



News Messenger

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Blacksburg

Christiansburg

Saturday, December 23, 2023

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USPS 016-490

\$1.00



PHOTO COURTESY OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY-BLACKSBURG KIWANIS CLUB
Laura Beth Weaver, Director of the Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley, receives the Teilmann Youth Services Award from Kiwanian Andrew Walker.

Montgomery County-Blacksburg Kiwanis Club presents The Teilmann Youth Services Award

The Montgomery County-Blacksburg Kiwanis Club has presented the 2023 Teilmann Youth Services Award to Laura Beth Weaver, who exemplifies the many attributes of Reverend Gunnar Teilmann by working tirelessly inside and outside of her position as Director of Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley, located in Radford.

Weaver has dedicated her professional and personal life to providing vital services and hope to women and children confronting the trauma of domestic and sexual violence.

She is an integral part of the Christian education program at Christ Episcopal Church, from leading Children's Chapel to teaching Safeguarding God's

Children, a program designed to instruct adults on the prevention of sexual abuse of children and youth. Weaver contributes to many regional volunteer and board appointments focused on social justice and the rights and safety of women and children.

In the new year, Weaver will join the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance, broadening her reach, expertise, and commitment across the Commonwealth. Thank you, Laura Beth, for serving the children in our community and beyond.

The Teilmann Youth Services award is presented annually by Montgomery County-Blacksburg Kiwanis in honor of Gunnar Teilmann, and it has been

awarded for more than 30 years to an outstanding citizen who has made significant unselfish contributions to the betterment of youth in Montgomery County for service to God, country and community. Gunnar Teilmann, a former Kiwanian and Eagle Scout, was an Army chaplain in WWII, a Prisoner of War, and a Silver Star recipient. After the war, he served as a missionary in Malaysia and in Singapore. He later served as Associate Pastor at Blacksburg United Methodist Church. Just days prior to his death, he scribbled a note that read, "I am thankful, so thankful to all."

Montgomery County-Blacksburg Kiwanis Club

MCEAP food pantry receives huge food donation from Christiansburg FD

Food distribution to people in need at Moose Lodge today, Sat. Dec. 23

Lori Graham
Contributing writer

CHRISTIANSBURG - The Montgomery County Emergency Assistance Program's (MCEAP) food pantry received a large donation due to the over 2,211 collected food items delivered by the Christiansburg Fire Department.

According to MCEAP's Facebook page, Santa and the Christiansburg Fire Department delivered 700 food items on the first day, 331 on the second day, 665 on the third day, and 515 on the fourth day to MCEAP's Food Pantry.

See **Donation**, page 4



PHOTO COURTESY OF MCEAP

The Montgomery County Emergency Assistance Program's Food Pantry provides food assistance, as well as clothing and other donations, to community members in need.

Cambria Baptist Church returns to historical building for Christmas Eve

Lori Graham
Contributing writer

CHRISTIANSBURG - To say this is a homecoming of monumental and historical proportions would be an understatement for Cambria Baptist Church.

After over 100 years, Cambria Baptist Church will return to their place of origin at 100 West Main St. in what is now known as the Great Roads on Main.

On Dec. 24, Cambria Baptist Church welcomes the public to their services on Christmas Eve in the historical hall with an 11 a.m. service and a 5 p.m. traditional candlelight service. The candlelight service will begin with a devotional, then will follow with Christmas hymns, and will conclude with the congregation moving outdoors into the patio area for the candle lighting. Due to fire restrictions in the building, the candles must be lit outdoors; however, the courtyard provides a garden area that makes the setting perfect for a gathering.

Pastor Keith Crowgey will lead the congregation in prayer and song with a backdrop of cathedral ceilings and ornate stained-



Cambria Baptist Church building, now known as Great Roads on Main, was originally founded in 1852, changing names and ownership over the years.

glass windows, says Kayla Zwald, Director of Family Ministries, as well as the Communications and Marketing for the Church.

"It has been over 100 years since we've held a service there," Zwald said. "The church was planted in 1909."

Great Roads Café recently closed, and the

building is now up for sale with Long and Foster listing the commercial property at \$2.5 million. There are three buildings in all that include a coffee shop, restaurant, and multiple suites that are currently leased commercially, according to www.longandfoster.com.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF KAYLA ZWALD

Great Roads on Main provides a breathtaking scene of stained-glass windows, arched entryways, and cathedral ceilings.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE KIWANIS CLUB OF CHRISTIANSBURG

Children sing Christmas carols while waiting for Santa. The singing is being led by Kiwanis members Dubby Charlton and Christina Waddell. Photos courtesy of the Kiwanis Club of Christiansburg.

Kiwanis Club of Christiansburg and Santa provide Christmas for 60 children

The Kiwanis Club of Christiansburg held its Annual Children's Christmas party for 60 children and their parents or guardians on Dec. 14.

They gathered at St. Paul's Methodist Church where they were fed, the children received gifts, and met Santa Claus.

The process began with the local teachers providing the Kiwanis Club with names of children in need. They also provided a list of the clothing needed and the toys desired.

See **Kiwanis**, page 4

Blacksburg native celebrates 100th birthday

Marie Dillon Bland was born on December 21, 1923 and raised in McCoy, along with her three brothers. She spent her life in Blacksburg with her devoted husband, Jim, and currently resides in North Carolina with her daughter, Donna Burrows. Her granddaughter, Wendy Burgess, says Marie "attributes her long life to the fortune of good health and to her caring family." Happy Birthday, Marie Dillon Bland!



PHOTOS COURTESY OF WENDY BURGESS

Marie Dillon Bland celebrated her 100th birthday on Dec. 21. Marie (right) as a young girl in the McCoy area of Blacksburg.

Staff report

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, Dec. 23 -

Tuesday, Dec. 26:

Radford Public Library closed

Radford Public Library will be closed Friday, Dec. 22 through Tuesday, Dec. 26. RPL will close early at 5 pm on Wednesday and Thursday, Dec. 27 and 28.

Sunday, Dec. 24:

Town of Blacksburg holiday hours

The Blacksburg Community Center and Aquatic Center closed. Blacksburg Transit will operate on reduced service with service ending at 6:45 p.m.

Monday, Dec. 25:

Town of Blacksburg holiday hours

All town administrative offices will be closed. The Blacksburg Community Center and Aquatic Center will be closed. There will be no Blacksburg Transit service. There will be no trash pickup in the SE quadrant. Make-up service will be Wednesday, Dec. 27. Please have all materials to the curb by 7 a.m.

Tuesday, Dec. 26:

Town of Blacksburg holiday hours

All town administrative offices will be closed. The Blacksburg Aquatic Center will be closed. The Blacksburg Community Center will be open regular hours. Blacksburg Transit will operate on reduced service.

Wednesday, Dec. 27:

CommUNITY Yoga for Self-Care for Adults

At the Radford Public Library; 5:45- 6:45 p.m.

Join Kelly McCoy of The Whole You for an all-level yoga class for adults. Learn poses to help strengthen and lengthen your muscles as well as some breathing and meditation techniques to help calm the nervous system. This class is free to the public and is funded by grant money via the Virginia Department of Health.

Sunday, Dec. 31:

Town of Blacksburg holiday hours

Blacksburg Transit will operate on reduced service. The Blacksburg Community Center will be closed. The Blacksburg Aquatic Center will be open regular hours.

Monday, Jan. 1, 2024:

Town of Blacksburg holiday hours

All town administrative offices will be closed. The Blacksburg Community Center and Aquatic Center will be closed. There will be no Blacksburg Transit service. There will be no trash pickup in the SE quadrant. Make-up service will be Wednesday, Jan. 3. Please have all materials to the curb by 7 a.m.

Radford Public Library closed

RPL will be closed on Monday, Jan. 1, 2024 for the New Year holiday.

Tuesday, Jan. 9:

Fall Prevention and Balance in the Home

Join Blacksburg Parks and Recreation at 2 p.m. for a presentation on Fall Prevention & Balance in the Home, by Cindy Henderson with CORA Physical Therapy. In addition to the presentation, this program offers participants free injury screenings, live demos, giveaways, and a Q&A session. This program will be held at the Blacksburg Community Center and is free to attend. Registration is required. To register, call 540.443.1142 or email jherbert@blacksburg.gov

On-going:

Dec. 14- Jan. 15:

Blacksburg Transit reduced service

Blacksburg Transit will operate on reduced service for the holiday season beginning Dec. 14. Reduced service will remain in effect until Jan. 15. There will be no bus service on Christmas Day and New Year's Day. For more information, please contact 540-443-1500.

