2026 Friday Night Lights inside this edition!

News Messenger

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Blacksburg Christiansburg

Wednesday, August 26, 2026 www.ourvalley.org USPS 710-040 $1.50

Railroad crossing blockages still a hot topic for county

Marty Gordon
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

Train stoppage in the eastern part of Montgomery County continues to be a problem, and county leaders are looking at several ways that would provide emergency access to affected residential areas.

The problem is not a new one, but recently it has become more frequent.

Stopped trains have block railroad crossings like Cannery Road and Cove Hollow Road near Elliston, causing significant safety concerns and traffic delays for local residents.

The Cannery Road crossing has been blocked over a dozen times over the past year due to "track congestion" or mechanical issues. The 911 system recorded as many as 14 emergency calls in recent years where residents were completely cut off from emergency services due to idle trains.

Residents and the community have pointed out these stoppages have block crossings, trapping people and delaying emergency responders as the crossing is the only way in or out of the residential area.

Montgomery County has applied for a federal grant to study the blocked crossing problem and find potential solutions.

In addition, under Virginia code, it is illegal for a railroad company to obstruct a public roadway for longer than five minutes. But the law is entirely unenforceable.

Federal courts have ruled that the federal government holds exclusive authority over railroad operations. In addition, local and state police cannot issue citations or force Norfolk Southern to move a



PHOTOS BY MARTY GORDON

Coal Hollow Road in Elliston has become prone to train blockages.

See **Crossings,** page 3

Christiansburg leaders discuss Flock cameras

Marty Gordon
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Flock camera usage continues to be a hot topic, and this past week, Christiansburg town council took time during a work session to discuss it even more.

Recently, someone cut a cable to one of the town's cameras. Police Chief Chris Ramsey said the vandalism was probably a direct impact of online tensions surrounding the issue.

"I do regret or lament that social media, I think, has driven people to feel so inflamed about this topic that they're resorting to that kind of thing," he said.

Ramsey said the topic is turning into a very heated political issue that has resulted in some bad actions.

Christiansburg currently has six Flock cameras that have been in operation since 2024. Their contract is for two years and was just renewed for two more years.

"There are going to be strong feelings on both sides of this issue because it does deal with civil liberties and the perception of a surveillance state, police state, free state — all of those different issues kind of coming together," Ramsey said.

But the chief says there are plenty of misconceptions floating around the public.

The cameras in Christiansburg, according to Ramsey, capture the back of the car, storing the license plate photo for 21 days.

Mayor Michael Barber said there are plenty of misunderstandings about the use of the technology.

"There was a lot of misconceptions that people are being videoed and we're recognizing what color shirt you have on — and you know, this is truly false," Barber said.

Other council members asked Ramsey about the misuse of the Flock technology. While he said there have been no problems here, there are others in other states and they're getting caught.

The word, "Flock", is a specific company (Flock Safety) which produces these type of

See **Flock,** page 2

Fire and blood: cooperation to save lives



PHOTO BY LARRY HYPES

Greg Cook of Riner, a volunteer blood donor, came to the Riner Fire Department to help with the recent Red Cross Blood drive. Assisting were (l) Sandy Myers, Heather Trail, Samantha Mitchell, Cynthia Deeds and Jeri Poff.

Larry Hypes
Contributing writer

RINER – Red-blooded firefighters are unquestioned heroic first responders and the Red Cross is renowned for its work on behalf the human body's life-preserving liquid.

Both came together last week as the Riner Fire Department hosted a blood drive coordinated by the New River Valley area Red Cross. Local citizens, by appointment, lined up to share the gracious gift which in recent times always seems to be in short supply.

"I am happy to be able to donate blood," said Riner resident Greg Cook. "Any of us might be in a situation to need it, or a family member or friend – anyone in need. For a long time, I was a regular

See **Fire,** page 2

Radford University grads launch electric truck company



PHOTO BY MARTY GORDON

A new smaller truck produced by Narro Trucks is ready to take to the paths of the Radford University campus.

Marty Gordon
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

Two Radford University graduates have launched a new electric truck company, which includes vehicles for college campuses, golf courses and other facilities. The founders of Narro Trucks, CEO Max Collignon and CTO Cullen Danilowicz, cite a narrow body that is 100 percent electric.

Thursday, they unveiled one of the company's vehicles during a test run at Randolph Park in Dublin. The manufacturing facility will be located at a former site of an elementary school in Dublin.

Collignon graduated from RU in 2012 and Danilowicz in 2025.

"There seems to be a gap between the current UTV platform offerings and a small pickup truck. Our goal is to provide payloads closer to the pickup truck yet fit it in the same footprint of a UTV to maneuver in tight or crowded spaces," Collignon said.

See **Truck,** page 2

Radford police investigating weekend aggravated assaults

RADFORD - The Radford City Police Department is investigating two aggravated assaults that occurred over the weekend.

According to the RCPD, the incidents occurred in the 1200 block of Fairfax Street during the late evening hours of Saturday, Aug. 22, 2026, and the early morning hours of Sunday, Aug. 23, 2026.

"Officers were dispatched at approximately 11:38 p.m. on Aug. 22, 2026 to the 1200 block of Fairfax Street in response to a fight in progress," the RCPD stated. "Officers responded to the area and began investigating the circumstances surrounding the incident."

"At approximately 12:33 a.m. on August 23, 2026, officers were dispatched to the same area for a report of a fight in progress," the statement continued. "Both incidents are being investigated as aggravated assaults. The Radford City Police Department is actively investigating both incidents, including identifying all individuals involved. No suspects have been arrested at this time."

The police department is asking "anyone who may have witnessed either incident, observed suspicious activity or has information regarding individuals or vehicles in the area of the 1200 block of Fairfax Street between approximately 11 p.m. on Aug. 22 and 2 a.m. on Aug. 23" to contact Lieutenant E. Martin at the RCPD, and notes that "even information that may seem insignificant could be important to the investigation."

Martin can be reached at 540-267-3196 or via email at Eric.Martin@RadfordVA.gov.

Staff report



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Upcoming events

Wednesday, Aug. 26:

2026 Market Square Jam

Held at Market Square Park, 108 W Roanoke St., Blacksburg, each jam session runs Wednesdays 7-9 p.m., June – September. For more information, and a full list of dates and host bands, visit https://www.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.

Connection Series:

How trusts can support your estate plan

At Warm Hearth Village Center, 2387 Warm Hearth Dr., Blacksburg, 10 a.m. Join for an informed discussion on trust and their benefits. Ray Juidici, Senior Vice President of Trust & Wealth Management at National Bank, will provide detailed information on how to determine if a trust is more beneficial for your situation, how it is established, and how it works in terms of financial distribution. He will talk about how to simplify estate planning, reduce estate expenses, and how to meet your goals. There will be time for questions. RVSP by Aug. 24 to Dominique at dharder@warmhearth.org or 540-443-3406.

Saturday, Aug. 29:

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 Farmers Market

At 600 Unruh Drive, next to Glencoe Mansion, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. More than 40 vendors, including plants, baked goods, fresh eggs, cheeses and meats, craft items, food trucks, coffee and more.

Monday, Aug. 31:

Radford Fiddle and Banjo Jam

At the Radford University Artis Center, 801 E. Main St., Radford, 6- 9 p.m. every Monday. The Jam is an official event of the Crooked Road Virginia Heritage Music Trail. The event is free and all are welcome. For more info, visit the Radford Fiddle and Banjo Jam Facebook page.

Sunday, Sept. 13:

Blacksburg Vintage Market

Shop at the Blacksburg Vintage Market on the second and fourth Sundays of every month, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., for vintage vinyl, clothing, jewelry, books, housewares, oddities and more. Located in downtown Blacksburg at the corner of Roanoke Street and Draper Avenue, in Market Square Park, under the Farmer's market structure. Plenty of parking is available nearby.

Monday, Sept. 14:

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., 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, Sept. 15:

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

At 7 p.m. at Town Hall,100 E. Main St., Christiansburg. This is a regular meeting of town council. The meeting will be live streamed to the Town's YouTube page at www.christiansburg.org/YouTube. Please copy and paste the URL into your browser and be sure to select Live videos to view. Agendas and minutes can be viewed at www.christiansburg.org/agendasandminutes.

Flock from page 1

cameras and technology, but the name has stuck when the discussions take place.

Flock cameras are automated license plate readers and use AI-enabled surveillance systems with estimated 120,000 being used not only by police departments but also private businesses nationwide.

Communities across the country have paused or cancelled the Flock usage in the midst of criticism over Fourth Amendment protection.

The tracking records the vehicle's characteristics including bummer stickers, roof racks and dents on the car, but does not grab any type of facial recognition. Police can use the technology to locate stolen vehicles, track fugitives and solve local crimes where the car might have been identified.

Privacy groups like the American Civil Liberties Union note that over 99 percent of scanned cars have no link to a crime, yet their location histories are stored for a time in searchable databases.

In the past, many of these same law enforcement agencies had similar units mounted on police cruisers, automatically photographing passing license plates. Most have now been removed.

Flock remains one of the top companies in the market area and recently announced changes to its platform intended to deal with privacy concerns and the misuse by police officers. The company says all law enforcement customers must implement an audit tool, which flags abnormal search behavior. In addition, the standard retention window will drop from 30 days to seven. Those cases connected to any type of crimes can be preserved for a longer period of time.

Users will also be required to enter a code, tying each search to a specific case.

Systems transitioned from the police cruisers to what we see today, fixed infrastructure mounted on poles.

No action on the Flock cameras took place during the work session but could be revisited during an upcoming regularly scheduled council meeting.

Fire from page 1

donor, usually doing this at my church and now I plan to be donating regularly again. I would encourage anyone to do this."

Sandy Myers, area Red Cross account manager, said there are more blood drives planned for the area.

"We are very pleased to be here at the Riner Fire Station and also plan to have blood drives at the local high schools, including a public blood drive at Auburn High School on October 21. We will be at Blacksburg High for two days, on Oct. 28 - 29 (for students only) and at Eastern Montgomery with another public blood drive on September 16. We are also working on a date to visit Christiansburg High this fall."

All of the Red Cross personnel at Riner were phlebotomists trained to collect blood samples from patients for testing and analysis. Phlebotomists ensure that blood is drawn safely and efficiently for medical purposes.

A brief medical review is given to all potential donors, snacks are provided and donors are asked to remain for observation briefly. In addition, an appreciation gift (these change by location) is given to each donor after completion of the process.

Staff members on hand at Riner included Cythia Deeds, Heather Trail, Samantha Mitchell, Jeri Poff and Sandy Myers.

Riner Fire Department, which is a volunteer organization, is directed by Chief Mike King, Assistant Chief Billy Venth, Captain Adam Quesenberry, First Lieutenant Josh Martin and Second Lieutenant Scott Howell.

"We have a variety of vehicles for all types of situations," said Martin, on hand for the Red Cross drive, along with firefighter Isiah Moore. "From the large pumper to side-by-side four wheelers with smaller water capacity, as well as a 2,000-gallon capacity tanker and a pair of response pickup trucks, we work to maintain a fleet for most any emergency situation."

Martin noted that the Riner Department works closely with the local rescue squad, which is housed in the former fire department building.

"I guess you could say that, like the Red Cross, we love to help others and we have about 30 members that feel that way. Of course, we are always ready to welcome new members and anyone interesting in applying to join us can call 540-392-0115."

The Riner Women's Auxiliary is also very active in department activities.

It is a possibility that in addition to the local high school drives, the Red Cross may also work with the Riner Fire Department in the future.

Truck from page 1

In addition, he said the battery electric drive train allows the company to increase operating efficiency as the operating cost that is one-sixth the cost of an internal combustion equivalent.

"Additionally, the battery electric powertrain reduces maintenance cost for our customer, therefore, hopefully helping lower the cost to the American consumer with respect to the goods or services our customers provide," he said.

