



Easter devotion: The Mother Lode

(a special Easter devotion for Virginia Tech fans)

Read John 19:25-30

“Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother” (v. 25)

She was called “an extraordinary woman” who was hit hard in her life by heartache and suffering but who endured with “resiliency and fortitude.” Fortunately for Tech fans, she instilled those qualities in her son.

She was born with the stigma of her name attached to her like some kind of scarlet letter. Her grandfather, great uncle, a cousin, and several other family members were involved “in a spasm of violence in 1912 that left five people dead, including the judge, prosecutor, and country sheriff.” They shot up a Virginia courthouse and fled, an incident with its subsequent manhunt that “dominated headlines across the nation for months alongside the other huge story of that spring: the sinking of the Titanic.”

The incident – and other less sensational encounters with the law – left a scourge on the family name that she bore. “She faced obstacles every way she turned” because of her family name.

When she was 7 in 1926, her father died of pneumonia. Shortly after that, the family’s farmhouse burned to the



ground. “She had a tough time as a girl,” summarized a relative. Neighbors and relatives helped the family rebuild, but life on a farm during the Great Depression was hard. Even as a young girl, she worked constantly just to help the family stay fed.

She grew into “a smart, pretty young woman” who used her determination and grit to secure a teaching certificate. She fell in love, married, and gave her husband four children. Each of the

pregnancies was difficult, especially the last as her labor stretched into days. But as she had done throughout her life, she relied on her faith and her fortitude. She “prayed and prayed” and “told the Lord that if he would allow the child to be born she would do everything she could for the Lord for the rest of her life.”

She was Herma Allen Beamer. That last baby was Frank. And she kept her

See **Easter**, page 2



After 28 years of service to the Town of Blacksburg, Director of Public Works Kelly Mattingly will retire effective Aug. 1.

Blacksburg public works director Mattingly to retire

Kelly Mattingly, Director of Public Works for the Town of Blacksburg will retire Aug. 1 after 28 years of service.

Through his leadership and dedication to the Blacksburg community, Mattingly has been involved with numerous high profile projects ranging from new roads and bridges to streetscapes, landscapes, utilities, and building construction. His enduring legacy, however, will be the creation of the town’s environmental sustainability program.

Most notably, Mattingly initiated the first building energy retrofits to all town facilities, introducing energy efficient lighting and HVAC systems; implementing sin-

gle stream curbside recycling; introducing biodiesel fuel to the town’s vehicle fleet; and most recently the process of transitioning the fleet to electric powered vehicles in coordination with the town’s Office of Sustainability.

Mattingly has established long-lasting community partnerships by supporting the infrastructure needs for annual downtown events; partnering with the YMCA at Virginia Tech on successful programs such as e-Waste recycling; and helping found the non-profit Sustainable Blacksburg, which in collaboration with the town and Virginia Tech, has held a series of annual educational

See **Mattingly**, page 2

RU graduate art students to host fundraiser for Mill Mountain Zoo

The Graduate Art Student Association of Radford University will host a silent art auction to raise funds for the Mill Mountain Zoo’s conservation efforts. The auction will be held at the zoo on Saturday, April 30, 2022, 10 a.m. until 2 p.m.

The auction is open to the public.

The auctioned artwork consists of original paintings and ceramics inspired by the Mill Mountain Zoo animals and attractions like the Red Wolf, turtles, and the Zoo Choo Train.

“Our graduate students are working professionals who want to donate their talents to the community in the form of art,” said Alexandra Leonetti, the president of Radford University’s Graduate Art

Student Association. “It’s important to us that we support a local non-profit organization like the Mill Mountain Zoo that promotes wildlife preservation through education and conservation.”

All auctioned artworks will be available for viewing one week prior to the event on the Graduate Art Student Association Facebook page [facebook.com/gasa.radford]. In-person and online bidding will be available the day of the auction.

The Graduate Art Student Association at Radford University provides students working towards a master of fine arts degree with opportunities for professional development in art through exhibitions, seminars, community involvement, and other educational programs.



“It’s in the Eyes” by RU graduate art student Alexandra Leonetti is one of the paintings available at the fundraiser on April 30 for the Mill Mountain Zoo’s conservation efforts.

Christiansburg native Leah Piemonte releases first album

Christiansburg native Leah Piemonte is a former high school and Virginia Tech diver who is now jumping into the deep waters of the music world with the release of her first CD, “Thank-You Notes,” which hit the web this week.

Piemonte spent almost eight years in the pool, but music always drew her attention. She started singing every Sunday in her church at a young age. Her parents were both musical, and they encouraged her to sing and play instruments.

“They loved to make music with me. I started taking voice and piano seriously at the age of 12,” Piemonte said. Writing her songs came a short time later while she was in middle school.

But it wasn’t until college that she started recording her own songs. She released her first single “Cigarette,” a short time later and she called the feeling “euphoric.”

“I told a friend almost immediately that I wanted to make an album and he said let’s do it,” she said.

Piemonte now lives in Richmond and describes her music as a combination

of pop, indie, and acoustic.

“I think this album reflects elements from all three, and that’s one of my favorite things about it,” she said. “Each song on the album definitely has a special meaning. I write based on real experiences and real people who have come in and out of my life. The process of molding each song to sound the way they do was extremely healing for me because it felt as if I could finally walk away from those people and situations. It brought a sense of closure,” she said.

Her goals for this album are for it to continue to gain listeners via word-of-mouth and promotion. Her biggest goal for the album is to perform it.

“I am seeking out opportunities to perform my music wherever I can, and I really hope to be able to do that soon,” she said.

Those long-term goals consist of continuing to create and release music consistently and to perform anywhere she can. She hopes one day to go on a small tour, maybe along the East Coast.

She also did most of the artwork for this first album herself. She had never done



PHOTO COURTESY OF LEAH PIEMONTE

Leah Piemonte is a Christiansburg High School graduate who has recently released an album featuring her own songs.

digital art before, so she had to teach herself the language of photoshop and various programs.

“I knew nothing about it, which was challenging and exciting,” she said. “I view each song on ‘Thank You Notes’ (the title track name) as a letter written to specific people in my life.”

Piemonte calls the album cover essentially a self-portrait in which she is writing each letter and creating a pile (which is the album itself.)

“I also created three separate pieces for the three singles I released when the album came out,” she said.

Those singles are “Never Had It,” “Sleeping

Alone,” and “Throw Me to the Wolves.” For each of those, she chose something that reminds her of each situation, according to Piemonte, honing in on the style of a person or a key object from the scene of a specific experience.

So far, the response to this new album, she said, has been incredible and pretty surreal. “People from all over the world are listening and have reached out to me via social media, which has been so cool,” she said.

Piemonte’s music can be found on Spotify, Apple Music, Itunes, Youtube and all social media platforms.

Montgomery Chamber to recognize best places to work



The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce will host its fifth annual “Best Places to Work in Montgomery County including Blacksburg, Christiansburg” on May 18 at the Inn at Virginia Tech & Skelton Conference Center during the Leadership in Changing Times: A Conference for All & Best Places to Work luncheon

The Best Places to Work program was started in 2017 as the chamber

and the NRV Society of Human Resource Managers, aka SHRM, partnered to develop this initiative and raise awareness of the local community’s outstanding workplaces. In 2020, the chamber combined Best Places with the leadership conference to recognize organizations that are changing and embracing new employment and leadership practices.

“Our community is one of the most rapidly growing in the common-

See **Best Places**, page 3

Radford City, Montgomery Co. among best places in Virginia for mortgage approval

SmartAsset, an online destination for consumer-focused financial information and advice that powers SmartAdvisor, a national marketplace connecting consumers to financial advisors, has determined that Montgomery County is among the best places in the commonwealth for mortgage approval.

With a loan funding rate of 74.89% and annual property taxes among the lowest in the commonwealth at \$9,087, SmartAsset ranked Radford City as the second-best place in the commonwealth to gain mortgage approval.

Right behind at No. 4 in the financial company’s rankings was Montgomery County with a loan funding

rate of 73.22% and annual property taxes of \$10,518.

Overall, Southwest Virginia emerged as the best place to seek and gain mortgage approval. Other area locations that landed high in the company’s rankings were Salem City at No. 5, Botetourt Co. at No. 7, and Roanoke Co. at No. 8.

With a loan funding rate of 85.58% and annual property taxes of \$8,709, Covington City emerged in SmartAsset’s rankings as the best place in the commonwealth for mortgage approval. Others in the company’s top 10 were Lexington City at No. 3, King William Co. at No. 6, Hanover Co. at No. 9, and Falls Church City at No. 10.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Now through Tuesday, April 22:

Montgomery Chamber Best Places to Work Survey
Virginia Tech's Center for Economic and Community Engagement and the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce are asking businesses to participate in the annual Best Places to Work survey. Chamber membership is not required, and the survey is open to all businesses in Montgomery County. The survey has two components, one for the employer and the other for employees. The top 20 Best Places to Work will be announced on May 18 at the Leadership in Changing Times and Best Places to Work Conference. This survey will be open for only a three-week period until April 22. For more information, visit <https://bit.ly/lcbestplaces22>. Contact marketing@montgomerycc.org with any questions.