Dec. 15 – Jan. 1:

Free downtown Blacksburg parking

Free holiday parking will be in effect downtown. Normal parking rates will resume on Tuesday, Jan. 2.

Blacksburg stormwater utility credit application deadline

Deadline for Stormwater Utility Credit Applications is Jan. 1, 2024. If you are located within the Town of Blacksburg and have a stormwater management facility on your site, you may qualify for a credit on your monthly stormwater utility fee. Go to www.blacksburg.gov/stormwaterfund and review the Stormwater Utility Credit Manual to know more. Stormwater management facilities are typically ponds (either dry ponds/dry detention basins or wet retention basins). Other types include underground storage structures (usually located under parking lots in commercial areas), vegetated areas like bio-retentions, and mechanical filters that remove oil and sediment from stormwater runoff. Questions, contact stormwater@blacksburg.gov or call 540-443-1354.

Blacksburg Comprehensive Plan Amendment application process

In 2021, Town Council adopted the updated Comprehensive Plan. As part of the mid-way evaluation between five-year updates, the town accepts privately initiated applications for amendments to the plan. Amendments include changes to Future Land Use Map designations or the text of the Plan. Applications due on Jan. 15, 2024. A pre-application meeting is required prior to submittal. Contact Maeve Gould, Comprehensive Planner, at (540) 443-1300 or CompPlan@blacksburg.gov, with questions, or to schedule a pre-application meeting.

Beta Sigma Phi supports the Agape Center of NRV for the holidays

The local Chapter of Beta Sigma Phi Sorority has made a holiday donation to the Agape Center of NRV, and also remembers a former small business owner who assisted the Chapter in fundraising for its community service efforts.

"Members of Alpha Mu Master Chapter collectively agreed to forgo Christmas gifts to one another and donate instead to The Agape Center NRV, who assists people in need throughout the NRV, including Montgomery County and the City of Radford," said Carolyn K. Sowers, Public Relations Chair of the Beta Sigma Phi Chapter.

Chapter members wanted to honor the memory of Louise Via of Floyd, a Stanley products salesperson who for many years collaborated with the chapter for a major fundraising Stanley Products Sale event.

"Mrs. Via took a lot of pride and effort in planning the party, conducting an on-site party event with the chapter, realizing proceeds would assist many community needs," said Sowers. "The funds that the chapter raises through these events is what allows such community service donations to be possible. The Chapter wanted the Via family to know just how much Mrs. Via's assistance and support meant to the entire chapter and affected many in the community. A portion of the chapter donation was earmarked in her honor."

Alpha Mu Master Chapter of Beta Sigma Phi Sorority



PHOTO COURTESY OF CAROLYN SOWERS
Phyllis Durham presents monetary donation from Alpha Mu Master Chapter of Beta Sigma Phi Sorority to Lucy Copeland, Co-Director of Agape NRV, with members (left to right) Sue Warden, Libby Pettigrew, Sharon Legg, Doris Caldwell and Carolyn Sowers.

Reminiscing about the Christmas orange

*Evans "Buddy" King
Columnist*

I was in the grocery store the other day doing a little Christmas stocking up. I spied an item that must be seasonal – a bag of spectacularly colored apples – reds and greens – and brilliant oranges. I wasn't used to seeing them packaged that way and I had to buy them. If nothing else it helps provide cover for the little white lies I tell my doctor and my health insurance carrier that "oh, yeah, sure, I always have fruits and vegetables around." Never know when they might ask for receipts.

It brought back a poignant Christmas memory. I don't remember how old I was, maybe eight, but I can still hear my father when I asked what he got for Christmas when he was a kid. He said, "an orange". I said, not intending to be funny, "an orange what?" An orange bicycle? An orange baseball glove? An orange wagon? He said "no, we just got oranges". Remembering that moment always fills me even more with love and warmth for my Dad – and anxious to tell the King family story.

In case I am losing readers at this point, there is one urgent take away here – learn about your families while you have the chance. It's easier to chronicle and preserve now – in my youth it was mainly an oral history and I did not do my part by being a good listener as well as I would have liked. Take the time.

Back to the King's of Christiansburg. My dad was the oldest of eight (there had been one more – another boy John – who died in early childhood in 1918 from the Spanish flu. The kids consisted of my dad (Evans), the twins Clyde and Cline, Elbert, Violet, Ruth, Pearl and Barbara. (No argument from me if you say they sure don't name them like they used to – Aunt Barbara, the youngest, got off easy (must have run out of cool names by then). My grandfather was Charlie and my grandmother was Virgie Mae (no comment please), Virgie Mae Sutphin.

The first several years of my dad's life were spent in a hollow near the Montgomery-Floyd County line. Huffville, a suburb of Pilot. I don't think they knew which county they were in. They were the classic southern family of that era – post-reconstruction, pre-

depression – subsistence farmers. I was away at college before I learned that "damn" and "yankee" were separate words. My father said that they didn't even notice the Depression when it came along. They had lived it their whole lives.

When things got really rough grandfather Charlie would go to southern West Virginia and work in the mines – he was a mechanic and worked on the rail cars that hauled the coal out of the ground. He lived in coal camps and sent money back to his family. He worked underground some. Here is where the story gets a little more interesting. The King's are known as a loquacious lot – we talk. A lot. But apparently this trait wasn't from the King side. My dad said one time that he heard his father say "maybe 10 words in his whole life." Charlie King was just a simple, hard-working, God-fearing man who did the best he could to provide for a family that got away from him numbers-wise. The penchant for talk, and a thirst for learning, came from my grandmother. In the early part of the 20th century, she obtained a "normal school degree" – which, from what I understand, entitled her to teach

school – and she was determined that her kids would get educations, like it or not. I think they did like it, judging from the results.

My grandmother's desire that her children be "properly schooled" led her to move the family into Christiansburg after my dad had finished the 8th grade – for the third time. His mother had been waiting for some of the younger members of the brood to catch up with him to justify the move. There had been no high school where they lived – just a bunch of King's and Epperly's and Huff's and Turner's, and an old one room school house. Altoona School I think it was called.

Christiansburg had about 1,000 residents when the Kings moved into town in the late 1920's, making a substantial bump in the population. I like to say that they were the poorest family in town, but small southern hamlets of that era were not exactly swimming with Carnegie's and Rockefeller's, so they were probably typical, just a few more mouths to feed than most.

See Orange, page 4

Holiday season contributes to December being the top month for U.S. home fires

Many hallmarks of the holiday season, including Christmas trees, holiday decorations, and festive meals, present potential fire hazards that contribute to an annual increase in U.S. home fires. According to the National Fire Protection Association® (NFPA®), Christmas Day and Christmas Eve are among the leading days of the year for home fires.

“December is a leading month for home fires, which is largely due to the activities we engage in during the holiday season,” said Lorraine Carli, NFPA vice president of Outreach and Advocacy. “Additionally, an increase in the use of heating equipment, driven by colder temperatures across most of the country, contributes to this heightened risk.”

Fortunately, Carli notes, many winter fires can be averted with added awareness and planning. “By knowing where

potential fire hazards exist and taking basic precautions to prevent them, people can enjoy a festive, fire-free holiday season,” said Carli.

NFPA’s winter holiday resources include tips and guidelines for helping reduce the risk of fires, while the association’s latest statistics underscore the increased risk of fire during the holiday season and beyond:

Christmas trees
An annual average of 150 home fires involving Christmas trees were reported by the US fire departments between 2017-2021.

Electrical distribution or lighting equipment, such as decorative lights, were involved in more than two of five (44 percent) home Christmas tree fires.

Nearly one in five Christmas tree fires (19 percent) were started by decorative lights.

Eight percent were started by candles.

As Christmas trees dry out, they become more flammable. Thirty percent of Christmas Tree fires occur in January.

