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Saturday, December 24, 2022

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Virginia state veterinarian approves entry of Santa's reindeer on Christmas Eve



PHOTO COURTESY OF PEOPLE MAGAZINE

Dr. Charlie Broaddus, State Veterinarian with the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS), in collaboration with the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR), has issued a permit to Nicolas "Santa" Claus of the North Pole to bring his herd of "eight tiny reindeer" and one additional rare, red-nosed reindeer into Virginia on the evening of Dec. 24.

While the USDA regulates the international movement of animals, the VDACS Office of Veterinary Services regulates the movement of animals into the Commonwealth of Virginia. DWR is charged with the management of the

state's wildlife resources. All ruminants entering Virginia must bear identification, and the identification number must be noted on the Certificate of Veterinary Inspection (CVI). Identification can be an ear tag issued by a state or federal entity, or other forms of identification approved by the state veterinarian and is critically important in tracing animals in the event of a significant disease outbreak.

As the importation of deer into Virginia is generally prohibited, the state veterinarian collaborated with DWR to issue the permit. A DWR permit is

See **Reindeer**, page 4



PHOTO COURTESY OF VISIT NC

As this family shops for a Christmas tree, Virginia Tech's Kyle Peer points out that real Christmas trees benefit the environment beyond the holiday season.

VT expert: "Farm-grown, real Christmas trees have the upper hand" over artificial trees

Whether your family buys a fake tree or visits a local farm to buy a real tree, it's important to understand the environmental significance of the choice.

Virginia Tech's Kyle Peer, from the school's Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation, says farm-grown Christmas trees benefit the environment beyond the holiday season. Peer is a specialist

for growing Christmas trees.

"A farm-grown, real Christmas tree has the upper hand," Peer said. "While they're growing, real Christmas trees absorb carbon dioxide and other gasses and emit fresh oxygen."

Christmas trees are grown on farms like any other crop, and farmers plant new seedlings every spring to replace those harvested.

"Approximately 350

million conifer trees are growing on Christmas tree farms in the U.S. alone," said Peer. "These trees would not exist if they were not planted by Christmas tree farmers. Christmas tree farms stabilize the soil, protect water supplies, and support complex ecosystems. And, of course, farm-grown Christmas trees can be recycled whereas fake

See **Trees**, page 4

Virginia earns #1 business climate spot from Site Selection magazine

New River Valley, VA - Virginia Business has announced that the state has earned the top spot in Site Selection magazine for best business climate. Virginia has catapulted nine places from its number ten ranking last year and has unseated Georgia, which has had an eight-year streak at the top.

The head of the Virginia

Economic Development Partnership, CEO and President Jason El Koubi, said,

"In 2021, the Virginia Economic Development Partnership announced 130 projects in Virginia, expected to bring more than 18,000 jobs and \$2.1 billion in investment. And since January, VEDP has announced 65 more projects. Virginia has been most

successful attracting projects in advanced materials, supply chain management, data centers, and life sciences."

Site selectors were surveyed and responded that their number one criteria for site selection is workforce skills, followed by tax climate and workforce development.

Virginia is ahead of the curve with major workforce

programs and partnerships. The Virginia Tech Talent Pipeline Program "aims to produce 31,000 in-demand computer science graduates during the next two decades through a cooperative program with 11 Virginia universities." Additionally, the Virginia Talent Accelerator Program, the result of collaboration between VEDP and the Virginia Community College

System, provides "customizable job training and other support to qualifying companies at no cost."

The New River Valley has several exciting talent development initiatives, including a recent announcement regarding a GO Virginia grant to fund workforce development in Floyd and Pulaski counties.

- Onward NRV



PHOTO BY MEGHAN MARSH FOR VIRGINIA TECH

University Arborist Jamie King speaks at the sesquicentennial grove dedication ceremony.

Grove planted to commemorate Virginia Tech's Sesquicentennial

A new grove of trees commemorating Virginia Tech's Sesquicentennial on the Blacksburg campus can be found on the western edge of the Drillfield for future generations of Hokies to gather, reflect, and celebrate the university's resiliency.

A collaborative effort among many university groups, including the Division of Campus Planning, Infrastructure, and Facilities; College of Natural Resources and Environment; College of Architecture, Arts, and Design; Communications and

Marketing; Advancement; and more, the sesquicentennial grove will leave a lasting impact on Virginia Tech for the next 150 years and beyond.

Reminiscent of the university's sesquicentennial theme of honoring the past, celebrating the present, and looking forward to the future, the grove will offer a new setting for research, education, and recreation on the Blacksburg campus.

See **Grove**, page 4



PHOTO COURTESY OF

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, Dec. 24 – Monday, Dec. 26:

Radford Library closed

The Radford Public Library will be closed for the Christmas holiday from Dec. 23 – 26.

MFRL closed

All branches of the Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library will be closed for the Christmas holiday from Dec. 23 – 26.

Saturday, Dec. 24:

Town of Blacksburg holiday schedule

The Blacksburg Community Center and Aquatic Center will be closed. Blacksburg Transit will operate on Reduced Alternate Service.

Sunday, Dec. 25:

Town of Blacksburg holiday schedule

The Blacksburg Community Center and Aquatic Center will be closed. There will be no Blacksburg Transit service.

Monday, Dec. 26:

Town of Blacksburg holiday schedule

All town administrative offices will be closed. The Blacksburg Community Center and Aquatic Center will be open. Blacksburg Transit will operate on Reduced Alternate Service. Blacksburg Transit offices will be closed. Trash will not be picked up in the SE quadrant. Instead, trash pickup will be on Wednesday, Dec. 28. Please have all materials at the curb by 7 a.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 27:

Melted snowman slime

At the Christiansburg Library; 3 p.m. All ages are invited to come make some melted snowman slime.

Wednesday, Dec. 28:

Afternoon movie and snack,

At the Meadowbrook Public Library; 12:30 p.m. This is a fun-filled afternoon complete with a tasty snack and an animated film (rated PG) about crime fighting Super-Dog Krypto as he embarks on a mission to save his crime-fighting pal, the Man of Steel. Call (540) 268-1964 for more details.

Thursday, Dec. 29:

American Red Cross blood drive

At the Christiansburg Library; 10 a.m. Walk-ins are welcome or donors can sign up at <https://www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/donation-time>.

Pokémon party

At the Blacksburg Library; 2 p.m. Participants can bring their Nintendo Switch or DS with their Pokémon games or their Pokémon Card Collection and make new friends while trading, exploring, and battling. Trainers of all ages are welcome.

Friday, Dec. 30:

Red Cross blood drive

At the Jessie Peterman Memorial Library; 11:30 a.m. Walk-ins are welcome or donors may sign up at www.redcrossblood.org/give.html/find-drive.

Saturday, Dec. 31:

Family movie matinee: Ratatouille

At the Radford Public Library; 11 a.m. Take a trip to Paris through Disney Pixar and meet a rat who dreams of becoming a gourmet chef at one of Paris's finest restaurants. Rated G with a run time of 111 minutes.

Sunday, Jan. 1:

Town of Blacksburg holiday schedule

The Blacksburg Community Center will close at 5 p.m. There will be no Blacksburg Transit service.

Monday, Jan. 2:

Town of Blacksburg holiday schedule

All town administrative offices will be closed. Blacksburg Transit will operate on a Reduced Service. Blacksburg Transit offices will be closed.

Ongoing:

Help veterans with donations

The Meadowbrook Public Library is a collection point for items needed at the VA Medical Center in Salem. Donations of the following items may be brought to the library during December: deodorant, denture adhesive, 3-in-1 body wash/shampoo/conditioner, body lotion, toothpaste, nail clippers, sweatpants, sweatshirts, t-shirts (size M, L, XL), and new baseball caps. Co-Sponsored by VFW Post 5311 and Montgomery-Floyd Regional libraries.

Free GED Classes

At the Meadowbrook Public Library, 5 to 8 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. New River Community College is offering free GED classes every Tuesday and Thursday until Thursday, Dec. 15. For more information or to sign up call the library at 540-268-1964.



