. Just sing along. And relax and enjoy being in the Lord's house. Services usually last about an hour.

What happens at the end? The pastor usually ends the service with a prayer or benediction. After that you may leave. Sometimes the pastor will move to the exit door and speak to people as they leave the sanctuary. Your choice if you want to want to stop and chat for a few seconds.... or not.

What if they take up an offering? Most churches do take up an offering during the ser-

vice by passing around an offering plate. The money goes to pay for church expenses and ministry and missionary needs. It's totally up to you whether you want to contribute or not. If so, you may place cash or a check in the offering plate as it comes around. Any amount would be greatly appreciated.

Can I visit a church more than once? Yes, as many times as you like.

Do I need to say anything to the pastor? No, but if you have questions or want to discuss something you can catch him or her after the service or call the church office to make an appointment.

Can I visit more than one church? Certainly, it's up to you. You can also catch church services online now via YouTube or Fb.

Can I bring my children? Yes, most churches offer child care for all ages, including a nursery. You may want to get there a little early to make arrangements your first time. Children of any age may also sit with their parents during the service. Many churches offer a children's time during the service where a Children's lesson is taught. Participation is totally up to the parent.

What about teenagers? Teens usually sit with parents or friends during the service. Most churches also have special youth groups and activities during the week or on Sunday evenings for teens.

Can I go to any church I choose? Yes....

Must I contact the church or the Pastor before I come? No, but if you have questions, it would be ok to call ahead.

What if there is a visitor's form inside the bulletin? Those are placed there to give you info about services etc. or to provide contact info if you should have questions etc.

Is Sunday School just for children? Absolutely not! It's for everyone, including children of all ages, and adults of all ages. It's the way we learn about God. But attendance is totally up to you.

I have heard people speak of their church family? What's that at all about? You'll find that after you've attended for a while, you will get to know the people and yes, they will become much like family and that's a really good thing!

What happens to

the offering that I give? Churches have expenses to pay just like families. They also have to pay salaries of the pastor and staff as well as the costs of the various church ministries they conduct. Each church has a church budget which is approved by a committee of church members and is available for anyone to see.

20. What if there is some activity after the service, should I go? It's your choice. Things like pot luck dinners etc. are open to all, and they're a great opportunity to get to know people. Plus the food will be fantastic!

21. Should I be nervous about going for the first time? Not really. Anything we do that is new to us often creates a little nervousness, but just remember we've all been in your shoes before. It will go away right after you get there.

22. If I have questions, can I call ahead of time? Certainly. Many churches also have a website where you can find information about the church, but feel free to call and speak with the church secretary or the pastor.

23. Apparently some churches have two different services on Sunday? Which one should I go to? Some churches do offer both a contemporary service as well as a traditional one. It's up to you, which one you would like to attend. The contemporary is somewhat less formal, usually with more sing along hymns, and often has a praise band. The traditional is a bit more formal and has a choir instead of a band. The sermon portion is usually the same. You could try both and see which one you like best.

24. Won't church people look down on me? No, all of us realize that we are sinners too, saved only by the grace of God through our faith in Jesus Christ.

25. Is this the right decision for me? Trust me, it's the right decision! Deep down you know it is and know this, God will bless the journey you are about to begin! In a word, God is about love and love conquers all!

See you at church!

Love to all,

Joe Hester
Gideons International
Radford, Va

News Messenger

Established 1869

(540) 389-9355

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Michael Showell, *Publisher*

Ed McMinn, *Editor*

editor@ourvalley.org

Heather Bell, *Community News Editor*

communitynews@ourvalley.org

Lynn Hurst, *General Manager*

lhurst@ourvalley.org

Randy Thompson, *Advertising Consultant*

advertise@ourvalley.org

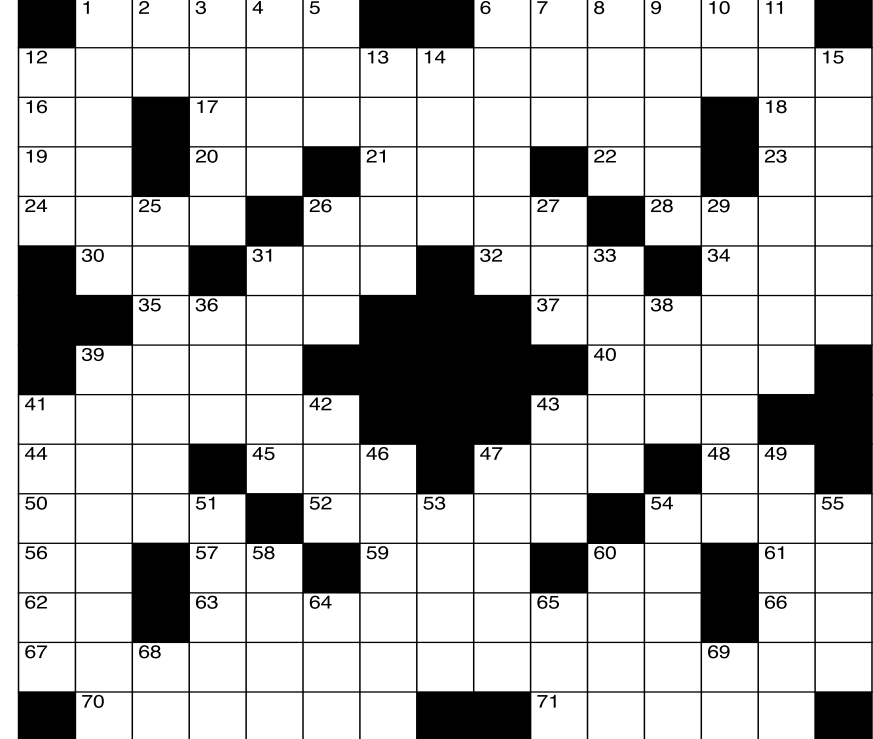
Give us your view:

