

# News Messenger

Serving Montgomery County Since 1869

Blacksburg

Christiansburg

Wednesday, February 22, 2023

www.ourvalley.org

USPS 016-490

\$1.00



## Hokies take the plunge in pursuit of a sustainable New Zealand



PHOTO BY CRAIG RAMSEYER FOR VIRGINIA TECH.

The Hokies Abroad group gathers in front of Aoraki Mount Cook, the tallest mountain in New Zealand.

## Two shot in Blacksburg incidents

At 1:51 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 18, 2023 Blacksburg Police and Blacksburg Rescue responded to a report of a person with gunshot wounds on the sidewalk at Bluestone Lane. Upon arrival, officers located a male with wounds to the leg and arm.

Blacksburg officers administered first aid to the male until Blacksburg Rescue arrived. The victim was treated and then transported to LewisGale Montgomery Hospital for further treatment. Approximately an hour later, at 2:58 p.m., while investigating the first incident, Blacksburg Police and Blacksburg Rescue were dispatched to the 1800 block of Whipple Drive for a second person with gunshot wounds.

The second male subject was also transported to Lewis Gale Montgomery Hospital for treatment.

The victims are acquaintances and at this time, it appears that the incidents are related. The Virginia Tech Police Department, the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office, and the Christiansburg Police Department are assisting with the investigation, which is ongoing.

-Submitted by Chief Kendrick T. Brewster

## Couch announces campaign for Montgomery Clerk of Court

Joined by Montgomery County Clerk of Court Erica Conner and former Montgomery County sheriff Tommy Whitt, Tiffany Couch, the Master Deputy Clerk Supervisor for Montgomery County, Friday at noon in front of the Montgomery County Courthouse announced her campaign for Montgomery County Clerk of Court.

With the slogan, "Experience that Matters," Couch recounted her qualifications and her commitment to making Montgomery County a better place in which to live.

"I am a native of Christiansburg, and I graduated from Christiansburg High School," Couch said. "I received my bachelors of science degree in criminal justice from Radford University. Four years ago when I learned that there was an opening at the Circuit Court Clerk's office, I immediately applied for the position. Erica W. Conner, Clerk of Circuit Court, took a chance on me and hired me to work in an entry-level position at the front counter and in the records room. I eventually became the supervisor and earned my Master Deputy Clerk title through good old-fashioned hard work and

dedication.

"I am so grateful she saw the potential I had and took the time to train me," Couch said. "Erica saw that I care what happens in my hometown and in Montgomery County. I live here with my husband John Couch, who is a retired United States Marine. Growing up, my parents, Judy and Stephen Todd, taught me that public service is important and necessary to be a productive citizen and part of our community.

"I have spent most of my life in public service, and most of my family have, too, in some form or another, whether it be in the military, public schools, being in local service organizations or being a constitutional officer," Couch said.

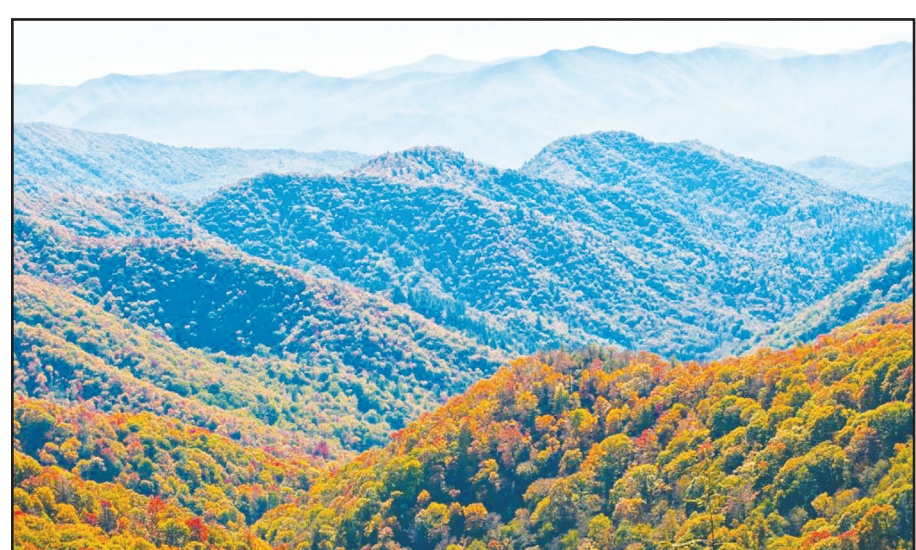
"The clerk's job is very important to me," Couch said in announcing her candidacy. "We are in charge of more than 800 statutory responsibilities. At some point in your life you will probably need the services of the clerk's office, and I will be there to serve you. Imagine that your father, mother, or even your child passes away and you are the executor of their estate. You come into our office during the most difficult time in your life, but you know that you

will have me and my very knowledgeable staff there to guide you through this difficult process.

"I have great ideas to continue to improve the clerk's office and I need your vote on November 7, 2023, to make them become a reality," Couch said. "During my eight-year term I will provide online renewals for concealed handgun permits and quicker, more efficient jury service payments. I will also start making appointments in the clerk's office and local retirement homes to answer any questions a citizen may have about how to make the probate process easier on their loved ones."

Couch went on to say, "In addition, I will provide a service where citizens may fill out their probate paperwork online before their appointment. I will also prioritize accountability to ensure best value on spending of your tax dollars. To date, I have assisted in saving our citizens \$107,590.00 in preservation grants.

"Our county deserves a Clerk who is experienced, competent, and dedicated to helping every citizen. I am humbly asking that you promote me to Clerk of Court at the next general election this November."



PIXABAY

The commemoration of Black History Month affords an opportunity to explore the rich history of Black communities in Appalachia between the end of the American Civil War and the beginning of the Jim Crow era. Daniel Thorp, an associate professor of history at Virginia Tech, has dedicated his research toward this aim.

## Expert recovers the history of Black communities in late-1800s Appalachia

Q: A widespread misconception about southern Appalachia maintains slavery didn't exist in the region, thus there was a sparse Black populace. What was the reality?

"If a time traveler were to arrive in Southwest Virginia in the late 1800s seeking African American/Black communities, he or she would find dozens of rural Black communities and Black neighborhoods in almost every town in the region. Thousands of enslaved men and women lived in Southwest Virginia when slavery ended in 1865 and many of them stayed in the region for years after gaining their freedom. Few had the resources to move immediately, and this is where their family and friends were; so they stayed."

Q: How did African American communities come together in post-Civil War Appalachia?

"Almost immediately they began to establish dozens of independent Black churches, and with the help of the Freedmen's Bureau and northern philanthropic societies they opened dozens of schools. These churches and schools

often became the nuclei around which Black communities grew."

Q: How did the people in these communities support themselves?

"Rural Blacks were mainly farmers, though some men combined farming with work on the railroad. In towns, Black men were often laborers, though small numbers worked as craftsmen or shopkeepers, and by the end of the century a very small number of Black lawyers and doctors had begun to appear. Black Women living in towns often worked as domestic servants."

Q: Did any of them have a say in regional politics?

"Throughout this era Black men participated in politics. Few were elected to office in Southwest Virginia, but Black men voted in large numbers until the early 20th century, when a new state constitution made it almost impossible for them to do so."

Q: What caused modern misconceptions about Black communities in Appalachia to take hold?

"Racism became more pronounced in Southwest Virginia at the turn of the 20th century. Lynching

became common during the 1890s, and after 1900 segregation became more widespread, and a new state constitution disenfranchised Black men almost entirely. These changes, combined with the difficulty of making a living in Southwest Virginia, led more and more African Americans to leave the region and move to southern cities like Roanoke or Charlotte, to coal fields in West Virginia, Ohio, and Iowa, or to northern cities like Chicago. Today few of these Black communities or neighborhoods still exist and few Whites, at least, even remember them."

About Thorp  
Daniel Thorp is an associate professor of history in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences at Virginia Tech. Shortly after he joined the faculty, Thorp noticed that slavery was mostly unheard of in Appalachia did not match the historical evidence and began researching further. He advocated for the dedication of Vaughn-Oliver Plaza, named after Virginia Tech's first known Black employee.