Marketplace



THE FINCASTLE HERALD
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News Messenger
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Positions Wanted

Quality Inn
Hiring Full/Part Time Housekeeping and Front Desk. Apply in Person. Ph-540-639-3000

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FOR SALE
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Help Wanted

Part Time Newspaper Production Help
Salem Times Register has openings for afternoon/evening shift work- inserting, labeling and bundling newspapers for delivery. No experience necessary. Hours may vary. Will train. \$11 per hour. Contact Lynn Hurst, General Manager, Salem-Times Register (540)389-9355 or email lhurst@ourvalley.org

Legals - City of Radford

NOTICE OF FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND NOTICE OF INTENT TO REQUEST RELEASE OF FUNDS

December 20, 2022
City of Radford
10 Robertson Street
Radford, Virginia 24141
(540) 267-3188
These Notices shall satisfy two separate but related procedural requirements for activities undertaken by the City of Radford, Virginia. REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS
On or about January 10, 2023 the City of Radford will submit a request to Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the release of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds under Title 1 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended to undertake a project known as East Main Street River and Rail Downtown Connector for the purpose of connecting the downtown area with the

Legals - City of Radford

river and spur economic growth in the area via parking, pedestrian safety, lighting, and wayfinding improvements. Total estimated CDBG funds associated with this project is \$150,000 and estimated total project funding is \$2,400,000.
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
The City of Radford has determined that the project will have no significant impact on the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) is not required. Additional project information is contained in the Environmental Review Record (ERR) on file at New River Valley Regional Commission at 6580 Valley Center Dr. Radford, VA 24141, the City of Radford at 10 Robertson Street, Radford VA 24141, where the ERR can be examined or copied weekdays 9 AM to 4 PM. The Environmental Review Record can also be viewed on the City of Radford's website at <https://www.radfordva.gov/CivicAlerts.aspx?CID=1>.
PUBLIC COMMENT
Any individual, group, or agency may submit written comments on the ERR to City Radford, Community Development Department, 10 Robertson Street, Radford, VA 24141 or by email to Melissa.Skelton@radfordva.gov. All comments received by January 10, 2023 will be considered by Radford City prior to authorizing the submission of a request for the release of funds. Comments should specify which Notice they are addressing.
ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATION
The City of Radford certifies to HUD that David Ridpath, in his capacity of City

Legals - City of Radford

Administrator, consents to accept the jurisdiction of the Federal Courts if an action is brought to enforce responsibilities in relation to the environmental review process and that these responsibilities have been satisfied. HUD approval of the certification satisfies its responsibilities under NEPA and related laws and authorities and allows the City of Radford to use program funds.
OBJECTIONS TO RELEASE OF FUNDS
HUD will accept objections to its release of funds and the City of Radford's certification for a period of fifteen days following the anticipated submission date or its actual receipt of the request (whichever is later) only if they are on one of the following bases: a) the certification was not executed by the Certifying Officer of the City of Radford; b) the City of Radford has omitted a step or failed to make a decision or finding required by HUD regulations at 24 CFR part 58; c) the grant recipient or other participants in the development process have committed funds, incurred costs or undertaken activities not authorized by 24 CFR Part 58 before approval of a release of funds by HUD or DHCD; or d) another Federal agency acting unsatisfactory from the standpoint of environmental quality. Objections must be prepared and submitted per the required procedures (24 CFR Part 58, Sec. 58.76) and shall be addressed to HUD, 600 E. Broad Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219-1800, Attention: Mr. Ronnie J. Legette, Sr.,


Legals - Montgomery County

LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING OF THE TOWN OF CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL

The Town of Christiansburg Town Council will hold a Public Hearing on, Tuesday, January 10, 2023, at 7:00 PM in the Council Chambers of the Christiansburg Town Hall, 100 E. Main Street, Christiansburg, Virginia 24073. The purpose of the public hearing is to receive public comments concerning: A. Rezoning request by Town of Christiansburg, Property Owner, to rezone an approximately 50.539-acre portion of the property located on Booker T Washington Pkwy NW; Tax Parcel 435 - ((A)) - 3A, Parcel ID 270079, commonly known as "Christiansburg Huckleberry Park", from Agricultural District (A) to Single-Family Residential District (R-1) and an approximately 12.25-acre portion of the same property from Agricultural District (A) to General Business District (B-3). The property is designated as Business/ Commercial and Parks/ Open Space on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan. Town Hall will be open and available to receive public comment in-person at the time of this Public Hearing. A copy of the application, the Town's Zoning Map, Zoning Ordinance, and Future Land Use Map may be viewed in the Planning Department Office, 100 E. Main Street, Christiansburg, VA 24073 during normal office hours of 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Contact Benjamin Tripp, Planning Director, at (540) 382-6128 ext. 1120 or

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by email at bttripp@christiansburg.org with any questions or if you require reasonable accommodations.



Classified Advertising

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Cookie swaps, gingerbread, peppermint, and more: Holiday food history uncovered

By Kelsey Bartlett

Safe from the biting cold, a group of Virginia Tech students gathered in early December to exchange cookies, sip hot cocoa, and reminisce about their favorite holiday traditions. The cookie swap, held Dec. 1 in Harper Hall, is one winter tradition that has grown in popularity in the United States over the years. This one was organized by Food Studies Program Director Anna Zeide and program affiliate Courtney Thomas.

No matter the holiday, winter celebrations tend to have at least one common thread — food.

Zeide and Thomas recently shared their favorite holiday traditions and the reasons behind popular foods that people eat during this time. Also, Kira Dietz, assistant director of Special Collections and University Archives and an affiliate of the Food Studies Program, shared her yearly tradition, interesting historical tidbits, and the history behind three winter holidays and the foods associated with them.

Q: Why are cookie swaps popular this time of year?

Zeide: In contrast to other holiday foods, which may be messier, more temperature – or time – sensitive, harder to scale up or serve or make ahead of time, cookies are perfect little packages of sweetness that can be made ahead, made in an infinite variety of flavors and textures, and can serve as discrete units that lend themselves to trading and gifting. Cookie swaps bring together these positive qualities of cookies with the desire to give gifts in the winter months. It’s a way to create connection in the darkness and bring a special occasion to look forward to in the shortest and darkest days of the year.

Q: Why is food such an important part of winter holiday celebrations?

Zeide: Food is an important part of holidays at any time of year because of its ability to comfort and satiate, to connect and break the ice and give people something to do with their hands and their mouths that eases social tension. But I also think that winter holidays take place in moments where people gather indoors, huddle close, and try to preserve warmth and lightness. In these contexts, foods are especially welcome in their ability to warm and concentrate pleasure.

Q: Why are flavors like peppermint and ginger associated with the season?

Zeide: A lot of winter and cold weather foods come down to preservation. These spices have preservative properties that make them commonly used in wintertime when the harvest is but a distant memory and foods often need to be spiced, salted, dried, and sugared — or later, canned, frozen, and/or boxed.

Q: What are your favorite holiday food tradition?

Zeide: My family celebrates Hanukkah, so I have taken to making latkes [pancakes] during that time. I once tried to do eight nights of latkes in which I made a different kind of vegetable or bean “pancake” each night, but I let myself go into the realm of veggie burgers, johnnycakes, Korean pancakes, crepes, blintzes, and so on. But when I do go the more traditional potato pancake route, I like to use a trick that my childhood friend taught me. Let the shredded pancakes sit in a bowl for a while before carefully removing them to reveal the liquid beneath, which, when carefully poured off, leaves behind a gummy white paste of potato starch. If you add that starch back into the potatoes, discarding the liquid, it helps give the latkes structure and crispiness. My kids now make latkes with me and look forward to the process each year.



PHOTO COURTESY OF VIRGINIA TECH

Gingerbread houses decorated by Virginia Tech students.

Thomas: When my twins were young my husband, Chris, and I realized that our Christmas tradition of visiting both his parents and my extended family on Christmas Day wasn’t sustainable or fun. We decided that we’d invite his parents to join our household for Christmas dinner. The first year we prepared a “traditional” Christmas dinner with a glazed ham and numerous sides, but when we started talking about the menu for the second Christmas, Chris asked me, “What do you want to eat?” And I said, “Tacos.”