Decorations

An estimated average of 790 home fires began when decorations (excluding Christmas trees) caught fire. These fires caused an annual average of 4 civilian fire deaths, 33 civilian fire injuries, and \$14 million in direct property damage between 2017-2021.

17 percent of home decoration fires occurred in December.

In 48 percent of fires involving decorations, the decoration was too close to a heat source such as candles or operating equipment.

Candles

An estimated average of 5,700 home fires (2 percent) started by candles caused an average of 80 civilian deaths (3

percent), 560 civilian injuries (5 percent), and \$247 million (3 percent) in direct property damage per year between 2017 and 2021.

Year-round, 33 percent of fires began with candles; in December, the number jumped to 46 percent.

Christmas is the peak day for candle fires, at an average of 35 fires, roughly 2.5 times the daily average; Christmas Eve ranked second. New Year’s Day is ranked third, with 30 fires per day.

In three of every five candle fires, the candle was too close to something that could catch fire.

Falling asleep without extinguishing the flame was a factor in 10 percent of home candle fires and 12 percent of the associated deaths.

Cooking

Cooking is the leading cause of reported home fires (49 percent) and home fire injuries

and the second-leading cause of home fire deaths.

Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home cooking fires.

Thanksgiving is the peak day for home cooking fires, followed by Christmas Day and Christmas Eve.

In addition, home fires caused by heating equipment peak during the winter months, with nearly half (49 percent) of home heating fires occurring in December, January, and February. Put a Freeze on Winter Fires, an annual NFPA campaign with the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA), works to educate the public about ways to stay safe during the colder months, offering tip sheets and other resources to help reduce the risk of heating fires and other winter hazards.

National Fire Protection Association

Virginia’s fall fire season ends after extreme fire activity

Fire danger remains elevated until drought conditions lift

CHARLOTTESVILLE – During this year’s fall fire season, which ran from Oct. 15 to Nov. 30, the Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF) responded to 156 wildfires that burned nearly 25,000 acres and damaged 13 structures.

Suppression efforts by DOF and the agency’s firefighting partners are credited with saving 224 homes and 268 other structures, with an estimated protected value of \$46.8 million. For comparison, 89 wildfires burned 2,654 acres in the 2022 fall fire season.

“With 35 consecutive

days of suppression efforts, this fall fire season provided tremendous challenges,” said State Forester Rob Farrell. “Our wildland firefighters once again answered the call to protect Virginia’s communities and natural resources. These successes would not be possible without our local, state and federal partners, as well as supporting resources from other states.”

Drought conditions combined with seasonal factors such as low humidity, high winds, and dry leaves and grass, allows wildfires to start easily, spread quickly and

be difficult to contain. Although the fall fire season has ended, the threat of wildfire is always present, and many parts of Virginia are still in a drought.

“Until drought conditions lift, fire danger will remain elevated,” said DOF Director of Fire and Emergency Response John Miller. “The leading cause of wildfires this year was once again escaped debris burning. Many localities have implemented fire restrictions, so check with local officials before conducting any outdoor burning. Even if no fire restrictions are in place,

we encourage those in drought areas to delay all outdoor burning until the drought is lifted.”

Follow these tips when burning debris:

- Check with local officials before burning
- Avoid burning if your locality is in a drought
- Avoid burning on dry, windy days
- Keep your burn pile small
- Stay with your fire until it’s completely out (drown, stir, drown again, ensure it’s cool)
- Have a rake or shovel and charged water hose on hand



PHOTO COURTESY OF VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY

- Have a phone ready to call 911 if a fire escapes your control
- Consider a “green” alternative to burning yard debris: compost your organic yard waste

Remain Safe this Holiday Season
Don’t let a careless

mistake ruin the holidays for you, your neighbors and your community. DOF also reminds those with live Christmas trees to follow safe practices on placing and caring for your tree. Learn more at nfpa.org.

Virginia Department of Forestry

Marketplace [ourvalley.org](http://www.ourvalley.org)

THE FINCASTLE HERALD | The Vinton Messenger | THE NEW CASTLE RECORD | SALEM TIMES REGISTER | News Messenger | RADFORD News Journal

Auctions

PUBLIC NOTICE
The contents of the listed unit will be sold at Public Auction December 29, 2023 at 11am at 1st Security Self Storage 5 Midway Plaza Dr. Christiansburg, VA. D020 D025 1st Security reserves the right to refuse any bid. Terms: CASH OR CREDIT CARD AT SALE.

Legals - Montgomery County

process for this action and his last known address is unknown, though he is known to be residing in and around the Montgomery County, Virginia area. It is therefore **ORDERED** that Respondent Kenneth McLemore, appear at this Court on or before **January 12, 2024 at 1:00 pm** before the Montgomery County Circuit Court and do what is necessary to protect his interest thereby. And, it is further **ORDERED** that this Order shall be published once a week for four (4) successive weeks in a newspaper of general circulation, serving the area of Montgomery County, Virginia, the locality of father’s last known whereabouts, and contemporaneously posted in a conspicuous location at the Montgomery County Courthouse. Enter this 1st day of November, 2023. Robert M. D. Turk, Judge

Legals - Montgomery County

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

The Town of Christiansburg Town Council will hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday, January 9, 2024, at 7:00 PM in the Council Chambers of the Christiansburg Town Hall, 100 E. Main Street, Christiansburg, Virginia 24073. The purpose of the public hearing is to receive public comments concerning: A. Conditional Use Permit request by Trustees of Blacksburg Church of Christ Missions & Cole Burch Properties LLC, Property Owners, and Carter Machinery Company, Inc., Applicant, to allow for machinery and equipment sales, service and storage, and for a contractors equipment storage yard, and for rental of equipment commonly used by contractors, on approximately 5.81 acres located south of Roanoke St. and west of Simmons Rd. SE, also addressed as 2091 and 2095 Roanoke St. including several vacant parcels, identified as Tax Parcels 499-(16)- 1-4, 8A, 9-12; 499-(16)-4A, 5-8; 529-(1)-13-17, 23-26; 529-(1)-18, 19; 529-(2)- 4-9; 499-(A)-15; Parcel IDs 007705, 014072, 007704, 014069, 020750, 230046; zoned General Business District B-3. The property is designated as Mixed Use with Buffer

Legals - Montgomery County

(Residential/Business) on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan. A copy of the application, the Town’s Zoning Map, Zoning Ordinance, and Future Land Use Map may be viewed in the Planning Department Office, 100 E. Main Street, Christiansburg, VA 24073 during normal office hours of 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Contact Andrew Warren, Assistant Town Manager, at (540) 382-6128, ext. 1130 or by email at awarren@christiansburg.org, with any questions or if you require reasonable accommodations.

Legals - Montgomery County

114-unit apartment community on approximately 7.497 acres located at the terminus of Sunset Drive NE, identified as Tax Parcels 436-((A))-43; 436-((A))-23A; 436-((A))-42, 436-((A))-22A; Parcel IDs 001575, 021982, 007729, 024266; zoned General Business District B-3. The property is designated as Mixed Use with Buffer (Residential/Business) on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan. A copy of the application, the Town’s Zoning Map, Zoning Ordinance, and Future Land Use Map may be viewed in the Planning Department Office, 100 E. Main Street, Christiansburg, VA 24073 during normal office hours of 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Legals - Montgomery County

Contact Andrew Warren, Assistant Town Manager, at (540) 382-6128, ext. 1130 or by email at awarren@christiansburg.org, with any questions or if you require reasonable accommodations.