Battery electric vehicle maintenance is minimal, compared to other alternatives, leading to lower operating costs over the lifetime of the vehicle. Also, there is no need for specialized charging infrastructure.

The trucks use a simple three-prong outlet, meaning they can be charged overnight.

Typically, these trucks aren't designed for highway use, or for high speeds, but they can carry up to a ton of material. The price tag is between $20,000 and $40,000.

As part of this past week's introduction to the world, Narro presented Pulaski County with one of its first vehicles.

Currently, the total employees on the company's payroll is rather small.

"As we get further into the industrialization process, we will work closely with a manufacturing partner to assemble the majority of our vehicle content. We are still in communication with several different partners, with a final location dependent on partner we move forward with," Collignon said.

The company sees a robust future with a goal to build a company around what commercial operations genuinely need.

"Reliable equipment, lower operating cost and efficiency gains. We will also be continually improving our products based upon feedback from our extended field-testing partners to be able to provide better and higher capable vehicles in the future. We are already working on the development of the next platform with an even higher payload to satisfy some customer needs," Collignon said.

Community Health Center of the NRV earns national awards for quality, access and innovation



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF CHCNRV

CHRISTIANSBURG - The Community Health Center of the New River Valley (CHCNRV) has received four national Community Health Quality Recognition awards from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

The honors recognize CHCNRV's achievements in clinical quality, heart health, access to care, and the effective use of health information technology.

CHCNRV received the Health Center Quality Leader–Silver Badge, placing it among the top 20 percent of health centers nationwide for overall clinical quality performance. The recognition is based on outcomes across a broad range of clinical quality measures and reflects the organization's continued commitment to providing effective, patient-centered care.

The health center also earned the National Quality Leader–Heart Health Badge. This distinction recognizes health centers that meet or exceed national benchmarks in areas such as controlling high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease prevention, tobacco-use screening and cessation intervention, and appropriate use of statin and antiplatelet therapies.

CHCNRV received the Improving Health Care Access Badge for demonstrating meaningful growth in the number of patients served or the availability of services while also achieving strong clinical results. The award reflects the organization's ongoing work to make medical, dental, behavioral health and other essential services more readily available throughout the New River Valley.

The Advancing Health Information Technology for Quality Badge recognizes CHCNRV's effective use of technology to improve care. Qualifying health centers demonstrate capabilities that include offering telehealth, exchanging clinical information with other providers, engaging patients through technology, and collecting information about patients' health-related social needs.

"These awards reflect the extraordinary work of our entire team and our shared commitment to the people of the New River Valley," said Michelle Brauns, MS, APR, Chief Executive Officer of CHCNRV. "We are especially proud to be recognized for expanding access while maintaining high standards for clinical quality. Whether we are helping patients manage heart health, using technology to coordinate care or finding new ways to reach people who need our services, our goal remains the same: to provide excellent, compassionate care to every patient."

HRSA's Community Health Quality Recognition badges are awarded annually to eligible health centers based on the most recent Uniform Data System reporting period. The 2026 awards reflect performance reported for 2025.

Community Health Center of the New River Valley

Salem VA Health Care System to host VetFest Veteran Enrollment Fair

SALEM - The Salem VA Health Care System will hold a Summer VetFest Veteran Enrollment Fair 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 29, at the Salem VA Medical Center, 1970 Roanoke Blvd, Salem, Va.

The event, open to all veterans, their family members and caregivers, will be a one-stop shop for all major VA services and resources – connecting veterans to VA care and benefits with same-day services.

At VetFest, veterans can enroll in VA health care on the spot. Then, after enrolling they can receive an initial Primary Care appointment with a VA Doctor on the same day. To enroll, veterans should bring their DD-214, a valid photo ID, and any insurance information.

VetFest is also an opportunity for veterans to file a veteran benefits claim, or to check on the status of an existing claim. Local Veteran Benefits Administration representatives will be on-site to offer one-on-one claims counseling.

Other services offered at VetFest include toxic exposure screenings, one-on-one private mental health support and the opportunity to connect and learn more about a large variety of VA programs. Featured Veteran programs include Women's Health, Homeless Care/Housing, Suicide Prevention, Caregiver Support, Social Work, Whole Health, Roanoke VET Center Support, and VA volunteering opportunities.

"A key part of fulfilling our mission is ensuring that Veterans within our community receive the health care they have earned for serving our nation," said Tammy Snyder, executive director of the Salem VA Health Care System. "This engaging, accessible event allows Veterans to easily connect with our team to access the care and benefits they deserve. They served us, now it's our duty and honor to serve them."

For a head start on enrolling in VA health care, Veterans can complete an online form (https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply-for-health-care-form-10-10ez/id-form) before the event. There is no requirement to complete this form, but its completion will assist with the enrollment process.

Complimentary summer picnic food, snacks, and drinks will be available to attendees.

Salem VA Health Care System

OBITUARIES

Burley, Jill Renee Green



"Well done, good and faithful servant… Enter into the joy of your Lord." — Matthew 25:23

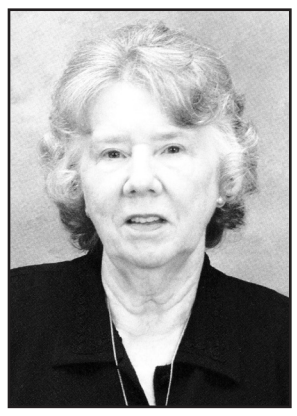
In loving memory of Jill Renee Green Burley

It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of Jill Renee Green Burley, who entered into the presence of her Lord and Savior Aug. 4, 2026, at the age of 65. Jill was born May 15, 1961 in Cleveland, Ohio. Throughout her life, she was known for her kind heart, quiet strength, and unwavering faith in God. She found great comfort in reading her Bible and spending time in prayer, and her relationship with the Lord was the foundation of her life. Jill had a special love for lighthouses and enjoyed collecting them over the years. To those who knew her, they were a reflection of who she was - a reminder that even in life's storms, there is always light to guide the way. She found beauty in simple things and cherished the moments spent with those she loved. Above all else, Jill loved her family. She was a devoted wife, a loving daughter, a caring sister, and a cherished mother. Her love, encouragement, and gentle spirit touched the lives of everyone who knew her. She leaves behind to cherish her memory her beloved husband, James Edward Burley Jr., her loving daughter, Yolanda Nicole Green; her mother, Pearl Green; her brothers, Russell Green, Charles Green, and Bobby Hawkins; along with extended family members and dear friends who will forever hold her close in their hearts. Though our hearts are heavy with grief, we rejoice in knowing that Jill is now at peace in the presence of the Lord she faithfully loved. She has exchanged earthly pain for eternal joy, and while she will be deeply missed, her faith, love, and beautiful memory will continue to live on in all who were blessed to know her. Funeral services will be conducted Saturday, Aug. 29, 2026, at 2 p.m., in the McCoy Funeral Home Chapel with the Reverend Neal Turner Officiating. The family will receive friends 1 – 2 p.m., prior to the service.

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want… Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." — Psalm 23

Forever loved. Forever remembered. Forever in our hearts.

Sowder, Betty Dickerson



Betty Dickerson Sowder, 87, of Mechanicsville, Virginia, passed away peacefully Friday, Aug. 21, 2026.

Born Nov. 9, 1938, at her family home in Shawsville, she was the daughter of the late Riley Tazewell and Anna Ella Martin Dickerson and was the eldest of five siblings. Betty graduated from Shawsville High School and later from Radford University, where she "survived" the dust checks on the tops of her dorm room door frames and Dean Moffett's white-glove requirements for formal social events and Sunday church attendance.

On July 27, 1963, she married James L. Sowder at Sowder Chapel in Shawsville. Throughout the years, they built a life reflecting their pleasant, rural southwest Virginia roots. She found joy in all things "James L", including gardening and canning, but was also a skilled seamstress. She was a devoted wife whose love and support were the heart of their home. She delighted in preparing nourishing meals for her family and for the many family visits and hunting trips back to "the country" over the years. She brought countless family reunions and holiday gatherings together in unforgettable fashion.

Beyond an unwavering family-centric focus, Betty was quite fulfilled by her accomplishments as the technical systems coordinator on the leading edge of bringing network computing to the American Cancer Society across the state of Virginia in the 70s, 80s, and 90s. During that same period, she mastered library science, skills she used to develop and maintain the church libraries at Glen Allen Baptist, and then Mechanicsville Baptist.

Betty's deep and abiding faith in Christ, as her Lord and Savior, was central to her life. Above all things, her faith was the foundation of her life, as was her desire to pass those values on to future generations. Her family was her greatest joy, and she loved her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren fiercely, never missing an opportunity to tell them. She graciously and selflessly looked out for others, never failed to remember her family's special days, and ensured that every greeting and parting included a hug, a kiss on the cheek, and the sincerest of "I love you's."

She will be so dearly remembered by her husband of 63 years, James L. Sowder; her daughter, Johanna (Gregory) Townsend; and her son, Nathan (Jeana) Sowder; her grandchildren: Kayla Spurlock, Jessica Sowder (Zach), Hunter Sowder (Jess); and her great-grandchildren: Marques, Arika, Kayden, Alyssa, Mallory, Nolan, Beau, Abraham, and Harold; her brother, Marshall (Donna) Dickerson, her sister, Edna Conner, as well as a great many nieces, nephews and dear friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her brother, Watson Lee Dickerson and her sister, Mary Jeanette Graham.

A Celebration of Life service will be held at Mechanicsville Baptist Church at 1 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 29, 2026, in Mechanicsville, Va.; Dr. Gary Threatt will officiate. Betty's family will greet guests at a visitation held from 11:45 a.m. at the church, prior to the service. Please come in casual dress if the alternative is not coming at all. Interment will be at a later date at Signal Hill Memorial Park in Hanover, Va.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to: Mechanicsville Baptist Church, 8016 Atlee Road, Mechanicsville, VA 23111.

For online condolences, visit: bennettfuneralhomes.com.

Dodson, Judith Long



Judith Long Dodson, 84, of Radford, passed away peacefully Friday, Aug. 21, 2026. She was a member of Central United Methodist Church and worked for many years in Charlottesville and Virginia Beach public schools, and at New River Community College as an adult education instructor.

Born Nov. 8, 1941, she was a graduate of RHS 1960; Radford University, BS Education, 1963; and Old Dominion University, MA English Literature, 1985.

Survivors include sons, Russ Dodson of Virginia Beach and Andy Dodson of Radford; daughter and son-in-law, Jennifer and Jose Martinez of Virginia Beach; grandchildren, Kaitlyn Dodson, Gabrielle Weis and Jolie Steinbaugh; and several nieces and nephews.

Judith cared deeply for the Radford community, her family, friends, and her neighbors, and always showed us that love wasn't something to be kept on a shelf. She gave it freely to all those around her.

The family would like to express deep appreciation to the staff at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Virginia each for their care, skill, and affection given to Judith during her stay over the past few years.

The family will receive friends from 10 - 11 a.m. Friday, Aug. 28, 2026, at Central Church Radford. Funeral services will begin at 11 a.m. with Rev. Don Shelor officiating. Interment will follow in West View Cemetery in Radford, next to her parents.

Flowers will be accepted or contributions may be made to Central Church Radford, 803 Wadsworth Street, Radford, VA, 24141.

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

Jones, Blanche Ristine Mannon



Blanche Ristine Mannon Jones, 86, of Radford, passed away Friday, Aug. 14, 2026. Born Nov. 16, 1939, she was preceded in death by her parents, William Roy and Blanche Moore Mannon; husband, Norman Dean Jones; beloved grandchildren, Kelsey and Trey; sisters, Mary Haynes and Opal Pannell; and her brothers, William Roy Mannon, Jr., Rollo Mannon and Paul Mannon.

Survivors include her sons and daughters-in-law, Dean (Karen) Jones, and Dennis (Kristi) Jones; daughter and son-in-law, Denise (Hoyt) Parris; grandchildren, Tyler, Jordan, Seth, Ethan, Rhen, Gage, Karli and Emma; great-granddaughters, Elliyana and Avaya; special kitty cat, Baby; and many other relatives and special friends.