So he started working on a special recipe. This was the birth of our “Christmas tacos.” He only makes them for Christmas dinner, which has now expanded to include us, our three young children, our elder daughter and son in law, his parents, my parents, and my grandmother. The tacos are the highlight of Christmas Day and the reason for the growth of the event. Our son-in-law makes the guacamole, and Chris’s Christmas taco recipe is a carefully

guarded secret that he hasn’t yet shared with anyone else. For our kids, Christmas tacos are an essential part of the holiday.

Dietz: The season between Thanksgiving and Christmas is serious cookie baking time for my family. We have a long tradition of making cookies to share with family, friends, and just about anyone who walks by our homes. I will happily bake year-round, but there’s something about this time of year, even when I’m not around my family usually until closer to Christmas, that I can’t wait to get out my baking sheets and cooling racks and fire up my oven.

I think my personal record was 80 dozen cookies one year, but most years I average closer to 40 to 60. I have certain cookies I make every year for sentimental reasons, but I take some time to experiment and try new cookies, sometimes combining my explorations with one of my other food passions: cocktail history.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE UNITED WAY OF THE NEW RIVER VALLEY

Happy holidays from the United Way of the New River Valley

A note from United Way interim director Lynn Rogers

The United Way of the New River Valley has gone through a great deal of transition over the last few months and is excited to see what 2023 brings. The strategic planning process began in the fall. This involved conversations with local community and non-profit leaders to discuss community needs and how the United Way can better serve residents of the New River Valley.

Much work remains to be done, but the United Way staff and board are learning and listening and are engaged. They are also motivated and dedicated to serve the New River Valley in the best manner possible. When those who are struggling are served, a strong community for everyone is being built. Happy Holidays and Happy New Year.

- United Way Interim Director Lynn Rogers

montcova.com

Survey: Virginia’s most popular Christmas book is “The Snowman”

The holiday season is upon us, and one of the best ways to get in the spirit of the season is to curl up and read a classic Christmas story. With the help of the data analysis firm Mindnet Analytics, MyElearningWorld did a deep dive into the data to determine what the most popular Christmas book is in each state across the country.

We all have our personal favorites, whether it’s Dickens’ A Christmas Carol, the 80’s favorite The Polar Express, the all-time classic Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, or something else.

There are dozens of Christmas stories that many of us cherish, but did you know your favorite holiday book might actually be influenced by where you live? For instance, New England loves A Christmas

Carol as it was the most popular book in Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island. Virginia’s most popular Christmas book is The Snowman.

Here are the state-by-state results: Alabama: A Christmas Memory; Alaska: Miracle on 34th Street; Arizona: The Little Match Girl; Arkansas: The Polar Express; California: The Little Match Girl; Colorado: The Nutcracker and the Mouse King; Connecticut: The Snowman; Delaware: The Snowman; District of Columbia: The Greatest Gift; Florida: The Greatest Gift; Georgia: The Gift of the Magi; Hawaii: The Greatest Gift; Idaho: Twas the Night Before Christmas; Illinois: The Steadfast Tin Soldier; Indiana: Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer; Iowa:

Twas the Night Before Christmas; Kansas: Miracle on 34th Street; Kentucky: The Best Christmas Pageant Ever; Louisiana: The Chimes; Maine: A Christmas Carol; Maryland: the Life and Adventures of Santa Claus; Massachusetts: A Christmas Carol; Michigan: Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer; Minnesota: Twas the Night Before Christmas; Mississippi: Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer; Missouri: The Elves and the Shoemaker; Montana: The Polar Express; Nebraska: Twas the Night Before Christmas; Nevada: The Little Match Girl; New Hampshire: A Christmas Carol; New Jersey: The Nutcracker and the Mouse King; New Mexico: The Polar Express; New York: The Cricket on the

See Christmas book, page 8

Public Notice Board of Equalization Montgomery County, Virginia

Public Notice is hereby given that the Board of Equalization of Montgomery County will meet on the days hereafter listed for the purpose of hearing complaints of inequalities including errors in acreage or for making decisions on such complaints. Upon hearing complaints, either oral or written, the Board will give consideration and INCREASE, DECREASE OR AFFIRM SUCH REAL ESTATE ASSESSMENTS. Before a change can be granted the taxpayer, or agent, must overcome a clear presumption in favor of the assessment. The taxpayer or agent must prove that the property is not uniform with other similar properties or prove that the property is assessed in excess of its fair market value.

Beginning Monday, January 9, 2023, to request an appeal hearing before the Board of Equalization call 540-394-3126 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday – Friday. THE DEADLINE TO REQUEST AN APPEAL BEFORE THE BOE IS FEBRUARY 10, 2023. Appointments will be scheduled at 15-minute intervals.

The Board of Equalization will begin hearing appeals on Wednesday, February 22, 2023 at the Reassessment Office, 16 N. Franklin Street (Back Entrance), Christiansburg, Va on the following days:

Wednesday, February 22, 2023	9:00 a.m.
Thursday, February 23, 2023	9:00 a.m.
Friday, February 24, 2023	9:00 a.m.
Tuesday, February 28, 2023	9:00 a.m.
Wednesday, March 1, 2023	1:00 p.m.
Thursday, March 2, 2023	9:00 a.m.
Saturday, March 4, 2023	10:00 a.m.
Wednesday, March 8, 2023	9:00 a.m.
Friday, March 10, 2023	9:00 a.m.
Tuesday, March 14, 2023	9:00 a.m. (as needed)
Thursday, March 16, 2023	9:00 a.m. (as needed)
Friday, March 24, 2023	9:00 a.m. (as needed)
Monday, March 27, 2023	9:00 a.m. (as needed)
Wednesday, March 29, 2023	9:00 a.m. (as needed)

The Board of Equalization offices will be closed on days that the Montgomery County Public Schools are closed for inclement weather. “As Needed” dates may be cancelled at the direction of the Board if all business/hearings are concluded prior to March 29, 2023.

By Order of the County of Montgomery, Board of Equalization
Louise Baker, Chair

Grove

from page 1

“Trees have been used throughout history to mark important places and events,” said Paul Winistorfer, dean of the College of Natural Resources and Environment. “They have served as early boundary lines and property borders, demarcated a particular year that an event happened through their growth rings, and become symbols of causes and celebrations. Many of the trees around Cheatham Hall were planted to honor our

graduating classes, the sycamore sapling planted across from the Lyric Theatre memorializes a very old sycamore used as a wayfinding marker, and the Merry Oak has long been treasured by enslaved people at Smithfield Plantation and their descendants.”

When the Sesquicentennial Planning Committee was looking for ideas to commemorate this historic anniversary, Winistorfer suggested planting a tree in honor of each academic college, an idea that germinated into the sesquicentennial grove. “I’m really excited and pleased that this grove of trees was planted to commemorate our anniversary. I look forward to seeing it grow, mature, and flourish in the decades to come — as has this great university,” said Winistorfer.

“The sesquicentennial grove is a perfect way to symbolize the celebration of our 150th anniversary. The trees will offer a lasting and visible legacy, changing and growing over time just like the university,” said Rosemary Blieszner, chair of the Sesquicentennial Steering Committee and interim dean of the College of Architecture, Arts, and Design. “I am grateful for the contributions and guidance from colleagues in the Division of Campus Planning, Infrastructure, and

Facilities in extending the sesquicentennial celebration to our beautiful campus.”

The grove includes several dozen trees from a variety of native species.

“These new trees represent our commitment to the future,” said Jamie King, university arborist. “They were selected carefully for their tolerance of the altered soils, heat, and pressure from human activity on urbanized sites. These species are also prepared for the climate we can expect in the near future. Many of these trees are native to areas south and east of Blacksburg where temperatures are warmer and periods of rain and drought are more intense.”

The sesquicentennial grove was planted in early December using thoughtful and sustainable planting practices to encourage healthy tree growth.

“Planting trees in the dormant season in this region is significantly less stressful on their roots than the rest of the year. The reduced risk of heat and drought during the winter also make this a beneficial time of the year for planting trees,” said King.

- Virginia Tech Communications

News Messenger

Established 1869

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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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Trees

from page 1

trees cannot.”