editor@ourvalley.org

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

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CROSSWORD PUZZLE



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| <p>CLUES ACROSS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Struck firmly 6. Shirt part 12. Nevertheless 16. Article 17. Adornment 18. Educator's helper 19. Healthcare pro 20. Atomic number 28 21. Extinct flightless bird 22. Mystic syllable 23. College sports decision maker (abbr.) 24. Evident mushrooms 26. Venerable English monk 28. Surrounded by 30. Forming fractional numbers from 4 onwards 31. Eastern France river 32. Short cry or yelp 34. Brew 35. Ornamental box 37. In a way, surfaced | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 39. Attired 40. Peculation 56. Hectoliter 57. Morning 59. NYC subway dweller 60. Law enforcement 61. Sodium 62. Elevated subway 63. Facility where wild animals are kept 66. Integrated circuit 67. Seaman's tool 70. Drink to 71. Small group | <p>CLUES DOWN</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Poem 2. Everest is one (abbr.) 3. Olympic legend Jesse 4. Portable tent 5. When you hope to get there 6. Unwavering 7. Back muscle 8. Within 9. Excessive fluid accumulation in tissues 10. Six 11. Involved as a necessary part 12. 2002 Liotta, Patric film 13. Living thing 14. Type of gin 15. Moved around in pursuit of fun 25. Makes light bulbs 26. Story of one's life 27. Small island in a river 29. A type of bliss 31. Genus of large herons 33. A way to make dry | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 36. One's grandmother 38. Vocal style 39. Pronunciation mark 41. American Indian chief or leader 42. Insecticide 43. Go bad 46. Capital of Zimbabwe 47. Polish river 49. Cast out 51. People of India and Sri Lanka 53. Cleaning fabrics 54. Very skilled 55. Pouches 58. Restaurant must-have 60. Native Americans from Arizona 64. Remaining after all deductions 65. Fleece 68. Dorm official 69. It cools your home |
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OBITUARIES

Adkins, Bobby Ray

Bobby Ray Adkins, 75, of Dublin, passed away Wednesday, Dec. 29, 2021. He was a member of Valley Harvest Ministries in Dublin and was a retired manager of NRV Airport. He was a U.S. Navy veteran.

Bobby was preceded in death by his father, Dallas C. Adkins; and a sister, Barbara Adkins Phillips.

Survivors include his wife of 54 years, Michele Wikel Adkins; his mother, Merendie Chaffin Adkins; daughters Cindy Adkins Collins (Jim) and Brianna Adkins; a son, Brian Keith Adkins; grandchildren Travis Wheeler and Lydia Collins; step-grandchildren Kait-



lyn Collins, Trey Collins, and Justin Collins; a god-grandson, Brandon Roop; a great-grandson, Everest Keith Adkins; brothers George Adkins (Dorothy) and Carlton Adkins (Wendy); and many other relatives and friends.

The family received friends on Sunday, Jan. 2, 2022, at the Valley Harvest Ministries Church in Dublin. Memorial services followed with Pastor Steve Willis officiating.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to your local church.

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

Bain, Ronald Ray

Ronald Ray Bain, 80, of Radford, passed away Sunday, Jan. 2, 2022. He was retired from Lynchburg Foundry and was in the U. S. Army Reserves. He was preceded in death by his parents, Ray and Louise Bain.

Survivors include his wife, Mitzi Bain; children Mark Daniel Bain, Jacqueline Diane Fisher, and Paula Suzanne Horne; grandchildren Joshua, Christina, and Christopher; great-grandchildren Kayden, Levi, Summer, Zane, Ariana, and Paisley Lynn; a sister, Linda Graves;



a brother, Ralph Bain; and many other relatives and friends.

The family will receive friends from 12:30 until 2 p.m. today, Wednesday, Jan. 5, 2022, at the Mullins Funeral Home in Radford. Funeral services will begin at 2 p.m. with the Rev. Joni Shelor officiating. Interment with full military honors will follow in Highland Memory Gardens in Dublin.

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

Dowdy, Frances Anne Hutcheson

Frances Anne Hutcheson Dowdy, 56, of Blacksburg, died Monday, Dec. 27, 2021, at her home.

She was born in Radford on Sept. 26, 1965, to the late Dallas and Sarah Barker Dowdy.

She was also preceded in death by her husband, David Corson.

She is survived by her sons and daughters-in-law, Brandon Dowdy (Alexis), Christopher and Ashley Dowdy, Jordan Dowdy-Parker, and Lawrence Tyler Dallas Dowdy-Parker; daughters and son-in-law, Catherine and Justin



Belcher, and Kara Lynn Dowdy-Parker; grandchildren Laykin Dowdy, Kayla Dowdy, and Andrew Dowdy; a sister, Lisa Lang; a brother, Jeffrey Dowdy; a sister-in-law, Linda Dowdy; best friends Laura Freeman and Lisa and Tish Poteet; a special friend, Rick Cook; and family pet Kobe.

The family would like to express special thanks to Carilion Hospice for the care of Frances in her time of illness. A memorial service will be held at a later date. Arrangements by McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg,

Brown, Rebecca Anne

Rebecca Anne Brown, 75, of New River, went to be with her Lord on Wednesday, Dec. 29, 2021

She was preceded in death by her parents, Reuben Lee and Kathleen Ingram Davis; sisters Darlene "DeeDee" Claytor and Sara E. Davis; and a nephew, Tremaine Claytor.

Anne was a member of Radford Church of God in Christ under the leadership of Bishop Ronald Watson.

Left to cherish her memory is her husband of 53 years, Phillip Brown; her daughters Traniece Morgan (Niece) and Tammy Brown; a son Monte Brown; seven grandchildren: Ronal Parris (Jessica), Larice and Tavon Mays, Kei Claytor, Sherrika Lewis, Nyla and Nolen Brown; four great-grandchildren, Davonye', Da-



veon, Keriyon, and Z-Mariah Lewis; sisters Keshia Miller, Barbara Brown, Charlotte Swayne (Donald), and Barbara Latten; mother-in-law Flossie Brown; brother and sisters in law Monte and Carolyn Brown, Bernita Gilliam, and Patsy Thompson; multiple nieces and nephews; honorary nieces and nephews Brandy and Danette Claytor, Octavia Martin, Sara Jerrell (Timothy), Phillisetta Carter (Brandon), Douglass, Charles (Tiffany), Chris, Laurie Carter, Mike Bishop, and Corey Mitchell; special friends Dr. Mackler, Debbie, John, Danny, Paul, and Tara; and a host of other relatives and friends.