Legals - Montgomery County

Christiansburg, Virginia for the purpose of receiving citizens’ comments on the following:
Fiscal Year 2024-2025 County Budget
The purpose of this public hearing is to gather citizen comments on the upcoming 2024-2025 fiscal year budget.
BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
Angela M. Hill
County Administrator

Legals - Montgomery County

VIRGINIA:

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

In Re: The Adoption of a Minor Child Under Eighteen Years of Age, to be known as **SERITA DANIELLE TICKLE**
By: **MILDRED ANNE TICKLE, FRED LEE TICKLE, JR.** Petitioners
ORDER Case No. CA23000019-00
ORDER OF PUBLICATION
The object of this cause is to obtain an adoption of the minor child, Serita Danielle McLemore, by your petitioners, Mildred Anne Tickle and Fred Lee Tickle, Jr., husband and wife. An affidavit having been made and filed, pursuant to Virginia Code §8.01-316(1950), as amended, showing that the biological father, Kenneth McLemore (aka Kenneth Sturdivant), despite the exercise of due diligence on behalf of Petitioners, could not be personally served with legal

ASK FOR THIS:
R. Cord Hall, Esq, VSB 77637
R, CORD HALL, ATTORNEY-AT-LAW, P.C. 106 S. Franklin Street, Suite B-2 Christiansburg, VA 24073 (540)381-0707 (540)381-0505-Facsimile Counsel for Petitioners

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NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, By the Board of Supervisors of the County of Montgomery, Virginia
that the Board hereby schedules a public hearing on Monday, January 8, 2024 at 7:15 p.m., in the Board Chambers, Montgomery County Government Center, 755 Roanoke Street,

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THE CLASSIFIEDS- Where the Deals Are!

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Orange from page 2

They settled on Craig Street, not far from the stockyard, the "economic engine" of its day. My vague memories (Charlie and Virgie Mae died close together around the time I was in 1st grade) are of a chicken coop in the yard and a small pasture next door. Smack in the middle of town. They knocked the back wall out and built rooms on to extend the house as more Kings arrived (Charlie and Virgie Mae apparently spurning overtures from Planned Parenthood as farm families did). They never owned a car. My mother taught my dad to drive when he returned from World War II – when he was already principal of the high school. Grandfather Charlie worked at the mill and was a handyman in town, still going to the

mines when circumstances required.

Virgie Mae's passion for education, and for a better life for her kids, was fulfilled many times over. All four sons graduated from college, my dad and the twins from Emory & Henry, Uncle Elbert from VPI. The girls, who my father said were all brighter than any of the boys, all finished high school and family legend (my dad) has it that each was valedictorian of her class. (The times being what they were, college was not in the cards for the girls.) The Kings of Craig Street had the largest number of graduates of Christiansburg High of any nuclear family ever, again per my father. Since families don't get that large anymore, I think this record will endure.

The kids all worked hard – in school and at home. They all had after school jobs. The boys played sports, Clyde and Cline being among the better football players in the area. Cline eventually coached the football team at CHS for a couple of years while my dad was principal. My dad worked in a grocery in high school in addition to playing football and baseball. In college he worked in the campus cafeteria and sold class rings to get by, at the height of the Great Depression. Later, three of the brothers were in three separate graduate schools in New York City at the same time – my dad at Columbia and Clyde and Cline at NYU and City College. Around that time, the fourth son, the youngest, Uncle

Elbert, began a long and successful career as an engineer with Foster Wheeler, also in the City. Pretty remarkable for a family from hillbilly country. Most of the kids served in World War II. All were solid members of their communities.

Inevitably, each generation takes the past more for granted than the previous one. For goodness sake, it's the past. We assume that things are the way they are because of our own efforts and our own brilliance. How we got to where we are is irrelevant. We are born on third base and go through life thinking we hit triples. But every year at Christmas, when I see an orange, I count my blessings for the family that gave me the opportunities and the life I have been given.

Kiwanis from page 1

News Messenger

Established 1869

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Give us your view:

editor@ourvalley.org

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

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Once the names were received, each Kiwanian took a name and bought clothes for the child they selected. The items purchased included coats, socks, shoes, boots, pants, shirts, underwear, and other items requested. Before the event, the Kiwanis members went on a club-funded 7 a.m. shopping spree at Walmart and purchased toys for the children. Afterwards, the toys were stored until taken to Christiansburg High School where they were wrapped by the Early Childcare Education Class. After being wrapped, the toys were delivered to St. Paul Methodist Church, where Santa presented them, along with the clothing gifts from the members, to the children.

After the children enjoyed pizza and drinks; they joined in singing Christmas Carols while waiting for Santa's surprise entrance. Santa and his helpers called the children forward and presented them with their gifts. Santa presented each child with a bag of toys and a bag of clothes.

Kiwanis members provided transportation to the children who needed a ride to and from the event.

The members and the club spent more than \$13,000 total for the clothing and toys this year. Club funds came from fundraisers held during the year.

A big thank you to Walmart and its employees, CHS Early Childhood Education Class, Pizza Inn, Joco Mart, St. Paul Methodist Church, B & B Storage, Santa, and all the Kiwanis members who helped make this event a success.

Special kudos are due to Dennis Hunter who chaired the event for the Kiwanis Club and the Kiwanis members who did all the work.

Kiwanis is a global organization of members, clubs, and partners who are dedicated to changing the world, one child and one community at a time. The Kiwanis Club of Christiansburg has provided service to the youth of the

local community since its charter was granted in 1949.

Kiwanis Club of Christiansburg



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE KIWANIS CLUB OF CHRISTIANSBURG
A child sits on Santa's lap while receiving presents at the Kiwanis Club of Christiansburg's Christmas party.

Donation from page 1

The MCEAP is located on 760 Roanoke Street in Christiansburg and is a 100%-volunteer operated program. According to their website at www.mceap.com, their operations are supported entirely by donations and profits made from the store. The store provides food, clothing, household items, and assistance to the community that other assistance programs might not be able to meet.

Additionally, on December 23, Montgomery County Moose Lodge #1470 will be holding a food pickup from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. One box of holiday and canned food supplies will be available for pickup for families that need a little extra assistance this holiday season. Boxes of food will be given out while their supplies last. Food distribution will not begin before

11 a.m., according to MCEAP's website, but interested parties should arrive early to secure their spot in line.

The Moose Lodge asks that those individuals or families wishing to pickup a box of food pull in front of the building at 1637 North Franklin St. where a volunteer will assist in loading the food items.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
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49	50							51		52	53	54
55				56		57	58	59	60			
61				62					63			
64				65						66		
67				68						69		

- CLUES ACROSS**
- Sharp pain
 - Military hats
 - Software app on a network (abbr.)
 - Genus of freshwater mussels
 - Continent
 - Afghani monetary unit
 - Recovered
 - Ribonucleic acid
 - Refers to end of small intestine
 - Ethiopia's largest lake
 - Hostelry
 - Defunct American automaker
 - Denotes origin by birth or descent
 - Part of a watch
 - Stare with mouth open wide
 - Found in granite
 - Competing
 - Stone film "___ Given Sunday"
 - Junction between two nerve cells
 - Greek goddess of the dawn
 - Fight
 - Thin, narrow piece of wood or metal
 - Ribosomal ribonucleic acid
 - Type of kitchenware
 - Specialty of The Onion
 - Major Mexican river
 - Kilometers per hour
 - Species of mackerel
 - Bones
 - Interest rate
 - New York Mets legend
 - 19th letter of Greek alphabet
 - Shawl
 - Gracefully thin
 - Type of deciduous tree
 - Not classy
 - Taro corm or plant
- CLUES DOWN**
- Jewish festival
 - Anoint
 - More pleasant
 - Type of painting
 - Witness
 - Harm
 - Builder of Arantea (Greek myth.)
 - City in India
 - Used to unlock cans
 - Induces sleep
 - More bouncy
 - A branch of Islam
 - White (French)
 - Legal term
 - Covered with frost
 - Hengyang Nanyue Airport
 - Wash
 - Disorder of the scalp
 - North American tree
 - Helps cars run
 - Mandela's party
 - Aromatic plant of the daisy family
 - Negative
 - College student educator (abbr.)
 - Most rare
 - Harm with a knife
 - Folk singer DiFranco
 - Return to
 - One who repairs
 - Eastern England river
 - Hockey players need two
 - Dismay
 - Rebuke
 - Plant of the arum family
 - Fish genus
 - Plant of the mallow family
 - Amounts of time
 - 11th letter of the Hebrew alphabet
 - One of Napoleon's generals

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Send community news and photos to communitynews@ourvalley.org

OBITUARIES

Cooper, Richard Ferguson



Richard "Rick" Ferguson Cooper, he was THE ONE that she had waited for "a sign" of, and together they enjoyed 45 years of amazing love, abundant laughter, casual construction and renovation projects, horseback riding, and farming of a hay field.

