

Christiansburg Council approves proposal for H20kies, design work for community gathering space

Angelica Ramos
Contributing Writer

CHRISTIANSBURG - Christiansburg Town Council voted to approve the contract to begin designing a new community gathering space and to approve the building of a dryland facility for H20kies and the swim teams that utilize the aquatic center for training.

Part of the consent agenda for the May 28, 2024 council meeting was to approve the contract to Hill Studio for a community gathering space which would also serve as a farmers market structure on Hickok Street. The contract approved by the council was for \$ 44,100 to begin the design and bidding phase. Hill Studio work with and comply with the management team, staff and the New River Regional Commission to propose a design. This design contract will build off the original conceptual designs proposed when the town received a construction grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission of \$275,000. An additional \$27,500 was added for the project in the FY 2023-2024

budget.

The council approved the vote with majority approval and one oppositional vote from Councilwoman Johanna Hicks.



There are still community and council questions about how this structure and development will impact downtown, road closures and its permanency. The plans and designs are being drafted with keeping in mind keeping Hickok Street open.

Also, the proposal for a dryland facility that was presented on May 12, 2024 by Director of New River Valley Aquatics Scott Baldwin, the youth of Montgomery County and members of the H20kies, was voted

on and approved by the town council in Thursday's meeting. With the building being built on land owned by the Town of Christiansburg and the building intended to be town property, the clubs and organizations using it have agreed to pay a monthly rent and attain a 30-year lease. At the end of those 30 years, if the clubs and organizations are still utilizing and occupying that space, they may renew their lease and extend the usage of that space. The council voted unanimously for the approval of the dryland facility on Thursday and the community members present who were there in support of this new development cheered and expressed joy.

"I just want to say that this is a very special program," Councilwoman Tanya Hockett said. "I appreciate how prepared and flexible and how supportive the team has been and it's been wonderful to see so many participants and members come to council when this has been on the agenda. And we just appreciate you all coming out and the kids for coming and speaking out."



PHOTO COURTESY OF APPALACHIANS AGAINST PIPELINES
Pipeline protestors hold signs at the site of the protest that led to the arrest of one of the protestors.

Pipeline protestor arrested after blockade in Elliston

Heather Bell
editor@ourvalley.org

ELLISTON - A protestor was arrested in Elliston Wednesday morning for attempting to block access to the Mountain Valley Pipeline construction area.

According to Virginia State Police Sgt. Richard Garletts, VSP troopers "were called to remove an individual which was blocking pipeline access on Yellow Finch Road this morning (Wednesday, May 30). State Police responded at 6:21 a.m. for a protestor suspended on a tripod in the roadway."

Elsa McLaughlin Schlensker, 25, of Cleveland, Ohio, was arrested at the scene.

"Schlensker was taken into custody without incident and transported to the Montgomery County jail and charged with obstructing the free passage of another," said Garletts.

Appalachians Against Pipelines (AAP), an organization fighting against the pipeline, also released information about the arrest.

"Early Wednesday morning, pipeline fighter August (Schlensker) suspended themselves in a tripod blockade on Yellow Finch Lane in Montgomery County, blocking Mountain Valley Pipeline's construction access to Poor Mountain," AAP stated. "A rally of supporters gathered on site throughout the morning until Virginia State Police responded with a militarized, armored skid steer to remove August from their blockade. Banners and signs at the protest read, "Until all are free," "Water is precious," and "Doom to MVP!" After over 4.5 hours of blocking the road, August was extracted and arrested."

"Recent years have seen an alarming increase in the incidence of cancer, autoimmune diseases and other illness in our communities," said August. "This trend is even more profound in communities around refineries, factories, and pipelines. It is not an abstract risk. As a survivor of environmentally-implicated thyroid cancer, I feel this very deeply and seriously. Everywhere I look I see resilience, but we are tired of having to be resilient."

"Anything we do against this machinery of devastation is an act of self-defense. It is an act of survival; an act of hope that despite the actions of the rich and powerful, we might be able to save a future worth living for. Every time we block or defeat or shut down a part of this machinery, it is to make room for what we are dreaming

See BLOCKADE, Page 3



PHOTO COURTESY OF VIRGINIA STATE POLICE
A Virginia State Police trooper arrested a protestor against the Mountain Valley Pipeline Wednesday morning on Yellow Finch Road.

Epperly, four others from area denied parole

Marty Gordon
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The Virginia Parole Board says Stephen Epperly will continue to remain behind bars for his conviction in the 1980 disappearance and murder of Radford University student, Gina Hall.

The announcement comes just weeks from the date, June 28, 1980, she was last seen.

Epperly's parole request, which was the most publicized, was one of five this past month that included individuals from our area.

In addition to denying Epperly's request, the parole board also deferred any future hearing for three years.

He had been given a hearing every year over that time-period under a "geriatric" age ruling.

Epperly, who is 72, has served 46 years in prison.

He had also requested a move to a minimum-security facility. So far, the parole board has not released any decision on the latter. Epperly has served most of his sentence at a Richmond prison, except for a brief time at the Bland Correctional Center.

What the five individuals denied parole this past month have in common is their age of over 50 with five being over 60.

William R. Smith, 50, was denied parole in his 1993

See PAROLE, Page 4

Participants sought for Blacksburg Fourth of July Parade



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MOUNT TABOR RURITAN CLUB

Participants are needed for Blacksburg's Fourth of July parade, which is organized by the Mount Tabor Ruritan Club. The parade, the theme for which is "A Child's Fourth of July," starts at 2 p.m. on Eheart Street, runs through downtown on Main Street, and ends on 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, by texting 540-449-6178, or at the Blacksburg Parks and Recreation office. The Town of Blacksburg will have music and fireworks at the Municipal Park, near the Rec. Center: Live music 6-9:30 p.m. and fireworks at 9:30 p.m. (even if raining).

Fire department proposes paid positions to improve service

Angelica Ramos
Contributing Writer

MONTGOMERY CO.- Montgomery Fire and EMS addressed the Board of Supervisors on May 28, 2024 regarding paid daytime fire staffing.

Deputy County Administrator Christopher S. Lawrence and Micheal Geary addressed the Board of Supervisors on May 28, 2024 in a presentation advocating for paid daytime positions for Shawsville/Elliston Fire Services.

"Our primary goal tonight is to kind of confirm a consensus," Lawrence said, "from the board to proceed with advertising for 12 new positions that are part of the budget because that's going to take several months to hire them."