Now through April 30:

Free prom dresses
By appointment only at the Meadowbrook Public Library, which has prom dresses of all sizes available for free to anyone in Montgomery County, Floyd County, and throughout the New River Valley. Call (540) 268-1964 to make an appointment to try on and choose a free prom dress.

Now through May 7:

Blacksburg Parks & Rec Toddler and Children Art Classes
Art & More for 2's S1
For 2-year-olds, 9:45 to 10:45 a.m. at the Parks and Recreation administrative offices. Fee is \$42 for residents, \$52 for non-residents. This class will introduce toddlers to art in a semi-structured setting. The classes will consist of a variety of art projects, story time, and songs. Parent participation is required.
Art Smart S1
For three- and four-year olds at the Blacksburg Parks & Recreation administrative offices from 11 a.m. until noon. Fee is \$42 for residents, \$52 for non-residents.
Toddlers will be exposed to different media while learning how to use colors, shapes, patterns, and sizes. They will be encouraged to use imagination, expression, and communication through art. The emphasis will be on fun and social interaction.
Register online at www.blacksburg.gov/recreation, by phone 540-443-1140 or 540-443-1100, or in person at any Blacksburg Parks and Recreation facility.

Wednesday, April 13:

Brown Bag Book Club
The club meets on the second Wednesday of each month for a casual book discussion. Participants may bring a lunch or enjoy Aaron's latest culinary creation. Discussed this month is "Apples Never Fall" by Liane Moriarty. To be discussed next month is "The Lost City of Z" by David Grann (on 5/11/22).

Loops group
At the Blacksburg Library; 2 p.m. Attendees can bring their project and join the library's loops group for community and conversation. Everyone is welcome.

Spring eggstravaganza
At the Meadowbrook Public Library; 4:45 p.m. Children are invited to an Easter egg hunt in the courtyard. Take-home crafts and

an Easter basket drawing will be part of the fun. Children should bring an Easter basket and a camera.

Author event with Daniel Thorp
At the Blacksburg Library; 6 p.m. VT Associate Professor of History Daniel Thorp discusses his new book, "In the True Blue's Wake: Slavery and Freedom among the Families of Smithfield Plantation," which tells the story of the people who were enslaved at Smithfield Plantation between 1774 and 1865.

Evening book talk: "The Lost Man"
At the Christiansburg Library; 6:30 p.m. Discussed this month is "The Lost Man" by Jane Harper, in-person and virtually.

Thursday, April 14:

"The Middle of Somewhere" author's talk
At the Radford Public Library; 7 to 8 p.m. Suzanne Stryk is an artist who finds equal fascination in the natural world and the visual arts. Her conceptual nature paintings and assemblages have appeared in solo exhibitions throughout the United States, and her portfolios and related writings have been featured in Terrain.org, Orion, Ecotone, and the Kenyon Review. She is the recipient of a George Sugarman Foundation grant and a Virginia Commission for the Arts fellowship for the project "Notes on the State of Virginia," the precursor to "The Middle of Somewhere." She lives in southwestern Virginia.

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, in Radford. All skill levels of quilters are welcome. For more information, call Anna Handy, 540 320 7791.

Radford Army Ammunitions Plant community meeting
At the Christiansburg Public Library at 6 p.m. This community meeting will discuss modernization and environmental projects and compliance and corrective actions at the Radford Army Ammunition Plant. Staff members from the U.S. Army and BAE Systems will be on hand to engage with the public. Questions ahead of the meeting may be emailed to usarmy.radford.peo-eis.list.rfaap-public-affairs@mail.mil.

Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce's legislative wrap-up
The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce's legislative wrap-up will explore what occurred during the most recent legislative session in Richmond. Attendees will have opportunities to hear from their legislators and ask business-related questions during the Q&A portion of the program. 7:30 a.m. at Warm Hearth Village, 2387 Warm Hearth Dr, Blacksburg. Reservations at <https://bit.ly/april22legislative>. The cost is \$25 for chamber members and \$35 for non-members.

Peep houses
At the Meadowbrook Public Library; 1 p.m. Participants will build a cozy graham cracker home for little marshmallow peeps. Registration is required. All ages are welcome.

Play Overcooked 2
At the Blacksburg Library; 1:30 p.m. Chefs of all ages are welcome to plunge into the kitchen in Overcooked, and work with other players to create and serve delicious dishes while avoiding outrageous obstacles such as cannonballs, cars, and plunging hot air balloons.

Teen Poetry Workshop
At the Blacksburg Library; 4:30 p.m. April is National Poetry Month. Come join in for a cup of tea and a poetry workshop. Participants will be reading poetry together and working on drafting their own poems.

Adulting 101: How to live with other people
At the Blacksburg Library; 6:30 p.m. Everybody has at least one nightmare roommate story. Living with another person can be a challenging experience whether you are headed off to college, renting a house with friends, or moving in with a new spouse. Trent Davis and Mary Gaskill, licensed professional counselors, will help with advice for navigating the rough transition of living with other people. Virginia Tech Therapy Dog Derek will also be in attendance. This program will be offered in person and online. Call the library at 540-552-8246 for the link to participate.

Saturday, April 16:

Radford Easter egg hunt
At Bisset Park; 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. The schedule by age groups is as follows: noon: ages 3-5; 12:25 p.m.: ages 6-8; 12:30 p.m.: ages 9-12; 12:45 p.m.: ages 3 and under. Bounce houses, fire trucks, police cars, food trucks, and photos with the Easter Bunny will be a part of the fun. Children should bring a basket.

Monday, April 18:

Free GED classes with NRCC
At the Radford Public Library; 9 a.m. to noon. Free GED prep classes offered by New River Community College in the library's community room. Call (540) 674-3682 for additional information.

Bad guys
At the Christiansburg Library; 2 p.m. Participants will attempt to get through a laser maze without setting off an alarm and defeat a hoard of zombie kittens to save the world. Fans of the series The Bad Guys can join in for fun activities inspired by the books. Contact spahl@mfrl.org for more information.

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

Craftroom Delight
At the Radford Public Library; 1 to 2 p.m. For adults. Participants may bring their supplies and knit, crochet, and needlepoint at the library. Some crafting supplies will be provided.

Tuesday, April 19:

Family reads with LVNRV
At the Radford Public Library; 5:30 to 7 p.m. Literacy Volunteers of the New River Valley will provide English as a Second Language (ESL) lessons to parents of children ages 3-8 (older siblings are welcome). The 7-week program started Tuesday, April 12. Children will have fun activities to work on while parents learn to read English. Call (540) 382-7262 or email Anne Abbott at aabbott@lvnr.org for more information.

Wednesday, April 20:

Easter

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promise to the Lord. Mamas often face challenges in their lives that involve their children, but no mother in history has faced a challenge to match that of Mary, whom God chose to be the mother of Jesus. Like mamas and their children throughout time, Mary experienced both joy and perplexity in her bewildering and sometimes exasperating relationship with her son.

To the end, though, Mary stood by her boy. She followed him all the way to his execution, an act of love and bravery since Jesus was condemned as an enemy of the Roman Empire.

But just as mothers like Mary and Herma Beamer – and perhaps yours – would apparently do about anything for their children, so will God do anything out of love for his children. After all,

that was God on the cross near which Mary stood, and he was dying for you, one of his children.

She was just mom. She demanded you do well. She knew how to endure.

– Frank Beamer's brother, Barnett, on their mother
Mamas often sacrifice for their children, but God, too, will do anything out of love for his children, including dying on a cross.

Mattingly

from page 1

events since 2007. Under his leadership, the town also partnered with Virginia Tech to build a joint salt storage facility to improve snow removal operations in the northwest sector of town.

Asked about the highlights of his career, Mattingly said his greatest achievements were less in the area of things built and more in the development of a strong work ethic and culture within his department.

"It's important that we, as an organization and as individuals, treat our citizens and business community with respect, listen to their concerns, and respond honestly," said Mattingly. "I would like to think that by doing so, we've built a level of trust be-

tween Public Works and the community that will carry on long after I am gone."

Mattingly also believes that future Public Works leaders will need to embrace emerging transportation technologies that hold the promise of reducing reliance on fossil fuels and traffic congestion and making Blacksburg even safer for motorists, cyclists, pedestrians, and workers in the roadway.

"This will require decision makers to think about where they should be investing their transportation infrastructure dollars today in anticipation of these technologies coming to fruition in the not too distant future," Mattingly said.

In his retirement, Mattingly said he looks forward

to spending time with his first grandchild and hitting the road with friends and family for cross-country trips and music festivals.

"I am proud to have worked with such dedicated individuals who, at times, under the most extreme conditions have delivered the many services that make our community a beautiful, enjoyable and safe place to live," said Mattingly. "It has been an honor serving this community for the past 28 years, and I will forever be grateful to our town council for their continued support and friendship."