The family received friends Wednesday, Aug. 19, 2026, at the Mullins Funeral Home in Radford. A memorial service followed with Rev. Gina Rhea and Rev. Jim Asbury officiating.

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

Crossing from page 1

stopped train.

Kasandra Jenkins, a communications director with Norfork Southern said the company makes every effort to avoid inconveniencing communities with blocked crossings.

"Our business relies on our ability to keep our trains moving safely, and that's always the goal. Nevertheless, trains may have to stop for a number of reasons, including congestion on the tracks or in yards, coordinating traffic with other railroads, power outages affecting train signal devices, or mechanical issues," she said.

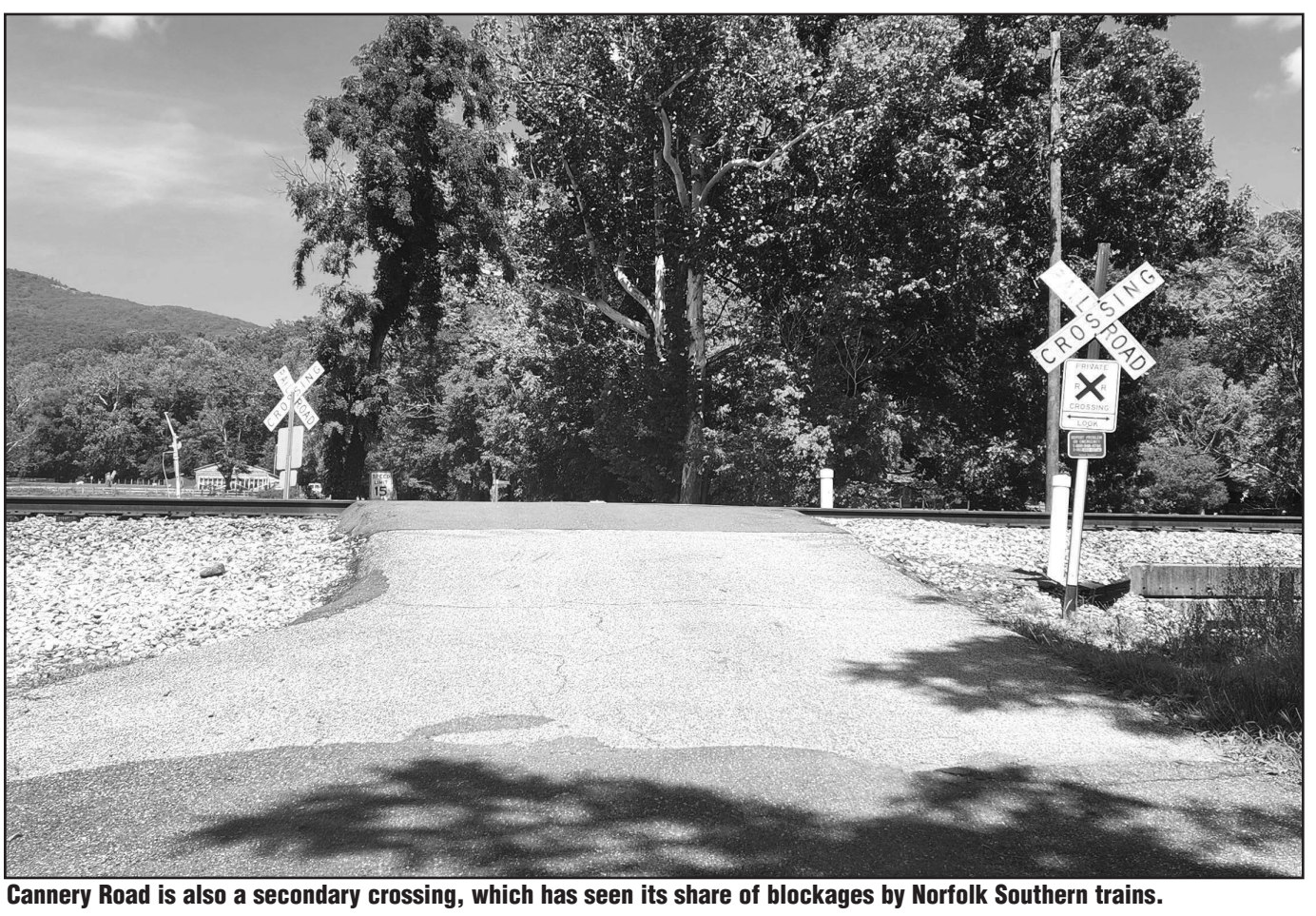
On Cannery Road, Jenkins said Norfolk Southern made operational changes a few weeks ago to mitigate blocked crossings there and residents should be seeing the effects of that over the next few weeks.

The Federal Railroad Association has an active website, which records blocked crossing incidents. NS officials say only one blockage is shown in the database on Coal Hollow Road.

Today, there are more than 120,000 public grade crossings nationwide, presenting more than 120,000 interactions between train, pedestrian and vehicle traffic. Norfolk Southern said it is taking the time to work with communities, developing solutions together to address the issue of blocked crossings.

In September 2023, Norfolk Southern created a director public engagement role designed to focus on issues that affect our communities. They are helping to marshal resources to improve infrastructure and engagement.

"Norfolk Southern has a responsibility to be a good corporate citizen, and this new role will help deliver on that commitment," Norfolk Southern President and CEO Alan H. Shaw said in announcing the role. "We're focused on collaborating with communities and their leaders on projects that benefit them, while maintaining the critical role of rail to our national economy."



Cannery Road is also a secondary crossing, which has seen its share of blockages by Norfolk Southern trains.

Every year, Norfolk Southern partners with communities all over our 22-state network to eliminate redundant crossings and support grade separation projects that replace at-grade crossings and improve safety.

Since 2014, Norfolk Southern has worked with communities and private landowners to close more than 750 at-grade crossings. That includes in the Birmingham, Alabama region, where, in 2023, Norfolk Southern worked to help secure more than $8 million in funding, in addition to a $1.5 million company contribution.

The funding helped to develop a series of infrastructure projects that will eliminate about a half-dozen at-grade crossings in favor of grade-separated options, among other community improvements.

Recently, the Montgomery County board of supervisors discussed a couple options from the Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP) who has a pipeline that is located near the Coal Hollow crossing. But there was concern from nearby residents that this offering came with a caveat.

MVP offered what they thought was a solution for the crossing at Cove Hollow Road with plans for a one lane crossing and/or a pedestrian bridge. The company said they would only build the bridge if its planned compressor station is built on an adjacent lot near the crossing. MVP would pay for the complete construction over the railroad tracks.

Supervisors would not agree to the proposals as the county has no jurisdiction to maintain the bridge like MVP had suggested.

In addition, residents who spoke at the recent meeting felt the proposal was an effort to MVP to gain support from county leaders for a controversial compressor station nearby.

Supervisors said they would continue to look at other crossing alternatives including state and federal funding.

OPINION

Delegate supports federal efforts for English proficiency for CDL drivers



Delegate Jason Ballard

Virginia General Assembly

As a member of the General Assembly's House Committee on Transportation, the safety of motorists in the Commonwealth is a top concern of mine. Every Virginian relies on our roadways in some form or fashion; whether that be getting to and from work, taking our kids to school or on a family vacation, ordering goods online or at a store, or the countless other means by which we utilize transportation infrastructure. The Commonwealth's standards for road safety have traditionally been strong, which is why a recent action by Democrat Attorney General Jay Jones is so puzzling.

Recently, Attorney General Jones directed the Commonwealth to join a lawsuit that prevents the federal government from determining whether or not Virginia Commercial Drivers' License (CDL) holders speak English. While the Attorney General argues that he is trying to protect the privacy of CDL holders, the federal government is simply trying to determine whether or not those using public roadways for commerce are able to read road signs and signals. Here in Virginia, five people were killed in a bus crash on Interstate 95 when the bus – driven by a man who did not speak English – slammed into stopped traffic. Some road signs – including mobile LED and dynamic displays – are in place specifically to ensure that motorists are kept up to date on real-time road conditions and impending traffic hazards. If these types of signs cannot be read by those entrusted to operate heavy machinery, it can create a very real risk to public safety. I cannot help but wonder why Attorney General Jones does not want to ensure that our CDL holders can speak/read the language that our road signs are written.

In unrelated news, I am proud to report that state funding I successfully obtained for repairs at the Andrew Johnston House in Pearisburg will soon be disbursed by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. In advance of the 2026 General Assembly Legislative Session, I solicited requests for legislation and budget funding from local governments and constituents in the 42nd House District. One such request was funding to restore the historic Andrew Johnston House, which is the oldest surviving brick structure in Giles County and was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1993.

The Andrew Johnston House has fallen into a state of disrepair over the years, including a leaky roof that threatens the ongoing viability of the structure as a museum and historical landmark. After lengthy discussions with House and Senate budget negotiators, I was able to secure a $295,000 grant that will be used to replace the failing roof, repair plumbing and complete other projects so that this historic property will remain open for years to come. Securing state funding for any project is an uphill battle, especially as a member of the minority party. I am proud that my efforts were effective. Our region's history is important, and I will continue to support our local efforts to preserve it.

As the Delegate representing the 42nd House District in the Virginia General Assembly, your concerns are my greatest priority. If ever I may be of assistance to you and your family, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at DelJBallard@House.Virginia.Gov. You can also follow me on Twitter @JasonBallardVA or like my Facebook page, Jason Ballard for Delegate, to keep up to date with what I am doing in Richmond and in our community on your behalf.

Energy prices have been rising for a long time – let's have that stop

Gary Silverman

Columnist

It was tiresome reading in last week's paper yet another article complaining about how Virginia Democrats are raising costs. This complaint is neither factual nor useful. The call to cut local and state taxes somehow never mentions what people would lose if those taxes were reduced (no more libraries, paying teachers less?). Perhaps they are meant simply to rile people up. But it must be obvious to everyone that the war in Iran and its tremendous associated costs must be paid for by someone. Plus, with federal buildings being torn down, new buildings going up, new fleets of ships and airplanes being built and bought and illegal tariffs needing to be repaid, money needs to come from somewhere. The U.S. national debt just passed $40 trillion! Some may think that these federal government actions are worth it, but no one can reasonably suggest that are not the primary reason for our rising cost of living. Complaining that it's due to state Democratic legislators is simply inaccurate and wrong.

With this past Virginia legislative session behind us, it's easy to see that the legislature was very moderate in its actions. No major new taxes were raised, and the state has made progress in helping the very needy. For just one example, many working women now will have the financial ability to become mothers! Isn't that a good thing?

One anti-Democrat complaint is that Virginia will be turning to renewable energy – and that it's too expensive. All around the world, countries are investing in renewables as the cheapest way to develop new energy supplies. Solar is the single most important source of new energy internationally. Some may argue that somehow the U.S. is different. But arguing against solar, including in the United States, is arguing against saving money. Let's compare out situation to that in Texas – obviously a state dominated by conservative legislators. During the first half of 2026, Texas added new power plants producing about 2200 megawatts of solar, with about another 3000 megawatts of battery storage. Virginia added only about 300 megawatts combined of solar and battery storage. This isn't good – it is holding us back. We made woeful progress toward adding energy capacity compared to our very conservative sibling state, even though Texas has plenty of its own oil and gas resources. It certainly wasn't the Democrats in Texas that made its solar development happen.