The family received friends on Tuesday, Jan. 4, 2022, in the Radford Church of God in Christ. Interment will be private.

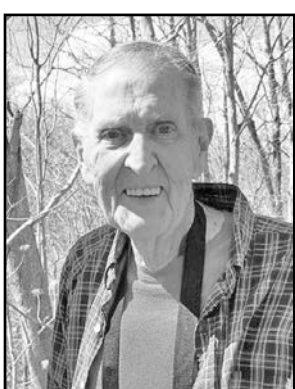
Gunter, Jackie Delmer

Jackie Delmer Gunter, 84, of Fairlawn, passed away Sunday, Dec. 26, 2021.

He was a U. S. Army veteran and was retired from Burlington Mills.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Martha Whitlock Gunter; his parents, Clarence and Virginia Gunter; and his sisters, Wanda Bain and Betty Sowers.

Survivors include his son and daughter-in-law, Mike and Carol Gunter; granddaughters Kayla Gunter and Ashley Parah and her husband, Luke; great-grandchildren Jackson Sadler, Ember Lattimer, and Katherine Parah; a brother and sister-in-law, Leonard and Kitty Gunter; and many other relatives and



friends.

A special thanks goes out for all of his memories of friends from Burlington Mills, his daily walks at Bisset Park and Riverlawn Elementary School, and especially the associates of Walmart in Fairlawn. You were like family to him. And don't worry, Dad, we'll feed Jake.

The family received friends on Thursday Dec.

30, 2021, at the Mullins Funeral Home in Radford. Graveside services were held on Friday, Dec. 31, 2021, at the West View Cemetery in Radford with Pastor Chandler Jones officiating.

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

Gravely, Jean Bullion

Jean Bullion Gravely, 72, of Blacksburg, passed away Monday, Dec. 20, 2021. She was a former employee of Old Colony Box Company.

Jean was preceded in death by her parents, Cecil and Julia Bullion; and her brother, Cecil Bullion.

Survivors include her husband, Thomas. F. Gravely, Jr.; daughter and son-in-law Debra and Davie Whitlock; sons

and daughters-in-law Harold and Beth McGuire, Brian and Lori McGuire, and Darren Taylor; numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren; a sister, Connie Price; brothers James and Eddie Bullion; and many other relatives and friends.

Services will be private.

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

Hungate, Shirley A.

Shirley A. Hungate, of Christiansburg, born the ninth month, twenty second day of 1960, died Dec. 28, 2021, at the age of 61 in the loving arms of her husband.

Shirley devoted her life to being a caring wife, sister, and loving mother of her three sons. She was a devout Christian devoted to the Bible and God-like service to all. Shirley loved to read and work puzzles, and especially loved to spend time with nieces, nephews, and grandchildren.

Shirley was preceded in death by her grandparents, Luther and Inez Alls; her father, Gerald Alls; fathers-in-law Jimmy Hungate and John Collins; and brothers-in-law, Darrell Hungate and Mike Wallace.

She is survived by her husband, Douglas L. Hungate, Sr.; her mother, Elvira

Alls; sons Douglas, Jr., (Emily), Emma and Sophie James (Vanessa), Weston and Eliza, Jason (Wendy), Dexter, Everett, and Beckham; sisters Clorene Brokofsky, and Linda Vaught (Edison); brother Michael Alls; sisters-in-law Debbie Wallace, Dana Payne, and Leann Sharp (Kevin); mothers-in-law, Edna Collins and Charlotte Hungate; a very special friend, Marilyn Eisenback; and many special nieces and nephews.

Visitation was Monday, Jan. 3, 2022, at McCoy Funeral Home with the funeral service immediately following. Interment was at Westview Cemetery (723 E. Roanoke St., Blacksburg, Va.)

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations in honor of Shirley to the National Alliance on Mental Health Virginia.

Webb, Lynwood "Woody" Wilson

Lynwood "Woody" Wilson Webb, 103, of Dublin, passed away Friday, Dec. 31, 2021.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Harvey P. and Lydia Wilson; her husband, Lewis Norman Webb, Sr.; a daughter, Carolyn King; brothers Robert and Jeff Wilson; and her sisters, Mackie Hale, Ruth Price, Kathleen Wilson, and Daphne Luffman.

She is survived by her son and daughter-in-law, Lewis "Butch," Jr., and Nancy H. Webb; grandchildren Ben Webb,



Wendy Serpan, David Price, Erin Saylor, and Ashley Dykes; eight great-grandchildren; and many other relatives and friends.

The family is especially grateful to Good Samaritan Hospice for the wonderful care they provided Woody.

A graveside service was held on Tuesday, Jan. 4, 2022, at 3 p.m. at Sunrise Burial Park in Fairlawn with Pastor Diana White officiating.

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

Pennington, Dickie Steven "Sugar Bear"

Dickie Steven "Sugar Bear" Pennington, 68, of Pulaski, passed away Dec. 16, 2021.

He served in the U. S. Army during the Vietnam War and was a longtime employee of Radford University.

Sugar Bear was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Rhonda England Pennington; his parents, Glenn Thomas and Grace Virginia Pennington (nee Cox); and a brother, Glenn Thomas Pennington Jr.

Survivors include his son, Barrett Thomas Pennington of Pulaski; three brothers, Douglas Edward and Karen Pennington of Bumpass, and Gilbert Lee Pennington and Larry Michael "Sheep" Pennington of Dublin; in-laws Ed and



Jerri England; and four nephews and two nieces, Christopher, Michael, Rett, Shane, Deretha, and Michelle.

Bear was blessed with many treasured friends and canine companions.

"The only way to have a friend is to be one." - Ralph Waldo Emerson

In lieu of flowers, please support a worthy organization providing services to veterans and their families.

A casual memorial service will be held at Mullins Funeral Home at 3 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 9, 2022, with Pastor Richie Goad officiating.