The Town of Blacksburg will conduct a nationwide search for Mattingly's successor, beginning this month.



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PETS OF THE WEEK



Sweet dog Tips is looking for some bunny to take him home. He's a bright boy who knows commands like "sit" and "down." He is also housebroken and may nudge nearby humans when he's ready to take care of business outside. He doesn't mind hanging out in a crate at night. Tips is good with people of all ages. He is treat-motivated but is on a special diet due to allergies.



One-year-old Nugget is a shy kitty who warms up once he feels comfortable. He gets along with other cats but may do best in a home free from small children, as he can be a little skittish and feel nervous. Nugget has some scarring on his eye but that doesn't appear to affect him. Stop by the Animal Care and Adoption Center to meet Nugget. He may be your purrfect match.

Yvonne Hurt joins Warm Hearth Village as human resources director

Yvonne Hurt has joined the staff of Warm Hearth Village (WHV) as the new Director of Human Resources.

Hurt comes to the village with varied experience in human resources, most recently with Meridian Bird Removal where she was the People Operations Manager.

Hurt said she was drawn to WHV's staff and residents and their caring and compassionate atmosphere. "I knew immediately this would be a good fit," she said. Her immediate goals center around recruiting and rebuilding the healthcare workforce.

"Communication with all employees is my priority and streamlining processes and procedures along the way," Hurt said.

"Lastly, I want to help every employee grow and thrive in our village."

Hurt earned a bachelor of science in business management and a master's in management and leadership from Liberty University. This May she will graduate from Wake Forest University Law School with a Master of Studies in Law: Business Law and Compliance.

Hurt and her husband have five children and two grandchildren. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with the grandbabies, all her animals, reading, and yard work.

Warm Hearth Village is a nonprofit senior living community in Blacksburg that provides a full continuum of living options on its campus and in the home.



With both a bachelor's degree and a master's degree, Yvonne Hurt is the new Director of Human Resources for Warm Hearth Village.

Blacksburg High seniors earn national DECA honor



Blacksburg High School seniors Alexis Snyder and Siri Bedsaul, pictured above, have received the 2022 DECA Emerging Leader Honor award.

Alexis Snyder and Siri Bedsaul, two seniors at Blacksburg High School, have received the 2022 DECA Emerging Leader Award.

DECA, Inc. (formerly the Distributive Education Clubs of America) is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit student organization with nearly 175,000 members in all 50 United States, Canada, Guam, Puerto Rico and Germany. The United States Congress, the United States Department of Education and state, district and international departments of education authorize DECA's programs.

DECA prepares emerging leaders and entrepreneurs for careers in marketing, finance, hospitality and management in

high schools and colleges around the globe.

The emerging leader award recognizes students studying marketing, finance, hospitality and management for being academically prepared, community oriented, professionally responsible, experienced leaders through participation in DECA. The award recipient must be a DECA member in their senior year of high school with a cumulative grade point average of 3.2 or better for each of their high school semesters.

The DECA chapter advisor at Blacksburg High School is Jessica Catley.

Alexis Snyder is the daughter of Ashely and Terry Snyder. Siri Bedsaul is the daughter of Andrea and Michael Bedsaul.

Best Places from page 1

wealth, and we want to showcase businesses that are making a difference," said Mark Woolwine, 2022 Chamber Board Chair. "It is important that everyone shares the 2022 Best Places to Work survey as it is open to all member and non-member businesses in Montgomery County."

The survey will be open only for a three-week period ending April 22.

Those attending the May conference have the

opportunity see the top 25 Best Place to Work announced, as well as hear from two keynote speakers: Dwayne Washington, Vice President for Merrill Lynch, and Jay Caughron, Ph.D., Professor of Organizational Psychology for Radford University and founder and CEO of Allied Consulting Network. More information about each recognition and the May 18 program can be found at <https://bit.ly/lcbestplaces22>.

Send community news and photos to communitynews@ourvalley.org

ONLINE AUCTION

Ends Thursday April 28th at 4 PM

Commercial Investment Property for Sale in Montgomery County VA!

Bid Now at VaAuctionPro.com

Offering # 1 - House on 1.04 acres
3983 South Main Street, Blacksburg VA 24060

Offering # 2 - Building Only
3395 North Franklin Street, Christiansburg, VA 24073

You have the opportunity to purchase two commercial investment properties in Montgomery County VA! There are 2 offerings available for purchase. Bidders wanting to purchase both offerings will need to be the high bidder on both offerings. Online Auction will have a "soft close" where bidding on both offerings is extended 2 minutes if a bid on either offering occurs.

Offering # 1 - 3983 South Main Street, Blacksburg VA 24060

This is where Drive Away Car Dealership business office is located. House on 1.04 acres built in 1960 & later converted into an office. The upper level has 2,052 Square Feet with multiple offices, lobby, waiting room & bathroom. Basement has kitchen & storage areas with 1,516 sq. ft. There are 2 heat pumps, 1 heat pump for each level. There is a storage building behind main building. The 6,150 Square Foot Metal Building on adjacent property (Offering # 2) slightly encroaches on this property.

Offering # 2 - Building Only - 3395 North Franklin Street Christiansburg, VA 24073

This offering is for the 6,150 square foot Metal Service Building Only. The building is located on land owned by Norfolk Southern. The building is owned by Mark A. Cole Inc. DBA Drive Away Cars which has long term lease of \$2,000 per month with Norfolk and Southern. Norfolk and Southern has agreed to transfer lease to high bidder / purchaser of building. A copy of the lease can be provided upon request. Purchaser of building can have option of continuing lease with Norfolk and Southern and leave building or move building. If purchaser desires to remove building from Norfolk and Southern Land, they will be responsible for due diligence, permits, licenses, and insurance required if any to move building once purchased. Building slightly encroaches on adjoining property (Offering # 1). Building has 2 oil furnaces, two 1,000 gallon oil tanks, & two air compressors that will convey with building. 8 Bays and 6,150 sq. ft. Has bathroom, shop area & large work areas. Currently being used as an auto servicing business. Tools and equipment in building do not convey with building. Building has town water and private septic.

Great location with very good commercial visibility on Highway 460 between Christiansburg and Blacksburg VA. Adjoins Meade Tractor Company and very close to New River Valley Mall, Wal-Mart, Lowes, multiple restaurants / shops, Virginia Tech, & Downtown Blacksburg.

Preview Dates – Saturday April 9th @ 11 AM & Friday April 15th @ 4 PM

Terms: 10% Buyer's Premium will be added to final high bid to arrive at contract price. Earnest Money Deposit of \$10,000 per tract required on day of sale. Close in 60 days. Subject to seller confirmation. Property sold as is, where is with any and all faults. Buyer is expected to complete their own due diligence. Download Bidder Pack at VaAuctionPro.com

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OPINION

Virginia's gas prices continue to fall

Average gasoline prices in Virginia fell eight cents per gallon last week, averaging \$3.98/g Monday, April 11, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,081 stations in Virginia. Prices in Virginia are 27.9 cents per gallon lower than a month ago but stand \$1.26/g higher than a year ago. According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Virginia was priced at \$3.44/g Monday while the

most expensive was \$5.49/g. The national average price of gasoline fell 7.5 cents per gallon last week, averaging \$4.10/g Monday. The national average is down 23.3 cents per gallon from a month ago but stands \$1.25/g higher than a year ago, according to GasBuddy data compiled from more than 11 million weekly price reports covering over 150,000 gas stations across the country.

"Gas prices have continued to move in the right direction – down – saving Americans approximately \$100 million every day compared to when prices peaked about a month ago," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy. "And, more good news is on the horizon: the national average this week will likely fall back under the critical \$4 per gallon mark," De Haan said. "It remains pos-

sible that gas prices may have hit their 2022 peak, barring the typical caveats like the Russia war on Ukraine, the economy, hurricane season and COVID don't take drastic and unexpected turns. Diesel prices are also falling and are likely to go back under the \$5 per gallon average this week. The situation for now continues to show signs of improving with the national average falling back into the \$3 range as

early as this week." *GasBuddy is the authoritative voice for gas prices and the only source for station-level data spanning nearly two decades. 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.*

Financial Focus: Avoid tax-filing errors

It's tax season once again. You've got until April 18 to file your taxes for the 2021 tax year, but if you think you'll get a refund, you'll probably want to get going as soon as possible. However, it's important not to rush so much that you make errors, which, at the least, could delay your refund. So, take the time you need to prepare your taxes – and be sure to avoid

these common filing mistakes: **Failing to include all W-2 forms** – You need to include official copies of all your W-2 forms from your employer (or employers). The wages and withholdings listed on these forms must be combined and reported on your tax return. **Forgetting necessary paperwork** – Make sure you have all the docu-

ments you need before filing, such as forms from investment companies, including Form 1099-INT for interest income and Form 1099-DIV for dividend income. **Entering an incorrect Social Security number** – An incorrect Social Security number can cause the IRS to reject your return. So, double-check your SSN, and that of your spouse, if filing jointly, before submitting your return. **Using the wrong column from Tax Tables** – If you do your own taxes, you will probably have to refer to the 1040 Tax Tables page to make the correct calculations. But if you look at the wrong column, you could miscalculate – a mistake that's not uncommon, according to the IRS.