Peer said that unlike real trees, artificial trees are a petroleum-based product that are manufactured primarily in Chinese factories. Around 85 percent of fake trees in the U.S. are imported from China, according to the U.S. Commerce Department. This issue is especially concerning due to China’s weak enforcement of environmental

regulations. The polyvinyl chloride (PVC) used in most artificial trees has also been boycotted by many environmental groups.

“The average family uses a fake tree for only six to nine years before throwing it away, where it will remain in a landfill indefinitely,” said Peer. “That’s a pretty hefty, long-term environmental burden.”

“Since real trees are

biodegradable, they can be recycled or reused for mulch. Be sure to check with the local pick-up or drop-off locations in your local area to see where you can best recycle your tree,” said Peer.

Kyle Peer is a research faculty member in the College of Natural Resources and Environment at Virginia Tech and is the superintendent for the Reynolds Homestead

Forest Resources Research Center, a 780-acre center created in 1969 to further the study of forest biology and soil science. His areas of specialization include vegetative propagation, clonal forestry, and tree breeding. He is an industry advisor for the Virginia Christmas Tree Growers Association and also serves as the Virginia Cooperative Extension Specialist for Christmas Trees.

Reindeer

from page 1

required to possess any member of the deer family in Virginia.

“Santa travels to Virginia each year with his herd of reindeer, and while his visit is brief, it is still vitally important to Virginia’s agricultural industry that the reindeer are safe and healthy. Santa takes great care

of his herd, and I am happy to issue an approved permit,” said Dr. Broaddus.

In discussing this approval, Santa said, “I love delivering Christmas presents to the commonwealth. Virginia farmers produce some of the best products in the world.

I especially enjoy the milk and eggnog, and my reindeer really love Virginia-grown carrots and apples.”

Submitted by Paige Pearson, Public Information Officer, Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

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| <p>CLUES ACROSS</p> <p>1. Sharp pain</p> <p>5. Military hats</p> <p>11. Software app on a network (abbr.)</p> <p>14. Genus of freshwater mussels</p> <p>15. Continent</p> <p>16. Afghani monetary unit</p> <p>17. Recovered</p> <p>19. Ribonucleic acid</p> <p>20. Refers to end of small intestine</p> <p>21. Ethiopia's largest lake</p> <p>22. Hostelery</p> <p>23. Defunct American automaker</p> <p>25. Denotes origin by birth or descent</p> <p>27. Part of a watch</p> <p>31. Stare with mouth open wide</p> <p>34. Found in granite</p> <p>35. Competing</p> <p>38. Stone film "___ Given Sunday"</p> <p>39. Junction between two nerve cells</p> | <p>41. Greek goddess of the dawn</p> <p>42. Fight</p> <p>44. Thin, narrow piece of wood or metal</p> <p>45. Ribosomal ribonucleic acid</p> <p>46. Type of kitchenware</p> <p>49. Specialty of The Onion</p> <p>51. Major Mexican river</p> <p>55. Kilometers per hour</p> <p>56. Species of mackerel</p> <p>60. Bones</p> <p>61. Interest rate</p> <p>62. New York Mets legend</p> <p>64. 19th letter of Greek alphabet</p> <p>65. Shawl</p> <p>66. Gracefully thin</p> <p>67. Type of deciduous tree</p> <p>68. Not classy</p> <p>69. Taro corm or plant</p> | <p>CLUES DOWN</p> <p>1. Jewish festival</p> <p>2. Anoint</p> <p>3. More pleasant</p> <p>4. Type of painting</p> <p>5. Witness</p> <p>6. Harm</p> <p>7. Builder of Arantea (Greek myth.)</p> <p>8. City in India</p> <p>9. Used to unlock cans</p> <p>10. Induces sleep</p> <p>11. More bouncy</p> <p>12. A branch of Islam</p> <p>13. White (French)</p> <p>14. Legal term</p> <p>18. Covered with frost</p> <p>24. Hengyang Nanyue Airport</p> <p>28. Wash</p> <p>29. Disorder of the scalp</p> <p>30. North American tree</p> <p>31. Helps cars run</p> <p>32. Mandela's party</p> | <p>33. Aromatic plant of the daisy family</p> <p>36. Negative</p> <p>37. College student educator (abbr.)</p> <p>39. Most rare</p> <p>40. Harm with a knife</p> <p>43. Folk singer DiFranco</p> <p>45. Return to</p> <p>47. One who repairs</p> <p>48. Eastern England river</p> <p>49. Hockey players need two</p> <p>50. Dismay</p> <p>52. Rebuke</p> <p>53. Plant of the arum family</p> <p>54. Fish genus</p> <p>57. Plant of the mallow family</p> <p>58. Amounts of time</p> <p>59. 11th letter of the Hebrew alphabet</p> <p>63. One of Napoleon's generals</p> |
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OBITUARIES

Blevins, Baxter Walter

Baxter Walter Blevins, 78, of Nicole (Sis) and Randy O'Dell; Dublin died Monday, Dec. 19, 2022.

He was born in Troutdale, Va. on May 30, 1944, to the late Garland Faith and Eugenia Dunavant Blevins. He was preceded in death by his wife, Juanita Tickle Blevins, and a brother, Larry Garland Blevins.

He is survived by his daughter and son-in-law, the Highland Memory Gardens.



a son, Tracy Blevins; grandchildren Josie, Judy, Julia, JoAnna, Holly, and Misty; great-grandchildren EmmaLeigh and Karson-Leigh; and a brother, Kenneth Blevins.

Graveside services were conducted Wednesday, Dec. 21, 2022, at 11 a.m. in

Caldwell, Eva Katherine

Eva Katherine Caldwell, 100, Delores Caldwell, Allen and Karen Caldwell; a sister, Vivian Davis Long; seven grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; and six great-great-grandchildren.

She was born in McCoy on April 11, 1922, to the late George Thomas and Eva Smith Graves. She was preceded in death by her husband, Brady W. Caldwell, daughter Glenna Whitt, brothers Carl, Joe, Robert, and Johnny Graves, sisters Lillian Graves, Roxie Carroll, and Gladys Lucas; and a granddaughter, Judy Albert. She was a resident of Long Shop for 47 years.

She is survived by her daughters and sons-in-law, Linda and R.H. Albert, Iris Ann Caldwell, Grace, and Phil Speirer; sons and daughters-in-law, Thomas and



The family extends a special thanks to Good Samaritan Hospice, especially Karen, Todd, Brittany, Lottie, Morgan, and the on-call nurses.

Funeral services were conducted Wednesday, Dec. 21, 2022, in the McCoy Funeral Home Chapel with Pastor Delores Caldwell officiating. Interment followed in the Harless Cemetery.

Contributions may be made to the American Cancer Society or Good Samaritan Hospice.

Send community news and photos to communitynews@ourvalley.org

See Obituaries, page 6

ANGLICAN CATHOLIC

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

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

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

BAPTIST

First Baptist Church on 3rd Ave., 215 Third Ave at the corner with Downey St. We nurture meaningful connections to God and others through worship, spiritual growth, and community ministry. We celebrate the dignity and worth of all persons, created in the image of God. Sunday Bible Study Groups - 9:45, Sunday Worship - 11:00. Website: fbcradford.org 540-639-4419. Worship is in-person and live-streamed on Facebook and on our YouTube channel: First Baptist Church Radford.

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

CHURCH OF CHRIST

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

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

CHURCH OF GOD

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

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

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

Christiansburg Church of the Brethren, 310 South Franklin Street. Pastor: Hal Sonafank, 1-336-583-4822. Sunday School 10 a.m.; Morning Worship 11 a.m.; Bible Study 10:30 a.m. Tuesdays. Website: www.christiansburgcob.org. A loving family, fueled by the Holy Spirit, grounded in God's Word, and delivering Jesus forgiveness and love to all people. Come as you are... you are welcomed!

(DOC - DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

Snowville Christian Church, 5436 Lead Mine Rd., Hiwassee, VA 24347, Pastor: Jerry King, Website: www.SnowvilleChristianChurch.com (and Facebook), Office: 540-633-3761, Email: office@SnowvilleChristianChurch.com, Sunday Worship Service: 11:00 a.m., Sunday School: 10:00 a.m., Thursday Bible Study: 6:00 p.m., We are: "Inspiring hope, helping people grow their faith, and sharing God's love with others!"

