



Juneteenth celebration brings together community in "Black Empowerment, Joy, and Legacy"

The event was held on the historic grounds of the Christiansburg Industrial Institute

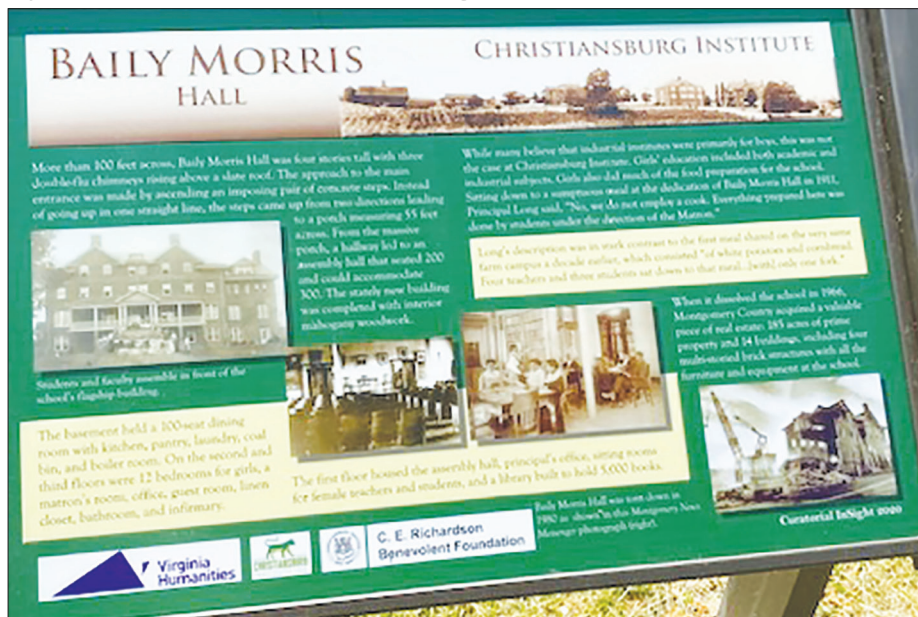


Jojo Stockton, on guitar, and Jarod Leland, on harmonica, entertain the crowd at the 2023 Juneteenth celebration in Christiansburg.

Lori Graham
Contributing writer

The 2023 Juneteenth celebration happened on Saturday, June 19 on the grounds of the historic campus of the Christiansburg Industrial Institute and was sponsored by The Coalition of Christiansburg Institute, Hill School Community Center, and the Christiansburg Alumni Association.

Juneteenth, celebrated on June 19, became a nationally recognized holiday in the United States two years ago through President Biden's legislative initiative and Congress's passing of the action. The holiday is to remember and celebrate once enslaved African Americans and their emancipation. Specifically, "even though the



New storyboards are located on the grounds of Christiansburg Institute.

PHOTOS BY LORI GRAHAM

Emancipation Proclamation was made effective in 1863, it

See Juneteenth, page 3

Blacksburg Police Chief presents Outstanding Citizen Award for assistance in the apprehension of thieves

Lori Graham
Contributing writer

The June 13 Blacksburg Town Council meeting began with the presentation of an Outstanding Citizen Award to Mario Termine by the Blacksburg Police Chief Todd Brewster.

Termine was recognized for his actions in helping to capture wanted individuals involved in larceny and a string of thefts of catalytic converters.

According to Brewster, on February 24, 2023, Termine made a call to the police department for suspicious activity happening outside the building after he heard a "grinding noise." Upon the arrival of the police officers, they determined that a vehicle in the parking lot had been burglarized having its catalytic converter removed.

The Blacksburg citizen was able to take a picture of the suspect's vehicle license plate,

who was reportedly wearing a mask, before they left the area.

"At that time, Officer Quigley put out a 'be on the lookout' to surrounding agencies for this vehicle who happened to be seen by a Montgomery County deputy on Prices Fork Road, just outside the town limits. The deputy tried to stop the vehicle and a pursue ensued that went all over the county, into Pulaski County, back into Montgomery County and multiple agencies were involved in taking two suspects into custody," Brewster said.

The individuals being held in custody are from out of state and believed to be involved in similar crimes along the east coast.

"Because of citizens like Mr. Termine, we have been able to solve a few of these cases," Brewster said.

Also during meeting, the town council has set a public hearing on July 11, 2023 for the following

ordinances: Ordinance 2026 granting a lease of office space at 200 Clay Street, S.W., Ordinance 2027, to amend the FY2022/2023 Operating Budget by reappropriating prior year Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and home revenues, and Ordinance 2028, to amend the FY2023/2024 Operating Budget to accept and appropriate \$255,000 of the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services Grant Funds to the General Fund.

Blacksburg Town Attorney, Larry Spencer also presented an ordinance to the board during their regular session on Tuesday. Ordinance 2018, Section 14-107 pertains to civil penalties imposed for inoperable vehicle violations.

"This provides for \$100 civil penalty for first violation and \$150 for each violation thereafter," Spencer said. "We can theoretically assess up to \$3,000 in civil penalties but

we rarely get to the stage where we have to do this at all."

Vice Mayor Susan Anderson moved to approve Ordinance 2018, resulting in unanimous approval by the council.

Spencer also addressed the council on an ordinance to amend town code section 12-606, Ordinance 2024 that addresses fees for residential parking permits. The amendment states that there will be no fee for the first two permits issued for a single residence with additional permits charged at \$5.00 each. Parking permits will be capped to four per year for any

See Police, page 3



COURTESY GRAPHIC

Wonder Universe Children's Museum asks Christiansburg for reconsideration to provide funds for FY 2023-24

Lori Graham
Contributing writer

Christiansburg's FY2023-2024 proposed budget does not currently include community grant money earmarked for Wonder Universe this year, causing concern for those parents who frequently bring their children to the museum.

Many residents spoke during the town council meeting's citizen comments session in support of Wonder Universe Museum and the need for continuing financial support from Christiansburg Town Council.

Previously, Wonder Universe was located in

Blacksburg, but volunteers and supporters of the museum decided to change its location to the Uptown Christiansburg (formerly the New River Valley Mall) to provide for a more centralized location, according to Jessica Jeter, Chair of the museum.

"We currently have over 600 Christiansburg family members, which exceeds the number of Blacksburg family memberships," Jeter said. "This just shows how important it is to Christiansburg."

Doug Adkins of Christiansburg shared with the council that, not only is Wonder Universe a place to visit for residents, but it is also a destination that travelers

seek in relation to museums across the state of Virginia and beyond.

"We've taken several visitors that have come to our house during the weather and showed them the museum," Adkins said. "It is on the map for people coming to our area."

One resident pointed out that some of the non-profit organizations, considering the town's financial needs that must be met, will not receive financial support every year.

"There is only so much we can do, and these organizations are all going to get an opportunity to hear

See Museum, page 3

Earthquakes common in NRV

Residents in Blacksburg and the New River Valley caught the edge of a 2.5 earthquake on Friday night as the seismic activity was centered in Giles County. No physical damage has been reported.

Perhaps the surprising news for NRV residents is not that an earthquake occurred but that earthquakes are rather common in this area though the intensity of this particular quake is not. People typically think of earthquakes happening in California and Alaska, but eastern Tennessee and southwest Virginia are in one of the most active areas in the nation in terms of the number of earthquakes recorded.

According to Martin Chapman, director of the Virginia Tech Seismological Observatory, Virginia has had more than 160 earthquakes since 1977, though only about two of them are felt at the surface every year. The New River Valley is right in the line of fire, so to speak. Over the past 50 years, earthquakes have occurred in Giles, Pulaski, Montgomery and Bland counties in Virginia

and in Monroe, Mercer and Summers counties in West Virginia.