Rick moved to Blacksburg from his home in northern Virginia to attend Virginia Tech. He fell in love with the scenic mountain landscape, adventurous spelunking (exploration of underground caves) opportunities and its community members, and small town life around Virginia Tech and remained employed in the Electrical Engineering department at Virginia Tech until his retirement, loving every minute of it, even the difficult parts. He taught Electrical Engineering labs, sharing his passion and expertise with students and anyone interested; he lived and breathed the Hokie motto of Ut Protism (that I may serve).

He married Debora "Debbie" Massa Cooper on March 18, 1978 after proposing while wearing a cute, red, bow collar to jokingly prove to her that

is survived by his wife, Debbie, his daughter, Amanda Christine Cooper, his brother, Michael Cooper, his sister Stephanie Cooper, and many wonderful nieces and nephews.

The memorial will be held on Friday, Dec. 29, 2023 at Dwelling Place Christian Fellowship located at 3325 N Franklin St, Christiansburg, VA 24073 with visitation at 2 p.m. and a service at 4 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to either Rick's church in Blacksburg, VA: Dwelling Place Christian Fellowship <https://onrealm.org/DwellingPlaceCh/give/benevolence> or the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation www.jdrf.org.

Dobbins, Peggy Mae



Peggy Mae Dobbins, 83, of Dublin, at the rehab for the last six years; and passed away Monday, Dec. 18, 2023. She was a member of Fairlawn Church of God and retired from Kroger after 35 years. Peggy was preceded in death by her parents, Richard and Annie Mae McGhinnis; husband, Billy Ray Dobbins; and son, Brian Dobbins.

Survivors include her son and daughter-in-law, Daren and Rhonda Dobbins of Corpus Christi, Texas; grandchildren, Matthew and Rachel Dobbins, Nichole Dobbins, and Brandon Dobbins; six great grandchildren including her special great granddaughter Breanna Smith, who took excellent care of her

many other relatives and friends.

The family received friends Thursday, Dec. 21, 2023, at the Fairlawn Church of God. Funeral services followed with Rev. Marcus Harrison officiating. Entombment followed in Highland Memory Gardens Mausoleum in Dublin.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donations to the Alzheimer's Association.

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

Send community news and photos to communitynews@ourvalley.org

ANGLICAN CATHOLIC

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

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

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

BAPTIST

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

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

CHURCH OF CHRIST

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

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

CHURCH OF GOD

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

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

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

Christiansburg Church of the Brethren, 310 South Franklin Street. Pastor: Hal Sonafrank, 1-336-583-4822. Morning Worship 11 a.m.; Bible Study 10:00 a.m. Wednesdays. Website: www.christiansburgcob.org. A loving family, fueled by the Holy Spirit, grounded in God's Word, and delivering Jesus forgiveness and love to all people. Come as you are... you are welcomed!

(DOC - DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

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

ECKANKAR

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

EPISCOPAL

Grace Episcopal Church, 210 Fourth Street Radford.

Montgomery County WORSHIP DIRECTORY

ONLY ONE WAY

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

In our culture, almost anything goes. The overwhelming idea is: whatever works for you. It's okay to believe in God, but it's not acceptable to suggest there is only one way to know Him. The problem is that if you believe in Christ, you must also believe His words. He did not say, "I am a way." He said, "I am THE way." Think about it. If anything would work, why suffer? If anything else could save us, why would God send His son? Read Isaiah 43:10-11. First, understand that God does want us to know Him. It's why He sent His son in the first place. Second, recognize that there is only one Savior and put your trust in Him. Perhaps you have long since accepted that only Christ can save you, but have you really accepted that only He can save somebody else? Knowing how much others need Christ motivates us to tell them about Him. After all, "how, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?" (Romans 10:14) Tell someone about the Savior today! Worship: Today, thank God for sending the Savior. Pray for those who do not know Him, those who live and work right around you as well as those in foreign lands. Read Romans 10:14-15. Pray that God will send His people to preach good news and ask Him to give you opportunities today to share His love with someone.

If your church is not listed and if you are interested, call Wendi Craig at 276-340-2445 or email at advertise@mainstreetnewspapers.com

Welcoming and accepting, we have been a part of the Radford community for more than 130 years. ALL ARE WELCOME. Grace offers an 8:00am Contemplative Eucharist and a 10:30am Eucharist with organ music and a choir, with refreshments served afterwards. The 10:30am service is also available on YouTube for those unable to leave their house. Find us on Facebook and www.graceradford.org.

St Thomas Episcopal Church, 103 East Main Street, Christiansburg VA, 24073. Worship and communion at 10:00 a.m., each Sunday, followed by hospitality coffee and Adult Sunday Adult Seminar. Our service is also streamed. Contact for more info: mystthomasoffice@yahoo.com. <http://www.stthomaschristiansburg.dioswva.org>

LUTHERAN

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

Our Saviour Lutheran Church ELCA, 1845 Cambria St NE, Christiansburg. Worship each Sunday at 10 am, in person and online at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMsBgbyjmV5ce9mr43dbCw>. Please visit our website at www.oslc-cburg.org and our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/oslcchristiansburg> to learn more about us. Little Free Pantry and Little Free Library located in our parking lot. Pastor Joshua L. Copeland; church office 540-382-2223.

St. Michael Lutheran Church, 2308 Merrimac Road, Blacksburg, VA 24060. Worship service each Sunday

at 10 AM, Sunday School 9 AM. We are a community of God's people where we gather for worship, learning and service. Visitors and new members are always WELCOME! Google comments: "Wonderful, welcoming congregation." A place where all are truly welcome." You'll love our minister, The Rev. Dr. Wes Jamison, who engages us in God's word. St. Michael started and administers Micah's Caring Initiative which includes Micah's Backpack, Soup for Seniors, Garden, Closet, and Mini Pantry, with tremendous community impact. Partnering with Rainbow Riders and Total Action for Progress, we opened the first Early Childhood Head Start in our community (6 weeks to age 3). We sponsor an awesome Scouting program of Scouts Boy & Girl Troop, Venture Scouts for older youth, and a Cub Pack for girls & boys kindergarten - 5th grade, amongst many other programs. Directions: From Price's Fork Road, turn onto Merrimac Road. St. Michael is ~quarter mile on the left. For more information: Phone 540.951.8951; Email hope@stmlc.us; Website www.st-michael-lutheran-church.org

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

PENTECOSTAL HOLINESS Compassion Church, 1820 Second Street, Radford, 639-6287, Our music is passionate, our worship is real, and Pastor Chandler Jones brings relevant messages for everyone at any place on their journey,

Sunday Worship Experience at 9:30 AM & 11:00 AM, Wednesday Family Night at 7 PM, Children Ministry provided for all services. Our vision is to see all Saved. Freed. Restored. Fulfilled. Find us on Facebook and Instagram

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

Piedmont Pentecostal Holiness Church, 5007 Jewell Dr., Shawsville Va. Sunday morning service 11am. Pastor Tim Clyburn. 8 miles from Shawsville Rt 460, on Alleghany Spring Rd.

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

UNITED METHODIST

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

Central Church, 803 Wadsworth Street, Radford. 639-3529. 8:30 a.m. Sunday Services: 8:30am; 9:45am Sunday School; and 11:00a.m. Child care is provided. www.centralmethodistchurch.com.

St. Paul United Methodist Church, 220 W. Main St., C'Burg. Rev. Mike Derflinger (540) 382-2410. Sunday Worship 10 a.m., Sunday School 9 a.m. Live streaming Sunday Service - www.twitch.tv/stpaulumc

WESLEYAN

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

AARP Virginia fraud alert: AI for good and bad

The holidays are a time when friends and family of all ages gather together, share updates on their lives and recount cherished memories. One thing to add to that list this year: a conversation on how to stay safe from fraud.

We know that scammers target people of all ages. Last year 40% of all scams reported to the Federal Trade Commission were from people under the age of 40, and victims over the age of 60 lose the most money to scams on average. So, we are all vulnerable to these criminals, and we could all use a little help and guidance. Here are two fraud topics to talk about with your family this holiday season.