Making math errors – If you file a paper tax return, be sure to check your math to make sure the figures add up. Of course, if you use a software program, or work with a tax professional, you won't have to do the math on your own, but you should still double check it. It's always important to review your return. **Entering the wrong routing or account number** – If you want your tax refund to be deposited directly into your bank account, which is the fastest way to receive it, you need to provide the correct routing and account numbers. A simple mistake can result in the IRS sending you a paper check or, even worse, someone else receiving your refund.

Failure to sign and date your return – Signing your return is an easy task – but it's also easy to overlook. If you file your taxes electronically, as most people do, you may be able to use a Self-Select PIN as your digital signature. If you're filing a joint return, you and your spouse must use your respective PINs. **Missing the filing deadline** – If you don't think you can finish your taxes on time, file for an extension before the April 18 deadline. You'll still need to pay the taxes you owe (though you may have to estimate the amount) by April 18, and if you owe more, you'll likely accrue interest, but you can avoid failure-to-file penalties, which can be hefty.

Keep in mind that, when you submit your return electronically, the e-file system can detect typical errors, allowing you to correct them immediately, according to the IRS. And, of course, working with a tax professional can greatly reduce the likelihood of mistakes. But even if you're entrusting your tax returns to someone else, you still should be quite familiar with all your documentation – and everything else that goes into your taxes, too, because how you manage your taxes will always be part of your overall financial strategy.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Edward Jones. Member SIPC.

News Messenger

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

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WalletHub: 2022's best and worst entry-level jobs

With employers planning to hire over 26% more graduates from the Class of 2022 than they did from the Class of 2021, the personal-finance website WalletHub Monday released its report on 2022's Best & Worst Entry-Level Jobs. To take stock of the first-timer employment landscape, WalletHub compared more than 100 different types of entry-level positions based on 12 key metrics. The

data set ranges from average starting salary to projected job growth by 2030 to median tenure with an employer. According to WalletHub, the 10 best entry-level jobs for 2022 are 1) Software Engineer I 2) Electronics Engineer I 3) Engineer I 4) Systems Engineer I 5) Industrial Engineer I 6) Electrical Engineer 7) Operations Research Analyst 8) Hardware Engineer I 9) Web

Applications Developer and 10) Environmental Health and Safety Engineer I. According to WalletHub, the worst entry-level jobs are 99) Architectural Drafter I 100) Consumer Credit Analyst I 101) Mechanical Drafter I 102) Claims Processing Clerk 103) Welder I 104) Aircraft Painter I 105) Building Inspector 106) Emergency Dispatcher 107) Floor Assembler I.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Work Zone Awareness Week

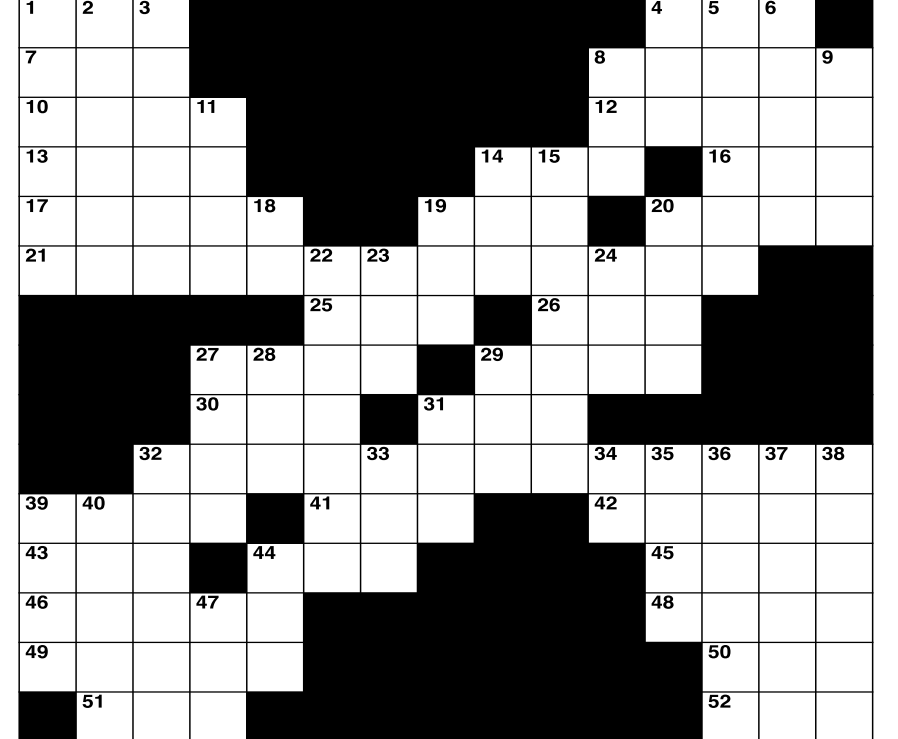
To the Editor: Each spring, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and other state DOTs recognize Work Zone Awareness Week

to remind drivers of the importance of avoiding distractions and driving safely through work zones. This year VDOT promotes the theme of "Work Zones are a Sign to Slow Down" for National Work Zone Awareness Week through April 15. This week is a reminder that work zone safety is a community effort and everyone's responsibility. VDOT's employees and contractors put their lives on the line in work zones every day while working to improve travel for motorists in Virginia. This is true in mobile operations like mowing, paving, and plowing snow as well as in the established work zones for long-term construction projects like the widening of I-81 in the Roanoke Valley, the construction of the New River Bridge at exit 105 in Montgomery County, the realignment of Route 460 near Montvale in Bedford County, and the widening of Route 58 at Lover's Leap Mountain in Patrick County. Although signs, cones, and safety vests can be effective in warning motorists of a work zone, these tools are no protec-

tion against a fast-moving vehicle or an inattentive driver. Did you know? • The statistics between 2020 and 2021 increased at an alarming rate. With a 41% increase in crashes in 2021, fatalities within a work zone increased by 155% and injuries increased by 20%. • Every time drivers take their focus off the road — even for a moment — they put their lives and the lives of others in danger. Distracted driving crashes within a work zone increased by 27% last year. • In addition to the dangers posed to highway workers, motorists are also at risk. Many work zone deaths are motorists, not workers. All motorists — whether a seasoned driver or someone new behind the wheel — should follow these instructions when driving through a work zone: • Work zones are a sign to slow down. • If drivers see the orange work zone warning signs, they should be alert for changing conditions ahead.

• Drivers should eliminate distractions and stay aware of their surroundings at all times. • Drivers should follow Virginia's phone-down-and-move-over laws. In addition, to show support for National Work Zone Awareness Week, VDOT encourages Virginia's drivers to participate in these activities during the week: • Wednesday, April 13 is national "Go Orange Day." Everyone is encouraged to wear orange in support of work zone safety across the country. Share pictures with VDOT on Twitter and Facebook! #GoOrangeVa • Follow VDOT and share VDOT's Salem District group page on Facebook at www.facebook.com/groups/VDOTSalem and ReTweet with VDOT @VaDOTSalem. Be a part of the community committed to keeping our roads and work zones safe for everyone. Let's work together to all arrive at home safely each and every day. *Ken King, P.E. District Engineer Salem District*

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



- | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p>CLUES ACROSS</p> <p>1. Runs PCs</p> <p>4. An entertaining, eccentric person</p> <p>7. Small, faint constellation</p> <p>8. Indigo bush</p> <p>10. Not excessive</p> <p>12. African antelope</p> <p>13. A way to fly a glider</p> <p>14. Tough softly</p> <p>16. In the course of</p> <p>17. Early Mesoamerican people</p> <p>19. A way to drop down</p> <p>20. Mistake!</p> <p>21. Housing developments</p> <p>25. Baseball stat</p> <p>26. No (Scottish)</p> <p>27. Type of cuisine</p> <p>29. British Army infantry-</p> | <p>men (abbr.)</p> <p>30. Marry</p> <p>31. Buffer solution</p> <p>32. Legendary rock band</p> <p>39. Recording industry show</p> <p>41. A way to consume</p> <p>42. Lake in Botswana</p> <p>43. Political action committee</p> <p>44. Field force unit (abbr.)</p> <p>45. Very eager</p> <p>46. Excessive fluid accumulation in tissues</p> <p>48. Nocturnal insect</p> <p>49. Challenged to perform</p> <p>50. Thus far</p> <p>51. Famed NYC arena</p> <p>52. Commercials</p> | <p>CLUES DOWN</p> <p>1. Small, purple-black fruit</p> <p>2. Baltimore ballplayer</p> <p>3. Highly seasoned sausage</p> <p>4. Split pulses</p> <p>5. Northwestern Mexico town</p> <p>6. Edible fruit</p> <p>8. Upper-class southern young woman</p> <p>9. Sums up</p> <p>11. The most worthless part</p> <p>14. Dash</p> <p>15. Sufferings</p> <p>18. Clearinghouse (abbr.)</p> <p>19. Indian title of respect</p> <p>20. Poems meant to be sung</p> <p>22. Actor Cooper</p> | <p>23. Luke's mentor
—Wan</p> <p>24. Clumsy person</p> <p>27. Figures</p> <p>28. Polish Baltic coast peninsula</p> <p>29. Old cloth</p> <p>31. Explosive</p> <p>32. Automobiles</p> <p>33. 007's creator</p> <p>34. The Volunteer State</p> <p>35. Old Irish alphabet</p> <p>36. Japanese city</p> <p>37. Portrayed emotion</p> <p>38. Observers</p> <p>39. Mimicked</p> <p>40. Polite reference to a woman</p> <p>44. Male parent</p> <p>47. Peter Griffin's daughter</p> |
|--|--|--|--|