In the previous interview, Chapman said seismic activity has been known for several decades to be the strongest in and around Giles County with the Giles County seismic zone extending for almost 50 miles along the West Virginia border. This zone is laced with known faults and many smaller and deeper ones that remain undetected. The largest historical earthquake in the Giles County seismic zone was magnitude 5.0-5.5 and occurred on May 31, 1897.

A quake of 4.0 was recorded in Pearisburg in 2017, the area's largest since 1968. Witnesses said it was loud and dramatically shook the earth with reports coming in from as far as Radford and Pulaski. Items were knocked off shelves, and several buildings suffered cracks in their foundations and walls.

"Damaging earthquakes of 5.0 and larger appear to happen (here) at a rate such that the average time between them is about 150 years,"

Chapman said shortly after the Pearisburg quake.

In 2011, Mineral, Louisa County (Va.), recorded a quake with a magnitude of 5.8 centered near Mineral that was the largest and most damaging earthquake in the United States since 1886. Significant damage was reported from the quake to structures within a 100-mile radius including Washington, D.C., with as many as 876 aftershocks.

"Shocks like Mineral can be expected to occur along the east coast of North America about once per century on average," Chapman said. "But at any specific spot, a quake could occur tomorrow or a thousand+ years from now."

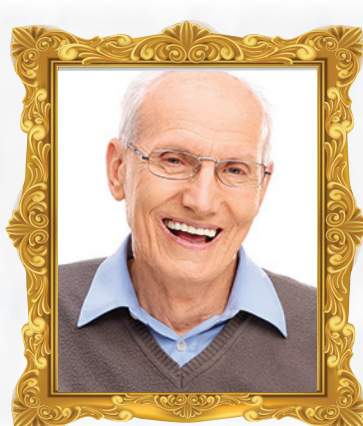
The observatory director did say it is unlikely that Virginia will experience a magnitude 7.1 event within our lifetimes.

"But in 2011, we did experience an earthquake very similar to the first shock in a recent California sequence (M 6.4)," Chapman said. "The ground shaking during the August 23, 2011, Mineral

See Earthquakes, page 3

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday, June 21:

Mingle at the Market
Join the Blacksburg Farmer's Market for the first 2023 Mingle at the Market, 4:30 – 6:30 p.m., at Market Square Park. This event will feature live music, locally brewed beverages, local food and more.

Waffles Club! A Young Writer's Group
At the Radford Public Library; 4- 5 p.m. Join us for a gently guided writing club for kids, aka the Waffles Club (Writing Association for Fun Loving Enthusiastic Students)! Together, we will work on responding to writing prompts, have some quiet writing time, and the opportunity to share work! Geared toward 8-12 year olds. Contact Morgan for more information at morgan.esterhuizen@radfordva.gov. Please bring your favorite writing materials!

English Conversation for Adults
At the Blacksburg Library; 5:30 – 6:30 p.m. We are pleased to host adult English conversation in partnership with the Literacy Volunteers of the NRV. Sign up at www.lvnrv.org/classes.

Thursday, June 22:

Wildwood Park Nature Lecture Series
The Wildwood Park Nature Lecture Series takes place in the heart of Wildwood Park at the Outdoor Classroom (pavilion). To get to the site, attendees can park at the Sundell Drive parking lot for Wildwood Park and take the walkway into the center of the park. All of the talks start at 7:30 p.m. and are held rain or shine unless there are thunderstorms. June 22: Turtles (Brandon Crawford, Virginia Tech).

Friday, June 23:

Reading with Dave and Ollie
At the Radford Public Library; 2 p.m. Teens are invited to come and listen to Dave read a short story or a passage from a novel while also visiting with Saint Francis Facility Dog, Oliver!

Monday, June 26:

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.

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.

Tuesday, June 27:

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 the 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.

Tuesday Night Book Club
At the Radford Public Library; 6- 7 p.m. Adults and teens are invited to chat with Dave about whatever they happen to be reading, watching, or listening to at the moment. Snacks and coffee provided.

Summer Backpack Program
At the Meadowbrook Library; 3:30 – 5:30 p.m. The Summer Backpack Program is intended to help families with children and teens stretch their grocery budget. The bags are filled with nutritious food. This is a drop-in program open to residents of Eastern Montgomery County only. Each week there will be crafts for the kids in addition to the bag of food. If you missed picking up food for the week, call and make an appointment. For more information call the Meadowbrook Library at 540-268-1964.

Wednesday, June 28:

Mingle at the Market
Join the Blacksburg Farmer's Market for Mingle at the Market, 4:30 – 6:30 p.m., at Market Square Park. This event will feature live music, locally brewed beverages, local food and more.

Thursday, July 6:

American Legion meeting
The American Legion, Harvey-Howe-Carper Post 30 will meet at 6 p.m. at the VFW Post Home on 102 Watts St. in Radford. For further information, please call 540-250-2283 or 540-239-9864.

Saturday, July 15:

Rotary Club blood screening
The Rotary Club of Christiansburg-Blacksburg and LewisGale Hospital Montgomery biannual blood screening; 6:30 -10 a.m. in the hospital's lobby. The fasting blood test screens over 25 different markers including cholesterol and red blood indices at a significantly reduced cost. New this year, the test will include Hemoglobin A1C. Cost is \$50. Results are sent to participants and their physician of choice. A portion of the

proceeds is used to fund a service project in the community. Pre-register for the blood screening at <https://www.rotary7570.org/blood> or call 540-951-8988. Walk-in registration is available the day of the blood screening.

Thursday, July 20:

Sons of Confederate Veterans meeting
The Sons of Confederate Veterans, Stuart Horse Artillery Camp 1784 will meet at 7 p.m. at Aly's Family Italian Restaurant on 3204 Riner Rd. Members of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) are also invited to this meeting. Mr. Sam Winkler, aka "President Jefferson Davis" will be the guest speaker. For further information, please call 540-320-4315 or 540-239-9864.

On-going:

Entries sought for July 4th Parade
Participants are needed for Blacksburg's July 4th parade, which is organized by the Mount Tabor Ruritan Club. The parade starts at 2 p.m. from Eheart Street, runs through downtown on Main Street, and ends at Alumni Mall. Entries can be floats, bicycles, wagons, marchers, walkers, antique/classic cars, Jeeps, trucks, fire engines, scouts, bands, sports teams, etc. Information is available on the Mount Tabor Ruritan Club's Facebook page, or by texting 540-449-6178.

Market Square Jam
Held Wednesdays, June through September, in Blacksburg on the corner of Draper Road and Roanoke Street; 7 – 9 p.m. Catering to traditional Old-Time music, Blacksburg's Market Square Jam brings musicians together to pick a tune, enjoy fun times with friends and family, and take in all that downtown Blacksburg has to offer. Blacksburg's Market Square Jam is an official Crooked Road affiliated venue that provides fun and entertainment.

Blacksburg Farmers Market
Hours now through October: Wednesdays 2 – 6 p.m. and Saturdays 8 a.m. – 2 p.m. Located at Market Square Park, on the corner of Roanoke Street and Draper Road in downtown Blacksburg. Features growers of locally grown produce and meats, alongside artisans of baked goods, prepared foods, cheese, handmade crafts, and more.

Christiansburg Farmers Market
Thursdays; 3 – 7 p.m. Located in the Recreation Center parking lot. Features local farmers and vendors. Seasonal produce, plants, fresh baked goods, crafts, fresh flowers, handmade jewelry and more. Items for purchase vary week-to-week. Check our Facebook page for details about weekly themes, prizes, vendors, and live music.

Radford Farmers Market
Held on the grounds of Glencoe Mansion, Museum and Galley, located just off West Main Street, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. each Saturday until October 14. Features produce, plants, baked goods, artisans, fresh squeezed lemonade, eggs, meats, cheeses and more.