What is a question, story or phrase that no one other than your close family would know? Scams targeting parents and grandparents are only becoming more believable with the adoption of Artificial Intelligence, but no matter how realistic

a voice may sound it won't know this private memory or password. Passwords are another critical topic. We all have so many passwords that it's hard to keep straight. This leads many to choose simple passwords or use the same one repeatedly. A quick chat about how you choose and protect your passwords could save someone you love a lot of money.

Lastly, be willing to share. Too many victims of fraud suffer in silence because they are ashamed to admit what happened to them. The truth is that scammers are sophisticated criminals and for victims sharing their story is the best way to protect others and get the support they need.

Be a fraud fighter! If you can spot a scam, you can stop a scam.

Virginia AARP

Record \$80 million grant to fund pilot program encouraging the implementation of climate-smart practices on farms

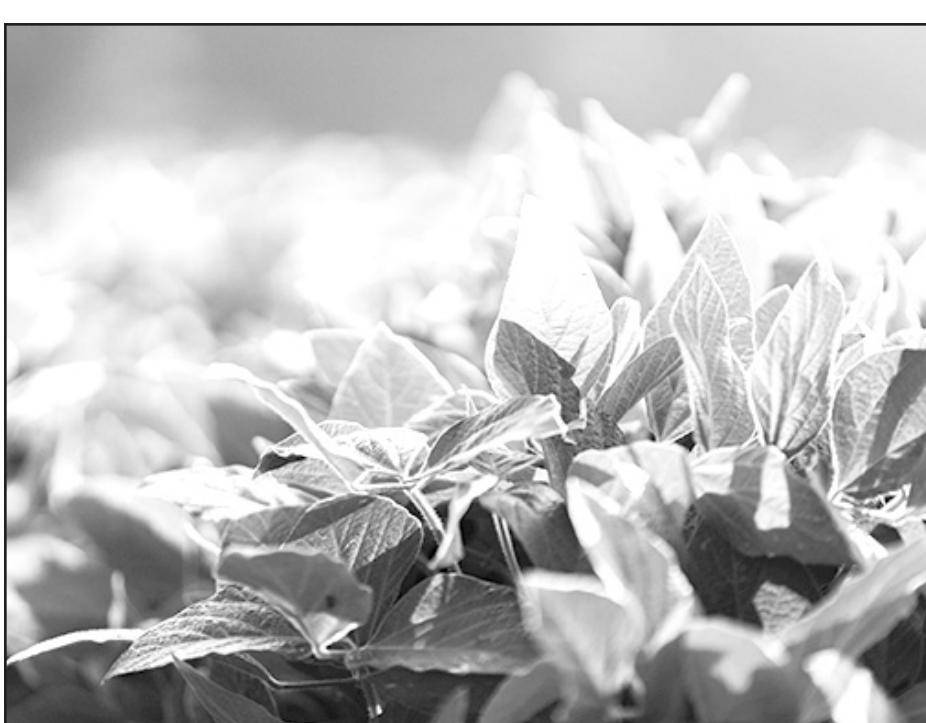


PHOTO COURTESY OF VIRGINIA TECH

The Alliance to Advance Climate-Smart Agriculture will reach an estimated 4,500 operations representing up to 500,000 acres in the initial four states, which includes Virginia, North Dakota, Arkansas, and Minnesota.

Virginia Tech received a record \$80 million grant to help farmers implement climate-smart practices that could significantly reduce greenhouse gasses.

With the Alliance to Advance Climate-Smart Agriculture, which is now underway, the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences will distribute more than \$57 million of the largest grant in the university's history to producers to enact climate-friendly practices and serve as a pilot program for a national model.

The \$80 million grant from the United States Department of Agriculture will pilot a program that pays producers to implement climate-smart practices on farms of all sizes and commodities, an initiative that could have significant impacts on curbing climate-changing gasses.

A three-year pilot program will be created in Virginia, Arkansas, Minnesota, and North Dakota that will test the feasibility of rolling out a similar program on a national scale. If scaled up nationally, the program could help producers reduce agricultural emissions by 55 percent and total emissions in the United States by 8 percent after 10 years.

"We are proud to lead this effort that gives agricultural producers

incentives to enact climate-smart practices and the financial means to do so," said Tom Thompson, principal investigator on the project, associate dean of the college, and director of CALS Global. "This is a watershed program that helps the agricultural industry be a leader in addressing climate change."

According to Thompson, the credit for the pilot concept belongs to RIPE (Rural Investment to Protect our Environment). Virginia Tech leads the Alliance to Advance Climate-Smart Agriculture.

The pilot program will pay producers \$100 per acre or animal unit for voluntary adoption of climate-smart practices that deliver more than that amount in public environmental benefits. Unlike previous cost-sharing programs that shared some of the financial burdens of adopting climate-smart practices on producers, this program pays producers more than the cost of implementation of these practices while also improving their bottom lines. More than 20 state and national organizations will help to implement the Alliance to Advance Climate-Smart Agriculture. Producers interested in learning more information can visit the Alliance's website.

The Alliance to Advance Climate-Smart Agriculture will reach an estimated 4,500 agricultural operations representing up to 500,000 acres in the initial four states. If scaled up nationally, as much as 80 percent of agricultural producers could be enrolled in

the program, which would make a significant impact on global carbon emissions. Only about 3 percent of producers currently participate in carbon reduction programs.

In tandem with tackling the issue of climate change, the project also targets boosting agricultural productivity in order to help feed a growing global population that is expected to reach 9.7 billion by 2050.

Producers will be able to market their climate-smart commodities to the American public through certificates with tracking numbers. Informed by feedback through a series of roundtables, the tracking system will include information needed by commodity purchasers to meet their sustainability goals.

The USDA "is delivering on our promise to build and expand these market opportunities for American agriculture and be global leaders in climate-smart agricultural production," Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said in his announcement. "This effort will increase the competitive advantage of U.S. agriculture both domestically and internationally, build wealth that stays in rural communities, and support a diverse range of producers and operation types."

Virginia Tech researchers will create a model that selects participants to ensure program diversity. At least 40 percent of participants will be underserved and small producers, reaching at least 1,900 operations. A minimum of 500 operations with socially



PHOTO COURTESY OF JULIE ALLEN

A drone carries a data collection device to be dropped onto treetops in the forest.

Virginia Tech biologist is a finalist in the \$10 million XPRIZE Rainforest competition

Next June, Julie Allen and a team of more than 30 researchers who call themselves "Team Waponi" will be dropped "Survivor"-style into a remote part of Brazil's Amazon rainforest.

They will have just 24 hours to survey the biodiversity of 100 hectares — 247 acres — of rainforest and produce real-time insights within another 48 hours to win the competition. The winning team must develop the fastest, most comprehensive, and most efficient automated technologies for identifying species at every level of the rainforest, from canopy to floor.

For Allen, assistant professor in the Department of Biological Sciences in Virginia Tech's College of Science, the goal is not so much to claim the \$10 million prize as to help revolutionize how we study and preserve the rainforest.

"We are losing rainforest every minute to human activity," she said. "The vast level of biodiversity is not known, and these forests are disappearing before we can even identify them. The idea behind the XPRIZE is to find a way to measure and show the economic value of keeping the rainforest intact."

XPRIZE Rainforest is one of several competitions sponsored by the XPRIZE Foundation to incentivize collaboration by world-leading experts on solving humanity's biggest problems. XPRIZE judges winnowed the initial 300 entrants down to 15 semifinalist teams for the June semifinals in Singapore. Now, just six teams remain to face off in the finals.

"I'm running on full adrenaline right now," Allen said. "We won't know where we're going in the rainforest until the day of the competition. They will likely helicopter us into a random plot in Brazil."

"Waponi" is a term meaning "hi," "what's up," "good," or "cool," from the Waorani tribe, who are longtime residents and guardians of Ecuador's Amazon rainforest. The XPRIZE Waponi team is composed of experts in a variety of fields, including anthropology, biology, chemistry, computer science, ecology, engineering, and robotics, along with members of the Waorani Amazon indigenous community.

The team's main technology is a device called the Limelight, which uses a drone to drop a sample collection raft into the rainforest canopy. Instruments on the raft record sounds and images, capture insects, and gather environmental DNA from the air, soil, and water. Machine learning technology and field DNA sequencing, along with other streams of data coming from the drones, will help to identify species.