Submit letters to the editor to editor@ourvalley.org

U.S. Geological Survey and Virginia Tech partner on national water-loss program

U.S. Geological Survey and Virginia Tech Virginia Tech researchers and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) are collaborating on a national water-loss program to reduce wasted resources during the extraction, treatment, and distribution of drinking water.

The USGS Water Resources Mission Area will create new models to estimate national public supply water use based on historical water-use data, as well as data from PIPEiD, a national database of water conveyance infrastructure characteristics created by Sunil Sinha and his research team at Virginia Tech.

The USGS will then use these data models to develop a series of pilot systems with the greatest data support for creating a public supply water loss data-driven model using machine learning and artificial intelligence. The data reported through these pilot systems will be evaluated for quality, standardized into consistent formats, and complemented with other system-level data to support comprehensive and state-of-the-art modeling for public supply water use.

Just as PIPEiD provides data for the U.S., predictors of water losses established by the pilot studies will be available nationally. "We aim to

improve national estimates of public supply water use that is supported by water delivery infrastructure data," said Sinha.

Sinha, a professor of civil and environmental engineering, hopes the program will give water utilities guidance on how to improve efficiencies in supply and revenue recovery. This would help utilities better serve their customers, improve their financial standing, and be better positioned to make vital upgrades to the vast and aging water infrastructure in community water supply systems.

"Safe drinking water plays a crucial role by promoting good health, food production, manufacturing, and support for virtually all aspects of life," said Sinha. "Drinking water utilities have done an outstanding job of meeting these needs by providing safe water directly to homes, businesses, institutions, and industrial facilities. Yet today's water utilities encounter numerous challenges in providing safe drinking water for human consumption."

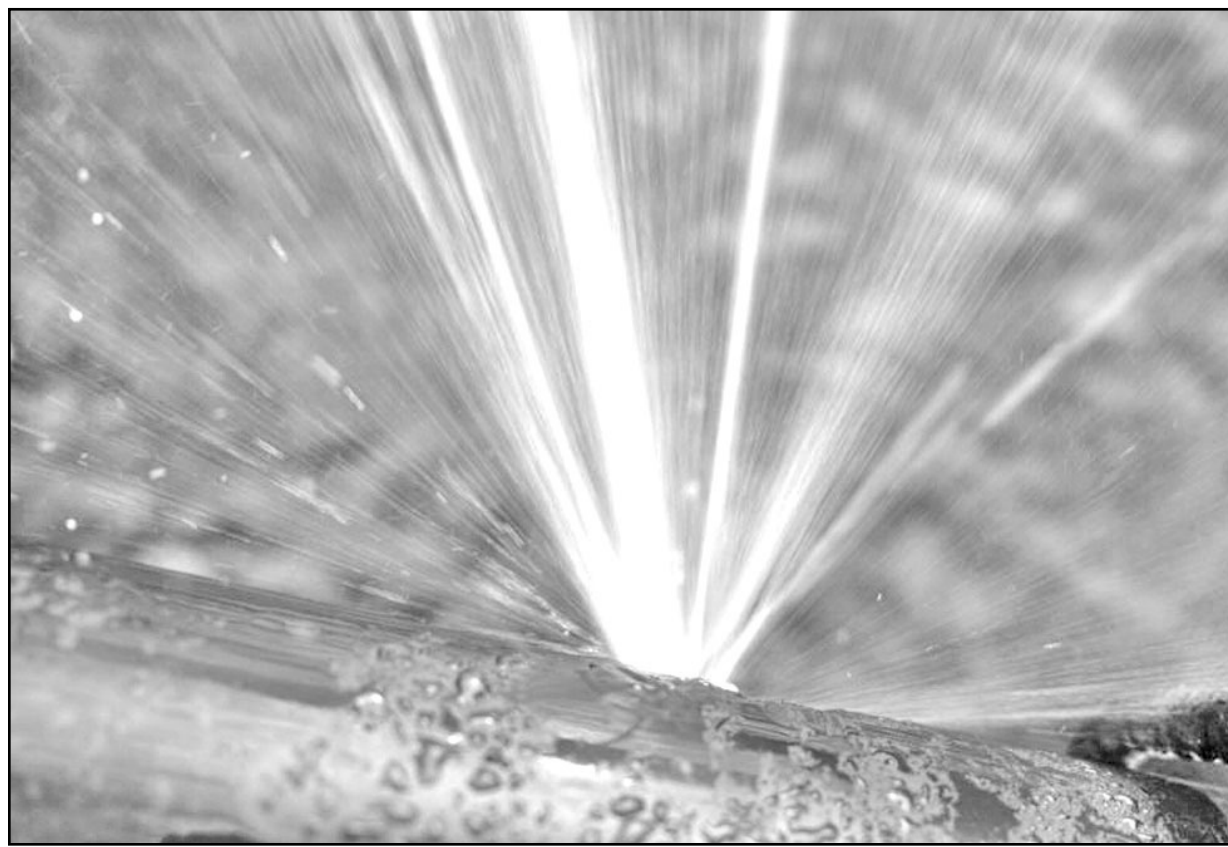
Historically in North America, abundant water resources have been readily and reliably tapped to supply communities, Sinha said. However, many regions today are experiencing

strain on their supplies due to a changing climate and other environmental stress, growing and shifting populations, financial constraints, and evolving regulatory programs.

"For many of today's water utilities, the amount of water available is likely the greatest volume they will ever have," said Sinha. "This puts enormous pressure on water managers to ensure they are accountable in their practices and highly efficient in their operations."

No matter how efficient managers are, all drinking water utilities have water losses. According to Sinha, billions of gallons of water are lost every day from U.S. drinking water systems because of leaks. Although some states require best practices for estimating, locating, and reducing leaks, other less-regulated areas may be unaware of the volume of water loss beneath their streets, said Sinha. Water leaks can have dramatic cost impacts, and paying customers often bear much of the financial burden of a utility's inefficiencies. partner on national water-loss program

By Emily Roediger



VT civil and environmental engineering professor Sunil Sinha is working with the U.S. Geological Survey to characterize water losses in the nation's public supply systems.

Virginia Department of Transportation road watch

The following is a list of forecasted highway projects that may impact traffic traveling in the 12-county Salem Transportation District this week. Work schedules and construction project timelines are always subject to change and are weather dependent. The Salem District covers Bedford, Botetourt, Carroll, Craig, Floyd, Franklin, Giles, Henry, Montgomery, Patrick, Pulaski and Roanoke counties.

EASTER HOLIDAY

To help motorists get to their destinations without hassle, VDOT will suspend most highway work zones and lift most lane closures on interstates and other major roads in Virginia for the Easter holiday from noon Friday, April 15 until noon Tuesday, April 19. While lane closures will be lifted in most locations, motorists may encounter semi-permanent work zones that remain in place during this time. A full listing of those lane closures can be found on VDOT's website.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

I-81 NORTHBOUND AT EXIT 105 NEW RIVER BRIDGE REPLACEMENT IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY - Lane and shoulder closures may be in place near exit 105. Lane closure may be in effect during the week from 8 p.m. to 7 a.m. Shoulder closures may be in effect at any time during the week. Slow rolls may be performed on I-81 in the north and southbound lanes from

mile marker 104 to 106 from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. Speed limit is reduced to 60 miles per hour in the work zone. Shoulder closures will remain in place though the duration of the project. Project completion is estimated by summer 2023.

INTERSTATE 81

INTERSTATE 81 LANE WIDENING CONSTRUCTION EXIT 137 TO EXIT 141 - A \$179 million design-build project to widen both directions of I-81 between mile markers 136.6 and 141.8 from two to three lanes is set to begin. Continuing into the early summer, work will be performed on the inside and outside shoulders along a five mile section of both northbound and southbound Interstate 81 in Roanoke County and the city of Salem. The shoulders will be built up before a barrier wall can be installed for road crews to work behind. A barrier wall will be installed along the shoulders in the spring and summer. Two lanes of I-81 traffic in each direction will remain open during the project with periodic lane closures scheduled during nighttime hours or outside of peak travel times as needed. Drivers can expect the following lane closures and upcoming impacts on northbound and southbound I-81:

From mid-March until mid-June, nighttime right lane and shoulder closures between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m., Sunday through Thursday.