OBITUARIES

Aliff, Louise Bandy

Louise Bandy Aliff, 95, of Christiansburg, went to be with the Lord on June 13, 2023. She was a woman of great faith who loved her Lord.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Burgess D. Aliff; and daughters, Susan Renee Aliff and Rhonda Aliff Powers. Louise retired from C & P Telephone Company and was a member of Fellowship Baptist Church in Riner.

She is survived by her son



and daughter-in-law, Stephen

W. and Carol G. Aliff; son-in-law, Randy Powers; three grandsons, Sean Aliff, Jake Powers, and Ben Powers; as well as several nieces, nephews, cousins, loving neighbors, and church family.

Funeral Services will be held on Wednesday, June 21, 2023, at 1 p.m. with Pastor James Bradley officiating. Interment will follow in Sunset Cemetery. The family will receive friends one hour prior to the funeral service.

Lawrence, Jenny Cochran

Jenny Cochran Lawrence, of Belspring, passed away on Wednesday, June 14, 2023.

She was born February 4, 1933, to Henry Andrew Cochran and Alma Talbert Cochran Lucado.

Mrs. Lawrence was a 1950 graduate of Dublin High School.

She retired from Hercules (RAAP) where she worked in QC. She was later employed by Kroger.

She was predeceased by her husband, John T. Lawrence, Sr.; sons, John T. Lawrence, Jr. and Kenneth C. "Kenny" Lawrence; brothers, Robert Cochran and Bill E. Cochran; and sister, Juanita Likens.

She is survived by her daughter, Jennifer "Vicki" Lawrence Presley (Randy) of Palm Bay, Fla.; grandson



and caretaker, John Thomas Lawrence III (Adrian); granddaughters, Allison Presley Grice of Palm Bay, Fla. and Jessica Lawrence

of Dublin, Va.; great granddaughters, Kaitlyn Lawrence, Tori Foster, Ashlyn Lawrence, and Giuliana Grice; great grandson, Dakota Lawrence; brother, Jim Cochran of Chuluota, Fla.; and many other relatives and friends.

Graveside services were held on Sunday, June 18, 2023, in Hickman Cemetery in Pulaski with Rev. Marcus Harrison officiating.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donations to Good Samaritan Hospice.

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

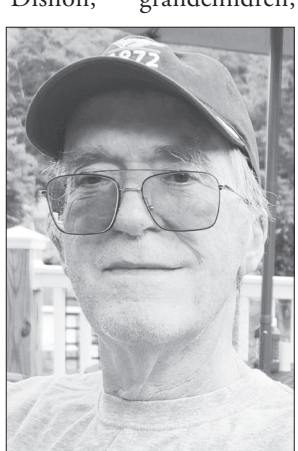
Dishon, Merle Thomas

Merle Thomas Dishon, 76, of Hiwassee, passed away at Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital on Thursday, June 15, 2023.

He was an avid Virginia Tech fan and reader of Westerns and loved farming. He was preceded in death by his parents, Roy Freeman and Loma Phillips Dishon; and his sisters, Shannon Ruth Dishon, Helen Quesenberry, and Mozelle Duncan.

Survivors include his loving wife of 39 years, Traci Gross Dishon; sons, Neil Thomas Dishon and Roy Jeffery Dishon; daughter, Jennifer Jo "J.J."

Dishon; grandchildren,



Ami, Kristin, Roy, Jr., Benjamin and William; five great-grandchildren; sisters,

Nancy, Joyce, Patricia and Linda; brothers, Bill, Conley, Donald, Lacy, Leslie and Buddy; canine companion, Anna; and many other nieces, nephews, in-laws, relatives and friends.

The family received friends on Tuesday, June 20, 2023, at the Snowville Baptist Church in Snowville. Funeral services followed with Pastor Tony Hart officiating. Burial followed in the Dishon Family Cemetery in Hiwassee.

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

Sumner, Sr., Archie Hassell

Archie Hassell Sumner, Sr. 87, passed away on Tuesday, June 6, 2023, at his home.

He was born on December 18, 1935, in Floyd, to the late Archie Woodrow Sumner and Wava Blythe Graham Sumner. Archie was a member of the Auburn Baptist Church of Riner. He proudly served in the United States Army and retired an officer of the Virginia Department of Corrections.

He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Phyllis M. Sumner of Christiansburg; daughter Lisa S. Jarrett of

Falls Church; son Archie H.



Sumner, Jr. of Dublin and his late wife Debra A. Sumner; and one grandchild, Tyler C.

Jarrett of Falls Church.

The family gives thanks and appreciation to all at Gentiva Hospice, Roanoke, Virginia, and Careosity, LLC, Christiansburg. The care and attention given to Archie made his passing much easier.

A graveside service was held on Friday, June 9, 2023, with Pastor Shake Smith officiating and prayer by Assistant Pastor Austin Peyton at Sunset Cemetery, Christiansburg, Virginia in a private family ceremony. Arrangements by McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg.

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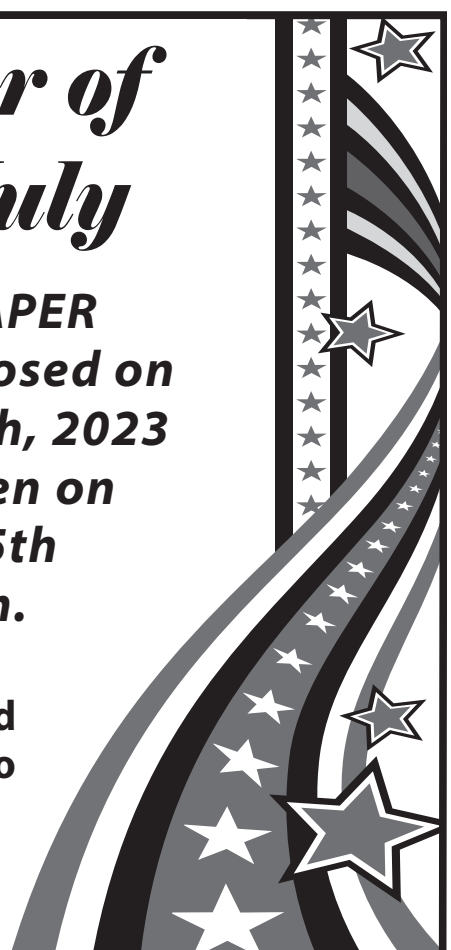
All ads for July 5th and

July 6th papers need to

be in our office by

Friday, June 30

at 12:00 Noon.



Police

from page 1

single residence, which includes accessory apartments. “We wanted to make sure that when you say the word dwelling, accessory apartment is considered part of that,” Spencer said.

Blacksburg Town Council approved Ordinance 2018 with a unanimous vote.

Blacksburg Assistant Planning Director Kali Casper presented to the council a special request for parking in front of the

Museum

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the word no, because the way the process is now set up is that you can only get three out of five years,” said Christina Waltz of Christiansburg. “So, this year Wonder Universe and Montgomery Museum got their chance to hear no.”

Council members adjourned, deciding to revisit a discussion later about citizens’ requests for the council to reconsider financial support for the non-profit Wonder Universe.

David Hagan, co-owner of Shelor Motor Mile in Christiansburg, also addressed council members during citizen comment on Tuesday night. Hagan requested an apology for the council’s response to the request for proposal (RFP) concerning the recent naming rights for the new Christiansburg Huckleberry Park. Previously, Shelor Motor Mile completed the request for naming rights with a financial support of \$500,000, the minimum allowable donation that would permit naming rights per the RFP. Shelor’s offer was rescinded by council.

Hagan stated that he had been approached by the council to submit the proposal and had followed the instructions as they had determined in their RFP.

“Naming Rights Agreement, Section 2, name of the park Motor Mile Christiansburg Huckleberry Park, section 29, confidentiality nondisclosure,[states] ‘sponsors and owners shall not at any time have any press release or make any public comments without consent from the other party,’” Hagan said. “We followed the exact terms of the RFP.”