ECKANKAR

Eckankar, the Path of Spiritual Freedom, is a simple teaching that focuses on the Light and Sound of God to help people find more love in their life. The Roanoke Eckankar Center is located at 1420 3rd St. SW, Roanoke, VA 24016. The Center was closed during the COVID crisis but is now open. A spiritual event is held on the 2nd Sunday of each month at 10:30 a.m. Since contracting COVID-19 may still be possible, please take the health steps that are best for you. It is appreciated that by attending you are taking responsibility for your own health. Visit www.eck-va.org, www.meetup.com/Roanoke-Spiritual-Experiences-Group or call 540-353-5365 for other Eckankar programs and for more information about how the teachings of Eckankar can lead you to spiritual freedom.

EPISCOPAL

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

Montgomery County

WORSHIP DIRECTORY

ONLY ONE WAY

"I am the way, the truth and the life.
No one comes to the Father except through Me." John 14:6

In our culture, almost anything goes. The overwhelming idea is: whatever works for you. It's okay to believe in God, but it's not acceptable to suggest there is only one way to know Him.

The problem is that if you believe in Christ, you must also believe His words. He did not say, "I am a way." He said, "I am THE way." Think about it. If anything would work, why suffer? If anything else could save us, why would God send His son?

Read Isaiah 43:10-11. First, understand that God does want us to know Him. It's why He sent His son in the first place. Second, recognize that there is only one Savior and put your trust in Him. Perhaps you have long since accepted that only Christ can save you, but have you really accepted that only He can save somebody else? Knowing how much others need Christ motivates us to tell them about Him. After all, "how, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?" (Romans 10:14) Tell someone about the Savior today!

Worship: Today, thank God for sending the Savior. Pray for those who do not know Him, those who live and work right around you as well as those in foreign lands. Read Romans 10:14-15. Pray that God will send His people to preach good news and ask Him to give you opportunities today to share His love with someone.

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

Fellowship and refreshments follow services. Find us on Facebook: Grace Episcopal Church and www.graceradford.org.

LUTHERAN

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

Our Saviour Lutheran Church ELCA, 1845 Cambria St NE, Christiansburg. Worship each Sunday at 10 am, in person and online at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMsB-gbyjmV5ce9mr43dbCw>. Please visit our website at www.oslc-cburg.org and our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/oslcchristiansburg> to learn more about us. Little Free Pantry and Little Free Library located in our parking lot. Pastor Joshua L. Copeland; church office 540-382-2223.

St. Michael Lutheran Church, 2308 Merrimac Road, Blacksburg, VA 24060. Worship service each Sunday at 10 AM, Sunday School 9 AM. We are a community of God's people where people gather for worship, learning and service. Visitors and new members are always WELCOME! Google comments: "Wonderful, welcoming congregation...A place where all are truly welcome... Nice, friendly, competent staff." You will like our minister, The Rev. Michelle L. Stramiello. Her previous service was as Family Faith Formation Director at Cross and Crown Lutheran Church, Indianapolis, IN, Pastor of St Matthew Lutheran Church, Paducah, KY, and Hospice Chaplain in Largo, Fl. St. Michael started

and administers Micah's Backpack which has great community impact, Micah's Soup for Seniors, Micah's Garden, Closet, and Mini Pantry. Also, partnering with Rainbow Riders and Total Action for Progress, we opened open the first Early Childhood Head Start in our community (6 weeks to age 3), and have numerous other programs including a Justice & Mercy Fund providing assistance for those needing emergency assistance with critical bills. Further St. Michael sponsors an awesome Scouting program of Boy & Girl Scout Troops, Venture Scouts for older youth, and a new Cub Pack for girls & boys kindergarten - 5th grade. Directions: From Price's Fork Road, turn onto Merrimac Road and St. Michael is 3/10ths of a mile down on the left. For more information about any of our activities: Phone 540 951-8951. Email hope@stmlc.us or visit our Website www.st-michael-lutheran-church.org

MULTI-CULTURAL NON-DENOMINATIONAL Christian Growth Center, 1850 Electric Way, Christiansburg, VA 24073 (beside Hubbell Lighting). Sunday Worship: 9:30am Prayer, 10:00am Service *Nursery Available. Lead Pastor: Todd Hallinan. Founding Pastor: Rob Sowell. Mission: Sow, Grow, & Go Sow Faith! Grow in Righteousness! Go into all the world in the authority of the believer! 540-382-2908.

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

Compassion Church, 1820 Second Street, Radford, 639-6287, Our music is passionate, our worship is real, and Pastor Chandler

Jones brings relevant messages for everyone at any place on their journey, Sunday Worship Experience at 9:30 AM & 11:00 AM, Wednesday Family Night at 7 PM, Children Ministry provided for all services. Our vision is to see all Saved. Freed. Restored. Fulfilled. Find us on facebook and Instagram

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

UNITED METHODIST

Asbury United Methodist Church, 500 Stuart Street, Christiansburg. 540-382-0743. Rev. Dr. Patricia Jones, Sunday School, 9:45 a.m., Sunday Worship, 11:00 a.m. All are welcome.

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

St. Paul United Methodist Church, 220 W. Main St., C'Burg. Rev. Mike Derflinger (540) 382-2410. Sunday Worship 10 a.m., Sunday School 9 a.m. Live streaming Sunday Service - www.twitch.tv/stpaulumc
Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church, 350 Stafford Drive, Christiansburg, VA 24073, Sunday School 10am, Sunday Worship Service 11am.

WESLEYAN

Christ Wesleyan Church, 525 Harkrader Street, Christiansburg. Public Worship service at 11:00 AM. Sunday School for adults - 10:00 AM. Pastor: Gale Janofski 540-510-0952. The building is totally handicapped accessible. Website: christwesleyanchurch.org

Obituaries

from page 5

Cox, Virginia Ellen

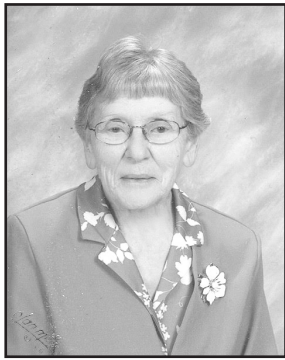
Virginia Ellen Cox, 100, of Lafon of Norfolk, Arnold Lewis Blacksburg, died at her home on Dec. 18, 2022.

She was born on July 29, 1922, in Blacksburg at her home. She finally made the trip home she had been asking about.

She was preceded in death by her parents, James Walter Cox, Sr., and Ollie Hester Shaver Cox; a great-nephew Donald (Donnie) Lafon;

her sister and brother-in-law, Mildred (Brownie) Cox Lafon and Arnold (Fonce) Alphonso Lafon; and brothers and sisters-in-law, Robert (Bob) Lee Cox and Alma Sue Lafon Cox, James (Pete) Walter Cox, Jr., and Mary Katherine Cox.

She leaves to cherish her memory four nieces, Charlotte Lafon Holland of Blacksburg, Evelyn Fay Cox and Edith Sue Cox Bradley of Roanoke, and Brenda Lou Cox Belton of North Carolina; and five nephews, Clarence (C.W.) Watson



Lafon, Johnny Lee Cox, Curtis Ray Cox, and Paul Robert Cox of Blacksburg.

Virginia lived on Toms Creek and then in the Mt. Tabor Community. She went to Radford Women's Teaching College, taught some at Mt. Tabor School, worked at VPI for 35 years, and lived at her home in Mt. Tabor most all her life.

Funeral services will be conducted Tuesday, Dec. 27, 2022, at 10 a.m. in the McCoy Funeral Home Chapel with love and memories by Corbin Crocker, Andrew Crocker, and Robert Holland. Burial will be private. The family extends a special thank-you to Mary Ann Harris of Comfort Care Senior and her workers for the love they gave Virginia for the last three years.

O'Brien, Sr., Charles Grooms

Charles Grooms O'Brien, Sr., Cross, Salvation Army, United of Blacksburg died Dec. 19, 2022.