For what appears as purely partisan rhetoric, anti-renewable energy advocates claim that adding renewables will add expense for many years. Never mentioned is that after an initial investment, the fuel is free! Costs should eventually stabilize and drop. In contrast, let's look at what has been happening as we've relied on gas and coal. Costs have skyrocketed! And coal and natural gas are never going to be free. Those of us who have been paying utility bills have been experiencing much greater increases than general inflation. One estimate is that in Virginia electricity costs have increased between 80 and 95% over the rate of inflation for the past 20 years. So why does anyone want to keep depending on fuels that have consistently risen in price and promise to increase costs even faster going forward? What do all the other nations know who are controlling costs by turning to solar? Of course, there is a need for an initial investment – and we can lament that we didn't make that investment much earlier (perhaps following the Texas example?). But because of 2025 legislation that secularized fossil fuel costs, we will be paying for past oil and coal related expenses for a long time (certainly the opposite of investing in the future!). The longer we wait, the longer it will be until the cost of electricity stabilizes and even drops. Better than complaining that change is bad, and that the old ways (even as they increased our costs) were good, let's embrace the opportunity to move forward and put money in our pockets. Texas is doing this – why not us?

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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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Writing for a reason



Steve Huppert

Columnist

Hupps440 @aol.com

I recently finished writing a book, "What's Weird, That's Weird," with a picture of Mr. Trump on the cover. The book covers weird people and experiences that have occurred over the ages.

Included are court jesters, witchcraft, Salem, P.T. Barnum, Vaudeville, the two Red Scares (1920 & 1950), comedians and Donald Trump.

I give Mr. Trump special treatment, as I have documented many of the executive orders he has proclaimed during the last 18 months since his second term began.

Throughout time people have felt that life was like riding a bicycle, to keep your balance you must keep moving, and that is what people felt they were doing when they did the weird things.

Within the book, I tried to cover people who did weird things from almost day one; don't worry, Mr. Trump will get his fair share of comments, weird or not.

I am giving the book to people for free and hope they will make a donation to the American Cancer Society (Relay for Life) through me. Checks should be written to the American Cancer Society. I am currently only four thousand dollars short of $200,000.

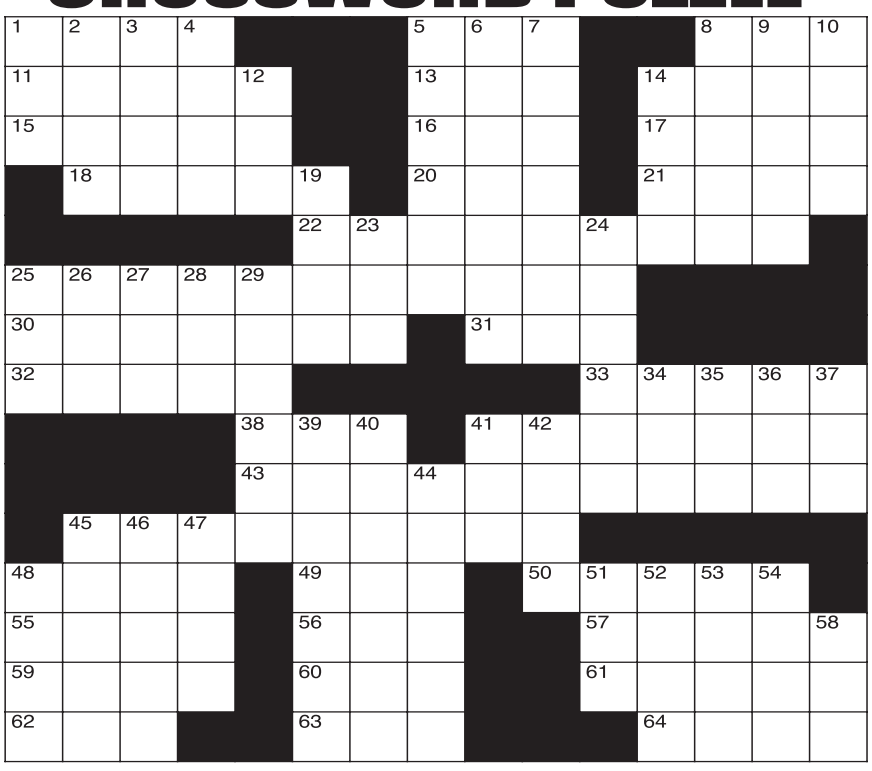
If you would like your free copy, email me your name and address to: hupps440@aol.com.

You will get to read a great book about weird people and support a wonderful cause- curing cancer. Thanks for the help.

Thought for the day:

"Believe everything happens for a reason; if you get a second chance grab it with both hands."

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



CLUES ACROSS
1. Taxis
5. Space Systems Command
8. Plant seed by scattering
11. Alliances
13. Fiddler crabs
14. Heroic tale
15. Yemen capital
16. Misleading gesture
17. Cain and __
18. Simple shoe
20. Hundredweight
21. ChildrenÕs toy in the snow
22. Gets rid of
25. Free of deceit
30. Performed a dance
31. Chinese philosophical principle
32. Exaggerated
33. Refrain from inflicting
38. A doctrine
41. Can be subdued
43. A place to bathe
45. Land used for pasture
48. Curved piece of iron
49. Automobile
50. Fencing sword
55. Breezes through
56. Child
57. NBA legend Iverson
59. Horsley and Iacocca are two
60. Midway between northeast and east
61. Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation
62. U.S. leader during much of WW2
63. Lair
64. Fibrous material

CLUES DOWN
1. Home of Ò60 MinutesÓ
2. Expression of sorrow or pity
3. __ fide: legitimate
4. Immune response
5. Assistance and support
6. Glared
7. Spanish saloon
8. Pitch black
9. S-shaped lines
10. Statistical test
12. __ Paulo, city
14. Graduation garb
19. A way to record
23. Not good
24. Weather events
25. A pituitary hormone
26. Jamie Foxx film
27. RockerÕs accessory
28. One point east (clockwise) of due north
29. One who obtains pleasure from anotherÕs pain
34. Consume
35. Licensed for Wall Street
36. Sick
37. Israeli city __ Aviv
39. Removed the husk
40. Mass of rocks and sediment
41. Two-year-old sheep
42. Area units
44. Prison overseer
45. Walked
46. Wartime escort aircraft carrier
47. Tax
48. 50 percent
51. Swiss river
52. Tattle
53. Actor Idris
54. Resist authority (slang)
58. Egg of a louse

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P.E.O. Blacksburg chapter supports 10 women with scholarships

Traditionally, stars represent the outstanding, the bright, the good, the positive.

They symbolize noble and shining goals. Stars, as people, stand out from others; they leave a distinct mark in life and in society. There are stars on the rise in our area!

P.E.O. (Philanthropic Educational Organization) Chapter AU of Blacksburg recently sponsored several young women who have received awards for the academic year 2026 – 2027, either through the P.E.O. or through its own Jean B. Duerr Memorial Scholarship.

P.E.O. has been celebrating women helping women reach for the stars for more than 150 years. Since its inception in 1869, the nonprofit organization has helped more than 129,000 women pursue educational goals by providing over $462 million in grants, scholarships, awards and loans. The Sisterhood also owns and supports Cottey College in Missouri, the only **non-sectarian college in the United States that is owned and operated by women for women.**

Through membership, the P.E.O. Sisterhood has brought together more than half a million women in the United States and Canada who are passionate about helping women advance through education, while supporting and motivating them. In addition to educational philanthropies, the P.E.O. Sisterhood provides a framework of support and community for all members.

What started with a bond of friendship among seven women in Mount Pleasant, Iowa, is now one of the oldest women's organizations in North America with close to 5,400 chapters.

To learn more about P.E.O., its powerful educational philanthropies and see stories of women who have benefited from the programs, visit peointernational.org.

This year's P.E.Op Project recipients include:

Briana Carper, Program for Continuing Education (PCE) (need-based grant) and ELF Loan (up to $20,00 for her MS degree); Florence Onyike, International Peace Scholarship (IPS) (up to $12,500); Trio Springer, Educational Loan Fund (ELF) (up to $25,000 for her DNP degree); Tess Dickhans, $2,500 STAR Scholarship; and Layla McCall, Virginia State Scholarship Fund (VSSF) Designated Scholar ($2,000 min).



Briana Carper, with the help of her PCE grant and her ELF loan, will attend Radford University to pursue an MS in Counseling and Human Development with a concentration in Clinical Mental Health Counseling, while working as a Graduate Assistant. Her goal is to become a Licensed Professional Counselor. PCE provides need-based grants to women whose education has been interrupted and who find it necessary to return to school to support themselves and/or their families. The ELF loan has an interest rate of 2% which does not accrue until after graduation. The loan also provides a six-month grace period with no interest and no payment during those months.



Trio Springer also has been awarded an ELF loan. She has pursued her degrees while working as a school nurse and raising four boys. She is currently in her final year as a Doctor of Nursing Practice student at Radford University. She believes that the DNP degree will enable her to provide even higher-quality care to her patients, to serve as a stronger leader within her profession and to mentor future nurses. According to her, the ELF loan has brought her one step closer to achieving her lifelong dream and advancing her career as a future Nurse Practitioner. She is excited about using her higher education to give back to the community and to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others.



Florence Onyike is a recipient of an IPS which provides scholarships for international women students to pursue graduate study in the U.S. or Canada. She is PhD candidate in Geosciences at Virginia Tech, where her research focuses on groundwater sustainability and land subsidence. She studies managed aquifer recharge (MAR) as a strategy to replenish depleted groundwater supplies and stabilize land that has sunk due to over-pumping, with particular attention to underserved and rapidly urbanizing communities most vulnerable to water insecurity. Florence is committed to turning her research into practical tools that help water managers and communities anticipate and withstand water-related hazards before they become crises.



Tess Dickhans will attend Appalachian State University and will major in Kinesiology with a concentration in Exercise Science. Her goal is to attend dental school and become a dentist. Since App State does not have a pre-dental track, kinesiology will provide a strong background for dental school. She also plans to take some required dental classes as she completes her undergraduate work. The STAR Scholarship that she received provides scholarships for exceptional high school senior women to attend an accredited postsecondary institution in the U.S. or Canada.



Layla McCall is a Virginia State Scholarship Fund Designated Scholar which provides scholarships to women who are U. S. citizens and domiciled in Virginia to attend an accredited Virginia school of higher education. As an upper classman at Virginia Tech, Layla will continue her degree work in Clinical Neuroscience this year on a pre-medical track. She hopes to ultimately pursue an MD/PhD program to become a physician-scientist. She is particularly interested in researching neurodevelopmental disorders. She also looks forward to starting a research internship through the Integrated Health Sciences & Research Program, where she will be matched with a lab at Fralin Biomedical Research Institute.

Chapter AU also offers scholarships from its own Jean B. Duerr Memorial Fund. The fund was established by Duerr's husband to honor her memory. Jean Duerr was a past president and loyal member of Chap AU and the P.E.O. sisterhood until her death in 1991. The fund has provided scholarships to deserving women for over thirty years. Chapter AU had five recipients of the Jean B. Duerr Memorial Scholarship, each receiving $2,200 for the 2026 – 2027 academic year: Zahra Bahranifard, Naisha Hudait, Jorja Lawson, Monica Shanmugam and Brooke Werthmann.



As a PhD Candidate in Chemical Engineering at Virginia Tech, Zahra Bahranifard's research project is the design and development of biocompatible multi-material integration in 3D/4D printing to bridge the gap between material innovation, advanced fabrication, and real-world biomedical applications. Her long-term commitment is research that connects fundamental materials science with biological performance. She is committed to completing her research while remaining engaged in community building, cultural exchange, and supporting fellow graduate students.



Naisha Hudait graduated from Blacksburg High School this past May. She will attend the University of Virginia where she plans to study neuroscience to be able to dive deeper into how the brain works and how we can use that knowledge to treat neurological disorders. She is excited to explore research on epilepsy, brain-computer interfaces and decision making while staying grounded in compassion and patient care. She believes that understanding people matters just as important as understanding neurons.



Jorja Lawson will attend Johnson and Wales University, a highly respected and accredited Culinary College, to earn an associate's degree in culinary arts. She will then aim for a BA in Culinary Nutrition. Her goal is to make memorable food that not only tastes good and evokes memories but also fits specific nutritional needs.