Over the past year in Shawsville and Elliston, there has been a decline in fire and EMS response. What that means is that in 2023, an average dispatch to en route

was nine minutes and 16 seconds in time. In 2023, an average for on-scene dispatch was a little over 16 minutes. Thus far in 2024, enroute times increased to a little over 11 minutes and on-scene times increased to almost 20 minutes to dispatch and respond. There have been 57 total fire calls thus far in 2024.

Shawsville/Elliston Fire would like to hire 12 full-time fire personnel which would allow them to have two shift teams consisting of six firefighters. These shifts would be 12 hours long, seven days a week and be able to staff two fire trucks or fire vehicles (depending on call type). These 12-hour shifts would be daytime shifts with volunteer firefighters covering the evening shifts. Each shift will have a captain, a lieutenant, and four regular firefighters with part-time staff filling in the gaps. These paid positions will go through training in accordance with state mandates, but the training will also be helpful

See FIRE DEPARTMENT, Page 5

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, June 1:

Blacksburg Farmers Market

At Market Square Park, 100 Draper Rd SW, Blacksburg; 8 a.m. - 2 p.m. The Blacksburg Farmers Market is a local, family-friendly gathering place in downtown Blacksburg featuring farmers of locally grown produce and meats, alongside artisans of baked goods and handmade crafts. For more information, visit <http://blacksburgfarmersmarket.com>.

Radford Farmer's Market

Every Saturday through October; 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. on the grounds of Glencoe Mansion, 600 Unruh Dr. Visit weekly for an ever-changing supply of homemade goodies, crafts, plants, meats, produce, and more.

Sunday, June 2:

Books & Brews

Join The Radford Public Library at Long Way Brewing for a discussion on the book "Breaking and Entering." The book discussion is informal and relaxed - just have a talk with your tablemates! Copies of the book are available for checkout. Advance copies are given to those who attend book club and 10% discount is given to book club participants for LWB drinks.

Tuesday, June 4:

Coffee Club for Adults (age 50+)

Cultivate community by making new friends at Radford Public Library; 10- 11 a.m. Adults 50+ years are encouraged to come out and enjoy coffee and baked goods together. This informal gathering will be hosted by RPL staff member Monika. Please join us, get connected over coffee, and share your stories in this informal gathering - it's all grounds for a good time! (We'll also have tea and other beverages).

Wednesday, June 5:

Market Square Jam

Blacksburg's Market Square Jam is an official Crooked Road affiliated venue that provides fun and entertainment on Wednesday evenings, June through September. The Jam takes place at Market Square Park from 7-9 p.m. Host Band: The Jug Busters (Russ Boyd). For more information and a list of hosts, please visit blacksburg.gov/marketsquarejam.

Blacksburg Farmers Market

At Market Square Park, 100 Draper Rd SW, Blacksburg; 2 - 6 p.m. The Blacksburg Farmers Market is a local, family-friendly gathering place in downtown Blacksburg featuring farmers of locally grown produce and meats, alongside artisans of baked goods and handmade crafts. For more information, visit <http://blacksburgfarmersmarket.com>.

Thursday, June 6:

American Legion meeting

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

Friday, June 7:

Friday night outdoor concert

Featuring: The Blacksburg Community Band. The summer of 2024 lineup of outdoor concerts offers six bands throughout June and July. Live music will take place Friday evenings on Henderson Lawn at the corner of Main Street and College Avenue, from 6-7:30 p.m. In case of inclement weather, the event will be canceled.

Saturday, June 8:

Rockin' Main Street Concert

The Town of Christiansburg is hosting Rockin' Main Street, a fun-for-all event with live music from two exciting artists on East Main St. Start the evening off with country music singer/songwriter, Drew Pace taking the stage at 5 p.m. At 7 p.m., country/Americana act, Lyn Avenue will perform. Lyn Avenue brings catchy, compelling stories driven by rich vocals, electrifying leads, and boot stomping rhythms. Beer, wine, and food trucks will be available at the event. Attendees are encouraged to bring lawn chairs to sit watch the live music. Be sure to bring your IDs if you plan to purchase beer or wine.

Red Cross blood drive

At St. Thomas Episcopal Church, 103 E. Main St., Christiansburg; 10 a.m.- 2 p.m. Appointments: <https://www.redcrossblood.org>.

Fish Fry

Mount Tabor Ruritan Club will hold its June Fish Fry, 5 - 7 p.m. at Slusser's Chapel Picnic Shelter, 1543 Mount Tabor Rd, Blacksburg. Serving fish, fries and slaw; homemade desserts; and beverages. Adults-\$12, children under 12- \$6, children under three-free and carry-outs-\$12. This month, the Blacksburg Community Band will be playing. Held rain or shine. Call or text 540-449-6178 for further information. On Facebook at MtTaborRuritan.

Sunday, June 9:

Vintage Market

At Market Square Park, 100 Draper Rd SW, Blacksburg; 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. The market is made up

of a carefully chosen group of vendors selling a wide selection of quality vintage items, upcycled crafts, and occasional antiques. For more information, visit blacksburgfarmersmarket.com/vintage-market/.

Monday, June 10:

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. Citizens are invited to attend and allowed to speak at each meeting. See the agenda at www.radfordva.gov.

Montgomery County Board of Supervisors meeting

Public meetings are normally held 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 11:

Blacksburg Town Council meeting

The 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 St.). 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.

Saturday, June 15:

Pilot Community yard sale

At the Pilot Community Center, 4449 Brush Creek Rd., Pilot, Va.; 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Event is free and open to the public. Renting a space is \$10. Bring your own tables and canopy. To reserve your space: 540-257-3336 or ali5jn@aol.com.

Summer Arts Festival 2024 promises free fun and entertainment for all

If you are planning to be in Blacksburg for the summer, take some time to enjoy a full schedule of summer arts activities.

The Summer Arts Festival offers fun for all ages and includes indoor and outdoor concerts, movies, visual arts, children's activities, and other special events.

The festival is presented in partnership between the School of Performing Arts at Virginia Tech and the Town of Blacksburg. All events are free and open to the public.

"I am excited about the 2024 Summer Arts Festival. We continue to offer fun outdoor concerts on Friday nights, the community sing, classic films, and a production of Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream," said Ariana Wyatt, associate professor of voice in the School of Performing Arts and director of this year's festival. "We are excited to partner with the Lyric Theatre and the Hahn Horticultural Garden this season. There is something for everyone."

Friday night outdoor concerts

The summer of 2024 lineup of outdoor concerts offers six bands throughout June and July. Live music will take place Friday evenings on Henderson Lawn at the corner of Main Street and College Avenue, from 6 -7:30 p.m. In case of inclement weather, the event will be canceled.