According to Hagan, they would have been fine with re-negotiating the RFP and not mentioning Shelor at all.

“I feel that our company and employees were mishandled, and you should apologize,” Hagan said.

Council members expressed their apologies to Hagan later in the meeting.

“I want to give you my personal apology as a person,” Johana Hicks said. “As citizens of Christiansburg, [we] have paid so much money into it and obviously \$500,000 is a lot of money and we are grateful for that.”

“I think he completed the application just as we presented it

building line in relation to 1284 North Main Street. The request was made by the Islamic Society of New River Valley. The future land use of the parcel is for commercial with religious assembly being a by-right in this type of land use.

The Planning Commission has recommended approval of the request with a 6-0 vote.

Trevor Kimzey, Director of Engineering with Foresight Design Services, followed Casper with additional comments.

to him,” Tanya Hockett said, in response to Hagan’s comments. “He’s right. Shelor Motor Mile doesn’t deserve to bear the brunt of any anger or frustration from the public.”

In rezoning and conditional use permits, the council voted on several requests during the meeting.

Both rezoning and conditional use permit requests were approved with a 6-0 vote for an automobile body shop on the southeast corner of Route 460 Bypass and Roanoke Street of 1.976 acres. The rezoning will be a change from B-3 General Business to I-1 Limited Industrial use. Public hearings were previously held on May 23, 2023.

Shepherd Contracting LLC, owner of the property located at 4600 Roanoke Street, requested to rezone approximately two acres from Limited Business District B-1 to General Business District B-3 with an additional request for a conditional use permit to establish a contractors’ storage yard. Both requests received a 7-0 approval from council members, with conditions as listed per the Planning Commission’s approval on May 15, 2023.

A 209-unit, multi-family planned housing development proposal on 18.77 acres located on Farmview Road, NE, was submitted by Denstock, LLC. The requests included a vacation of a .169-acre right-of-way at the eastern end of Farmview, Road, NE, as stated in the town council’s agenda documents. Council members voted unanimously in approval of the vacation of the land and a conditional use permit to allow the development that would provide one-, two-, and three-bedroom units. Conditions do apply and are present on the town’s website at www.christiansburg.org.

Mayor Mike Barber opened further conversation on the appointment of school resource officers (SROs) to the county’s public schools. Barber gave a brief history of the previous discussions surrounding the funding and support of SROs in Montgomery County Public Schools.

“I talked to Miss Hockett about putting this on the agenda and the thing that’s most appalling to me is that we’ve asked

Recommendations for shrub landscaping, to act as a buffer, were revealed in drawings and designs shown to the council.

The council approved the special request in a 6-1 vote, with council member John Bush voting against approval.

Council member Michael Sutphin stated that June is Pride Month and Blacksburg businesses will be participating in several ways. Event details can be found for all summer activities in Blacksburg at www.downtownblacksburg.com.

the Board of Supervisors to meet with us as two governing bodies in one location to come up with a mutual plan for how we’re going to cover down on school resource officers, and for the record, the best answer they’ve given us was out of our last council meeting they would meet with us at 6 o’clock on the same night as our council meeting,” council member Tim Wilson said. “The schools belong to the county...we just asked for a reimbursement for that funding.”

Hockett followed with comments including, “If we can’t sit down and discuss this with the Board of Supervisors, I don’t even know; we are powerless.”

Other members of the council agreed that they would want to sit down with the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors very soon. The mayor was the deciding vote previously, with a 3-3 split among council members, to remove the SROs on July 1 with the intent of having further discussion with the County.

According to Mayor Mike Barber, “to hire a heavily qualified resource officer going forward, they have to [have] two years’ experience on the road and they have to go through a training for school resource officer. If this is a new hire, that they hire in specifically, or even in the future if we hire in specifically for this, they have to go through the academy which is eleven months, two years on the road, and then qualification in the summer.”

After each member had an opportunity to speak on the topic, the council decided to continue seeking out an opportunity to meet with the county supervisors to resolve the conflict.

Additionally, Christiansburg Town Council voted 6-0 in approval of Matthew Estes’ recommendation to the Circuit Court, Board of Zoning Appeals.

“I’ve been a member of the Christiansburg community for about five years now. Born and raised in Syracuse, New York. I currently work for Moog in Blacksburg, Virginia,” Este said.

The search for a new police chief is also underway. Eight applicants have been received for the now closed advertisement for the position of Christiansburg’s Police Chief.

Juneteenth

from page 1

could not be implemented in places still under Confederate control,” according to the Smithsonian Institute’s National Museum of African American History and Culture. “As a result, in the westernmost Confederate state of Texas, enslaved people would not be free until much later. Freedom finally came on June 19, 1865, when some 2,000 Union troops arrived in Galveston Bay, Texas. The army announced that the more than 250,000 enslaved black people in the state, were free by executive decree. This day came to be known as “Juneteenth,” by the newly freed people in Texas.”

Saturday’s celebration in Christiansburg included food trucks, refreshments, local artisans, organizations, live entertainment, and of course, fellowship of community members, CI alumni, and the sharing of African American history and culture.

Welcoming remarks were given by Debbie Sherman-Lee, Chair of the Christiansburg Institute, Inc., Devante Mosley, CI, Inc. Project Coordinator, and Chris Sanchez, Executive Director of CI, Inc. Mosley led the celebration as emcee for the evening.

Blues player Jojo Stockton on vocals and guitar, accompanied by harmonica player, Jared Leland, gave a rhythmic and rousing performance, getting the festivities off to a great start. The duo was sponsored by the New River Blues Society, a local group that supports the continuation and growth of Blues music in the New River Valley.

The Glen Holmes and Custom Vibe Band provided music throughout the evening as well. Glen Holmes has been heavily influenced by jazz music, but enjoys all music genres, according to his website at www.glenholmesmusic.com.

Visitors were also able to tour the Smokehouse Museum, a replica built in 1988 of the original structure that once stood on the school grounds. Through a Virginia Humanities grant, C.E. Richardson Benevolent Foundation, and the Christiansburg Institute, new storyboards have recently been placed outside of the smokehouse that provide historical information and original digital images of other original structures that were once a part of the approximately 200-acre campus.

Speakers also provided the audience with opportunities to hear more about the legacy of the Christiansburg Institute and African American culture present in the region’s past.

Linda Whitlock-Brown, a great-great-great granddaughter of Edgar A. Long, former member of the Tuskegee Institute, and principal of the Christiansburg Institute, was present and spoke at the Juneteenth celebration.

“I am a firm believer that we all have a story to tell,” Whitlock-Brown said. “Share your story.”

Whitlock-Brown also shared the publication of Edgar A. Long’s publication of writings titled A Vision of Education: Selected Writings of Edgar A. Long. The book is in its second edition of publication and is available to purchase from the Christiansburg Institute, Inc. website at www.christiansburginstitute.org.

The NAACP, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, also had a tent at the celebration and representatives available to provide information on their work. Shirley Akers, Secretary of the local NAACP shared that in-person meetings are happening on the fourth Sunday of each month at the Old Hill School on High Street in Christiansburg.