## Montgomery-Radford-Floyd NAACP branch to hold general body meet Sunday, Feb. 26

The Montgomery Co.-Radford-Floyd branch of the NAACP will hold a general body meeting via Zoom on Sunday, Feb. 26, 2023, from 3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

The meeting is a combined celebration of Black History Month and the branch's founding anniversary of Feb. 12, 1909.

The branch is seeking volunteers to lead various program committees.

The committees and their chairs are Jim Klagge/communications; Debbie Travis, criminal justice/legal redress (seeking co-chair); Judy Barlyske and Karen Eley Sanders/education; Karen Jones/environment; Jill Stewart/finance; Jill Stewart and Debbie Travis/freedom fundraising; Karen Jones/political action; Shirley Brown/health; Roxie Palmer and Shirley Akers/membership/life

membership, Michael Sanborn/religious affairs, Debbie Travis (seeking co-chair)/scholarship ad hoc, Cheryl Burrell Graves and Tamara Cherry Clarke/young adults (need chair), veterans affairs (need chair).

Call the branch at 540-382-6751 or email at info@mrfnaacp.org to volunteer for the preferred committee. The volunteer will be contacted.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## Wednesday, Feb. 22:

**Sustainable Blacksburg Lunch and Learn: Become a Tree Rescuer**

At the Blacksburg Library; noon – 1 p.m. Learn about the launch of a new program to preserve trees in our area and how you can help. Following the lead of a successful Northern Virginia program, we will show how anyone can take action to protect our local trees.

**Movie and a Meal: Respect**

At the Radford Public Library; 5:30 p.m. See the movie about the Queen of Soul in honor of Black History Month. "Respect" stars Jennifer Hudson and Forest Whitaker in the telling of the rise of Aretha Franklin's career. Rated PG-13; 145 minutes. Pizza provided.

**Tom's Creek Basin Bike and Pedestrian Connectivity Study] Public Meeting**

At the Blacksburg Community Center, 725 Patrick Henry Dr., Blacksburg; 4 – 7 p.m. The Town of Blacksburg is conducting a connectivity study to outline how and where to expand bike, pedestrian, and other non-vehicular transportation infrastructure for the Tom's Creek Basin. This could include new trail connections, sidewalk sections, bike lanes or roadway improvements.

Please join us for our open house meeting to learn more and discuss future possibilities for bike and pedestrian connectivity in the Tom's Creek Basin. Drop in between 4 – 7 p.m. to share your thoughts. Questions or not able to attend? Please contact Will Lattea at 540-443-1618 or WLattea@Blacksburg.gov

## Thursday, Feb. 23:

**Community Quilting Bee**

At the Blacksburg Public Library; 10 a.m. – noon. Join us for our weekly quilting and sewing group. Bring your supplies and join us for conversation.

**Lunch and Learn: Intro to Libby**

At the Radford Public Library; 1-2 p.m. You can use Libby to borrow eBooks, eAudiobooks, and Magazines on your phone, computer, or smart device! Get a basic introduction to Libby and libbyapp.com while enjoying a light lunch.

## Saturday, Feb. 25:

**Retro Gaming**

At the Meadowbrook Library; 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. Kick it old school at Meadowbrook and try out various retro games and systems (provided). For ages 10 and up. Get a chance to enter your name in for a video game themed door prize. No registration needed. Drop in at any point during the allotted time to play some retro games.

## Monday, Feb. 27:

**Radford City Council meeting**

The Radford City Council will hold its regularly scheduled meeting at 7 p.m. in council chambers at the Radford Municipal Building, 10 Robertson St., Radford. See the agenda at [www.radfordva.gov](http://www.radfordva.gov).

**Montgomery County Board of Supervisors meeting**

Public meetings are the second and fourth Monday of each month at the Montgomery County Government Center, 755 Roanoke St. in Christiansburg. Closed sessions begin at 6 p.m. if needed. Open sessions begin at 7:15 p.m. Citizens are invited to attend and allowed to speak at each meeting. All regular meetings of the Board of Supervisors are rebroadcast on Montgomery County Comcast and Shentel Channels 190 daily.

### Public Notice Board of Equalization Montgomery County, Virginia

Public Notice is hereby given that the Board of Equalization of Montgomery County will be adding three additional days for appeals to be heard to the list already advertised 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.

Below is the list of all the dates the Board of Equalization will be hearing appeals, including the three additional dates, starting on Wednesday, February 22, 2023 and ending on Wednesday March 29, 2023. The Board of Equalization will meet 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.
Thursday, March 16, 2023	9:00 a.m.
Friday, March 24, 2023	9:00 a.m.
Monday, March 27, 2023	9:00 a.m.
Wednesday, March 29, 2023	9:00 a.m.

ADDITIONAL DATES ADDED FOR APPEALS BY THIS NOTICE:

Thursday, March 9, 2023	9:00 a.m.
Monday, March 13, 2023	9:00 a.m.
Friday, March 17, 2023	9:00 a.m.

The Board of Equalization will also be adding two additional work days listed below:

Saturday, March 25, 2023	10:00 a.m.
Tuesday, April 4, 2023	10:00 a.m.

The Board of Equalization offices will be closed on days that the Montgomery County Public Schools are closed for inclement weather.

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

## Tuesday, Feb. 28:

**Blacksburg Town Council meeting**

Town Council meets in regular session the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at 6:30 p.m. in the Roger E. Hedgepeth Chambers of the Blacksburg Municipal Building, 300 S. Main St. These meetings are open to the public and televised live on WTOB Channel 2.

**Christiansburg Town Council meeting**

Regular Town Council meetings are held on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month beginning at 7 p.m. in Council Chambers of Town Hall (100 E. Main Street). The public is welcome and encouraged to attend, with a citizen hearing time reserved at each meeting for residents to bring any matter they desire before the entire council.

**Lunch and Learn with New River Community College**

At the Radford Public Library; 1-2 p.m. Adult Career Coach & Community Outreach Specialist Stephanie Addikis of New River Community College will talk about the many resources and support services available for students of all ages. Whether you're a teenager or a senior or any age in between, there's something for you at NRCC. Stephanie will give a brief presentation and a financial aid advisor will be present to help with questions about enrollment and affordability. Contact Elizabeth at [Elizabeth.sensabaugh@radfordva.gov](mailto:Elizabeth.sensabaugh@radfordva.gov) to place a request for a free lunch (an assortment of sandwiches, chips, apple and a drink).

## Wednesday, March 1:

**Blacksburg business license renewal forms due**

Town of Blacksburg business license renewal forms for 2023 are due by Wednesday March 1, 2023. Businesses are assessed an annual license tax based on prior year's annual gross receipts.

Tax and fees must be filed and paid by March 1, 2023, to avoid late filing and late payment penalties of 10% each plus 10% interest. Renewal forms were mailed in early January. If you have not received the form, email [businesslicensegroup@blacksburg.gov](mailto:businesslicensegroup@blacksburg.gov) or call 540.961.1108.

## Thursday, Mar. 2:

**Crab Creek Watershed Project kick-off meeting**

Come to the Crab Creek Watershed Project Kick-Off Meeting to learn about how to get involved and receive funding to install watershed-friendly landscaping on your property! At the Loft at Great Road on Main (100 W Main St. Christiansburg); 6 – 7 p.m.

**American Legion meeting**

American Legion, Harvey-Howe-Carper Post 30 will meet on Thursday, March 2, 6pm at the VFW Post Home on 102 Watts St. in Radford. If Radford City Public Schools are closed on Thursday or Friday of this week due to weather, the meeting is cancelled. For further information, please call 540-250-2253 or 540-239-9864.

## Thursday, Mar. 9:

**River City Quilt Guild**

The River City Quilt Guild meets the second Thursday of each month at 9:30 a.m. in Grove United Methodist Church, 1020 Tyler Ave., Radford. If you are willing to share your knowledge and learn from others, this guild is for you. We welcome all skill levels of quilters. For more information call Anna Handy, 540 320 7791.