Charles was born in Gastonia, NC on March 9, 1931. His parents, Troy Eric O'Brien and Hester Grooms O'Brien, and his brother Troy Eric O'Brien, Jr. preceded him in death.

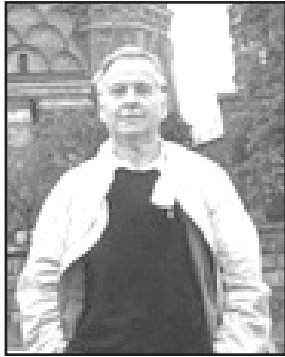
Charles grew up in Schoolfield, VA. He graduated from Schoolfield High School in 1948 and served from 1948 to 1952 in US Naval Aviation. He attended Virginia Polytechnic Institute under the Korean War GI Bill, and received a BS in industrial engineering in 1956.

He married Elizabeth (Betsy) Kenney on June 12, 1956, in Christ Episcopal Church in Blacksburg.

After Charles was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease, Betsy became his faithful caregiver. Charles was the happy and grateful parent of two sons, Charles, Jr., (Coby) born in 1959 and Christopher (Chris) born in 1961. Grandson Tristan, born in 2015, was a welcomed and blessed addition.

Charles had a 37-year career with Armstrong World Industries. He served in management positions in Pensacola, Fla., Macon, Ga., Fulton, NY, and Thomasville, NC. He retired as Executive Vice President of Thomasville Furniture Industries, an Armstrong subsidiary. Following retirement, Charles was a volunteer with International Executive Service Corp. and Citizens Democracy Corp., with assignments in Tema and Takoradi, Ghana; Taganrog, Russia; Simferopol, Ukraine; Gdynia, Poland; Zilina, Slovakia and Varna, Bulgaria.

Charles was an Elder in the Presbyterian Church and a member of numerous boards (including Thomasville Furniture Industries, NationsBank, American Red



Way, Chamber of Commerce and Davidson County Community College.) He was chairman of the Thomasville Community Foundation and Community Hospital boards.

He was a member of Rotary International who considered the Ut Prosim ideal Of Virginia Tech and his education there inspirations throughout his life. He was a member of the Ut Prosim Society and the College of Engineering Committee of 100. He was a past Chairman of the Industrial & Systems Engineering Advisory Board and also served on the College of Engineering Board and the German Club Alumni Foundation Board.

Charles was a member of the COE Academy of Excellence and the ISE Academy of Distinguished Alumni. He was the recipient of ISE's Marvin Agee Distinguished Alumni Award. Charles enjoyed many happy years among friends at Warm Hearth Village and the support of his Rock Steady Boxing group.

He is survived by his wife, Betsy, his sons and daughters-in-law Charles, Jr., (Jennifer) of Temple Terrace, Fla., Christopher (Virginia) of Brooklyn Heights, NY, and grandson Tristan of Temple Terrace, Fla. Charles's remains will be interred in the Virginia Tech Columbarium with a memorial service at a later date.

To honor his memory, he would be happy with contributions to the Charles and Betsy O'Brien ISE Scholarship Fund, Virginia Tech Foundation, 902 Prices Fork Road, Blacksburg, VA 24061 or to Neighbors in Need Fund, Warm Hearth Foundation, 2607 Warm Hearth Drive, Blacksburg, VA 24060.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BLACKSBURG MUSEUM AND CULTURAL FOUNDATION

Annual events returning to Blacksburg Museum

This past year saw the return of beloved annual events to the Blacksburg Museum & Cultural Foundation that had been canceled due to Covid for several years. Having experienced a significant pause in the museum's ability to gather as a community renewed the museum's appreciation for the cornerstone of community life that the Museum provides.

This year the Museum pushed new boundaries with a slate of celebrated exhibitions spanning art and history. From the history of the Lyric Theater to regional music history, this year's exhibitions illuminated the full character of the region. Exhibitions this year included: The Twenties: Virginia Women's Fashions After the Great War, End of the Line, A Multimedia Exhibition by Bill Ratcliffe, Virginia is for Farmers: Agriculture in SouthWest Virginia, Then and Now, Trace Elements, An Installation by Amanda Lechner and Michael Borowski, From Africa to Appalachia: Roots of Old-Time and Bluegrass, and Fashion History Moving Forward: Animating the Present, Considering the Past.

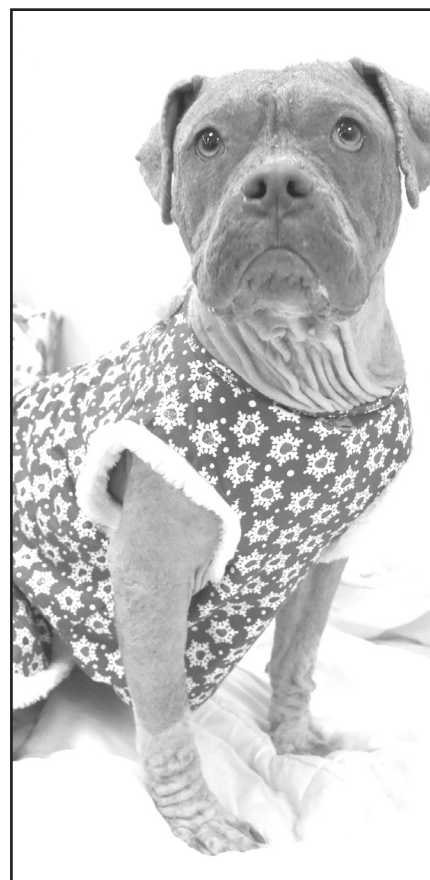
In 2022, the Museum served the community with a host of inspired

programming of music, lectures, classes, and events, including a petting zoo and haunted house. Some highlights of the year include launching a Summer Rhythms concert series featuring regional musicians, a lecture and music demonstration presented by Willis-based Fiddler, Earl White, art classes taught by Leana Fischer, and the return of our Annual Gospel Sing and Blues, Brews, and BBQ.

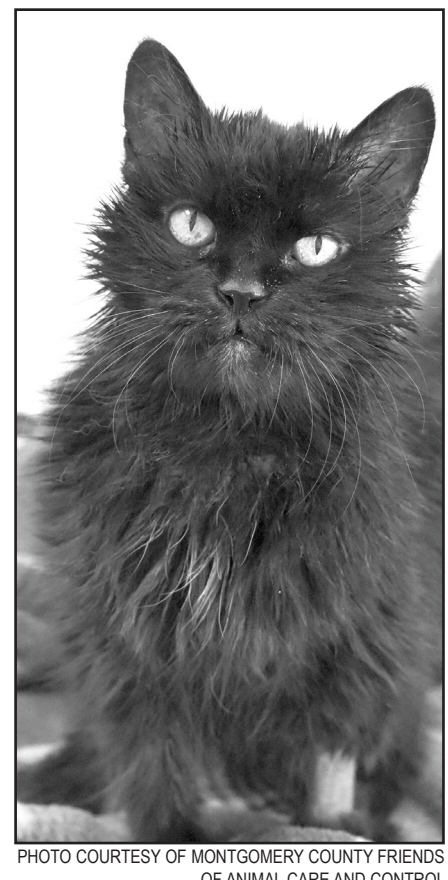
This year the Museum was selected to participate in the Collections Assessment for Preservation program, a critical step toward the museum's mission to preserve local history. CAP helps museums improve the care of their collections by providing support for a general conservation assessment of the museum's collections and buildings. The museum will work with a team of preservation professionals to identify preventive conservation priorities. The final assessment report will help the museum prioritize its collections care efforts in the coming years.

-Blacksburg Museum & Cultural Foundation

PETS OF THE WEEK



Before Tahoe came to the Animal Care and Adoption Center, she had a rough time with some skin issues. Now, she is on the mend and her fur is growing back. This sweet gal can be a little shy and unsure, but with the right humans to trust she will likely come out of her shell and flourish.