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

Hoff, Christopher Lee

Christopher Lee Hoff, 37, of Radford, passed away Friday, Dec. 31, 2021.

Survivors include his wife, Jennifer D. Hoff; his mother, Donna Byers; his father, Allen Michael Cox; his maternal grandmother, Suzanne Pizzarelle; sons Drayton and William Hoff; daughters Lyra and Luna Hoff; sisters Brittany Hoff, Heather Holcomb, Jessica, and Katie; and many other relatives and friends.

The family will receive friends from 2 until 4 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 8, 2022, at the Mullins Funeral Home in Radford.



In lieu of flowers, the family requests that contributions be made to the Go Fund Me account in Jennifer's name.

The Hoff family is in the care of Mullins Funeral Home in Radford. www.mullinsfuneralhome.com.

Wright, Shawn Michael

Shawn Michael Wright, 40, of Wytheville, passed away Tuesday, Dec. 21, 2021.

He was preceded in death by his father, Michael Edward Wright; and a sister, Michelle Dawn Wright.

Survivors include his son, Markus Wright; his former wife, Johanna Godbey; a daughter, Haylea Wright; his mother, Vonda Barton,



and stepdad, Oskie; and many other relatives and friends.

Memorial services will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to Mullins Funeral Home to help with funeral expenses.

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

OBITUARIES

Spence, Sr., Paul Monroe

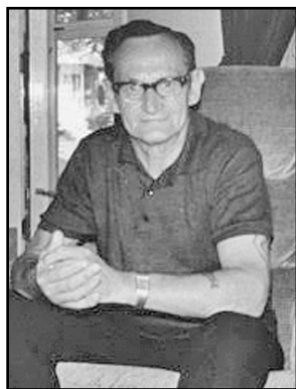
Paul Monroe Spence, Sr., of Blacksburg, was reunited with his wife and daughter on Dec. 30, 2021.

Paul was born Dec. 22, 1930, the son of King David Spence and Golden Estella Nutter.

He served in the Armed Forces with an honorable discharge in 1954. He was a mechanic at Blacksburg Exxon and Hardies 76 station.

He was married to Barbara Spence for 66 years and had four children. Those who knew Paul will remember him for his love of old cars, NASCAR, mowing his yard, and guarding his property. Paul loved his family, his cat, Cara, and fixing things. He was an exceptionally talented mechanic and there was nothing that he could not fix. He will forever be missed.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Barbara Spence; a daughter, Sandra Duncan; a grandson, Travis Spence; two



brothers, and two sisters.

He is survived by his sons, Paul Spence, Jr., and his wife, Debra, Michael Spence, and Richard Spence; grandchildren Tracy Spence, Nathan Spence, Sabrina Wesel and Mike, Christopher Duncan, Johnathan Spence, Alex Spence and wife, Lauren, Mikey Spence, Richard Spence, Jr., Christina Agnew and husband, Chris, and Elisha Spence; great-grandchildren Dayton Kidd, Karston Kidd, Landon McCoy, Jayla Duncan, Jasmine Duncan, Mallory Spence, Carter Agnew, Cole Agnew, Riley Spence, and Arabella Spence; great-great-grandchildren Kinslei Kidd and Braxton Kidd; several nieces, and a special son and daughter-in-law, Paul Wesel and Karen Linkous.

A visitation was held on Monday, Jan. 3, 2021, from 5-7 p.m. at McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg.

Leonard, Edna Marie Snider

Edna Marie Snider Leonard, 72, of Dublin, went home to be with her Lord and Savior on Sunday, Dec. 26, 2021.

Survivors include her husband and best friend of 54 years, Bobby Carl Leonard; a son and daughter-in-law, Michael Leonard and Jenny of Christiansburg; daughters and sons-in-law, Brenda Leonard Law and Jay of Catawba, and Teresa Leonard Bergman and David of Dublin; grandchildren Michael Wayne Leonard, Jr., Elizabeth Grace Hutchins, Jeremiah Law, Victoria Petrey; Josh Bergman, and Daniel Bergman; great-grandchildren Lily, Maddy, Sonora, Clayton, Amelia, Addison, Ava, and Josie; brothers Jackie Snider of Bland and Tommy Snider of Christiansburg; sisters Betty Snider of Christiansburg and Bar-



bara App of Windsor, Calif.; and many other family members and friends.

Edna was a loving wife and mother. She cherished and loved her grandchildren and great-grandchildren deeply.

The family received friends on Friday, Dec. 31, 2021, at the Mullins Funeral Home in Radford. Funeral services followed with Pastor Doug Testerman officiating. Interment followed in Central Cemetery in Radford.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to Grace Baptist Church Building Fund, 552 E Main St, Dublin, VA 24084 or to the funeral home to help with funeral expenses.

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

Yates, Raymond "Howard" and Patricia Kirkner

Raymond "Howard" Yates, born Aug. 22, 1942, and Patricia Kirkner Yates, born Dec. 17, 1944, of Pilot, went to be with their Lord on Dec. 27, 2021.

Howard and Pat were high school sweethearts and best friends. They were happily married for over 59 years.

Howard was a U.S. Air Force veteran serving in Las Vegas until returning to Pilot in 1968. He worked for Burlington/New River Industries for 42 years. After retirement, Howard worked for MCPS as a beloved school bus driver.

Pat worked many years for American Electric Power as a customer service representative. Upon retirement, she became an elderly caregiver for a short time. She was an active member in helping restore the Pilot Community Center.

Howard and Pat were both members of Oak Grove Church. Howard served as deacon and song leader. Pat also was in the choir along with Howard. They both loved to sing for the Lord.

They both were the kindest and sweetest people you could ever meet. Their love and support for each other and their family were tremendous. They are now walking down the streets of gold hand in hand and watching over their family.



Howard was preceded in death by his parents, Maurice and Louise Yates; and a brother and sister-in-law, Roger and Darlene Yates.

Pat was preceded in death by her parents, Hanford and Willadean Kirkner; and a brother-in-law, Raymond McNeil.