Blacksburg Community Band, June 7 (concert band selections)

The Domino Band, June 14 (R&B)

Redd Volkaert Trio with Adam Clark & Dylan Locke, June 21 (country swing/jazz/rock)

Music Road Co, June 28 (funk/rock/reggae/afrobeat/Latin fusion)

TBD, July 12

Root Down, July 19 (jazz/funk/blues)

Live theatre

Three live outdoor performances of Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" will be performed on July 18, 20, and 21 at the Hahn Horticulture Garden. (Rain location will be the Creativity and Innovation District LLC Building, 185 Kent St., Blacksburg).

Thursday night indoor concerts

Two indoor concerts will be offered,

including one community sing event. Concerts will be held at the Blacksburg Presbyterian Church, 701 Church St. SE.

"Shakespeare's Music," July 11 - A concert of music inspired by Shakespeare.

"A Treasury of English Music," July 25 - Music by Handel, Purcell, and others. This event is a community sing; those interested in participating as a choir member are asked to fill out this form. Rehearsals begin on July 1.

Classic movies at the Lyric

Beat the summer heat with a free classic movie at the historic Lyric Theatre at 135 College Ave. All movies begin at 3 p.m.

"The Wizard of Oz," June 1

"Fried Green Tomatoes," June 8

"Some Like It Hot," June 29

"Forrest Gump," July 27

Joe Kelley: (Un)seen Works' art exhibition

The Squires Perspective Gallery will host "Joe Kelley: (Un)seen Works," an exhibit honoring the artist who lived in Blacksburg that explores the artist's versatility, genius, and passion for life expressed through the art that he left as a reminder to live every moment fully. The exhibit opens June 10 and runs through September 8, with a closing reception on September 6.

Shakespeare Workshop

Join a Shakespeare workshop at the Lyric Theatre on June 27 from 2-3pm. Perfect for middle and highschoolers. Find out more here.

Special events

Blacksburg Market Square Jam is an official Crooked Road affiliated venue that caters to traditional old time music. Music jams are each Wednesday from 7-9 p.m., June through September, at the corner of Draper Road and Roanoke Street.

The 16th annual Summer Solstice Fest annual Summer Solstice Fest from 1-11 p.m. June 15 will feature live music, craft vendors, and family fun.

The Independence Day Celebration on July 4 includes the Downtown



PHOTO COURTESY OF MUSIC ROAD CO.

Music Road Co performs June 28 as a part of the Summer Arts Festival in Blacksburg.

Parade, live music, and fireworks at Municipal Park.

Art at the Market celebrates Blacksburg's vibrant arts community with an outdoor exhibit July 13 from 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

The Steppin' Out Street Festival Aug. 2-3 includes performances and over 200 exhibitors.

Sign up for weekly Summer Arts Festival updates from the School of Performing Arts here.

Find more information online or contact Ariana Wyatt, Summer Arts Festival producer, at ariana1@vt.edu.

Zeke Barlow for Virginia Tech

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News Messenger

Montgomery Museum of Art & History hosts annual Arts Love NRV Market

The Montgomery Museum of Art & History will host its annual Arts Love NRV Market Friday, June 7, noon- 6:30 p.m., and Saturday, June 8, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

This event will also feature the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts' (VMFA) On the Road Traveling Museum Artmobile, a state-of-the-art, climate-controlled trailer equipped with Wi-Fi and interactive components that meet 21st century expectations. Arts Love NRV Market is presented by Floored. The Market will feature over 30 regional art and crafts vendors with artwork for sale and local art demonstrators on display. This event will also feature a wine garden, food from Copper Dog & Co. food truck, and an arts-based raffle.

The VMFA On the Road Traveling Museum Truck meets residents of the Commonwealth where they are, inviting them to step inside and experience authentic works of art from VMFA's collection up close and in person. VMFA On the Road is traveling to all corners of Virginia.

The stops are selected from among the museum's Statewide Partners program, which includes 1,000 locations, from community centers and small museums to colleges and universities.



The VMFA is bringing their "Love, Laughter, Tears: An Artist's Guide to Emotions" exhibit to the Montgomery Museum during the Arts Love NRV Market.

On June 7, after the market closes, the museum will host "Paint like Picasso," a painting class led

by Ruth Lefko and David Ferrell. The cost is \$45, including canvas, materials, and one glass of wine. Limited additional wine may be purchased at the event. Finished paintings will be displayed at the museum after the market concludes. This event is for adults only, with a limit of 18 participants.

For more information about the Arts Love NRV Market, including a complete list of participating artists, visit: www.artsnrv.org. This event is proudly presented by Floored with additional support from Blacksburg Regional Art Association, BT's Restaurant, Miller Off Main St. Galleries, New River Art and Fiber, All for Paws Animal Clinic, Ruth Lefko Art, and Matrix Gallery.

On Saturday, June 8, spend your full day in Downtown Christiansburg as the Town of Christiansburg's Rockin' Main Street concert series will be taking place after the Arts Love NRV Market, beginning at 5 p.m.

Montgomery Museum of Art & History

Virginia Organizing NRV presents home repair program to BOS

Angelica Ramos

Contributing Writer

MONTGOMERY CO.- Virginia Organizing New River Valley Chapter presented a new initiative to the Board of Supervisors on May 28, 2024 that is meant to aid New River Valley residents.

Virginia Organizing presented their Home Repair Program Initiative to the BOS during the presentation portion of the May 28 meeting. They asked the Board of Supervisors to help them set up a working group to help them hit the ground running and potentially bring this program to residents in need.

The Home Repair Program Initiative hopes to give money to low-income homeowners and to landlords who house low-income renters in order to fund repairs to the living spaces. The repairs would be aimed towards empowering low-income homeowners, keeping residents in their current housing and help reduce the likelihood of homelessness.

"We are dedicated to empowering people," Jocelyn Hildebrand, a member of Virginia Organizing said, "in local communities to address issues that affect their quality of life."

Virginia Organizing was founded in Lee County in 1995 as a non-partisan statewide organization. The organization hopes that by advocating for those that feel voiceless, they may build relationships with communities, individuals, and organizations throughout the state so that change can be made. The New River Valley Chapter is one of 18 chapters statewide. They have worked with the community to bridge gaps in terms of working to eliminate educational, racial, sexual, gendered disparities along with addressing ability disparities within the New River Valley.