Monica Shanmugam is a PhD. candidate in Aerospace Engineering. Her research focuses on "creating tools that help engineers detect early signs of degradation, reduce unplanned maintenance, and improve the safety and reliability of systems that millions of people rely on every day." Her long-term goal is to become a "technical leader who helps guide the safe and ethical use of AI-enabled technology across aerospace and other critical engineering systems."



Brooke Werthmann is a rising fourth-year student at Virginia Tech working on a Bachelor of Science in Human Nutrition, Food, and Exercise, with a Psychology Minor. Her long-term goal is to become a Physician's Assistant. She has a passion for patient care but also a concern for "work-life balance" and the importance of hard work to reach her goal. One of her references stated that "she is one of the most dedicated, accomplished, and well-rounded students I have had the privilege to mentor in my career."

These young women are shining stars! This world is and will continue to be a better place because of them and what they have to offer.

Marianna Fillmore
President Chapter AU, Blacksburg

Blacksburg Junior Women's Club supports local schools with supplies

The Blacksburg Junior Women's Club (BJWC) recently donated school supplies to all five local elementary schools in Blacksburg, helping provide students and teachers with resources as they begin a new school year. The donation reflects BJWC's ongoing commitment to serving the Montgomery County community. BJWC is a group of women dedicated to serving their community, supporting local causes, developing leadership skills and building lasting friendships. Through volunteer projects, fundraising efforts, social events and community partnerships, members work together to make a positive difference in the lives of those around them. BJWC is part of the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC), an organization that has been bringing women together in service since 1890. GFWC creates inclusive communities around the world and includes approximately 60,000 members across the United States, including the District of Columbia, as well as members in 12 countries. GFWC volunteers make a global impact through their commitment to improving the lives of others. Members vary in age, talent, location, background, and profession, but are united by a shared dedication to community service. The school supplies that were distributed were donated on behalf of GRWC VA through their Advocates for Children Special Program at their most recent conference in Natural Bridge. Women age 18 and older who live in Montgomery County or the surrounding area are invited to learn more about becoming part of BJWC. The club will hold its first meeting and membership information session of the year Tuesday, Sept. 1, at 6:30 p.m. in the Blacksburg Police Department Community Room. Whether you are new to the area or looking for meaningful ways to become more involved in the community, BJWC welcomes women who want to serve, connect, and make a difference.

Blacksburg Junior Women's Club



Pictured (left to right) Kristen Widsa, BJWC President; Dr. Cheryl Burrell-Graves, Principal Harding Avenue Elementary School; Becca Williams, Assistant Principal Harding Avenue Elementary School; and Kelley Olsen, BJWC Vice President of Membership.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF BJWC

Pictured (left to right) Kelley Olsen, BJWC Vice President of Membership; Kelly Roark, Principal Gilbert Linkous Elementary School; and Kristen Widsa, BJWC President.

New graduate certificate in Substance Abuse and Addictions Counseling offered at RU

Radford University's College of Education and Human Development has received approval from the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) for a new graduate certificate in Substance Abuse and Addictions Counseling. This new program will provide knowledge and skills in the prevention, treatment and recovery of substance use disorders by exploring societal dimensions of substance abuse and addiction in the United States.

This program will give aspiring counselors an understanding of the neurobiological and pharmacological foundations of substance abuse and addictive behaviors, preparing them to work with individuals, families and communities impacted by substance misuse. Graduates will be able to apply counseling interventions in the treatment of substance abuse disorders.

"We are thrilled to receive SCHEV approval in support of the graduate certificate in Substance Use and Addictions Counseling, an initiative that reflects our commitment to addressing one of the most pressing behavioral health needs in our region," said Bethany Lanier, associate professor and chair of the Department of Counselor Education. "The launch of this certificate is more than the addition of a new certificate – it is an investment in hope."

The new certificate program supports Radford University's initiative to become a premier destination for health education and talent in Southwest Virginia, diversifying the educational portfolio for practitioners of different professions. Students will learn approaches to assessment, treatment planning, relapse prevention and recovery support, with particular attention to the needs of rural and underserved populations.

"By preparing counselors to respond to substance use and addiction through evidence-based practice with expertise, compassion and cultural responsiveness, we are creating opportunities for healthier individuals, stronger families and more resilient rural communities," Lanier said.

The graduate certificate in Substance Abuse and Addictions Counseling is expected to launch in fall 2026. Prospective students interested in expanding their expertise in substance use treatment and preparing to serve individuals, families and communities impacted by addiction can go to https://www.radford.edu/programs/substance-abuse-addictions-counseling-certificate.html.

Jordan Richardson for Radford University

Global Flavors, Local Connection celebration planned at YMCA

BLACKSBURG — The YMCA at Virginia Tech invites community members to experience an unforgettable evening of culture, cuisine, music, and connection at Global Flavors, Local Connection, a special Welcoming Week celebration inspired by the 2026 theme, Stories We Share: The Courage to Connect.

The event, set for Saturday, Sept. 19, 2026, offers a unique opportunity for neighbors of all backgrounds to come together through the universal languages of food, music, and dance. Guests will enjoy international cuisine, cultural entertainment, and meaningful opportunities to build relationships while celebrating the diverse traditions that make the New River Valley a vibrant and welcoming community.

The evening begins with food sampling and cultural entertainment, 5-7 p.m., featuring dishes from local restaurants representing cultures from around the world: India Garden – Indian Cuisine, Next Door Bake Shop – Thai cuisine, Avellino's – Italian, Our Daily Bread – French and YMCA Food Truck – Hispanic.

As guests sample a variety of global flavors, they will also learn about the cultural traditions and stories behind the foods, creating opportunities for conversation, understanding, and connection.

The program will feature an exciting lineup of live performances, including:

The Itraab Music Ensemble, performing traditional and contemporary Arabic music; the debut of a special original musical composition featuring recorded narratives from members of the international community, accompanied by harp performance by Aline; and Appalachian music and dance presented by Blacksburg Contra Dance.

Following the cultural showcase, the celebration continues with a Community Contra Dance, 7 – 10 p.m. Open to all ages and experience levels, the dance offers a fun and welcoming opportunity for participants to learn simple steps, meet new people, and experience one of Appalachia's most beloved community traditions.

"Food and music have an incredible ability to bring people together," said Dina Ali, Director of International Programs at the YMCA at Virginia Tech. "This event is about creating space for neighbors to share stories, celebrate cultures, and discover the connections that unite us. We hope everyone leaves feeling a greater sense of belonging and appreciation for the richness of our community."

Global Flavors, Local Connection embodies the spirit of Welcoming Week by encouraging cultural exchange, strengthening relationships, and fostering a community where everyone feels valued and included. Through shared experiences and meaningful conversations, attendees will discover how food, traditions, and storytelling can help build bridges across cultures and backgrounds.

To purchase tickets, go to https://vtymca.org/welcoming-week/. Proceeds from the event support YMCA at Virginia Tech community programs that strengthen youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility throughout the New River Valley.

YMCA at Virginia Tech

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

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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

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. Pastor Diana Farrell White. 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.

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.

(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!"

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 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.

LUTHERAN

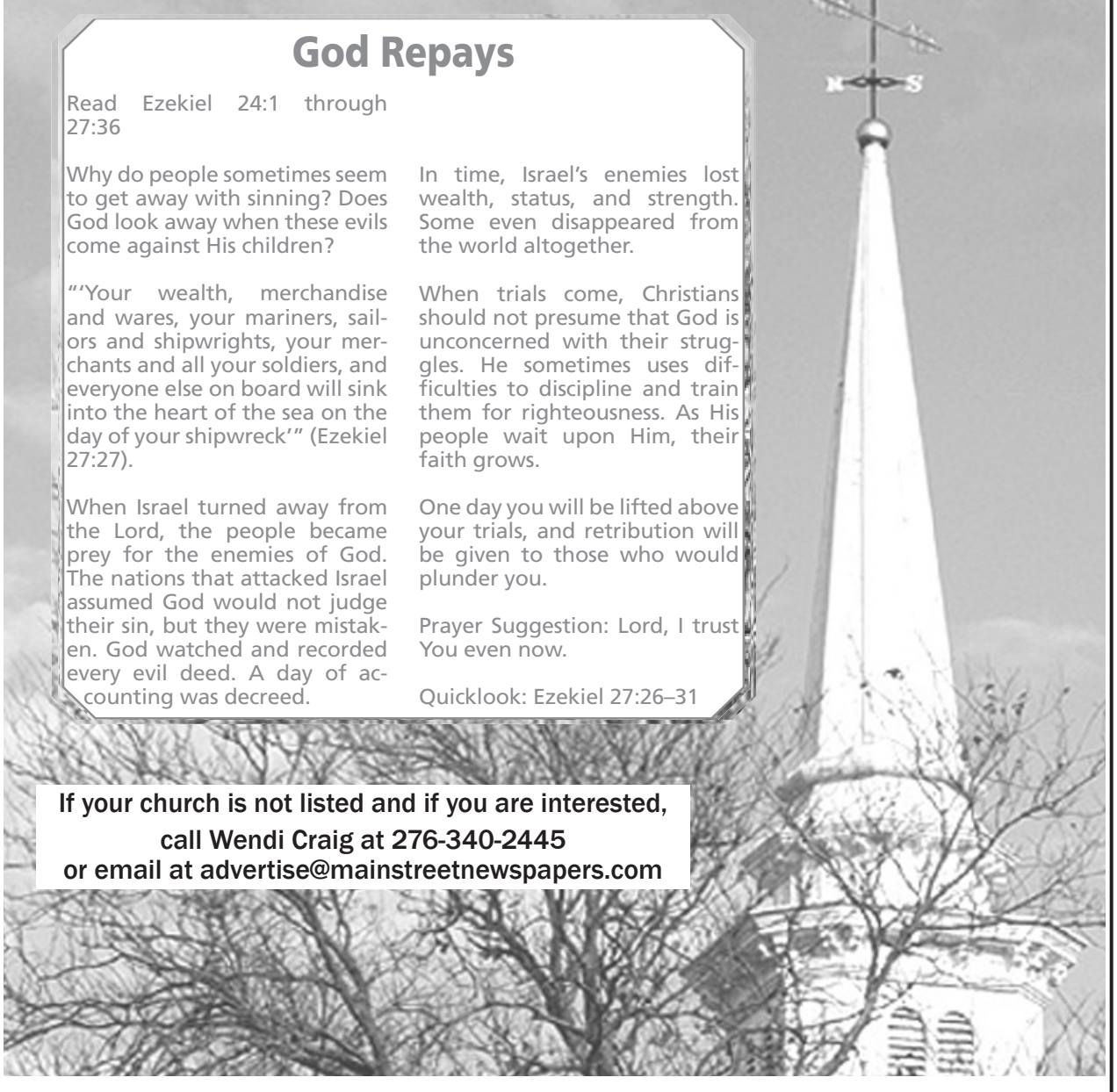
St. Michael Lutheran Church, 2308 Merrimac Road, Blacksburg, VA 24060. Worship service each Sunday at 10 AM, Sunday School 9 AM. We are a community of God's people where we gather for worship, learning and service. Visitors and new members are always WELCOME! Google comments: "Wonderful, welcoming congregation." A place where all are truly welcome." You'll love our minister, Pastor James Henricks, who is a guiding light for our lives. 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

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.

WESLEYAN

Christ Wesleyan Church, 525 Harkrader Street, Christiansburg. Sunday Worship at 11 AM with Nursery available. Sunday School at 10 AM with Adult and Children classes. Adult Midweek Refuel and Youth Group on Wednesdays from 6-7:30 PM. Mission: Seeking to exalt Christ by sacrificially caring for one another and our community. Pastor: Colby Callaway. Office Phone: 540-250-3864. Website: cwc4u.org. We Also Livestream on Youtube Every Sunday at 11AM!"