From mid-May to mid-June, alternating left and right lane and

shoulder closures during nighttime hours between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m., Sunday through Thursday.

The project also includes replacing six bridges, widening two bridges, installing approximately 2.6 miles of sound barrier walls along northbound I-81, improving the southbound exit 137 off-ramp intersection at Wildwood Road and adding interchange lighting at exits 137, 140 and 141 are also included in the project. Expected completion in early 2026.

I-81 TROUTVILLE

REST AREA CLOSURE - The Troutville Rest Area located on southbound Interstate 81 near mile marker 158 in Botetourt County will be closed from late May 2022 until early September 2022. This project will extend the ramp into the rest area by 500 feet and the ramp out of the rest area by 2,100 feet. It will also include expanding the truck parking area at the facility by about 10-13 spaces. Visitors to the rest area may see some preliminary work, such as drainage improvements, as early as this spring. However, the major construction will begin after Memorial Day, and the rest area facility, ramps and parking lot will be closed to the public from late May until early September. Work is expected to be completed in early fall 2022.

INTERSTATE 81 LANE WIDENING CONSTRUCTION EXIT 141 TO EXIT 143 - A project to widen the lanes on I-81 in Roanoke in both northbound and southbound directions

between Exit 141 to Exit 143 has been underway. All lanes now open and will remain open through winter with periodic lane closures at night as needed. The final surface paving and markings for northbound will resume with the next paving season in spring 2022. Drivers can expect rough pavement. Estimated completion date of the project is summer 2022.

I-81 PAVING OPERATIONS

- Weather permitting, crews will pave, patch and repair pavement on various routes. Lane closures may be in place during nighttime hours, 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. the following morning. Drivers should watch for signs and expect possible delays.

I-81 BRIDGE DECK

REPAIRS - Weather permitting, crews will repair bridge decks on Interstate 81. Between mile markers 138 to 152, right and left lane closures will be in place northbound and southbound during nighttime hours, 9 p.m.

See VDOT, page 6

Virginia Tech center shines light on displaced people in Virginia through podcast

Leave it behind. Your bed. Your books. Your toys. Your home.

Take only what you can carry on this harrowing journey.

Across the globe, displacement forces people to make sacrifices like these and more. In Virginia, on land that originally belonged to Native Americans, displacement continues today in various forms.

Virginia Tech students and faculty members in the Center for Refugee, Migrant, and Displacement Studies are illuminating these stories.

The "In Place: Conversations About Displacement in the Commonwealth" podcast examines a different theme related to migration, displacement, and resettlement through interviews with experts on the topics, many of whom have personally experienced displacement.

One episode, for example, includes an interview with a social worker who came to the United States as a refugee from Vietnam and now works with resettled populations in Northern Virginia.

Brett Shadle, chair of the Department of History and the center's associate director of outreach, brings an international perspective to the study of displacement with his research in Africa. He also coordinates a tutoring program that pairs Virginia Tech students with recently resettled families.

Hester hopes the stories told through the podcast inspire listeners to get involved with organizations such as local nonprofits and civic groups to help those affected by displacement.

"We believe in the power of narrative," said Hester. "The podcast provides a place for people to share their stories and to control their own narratives, whether those narratives are about displacement or helping others who have been displaced."

"We want to center the humanity of those who have been displaced," Hester said. "So often, people who have experienced forced migration are described in dehumanizing ways. Narratives about displacement often foreground the anti-immigrant sentiment of the U.S. population. We aim to humanize both those who have been displaced and those who support them by broadly applying the arts and the humanities. The 'In Place' podcast is one tool in our methodological toolkit."

Those who have experienced displacement or who work in a related field in Virginia can reach out to the "In Place" team to discuss an episode appearance through the podcast's contact page. The podcast website includes episodes and additional resources for listeners.

By Andrew G Adkins

"It is our hope that we will create a field that can simultaneously examine diverse issues such as redlining, refugee camps, and tent cities at the border to consider the experiences of the forcibly displaced, no matter how they are defined by the state," Hester said.

Displacement does not only affect the human population, Hester said. "We tend to always

think about people when we study displacement, but the truth is that there are a significant number of animal and plant species displaced by events such as the construction of energy infrastructure, coastal flooding, and urban renewal."

A prominent example of displacement in Virginia involves eminent domain.

Hester pointed to the research of Katrina Powell, director of the Center for Refugee, Migrant, and Displacement Studies, on the effects of eminent domain on Virginia residents during the creation of the Shenandoah National Park.

Emily Satterwhite, an associate professor and director of Appalachian Studies in the Department of Religion and Culture, has highlighted the effects of displacement on long-term landowners by the Mountain Valley Pipeline under construction across southern and Southwest Virginia and northwestern West Virginia.

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By Andrew G Adkins

Students and faculty receive awards at Graduate School's annual ceremony



The winners of the 2022 Graduate School awards for excellence were honored at a recent reception at the Graduate Life Center. Graduate School photo.

At its annual awards reception during Graduate Education Week, the Graduate School recognized master's and doctoral degree students from across Virginia Tech's campuses and programs for their work, honoring them with awards of excellence.

Award winners included the graduate students of the year and students who received the service excellence award, graduate teaching assistance excellence awards, and outstanding dissertation and thesis awards. Outstanding master's degree and Ph.D. students chosen by each college received honors, as did faculty members chosen by the colleges.

"The Graduate School at Virginia Tech could not be more proud to celebrate the individuals honored in our Graduate Education Week Awards Ceremony," said Graduate School Dean Aimée Surprenant. "These awards honor a variety of accomplishments, from mentoring to outstanding research, scholarship, and teaching to individuals exhibiting character and service. Each winner has been chosen by a selection committee and represents excellence in their field. We look forward to seeing what

they accomplish in the future. It will be great, I promise."

Student of the year and service awards

2022 Graduate Students of the Year: Gabriela Carrillo, Ph.D. candidate in translational biology, medicine, and health, Fralin Biomedical Research Institute at VTC; and Jack Leff, Ph.D. candidate in science, technology and society, College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences.

Graduate Service Excellence Award: Kathryn Lopez, Ph.D. student in civil and environmental engineering, College of Engineering.

Thesis and dissertation awards
Outstanding Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Dissertation Award: Lindah Kotut, computer science, College of Engineering.

Outstanding Social Sciences, Business, Education, and Humanities (SSBEH) Dissertation Award: Kazuki Hori, education research and evaluation, College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences.

Outstanding Master's Thesis Award, STEM: Molly Hick-

man, computer science, College of Engineering.

Outstanding Master's Thesis Award, SSBEH: Jessica Brabble, history, College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences.

Teaching awards
Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) Instructor of Record Excellence Award: Sarah Blackowski, Ph.D. student in engineering education, College of Engineering.

Graduate Teaching Assistant Excellence Award: Troy Jaisohn Kim, mechanical engineering, College of Engineering.

Outstanding doctoral degree students

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences: Leah Hamilton, food science and technology.

College of Architecture and Urban Studies: Omobolanle Ogunseiju, building construction.

College of Engineering: Barath Udayasuryan, biomedical engineering.

College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences: Damien Williams, science, technology and society.

College of Natural Resources

and Environment: Yang Zhou, sustainable biomaterials.

College of Science: Whitney Woelmer, biological sciences.

Pamplin College of Business: Haozhen Zhang, management.

Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine: Sarah Kuchinsky, biomedical and veterinary science.

Interdisciplinary doctoral student: Connor Brown, genetics, bioinformatics, and computational biology.

Outstanding master's degree students

College of Agriculture and Life Sciences: Aryanna James, entomology.

College of Architecture and Urban Studies: Alexandra Palin, visual arts.

College of Engineering: Bharath Bharadwaj, mechanical engineering.

College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences: Kiana Wilkerson, history.

College of Natural Resources and Environment: Brogan Holcombe, fish and wildlife conservation.

College of Science: Carla Lopez Lloreda, biological sciences.

Pamplin College of Business:

Alexis Monahan, business administration.

Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine: Emily Hellstern, biomedical and veterinary science.

Outstanding faculty mentors
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences: Professor Boris Vinatzer, plant and environmental sciences.

College of Architecture and Urban Studies: Professor Frank Weiner, architecture.

College of Engineering: Associate Professor David Knight, engineering education.

College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences: Assistant Professor Jordan MacKenzie, philosophy.

College of Natural Resources and Environment: Professor Kevin Edgar, sustainable biomaterials.

College of Science: Associate Professors Pearl Chiu and Brooks King-Casas, psychology.

Pamplin College of Business: Associate Professor Mario Pandelaere, marketing.

Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine: Professor John Rossmel, biomedical and veterinary science.

VDOT

from page 5

to 6 a.m. the following morning. Drivers should watch for signs and expect possible delays.

I-81 POTHOLE PATCHING OPERATIONS – Weather permitting, crews will patch potholes along southbound and northbound Interstate 81. Mobile right and left lane closures will be in place and moving along northbound and southbound lanes during nighttime hours, 9 p.m. to 6 a.m.

the following morning. Drivers should watch for moving vehicles and equipment. Expect possible delays.

INTERSTATE 581 ROUTE 581 BRIDGE WORK OVER WILIAMSON ROAD – On Route 11 (Williamson Road) drivers can expect intermittent and alternating lane closures between the intersections with Rutherford Avenue and Wells Avenue. In-

termittent daytime and nighttime lane closures between the intersections above might be required, and will be in place utilizing flagging operations. Any impacts to I-581 will be minimal. The project is expected to be complete in the fall of 2022.

LANE CLOSURES:
A left lane closure will be in place on northbound and southbound I-581 from mile marker 0-1, Monday at 7 a.m. through Wednesday at 7 p.m.

A right lane closure will be in place on northbound and southbound I-581 from mile marker 0-1, Thursday at 7 a.m. through Saturday at 7 p.m.

A left and center lane closure will be in place on northbound and southbound I-581 from mile marker 0-1, Saturday at 5 p.m. through Sunday at 2 p.m.

A right lane closure may be in place on Route 11 northbound between the intersections of Rutherford Avenue and Wells Avenue periodically.

Nighttime left lane closures for both the northbound and southbound directions of Route 11 are possible between the intersections referenced above.

I-581/220 EXPRESSWAY PAVING OPERATIONS – Weather permitting, crews will pave, patch and repair pavement on various routes. Lane closures may be in place during nighttime hours, 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. the following morning. Drivers should watch for

signs and expect possible delays.

I-581/220 LANE & RAMP CLOSURES FOR PAVING AND MAINTENANCE OPERATIONS IN ROANOKE COUNTY – Weather permitting, crews will be milling and paving along Interstate 81. Right and left lane closures will be in place along northbound and southbound lanes during nighttime hours. Drivers should expect possible delays.

I-581 BRIDGE REPAIRS – Weather permitting, crews will repair bridge decks on Interstate 581. Right, center and left lane closures will be in place northbound and southbound during nighttime hours, 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. the following morning. Drivers should watch for signs and expect possible delays. Scheduled traffic impacts include:

Left or right lane closures may be in place on I-581 northbound from Orange Avenue to Valley View Boulevard from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Left or right lane closures may be in place on I-581 from Valley View Boulevard to Orange Avenue from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Flagging operations may be in place on Liberty Road NW from Lukens Street NE to Hunt Avenue NW from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

INTERSTATE 77 (CARROLL COUNTY) I-77 PAVING OPERATIONS – Weather permitting, crews will be performing paving op-

erations along Interstate 77 between mile marker 24 and 0. Right and left lane closures may be in place along northbound and southbound lanes during nighttime hours, 7 p.m. to 6 a.m. Drivers should watch for moving vehicles and equipment. Expect possible delays.

I-77 BRIDGE DECK REPAIRS – Weather permitting, crews will repair bridge decks on Interstate 77. Right and left lane closures may be in place northbound or southbound during nighttime hours, 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. the following morning. Drivers should watch for signs and expect possible delays.

Left lane and right lane closures will be in place on I-77 northbound from mile marker 1 to 2.5 from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m., Sunday through Thursday nights.

I-77 LANE & RAMP CLOSURES FOR MAINTENANCE OPERATIONS IN CARROLL COUNTY – Weather permitting, crews will be milling, paving and performing maintenance along Interstate 77. Right and left lane closures will be in place along northbound and southbound lanes during nighttime hours. Drivers should expect possible delays.

I-77 MOWING, BRUSH REMOVAL & SHOULDER WORK – Weather permitting, crews will remove and clear brush and work on shoulders and slopes along I-77 northbound and southbound from

mile marker 17 to 14 during nighttime hours, 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. the following morning. A left lane closure will be in place.

ROANOKE CITY

13TH STREET SE IMPROVEMENTS WITH DETOUR – A project to improve a portion of 13th Street SE in Roanoke is underway. Located in a residential neighborhood just east of downtown Roanoke, this project will improve traffic flow and connectivity along 13th Street SE from Tazewell Avenue to Norfolk Avenue. The project entails reconstructing about 0.2-mile of 13th Street as an improved, two-lane roadway with 10.5-foot-wide travel lane and a raised median. A new roadway will extend 13th Street to Norfolk Avenue and the intersection at 13th Street and Wise Avenue will be reconfigured to include a roundabout. Bike lanes, sidewalks, crosswalks and curb and gutter will also be added. Southbound 13th Street traffic has a detour in place using Norfolk Avenue onto 12th Street to Tazewell Avenue. This detour will be in place throughout the duration of this project. Signs will be posted to designate the detour route.

Northbound 13th Street will remain open to traffic. Flaggers may be possible and the speed limit through the work zone is 25 mph. The project is expected to be completed in summer 2023.

AUCTION SALE!

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MONTGOMERY SPORTS

Christiansburg's Worley named first-team All-American gymnast

Marty Gordon
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

Christiansburg gymnast Raena Worley, a junior, has been named a first-team All-American gymnast after qualifying from the University of Kentucky for the NCAA Championship April 14-16 in Fort Worth, Texas.

Worley will be competing for the all-around following her most recent win in the second round, first session of the NCAA Auburn Regional. She has won the award seven times throughout her 2022 junior season, winning 13 times overall throughout her college career.

Her highest mark of 39.750, which she scored against Missouri and Michigan State, is the highest individual all-around performance

for Kentucky in the regular season since 1996. The top-three all-around performance scores for the Wildcats are held by three-time NCAA Champion, Jenny Hansen (1993-96). Worley's 39.750 is the fourth-best all-around performance tally in program history.

Throughout the season, Worley set numerous career and season records including a 9.925 on vault, 9.950 on bars and a 9.975 on the floor exercise. She tied both her top beam (9.950) and floor score at the regional final.

The Women's Collegiate Gymnastics Association Thursday named Worley a 2022 Regular Season All-American. She earned first-team All-American honors on three different events, including first-team on

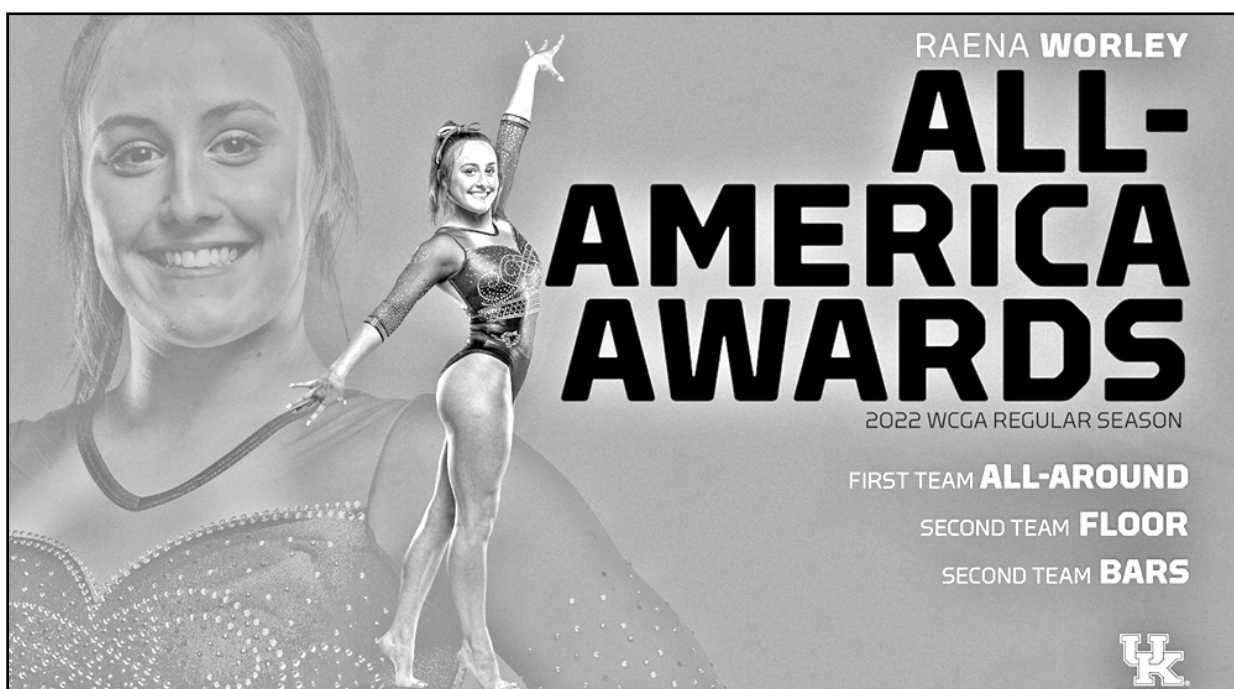


PHOTO COURTESY OF UK ATHLETICS

the All-Around.