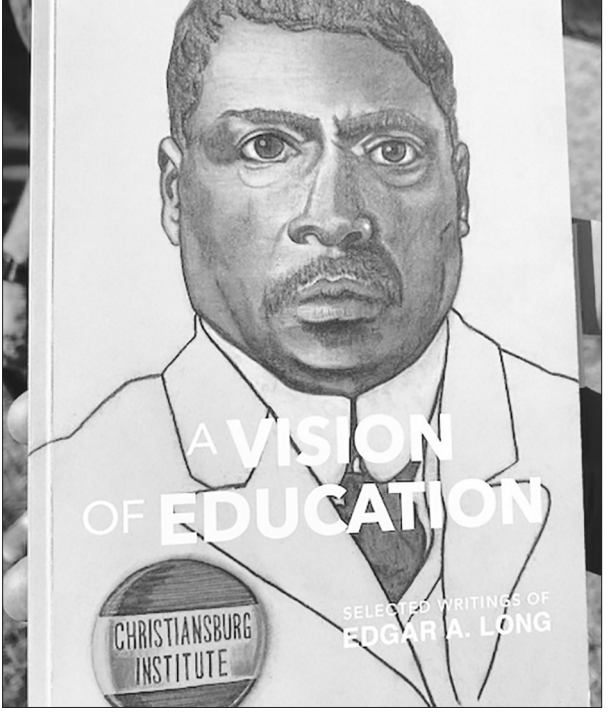


PHOTO BY LORI GRAHAM
Edgar A. Long’s publication of writings titled “A Vision of Education: Selected Writings of Edgar A. Long” is in its second edition of publication.

Earthquakes

from page 1

earthquake (M 5.8) near the epicenter was essentially the same as that experienced during their initial Ridgecrest California shock. This has to do with the fact that rocks in Virginia transmit seismic waves much more efficiently than those in California, and the energy per unit area of fault rupture in the

Virginia shock was much greater than in any of these recent California shocks.”

The San Andreas Fault in California is the best-known problem area in the country with frequent tremors. Much smaller quakes can be felt on the east coast in a larger circle.

For example, one at a 4.0 magnitude can be felt as far away as 60 miles from where it occurred.

Chapman said the recent California earthquakes are by no means a surprise. “They are not happening along the main coastal plate boundary faults (e.g., San Andreas) but instead east of the Sierra Nevada mountains in a region known to seismologists as the ‘eastern California shear zone,’” the observatory director said. “It has a long history of major earthquakes like we are seeing now.”

The earthquakes on the east coast are different from

California’s tremors.

“We are in a very different tectonic environment than California,” Chapman said. “The fault that ruptured during the 2011 Virginia shock may have been created during that earthquake.”

California shocks tend to occur on faults that are easily mapped at the surface. The faults causing the earthquakes in eastern North America are not easily mapped and may not even be faults until the earthquakes themselves occur. In other words, new faults are being created in earthquakes like the Mineral shock in 2011.”

Most of eastern Tennessee, northwestern Georgia and northeastern Alabama have earthquakes as rates comparable to the Giles county seismic zone. That area is known as the Eastern Tennessee seismic zone. Central Virginia is also an area of earthquakes of moderate intensity and is known as the Central Virginia Seismic zone.

Chapman did provide some advice to homeowners by suggesting they buy earthquake insurance.

“The lack of such [insurance] was a problem in 2011 in central Virginia,” he said. “Also, communicate with your state representatives about the lack of earthquake hazard mitigation efforts in Virginia. That includes both scientific research and building code enforcement.”

-Staff reports

DOWN EAST WOOD DUCKS VS SALEM RED SOX

	<p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">JUNE 20TH 7:05PM</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">GAME 1 - GATES OPEN AT 6:00PM</p>
	<p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">JUNE 21ST 7:05PM</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">GAME 2 - GATES OPEN AT 6:00PM</p>
	<p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">JUNE 22ND 7:05PM</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">GAME 3 - GATES OPEN AT 6:00PM</p>
	<p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">JUNE 23RD 7:05PM</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">PRIDE NIGHT - GATES OPEN AT 6:00PM</p>
	<p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">JUNE 24TH 6:05PM</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">MARVEL'S DEFENDERS OF THE DIAMOND - GATES OPEN AT 5:00PM</p>
	<p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">JUNE 25TH 3:05PM</p> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">GAME 6 - GATES OPEN AT 2:00PM</p>

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OPINION

Dear Editor:
 Radford has lost its superintendent. Rob Graham made the difficult decision to leave Radford, something he sadly admitted he didn't want to do.
 "Members of Radford City School Board deliberately and systematically drove off a good man and award-winning Superintendent," former Radford School Board member Liz Altieri lamented immediately after Graham's resignation.
 Many fail to realize how difficult it is to be a school superintendent. The "buck" stops with him or her. Problems that can't be solved by anyone else always end up with the superintendent. He has to work effectively with everyone: students, parents, staff, the board, the city council, the community---everyone. Any little mistake is amplified; many, many positive outcomes go unrecognized.

In a small division like Radford, you're on call 24/7/365. Rob is an excellent superintendent/leader. He assembled an outstanding team. He is knowledgeable and on top of issues, educational and otherwise. He is humble and deflects praise to others. He supported his teachers and staff. He worked valiantly with the city council to secure funding for the division and, ultimately, the students, staff, and community. Students excelled in sports, the arts, academic areas---in everything. Radford is a great school system because of his leadership.
 However, of all of these great attributes, one stands out to me: His love of students. Everything he accomplished was done with the educational, social, emotional---all areas---of growth for children at the forefront of his thinking, planning, and actions. This real compassion for people is

something a person can't fake and is often missing from the top of the "toolbox" of many superintendents.
 Radford lost so much more than just another administrator; it lost a leader who cared about the people of the community like no one else may again in the same way because he was such a part of the community from his youth until now.
 Some current school board members do not yet realize the ramifications of "driving off a good man" for the Radford community. Rob truly is a good man.
 I wish Rob the best with Pulaski County. They obviously recognize his value to their division. Radford's loss is Pulaski's gain.
 Steve Frey
 Radford

Virginia the 'most improved' state for retirees

Seemingly vying to appeal to the highest number of retiring individuals, each passing year presents a fresh ranking of the most desirable states for retirees. Past years saw states such as Florida, South Carolina, and Arizona consistently topping the lists. Recently, however, the landscape has fluctuated, with states gaining or losing allure based on various criteria including quality of life, affordable housing, reasonable healthcare costs, safety, and low taxation.
 Nonetheless, gauging the attractiveness of retirement states solely from an isolated annual ranking might not yield a precise portrait. It might fail to show whether these high-ranking states truly offer the best retirement environments, or if their positions have been temporarily inflated by short-term factors like favorable new tax regulations.

To provide a more comprehensive, long-term perspective, Metal-res.com undertook a 'study of studies' of retirement rankings across a five-year span. This research involved calculating the rise or fall in rankings to identify the states showing the most significant improvements or declines as retirement destinations, as reflected in various studies' rankings.
 The findings revealed that Virginia has had the most remarkable improvement as a retirement state over this half-decade period, jumping 38 places. While Virginia might not immediately come to mind as a retirement destination, it has distinguished itself as the state with the most progress, thanks to its high-quality living standards, top-notch healthcare services, and affordable cost of living. Virginia jumped from

39th place in 2019 to occupy the top spot by 2023. When it comes to tax policy, Virginia is comparatively moderate, charging .66% less in state tax than the national average. However, the exemption of social security benefits from taxation adds significant appeal for retirees.
 "Over the last five years, we've witnessed a substantial shift in the retirement landscape across the United States," said Barry Landry of Metal-res.com "It's not merely about where retirees are heading now; it's about recognizing consistent improvement in factors that matter to retirees. This data gives us a deeper understanding of retirement trends and showcases how states are striving to better accommodate our aging population."
-Submitted by Metal-res.com

Virginia residents have the fourth highest student loan debt in America

A new study reveals that Virginia is among the top 10 states with the highest student loan debt.
 The research, conducted by CreditDonkey, compared all 50 states based on the most recent student debt data from the Federal Reserve Bank of New York to discover which states

had the highest proportion of student debt per borrower.
 The study revealed that Maryland has a higher prevalence of student loan debt than any other state. With 864,700 student loan borrowers in the state, Maryland's total federal student loan debt balance is \$36,787 billion. This equates to an average loan debt of \$42,543 per borrower.