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Email: geraldduncan@duncanauto.net

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For Sale

FOR SALE

Crosby 14' Fiberglass Angler with trailer and non-working Johnson motor. Call 336-601-4323.

Public Auction

Notice of Public Auction

The contents of the following storage unit(s) will be sold at Public Auction to enforce our owner's lien:
Unit #434
Sale will be conducted at B&B Storage,
At 1015 Radford St., Christiansburg VA
on Friday, August 28, 2026, at 10:00 A.M.
All sales are final & CASH only

Legals - City of Salem

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given to all interested persons that the Council of the City of Salem, at its regular meeting on Monday, September 14, 2026, at 6:30 p.m., in Council Chambers, City Hall, 114. N. Broad Street, in the City of Salem, Virginia, will hold a public hearing, pursuant to Sections 15.2-2204 and 15.2-2285 of the Code of Virginia, as amended, to consider the following requests relative to the CODE OF THE CITY OF SALEM, VIRGINIA:

1. Consider the request of Terry Properties of VA Inc., property owner, for the issuance of a Special Exception Permit to allow a two family dwelling on the property located at 432 Chestnut Street, (Tax Map # 161-3-1).

2. Consider amending Chapter 66, Signs, Article I In General, Section 66-11.1 Minor signs during voting, of the CODE OF THE CITY OF SALEM, VIRGINIA, pertaining to minor signs during voting.

Copies of the proposed plans, ordinances or amendments may be examined in the Office of Community Development, 21 South Bruffey Street, Salem, Virginia.
At said hearing, parties in interest and citizens shall have an opportunity to be heard relative to the said requests.
THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SALEM, VIRGINIA
BY:
H. Robert Light
Clerk of Council

VDOT Virginia Department of Transportation

ADVERTISEMENT FOR SNOW REMOVAL EQUIPMENT SERVICES WITH OPERATOR SIGNUP

The Virginia Department of Transportation invites heavy equipment owners to sign up for the rental of their equipment with operators for SNOW & ICE REMOVAL purposes in Salem Residency which includes the counties of Roanoke, Botetotourt and Craig during the winter of 2026-2027. Price per hour shall include operators, fuel, tire chains,supplies and required insurance. VDOT will need dump trucks, pickups with plows, motorgraders, backhoes, dozers, track loaders, tractors, rubbertire loaders and farm tractors. All equipment shall be equipped for night work and be in good mechanical condition to ensure a safe and dependable 24/7 operation. VDOT reserves the right to determine acceptability of equipment size and condition for the task. Contractors submitting prices meeting the requirements of the Agreement may be contracted with and may be eligible to receive a bonus payment and a minimum guaranteed payment for the season. Contractors must submit their application on the electronic M7B bidding site at https://plow4va.vdot.virginia.gov. All new and returning Contractors must be active in the Virginia eProcurement Portal (eVA) in order to do business with the Commonwealth of Virginia (https://eva.virginia.gov). Applications received by 7:00 PM on Friday September 18, 2026 may be eligible for a bonus payment. See the EVA posting for additional information, including contract requirements. Questions can be directed to the Salem Residency from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday – Friday.
Phone: 540-387-5497.
Email: SalemDistrictSnow@vdot.virginia.gov
EEO/AA Employe

Legals - Montgomery County

VDOT Virginia Department of Transportation

ADVERTISEMENT FOR SNOW REMOVAL EQUIPMENT SERVICES WITH OPERATOR SIGNUP

The Virginia Department of Transportation invites heavy equipment owners to sign up for the rental of their equipment with operators for SNOW & ICE REMOVAL purposes in Christiansburg Residency which includes the counties of Floyd, Giles, Montgomery, and Pulaski during the winter of 2026-2027. Price per hour shall include operators, fuel, tire chains, supplies and required insurance. VDOT will need dump trucks, pickups with plows, motorgraders, backhoes, dozers, track loaders, tractors, rubber-tire loaders and farm tractors. All equipment shall be equipped for night work and be in good mechanical condition to ensure a safe and dependable 24/7 operation. VDOT reserves the right to determine acceptability of equipment size and condition for the task. Contractors submitting prices meeting the requirements of the Agreement may be contracted with and may be eligible to receive a bonus payment and a minimum guaranteed payment for the season.
Contractors must submit their application on the electronic M7B bidding site at https://plow4va.vdot.virginia.gov . All new and returning Contractors must be active in the Virginia eProcurement Portal (eVA) in order to do business with the Commonwealth of Virginia (https://eva.virginia.gov). Applications received by 7:00 PM on Friday September 18, 2026 may be eligible for a bonus payment. See the EVA posting for additional information, including contract requirements. Questions can be directed to the Christiansburg Residency from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday –Friday.
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Legals - Montgomery County

Order of Publication

Commonwealth of Virginia
VA Code§§ 1-211.1; 8.01-316,-317,20-104
Case No.CL26-1624
MONTGOMERY COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT, 55 EAST MAIN STREET, SUITE 1, CHRISTIASNBURG, VA 24073
VIRGINIA: IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE COUNTY OF MONTGOMERY
ALISON JUSTUS, Plaintiff,
v.
UNKNOWN HEIRS OF MELVIN E. SCOTT, INDIVIDUALLY, AND AS TRUSTEE UNDER THE SCOTT LIVING TRUST DATED JUNE 16, 1999,

UNKNOWN HEIRS OF NAOMI W. SCOTT, INDIVIDUALLY, AND AS TRUSTEE UNDER THE SCOTT LIVING TRUST DATED JUNE 16, 1999,

UNKNOWN SUCCESSORS IN TRUST UNDER THE SCOTT LIVING TUST DATED JUNE 16, 1999, and

UNKNOWN BENEFICIARIES UNDER THE SCOTT LIVING TRUST DATED JUNE 16, 1999,
Defendant(s).

The object of this suit is to reform the Deed dated August 21, 2003, recorded in the Clerk's Office of the Circuit Court of Montgomery County, Virginia, as Instrument No. 2003014538, and confirm title in Alison Justus. An Affidavit having been filed stating that due diligence has been used, without effect, to ascertain the location of the named Defendant(s), that the Defendant(s) may be non-residents of Virginia and maintain no domicile with ion the borders of the Commonwealth, or are deceased, or that there may be parties who have an interest in the property but are unknown, namely, heirs, devisees, and successors in title of the named Defendant(s), made Defendant(s) by the general description of Parties Unknown, it is hereby ORDERED that he named Defendant(s) and all Parties Unknown appear on or before October 14, 2026, and do what may be necessary to protect their interests in this cause.
Entered 8/17/26
Honorable Robert M.D. Turk
Judge
I Ask For This:
N. Reid Broughton (VSB No. 38899)
Katie M. Decoster (VSB No. 82696)
Sands Anderson PC
P.O. Box 2009
Christiansburg, VA 24068-2009
(540)260-9011
(540) 260-0022 fax

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, September 14, 2026, at 7:00 PM in the Council Chambers of the Christiansburg Town Hall, 100 E. Main Street, Christiansburg, Virginia 24073, pursuant to Sections 15.2-2204 and 15.2-2285 of the Code of Virginia, as amended. The purpose of the public hearing is to receive public comments concerning:
A. An ordinance of the Town of Christiansburg amending the 2013 Comprehensive Plan by adopting a revised Comprehensive Plan consisting of the following elements:
Government, Environment, Economic Development, Recreation and Destination, Infrastructure, Transportation, Public Safety, Housing, and Future Land Use, including the Future Land Use Map.
Town Hall will be open and available to receive public comments in-person at the time of this Public Hearing.
A copy of the proposed revised Comprehensive Plan 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 the Planning Department, at (540) 382-6128, ext. 1902 or by email at planning@christiansburg.org, with any questions or if you require reasonable accommodations.

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, September 8, 2026, 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. Code Amendment request by Town of Christiansburg, Applicant, to amend the Christiansburg Town Code, Chapter 42, Sec. 42-397 – Permitted uses. Data centers are currently allowed by right in the General Industrial (I-2) Zoning District, and the request is to require a conditional use permit for data centers in the General Industrial (I-2) Zoning District.
A copy of the applications, 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 the Planning Department, at (540) 382-6128, ext. 1902 or by email at planning@christiansburg.org,
with any questions or if you require reasonable accommodations.

Trustee's Sale

1990 Reesedale Road, Elliston, Virginia 24087 (Parcel ID: 022175; Tax Map No.: 057- 2 6)
Default having been made in the terms of a certain Deed of Trust dated December 29, 2015, in the original principal amount of $106,837.00 and recorded in the Clerk's Office of the Circuit Court of the County of Montgomery, Virginia in Instrument No. 150009429, the undersigned Substitute Trustees will sell at public auction on September 25, 2026, at 3:00 PM in front of the building housing the Montgomery County Circuit Court, 55 East Main Street, Christiansburg, VA 24073, the property designated as Lot number six (6), as shown on plat entitled "Survey for […] Kaulback" showing Subdivision of 45.86 acre tract, Mt. Tabor District, Montgomery County, Virginia, which plat is dated June 18, 1979, prepared by T.P. Parker and Son, C.L.S., designated no. 6256, and recorded in the Clerk`s Office of the Circuit Court in Montgomery County, Virginia, in Plat Book 9, page 197. Sale is subject to all prior liens, easements, restrictions, covenants, and conditions, if any, of record, or other matters which would be disclosed by an accurate survey or inspection of the premises. TERMS: CASH. A deposit of $11,000.00 or 10% of the sale price, whichever is lower, will be required of the successful bidder at time of sale. Prior to the sale, interested bidders will be required to register with and must present a bid deposit which may be held during the sale by the trustee. The bid deposit must be certified funds and/or cash, but no more than $9,900.00 of cash will be accepted. The successful bidder's deposit will be retained at the sale and applied to the sale price. If held by the trustee, all other bid deposits will be returned to the unsuccessful bidders. Settlement is to be made within 15 calendar days. The successful bidder will be responsible for obtaining possession of the property, and for all costs and fees related to recording the Trustee's Deed, including the grantors tax. The successful bidder will be required to execute a Memorandum of Trustee's Sale, available for review on the Foreclosure Sales page of www.glasserlaw.com, outlining additional terms of sale and settlement. A Trustee's Deed will be prepared by Trustee's attorney at high bidder's expense. This is a communication from a debt collector, Glasser and Glasser, P.L.C. on behalf of Atlantic Trustee Services, L.L.C., and/or M. Brennan Hutt d/b/a H&H Abstracting, and/or NFPDS-VA LLC, Substitute Trustees, Crown Center Building, Suite 600, 580 East Main Street, Norfolk, VA 23510, File No. 233457-02, Tel: (757) 321-6465, between 10:00 a.m. & 12:00 noon only.

Legals - Montgomery County

ABC NOTICE

SUNSHINE EATS LLC, trading as ADDY KATZ, 3165 N. Franklin St., Christiansburg, Montgomery County, Virginia, 24073-4025

The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) AUTHORITY for a Mixed Beverage Restaurant license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages.
Ronald J. Frank Jr. Owner

NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

STATEWIDE ADS

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SERVICES

DIVORCE-Uncontested, $525.00 + $89.00 court cost. WILLS-$295.00. No court appearance. Estimated completion time twenty-one days. Hilton Oliver, Attorney (Facebook). 757-490-0126. Se Habla Espanol. BBB Member. https://hiltonoliverattorneyva.com

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Montgomery Sports

First week of Friday Night football

Marty Gordon
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

Fans at Thursday's Radford, Christiansburg benefit game noticed a little difference in Radford's helmets as every player wore Guardian Caps.

Their usage has surged significantly with over 500,000 athletes wearing them across youth leagues, high schools, colleges and the NFL.

The Cap is a lightweight, padded soft-shell cover that attaches over the outside of traditional hard-shell sports helmets and primarily used in football to absorb and reduce the severity of impact forces.

Typically, they weigh under a pound and fasten with straps and Velcro.