**Women's Leadership Conference**

At the Inn at Virginia Tech and Skelton Conference Center. The deadline to register is March 2. Register at

<https://montgomerychamber.chambermaster.com/eventregistration/register/9932>

## Monday, March 13:

**Radford City Council meeting**

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## Tuesday, March 14:

**Sons of Confederate Veterans meeting**

The Sons of Confederate Veterans, Stuart Horse Artillery Camp 1784 will meet at 7 p.m. at Aly's Italian Family Restaurant at 3204 Riner Rd. Members of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) are also invited to this meeting. If Montgomery County Public Schools are closed on Tuesday or Wednesday of this week due to weather, the meeting is cancelled. For further information, please call 540-320-4315 or 540-239-9864.

**Blacksburg Town Council meeting**

Town Council meets in regular session the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at 6:30 p.m. in the Roger E. Hedgepeth Chambers of the Blacksburg Municipal Building, 300 S. Main St. These meetings are open to the public and televised live on WTOB Channel 2.

**Christiansburg Town Council meeting**

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## On-going:

**Cap and Gown Drive**

Support the 2023 BHS Senior Class by donating extra caps and gowns for use during graduation! The Town of Blacksburg Sustainability Office is partnering with Blacksburg High School and Sustainable Blacksburg to encourage re-use of previous years' graduate gear for the 2023 senior class. Gowns (blue only - from 2018 and later), caps, stoles, and cords are accepted. Donations can be made between 8:30 a.m. -2:30 p.m., Monday-Friday at the Main Entrance of Blacksburg High School. In an effort to keep project costs affordable, it is appreciated if materials are dry-cleaned before donation, though it is not required. For more information, please contact the Town of Blacksburg Sustainability Office at 540-443-1617 or [sustainability@blacksburg.gov](mailto:sustainability@blacksburg.gov).

**Blacksburg 2023 Citizens Institute**

Want to learn more about the Town of Blacksburg? Are you a new resident, retiree, or just someone who wants to get involved in the community? Join us for the 2023 Citizens Institute to meet town staff and to learn about the functions of your local government. Classes will be held on Monday evenings beginning April 6, from 6 – 8 p.m. Participants must be 18 years of age or older, and residents of the Town of Blacksburg. Space is filling up fast! To register, call the Community Relations Office at 540-443-1090 or email [cro@blacksburg.gov](mailto:cro@blacksburg.gov).

**Free GED Classes**

New River Community College is offering free GED at the Meadowbrook Library every Tuesday and Thursday evening from 5 – 8 p.m. The classes began on Tuesday, Jan. 17 and end on Thursday, May 11. For more information or to sign up please call the Meadowbrook Library at 540-268-1964.

## LEGAL NOTICE

### MONTGOMERY COUNTY TAX RELIEF PROGRAMS

Real estate tax relief programs are available to County citizens who are age 65 and over as of Jan. 1, 2023 or are totally and permanently disabled. You must own and live in the home (including mobile homes) for which relief is requested.

TAX RELIEF RANGES FROM

**40% - 100%**

DEPENDENT ON TOTAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME

For applications and additional information contact the Commissioner of the Revenue's Office

Brenda Winkle, Master Deputy  
[winklebh@montgomerycountyva.gov](mailto:winklebh@montgomerycountyva.gov)  
540-394-2120 ext. 54042  
755 Roanoke St. Suite 1A  
Christiansburg, VA 24073

For online information and applications please go to [MONTVA.COM](http://MONTVA.COM) click on Elected Officials, Commissioner of the Revenue, Tax Relief.

### DEADLINES:

FOR REPEAT FILERS March 1, 2023  
FOR FIRST TIME FILERS December 31, 2023

# POLICE REPORT

## MONTGOMERY COUNTY JAIL ARREST LOG

VAUGHT, DYLAN COMMIT DATE 02/04/2023 OFFENSE DUI (first conviction) > .20	SANCHEZ, DANIEL COMMIT DATE 02/05/2023 OFFENSE Obscenity; drunk in public; profane language
OZOROSKI, MICHAEL COMMIT DATE 02/04/2023 OFFENSE Obscenity; drunk in public; profane language	STONER, REED COMMIT DATE 02/06/2023 OFFENSE DWI: Second offense within 5 to 10 years; BAC .15 to .20
WILBRICHT, GRAY COMMIT DATE 02/04/2023 OFFENSE DUI (first conviction) .15 TO .20	SMITH, TERESA COMMIT DATE 02/06/2023 OFFENSE Felony probation violation
VEIRS, REUBEN COMMIT DATE 02/04/2023 OFFENSE DUI-Second offense in 5 to 10 years OFFENSE IN 5 TO 10 YEARS	BANKS, DANNY COMMIT DATE 02/06/2023 OFFENSE Felony probation violation
SHEPHEARD, RANDY COMMIT DATE 02/04/2023 OFFENSE Narcotics possession	HINSON, KENNETH COMMIT DATE 02/06/2023 OFFENSE Felony probation violation
NUGENT, JAMES II COMMIT DATE 02/04/2023 OFFENSE Driving while intoxicated (first offense)	DALTON, NELSON COMMIT DATE 02/07/2023 OFFENSE DUI (first conviction) influ- ence of drugs
QUAGLIANO, ANTONIO COMMIT DATE 02/04/2023 OFFENSE Obscenity; drunk in public; profane language	MILLER, ANGELA COMMIT DATE 02/07/2023 OFFENSE Weapons purchase/transport of firearm by person subject to protective order
KIM, LEO COMMIT DATE 02/04/2023 OFFENSE Obscenity; drunk in public; profane language	SHEPPARD, SAMUEL COMMIT DATE 02/07/2023 OFFENSE Weapons purchase/transport of firearm by person subject to protective order
BURNETTE, KINCIE COMMIT DATE 02/04/2023 OFFENSE Failure to register for vio- lent second or subsequent offenses (2 counts)	LAIGNEL, ASHLEY COMMIT DATE 02/07/2023 OFFENSE Failure to appear to felony/ misdemeanor summons
BUNCE, BRANDON COMMIT DATE 02/04/2023 OFFENSE Obscenity; drunk in public; profane language	SNIDER, CASSIDY COMMIT DATE 02/07/2023 OFFENSE Failure to appear to felony/ misdemeanor summons
CARPENTER, FREDERICK JR COMMIT DATE 02/04/2023 OFFENSE DUI (second conviction in less than five years with child	MANNON, ROBERT COMMIT DATE 02/08/2023 OFFENSE Failure to appear to felony/ misdemeanor summons
WARD, ROGER COMMIT DATE 02/04/2023 OFFENSE Obscenity; drunk in public; profane language	ROSE, RICHARD COMMIT DATE 02/08/2023 OFFENSE Traffic: Driving while intoxicated and driving on suspended license after DUI conviction; display of altered/fictitious registra- tion/license plates
SATTERFIELD, CAMERON COMMIT DATE 02/05/2023 OFFENSE Obscenity; drunk in public; profane language	THOMPSON, ASHTON COMMIT DATE 02/08/2023 OFFENSE Larceny unauthorized use of animal/auto/boat worth \$200 or more; simple assault against family member; failure to appear in court for misdemeanor offense
DUNN, BRADY COMMIT DATE 02/05/2023 OFFENSE DUI (first conviction) .15 to .20; failure to stop for police	
GIVENS, STUART COMMIT DATE 02/05/2023 OFFENSE Obscenity; drunk in public; profane language	
ONORATO CHACON, EDGAR COMMIT DATE	