"Our chapter started thinking about housing issues in the New River Valley several years ago," Hildebrand said, "through some informal conversations with our community. People had been talking about not having enough social service resources to get help with their rent. They also mentioned that once they were lucky enough to find a place that they could afford, they usually had their rents raised and were priced out. Home ownership was definitely out of reach for most people we talked to."

Virginia Organizing's New River Valley Chapter went out to these areas, like trailer home parks and apartment buildings to see the conditions in which these residents were living; many of the mobile homes, trailer homes and some apartments had fallen into disrepair. Residents said they have tried to ask for help or report damage and were often met with no response or very little help if any at all. Many of the residents in the trailer homes have received confusing notices concerning ownership, some residents are not sure if they are renting their home or if they own their homes due to these notices.

Virginia Organizing has asked the Board of Supervisors to aid them in forming a working group with board members to help them bring relief and aid to low-income homeowners and renters in the New River Valley.

Community Housing Partners breaks ground on Blacksburg housing development

Community Housing Partners (CHP), which provides affordable and sustainable housing throughout the Southeast and Mid-Atlantic, recently broke ground on its newest community in Blacksburg.

Stroubles Ridge, which will occupy 24 acres on Merrimac Road, aims to address the pressing need for accessible housing options in the area, particularly for first-time homebuyers and those struggling to find affordable living spaces within town limits.

With 46 residential lots earmarked for construction, Stroubles Ridge will consist of up to 70 units, a mix of single-family homes and duplexes. All residences will adhere to or surpass EarthCraft green building standards, aligning with modern sustainability practices.

Phase one of construction is projected to encompass 20 units over the next two-three years, with a focus on households earning up to 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI). CHP is currently working with contractors to install neighborhood infrastructure and utilities over the next several months.

This project reflects the partnership between CHP and the Town of Blacksburg. In 2021, the Town of Blacksburg and Montgomery County approved a plan to adjust the town's boundary to include the Stroubles Ridge site. The town provided \$2 million in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding in support of CHP's goal of attainable homeownership in this neighborhood. CHP also plans to enter all units at Stroubles Ridge into the New River Home Trust, a community land trust managed by CHP.

"At CHP, we're committed to building strong communities and providing affordable homeownership opportunities," said Jake Powell, CHP's Director of Homeownership. "Stroubles Ridge is a great example of this approach. By converting all homes into New River Home Trust units, we're not just building houses. We're building a neighborhood where residents can invest in their future and feel a sense of belonging."

Community Housing Partners

Blockade

from page 1

and what we are already building. Every moment we slow pipeline progress is a portal—we get to decide what it looks like on the other side.

"My risk today is part of an ecosystem that has nurtured me to be this strong."

According to AAP, Yellow Finch Lane is the site

where two tree sits protected the last standing trees along the pipeline's 303-mile route for over 900 days from 2018-2021. The Mountain Valley Pipeline is a 42-inch diameter gas pipeline slated to cross at least 300 miles of Appalachia. In June 2023, Congress passed a law to fast track the MVP.

Help Wanted - Health Care

Wanted: Caregiver for adult male with special needs in Christiansburg.

Adult male is non-verbal and must have assistance with all aspects of daily living. We are looking for a long term person with a good employment record who has experience with a non-verbal adult. Safety is a priority. Candidates must be reliable; have kindness and patience; and show creativity (Music ability a plus). Hours will vary according to the needs of the gentlemen and his family. Pay is \$13.34 through Medicaid and CDCN. Candidates must pass a criminal background check and must have recent references (at least 3). No cellphone use while working except for emergencies. If interested, please call (540)838-5037 for an interview.

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Legals - City of Radford

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

City of Radford Appropriation Ordinance for School Board Budget Amendment

Radford City Council will hold a public hearing on June 10, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers located at 10 Robertson Street for the purpose of receiving public comments on the City's proposed budget amendment of \$3,647,783 to the School Board Budget for F.Y. 2024.

BY ORDER OF THE RADFORD CITY COUNCIL

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Legals - Montgomery County

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, By the Board of Supervisors of the County of Montgomery, Virginia that the Board of Supervisors hereby schedules a public hearing

for Monday, June 10, 2024, at 7:15 p.m. or as soon thereafter, at the Montgomery County Government Center, 755 Roanoke Street, Christiansburg, Virginia, in order to receive citizen comments on the intent to adopt a resolution amending the FY 2024-2025 budget by more than one percent of the total expenditures shown in the currently adopted budget, not to exceed \$4 million, by appropriating additional state funding for the Montgomery County Public Schools.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Angela M. Hill
County Administrator

Legal - Subcontractors



G. & H. Contracting, Inc. has been selected by Roanoke City Public Schools to be the General Contractor for their newest project, Preston Park Elementary School.

We are looking to give qualified subcontractors the opportunity to bid this project. All plans, specifications, and bid documents can be found on G&H Contracting's website at www.ghcontracting.com. Under the subcontractor tab, scroll down the page to Preston Park Elementary School. From there click on the project and it should allow you to download the bid documents. Please note this project bids June 6, 2024, at 2:00pm, and all bids must be submitted electronically to Eddie Herron at eherron@ghcontracting.com. For more information, please refer to our website, or call our office at 540-387-5059 and ask for Riley Kennedy.

Legals - Town of Christiansburg

LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING OF THE TOWN OF CHRISTIANSBURG PLANNING COMMISSION

The Town of Christiansburg Planning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on Monday, June 3, 2024, at 7:00 PM in the Council Chambers of the Christiansburg Town Hall, 100 E. Main Street, Christiansburg, Virginia 24073, pursuant to 15.2-2285 of the Code of Virginia, as amended. The purpose of the public hearing is to receive public comments concerning:

Amendment to the Christiansburg Town Code, Chapter 40, Section 40-2 Definitions and Section 40-3 - Administrator, to allow for additional administrative and planning commission reviews. Proposed revisions to Section 40-2 change the definition of "plat" and "preliminary plat subdivision" for consistency with the Virginia State Code definitions. Proposed revisions to Section 40-3 include: (1) allowance to the agent or the planning commission to approve lot line revisions, lot line vacations, except on behalf of the town publicly

Legals - Town of Christiansburg

dedicated easements including, but not limited to, utility, access, and drainage easements, and review for tentative approval preliminary subdivision plats that contain 11 or more lots, but less than 50 lots; and (2) allowance of tentative approval to the planning commission for the acceptance of the dedication of public rights-of-way on behalf of the town and for preliminary subdivision plats that contain 50 or more lots.