Last season, Craig County High School wore the caps during the entire season.

Researchers at the Virginia Tech Helmet Labs have thoroughly tested these add-on shells and show that a single cap reduces concussion risk roughly 15 to 34 percent, with two colliding caps mutually doubling that protective benefit.

Area media poll comes out for preseason with Liberty Christian topping the poll.

Ranking, followed by team (first-place votes) and points is:

1. Liberty Christian (2)- 69
2. Patrick Henry (1)- 62
3. Jefferson Forest (1)- 50
4. Roanoke Catholic (3)- 43

T-5. Salem- 36

T-5. Magna Vista- 36

7. Heritage-Lynchburg- 30

T-8. William Byrd (1)- 24

T-8. North Cross (1)- 24

10. William Fleming- 22

Other receiving votes: Lord Botetourt- 18, E.C. Glass- 14, Glenvar- 14, Radford- 13, Grayson County- 12, George Wythe- 8, Craig County- 5, Alleghany- 5, Franklin County- 5, Floyd County- 4, Blacksburg- 1

Games for the first week:

Christiansburg at Carroll County:

Last year, Carroll County finished 9-3, including a 35-21 win over Christiansburg. The Cavaliers enter their third season under Seth Greer, after losing to Magna Vista in Region 3D semifinals.

Prediction: Christiansburg 28, Carroll County 21.

Holston at Eastern Montgomery:

Last year, Holston downed EM 49-18 and would finish a 6-5 season.

Prediction: Eastern Montgomery 24, Holston 20.

Giles at Blacksburg:

Last year, Blacksburg took a 40-8 win. Giles would have a 9-3 season enroute to the postseason for the first time in three years.

Prediction: Blacksburg 32, Giles 24.

Radford at George Wythe: Instead of Remember the Titans, it will be remembering the ol' New River District. These two former district foes continue to make the opening game an annual event.

Last year, Radford took the 31-20 win and finished the season 7-5 overall. George Wythe was 8-5.

This one takes on a personal note as I graduated from GW and have been an adopted Bobcat for a long time.

Rising junior Trenton Carter returns for Radford after catching 41 passes for 702 yards with 10 touchdowns.

Coach Brandon Harner is in year number 14 at GW and has compiled a 97-45 overall mark.

Prediction: Radford 31, George Wythe 30.

Auburn at James River:

Auburn would take a 49-12 win over James River to start the 2025 season.

Prediction: Auburn 32, James River 24.

Glenvar, Blacksburg battle in benefit game



Blacksburg senior quarterback Sam Szefc gets ready to launch a touchdown pass to Keefer Caldwell during a second quarter drive against Glenvar at the Friday, Aug. 21 game.



Down 17-0 in the second quarter, Blacksburg's Keefer Caldwell scores on a long TD reception and then intercepts a Glenvar pass to spark a Bruin comeback against Glenvar.



PHOTOS BY JON FLEMING

Blacksburg's Zachary Noakes scores on a short touchdown reception against Glenvar during a Blacksburg rally. Blacksburg pulled within three points at halftime, but fell 14-17 after a scoreless second half.

Radford and Christiansburg play benefit game



Christiansburg's Colby Ashbury (center) finds his way through a sea of Radford defenders during Thursday's game.



Peyton Hailie (left) tackles Radford's Blake Blair on a quarterback keep play at the game, held in Radford.



Christiansburg backup QB Thierry Macie launches a pass to a Blue Demon receiver late in the Thursday, Aug. 20 benefit game.



PHOTOS BY KYMN DAVIDSON-HAMLEY

Trent Byrd eyes the advancing defenders from Radford as he advances on a handoff. Christiansburg won the game 21-10.

Outdoor report: State wildlife fees increase

At its regularly scheduled August meeting, the Board of Wildlife Resources approved several wildlife, fisheries, and boating regulations.

In addition, the board approved increases to certain fees related to hunting, fishing, trapping, and boating and a new fee for primitive camping on department owned wildlife management areas.

The proposed Stocked Trout Management Plan was endorsed by the board. The original plan proposed by DWR in May was a 10-year management plan and after the public comment period and further staff review a five-year management plan was presented by staff and endorsed by the Board. The plan includes a 35% reduction in trout stocking statewide.

These approvals came after a 30-day public comment period during which the Department received a total of 1835 comments on proposed regulations and fee increases as well as the Stocked Trout Management Plan. Out of those, 972 comments specifically related to the proposed fee increases.

Fee Increases:

Effective Oct. 1, 2026, most resident hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses, as well as boat registration and titling fees will increase by $5. Licenses for youth, apprentice, disabled veterans, and disabled participants will not increase. Boating related fees have not increased since 2019 and

See **Fees,** page 10

Radford All-American swimmer honored



PHOTO BY BRYANT ALTIZER

Radford High School swimmer/ diver Jillian Grim (left) receives her state championship ring during Thursday's benefit football game at RHS. Grim has won three consecutive state diving championships. She was also recognized for being named to the All-American swim list and is Radford High School's first female swimmer/ diver to do so. Also, pictured is her coach, Heather Rowland.

Member champs at Blacksburg Country Club



PHOTO COURTESY OF BLACKSBURG COUNTRY CLUB

The team of Rob Jones, Tracy McCoy, Susan Beato and Shelby Gwinn took this past week's Member-Member tournament at Blacksburg Country Club.

Results announced for Pulaski Motorsports Park's Aug. 22 races



Kyle Barnes picked up the win in Super Street at Pulaski Motorsports Park last Saturday.



Kyle Dudley picked up the win in the second Limited Late Model Race at the Aug. 22 races.



Jeff Linkous took home the win in Pure4 in Saturday's racing action.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF PC MOTORSPORTS

Charlie Beals took home the win in the Legends race Saturday, Aug. 22.

BHS claims golf victory



Playing at the number one spot for the Bruins, Blacksburg's Jack Skinner hits a perfect drive at number 10 at Draper Valley last week. Skinner carded a 73 to tie for 5th as Blacksburg would take the team win with a 299, with Hidden Valley just behind at 302.



Blacksburg's Gavin Horn tracks his drive during River Ridge District tournament play at Draper Valley. Horn scored a 78 for the Bruins.



Christiansburg's Carter Dudash hits a nice tee shot on Draper Valley's par three number 11 hole. Dudash shot 77 for his round to lead the Blue Demons team.



PHOTOS BY JON FLEMING

Christiansburg's Lucas Sawyers putts at Draper Valley. Sawyers shot a 78 on the day for the Blue Demons, who shot 321 as a team in an early season RRD tournament.

Fees from page 9

hunting, trapping, and fishing licenses have not increased since 2012. A $10 fee to camp on department-owned lands will also go into effect on Oct. 1, 2026.

A detailed list of license fee adjustments can be found here: https://dwr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/media/Proposed-Language-4VAC15-20-65.pdf

A list of boat registration and titling fee adjustments can be found here: https://dwr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/media/Proposed-Language-4VAC15-380-120.pdf

Details on the new fee for primitive camping on Department-owned wildlife management areas can be found here: https://dwr.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/media/Proposed-Language-4VAC15-20-155.pdf

Wildlife:

Approved changes include updating the lists of federally threatened and endangered species and of native and naturalized fauna in Virginia, adding and removing species from the state list of endangered and threatened species, clarifying the start of bear hound training season, changing the release date for rehabilitated deer fawns via permittees, and adjustments to the elk special conservation license program. Some of these changes will become effective on Oct. 1, 2026, while others will become effective on Jan. 1, 2027.

Fisheries:

Fisheries regulatory changes include a prohibition on stocking flathead catfish and rock bass, limiting the waters in which certain gear can be used to collect bait, updating the definition of "fish bait," as well as changes to some local trout regulations. These changes will become effective on Jan. 1, 2027.

Boating:

Boating regulations include clarifying language related to vessel operation and waterway markers, adoption of the federal requirement for children under the age of 13 to wear a life jacket when underway, and adoption of the federal requirement for the use of engine cut-off switches. These changes will become effective on Jan. 1, 2027.

Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources



PHOTO COURTESY OF RADFORD UNIVERSITY

Radford University's competitive cheer team earned first places finishes at all three events they competed in this past season.

Radford's newly elevated competitive cheer team takes home a trio of trophies

It doesn't take long to watch Radford's competitive cheer team perform its most recent routine; this season's piece clocks in at two minutes and 30 seconds.

When it comes to the amount of time and effort required to put the whole thing together, however, that's a different story.

Starting last fall, the group's 27 student members spent nine months practicing and refining their choreography and perfecting their skills, stunts and timing. The group convened four days a week for more than two hours each day, with occasional weekend sets.

This past spring, that hard work paid off. Repeatedly.

Across March and April, the team vied for victory at three events – the Cheer & Dance Extreme Shamrock Showdown in Baltimore, Maryland; the Maximum Cheer & Dance Competition in Richmond, Virginia; and the Maximum Mountain National Championship in Cherokee, North Carolina – and left each meet with first-place wins.

Those successes came just a few months after the university founded the Club Sports Federation to support five newly elevated club sports, including pickleball, men's rugby, men's skeet and trap, women's flag football and cheer.

"We do owe a huge thank you to the elevated club sports council, because they gave us the resources and opportunities to grow and learn and get through all the challenges," team vice-president Lily Goggins said. "We also had a large number of athletes come and try out for our team, which gave us a deeper pool of talent."

Radford's Assistant Director of Club Sports, Keith Pulliam, said the team's performance helps validate the federation's decision.

"It definitely shows we picked the right group to elevate," he noted. "We're now thinking about transitioning other club sports, too."

Pulliam praised the team leadership provided by Goggins and club president Carmen Glover, as well as Brooklyn Arven, a senior who acted as coach.

"They couldn't find a coach in time, so they used one of the students. They decided they should go with her again next season, and I don't blame them," he said.

D.J. Preston, director of Student Recreation and Wellness, summed up the team's winning strategy: "They are committed to their craft. They are committed to their practice schedule. They are committed to their routine.

"I'm super excited for them and happy for them," Preston added. "They certainly deserve all the success they've found."

Goggins, a nursing major and a rising junior from Charleston, West Virginia, ascribed much of the team's fortune to the bonding they experienced as they prepared.

"Over nine months, we all just became one big family. It's really a great community to be a part of," she said. "And it's not all about winning. It's about building trust with one another, working hard together, working and representing Radford."

In addition to Arven, Glover and Goggins, Radford's cheer team also includes Vallie Anderson, McKenna Auerbach, Grace Bevins, Kendall Bullion, Kenzie Conner, Brandon Englen, Ava Gorman, Emily Johnson, Caiden Jones, Emmaleigh Jones, Aeri Kensey, Grace Martin, Oliviana McKenna, Mary Alice Mize, Makaleigh Peters, Zoe Peters, Lilly Porter, Abigail Salter, Jenna Townsend, Emily Turner, Logan Virgili, Cecilia Wissman and Josephine Woods.

Neil Harvey for Radford University

Epperly new RU Director of Revenue

Radford University Athletics has announced Cole Epperly will serve as the new Director of Revenue Generation.