KINGREA, CHRISTOPHER COMMIT DATE 02/08/2023 OFFENSE Larceny shoplifting; altering price tags worth \$250 or more; narcotics possession
FERGUSON, MICHAEL JR. COMMIT DATE 02/08/2023 OFFENSE Failure to appear in court for misdemeanor offense
TURPIN, IRA IV COMMIT DATE 02/08/2023 OFFENSE Arson; explosives; bombs offender 15 or over
GRIFFITH, LOGAN COMMIT DATE 02/09/2023 OFFENSE Assault; stabbing, cutting, wounding with malicious intent
TAYLOR, FORREST COMMIT DATE 02/09/2023 OFFENSE Weapons possession by non-violent convicted felon; possession with intent to transport firearm
SHELTON, MICHAEL COMMIT DATE 02/09/2023 OFFENSE DUI (first conviction) BAC less than .20; traffic: driving while intoxicated; driving with suspended license after DUI conviction
HOWELL, WILLIAM COMMIT DATE 02/10/2023 OFFENSE Larceny auto theft; grand larceny
CHOUHARY, VARUM COMMIT DATE 02/10/2023 OFFENSE Obscenity; drunk in public; profane language
MANIKONDA, ANISH COMMIT DATE 02/10/2023 OFFENSE Driving while intoxicated (first offense)
SMITH, GREGORY COMMIT DATE 02/10/2023 OFFENSE Possession of firearm while protective order was in effect
DOOLEY, WILLIAM JR COMMIT DATE 02/10/2023 OFFENSE Obscenity; drunk in public; profane language
COWARD, DAVID COMMIT DATE 02/10/2023 OFFENSE Felony probation violation
KIMBERLIN, JULIA COMMIT DATE 02/10/2023 OFFENSE Felony probation violation (three counts)
VIDAL- NICOLAS, CELSE COMMIT DATE 02/10/2023 OFFENSE DUI second offense in five to 10 years

# OBITUARIES

## Duncan, Clara Ann Meredith

Clara Ann Meredith Duncan, 91, of Blacksburg died Thursday, Feb. 16, 2023 at Commonwealth Senior Living at Radford. She was born in Giles County on Sept. 20, 1931, to the late Clyde Winford and Lillie Katie Meredith. She was preceded in death by her husband, Richard Winston "Bud" Duncan,

and by eight sisters and brothers. She is survived by her sister, Aleta Lewis; nieces Tabatha Lewis and David Willard, Joyce and Darrell Bandy; nephews Larry, Jr., and Denny Lewis, Jerry and Patty Duncan, Curtis and Janet Duncan, Gary and Debra Kinsley; and other family members. Funeral services will

be conducted Thursday, Feb. 23, 2023, at 11 a.m. in the McCoy Funeral Home Chapel with the Rev. Brad Delaney officiating. Interment will follow in the Westview Cemetery. The family will receive friends from 10 to 11 a.m. before the service at McCoy Funeral Home 150 country Club Drive SW, Blacksburg.

## Newcomb, Jennifer S.

Jennifer S. Newcomb died at the age of 74 on Friday, Jan. 17, after successfully completing all the tasks she aspired to accomplish. She could find anything you wanted and make anything you needed. She was a loving and supportive wife, a doting and instructive mother, and a maker



of beautiful things as a fiber artist. She served

in many capacities and helped many people. She is survived by her husband, John; her children, Elisabeth (Nitish), Bobby (Tara), and Billy (Eva); and eight grandchildren: Baylen, Levi, Lydia, Leila, and Luke Newcomb and Rohan, Atri, and Indra Sinha. They all miss her a lot.

## Wright, Grayson

Grayson Wright, 88, of Christiansburg, passed away peacefully on Feb. 15 surrounded by his family.

He was born April 8, 1934, in Grayson County, Va., the son of Fred and Mazy Wright. He was preceded in death by his parents, six brothers, three sisters and infant son, Mark Allen.

Grayson is survived by his loving wife of 60 years, Joyce Wright; his two sons and daughters-in-law, Toby and Peachy Wright; and Pat and Vicki Wright all of Christiansburg; his granddaughters, Captain Paige Wright and Haley of Jackson Springs, N.C., Courtney Wright and boyfriend Hunter Orey; Kara Wright and Grace Wright, all of

Christiansburg. Also surviving are a niece that felt more like a sister and her husband, Penny and Billy Baumgardner of Low Gap, N.C.; a cousin, Harold Combs of Fries, Va.; sister-in-law, Sarah Campbell of Dublin, Va.; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Grayson grew up in Grayson County. He proudly served his country in the United States Navy from 1954 to 1958. After he and Joyce were married, they moved to Christiansburg and raised their family. Grayson worked in electronics in the Physics Department at Virginia Tech for more than 30 years before retiring.

His proudest accomplishments were

being "Papa" to his four granddaughters and caring for his loving wife Joyce.

The family would like to express their gratitude to the NRV Carilion Hospice team that cared for Grayson during his final weeks. Special thanks to Becky, Amy and Rebekah who so lovingly cared for him and the family during this time.

Visitation and funeral service was held on Sunday, Feb. 19 at McCoy Funeral Home, 150 Country Club Dr. S.W., Blacksburg, with Pastor Scott Obenchain officiating. Graveside service was held on Monday, Feb. 20 at the family cemetery, Pleasant Hill Church, 3710 Pine Mountain Rd, Independence, Va.

## Peterman, William Wyatt (Bill)

William Wyatt (Bill) Peterman was born on July 1, 1940, and passed away on Feb. 16, 2023, at his home.

His parents were the late Earl and Bernice Tolbert Peterman. During WWII his parents worked in Baltimore, and he spent much of his childhood with his grandparents: Wyatt and Louise Tolbert in Gether, Va., and Gold and Blanche Peterman in Floyd.

Both Gether and Floyd were special places for him. His parents moved to Turman Hill just outside of Christiansburg when he started the second grade. He graduated from Auburn High School in 1958. He joined the Marines and was honorably discharged in 1962. He later attended Washington County Technical School and became a machinist.

In 1963 he married Mary Teany, his wife of 59 years. His first professional job was with General Electric in Salem. Bill and Mary moved back to Montgomery County in

1965, and he accepted a position with the Pipe Shop in Radford as a pattern maker. Bill was a talented carpenter and with the assistance of his father, he and Mary built their home.

In the early 1980s, he joined the Postal Service and carried mail in Riner until his retirement in 2001. Bill was a hard worker and a diligent mail carrier, often helping a farmer get his cattle back in a field or checking on an elderly customer along his way.

After retiring, Mary and he worked on their small farm raising cattle. He also had a woodworking and metalworking shop that afforded him the opportunity to work on projects for his children, neighbors, and friends.

He is survived by his wife Mary; his son, Ed Peterman of Washington, D.C.; his daughter, Wilma Peterman Cross, and her husband Matthew; and his granddaughter, Sadie Elizabeth Cross, all of Simsbury, Conn. He is also survived by his aunts,

Helen Rutrough of Salem and Ward and Nerene Tolbert of Bassett, Va., and many nieces and nephews on the Teany side of the family, including Laura Teany Lehman, who was like a daughter to Bill. He is also survived by his long-time friend, Frank Bobbitt of Fancy Gap, whom Bill considered a brother.

Finally, his friendship with Josh Altizer and Jeff Sheppard, both of Riner, kept him busy with fun projects.

The family received friends on Tuesday, Feb. 21, 2023, at the Mullins Funeral Home in Radford, and a graveside service followed at the Teany Family Cemetery, Currin Lane, Christiansburg.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donations to Old Brick Presbyterian Church, PO Box 3238 Radford, VA 24143.

Bill was a man of few words, humble in nature, but kind to all.

The Peterman family is in the care of Mullins Funeral Home and Crematory in Radford.

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# Home Country by Slim Randles

## The night the wind stole a tent

Back before the earth cooled completely, I was a reporter for the newspaper in Victorville, California. Victorville is a high desert town between L.A. and Las Vegas and is celebrated in folklore as “where the car broke down as I was trying to get to Barstow.”

And every spring about this time, that ol’ desert country tries to outdo itself in setting new records in how hard the wind blows. It’s not always the same, of course. Sometimes there’s a bunch of sand and dust in the wind, and sometimes it’s clear skies and there’s just a mountain or two in the wind. But it blows.

If there was anything or anyone out in that desert that was unusual or off the beaten path, I covered it. You know, Iron Water Alice who soaked in iron water (of course) to increase her psychic potency, “Guv” Reeve who lived with a harem of well-wishing

church ladies and ran for governor every four years. The beat goes on.