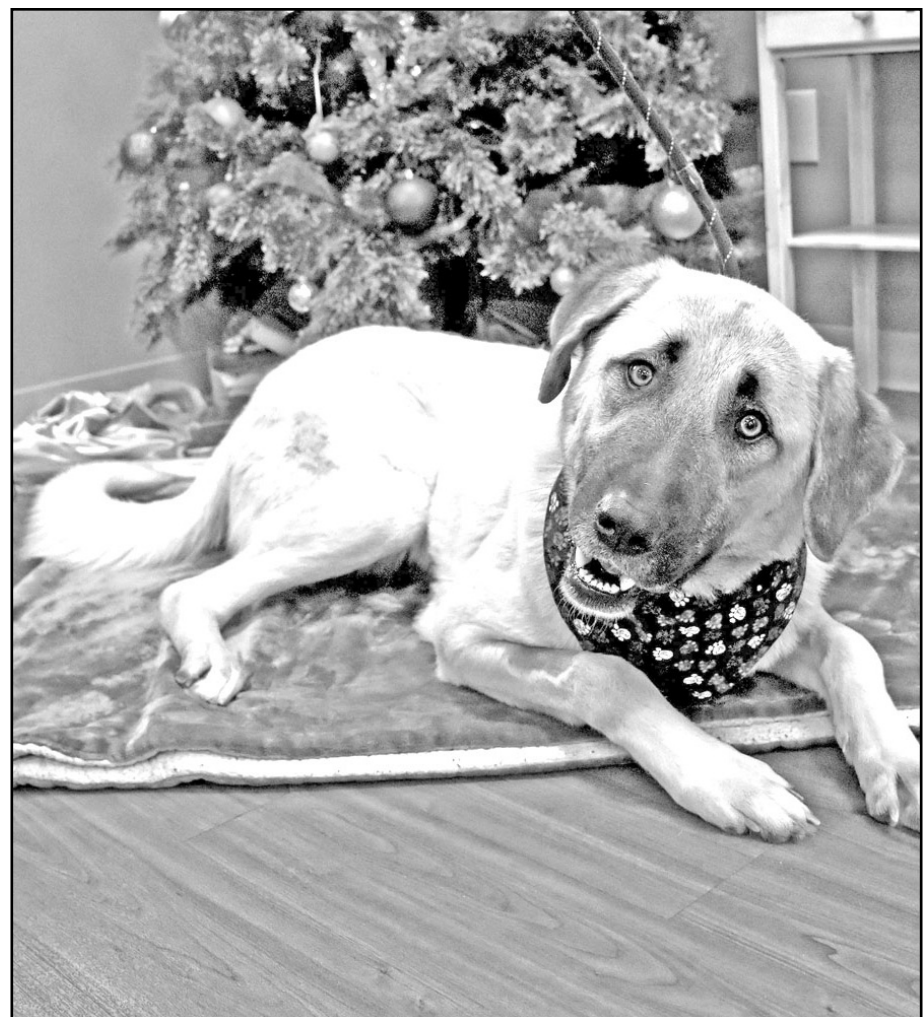
Left to cherish their memories are their daughter, Elise Epperly and her husband, Jeff; and a son, Randy Yates and his wife, Tara. They were blessed with five grandchildren: Matt Epperly (Nadia), Brady Epperly (Haley), Zach Epperly (Karlle), Hannah Yates, and Breanna Yates; four great-grandchildren: Halen, Layton, Lincoln, and Brantley; Howard's sister, Clara Dove; Pat's sister, Gloria McNeil (Bert Gill); Pat's brother, David Kirkner (Doris); and many nieces, cousins and friends.

At this time there will be no visitation, but a memorial service will be scheduled at a later date.

PETS OF THE WEEK



Jasmine has lived at the Animal Care and Adoption Center for a short period of time and he's ready to find his purrfect match! He's a little bit shy around people but enjoys being with other cats. Visit him in a community cat room at the Center.



Olive is a sweet, laid back larger dog. Few things phase her or get her riled up. She may need a home that can introduce her to the joys of toys, playing, and other doggie activities. She likes to meet new people and get attention, once she feels comfortable.

Baby births set record



Dr. John Harding, an obstetrician gynecologist, delivers the 1000th baby at LewisGale Medical Center.

LewisGale Medical Center has announced it broke its previous record of babies birthed at the hospital. From Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2021, 1,181 babies were delivered, the most in the hospital's 112-year history.

"Our labor and delivery teams provide

our community with high-quality services in a patient-centered environment, to ensure they are comfortable with their care and treatment plan," stated Lea Lee, chief nursing officer. "With our dedicated care team, women benefit from years of experience, extensive training and daily practice in the procedures, techniques, and treatments related to women's healthcare."

The previous birth record was set in 1995 with 1,075 babies born in a 12-month period.

"Just as every baby is unique, so is every delivery," said Lisa Wade,

maternal care services director. "We provide a customized birthing experience that begins long before the first contraction and continues well after delivery."

The news comes as the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) recently approved the facility's Certificate of Public Need (COPN) for a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) as well as the construction completion of its labor and delivery wing. Renovations included upgrades to delivery suites, patient rooms, and new birthing tubs.

| CROSSWORD ANSWERS | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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Lost & Found



LOST MALE HUSKY,
Brown Eyes
**** \$500.00 REWARD for safe return ****
CALL/TEXT-Facebook/IM: Sherri Combs Turnbull 540-580-2929

Max went missing November 8, 2021 in the Solitude Rd area of Arcadia, Va. Please help us find Max, if you see something, say something, ask questions, he's out there somewhere. He is loved and missed terribly by his family and twin sister Bella. We need Max home, PLEASE!!

Share this far and wide. Let's get Max home.

Auctions

PUBLIC NOTICE
The contents of the listed unit will be sold at Public Auction January 7, 2022 at 11am at 1st Security Self Storage 5 Midway Plaza Dr. Christiansburg, VA. D061 E82 F18 F41 1st Security reserves the right to refuse any bid. Terms: CASH OR CREDIT CARD AT SALE.