In addition to her first-team honors, Worley received two second-team All-American

awards. She tied for 11th place on the uneven bars at the NCAA championships, which earned her a second team nod in

that event. Worley also received a ninth-place ranking on the Floor Exercise, which secured her a spot on the All-Ameri-

can second team.

Worley was also voted to the 2022 All-Southeastern Conference First Team.

Roth returning as voice of the Hokies

Marty Gordon
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

A familiar voice is heading back to the radio booth for Virginia Tech football games this fall. Former play-by-play announcer Bill Roth returns after a seven-year absence.

Jon Laaser replaced Roth in 2015 after Roth accepted a similar post at UCLA. He stayed there for a year before returning to Blacksburg to teach Broadcasting classes. Laaser left abruptly during this past year's basketball season, and there had been plenty of rumors Roth might be coming back.

Tim Bickford replaced Laaser during the remainder of the college basketball season.

Roth had been doing nationally-broadcasted high school football games and picked up an ACC-network broadcast here and there.

"What an exciting time to return to the Hokies," Roth pointed out. "We've got so many

stories to tell and memories to make for Tech fans of all generations. There's so much positive momentum around Virginia Tech Athletics right now under the leadership of Whit Babcock and his staff. It's just awesome to be a part of it again as we kick-off the Brent Pry era."

Tech Director of Athletics Whit Babcock said having Roth return as the play-by-play voice of Virginia Tech Football should be a seamless fit for someone whose heart has really never left Blacksburg.

"Bill has been responsible for some of the most iconic radio calls in Hokies' history and we all look forward to hearing him describe more memorable moments along with his longtime partner, Mike Burnop. Both Coach Pry and I greatly appreciate Bill's depth of knowledge on all things Hokies, as well as his colorful storytelling skills," Babcock said.

Roth helped found the Virginia Tech's

sports media and analytics program and most recently shifted it to Tech's school of communications. He is a 2013 Virginia Sports Hall of Fame inductee and is an 11-time Virginia Sports-caster of the Year. When he left for UCLA, he had spent 27 full seasons in Blacksburg.

Roth will team again with former Hokie player Mike Burnop, who he had 25 past years in the booth together.

"I'm happy to welcome him back to the broadcast booth in Blacksburg as a friend and colleague. From the National Championship Game in New Orleans to Michael Vick and the Miracle in Morgantown, we've shared countless games with Hokie Nation over the years. There was even that time Tyrod 'did it' against Nebraska! I'm looking forward to sharing more Virginia Tech Football victories and great plays with Bill starting again this fall," said Burnop.

In addition to his

play-by-play duties for Tech Football, Roth plans to host podcasts for Tech Athletics and will write a regular column for Inside Hokie Sports magazine.

"This is a special place for me," Roth acknowledged. "This stadium. This campus. This community. As a broadcaster and now as an instructor, I've seen how Virginia Tech impacts the lives of its students and student-athletes. It's just a remarkable place with truly caring and genuine people, and I'm just delighted to return to the booth with my dear friend, Mike Burnop. Reunion tours can be fun, and I'm glad we've got the band back together again!"

Roth graduated from Syracuse's prestigious S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications in 1987. Upon graduation, Roth used his demo reel from the 1987 NCAA men's basketball national championship game between Syracuse and Indiana to help land



BILL ROTH

his initial appointment with Virginia Tech in 1988. He was inducted into the Virginia Sports Hall of Fame in 2013.

Learfield IMG, which handles the sports marketing and broadcast side of things at Tech, will advertise for a new basketball play-by-play guy as Roth will not do basketball games.

Roth will be calling

Saturday's Spring Game on television for ACC Network with former Tech wide receiver Eddie Royal handling the color commentary, with Taylor Davis reporting from the sidelines.

Roth will officially return to the radio booth for the Hokies on Friday, Sept. 2 in Tech's season opener at Old Dominion.

VT athletics' 'Hokie Hi: Weekend at Home' set for April 14-16

The Virginia Tech Department of Athletics is sharing additional details surrounding the "Hokie Hi: Weekend at Home" event, an expanded weekend in Blacksburg surrounding Tech Football's annual Spring Game, presented by PMSi.

The first-ever "Hokie Hi: Weekend at Home" will take place April 14-16 and will offer Hokie Nation the chance to cheer on a number of Tech sports, including softball versus Virginia (games on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday), baseball versus Miami (games on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday) and men's tennis versus Boston College (Friday).

The spring game will take place on April 16 at 4:00 p.m. and will be televised live on the ACC Network. Tickets are now available and will be sold for \$5 (all general admission seating). All tickets will be ordered online and will be delivered via mobile delivery or print-at-home, including tickets ordered on game day. Fans are encouraged to order tickets in advance in order to ensure a seamless gameday experience.

Students will be able to claim a complimentary ticket through the standard



lottery process for regular season games. More information will be shared with students in April.

Suite holders will be communicated with directly regarding available options for their suites in the next few days.

Registration is also now open for Virginia Tech's annual 3.2-mile Run in Remembrance, which will

take place that Saturday, April 16. The event will begin with a moment of silence at 9:43 a.m. to honor and remember the vibrant lives of the 32 students and faculty who were tragically taken from us in 2007.

The event's 3.2-mile loop around the Blacksburg campus begins and ends on the Virginia Tech

Drillfield near the April 16 Memorial and passes by landmarks such as the Duck Pond, the Grove, and the Virginia Tech Py-lons, and will take runners and walkers through Lane Stadium.

Visit RecSports.VT.edu/RunFor32 for registration details, T-shirt purchasing options, and event updates. For more

information on Day of Remembrance activities, visit WeRemember.VT.edu.

Parking will be available in all open on- and off-campus lots. Similar to previous years, parking will be free of charge and will be first come, first-served. As always, tailgating will be a memorable part of the entire Tech football experience.

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Blacksburg girls soccer downs Patrick Henry 8-0



Blacksburg's Ava Massjouni sends the ball into the box for the Bruin offense against Patrick Henry. On a cold and rainy Friday night, Blacksburg's girls defeated Patrick Henry, 8-0 at home.



Blacksburg's Ginny Crawford attempts to score in front of the Patrick Henry goal during the first half.



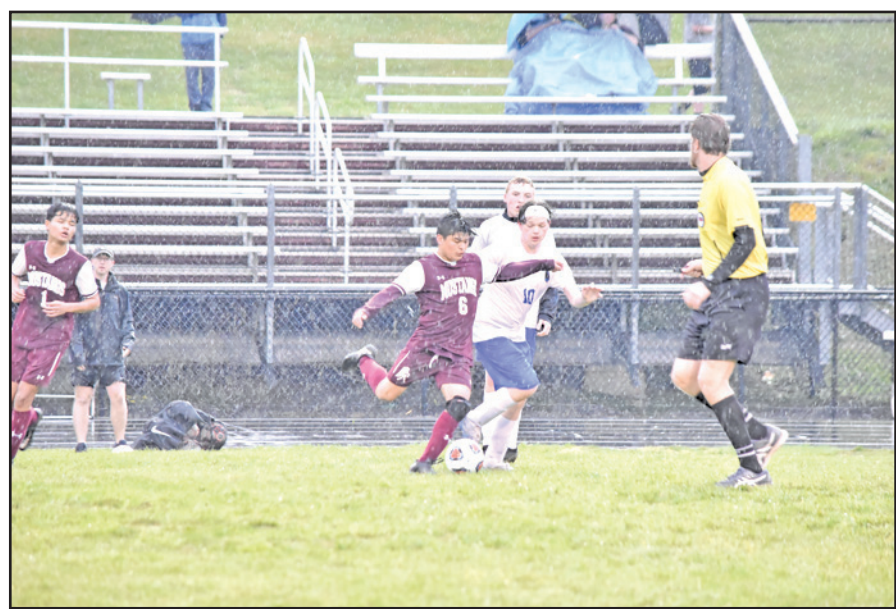
PHOTOS BY JON FLEMING

Blacksburg's Erin Bishop scored two quick goals right before halftime against Patrick Henry to help the Bruins to a 4-0 lead at the break on the way to the 8-0 win Friday night.

Eastern Montgomery boys soccer defeats Craig Co. 3-0, Parry McCluer 8-0 to up record to 5-2



EastMont's Senior Camren Sampson takes the throw-in for the Mustangs in their 3-0 win over Craig County on April 5 in the rain.



EastMont's Senior Luis Martinez passes the ball to his teammate in a rainy game against Craig County.



Eastmont senior Lance Elkins drills past a defender to score his first goal of the season.



PHOTOS BY LAUREN TATE

Eastmont freshman Talan Bruce rushes to the goal for one of his two goals on the night against Parry McCluer on April 7.

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