Polite people who answered the phone at the paper referred unusual phone calls to “the color story reporter named Slim.” Sounded better than weirdo writer, didn’t it?

And one March, two young boys called in from Apple Valley, about five miles to the east, and reported that someone had stolen their tent. They had set the tent up in the back yard because they wanted to be tough outdoorsmen, of course, and this was a good way to start. The tent had a floor and walls and a roof, of course, was pegged solidly to the desert, but when they went out the next morning, somebody had stolen it!

The sheriff’s office wouldn’t even take a report on it, but the Victor Valley Daily Press would, by golly. So the word went out to

every windblown acre of the high desert, and the crime was solved. Yes, it seemed an 80-year-old man who had a little cement-block shack in Lucerne Valley, about 20 miles east of the launch pad back yard, found a full-grown tent in one of his elm trees about 10 feet off the ground.

One little rip, but some tape took care of that. Thank the Lord for freedom of the press. And spring zephyrs that make a reporter’s job fun.

Brought to you by Hug-a-Horse Thrift Store in Edgewood, NM. Good folks work there. <https://www.thriftstores.net/store/7383/hug-a-horse-thrift-store/>

# Virginia gas prices decline once again

Average gasoline prices in Virginia fell 3.3 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.21 per gallon on Monday, Feb. 20, according to GasBuddy’s survey of 4,081 stations in Virginia.

Prices in Virginia are 11.2 cents per gallon lower than a month ago and 18.5 cents per gallon lower than a year ago.

The national average price of diesel has fallen 6.9 cents in the last week and stands at \$4.45 per gallon.

According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Virginia was priced at \$2.85 per gallon Monday while the most expensive was \$4.05 per gallon, a difference of \$1.20/g.

The national average

price of gasoline was unchanged in the last week, averaging \$3.37 per gallon Monday. The national average is down 2.7 cents per gallon from a month ago and stands 14.5 cents per gallon lower 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.

“Motorists across many areas of the country have seen gas prices inching down for another week, while some states have moved higher. We’ve seen some refinery challenges in pockets of the country, while others are starting the transition to summer gasoline, weighing on prices. For diesel, the outlook remains bright

with prices continuing to fall,” said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy. “Oil prices have softened over the last week, helping to limit any upside at the pump, with strong economic data leading to concern that the Fed will continue to use interest rates to slow the economy. This could weaken demand as we head into the peak summer driving season. For diesel, the great news is that the most common price in the U.S. for diesel is now \$3.99 per gallon, with average prices continuing to drop. In the next couple of weeks, diesel will finally flip to deflationary compared to a year ago, which is excellent news for the economy.”

## PETS OF THE WEEK



Juno

Juno (black and white fur) and Mercy (brown fur) are a bonded pair of older BFFs (Best Furry Friends) who will need to be adopted together. They love hanging around each other and people of all ages, too. Juno enjoys squeaky toys. Mercy is friendly but may be a little shy at first. They will do best in a home where they are the only pets. Both dogs’ adoptions are sponsored by Montgomery County Friends of Animal Care and Control.



Mercy

## 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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# Financial Focus: Take advantage of higher IRA limits

Over the past year, the rising cost of living has certainly been challenging. But for investors, there’s at least one silver lining to inflation — a higher IRA contribution limit.

IRAs have been around for nearly half a century, but they’ve only been pegged to inflation since 2001. Since then, the contribution limit has risen every few years, with the last increase coming in 2019. Now, in 2023, the annual IRA contribution limit has moved to \$6,500, up from \$6,000 last year. If you’re 50 or older, you can put in up to \$7,500 a year, up from \$6,500 in 2022.

If you’ve already established an automatic investment plan for your IRA, you could consider bumping up your payments to accommodate the new, higher limits. However, if you can afford it, you may want to fully fund your IRA as soon as possible, so the money can potentially be growing throughout the year. But you can contribute to your 2023 IRA any time from now until April 15, 2024. (And it’s also not too late to contribute to your 2022 IRA — you’ve got until April 18 of this year.)

If you haven’t yet opened an IRA, you might want to do so now to take advantage of the higher contribution limits. Depending on your situation, you could contribute either to a Roth or traditional IRA. Here are the basics for each one:

**Roth IRA** – When you invest in a Roth IRA, your earnings and withdrawals are free from federal taxes, provided you’ve had your account at least five years and you don’t start taking money out until you’re 59-and-a-half or older. In 2023, you can contribute the full amount to a Roth IRA if you are single and your modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) is less than \$138,000; above that amount,

your contributions will be reduced until they are phased out completely at \$153,000. If you’re married and file jointly, this “phase-out range” is \$218,000 – \$228,000.

**Traditional IRA** – Generally, you can invest in a traditional IRA regardless of your income level. If you and your spouse don’t have a 401(k) or similar employer-sponsored retirement plan, your contributions are typically tax deductible; if you or your spouse do have such a plan, the tax deductibility will depend on your income level. But regardless of whether your contributions are deductible, your earnings can grow on a tax-deferred basis.

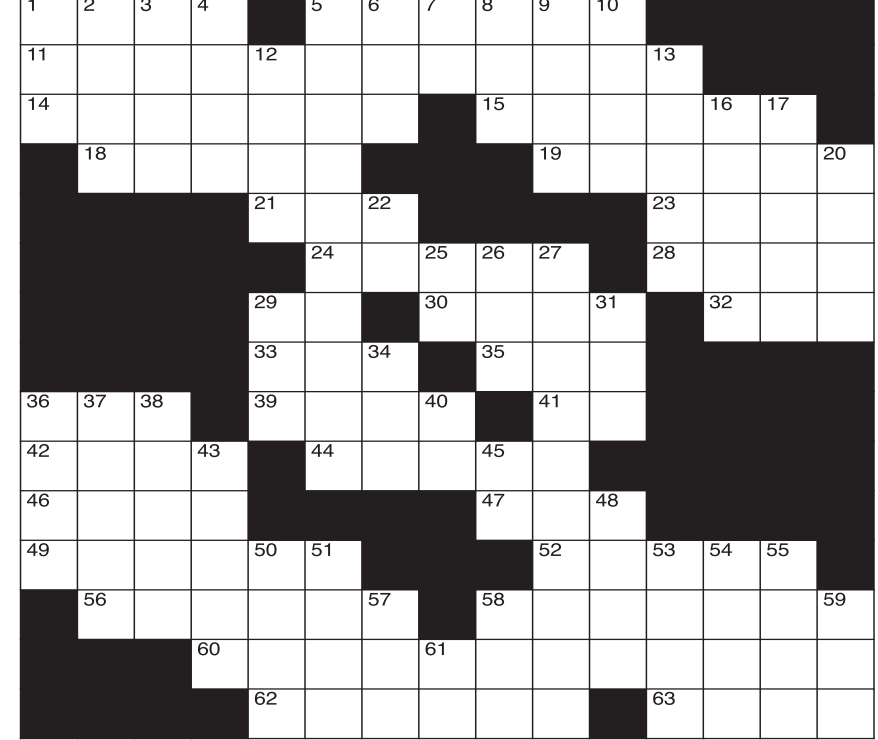
If you have a choice, which IRA should you pick? The decision largely revolves around this question: Would you benefit more from the traditional IRA tax deduction (assuming you qualify for it) or the tax-free withdrawals of a Roth IRA? And the answer mostly depends on whether your tax rate will be higher or lower during your retirement. If you are confident you’ll be in a higher tax bracket when you retire, the Roth IRA, with its tax-free withdrawals, might be the better choice. But if you think you’ll be in a lower tax bracket, you might benefit by taking the upfront tax breaks of a traditional IRA.

Of course, if you’re still many years away from retirement, it can be difficult to estimate your future tax bracket. Your tax advisor may be able to provide some guidance.

An IRA is one of the most popular retirement savings vehicles around — and for good reason. Consider putting one to work for you in 2023.