"We have to invent a field lab where we'll do all sequencing at the end of the rainy season in lowland Amazonia," Allen said. "We'll be dealing with rain, heat, and humidity. A lot of our machines can't get too hot — they'll break. We're trying to ensure we have a system that is field ready."

Allen joined Virginia Tech from the

University of Nevada, Reno, this year and is currently setting up her lab and preparing to teach a bioinformatics course in the spring.

As the leader for Team Waponi's DNA and bioinformatics group, she is developing DNA sequencing technology to rapidly identify species through environmental DNA in the water, soil, and air, and from insect tissue samples collected by drones in the forest.

"What I'll be doing in my lab over the next semester is testing more DNA protocols to increase our speed for sequencing and analyzing the DNA we collect at the site," Allen said. "I am hoping to find the support to fund students in paid internships and undergraduate research related to XPRIZE Rainforest."

Allen said Team Waponi has three distinct advantages going into the competition: insect expertise, indigenous knowledge, and expert drone technology. Several team members are scientists who specialize in insects, which are the most biodiverse animal organism in the forest. Allen herself is both an evolutionary biologist who studies insects and a bioinformatician who analyzes biological data to help answer questions about ecology.

"We are known for being the insect team," she said. "We expect to have thousands and thousands of insect coming at us, including new species we've never seen before. Insects are important stewards of the ecosystem and also great indicators of changes and declines in ecosystem health. When insects go away, everything goes away."

Team Waponi also includes Amazonian tribal and Indigenous members, who have strong ties to the land and expertise in the local ecosystem, as paid researchers and advisors.

"Our team includes Indigenous and local communities as part of a collaborative and ongoing, sustainable effort to collect data to understand what the rainforest is telling us," she said. "Our Team Waponi leader [Professor Tom Walla from Colorado Mesa University] has been working with the Amazon Indigenous community in Ecuador for over 20 years."

Allen said that win or lose, the team has already been successful in developing new technologies to advance species detection and identification. She and other members of Team Waponi plan to start a company that commercializes their XPRIZE work and contributes to global understanding of the importance of biodiversity.

"This competition is allowing me to take all the work and goals from my entire career and push them forward in a way that will have a rapid and significant impact," she said. "It's overwhelming and just awesome to be a part of this."

Lon Wagner for Virginia Tech

disadvantaged or limited resource producers will participate in the pilot project.

The grant will provide \$2 million to both Minnesota and Virginia to pilot the implementation of high-value and high-cost climate-smart practices in animal feeding operations. The pilot's near-term impacts will be an estimated greenhouse gas benefit of 300,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent and a total environmental value of \$200 million. The national program would have a benefit-to-cost ratio of 5:1, reaping a total environmental benefit of \$415 billion (working under the assumption that multiple climate-smart practices are implemented on the

same cropland acres and animal units after ten years of the program).

The program will rely heavily on research and programs at Virginia Tech, including the Global Agricultural Productivity (GAP) Report and insights from experts in the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, the School of Animal Sciences, and the Eastern Shore Agricultural Research and Extension Center.

There will be rigorous monitoring during the three-year pilot program to ensure the transaction costs associated with implementing the climate-smart initiatives are minimized and that there are few barriers for producers who enact such initiatives in their

operations. Virginia Tech researchers will track the greenhouse gas savings of the initiative as they are implemented, quantify the benefits of other environmental impacts such as reduced soil erosion, and examine consumers' willingness to pay for products with climate-smart labels.

"This is an extraordinarily exciting time to be involved in agriculture," Thompson said. "Farmers have always been the great stewards of our land, and American agriculture has always been a productivity powerhouse. This pilot program will help them continue to do so for generations to come."

Max Esterhuizen for Virginia Tech

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

P	A	N	G	S	H	A	K	O	S	S	S	B
U	N	I	O	E	U	R	O	P	E	P	U	L
R	E	C	O	P	E	R	A	T	E	D	R	N
I	L	E	A	L	T	S	A	N	A	I	N	N
M	E	R	C	E	R	E	T	H	N	I	C	
H	A	I	R	S	P	R	I	N	G			
G	A	P	E	M	I	C	A	V	I	N	G	
A	N	Y	S	N	A	P	S	E	E	O	S	
S	C	R	A	P	S	L	A	T	R	R	N	A
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K	P	H	S	N	O	E	K	S	A	C	R	A
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E	L	M	T	R	A	S	H	Y	E	D	D	O

MONTGOMERY SPORTS

Cromer leaves Christiansburg for Floyd Co.

Marty Gordon

NRVsports@mainstreetnewspapers.com

Tim Cromer has always loved to coach high school football.

In 2017, he stepped down after 15 years of coaching to become the athletic director at Christiansburg High School. Tuesday, he was named the head coach at Floyd County High School, replacing long-time legend coach Winfrey Beale. Cromer is only the second head coach at the school in the past 43 years.

Cromer, who is a native of Christiansburg and who graduated from CHS in 1987, started his teaching and coaching career in Citrus High School in Inverness, Fla. to be followed by stints at Radford and Christiansburg High School.

He has coaching experience in football, indoor and outdoor track, girls' basketball, baseball, golf and weightlifting, which the latter he will carry into his other new task at Floyd as a physical education teacher.

Of course, his main focus in those 30 years of experience has been coaching football, with 20 as a head coach. During his coaching tenure, Cromer has garnered multiple honors including leading Christiansburg to the 2011 Double-A state championship.

He has served as Christiansburg's current athletic director during a changing time at the school including the opening of a new turf field and track. In addition, the school has added a new softball complex and is undergoing the next phase of its athletic facilities that will include the addition of a new annex gymnasium.

Cromer led a multiple of Region Championships in 2009, 2010, and 2011, and also attained Region Runner-Up titles in 2004, 2006, and 2012. Christiansburg's consistent presence in the VHSL Playoffs from 2003



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF FLOYD COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL

to 2014, allowed him to finish with an overall record of 98-75 and a playoff record of 13-10.

Floyd officials said Cromer's commitment to fostering a positive and inclusive team culture aligns seamlessly with the values of Floyd County.

"We are confident that under his leadership, the FCHS football program will continue to thrive and exemplify the excellence that our community has come to expect."

"As we welcome Coach Cromer to our Floyd family, we are excited about the energy and expertise he brings to our football program," said Barry Hollandsworth, Principal of Floyd County High School. "His dedication to developing both athletic skills and character aligns perfectly with our commitment to providing a well-rounded education for our student-athletes."

Cromer expressed his enthusiasm for joining the Floyd community.

"While talking with the Floyd County administration, it became very apparent that this is a great fit," he said. "We will continue the FCHS tradition of playing competitive football the right way, while building men of character. I am so thankful to God and grateful for the opportunity to serve the Floyd County community in this capacity. Teamwork makes the dream work."

Cromer replaces a legend, so to speak, in Beale who stepped down following the conclusion of the 2023 season. He stepped down after 43 years as the head coach at Floyd. Beale was hired in 1981 and hung up his whistle with 245 wins, taking the Buffaloes to the state title game three times: 1999, 2001, and 2008.

Letter to sports, no fun for bowl season

Marty Gordon

NRVsports@mainstreetnewspapers.com

Bowl season is upon us, but it doesn't matter. "Going Bowling" just does not mean the same thing it did 10 years ago.

Let's set this straight in a letter to sports.

Dear Sports or the NCAA or the College Football Committee or collegiate athletic directors (and whoever that had a hand in taking down this time of year),

We used to love this time of the year. It was fun to see where the Hokies or our favorite college football team would be playing in December and early January. But you have taken all of the fun out of it.

Maybe this isn't all your fault, but you sure had a hand in it.

I can step back to a time when people wanted to watch the Sugar Bowl or even the Cotton Bowl. Then it all changed. I think you let it start with sponsors and the tons of money that was poured into the games.

Thus, the Rolo Chocolate Mayonnaise Bowl (doesn't exist, but it sure seems like it could be) was created.

Do you really know how many Division I football teams currently play?

There are 133 schools in the Division I Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) in the United States.

Do you know how many bowl games there are as of this year?

There are 43 games on the 2023-24 bowl schedule, culminating with the

CFP National Championship Jan. 8 at NRG Stadium in Houston. Thus, 86 teams play in a bowl game.