A copy of the proposed ordinance amendment and the Town's Zoning Ordinance 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 Retta Jackson, Planning Director, at (540) 382-6120, ext. 1120 or by email at rjackson@christiansburg.org, with any questions or if you require reasonable accommodations.



Classified Advertising DELIVERS

Expert shares tips for food safety at cookouts and potlucks

As the summer season approaches, lots of people will be planning to host or attend backyard cookouts and potlucks. But before you fire up the grill, Virginia Tech food safety expert Melissa Wright shares tips to protect yourself, your family, and your friends from foodborne illnesses during the warm-weather months.

“Safe food handling when eating outdoors is critical,” says Wright. She recommends following these four guidelines to avoid any issues:

Clean
“Food safety begins with clean hands and surfaces, even in an outdoor setting,” says Wright. Before beginning your food prep, she stresses the importance of practicing good hand-washing hygiene. “Proper hand cleaning is as much about the scrubbing action as it is about the soap.” If you do not have access to running water,



PHOTO COURTESY PEXELS VIA VIRGINIA TECH

Wright says to use a water jug, some soap, and paper towels.

“When it comes to your eating surface, make sure it is clean before setting out your dishes. If the surface is not cleanable, consider using disposable tablecloths.”

Separate
Raw meats, poultry, and seafood – Be sure to

keep these items securely wrapped and separate from other foods. This keeps their juices from contaminating prepared/cooked foods. All raw meat should be kept in a cooler at 40°F or below until time for grilling. Packing these items while still frozen can ensure they stay colder longer.

Raw fruits and vegetables – Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running tap water before packing them in the cooler, including those with skins and rinds that are not eaten. Rub firm-skinned fruits and vegetables under running tap water or scrub with a clean vegetable brush while rinsing with running tap water. Dry fruits and vegetables with a clean cloth towel or paper towel before packing.

Prepared cold dishes – Foods like pasta salad, deviled eggs, cut produce and many desserts require cold holding to maintain their safety. Transport them in a cooler with ice or frozen gel packs to

maintain a temperature of less than 40°F.

Prepared hot dishes – Hot food should be kept hot, at or above 140°F. Wrap it well and place it in an insulated container until serving.

Beverages and condiments – Consider packing a separate cooler so that the repeated opening of the cooler will not expose temperature-controlled foods to warm outdoor air temperatures. Maintaining beverages and most purchased condiments (even mayonnaise!) at cool temperatures is for quality, not safety.

Cook
Grilling and picnicking often go hand-in-hand. Just like cooking indoors, Wright says there are important guidelines that should be followed to ensure that your grilled food reaches the table safely.

Marinate safely – Marinate foods under refrigeration - never on the kitchen counter or outdoors. If you plan to

use some of the marinade as a sauce on the cooked food, reserve a portion separately before adding the raw meat, poultry, or seafood. Don't reuse marinade that has touched raw meat or poultry.

Cook food thoroughly – When it's time to cook, have your food thermometer ready. Always use it to be sure your food is cooked thoroughly by measuring the internal temperature at the thickest part of the food.

Whole steaks, roasts, pork, and fish: 145°F

Ground meat: 160°F

Poultry (ground or whole): 165°F

Don't cross-contaminate – Don't reuse platters or utensils that held raw meat, poultry, or seafood for serving unless they have been washed first in hot, soapy water. Using the same platter or utensils allows bacteria from the raw food's juices to spread to the cooked food. Having a clean platter and utensils grill-side is best.

Control the temperature

Keeping food at proper temperatures - indoors and out - is critical in preventing the growth of foodborne bacteria. “The key is to never let your picnic food remain in the “Danger Zone” - between 40°F and 140°F - for more than 2 hours or 1 hour if outdoor temperatures are above 90°F,” says Wright. “This is when bacteria in food can multiply rapidly, and lead to foodborne illness.”

Keep cold food cold
Cold foods in individual serving dishes can be placed directly on ice on your picnic table or in a shallow container set in a deep pan filled with ice. Drain off water as ice melts and replace ice frequently. If food is left out longer than two hours or one hour if the outdoor temperature is above 90°F, throw it away to be safe.

Keep hot food hot – Grilled food can be kept hot until served by moving it to the side of the grill rack, just away from the coals. This keeps it hot but prevents overcooking. Hot dishes like casseroles can be held in insulated carrying cases on the picnic table to keep them warm. The same rule that applies to cold food applies to hot, so you'll want to throw it away if it sits out more than two hours.

Melissa Wright is director of the Food Producer Technical Assistance Network in the Department of Food Science and Technology at Virginia Tech.

Margaret Ashburn for Virginia Tech

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

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Parole

from page 1

murder conviction. Smith was arrested after the attempt to rob a restaurant manager during a night deposit.

He along with two other individuals were convicted in 1993 of a robbery, murder and assault and battery in Montgomery County. Smith was given a life sentence on the homicide and 25 years on the kidnapping and robbery.

Lorna Crockett was abducted and shot while also making a night bank deposit.

60-year-old Gary O. Shanks' parole also was denied. He was convicted in 1980 to 40 years for kidnapping and grand larceny in Montgomery County. He was also charged with robbery and malicious wounding in Pulaski County.

He had additional charges in West Virginia and North Carolina. Shanks was accused in the malicious wounding and robbery of Bobby McDaniel, a Hazel Hollow Road man. He had served time for a murder he committed while a teenager.

Shanks had been charged in a Blacksburg convenience store robbery during which he wore a mask to conceal his identity.

The parole board concluded he should serve more

time of his sentence before being released.

60-year-old Robert A. Bain had been charged in 1986 for grand larceny in Montgomery County and murder in Wythe County. He had been given a life sentence to run concurrently with the other charges.

Bain was convicted in the murder his mother-in-law. The parole board ruled he needed to continue to serve his sentence.

Edward H. Dehart, Jr. of Riner, who had gone on a six-month crime spree and led police on a manhunt entered Alford pleas for 21 felonies.

According to previous testimony, DeHart was accused of stealing numerous construction tools from sites where he made deliveries as an 84 Lumber employee, starting a fire in one of these instances, stealing numerous vehicles and storing stolen tools in a storage facility he rented.

DeHart escaped arrest several times before leading sheriff's deputies on an Aug. 12, 2011, Interstate 81 chase that ended in a wreck.

His parole request had been because of his age, currently 61. The Virginia Parole Board ruled he needed to serve more of his sentence.