*-This article was written by Edward Member SIPC.*

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE



- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>CLUES ACROSS</p> <p>1. Constrictors</p> <p>5. Abounding in rocks</p> <p>11. Speed</p> <p>14. German city</p> <p>15. Lacking sympathy</p> <p>18. Visionaries</p> <p>19. Wastes away</p> <p>21. One precursor to the EU</p> <p>23. Nursemaid</p> <p>24. Unconsciousnesses</p> <p>28. Baby’s word for father</p> <p>29. Equal to 64 US pints (abbr.)</p> <p>30. Senses of self-importance</p> <p>32. Midway between south and southwest</p> <p>33. When you hope to get there</p> <p>35. Electronic data</p> | <p>processing</p> <p>36. Passports and drivers’ licences are two</p> <p>39. Fishes</p> <p>41. Air Force</p> <p>42. Personal computers</p> <p>44. Ecological community</p> <p>46. Wings</p> <p>47. Halfway</p> <p>49. Cool, calm and collected</p> <p>52. Jewelled headdress</p> <p>56. Musical composition</p> <p>58. ___ Falls</p> <p>60. Repeating remarks</p> <p>62. Periods in one’s life</p> <p>63. Hyphen</p> <p>CLUES DOWN</p> <p>1. ___ Humbug!</p> <p>2. Devices that alert pilots (abbr.)</p> <p>3. Grocer</p> | <p>4. One point east of southeast</p> <p>5. Subjects to hostility</p> <p>6. Work unit</p> <p>7. Atomic #56</p> <p>8. British thermal unit</p> <p>9. “Elusive Butterfly” singer</p> <p>10. Fastened over animal’s neck</p> <p>12. Device</p> <p>13. Rechargeable power source</p> <p>16. Ancient sage</p> <p>17. Consist of two elements</p> <p>20. “Pygmalion” writer</p> <p>22. “The Centennial State” (abbr.)</p> <p>25. Of I</p> <p>26. Get older</p> <p>27. Brotherhoods</p> | <p>29. Buzzing insect</p> <p>31. Sunscreen rating</p> <p>34. Brew</p> <p>36. Leader</p> <p>37. Indigo bush</p> <p>38. Burn with a hot liquid</p> <p>40. Junior’s dad</p> <p>43. Horse mackerels genus</p> <p>45. Morning</p> <p>48. Unit of linear measurement (abbr.)</p> <p>50. Double curve</p> <p>51. Small, twisted bunch</p> <p>53. Developed</p> <p>54. Mars crater</p> <p>55. Humanistic discipline</p> <p>57. Word element meaning ear</p> <p>58. Last or greatest in an indefinitely large series</p> <p>59. Wood residue</p> <p>61. It cools your home</p> |
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### Employment

### Legals - Botetourt County

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#### Legals - Botetourt County

#### TRUSTEE'S SALE OF 304 Goad Road, Fincastle, VA

Tax Map No. 62-155 In execution of a Deed of Trust dated August 31, 2011, recorded in the Clerk's Office of the Circuit Court for the County of Botetourt, Virginia, as Instrument No. 110003218, the Substitute Trustee will offer the above-described property for sale to the highest bidder at public auction on the date and time referenced below. All of that certain tract or parcel of land containing 1.375 acres, more or less, as shown on that certain plat of survey made by Charles R. McMurry, CLS, dated March 12, 1996, recorded in the Clerk's Office for the Circuit Court of Botetourt County, Virginia, in Plat Book 17, at Page 27. Date of Sale: March 8, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. Location: outside the Botetourt County Circuit Court, Courthouse, Main Street, Fincastle, VA 24090. Terms: CASH; a deposit in the form of certified funds in the amount of \$10,000 or 10% of the sale price, whichever is lower. Settlement within thirty (30) days of date of sale. Time is of the essence. OPTIONS: 1. All costs of conveyance, examination of title, recording charges, etc. will be at cost of purchaser with the exception of the grantor's tax. Neither the Substitute Trustee nor any other party guarantees or covenants to deliver or in any way to obtain possession of the premises for any third party purchaser 2. The Substitute Trustee reserves the right to reject all bids, extend the time to receive bids or withdraw the property from sale at any time. In addition, should the Substitute Trustee be unable, for any reason, in its sole discretion, to convey title, the successful bidder's sole remedy in law or equity shall be the return of his deposit. Upon refund of the deposit, the sale shall be void and of no effect. Additional terms may be announced at the time of the sale. The Substitute Trustee will convey the above-described property to the purchaser(s) by Special Warranty deed at settlement and makes no additional representations or warranties of any kind regarding the title to said property. John K. Prillaman, Esq. Substitute Trustee For Information Contact: John K. Prillaman, Esq. OPN LAW 3140 Chaparral Drive Roanoke, Virginia 24018 (540) 725-8194

#### Legals - City of Radford

#### Order of Publication Commonwealth of Virginia

VA Code §§ 8.01-316, -317 Case No. CL23-6883 City of Radford Circuit Court Commonwealth of Virginia, in re Robert A. Jones, Jr. v. Victor Carter, et al. The object of this suit is to: Quiet the title to 530 W. Rock Road, Radford, VA 24141. It is ORDERED that heirs of Charles Jones, deceased appear at the above-named court and protect his/her interests on or before MARCH 15, 2023. JANUARY 27, 2023 REBECCA PRICE Deputy Clerk

#### Legals - City of Salem

#### ORDER OF PUBLICATION COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA VA CODE §§ 1-211.1; 8.01-316, 20-104

Case No. CL23-40 ROANOKE COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT 305 E. MAIN STREET, SALEM, VA 24153 Commonwealth of Virginia, in re CHLOE GRACE DUNN v. The object of this suit is to: change the minor's name. It is ORDERED that MICHAEL MATTHEW DUNN appear at the above-named court and protect his/her interests on or before March 14, 2023 @2:30pm. JANUARY 11, 2023 STEVEN A. MCGRAW, clerk

#### NOTICE OF A PUBLIC HEARING

FOR THE PURPOSE OF DETERMINING THE NUMBER OF PUBLIC VEHICLES, TAXICABS, AND FOR HIRE CARS FOR WHICH CERTIFICATES OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCE AND NECESSITY SHALL BE ISSUED DURING THE NEXT YEAR AND FOR THE PURPOSE OF DETERMINING TO WHICH PERSON OR PERSONS SUCH CERTIFICATES SHALL BE ISSUED. IN THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SALEM, VIRGINIA: Pursuant to the provisions of Section 98-94 of The Code of the City of Salem, Virginia, the Council of the City of Salem hereby gives notice that at the regular meeting of said Council to be held on March 13, 2023, at 6:30 p.m., in Council Chambers of the City Hall, 114 North Broad Street, Salem, Virginia, a public hearing will be held for the purpose of determining the number of public vehicles, taxicabs, and for hire cars for which certificates of public convenience and necessity shall be issued during the next year and for the purpose of determining to which person or persons such certificates shall be issued. At said hearing, parties in interest and citizens shall have an opportunity to be heard, present evidence, and show cause why such certificates should or should not be granted. THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SALEM, VIRGINIA BY H. Robert Light, Clerk of Council

#### AUCTIONS

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Attention: Community Service Providers The Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS) is seeking applications to establish grant awards to agencies providing comprehensive suicide prevention and opioid addiction programs for Military Service Members, Veterans, and their families throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. Don't delay. Applications for grants are due February 28, 2023. Questions? Contact Vivian.Dooabay@dvs.virginia.gov or 804.482.8505

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# Deadline extended to March 3 for NRV Leading Lights Volunteer Award nominations

CHRISTIANSBURG – Actively seeking volunteer award nomination, NRV Leading Lights has extended the deadline until March 3, 2023.

Leading Lights awards are focused on the impact of a volunteer's work and leadership.

Those who have been nominated before but not selected as a Distinguished Recipient may be nominated again. Individuals and organizations are highly encouraged to submit nominations for outstanding New River Valley volunteers they know or volunteer with.

Administrators, teachers, guidance counselors, club sponsors, and youth mentors are asked to nominate young people for the high school and college awards. Groups and organizations cannot be nominated for awards.