Affordable Mini Storage, LLC
1250 Lee Highway Roanoke, VA 24019
Date: Saturday, January 8, 2022
Time: 12:00 pm
Units: F17, F16, B07, E33, P06, F20
Cash only. Buyer has 24 hours to remove items from unit.
Auction by Circle C Auction Company, LLC
VAAL #2907004430

For Sale - Firewood

FIREWOOD
Mixed Hardwood.
Call 540-529-2745
Delivery in Botetourt only

For Sale - Misc

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Legals - City of Salem

Notice is hereby given to
all interested persons that the City of Salem Planning Commission, at its regular meeting on January 12, 2021, at 7:00 p.m., in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 114 N. Broad Street, in the City of Salem, Virginia, will hold a public hearing, pursuant to Sections 15.2-2204 and 15.2-2285 of the Code of Virginia, as amended, to consider approval of the following requests relative to the CODE OF THE CITY OF SALEM, VIRGINIA:

1. Consider the request of Scott A. Boggs, property owner, for rezoning the property located at 407 East Burwell Street (Tax Map # 120-1-5) from RB Residential Business District to TBD Transitional Business District.
2. Consider the request of Union Plaza, LLC, contract purchaser, and the City of Salem, property owner, for rezoning the property located at 630 Union Street (Tax Map # 160-11-2) from HM Heavy Manufacturing District to HBD Highway Business District.
3. Consider the request of 2936 Salem Inc., dba Sunshine Spa and 217 NY Ave Corp, property owner, for the issuance of a Special Exception Permit to allow a massage parlor at 2936 West Main Street (Tax Map # 210-1-2).
4. Consider amending Chapter 106, Zoning, Article IV. Development Standards, Section 106-400 pertaining to site plan review.
5. Consider amending Chapter 78, Subdivisions, Article I Generally, Sections 78-103 and 78-105, Article II Administration, 78-201, Article III Definitions, Section 78-300, Article IV Review of Plats, Sections 78-402, 78-403, 78-406, 78-408, 78-416, and 78-421 of the CODE OF THE CITY OF SALEM, VIRGINIA pertaining to the review of subdivision site plans and plats.

Copies of the proposed plans, ordinances or amendments may be examined in the Office of Community Development, 21 South Bruffey Street, Salem, Virginia.

At said hearing, parties in interest and citizens shall have an opportunity to be heard relative to the said requests.
THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SALEM, VIRGINIA
BY: James E. Taliaferro, II
Executive Secretary

Legals - City of Salem

Notice is hereby given to
all interested persons that the Council of the City of Salem, at its regular meeting on Monday, January 24, 2022, at 6:30 p.m., in the Community Room of the Salem Civic Center, 1001 Roanoke Boulevard, in the City of Salem, Virginia, will hold a public hearing, pursuant to Sections 15.2-2204 and 15.2-2285 of the Code of Virginia, as amended, to consider approval of the following requests relative to the CODE OF THE CITY OF SALEM, VIRGINIA:

1. Consider the request of Scott A. Boggs, property owner, for rezoning the property located at 407 East Burwell Street (Tax Map # 120-1-5) from RB Residential Business District to TBD Transitional Business District.
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THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SALEM, VIRGINIA
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MONTGOMERY SPORTS

Carlos Zapata nails a hole in one at Auburn Hills



PHOTO COURTESY OF AUBURN HILLS

Pictured above, Carlos Zapata made a hole in one last week on hole number 11 at Auburn Hills Golf Club in Riner.

Big South Conference announces five-year strategic plan

The Big South Conference has unveiled its updated strategic plan for the next five years.

While the plan's overall strategic objective continues the vision of the Big South Conference's becoming the premier non-FBS conference in the Southeast, the five primary areas of focus are now student-athlete experience, branding/messaging, competition, finance, and membership.

The updated plan reaffirms the Big South's mission statement of providing programs and services that support the league's member institutions in developing student-athletes to achieve their full potential as students, athletes, and citizens. It also upholds the conference's stated core values of athletic excellence, academic centrality, equity, diversity and inclusion, integrity, sportsmanship and fair play, and student-athlete well-being.

"The significance of the Big South's updated strategic plan is the affirmation by the membership of the bold steps taken previously to enhance our athletics excellence and the support of our student-athletes," said Big South Commissioner Kyle Kallander. "Big South members are more committed than ever to the promise of a strong and vibrant future in the Big South Conference, and the benefits that come from it. The strategic planning process also reiterated the values we live by every day, the importance of place, and the warm culture of mutual respect and close fellowship enjoyed by Big South members."

The Student-Athlete Experience

Providing opportunities for student-athletes to achieve their full potential through creating an environment predicated on the health and safety of the student-athletes with a focus on mental and physical well-being; promoting and celebrating academic excellence towards the ultimate goal of graduation; encouraging co-curricular activities and supporting a holistic student-athlete experience; supporting equity, diversity and inclusion through leadership and impactful programming.

Branding/Messaging

Actively promoting the Big South mission and achievements to be recognized

as a Division I leader by sharing the outstanding accomplishments of student-athletes and member institutions through development of pride, appreciation, and greater awareness of the Big South teams, students, and campus community; aggressively promoting the Big South and its members through digital and social platforms; increasing the exposure of Big South institutions, teams, and student-athletes through TV broadcasts and enhanced school productions; and development of programs and tactics to position the Big South as a distinctive conference and brand.

Competition

Providing quality championship experiences to position teams for postseason success, such as establishing policies/procedures for basketball success with minimum standards to consistently achieve a 12-seed or better in the NCAA Basketball Championships and position as many teams as possible for postseason consideration; ensuring the Big South Basketball Championships are the signature events for the conference; maximizing postseason success for Big South teams in all sports; and enhancing the overall experience for every student-athlete at each Big South championship.

Finance

Focus on increased revenue generation annually while sustaining responsible fiscal policies to allow the management of resources and cost reductions, which will provide the maximum support for Big South member institutions; the increase of revenue through the corporate partner program; and the increase of revenue through the marketing and promotion of Big South and member's athletic events.

Membership

Continue to provide an environment that ensures stability and strength that positions the Big South Conference as a viable option for institutions in the Southeast Region that are committed to the league's mission, vision and core values, which will ensure the Big South receives automatic qualifying spots to NCAA Championships in all sponsored sports and will strengthen the Conference's position/influence in emerging trends and discussions at the national level.