The study revealed that Iowa has the second lowest proportion of student loans per borrower. The state has a total number of 465,500 student loan borrowers, with an average of \$29,845 of debt per borrower. Iowa has several student loan forgiveness programs, including specific programs for doctors, nurses, teachers, and other health care providers.

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The state of Maryland has also taken legislative measures to address student loan debt in the past. For instance, the Maryland Student Loan Debt Relief Tax Credit was introduced in 2017, which provides tax credits to certain individuals who have acquired student loan debt and are making timely payments.
 The study revealed that Georgia placed next in the ranking, with the second-largest amount of student debt in the country. In the Southeastern state, there are a total of 1,641,600 student loan borrowers, with an average loan debt of \$41,826 per borrower.
 Delaware ranks third, with residents having the third largest average federal student loan debt compared to borrowers in other states. When broken down, there are a total of 137,300 student loan borrowers in Delaware, with an average of \$39,238 debt per borrower.
 Virginia ranks as the fourth state with the largest amount of student debt, with an average of \$39,001 per borrower, while New York follows in fifth place with \$38,668. The top ten is rounded out by Florida ranking sixth, Oregon in seventh, followed by Illinois, California, and Alabama in eighth, ninth, and tenth, respectively.
 At the other end of the scale, South Dakota has the lowest average loan debt per borrower. Approximately 12.9% of all South Dakota's residents hold federal student loan debt, which equates to an average of \$28,218 debt per student loan borrower.

Alaska places next in the ranking, with residents having the third lowest average student loan debt when compared to borrowers in other states. When broken down, the average loan debt per borrower in Alaska is \$30,427 and there is a total of 70,600 student loan borrowers in the state.
 North Dakota ranks as the fourth state with the lowest amount of student debt, with an average of \$30,542 per borrower, while Wyoming follows closely behind in fifth place, with \$30,581. The top ten is rounded out by Wisconsin ranking sixth, Nebraska in seventh, followed by Arkansas, Indiana, and Oklahoma in eighth, ninth and, tenth, respectively.
 A spokesperson for CreditDonkey commented on the study: "It's no secret that the cost of a college education has soared over recent decades, with the average price of tuition, fees, and room and board increasing by 169% for an undergraduate degree between 1980 and 2020."
 "These findings provide an intriguing insight into where student loan debt is most prominent throughout the country, and where in the country could benefit the most from President Biden's proposed student loan forgiveness plan. At an estimated cost of about \$400 billion, Biden's plan to forgive student debt is one of the most expensive executive actions in history. The Supreme Court is expected to issue a decision before the end of June, providing much-anticipated clarity for millions of eager student loan borrowers."
-Submitted by CreditDonkey

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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When it comes to summer fire safety, it's all about location, location, location

With the summer season in full swing, fire and water damage cleanup specialists with SERVPRO in the Christiansburg area remind homeowners that popular summer activities - like grilling, setting off fireworks, and relaxing around a fire pit or campfire - can quickly turn from fun to flames, resulting in damage to property and structures, and even personal injury.
 "Where you place your grill and fire pit matters," says Rick Isaacson, CEO of Servpro Industries, LLC. "If you don't pay close attention to the location and environment, it could cause much more serious problems than just property damage. Even if the location of your grill or fire

pit hasn't changed from past years, the setting may have changed and created a more dangerous situation with the addition of fallen branches, leaves or more combustible, aging decking materials."
 To help avoid a potential fire disaster, you need to control the three factors that allow a fire to start and grow: fuel, heat, and air. When you do build an intentional fire, for cooking, warmth, or simple enjoyment, a key element to control is fuel. The U.S. Fire Administration, a division of FEMA, offers these guidelines to help keep

See **Fire Safety** page 5

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9			
10											
13	14			15		16		17	18		
19			20		21	22					
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54						55					
56					57	58		59			
		60			61			62			
		63			64			65			

CLUES ACROSS

1. ___ fi (slang)
4. Anecdotes about a person
7. Central Standard Time
10. Beverage receptacle
11. Football's Newton
12. Be in debt
13. Tattles
15. Musician ___ Lo
16. Arrange again
19. A binary compound of carbon with a metal
21. Brazilian futbol great
23. Feared
24. Annoy
25. Unit of heredity
26. Small freshwater fish
27. Muscular weaknesses
30. Fined
34. One-time EU currency

CLUES DOWN

1. Put fear into
2. Partner to corned beef
3. Interiors
4. Agrees to a demand
5. No (Scottish)
6. ___ Hess Corp.
7. Ornamental molding
8. Garment
9. Electric car company
13. Decimal digits in binary (abbr.)
14. Gibbon
17. Sun up in New York
18. ___ the line
20. A vale
22. Old Irish alphabet
27. A type of band
28. A team's best pitcher
29. Floor covering

CLUES ACROSS

31. A ___ in the machine
32. Supplement with difficulty
33. Prosecutors
37. Place in order
38. Japanese lute
39. Mongolian city ___ Bator
40. Perceived
41. A cloth for washing dishes
42. Chocolate cookie with white cream filling
43. Grassy plain
44. Barometer
47. Father
48. Of the ear
49. Thomas ___, British dramatist 1652-85
51. After eighth
52. Where golfers begin
53. Time units (abbr.)
58. Basics

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Fire Safety from page 4

your summer fire activities under control.

Grills. Place your grill well away from siding and deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches. Do not store or use a grill on a porch or balcony. Use propane, charcoal and wood pellet barbecue grills outdoors only to avoid the risk of fire or carbon monoxide poisoning.

Chimineas, outdoor fireplaces, and fire pits. Use these items outdoors only and position them at least 10 feet away from your home or anything that can burn. Build campfires at least 25 feet away from homes, tents, shrubs and anything that can burn. Flying embers can start fires that are not in direct contact with flames.

Fireworks. If you want to see fireworks, consider going to a public show put on by experts. Even the simplest fireworks like "sparklers" can reach 1,200 degrees Fahrenheit and cause third-degree burns.

"A small spark can start a major fire," says Isaacson. "Leave the fireworks to the professionals and put some time and thought into where you set up your grill, chiminea and fire pit, including clearing away any combustible materials. Then spend your summer enjoying good times and great food, not dealing with the destruction and heartbreak of a house fire."

SERVPRO is a provider of fire and water cleanup and restoration services. For more fire prevention and fire safety tips and information about fire and water damage restoration services, please visit <https://www.servpro.com>.

-Submitted by SERVPRO

Big South holds spring meetings

The annual Big South Conference Spring Meetings were held May 30-June 1 at The Westin Resort in Hilton Head, S.C., with meetings of the Council of Chief Executive Officers, Directors of Athletics, Senior Woman Administrators, Faculty Athletics Representatives, and the men's and women's basketball coaches, and culminated with the conference's Spring Awards Banquet.

The councils focused on an array of topics, including decisions around the 2024 Big South Conference Basketball Championships, discussions around the NCAA Transformation Committee, the NCAA's new Student-Athlete Holistic Model, new awards programs, and individual appointments within the Big South's governance structure.

Basketball Championships: The Big South CEOs supported the Conference's efforts to secure a neutral site location for the 2024 Basketball Championships, with a determination by Tuesday, June 13. Should a site not come fruition at that time, the CEOs approved the one-year format of home sites/highest seeds for 2024. The Conference will continue its exploration for a single site tournament for 2025 and beyond.

Basketball Working Group Task Force: The Big South CEOs and ADs approved the creation of a Working Group Task Force to further study men's and women's basketball over the next year to analyze if the Conference's current Strategic Plan needs revision, including matters related to scheduling, facility enhancements, and tactics. The group will evaluate metrics, trends and success to continue the league's forward progress in elevating men's and women's basketball.

Big South Connection: The Big South held its fourth Connection professional development and networking event on Wednesday, May 31, with more than 20 women and

minority athletic administrators attending to meet with Big South Athletics Directors and other administrators. The group participated in various panel discussions with the ADs, and concluded the day meeting individually with more than 20 administrators from the membership.