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CLUES ACROSS

1. Plant anchor	33. Fidelity	63. Cardboard box (abbr.)	27. Of she
5. 13th Hebrew letter	34. Mother of pearl	64. Human frame (slang)	28. Wedding words
8. Microelectromechanical systems	39. Help	CLUES DOWN	29. Em
12. Number system base 8	42. Arouse passion	1. Italian capital	35. Pie ___ mode
14. Doctors' group	44. Avoid	2. Organization of C. American States (abbr.)	36. Feline
15. Greenish blue	46. About roof of the mouth	3. About organ of hearing	37. Sandhurst
16. Sent by USPS	47. In a very soft tone	4. = to 100 sene	38. Snakelike fish
18. A Communist	49. Periodic publications (slang)	5. Champagne river	40. Crackbrained
19. Southern swear-word	50. ___kosh b'gosh	6. Improved by critical editing	41. Last course
20. Get free	51. Rouse from sleep	7. Amber dessert wine	42. Indicates near
21. North northeast	56. El Dorado High School	8. Indian plaid cloth	43. Indian given name
22. Uncommon	57. Golf ball stand	9. Equalize	44. Ordinal after 7th
23. Commit anew	58. Tranquil	10. Guillemot	45. Young women (Scot.)
26. Lion, goat & serpent	59. Pear shaped instrument	11. Of sound mind	47. "Taming of the Shrew" city
30. Irregularly notched	60. Anger	13. Irish elf	48. Luster
31. Lessened	61. Raja wives	24. Father	49. Conflate
32. Constitution Hall ladies	62. Dashes	25. Bachelor's button	53. Lotto
		26. Vacuum tube	54. Children's author Blyton
			55. "Untouchables" Elliot

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OBITUARIES

Vaden, Richard Monroe

Richard Monroe Vaden, 57, of Floyd, died Tuesday, May 28, 2024.

He was born Aug. 8, 1966 to the late Marshall and Julia Vaden. Ricky was an amazing and dedicated husband, daddy, and the best Pop Pop ever. He truly loved the Lord and his family and showed it in so many ways. He loved camping, fishing, hunting and enjoyed passing these hobbies to his children and grandchildren. He was always willing to lend a helping hand to anyone in need. Ricky was a dedicated machinist with MOOG for over 35 years.



Leaving to cherish his memory are his wife and best friend, Jennifer Vaden and his two daughters Ashley Carroll (Wes) and Amanda Vaden (Lukes). Also, his grandsons who he absolutely adored, Isaiah Shelburne, Cody Luke Shelburne, and Colty Carroll.

Funeral services were conducted Friday, May 31, 2024 in the McCoy Funeral Home Chapel with Rev. Roy Turpin officiating. Interment followed in Sunset Cemetery. The family received friends Thursday, May 30, 2024 at the McCoy Funeral Home.

Duncan, Donna Kaye Lyons

Donna Kaye Lyons Duncan, 64, of Pulaski, passed away Monday, May 27, 2024.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Charles Vinton and Ruby Combs Lyons; and her husband, Artie Lee Duncan.

She is survived by her daughter, Michelle Barker (David Mitchem); son, Travis Thompson (Rachael); grandchildren, Rosalee, Dakota, Trevor and Austin; brothers, Charles Lyons, Jr.



(Mary), and David Lyons (Teresa); special dog, Luke; and many other nieces, nephews, relatives and special friends.

The family received friends Thursday, May 30, 2024, at the Mullins Funeral Home in Radford, followed by memorial services.

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

Fire Department

from page 1

for staff and volunteer firefighters. The presentation to the Board of Supervisors was to explain how the paid positions would work, how the chain of command would work and to be given the go-ahead to begin hiring and training as that

process will take several months.

The Board of Supervisors gave consensus for Elliston Fire and EMS to move forward with advertising for the 12 positions.

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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. 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

Montgomery County WORSHIP DIRECTORY

FINDING STRENGTH IN GOD

Read 1 Samuel 27:1 through 31:13

David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the Lord his God (1 Samuel 30:6).

David and his men, just arriving home from battle, discovered that the enemy had kidnapped their families. His men were distraught, and they wanted someone to blame. David, their leader, was the obvious scapegoat, and they discussed taking revenge on him.

David, grieved at his own family's disappearance, now faced betrayals and accusations from his friends. Here, at an extremely low point, David did what always works. He turned to God and found strength in Him.

Exactly how David found strength in God is displayed throughout his psalms. David remembered God's promises, and more so, he reminded himself of who God is: his Rock of refuge; his compassionate, gentle Father; his faithful Provider; his all-wise Teacher, and so much more. As David turned to God, he gained the strength to rally his men on a rescue mission.

Prayer for Today: Father, please help me turn to You for strength in all things.

Quicklook: 1 Samuel 30: 3-8, 18-19

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

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 lutheremorialblacksburg@gmail.com, or contact the church office, (540) 951-1000. Rev. Monica Weber, pastor.

Our Saviour Lutheran Church ELCA, 1845 Cambria St NE, Christiansburg. Celebrate Word and Sacrament as we worship with varied liturgy, hymns and music. Join our inclusive community in person or online Sundays at 10:00 am (youtube.com/@OSLCCburg), followed by refreshments and fellowship. Ministries include Bible study, choir, food ministry, and crafters. Little Free Pantry and Library available 24-7 by the parking lot. Parent's Morning Out offers faith-based activities and play for children 16 month - 5 years select weekdays. Wheelchair accessible. Learn how you may contribute to our ministries at www.oslc-cburg.org. 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@stmclc.us; Website www.st-michael-lutheran-church.org

MULTI-CULTURAL NON-DENOMINATIONAL

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.

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.

St. Paul United Methodist Church, 220 West Main Street, Christiansburg. Rev. Mike Derflinger (540) 382-2410. Sunday Worship at 10a.m. with Children's Church at the same time, Sunday School at 9 a.m. Worship is in-person and Live-streamed on our YouTube Channel: StPaulUMCChristiansburgVA. All are welcome. Website: www.stpaulvaumc.org

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

Volunteer Montgomery awards scholarships

The Volunteer Montgomery Scholarship Committee met Friday, April 26 to review applications for this year's \$1,000 scholarship awards. They selected Rylee Akers, a home-schooled student from Sunnyside Academy who plans to attend Radford University to pursue

studies in Nursing and Alice Quigley, a student at Blacksburg High School who plans to attend Virginia Commonwealth University to pursue a degree in Genetic Counseling.

Volunteer Montgomery



Alice Quigley



Rylee Akers



PHOTO COURTESY OF PIXABAY

Birdhouses can help protect and preserve endangered species.