Special thanks to Coach J.C. Price



From the Sidelines

Marty Gordon

J.C. Price took over a Virginia Tech program for the final two games and a trip to a bowl with no real expectations. As a matter of fact, he was put in an awkward situation after the firing of his boss, Justin Fuente.

But he accepted the tag of "interim head coach" with dignity and a sense of pride as a former Virginia Tech player, which brought a perfect underlying message to players and fans. As a "Hokie," Price understood what this speed bump was all about, moving on and looking to the future.

Incoming new head coach Brent Pry also understood that last definition and asked Price to stay on in the new coaching era.

While Price could not pull off a win in the Pinstripe Bowl this past week, he was rather upbeat after the contest.

"Obviously, disappointed in the outcome," he said. "Not disappointed in these players. Love them. Proud of them. They got more things thrown at them in one year's time, year and a half, than any other team in history, and they continue to fight. One game does not define who those guys are in that locker room. I think it's a situation where it's like plowing a snow hill. You are plowing snow uphill. Eventually everything just caught up to us, and we didn't have enough tonight," he said.

Price took time to hug every Tech player on the field at the end of the game.

"I think I'm proud to be their coach," he said. "I'm proud of those guys. Maryland was a better team today, obviously. They were better coached. They played better. That doesn't stop a person from caring about somebody because you lost a football game, and I care about those guys. They care about this program, and the guys that are moving on should always feel welcome to come back here any time they want. As for the guys that are coming back, obviously, we need to go to work and be better than we were today."

He is looking to the future for the program. "We've got a lot of good kids coming back," Price said. "There's a couple of guys who have another year that may be on the fence, and I'm going to go to work recruiting them and trying to get them to return to school. The guys who are leaving, that's what's best for them, and good luck to them in the NFL, but the nucleus is here. You don't understand all the things these kids went through. I think eventually it just caught up to

us. It caught up to us tonight, and was hoping it wouldn't, but eventually when you go through so many adverse things ... Yeah, it's been difficult."

Price has the pedigree as he was a team captain and a third-team All-America selection for the Hokies as a senior in 1995. He returned to Blacksburg in 2021 as co-defensive line coach and defensive recruiting coordinator after spending the past nine seasons as Marshall's co-defensive coordinator and defensive line coach.

He was named the Conference USA Recruiter of the Year in 2015 and was part of seven Marshall squads that earned bowl berths, the 2014 Conference USA championship, as well three C-USA East Division titles. Marshall led the nation in scoring defense (13.0 points per game) in 2020, while ranking second in total defense (279.4 yards per game), fourth in rushing defense (95.5 yards per game) and 11th in pass defense (183.9 yards per game) en route to a berth in the Conference USA Championship Game.

Price was named The Conference USA Recruiter of the Year by Scout.com for his contribution to the Thundering Herd's 2016 recruiting class.

Prior to Marshall, Price spent eight seasons at James Madison University during which the team won the 2004 FCS National Championship. Also, just like incoming coach Brent Pry, Price serves as a graduate assistant on the Tech staff (2002-2003).

But the experience dates further back when Price proved he is a player with the "Lunch Pail" mentality. He was a third-round pick of the Carolina Panthers in the 1996 NFL Draft and spent time with the Arizona Cardinals in 1996-97 where his defensive line coach was Pro Football Hall of Fame inductee Joe Greene before a back injury curtailed his playing career.

He was a four-year starter who captained Tech's 1995 BIG EAST championship team. He earned third-team All-America honors from AP following the 1995 season and first-team All-BIG EAST honors after recording 104 tackles and a team-high 15. tackles for loss and eight sacks.

He finished his career with 256 tackles (125 solo), 30 tackles for loss and 17 sacks (-118.0 yards).

He is married to Jenny Root, who was inducted into the Virginia Tech Sports Hall of Fame in 2007. A standout for the women's basketball program, her 1,582 career points still rank as the fifth-highest total in Hokies' history.

Price will get his chance somewhere down the road to be a head coach. He has proven his leadership skills in the past month. But for now, he is just happy to be a Hokie.

Lady Hokies wave goodbye to '21 in style with defeat of Duke

The Virginia Tech women's basketball team earned a decisive 77-55 victory over the 15th-ranked Duke Blue Devils Thursday night to close out 2021 and move to 2-0 in the ACC for the third time in program history.

Tech took a 5-3 lead through some Aisha Sheppard-free throws and never looked back as the Hokies were efficient on the offensive end and stingy defensively, allowing just 30% shooting from the Devils.

Tech scored 17 points on 12 Duke turnovers and owned a 1.67 assist to turnover ratio. The Hokies capitalized on their opportunities at the free throw line, hitting a perfect 20 of 20 attempts.

In the process, the Lady Hokies set a pair of Cassell program records:

Tech's 20-for-20 free-throw performance was the most made free throws without a miss in a single game in program history, and the 22-point margin of victory was the largest margin against a ranked opponent in program history.

Tech's All-Conference center Elizabeth Kitley was on a tear in her last three games scoring 22 or more in each game and recording double-doubles in all three contests.

In ACC play, Kitley is averaging 30.5 points, 13 rebounds and 3.5 blocks per game, shooting 59% from the floor. She contributed nine of those 20 free throws Thursday night.

In two league games she has made 17 free throws and shot 89% while in the non-conference portion of the season she converted 15 free throws at a 38% clip.

Kitley leads the ACC in double-doubles, blocks, and 20-point games.

Georgia Amoore enjoying recent success

Aussie Georgia Amoore seems to have been given a boost by her family with whom she was reunited with after nearly two years. In her last two games, she has tallied 20 points, the first time in her career that she has put together back-to-back scoring performances like that. In ACC play the point guard is averaging seven assists and five rebounds while shooting 60% from behind the arc. Against Duke, she set a career high with six rebounds.

She has committed just one turnover in each of the last two games.

Behind Amoore's 7.0 assist-to-turnover ratio in conference play, Tech as a team owns the league's best ratio at 1.94.

Catfish stocking returns to commonwealth

Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) Fisheries staff have been busy this fall stocking catchable channel catfish in more than 120 waters throughout the state.