Presentations: NCAA Director of Division I Leeland Zeller presented to the Big South Board of Administrators and CEOs on the current status of the NCAA's Transformation progress, the Student-Athlete Holistic Model taking effect August 1, 2024, as well as Congressional engagement. Big South Corporate Partner First Citizens Bank presented a donation of \$4,200 to the conference in support of the Big South's continuing diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives.

Student-Athlete Health & Wellness: The CEOs approved recommendations from the Big South Athletic Trainers in developing a more consistent standard of care on each campus to ensure proper and attentive medical and health services at any home contest.

Championships: The Council of Senior Woman Administrators approved the return of the Tennis Championships to Marion Diehl Park in Charlotte for 2024. The Board of Administrators also requested the ADs to review the Championship field sizes for 2023-24 in women's soccer, men's soccer, volleyball, women's lacrosse, men's tennis, women's tennis, softball and baseball.

Big South Executive Committee: Gardner-Webb University President Dr. William Downs was elevated to Big South Conference President for the 2023-24 and 2024-25 academic years. USC Upstate Chancellor Dr. Bennie Harris was

See Big South page 7

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MONTGOMERY SPORTS



Radford Women's Basketball adds six transfers for 2023-24

RADFORD — Radford Women's Basketball Head Coach Mike McGuire has announced this week another round of exciting additions in six transfers to the roster for the 2023-24 season.

Pa'Shence Traylor-Walker, a 5'8 guard transferring from

Central Arizona College joins the team as a sophomore. Ellie Taylor is a 5'10 guard coming from Northern Kentucky and joins the team as a senior. Briha Beverly, a 5'11 guard from Millersville, joins the team as a junior. Reniya Jones, a 5'8 guard transferring from UT Arlington, will join the

squad as a junior. Taniya Hanner joins the Highlanders as a 6'1 center/forward graduate transfer from Albany. Rounding out the exciting transfers for Radford is Kirby Brown who comes from the JuCo level and will be a 6'0 forward from Roane State.

-Radford University Athletics

Inside the Huddle: Robbie Beran

Robbie Beran, a native of Richmond, Va., is set to play his final season of college basketball at Virginia Tech after competing at Northwestern the last four years. Another versatile forward, Beran started in all 34 games for the Wildcats last season, culminating with their second-ever trip to the NCAA tournament.

Let's get to know Robbie:

What is your nickname?

Rob

What is your favorite food?

Crab legs or steak

What is your favorite movie or Netflix series?

The Office

Who is your favorite basketball player?

LeBron

What are your favorite basketball shoes?

I don't necessarily have a favorite shoe. I prefer low tops and will typically stick with one style for a whole season.

What is your favorite hobby outside of basketball?

Play with my dogs or play Fortnite

What is your favorite sport outside of basketball?

Golf — I might not be the best, but I'm getting better and you can't beat the immaculate vibes with the boys.

Where is your favorite spot in Blacksburg/Christiansburg?

First Watch. I'm still new to the area and learning the spots, so I will take any recommendations!

What are you looking forward to the most playing in Cassell?

Everything I've heard about



PHOTO COURTESY OF VT ATHLETICS

Former Olympian, World Champion, and NCAA Champion Logan Miro has been promoted to associate head coach and men's recruiting coordinator.

Cassell has me super excited. From members in and around the league, hearing how much energy the place has on a nightly basis. I'm really looking forward to experiencing the energy.

What is your favorite basketball memory?

Going dancing last March

What were some of the key factors in deciding to transfer to Virginia Tech?

I had a pre-existing relationship with the whole coaching staff (they all recruited me out of high school). Once I got on campus and around the guys, I could feel there was something special about this group. It's an opportunity to finish my last year, to get my graduate degree from the

OMALS program. Everything was a win-win.

What are three strengths of your game?

Ability to space the floor, versatility guarding multiple positions, vocal on the court

What is one fun fact Tech fans should know about you?

I'm a big dog guy — nine dogs within the family and three live with me

With you being one of them, who is in your dream starting five?

Magic, Kobe, LeBron, me and Shaq

What's on your pregame playlist?

Rod Wave and Lil Durk

Where is the favorite place you've traveled to?

Paris, France

Describe Coach Young in one word:

Personable

When did you start playing basketball?

Since I came out of the womb

What is the best advice you've ever received?

“Don't allow anyone or anything to take you out of your game.” Applicable in sports as well as life.

If you could trade places with anyone for a day, who would you choose?

I really wouldn't want to be anyone else

If you could only have three apps on your phone, what would they be?

FaceTime, Teamworks, Clash of Clans

-Virginia Tech Athletics

Auburn's Fleet, Smoot Region 1C honorees

Eastern Montgomery's Bruce player of year

Pitcher Kirsten Fleet led Auburn to another state title this past week, and Friday, she was named both the region player of year and pitcher of the year. Her coach, Tim Smoot, was named region coach of the year.

Fleet was joined on the region first-team by teammates Rachel Brotherton (second base) and Avery Zuckerwar (shortstop). Eastern Montgomery's Mary Miller (pitcher) and Mack Hubbard (outfielder) were named second-team softball.

Miller and Hubbard were also named to all-Pioneer District first-team. Eastern Montgomery's Alexis Artrip and Allison Bower were named Pioneer second-team.

Auburn placed three players on the first-team all-Region

1C boys' soccer team. This included: Chase Sutphin, Sam Duncan and Andrew Tickle.

Eastern Montgomery was represented on the first team by Talen Bruce and Kelsey Greer. Their teammates, Jesse Boston, Osman Amaya and Zach Craighead were named to the second-team.

Eastern Montgomery's Maddie Bruce was named both Pioneer District and Region C girls' soccer player of the year. Her coach, Whitney Shaver, was the coach of the year.

Auburn and Eastern Montgomery dominated the all-Region C girls' soccer team with 17 honorees.

First-teammers from Auburn included Stacy Lewis, Grace Harris, Kenleigh Smith, Katie Light, Logan Mundy and Kelsie

Groseclose. Representing Eastern Montgomery were Bruce, Ajia Horne, Madeline Mirolli, Nadya Hubbard, Lilly Underwood, Hannah Blankenship, Olivia Boone and Logan Boone. Teammates, Lacy Davis, Meghan Kidwell and Jordan Hutchinson were named second-teamers.

Auburn's Jared Lavergne was named player of the year in Region C for baseball, while his coach, Eric Altizer, was coach of the year. They were both honored for same spots by the Mt. Empire District.

Lavergne was joined on the first-team by pitcher Brody Hensel, third baseman Damien Boyd and outfielder Kenny Wade. Second-teammers included Auburn's Michael Hale and Eastern Montgomery's Kobe Phoenix.

the second team.

In baseball, Mason Selfe was first-team pitcher and first base. His battery mate, Marshall Basham, was first team catcher and Tanner Evans was the first-team utility player. Honorable mentions included Gavin Dow, Jeremiah Thompson, Sam Dudash and Rocco Fizzano. Christiansburg's Kendall Britt was named to the region's first-team for boys' soccer.

Eastern Montgomery's Maddie Bruce was named both Pioneer District and Region C girls' soccer player of the year. Her coach, Whitney Shaver, was the coach of the year.

Auburn and Eastern Montgomery dominated the all-Region C girls' soccer team with 17 honorees.

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Blue Demons all-3D soccer

Marty Gordon
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Christiansburg placed six soccer players to the first-team All-Region 3D boys' team announced on Friday.

First teamers were: Luca Pickeral, Nat Selfe, Sami Self and Isaac Prader. Second-teammers were Chase Fister and Caleb Yopp.

On the girls' side of the field, Ava Landers and Madison Farley represented Christiansburg on the first-team. Bridgett Miller and Ava Rose were second-team, while Jasmyan Charlton and Abbey Sanders were honorable mention.