Awardees are engaged in diverse volunteer activities across the NRV. Collectively they spend thousands of

hours over their lifetimes volunteering with clothing banks, rescue and disaster relief teams, as youth mentors, managing holiday programs, overseeing weekend food backpack programs, helping at local food kitchens, serving with civic groups, community building, and volunteering with many other local charitable activities and programs.

Awards are given in three categories: community (seven awards), high school (two awards), and college (two awards).

In the community award category, an award is reserved for a volunteer in each county/city of the New River Valley (Floyd County, Giles County, Pulaski County, Radford City), two in Montgomery County (due to population size), and one across the entire NRV to recognize Lifetime Volunteer Achievement.

Nominees must be current residents of the NRV

or, if being nominated for a student category, they must be currently enrolled in a school/college in the NRV. Distinguished Recipients in each category will be selected on the following criteria:

- Strong community involvement
- Demonstrated lifestyle of dedicated, continuous, long-term involvement in the community
- Proven leadership
- Creativity in initiating and implementing projects that lead to a better quality of life

The NRV Leading Lights organization recognizes volunteers in the New River Valley each year who are making community-changing impacts culminating in an annual celebratory event scheduled for April 13, 2023.

The organization honors Distinguished Recipients by making a monetary donation to the non-profit of their choice.

## Local students earn academic honors at William & Mary

A number of local students were recently named to the Dean's List at the College of William & Mary for the fall 2022 semester.

In order to achieve Dean's List status, a full-time-degree seeking undergraduate student must take at least 12 credit hours and earn a 3.6

Quality Point Average during the semester.

Achieving the Dean's List honor from Blacksburg were Julie Anderson, Jack Baker, Sam Freeman, Dory Gilmer, Ella Goldschmidt, Sam Grove, Maegen Herring, Jenna Massey, Grace McGehee, Amy Menegay, and Ellie St.

Martin.

Achieving the Dean's List honor from Christiansburg were Tristan Hurst and Kira Quintin.

Achieving the Dean's List honor from Radford was Michael Wojdak.

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# MONTGOMERY SPORTS

## Christiansburg's Brady Hand wins 120-weight Class 3 state title in Salem

**Marty Gordon**  
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

Christiansburg freshman Brady Hand brought home a state championship from this weekend's Class 3 wrestling tournament in Salem. The 120-pound grappler was the school's only state winner.

Hand finished undefeated this season in Virginia matches and 37-4 overall in cross-state tournaments. His long-term goal is to be a four-time state champion and

to wrestle at the Division I level in college.

His father, Matt, is originally from Iowa where he wrestled for the University of Iowa, one of the elite programs in the entire country.

The 3C regional champ, Staunton River, took the Class 3 top honors. New Kent finished second. Christiansburg, as a team, was ninth.

Other Christiansburg wrestlers:

Jake Robie fell 8-5 in his finals match to take the runner-up spot in the Class 3 150-pound weight class.

Evan Mefford got a reversal with 45 seconds left to take third place.

As a team, Radford finished sixth in the Class 2 tournament. Taven Williams was third at 150; Cole Martin fourth at 157, Lance Duncan third at 175, Dawson Martin second at 190, and Charlie Davis was second at 215.



PHOTO BY KYMN DAVIDSON-HAMLEY  
CHS freshman wrestler Brady Hand won the state championship in the 120-weight class Saturday at the Salem Civic Center.

## CAC hosts Class 1, 2 state championship meet



Auburn's Kade Hamilton placed second in the 200-yard individual medley and also placed fifth in the 100-yard breaststroke final at Saturday's Class 1 and 2 State Championship meet.



PHOTOS BY JON FLEMING  
Auburn senior Kendra Scaggs performs a back somersault dive during the State Championship 1 meter diving competition on her way to a fifth place finish.

## Youngster takes court with Hokies basketball team



PHOTO BY MARTY GORDON

Chase O'Brien (third from left), the seven-year-old who designed Coach Mike Young's shoes for the Our Shoes 4 Hope initiative last month, is pictured along with his parents Eric and Jessica, at Saturday's Virginia Tech basketball game against Pitt. At the game, he was introduced as an honorary starter.

**Marty Gordon**  
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

Chase O'Brien is a typical seven-year-old. He loves basketball and is a big fan of the Virginia Tech Hokies. He is also a pediatric cancer patient.

Saturday night at Virginia Tech's basketball game he was introduced during pregame warmups as an honorary starter for Mike Young's Hokies. He was given a jersey signed by the team and met his favorite player,

Justin Mutts.

The Virginia Tech basketball program has teamed up with Carilion Children's Hospital to fight pediatric cancer. Players and coaches from the men's and women's teams are partnering with Carilion Pediatric Hematology-Oncology patients, getting creative to raise pediatric cancer awareness.

More than 25 participating children and teens had the chance to paint custom shoes for the coaches and basketball staff to wear later this season. Players and

coaches from both Virginia Tech men's and women's basketball joined the kids and their families on-site at the Carilion Children's Tanglewood Center in December.

The specially-designed sneakers were worn by the women's basketball coaches and staff at the January 12 game against Louisville, and the men's basketball coaches and staff wore the special shoes on Jan. 28 when the team hosted Syracuse. O'Brien was undergoing chemo treatment at the Roanoke hospital and was unable to attend.

Tech basketball coach Mike Young invited the O'Brien family to be at this weekend's game against Pitt. "Toughest guy in the building, man," said Young. "Toughest guy in the building. [Seven] years old and dealing with that. And his mom, Jessica, and his dad, Eric, to have them here and to be able to recognize him and bring him into the locker room after a big win and present him the game ball, call his number and his name to the starting lineups: pretty awesome day."

This event was part of an ongoing NCAA initiative called "Coaches vs. Cancer," in which collegiate basketball coaches and staff nationwide wear sneakers at designated games to raise awareness for the cause.

O'Brien's appearance was one step in his ongoing battle against the cancer that is disrupting his childhood. His mother, Jessica, met with the media shortly before this weekend's game. She said that unfortunately, his tumor started to grow back in May after his first surgery, so he has been going through chemotherapy treatments ever since.

He was first diagnosed with juvenile pilocytic astrocytoma, a rare childhood brain tumor, when he was five.

In most cases, the tumor is benign, grows slowly, and does not spread to surrounding brain tissue. Symptoms of JPA will vary depending upon the size and location of the tumor. Doctors typically treat the cancer by surgery followed by chemo.

Saturday, O'Brien got to be a little boy with no worries as he watched the Hokies defeat the Pitt Panthers from his sideline seat. He cheered and watched his favorite player, Justin Mutts, dunk one for him during the contest.

The rest of the sneakers colored during the program raised \$13,780 to benefit Carilion Children's Hematology and Oncology through the Shoes 4 Hope auctions.

## Christiansburg, Blacksburg players earn All-River Ridge honors

Christiansburg and Blacksburg high schools each had players named to the All-River Ridge District basketball teams announced Friday

Christiansburg's Katy Hoover was named to the first-team while Sathara Kane made

the second-team. Blue Demons Blythe Akers, Kaleb Robinson and Caden Calloway all received honorable mention honors.

Blacksburg's Wade Bland made the first team while teammates Chandler Montgomery,

Xavier Bland, Brynn Ferguson, and Riley Price were named to the second-team.

Pulaski's Keslyn Secrist was the River Ridge girls player of the year, and Cave Spring's Jessica Ficaro was the coach of the year.

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## Sports notes: Former RU coach, player both pass away

Marty Gordon

NRVsports@ourvalley.org

Former women's basketball player and Radford University women's coach Simone Edwards has died after a long battle with cancer.

Cam Jones, who played high school at Patrick Henry in Roanoke and then at Radford University, has also passed away. His death was announced this past week.

Edwards, who had been diagnosed with stage three ovarian cancer, lived in Florida and was the first Jamaican woman to sign with a WNBA team. She played for the Seattle Storm with whom she won the title in 2004 before retiring in 2006.

The 49-year-old coached the Jamaican women's national basketball team to the 2014 Caribbean Women's basketball championship title.