Incorporating birdhouses in the yard can help preserve endangered species

VIRGINIA BEACH—With habitat loss, climate change and other conditions posing threats to wild birds, incorporating birdhouses in the yard can help protect nature's marvels for generations.

Sightings of purple martins in Virginia offer a powerful reminder of their resilience, and the far-reaching impact of birdhouses.

Suffering from massive population decline over the last 50 years, the species' survival is largely due to the efforts of the Purple Martin Conservation Association and the thousands of people who hang up purple martin nest boxes around the country.

The North American Bluebird Society similarly helped revive the bluebird population after a major decline between 1920 and 1970. And thanks to the efforts of Bluebird Beach Bungalows in Virginia Beach today, the community's bluebird population is thriving, with nesting boxes hung up practically everywhere around town.

The charity's founder, Stephen Todd, has lived by a profound motto:

"Do Good Things." Even when a local grocery store closure left Todd, who has Down syndrome, with the challenge of finding another job, his lifelong passion for helping others took the lead.

Seeing his love for a bluebird family nesting in their yard, the family began building and selling birdhouses for charity out of the family garage.

Today, Bluebird Beach Bungalows has donated over \$150,000 to various charities and produced over 5,000 birdhouses—each one made by someone with a disability. They're constructed using donated reclaimed wood, and decorated with sea glass, shells and other natural materials from the Chesapeake Bay.

"It's taught me that good begets good, and people want to help in any way they can," said Jamie Todd, Stephen's mom.

To artist Yvonne Goad, a member of the Pamunkey Indian Tribe, crafting artful homes for her feathered friends is a "labor of love" that keeps alive a time-honored custom.

She's made "hundreds" of birdhouses from hollowed-out gourds over the last 14 years—a

longtime tradition of many Native American tribes.

Next to providing a comfortable nesting spot for small birds, her hand-painted homes add beauty and color to the landscape.

Shoppers around the world can now purchase Goad's unique creations online. She launched her Etsy shop, Gourds4All, this spring alongside other indigenous small business owners and artists.

Cavity nesters will happily move into a backyard birdhouse as long as it suits their needs. For example, the box's dimensions and entrance hole size should be designed to accommodate the particular bird species you want to attract.

Birdhouse designers for specific species, construction basics, cleaning tips, methods of deterring unwanted predators and other beneficial habitat features are available on the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources website at dwr.virginia.gov.

Read more in Virginia Farm Bureau's spring Cultivate magazine at bit.ly/3QOkpZ7.

Virginia Farm Bureau

Researchers reveal promising treatment target for resistant brain cancer

For many patients with a deadly type of brain cancer called glioblastoma, chemotherapy resistance is a big problem.

Current standard treatments, including surgery, radiation, and chemotherapy using the drug temozolomide, have limited effectiveness and have not significantly changed in the past five decades. Although temozolomide can initially slow tumor progression in some patients, typically the tumor cells rapidly become resistant to the drug.

But now, Virginia Tech researchers with the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute at VTC may have moved a step closer to a solution.

Working with glioblastoma cell cultures, including glioblastoma stem cells derived from patient specimens, and laboratory mouse models harboring human cancer cells, scientists have pinpointed an effective molecular signaling pathway that is thought to be crucial for cancer

cell survival during temozolomide treatment. The findings are now online in *iScience*, an open-access journal of Cell Publishing.

"In the past 50 years, treatment options for glioblastoma have remained largely unchanged, relying on surgery, radiation, and temozolomide," said Zhi Sheng, senior author of the study and assistant professor at the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute. "However, temozolomide's effectiveness is limited, and resistance to the chemotherapy inevitably develops in patients. Since it's the only currently available approved chemotherapy that can effectively reach the brain, finding ways to restore its effectiveness is crucial in addressing the treatment failure in glioblastoma."

Researchers examined the Phosphoinositide 3 Kinase (PI3K) molecular signaling pathway, which is like a communication system inside cells. It tells cells how to grow,

survive, and divide. When this pathway is activated, it can promote cancer growth, so scientists and clinicians generally thought blocking it could be a way to treat cancer.

Their results have not been successful.

In the new research, Fralin Biomedical Research Institute scientists found that in some brain cancer patients who didn't respond to treatment, levels were high of a specific form of the signaling protein called PI3K-beta that helps regulate cellular processes.

When they blocked just PI3K-beta in cell cultures and mouse models harboring cancer cells, the tumor cells became more sensitive to temozolomide treatment. In addition, using a drug that blocks PI3K-beta along with the usual treatment slowed down the cancer cells' growth.

Researchers are uncertain why PI3K, in its various forms, are very similar in structure yet do different things in the body.



PHOTO BY CLAYTON METZ FOR VIRGINIA TECH

For many patients with a deadly type of brain cancer called glioblastoma, chemotherapy resistance is a big problem. But now, Virginia Tech researchers led by Zhi Sheng of the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute at VTC may have moved a step closer to a solution.

"The reason previous treatments targeting the PI3K pathway failed is because they didn't distinguish between PI3K-beta and its related proteins," Sheng said. "This research shows that PI3K-beta is specific to glioblastoma, making it the crucial target for effective treatment."

Going forward, overcoming the blood-brain barrier remains a hurdle for delivering PI3K-beta inhibitors into the brain, which will be crucial for translating the findings into the clinic to help patients.

"We will resolve these issues in our future studies," Sheng said.

Co-first authors of the study are Kevin Pridham, a former postdoctoral associate at the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute, and Kasen Hutchings and Patrick Beck, two former medical students at the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine who are pursuing their medical careers in radiology in Las Vegas and pediatrics in Philadelphia, respectively.

Cell specimens were provided by Carilion Clinic. Study results are in part based on data generated by The Cancer Genome Atlas Research Network, the Dependency Map, the Genotype-Tissue Expression, or the Chinese Glioma Genome Atlas. The research was supported by the National Institutes of Health.

John Pastor for Virginia Tech

2024 Real Estate Taxes Due: June 5, 2024



Town of Blacksburg Real Estate Tax invoices for the first installment of 2024 have been mailed and are due by Wednesday, June 5, 2024. If you have not yet received a tax statement, call the Department of Financial Services at 540.961.1105.

Payment may be mailed, made in person or placed in the drop box at 300 South Main Street, Blacksburg, paid by phone with a credit card or paid online at www.Blacksburg.gov/payments. Visa, MasterCard and Discover are accepted.

A 10% penalty will be charged if not paid by June 5, 2024. Interest will be charged at the rate of 10% per year beginning July 1, 2024.