Pitcher Kadya Camper and flex players Brailyn Wilburn were named to the region's first-team softball squad. Teammate Addison Reazor was named to

Zhang Virginia's Gatorade soccer player of the year

In its 38th year of honoring the nation's best high school athletes, Gatorade has announced Edric Zhang of Blacksburg High School is the 2022-23 Gatorade Virginia Boys Soccer Player of the Year.

Zhang is the first Gatorade Virginia Boys Soccer Player of the Year to be chosen from Blacksburg High School.

The award, which recognizes not only outstanding athletic excellence, but also high standards of academic achievement and exemplary character demonstrated on and off the field, distinguishes Zhang as Virginia's best high school boys soccer player.

Now a finalist for the prestigious Gatorade National Boys Soccer Player of the Year award to be announced in June, Zhang joins an elite alumni association of state award-winners in 12 sports, including Ben Bender (2019-20, Calvert Hall College High School, Md.), Jacob Shaffelburg (2017-18, Berkshire School, Mass.), Jack Harrison (2013-14, Berkshire School, Mass.) and Steve Cherundolo (1996-97, Mt. Carmel High School, Calif.).

The 5-foot-9, 160-pound senior midfielder scored nine goals and passed for seven

assists this past season, leading the Bruins (18-2) to the Class 4 State Tournament quarterfinals.

The 2022 River Ridge District Player of the Year and a two-time All-Region 4D selection, Zhang was invited to train with the U.S. Soccer Under-14, Under-15 and Under-16 national teams in three consecutive summers.

Having previously only played club soccer, he concluded his two-year prep soccer career with 12 goals and 17 assists. In the summer of 2022, Zhang was selected to participate in the Virginia Aerospace Science and Technology Scholars Summer Camp fully funded by NASA. A research intern in Virginia Tech's College of Engineering, he has volunteered locally as the manager of the Blacksburg High School store. He has also donated his time on behalf of a food pantry and as a youth soccer coach.

“We never had an answer for Edric's speed, creativity and ability,” said Dave Atkins, head coach of Salem High School. “He has a rare combination of physical size, speed and skill on the ball that make him very hard to defend.”

Zhang has maintained a weighted 4.66 GPA in the

classroom. He will attend Princeton University, where he will play soccer, beginning this fall.

The Gatorade Player of the Year program annually recognizes one winner in the District of Columbia and each of the 50 states that sanction high school football, girls volleyball, boys and girls cross country, boys and girls basketball, boys and girls soccer, baseball, softball, and boys and girls track & field, and awards one National Player of the Year in each sport.

The selection process is administered by the Gatorade Player of the Year Selection Committee, which leverages experts including coaches, scouts, media and others as sources to help evaluate and determine the state winners in each sport. Zhang joins recent Gatorade Virginia Boys Soccer Players of the Year Parker Sloan (2021-22, Powhatan High School), Malcolm Brickhouse (2020-21, Charlottesville High School), Michael Meese (2019-20, Jamestown High School), and Clay Obara (2018-19, Frank W. Cox High School), among the state's list of former award winners.

-Staff reports

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Miro promotes Albert Subirats

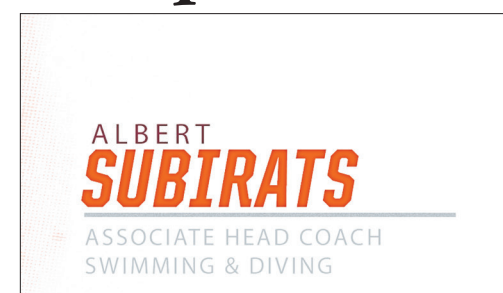


PHOTO COURTESY OF VT ATHLETICS

Former Olympian, World Champion, and NCAA Champion Logan Miro has been promoted to associate head coach and men's recruiting coordinator.

The Virginia Tech swimming and diving team has promoted Albert Subirats to associate head coach and men's recruiting coordinator, announced by Sergio Lopez Miro on Thursday.

Subirats first joined the swim and dive team in 2018 when Lopez Miro hired him as an assistant coach, and he recently wrapped up his fifth season with the Hokies.

“I can't thank Coach Albert enough for his tremendous work these past five seasons at all levels; as a person, as a coach and as our recruiting coordinator for the men's team and always supporting our women's recruiting,” said Lopez Miro.

Subirats has become one of the top recruiters in the country. Previous swimmers that have not been nationally ranked are swimming competitively at ACC's and NCAA's during their freshman year. Over the past two years, he has brought the first top 10 ranked classes to Virginia Tech, and he's building upon

his success with a stellar 2023 class that should be one of the top groups in the country.

“Equally thankful and excited for this opportunity,” said Subirats. “I feel very lucky to work with a staff that is passionate about the sport and always puts the athletes' well-being first. I want to thank Sergio Lopez Miro and Danny White for their leadership and their belief in me. Special thanks to the rest of the staff, all the athletes that have come through VT the past seasons, and their families. Without them, this wouldn't be the same. Can't wait to continue giving everything I have to the athletes and the program. Go Hokies!”

The four-time Olympian competed for Venezuela in the 2004, 2008, 2012 and 2016 Olympic Games. Having won Venezuela's Sportsman Athlete of the Year, Subirats is the most accomplished swimmers in the history of the South American and Central American Games. In 2007, he won Venezuela their first medal at World

Championships, earning bronze in the 100m fly. Later in 2010, Subirats was the World Champion in the 50m fly.

Subirats swam for the University of Arizona from 2004-2007, claiming three individual national titles. He also helped the Wildcats claim five relay national titles during that same time. In 2017, Subirats accomplishments were highly recognized when he was inducted into the University of Arizona Hall of Fame.

Contributing to the Hokies' many successes over the past few years, Subirats helped the men accomplish their highest NCAA finish in program history this past season with the team placing ninth. Since Subirats was hired as a Hokie in 2018, the women's team has progressed from 40th to 20th in the past five years and made their highest NCAA finish in over 10 years.

-Virginia Tech Athletics

Big South from page 5

named Vice President, while Longwood University President W. Taylor Reveley IV was named as an At-Large member to the Executive Committee.

Recognition Awards: The Board of Administrators approved the expansion of preseason All-Conference recognition in women's soccer, men's soccer, men's and women's tennis, men's and women's golf, softball and baseball, as well as the addition of a Newcomer of the Year award in applicable sports. The Council also approved measures to annually recognize the member institution with the highest academic achievement, as well as for the Awards Committee to develop an award to recognize the member institution with the most outstanding work in

the area of ESPN+ live event production.

Awards & Hall of Fame: During the league's Hall of Fame & Awards Banquet on Thursday evening, June 1, the Big South recognized the top three schools for their donation efforts as part of the “Big South Blood Drive” in conjunction with The Blood Connection, as Presbyterian College (first-place), Gardner-Webb University (second-place) and USC Upstate (third-place) paced the overall total of more than 3,300 lives saved.

The Big South also formally awarded the Conference's Christenberry Awards, Sunbelt Rentals Scholarships and McCloskey Insurance Graduate Fellowships, along with the Sasser Cup and All-Sport Trophies. The Conference also recognized

the contributions of outgoing Big South President and Charleston Southern University President Dr. Dondi Costin, and of outgoing USC Upstate Director of Athletics Daniel Feig. The evening concluded with the induction of retiring Commissioner Kyle Kallander into the Big South Hall of Fame.

-Big South Conference

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

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Small Children Are Being Poisoned by THC

The number of children under the age of 5 accidentally poisoned by cannabis edibles has soared 1,375% since 2017.

Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Jan. 2023



JustSayKNOW.org

This message is brought to you by the Montgomery County Prevention Partners & New River Valley Community Services



*Get involved! Stay informed!
Join the MCPP email list or join our monthly
Zoom meetings.
Email info@nrvc.org to learn more!*