Murphy is ready to head home. She's an affectionate and gentle older cat who enjoys singing from time to time. She has lived with a small dog previously and may do well with one that is laid back and doesn't play rough. Murphy's adoption is sponsored by the Montgomery County Friends of Animal Care and Control.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY FRIENDS OF ANIMAL CARE AND CONTROL

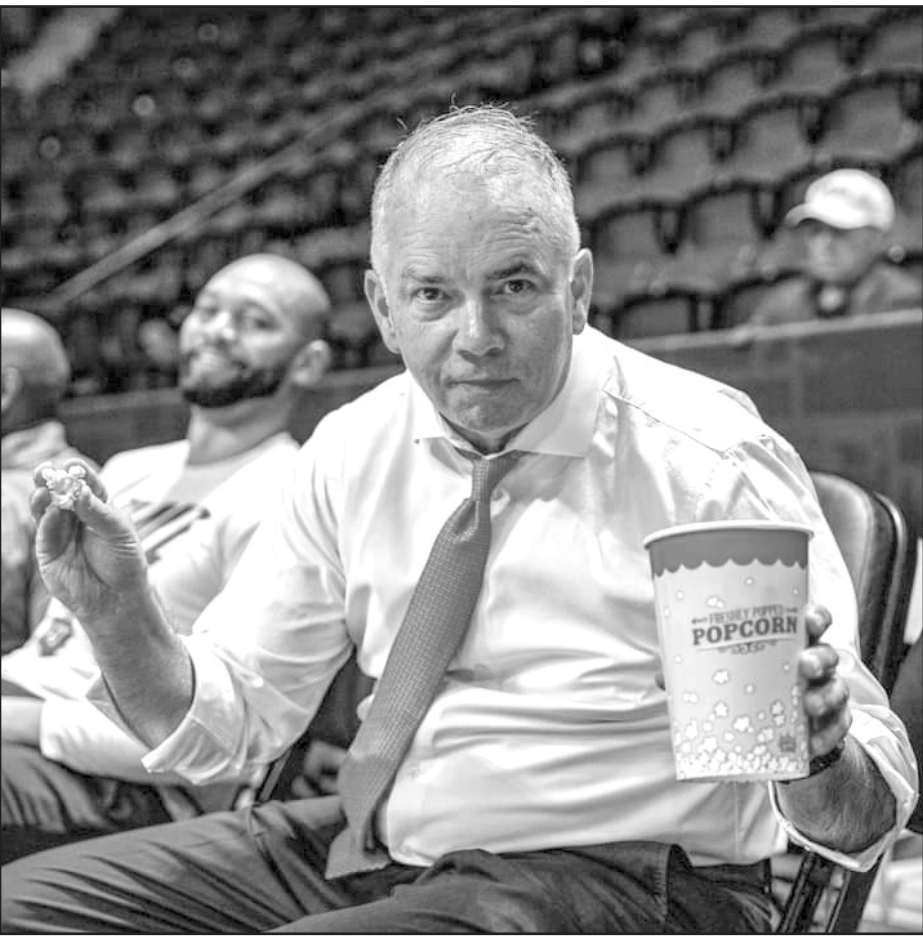
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MONTGOMERY SPORTS

Mike Young cherishes ACC title, popcorn bucket



Virginia Tech men's basketball coach Mike Young says you better try the popcorn as his team continues to find the winning ways at Cassell Coliseum.

Marty Gordon
NRVsports@mainstreetnewspapers.com

Mike Young and his Hokie basketball team produced their own "shock and awe" last season when they captured the ACC Tournament title, and it has carried over to this season as the team has now won 11 games and is ranked in the top 25.

The championship is definitely one of the top sports stories of the year, but Young's interest in popcorn has stolen some of the storylines, even becoming the norm at every game in 2022.

In an interview earlier this year, he said eating popcorn during warmups was something he had always done while he was at Wofford.

"I had done it for 20 years. It was no big deal at Wofford," Young said. "When I came here (Virginia Tech), it got lots of attention. I have always enjoyed eating some popcorn and talking

to staff, players, and coaches while the team warms up."

Photographs of Young sitting on the team's bench have been all the rave.

He told reporters that Virginia Tech's Cassell Coliseum has the best popcorn in the Atlantic Coast Conference while the best road corn is at Boston College.

I just had to find out for ourselves this past weekend when the Hokies hosted Grambling State. Young sat on the floor with his cup of corn while I sat above the student's section with an \$8 souvenir bucket of Cassell's favorite.

Not bad for a pregame snack.

So maybe, Mike Young is on to something with his popcorn addiction. In fact, Virginia Tech Athletics believes so much in Young's habit, they have created a custom popcorn bucket with his picture on it. The item was limited and was given to anyone who donated money to the VT Athletic Foundation earlier this year.



PHOTO COURTESY OF VT ATHLETICS

Believing in Coach Mike Young's popcorn habit, Virginia Tech Athletics has created a custom popcorn bucket with his picture on it.

Teddy Bear toss, kids' giveaway



PHOTO COURTESY OF RU ATHLETICS

Earlier this week, the Radford University women's basketball team visited Carillon Clinic and gave out more than 300 teddy bears from their "Teddy Bear Toss."

Year in review: Changing guard at Tech, Auburn dominates sports headlines

Marty Gordon
NRVsports@mainstreetnewspapers.com

A quick look back at the year in sports finds one of the biggest stories of the year as the changing of the head coaching position in football at Virginia Tech.

Brent Pry was named head coach at Tech in November of 2021, but the Pry era did not start taking shape until January.

Also big at the high school level was Auburn High School's continued dominance in volleyball as the Eagles won their third straight state championship.

Not to be outdone, the Auburn boys' basketball team won the 2022 Class 1 state championship.

On a sadder note, Radford University paid tribute to former women's coach Charlene Curtis and to former athletic director Chuck Taylor, both of whom passed away during the year.

From Altoona, Penn., Pry joined the Hokies after serving the past eight seasons as defensive coordinator/linebackers coach at Penn State. Pry returned to Blacksburg after previously working as a defensive graduate assistant for the Hokies from 1995-97 under head coach Frank Beamer and defensive coordinator Bud Foster.

Pry said at his opening press conference that working for Coach Beamer and Coach Foster as a graduate assistant in the 1990s as part of a program that at the time established itself as a national power. was a privilege.

"Even after I departed Blacksburg, I always continued to appreciate Virginia Tech, its great players, its championship teams, and its wonderful traditions from afar," Pry said. "The resources, facilities, university backing of athletics, and phenomenal fan support that Virginia Tech enjoys made this a very desirable situation.

"But just as importantly," Pry said. "was the opportunity to raise our children in a community like Blacksburg. We couldn't wait to meet the team, the support staff, and Hokie Nation. We were prepared to hit the ground running to attract the type of student-athletes to Virginia Tech who can help us achieve sustained success. Go Hokies!"

A 30-year coaching veteran, Pry has coached teams that have qualified for 15 bowl appearances and have finished in the FBS top 25 in total defense eight times. He played an instrumental role in coaching top-10 defenses at Virginia Tech, Penn State, Vanderbilt, Georgia Southern, and Western Carolina.

Pry was a 2021 Broyles Award nominee as the top assistant coach in the country as the Nittany Lions ranked fourth nationally in Red Zone defense (66.7%), seventh in scoring defense (16.8

ppg), eighth in defensive pass efficiency (111.98), and held their opponents to 4.7 yards per play.

Pry's defense helped lead Penn State to an 11-2 record in 2019, ranking eighth nationally in scoring defense (16.0 ppg). The Nittany Lions also led the nation in fewest yards per carry (2.6) and forced fumbles (22), while ranking fifth in rushing defense (95.0 ypg). The Penn State defense led the nation in sacks per game (3.62) and ranked fourth in tackles for loss (8.2) in 2018. His 2018 squad also ranked fifth in the county in yards per pass attempt (5.67), eighth in defensive pass efficiency (106.1) and 11th in Red Zone scoring percentage (.750).

Penn State also had an 11-2 record in 2017 with Pry earning his first Broyles Award nomination. The Nittany Lions finished seventh in the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) in both scoring defense (16.5 ppg) and sacks per game (3.23) during the 2017 campaign.

Pry's father, Jim, played collegiately at Marshall and began his own 40-year college coaching career at his alma mater in 1973-74. The elder Pry went on to enjoy a distinguished career that included stints at Illinois, Duke, Dartmouth, Akron, East Stroudsburg University, Buffalo, VMI, Bethune-Cookman and time as a high school head coach.