According to Bren-

dan Delbos, the State Hatchery Superintendent, "The fall catfish stocking program is one of our most popular events with anglers. This year we will be stocking 80,000 catfish, a 25% increase over last year.

These stockings require a significant amount of coordination and wouldn't be possible without the hard work and dedication of our fisheries and hatchery staff."

Fall is a great time for

anglers to get on the water whether they're targeting largemouth bass, trout, or channel catfish. A list of waters to be stocked with channel catfish include Lovills Creek Lake in Carroll County, Gatewood Reservoir in Pulaski, Hungry Mother Lake in Smyth County, and Rural Retreat Lake in Wythe County.

Winter means cleaning and storing life jackets. Fishermen should do so according to manufacturer's recommendations to make sure they're ready for the next season. The manufacturer has the following recommendations:

For an inflatable life jacket, hand wash or sponge down in warm, soapy water, taking care not to submerge the inflator. Rinse the jacket

with clean water and hang to dry on a plastic coat hanger. Do not dry-clean, use chlorine bleach, or apply direct heat. Always store the fully dried jacket in a warm, dry, well-ventilated place out of direct sunlight.

For an inherently buoyant life jacket (foam): Clean in the same manner except they may be fully submerged.

If the life jacket has possibly been exposed to a virus, clean as recommended by the manufacturer and then let dry in warm, low humidity environment for at least 72 hours before reuse. To reuse your product within 72 hours, the following precautionary guidance is suggested.

Buckles, zippers, other hardware and hook/loop fasteners (e.g. Velcro®) are

hard to clean due to crevasses and metal/plastic construction. Using 60 – 90% solutions of alcohol sprayed/wetted on these components is acceptable.

Avoid spraying inflatables with specific disinfectants that are detrimental to the fabric. e.g. bleach-based products.

Do not machine launder life jackets.

Life jackets should be hand-washed with gloved hands. Wash as hot as possible (< 60C) to kill virus.

Ensuring complete drying is critical; heated air drying is encouraged < 60C.

Viruses like moisture and can survive in cold. Viruses die by drying out and by heat, which some fibers can enhance.

If hang to air-dry, allow 72 hours (3 days) before reuse.



PHOTO COURTESY OF DWR

Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources fisheries staff are planning to stock 80,000 catchable-size channel catfish in more than 120 waters throughout the state this fall.

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VDH VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Keep an eye out for tagged Blue Catfish in the James and Chickahominy rivers



Virginia's Department of Wildlife Resources has started a project involving the tagging of 40 blue catfish of all sizes in the James and Chickahominy rivers. Anglers who catch a tagged catfish are asked to record the tag ID number and report it to the DWR at the phone number on the tag. Anglers who release the fish should leave the tag in.

DWR has started a blue catfish project in the James River system and has tagged 40 blue catfish of all sizes.

These fish have been internally tagged with an acoustic tag that will track their movement throughout the river as well as an external dart tag to help anglers identify these fish, if caught.

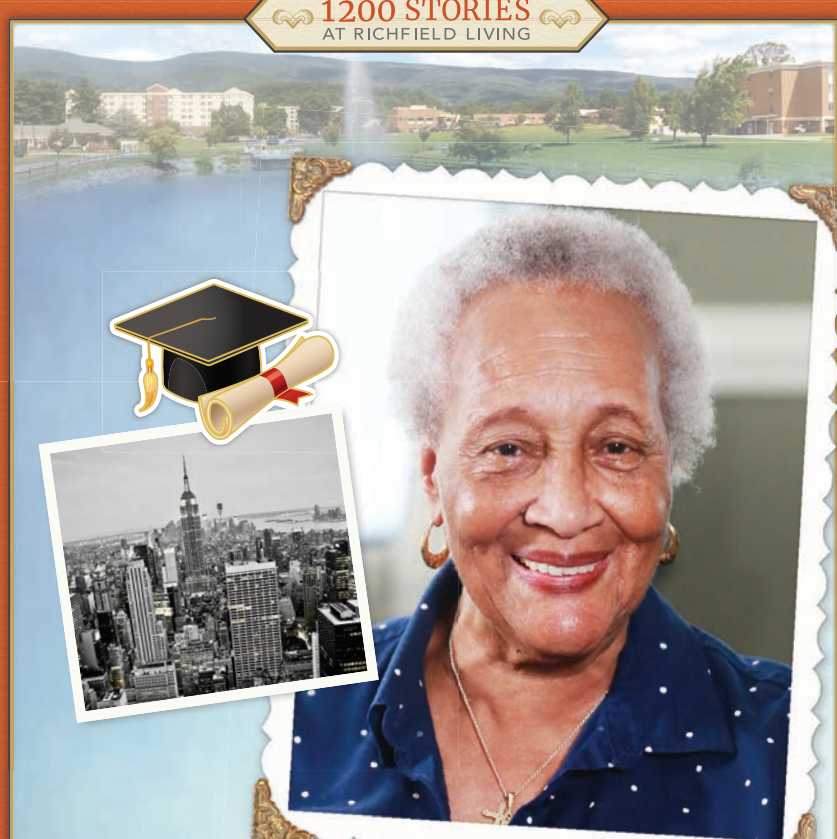
The DWR will be able to collect data from tagged blue catfish for the next 10 years.

The results of this project will help the department understand the seasonal movements of blue catfish and identify aggregation areas.

Anglers who catch a

blue catfish with a red dart tag in the James or Chickahominy River are asked to take a photo of the tag or record the three-digit tag identification number and report the tag to DWR at the phone number on the tag. Anglers who release the fish, are asked to leave the tag in.

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Shirley White

Shirley W. is a resident of Knollwood independent living. When she was young she lived in the area and worked as a cook at The Roanoker restaurant. Later she moved with her three sons to New York, where she pursued her undergraduate and master's degrees. She used her education in psychology to help the homeless.

She is most proud of her three sons. One is a lawyer, one is a CPA, and the middle one was a football player. Shirley has eight grandchildren and eight great grandchildren who are all college graduates or in the process. She came to Richfield for rehab, and had such a good experience that she came back here to live.



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