This leaves us scratching our heads that 57 teams are left out in the cold.

Of course, to make a bowl game, those schools must win six games. That didn't happen, did it. There will be several bowl games with teams who have a .500 record.

I know it has come down to money just look at the recent media conversation. Bowl games will pay out somewhere around \$375 million to conferences in exchange for their teams' participation in the 40 non-CFP matchups alone, a figure similar to last year's payout. CFP bowl games pay conferences \$6 million for each participant, a number that will only grow in the future.

The NIL money has also led to this change and there are so many players are opting out of playing in bowl games.

So far, more than 150 players chose to enter the transfer portal rather than play in a bowl game and another 45 or so opted out simply to protect themselves from injury in their preparation for the NFL draft.

Why should fans care when those players don't seem to.

Pass me the bowl of chips and let's watch a Hallmark movie instead of this year's bowl games.

And finishing out my letter, thanks for making the college championship series even less interesting.

Thanks, from the typical college football fan. I think I will pass this year.

Bowl Snapshot: Returning to the Military Bowl

Virginia Tech football is only two weeks away from playing in its first bowl game with Brent Pry at the helm.

The Hokies are slated to play No. 23 Tulane on Wednesday, Dec. 27, in the Military Bowl presented by GoBowling.com.

Organized by the Military Bowl Foundation, the National Capital Region post-season bowl game benefits current and former service members.

Formally known as the EagleBank Bowl, the DC Bowl Committee signed Northrop Grumman as the bowl's new title sponsor in 2010, thus creating its current name, 'Military Bowl'.

The football program in Blacksburg has an illustrious history with bowl game attendance, with a 27-bowl-game streak that lasted from 1993 to 2019. The meeting with the Green Wave in Annapolis, Maryland, will be the team's latest bowl game showing since the Pinstripe Bowl in 2021.

Tech will make its third appearance in the Military Bowl and its first since 2018. The Hokies split their first two visits to the Military Bowl,

both matchups against the Cincinnati Bearcats within a four-year span.

In its inaugural bowl game appearance on Dec. 27, 2014, Tech faced Cincinnati at Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium in front of 34,000+ fans. In a 33-17 victory over the Bearcats, running back J.C. Coleman rushed for 157 yards and a touchdown, while kicker Joey Slye connected on all four of his field goal attempts.

Tech's defense forced three turnovers, with two interceptions by defensive backs Chuck Clark and Kendall Fuller and a fumble return touchdown by Greg Stroman that essentially sealed the victory.

our years later, the two programs met once again, and Hokie Nation found themselves watching a back-and-forth affair. Tech scored first on a 21-yard pass from quarterback Ryan Willis to wide receiver Eric Kumah. The teams would continue exchanging touchdown blows with a 14-14 score going into halftime.

The Hokies opened the third quarter with a 28-yard field goal by kicker Brian Johnson and

responded to the Bearcats' 40-yard touchdown run with a 14-play 72-yard scoring drive to take a 24-21 lead.

Following Cincinnati's 75-yard touchdown drive to open the fourth quarter, Tech would rebuttable once more with a five-yard rushing touchdown by Willis for his third score accounted for on the day.

After a nine-minute stalemate, the Bearcats scored six more points with 1:29 left on the clock. The Hokies were unable to answer Cincy's touchdown once more on their final offensive possession, falling short 35-31 in a competitive outing.

Five years later, another six-win Tech team will face another 11-2 program in Tulane. Kickoff is set for 2 p.m. ET at Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium.

Virginia Tech athletics announced its allotment of Bowl tickets is sold out. Fans still interested in attending the bowl game are encouraged to visit SeatGeek, the official secondary market of Tech athletics.

Virginia Tech Athletics

Ashlyn and Lavoile-Brice sweep Big South weekly awards

RADFORD - The Big South Conference announced Monday afternoon the Highlanders took home both weekly awards, as Terissa Lavoile-Brice was named Freshman of the Week and Ashlyn Traylor-Walker was named Player of the Week.

Traylor-Walker earns her second Player of the Week nod as the beat goes on for the conference's leading scorer. The Christiansburg native notched double digit scoring efforts in her eighth and ninth straight games this week in two wins. Against Liberty, she dropped 22 points including 11 points in the final quarter to pull away from the Flames and seal the win. She would come alive once again in the fourth quarter of Radford's win against Queens scoring five of her 14 points in the final frame.

Lavoile-Brice earns her second Freshman of the Week award after another impressive week. The shots are falling for Radford's newcomer on the scene as she totaled 17 points, 14 rebounds and five assists this week. At Liberty, she shot 50% from the floor collecting two assists and eight points. Against Queens, she pulled down 10+ rebounds for the first time against a Division I opponent and scored nine second half points to help seal the dominant win.

The duo are the first Highlanders to sweep the weekly award list since Dec. 12, 2016, when Khiana Johnson won Freshman of the Week and Janyla



PHOTO COURTESY OF RADFORD UNIVERSITY

Ashlyn Traylor-Walker

White won Player of the Week. The awards mark the 11th time in program history a Radford duo has taken home both of the conference's weekly awards.

"Our program had a good week on and off the court," commented head coach Mike McGuire. "We are growing in the right direction. When the team has success, individuals will be recognized. Ashlyn and Terissa were impactful in both of our wins this week and did a lot to help our team."

Radford University Athletics

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Blacksburg defeats Auburn at home in girls basketball



Auburn guard Carli Christian drives into the lane against the Blacksburg defense on Monday night. Christian scored 16 to lead the Eagles. Blacksburg defeats Auburn at home in girls' basketball, 66-47.



Auburn's Chloe Rorrer shoots a three-pointer as Blacksburg's Brynn Ferguson defends.



Blacksburg's Kailyn Brawley led all scorers with 20 points in the Bruins' 66-47 win over Auburn on Monday night.



Blacksburg senior Paige Miller gets open on the low post for a first half basket against Auburn.

PHOTOS BY JON FLEMING

Steele mentions eight Virginia Tech Hokies

College football analyst Phil Steele has named his All-ACC teams and All-Americans from the recently completed season, which include several Hokies.

Antwaun Powell-Ryland made the second team All-ACC defense, while Bhayshul Tuten was on the second team as a kick returner and Tucker Holloway as a

punt returner. Dorian Strong was selected for the fourth team defense. Kaden Moore and Parker Clements made Steele's fourth team all-conference squad on the offensive line, while kicker John Love and punter Peter Moore were fourth team specialists.

In addition, Tuten was recognized as a fourth team All-

American kick returner, while Powell-Ryland garnered an honorable mention.

Tuten is one of two Power Five kick returners who co-lead the nation in touchdowns and one of five players overall in the FBS ranks. The North Carolina A&T transfer was selected to the 2023 All-ACC Second Team as an all-purpose back, ranking

third nationally in average kick return yardage (30.6).

Among Tuten's 16 kick returns this season, eight have qualified as explosive plays totaling 20 yards or more, including returns of 99, 94, 50 and 35 yards. The Paulsboro, New Jersey native registered 489 return yards on the season.

Powell-Ryland led the Hokies with 9.5 sacks and 13.5 tackles for loss. He recorded 39 tackles on the season, forcing three fumbles and recovering two. APR also tallied seven

quarterback hurries.

Holloway was eighth in the country in average yards per punt return (13.6) and ranked first in the ACC.

Strong allowed completions on just nine of the 32 passes (28%) thrown his way for 83 yards. He intercepted three passes and broke up seven more.

Moore played 791 snaps, including 412 pass-blocking snaps, while allowing just one sack this season. Clements registered 764 snaps, including 405 pass-blocking

snaps, allowing just three sacks.

Love had a breakout season as a redshirt freshman, connecting on 20 of his 22 field goals, including a career-long 47 yards against Virginia. He also made all 39 of his PATs.

Moore punted 58 times this season for 2,508 yards, an average of 43.2 yards per punt. Eighteen punts were for 50 yards or more, and 16 were downed inside the 20-yard line.

Virginia Tech Athletics

O Holy Night

May your heart be filled with love, joy, and peace this holiday season.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from our families to yours.

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Happy Holidays!

Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!