Pry served as a co-defensive coordinator at Vanderbilt University from 2011 to 2013. While at Georgia Southern in 2010, his defensive unit helped the Eagles to a win over No.-1 Appalachian State and an appearance in the NCAA Football Championship Subdivision semifinals. As a member of the Memphis State staff from 2007-09, Pry's defensive line corps helped the Tigers to back-to-back bowl appearances. He also coached at Louisiana-Lafayette (2002-06), helping the Ragin' Cajuns to their first Sun Belt Conference championship following a four-year tour of duty at Western Carolina (1998-01). During his stint as a graduate assistant at Tech from 1995-97, he was part of a staff that guided the Hokies to three bowl berths.

Can you say back-to-back-to-back volleyball championships at Auburn High School as the Eagles clearly established a volleyball dynasty? But there was more as the boys basketball team and the softball team won state championships.

The volleyball team entered the 2022 season with a 70-plus win streak that ended when Bland County snapped the streak by beating them in week number one. The Eagles went on to scrap their way to

the state finals despite a district championship loss to Giles. They rebounded from that loss to defeat that same Giles team in the regional finals. Last month, the Eagles claimed their third straight state title with a 25-13, 20-25, 25-21, 25-20 win over Rappahannock in the state finals.

Senior Avery Zuckerwar and coach Sherry Millirons were recognized as the player and coach of the year for Region C and statewide for Class 1. The duo was also honored by the Three Rivers District.

Not to be outdone, the Auburn boys' basketball team brought home another state title of their own in March with a 61-49 win in the Class 1 state title game.

Ethan Millirons led the Eagles to the win and was named the Class 1 Player of the Year by the Virginia High School Coaches Association. His father and coach, Terry Millirons, was voted the VHSCA coach of the year.

The Auburn softball team also looked like a dynasty in picking up its third straight state title in the spring, finishing the 2022 season with a 22-5 record.

One of Auburn's softball players was a part of the ever-changing landscape of college recruiting. Kirsten Fleet received a scholarship offer from the University of Georgia when she was a seventh grader. The pitcher had been heavily leaning that way as she finished her junior year, but the Bulldog coach retired, forcing Fleet to rethink that decision. This fall, she made it official by committing to James Madison University.

As a sophomore, Fleet led Auburn to the Class 1 state title, throwing 260 strikeouts in 120 innings, compiling a 16-2 record and a 0.29 earned run average.

This past spring, she finished with a .538 batting average with 14 hits, two home runs and 14 RBI. On the mound, she had six wins and one loss with 98 strikeouts, an earned run average of 0.525 and was named the Mt. Empire District and Region C Pitcher of the Year.

Fleet's early recruitment as an underclassman drew national attention, and two years ago, the NCAA made a rule change that would not allow coaching conversations with a player until she was a junior in high school. Fleet chose JMU over Auburn, Pittsburgh, and Appalachian State.

Meanwhile at Radford High School, the boys' basketball team advanced to another state finals,

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Send community news and photos to communitynews@ourvalley.org

RU 2023 Red & White Gala on April 28

Radford University Athletics and the Highlander Club will host the 2023 Red & White Gala on Friday, April 28, inside the Dedmon Center with WVU men's basketball coach Bob Huggins as the guest of honor. The evening will feature a silent auction that can be attended in person or virtually, as well as a live auction, dinner, and an open bar. Attendees are encouraged to wear their Radford red however they can, whether it be a dress, a tie, or a pair of shoes.

A 2022 inductee into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame, Huggins is one of only six coaches with 900 or more wins in his career.

Huggins has been to 24 total NCAA Tournaments, 23 in the last 26 seasons. He has led his teams to nine Sweet Sixteen appearances, four Elite Eights, and two Final Fours (1992 and 2010).

He was also the former college coach of current Radford men's basketball head coach Darris Nichols, who played for Huggins at West Virginia during his junior and senior seasons. In that time, Nichols was awarded the Big East Sportsman of the Year award while averaging 37 minutes played and 11 points per game for the Mountaineers.

All proceeds from the event will go toward the Highlander Club Annual Fund, providing Radford

Athletics with the necessary resources and flexibility to compete for championships and provide the best collegiate experience on and off the playing field.

Individual tickets will cost \$175 per person while a pair can be purchased for \$300. More details will come soon regarding a block of rooms that have been reserved at the new Highlander Hotel and will be available to Gala attendees for a discounted rate.

Those interested in becoming a sponsor of the event can reach out to Assistant Athletic Director for Business Development Matt Harman at charman2@radford.edu.



PHOTO COURTESY OF RU ATHLETICS
West Virginia Mountaineers head basketball coach Bob Huggins is coming to RU on April 28 as the guest of honor at the Red and White Gala.

Review from page 7



The Auburn High School volleyball team brought home another state title in 2022.



FILE PHOTOS
The Auburn High School boys' basketball team won the 2022 state Class 1 championship.

to another state finals, but the outcome was not what they hoped as they fell to John Marshall.

The Eastern Montgomery High School girls' soccer team brought home the gold in Class 1 as

they downed Auburn in the spring for the state championship.

Gas prices drop to lowest level in 18 months for Christmas travelers

Those heading out on the road for the holidays will receive the gift they've been waiting for all year: lower gas prices.

Holiday prices this year will be \$1.83 per gallon lower than they were just six months ago, according to GasBuddy, the leading fuel savings platform saving North American drivers the most money on fuel.

The national average price of gas is forecasted to be \$2.98 on Christmas Day, likely to drop below the critical \$3 per gallon mark on or before Christmas Eve for the first time in nearly 600 days.

Since peaking at over \$5 per gallon in June with prices in California reaching nearly \$7 per gallon, the national average price of gas in the U.S. has slowly come down from record-breaking levels,

falling below its year-ago level on Dec. 9. Since October, every one of the nation's 50 states has seen gas prices plummet precipitously, with diesel starting to follow suit.

"As 2022 draws to a close, we've seen gas prices cut nearly in half in some areas compared to this earlier this year -- a well-needed break from the sky-high prices we faced just six months ago," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis for GasBuddy. "Finally, things are starting to feel a bit more normal with gas prices far more affordable. Americans are saving around \$25 per fill-up compared to prices this summer," according to De Haan. "While we're closing out the year on a positive note, challenges remain that could drive prices up again next spring,

so motorists might want to keep their expectations in check and enjoy the sub-\$3 gasoline while they can."

By the numbers:

\$1.94 per gallon: decrease in the national average since June peak; 26: states now with average gas prices below \$3 per gallon; \$2.44 per gallon: the average price of the bottom 10% of U.S. gas stations; \$2.99: the current most common gas price in the country; 25+: cities with average diesel prices now below \$3.99 per gallon

GasBuddy suggests holiday travelers prepare by planning their route ahead of time, and downloading the free GasBuddy app to take advantage of its Search Along Route feature.

Drivers can also sign up for Pay with GasBuddy to receive cents off every purchase.

GasBuddy is the leading fuel savings platform providing North American drivers with the most ways to save money on gas. GasBuddy has delivered more than \$3.5 billion in cumulative savings to its users through providing real-time gas price information at 150,000+ stations, offering cash back rewards on purchases with brand partners, and through the Pay with GasBuddy™ payments card that offers cents-off per gallon at virtually all gas stations across the US. As one of the most highly-rated apps in the history of the App Store, GasBuddy has been downloaded over 100 million times.

Christmas book from page 3

Hearth; North Carolina: North Dakota: Rudolph Ohio: The Nutcracker
The Gift of the Magi; the Red-Nosed Reindeer; and the Mouse King;

Oklahoma: The Elves and the Shoemaker; Oregon: The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus; Pennsylvania: The Nutcracker and the Mouse King; Rhode Island: A Christmas Carol; South Carolina: the Gift of the Magi; South Dakota: the Gift of the Magi; Tennessee: The Polar Express; Texas: The Elves and the Shoemaker; Utah: The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey; Vermont: Miracle on 34th Street; Virginia: The Snowman; Washington: The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus; West Virginia: The Best Christmas Pageant Ever; Wisconsin: The Snowman; Wyoming: Miracle on 34th Street.

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