She was hired as an assistant coach at Radford University in 2007 and also served as an assistant at George Mason University from 2008 to 2011.

Jones, who most recently was teaching middle school in Richmond, averaged 8.5 points per game for RU in 2014-2015.

In other sports news in the area:

Ft. Chiswell High School has named Zane Quesberry as its new head football coach.

Quesberry is a former Pulaski County football player who played football at Maryville (TN) College as a defensive back. He started his coaching career at William Blount Middle School and then

moved on to Bearden (TN) High School. In 2016, he rejoined the staff at Auburn High School before moving on to Pulaski in 2020.

A two-person team representing Radford University will compete for the 2023 Major League Fishing Abu Garcia College Fishing National Championship on Lake Toho in Kissimmee, Fla., February 21-23.

Jackson Norton and Kent Clark qualified for the big-money college bass fishing finals by winning a regional college bass fishing tournament last year. The prize pool for the event is \$235,000.

The return of EA Sports' college football video game series now has a time of arrival: the summer of 2024.

Daryl Holt, EA Sports' vice president and general manager, told ESPN in an interview the brand is going to launch EA Sports College Football at that time because of the enormous undertaking involved in creating the game from scratch. The game will include state-of-the-art 3D scans of dozens of stadiums.

The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) is again offering a chance to hunt bull elk in the Elk Management Zone of Virginia for the upcoming hunting season. The application period is open until March 30, 2023.

The hunt for the 2023-2024 season will be held Saturday, October 14, 2023, through Friday, October 20, 2023. Five antlered elk licenses are available for this year's

hunt via lottery.

Applications for a special elk hunting license can be obtained online, under elk hunting, or by calling the Department of Wildlife Resources Customer Service for assistance in applying via phone.

Applications require a non-refundable fee of \$15 for Virginia residents and \$20 for out-of-state residents. Winners of the elk hunting lottery will then need to purchase a special elk hunting license for \$40 for in-state residents and \$400 for out-of-state residents.

All elk hunt lottery applicants are assigned a random number between 1 and the total number of applicants using a random number generator.

Opportunities to purchase a special elk hunting license will be offered to the applicant randomly assigned number 1 and will proceed sequentially until all slots have been filled in accordance with the following requirements:

The 1 license must go to someone who lives within the elk management zone.

No more than one license can be purchased by an out-of-state hunter.

If the winner who resides in the elk management zone cannot purchase the license, the next consecutive resident elk management zone applicant will be offered the opportunity.

If any of the other four winners are unable to purchase the special elk license within 30 days, the opportunity to purchase a license will be offered to the next consecutive applicant meeting residency requirements.

## VT wrestlers defeat Virginia for share of ACC title

Marty Gordon

Sports editor and news reporter

The No.-9 Virginia Tech wrestling team held down the fort Friday night in the last dual match of the season with a victory over commonwealth foe, the University of Virginia, in Cassell Coliseum. The win gained a share of the ACC regular season title for the

Hokies.

Highlighting the night were seniors Collin Gerardi, Hunter Bolen, and Mekhi Lewis, who all packed up wins in their final bout in Cassell Coliseum.

The night started with a Senior Night ceremony honoring seniors Mekhi

Lewis, Hunter Bolen, Collin Gerardi, Jordan Florence, Brandon Wittenberg, and Drew Nicholson and athletic training students Caroline Johnson and Ella Anderson. The group was honored for their time, their accomplishments, and their embodiment of the Hokie spirit during their time in Blacksburg. Among the group, Lewis has a year of eligibility remaining.

## Two assistant strength, conditioning coaches join VT football staff

Virginia Tech football head coach Brent Pry announced Thursday two new hires to the football strength and conditioning team with Brandon Dillard and Ryan Hardie joining the program as assistant strength and conditioning coaches under Senior Director of Strength and Conditioning Dwight Galt.

From Martinsville, Va., and Bassett High School, Dillard is no stranger to Blacksburg. A former student-athlete, he was a member of the Hokies' football team (2005-10), earning his bachelor's degree in residential property management in 2009. He played in 13 games in 2007 as a wide receiver and kick returner. He was a member of two ACC Championship teams (2007, 2008) and two Orange Bowl teams (2007, 2008) under Head Coach Frank Beamer.

Dillard began his career as a strength and conditioning graduate assistant at Tech in 2011 before being named the Associate Director of Strength and Conditioning for men's and women's

basketball in 2012, a role he held until 2016. For the last seven years, he has served as the Associate Director of Strength and Conditioning for Olympic sports at Tech, designing strength and conditioning programs for track and field, men's and women's soccer, men's tennis, and women's golf.

Over these years, the Hokies were a fixture in the postseason. The teams earned a total of 17 NCAA Tournament berths and nine ACC championships.

Dillard is a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist (CSCS) through the National Strength and Conditioning Association.

From Canton, Ohio, and GlenOak High School, Hardie comes to Blacksburg following four years as the Assistant Director of Sports Performance at Old Dominion. In that role, Hardie designed and executed strength and conditioning programs for the football, women's basketball, and women's rowing teams.

Hardie's résumé includes stops at his alma

mater, Walsh University (2013-15), and Malone University (2016-19), where he served as the Head Strength and Conditioning Coach at both schools. Hardie also served separate internships in strength and conditioning at Ohio State University (2015-16) and the University of Georgia (2019).

He is a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist (CSCS) through the National Strength and Conditioning Association, and holds a RSCC ranking through the NSCA. Hardie is also a certified Sports Performance Coach through USA-Weightlifting (USAW).

Hardie earned his bachelor's degree in multi-age physical education, along with a masters of business administration from Walsh University, where he played college football.

Dillard and Hardie join Tech football letterwinners Jarrett Ferguson and Greg Allen as football strength and conditioning assistants.

—VT Athletics

## Luther Memorial Lutheran Church to host Mr. Jefferson's Bones trombone quintet



NEWS MESSENGER STAFF PHOTO

BLACKSBURG — On March 12, 2023 at 4 p.m., Luther Memorial Lutheran Church will host a concert by Mr. Jefferson's Bones, a professional trombone quintet. The New River Valley community is invited to attend.

For the second time, Mr. Jefferson's Bones quintet is traveling to Puerto Rico to share their music, with a class for university students planned, and a free public concert on March 20. The quintet first visited Puerto Rico in 2018 as a Hurricane Maria relief effort: eight trombonists from the United States spent a week performing a number of free concerts for the public; they also offered music classes to students, distributed free music books and Bone instruments, and spent money with local businesses to help them recover and know they had not been forgotten by American citizens.

"Luther Memorial Lutheran Church is

delighted to host this 'practice' concert; this event is made possible by an endowment from the Marilyn Norstedt Memorial Music Fund at Luther Memorial Lutheran Church," said church pastor the Rev. Monica Weber. A free-will offering will be taken at the Blacksburg concert for anyone wishing to help defray the artists' lodging and transportation costs.

"We invite everyone in the New River Valley to come enjoy a wonderful free brass concert on March 12 at 4 p.m. and thank this gifted group of musicians for offering their time and talent to help young music students," said Pastor Weber.

Robert Mott, a member of the quintet, says, "We made some great friends and contacts with music teachers and professors on our 2018 trip and as a result, we have been invited to perform this year for the Puertorrican Brass Fest

held annually in Mayaguez on Tuesday, March 21. Trumpet, trombone, horn, and tuba students of all ages from across the island will gather for one day of classes and performances and we will be the closing concert for that one-day festival."

As they did in 2018, Mr. Jefferson's Bones is performing in Puerto Rico free of charge and is covering its own travel and lodging expenses for the trip. The group will also purchase musical instruments (e.g., pBones, pTrumpets, etc.) and music method books to donate to the music students of Puerto Rico, and is working with teachers in Puerto Rico to make sure that they are providing the most helpful resources.

"We have made a \$1,000 contribution to the quintet to help purchase valuable resources for Puerto Rican students," said the Rev. Weber.

—Submitted by Monica Weber, Pastor, Luther Memorial Lutheran Church

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