News Messenger

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MONTGOMERY SPORTS

Sports notes: NFCA Division 1 All-Americans

Marty Gordon

NRVsports@ourvalley.org

Virginia Tech outfielders Emma Ritter, Addy Greene, and Cori McMillan were all honored as Division 1 All-Americans, the NFCA announced Wednesday evening.

Ritter and Greene were selected for the first team, while McMillan was placed on the second team. This marks the first time in program history that the Hokies have had three All-Americans in a single season.

Ritter has received All-American recognition for the second time in her career. In 2022, she achieved Third Team honors. The senior led the Hokies all season with a .432 batting average and 82 hits. She is one of only seven players in the ACC to hit above .400 in 2024 and ranked in the top 15 nationally.

The leadoff hitter was a tough out this season, striking out only seven times, making a total of only 26 strikeouts in her career. On the base paths, she scored 59 runs and recorded 26 stolen bases. The center fielder posted a flawless 1.000 fielding percentage and has committed only two errors in her career.

Ritter will be remembered as one of the best hitters to ever wear a Hokie uniform. She is the program leader

with 184 runs scored. Over her four years, she has amassed 243 career hits, fourth in school history, a .377 batting average, and 82 stolen bases, both third in program history.

Greene had an exceptional year, also being one of seven hitters in the ACC and top 25 in the country to hit above .400. She was second on the team with a .424 ERA and 67 hits. She led the team with 15 doubles, a .520 on-base percentage, and 35 walks. Her on-base percentage ranks her in the top 20 in Division 1.

During her tenure at Virginia Tech, she has accumulated 169 career hits, including 37 doubles and 33 home runs. This season was her best yet, earning her All-ACC and NFCA honors for the first time in her career.

McMillan is a second-team All-American after leading the ACC and ranking in the top 10 nationally with 21 home runs. She was also second in the ACC with a .869 slugging percentage. Her power numbers set school records for single-season home runs and career slugging percentage. The junior posted 64 RBIs this year, leading the Tech squad and ranking third in the ACC. McMillan was also dynamic on the bases, scoring 55 runs and posting a perfect 20 for 20 in stolen bases.

Director of creative media design

Virginia Tech women's basketball head coach Megan Duffy tabbed Carson Henry as the program's director of creative media design Tuesday.

At Tech, he will direct the creation of unique content and branding for the program utilizing his skills in photography, videography and graphic design.

Henry comes to Blacksburg with several years of experience managing and creating content for athletic programs across all social media platforms through graphic design, photography and

videography.

Most recently, Henry was the coordinator of athletic marketing and fan engagement at University of Mary in North Dakota where he was also an assistant wrestling coach.

Over the course of his career, Henry has served as marketing content creator, social media director and student engagement specialist at several NCAA institutions. In 2023, he presented at the National Wrestling Coaches Association Convention following a year where he curated the top non-division I athletics Instagram account at Minnesota State.

Eastern Montgomery's Bruce, Miller tops in Pioneer

Marty Gordon

NRVsports@ourvalley.org

The Pioneer District has announced its spring all-district teams with two players from Eastern Montgomery High School receiving top honors.

Mary Miller was named the 2024 Pioneer pitcher of the year in softball, and Talen Bruce was the player of the year in boys' soccer.

Miller was joined on the first-team softball squad by teammates, Katie Salyer, Sam Brien, Alexis Artip, Mack Hubbard and Sophie Vishneski.

Eastern Montgomery's Macie Akers and K.K. Roupe were named to the second team. The honorable mention list included three from the school, Kelly Mills, Chelsie Kennedy and Rena Chandler.

The boys' soccer team finished 14-5 this season and won the Pioneer District regular season, being knocked from the Region C playoffs earlier this week by cross-county rival Auburn. Bruce was the team's leading scorer and was named the Pioneer District player of



FILE PHOTO

Mary Miller



PHOTO BY BRIAN SUTPHIN

Talen Bruce

the year.

Bruce, a junior, was joined on the first team by teammates, Aija McHone, Osman Amaya, Spencer Sisson, Kevin Vasconcelos, Kess Greer, Grayson Richardson and Caleb Sampson.

A total of 11 players from Eastern Montgomery were honored as Clayton Holloway, Jose Mejia Martinez and Nick Smith were named to the second team.

Gunner Lawson added

to that total with an honorable mention spot.

Three players from the school were named to the all-district first-team baseball. They included pitcher Austin Tate, outfielder Coltin Conner and Marshall Tate at-large.

Eastern Montgomery placed four on the second team in Caleb Jones, Cam Sutphin, Tyler Atkinson and Hunter Howard. Teammate Drew Smith was named to the honorable mention list.

Blacksburg Bruins regional baseball champs

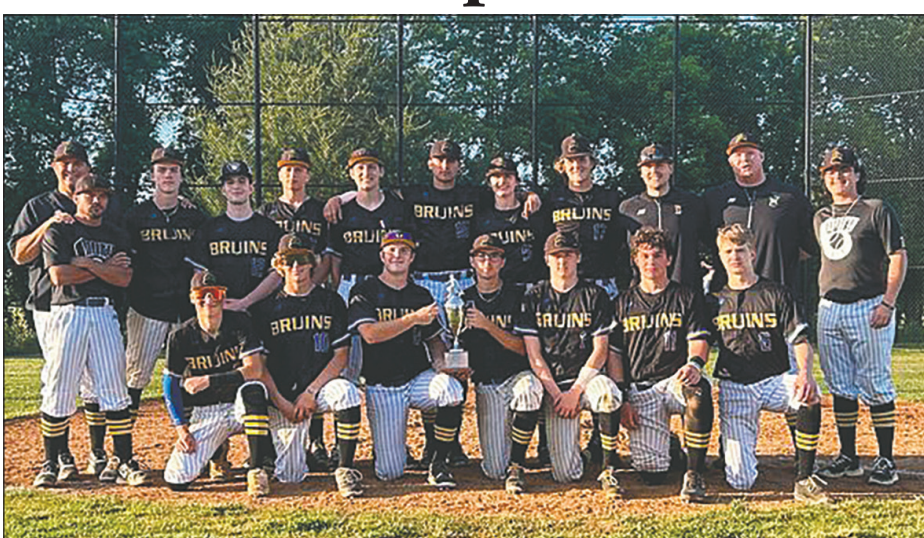


PHOTO COURTESY OF BHS

The Blacksburg High School baseball won the Region 4D Championship this past week with an 8-4 victory over James Wood. Blacksburg will host the Classic 4 State Tournament Quarterfinal Tuesday, June 4.



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