A familiar face around the Radford Athletics campus, the Radford alumnus has spent the past nine years as part of the gameday operations staff. "I am thrilled to be back at my Alma Mater and with the program that opened to door to me in college athletics," Epperly said. "The Radford community is one that shaped me into who I am today. Getting to work directly with the community and supporters while growing the athletics department is a responsibility I don't take lightly, and I'm excited to help build something lasting for Radford Athletics." In his new role, Epperly oversees the revenue generation side of the department through corporate partnerships, ticket sales, and Name, Image and Likeness (NIL) opportunities. This position will assist the overall athletic department corporate sponsorship program to include new sales, renewal of existing accounts, activation, achievement of sales goals, and consistent relationship building with the community. Epperly joins Radford Athletics after serving as an Account Executive – Revenue Generation with Virginia Tech Sports Properties (Learfield). While in Blacksburg, he boasted $3.3 million in total revenue through ticket sales and donor contributions for the Hokies while securing hundreds of thousands in new gifts for the program. Epperly also retained over 90 percent of season ticket and membership accounts in his year at Virginia Tech. During his stop as a Hokie, Epperly continued to serve part-time as an Assistant Operations and Gameday Manager with Radford Athletics, a position he held since August 2021. Under the tutelage of the Director of Operations Neal Leahy, he assisted his fellow Radford alumnus across all sports programs. Epperly first began working under Leahy as a member of the student operations staff back as an undergraduate freshman in 2017. He also spent the 2023-24 athletic year as an intern with the Highlander Club, helping the primary annual fundraising mechanism research best practices in college athletics fundraising and identify potential donors through creating meaningful relationships in the community. Epperly received his Bachelor of Arts in Sports Management from Radford University in May 2021. He also earned a Masters in Comprehensive Sport Industry Management in 2024, graduating with a 4.0 GPA from West Virginia University. The Riner native attended Auburn High School.

Radford University Athletics

Hughes promoted to director of broadcasting for Virginia Tech Sports Network

BLACKSBURG – Virginia Tech Athletics has announced the elevation of Evan Hughes to the role of director of broadcasting for Virginia Tech Sports Network.

Hughes, who has worked as the assistant director of broadcast services previously will assume duties of hosting Hokie football's pregame and postgame show as well as contributing to game broadcasts from the sidelines. Additionally, he will be the play-by-play broadcaster for the men's basketball program and contribute to other storytelling platforms including podcasts, social media content and hosting Tech Talk Live.

Hughes will oversee the relationships between the 40-plus radio affiliates that make up the Virginia Tech Sports Network and will also handle the day-to-day operation of the network and radio broadcasts of all Virginia Tech sports.

Hokie fans know Hughes from his iconic on-air calls ranging from the 2023 women's basketball Final Four run to the baseball program's 2022 season where they hosted Regionals and Super Regionals at English Field. A regular emcee at awards ceremonies and events around Blacksburg, Hughes has contributed so much to Virginia Tech in his first five years of professional work, and he is relishing the opportunity to take on new challenges in this expanded role.

"The phrase gets thrown around a lot, but this is truly a dream come true for me," Hughes said of his new appointment. "I grew up coming to Virginia Tech games as a kid and am a proud graduate. My dad played soccer here. My sister graduated here. I am a Hokie through and through. It is an honor to continue to help bring the Hokies' storylines to life on the radio and now to do so alongside two people I grew up listening to in Bill Roth and Mike Burnop, I could not be more excited to continue providing Hokie fans incredible coverage on The Virginia Tech Sports Network."



PHOTO COURTESY OF VIRGINIA TECH ATHLETICS

Evan Hughes is the new director of broadcasting for Virginia Tech Sports Network.

Some of Hughes' prior responsibilities included being the voice of Virginia Tech women's basketball and baseball programs. He also hosted the Hokie Sports Insider Podcast, a weekly show that provides updates on all sports at Virginia Tech with exclusive interviews from coaches and student-athletes which will continue in a revamped format this fall.

Hughes also does play-by-play duties for ACC Network Extra at Virginia Tech, broadcasting soccer, volleyball, basketball, wrestling, softball and lacrosse competitions.

The Richmond native joined the broadcast team following his graduation from Virginia Tech's School of Communication in 2021 with a degree in multimedia journalism and a concentration in sports media and analytics. As a senior, he was named the 2021 recipient of the Jim Nantz Award, presented annually to the nation's top college student sportscaster as voted on by working professionals under the umbrella of Sportscasters Talent Agency of America (STAA).

Hughes continues to mentor young broadcasters who are enrolled in the School of Communication's SMA program, including two young men who have received All-American honors in the past two years.

Virginia Tech Athletics

Pets of the week

These pets and many others are available for adoption at the Montgomery County Animal Care and Adoption Center, 480 Cinnabar Rd., Christiansburg. Phone: (540) 382-5795.

Stellabella lives up to her name. She's a beautiful star with a pawsome smile! This pup is friendly and charming, and she may know some basic commands, too. In a previous home, Stellabella did well with other canines.





Gentle Darcey is in search of humans who can help her live her best life. She is a little shy but soft scratches under her chin and reassuring pats can help her confidence. Stop by to meet her at the Animal Care and Adoption Center.

SALEM RIDGEYAKS
VS HILL CITY HOWLERS
SALEM RIDGEYAKS
SEPT. 1st 6:35 PM
2-for-1 Tuesday
SEPT. 2 6:35 PM
SEPT. 3 6:35 PM
SEPT. 4 6:35 PM Fan Appreciation Night
SEPT. 5 6:35 PM
First Responders Appreciation Night
SEPT. 6 2:05 PM

Colorful car, flower photos win contests





PHOTOS BY JOSEPH PACK

The Radford Photo Club enjoyed a picnic at Bisset Park for their August meeting. "Everyone mingled and enjoyed themselves," said Tracy Burlingame. "The weather was perfect and the food was good."

Joseph Pack of Fairlawn won both the challenge and the open categories. The challenge was old cars. Pack's photo of a 1958 Lincoln Continental was taken at the car show for the Brittany McCann fund raiser in Christiansburg. The Lily, the open category winner, was taken at a pond at the Creation Museum in Kentucky.

The next club meeting will be Sept. 24 at the Radford Public Library at 6 p.m. Allison Franklin will present photos taken in Alaska. The challenge will be farm animals. All interested people are welcome. Follow The Radford Photo Club on Facebook to learn about outings.

The club includes photographers of all experience levels from throughout the New River Valley. Club officers are Allison Franklin of Pulaski, Tracy Burlingame of Riner and Chuck Lynch of Christiansburg.

Radford Photo Club

Montgomery County Animal Care and Adoption Center offers free pet adoptions



IMAGE COURTESY OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

The Montgomery County Animal Care and Adoption Center (ACAC) will offer free adoptions Saturday, Aug. 29 and Sunday, Aug. 30, 2026, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day.

Community members are encouraged to visit montva.com/acac to view adoptable cats and dogs.

Throughout August, ACAC is participating in WSLS's Clear the Shelters initiative, joining shelters across the region to help more pets find permanent homes. This year marks ACAC's ninth consecutive year participating in the campaign. Over that time, the center has placed 1,003 animals into new homes through Clear the Shelters events.

The free-adoption weekend supports the Clear the Shelters mission and reflects ACAC's ongoing commitment to compassionate care, responsible adoption and community engagement.

For more information, please visit montva.com/acac or contact the Montgomery County Animal Care and Adoption Center.

Montgomery County

THE NRV MPO SEEKS PUBLIC INPUT FOR THE NRV PASSENGER RAIL STATION PEDESTRIAN, BICYCLE, AND TRANSIT CONNECTIVITY STUDY

Find out about study progress and potential pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connectivity improvements to access the NRV Passenger Rail Station in Christiansburg. The meeting will be held at the Town of Christiansburg's Town Hall, in the Council Chambers, located on the second floor at 100 East Main Street, Christiansburg, VA 24073 on Thursday, August 27, 2026, from 4:00 to 6:00 pm. In addition to the in-person meeting, public meeting materials will be posted by Friday, August 21st on the New River Valley MPO's website at www.newrivervalleympo.org. They will also be available for review at the office of the New River Valley MPO. **Please give your written comments** at the meeting or submit them via USPS to the NRV MPO's office, located at 755 Roanoke St. Ste. 2I, Christiansburg, VA 24073. You may also e-mail your comments to nrvstudy@rkk.com. Comments for this study will be received until 5:00 PM, September 10th, 2026.

This public notice and opportunity to comment on the NRV Passenger Rail Station Pedestrian, Bicycle, and Transit Study meets the program of projects requirements as established by the FTA pursuant to 49 U.S.C. Section 5307(c).

The NRV MPO ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact Dan Brugh at: brughjd@montgomerycountyva.gov or 540-394-2145, TTY/TTD 711.

MPO SEEKS PUBLIC INPUT FOR TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

The New River Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is amending its 2026-27 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The Amendment extends the limits of the Route 177 corridor study. The study will be from I 81 to East Main Street (Route 11) in Radford. A draft plan is available for review at the Offices of the Towns of Blacksburg and Christiansburg, the City of Radford, Pulaski County, as well as the Montgomery County Government Center. It is also available on the MPO website: www.nrvmpo.org.
Deadline for written comments: 5:00pm September 15, 2026.

Oral comments will also be taken at the MPO Policy Board meeting at 2:00 pm on November 5, 2026 at the Montgomery County Government Center.

The NRV MPO ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or requiring language access, or have other questions:

Contact MPO Director Dan Brugh
Phone 540-320-3263,
Email brughjd@montgomerycountyva.gov

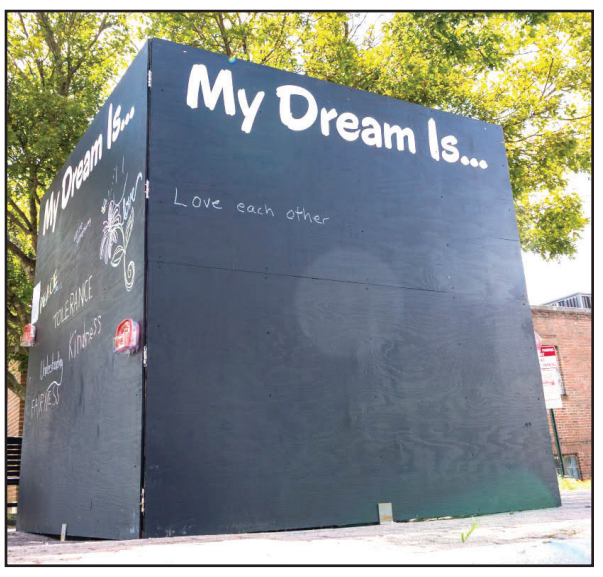


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSBURG

The Community Chalkboard Cube is an interactive public art piece designed to facilitate a shared space for community conversation, collaboration and creativity.

Blacksburg Public Arts Committee debuts interactive public art piece

Something new has appeared on Draper Road in Blacksburg near the Armory: the Community Chalkboard Cube.

The interactive public art piece was established by the Blacksburg Community Chalkboard Cube Public Arts Committee and facilitates a shared space for community conversation, collaboration and creativity. The Cube's prompt, "My Dream Is …" invites the public to share their vision, wishes, and hopes with one another through written word, drawings, or collaborative artwork.

To keep this art piece a positive space for all, contributors are asked to keep the following guidance and rules in mind:

Purpose: The Community Chalkboard Cube is a public creative space intended to encourage artistic expression, community interaction, and inclusive participation.

Permitted use: Chalkboard surfaces may be used for drawings, messages, poetry, and collaborative artwork.

Approved materials: Use is limited to dry chalk or other town-approved washable materials.

Shared access: Participants should share space respectfully and allow others to contribute.

Prohibited content: Hate speech, harassment, threats, intimidation, incitement to violence, obscene material, sexually explicit material, graphic violence, and personal information without consent are not allowed.

Prohibited materials: Paint, permanent marker, glue, stickers, carving, or any other damaging material are not allowed.

Commercial use: Commercial advertising, solicitation, and unauthorized promotion are not permitted.

Respect for others' work: Do not erase or overwrite another person's work unless the space is clearly available or a Town-authorized refresh is scheduled.

Public safety and access: Users must not block access to the cube or surrounding area.

Maintenance: The town will clean the board every 72 hours and may periodically clear the board to maintain accessibility and provide space for new contributions.

Removal authority: The town may erase or remove content that violates this policy or interferes with public use. Repetitive tags or names may also be removed.

Enforcement: Town staff may issue verbal warnings, remove prohibited content, or restrict access for repeated violations.

Disclaimer: Use of the Community Chalkboard Cube does not imply town endorsement of any message, artwork, or viewpoint displayed on the cube.

Town of Blacksburg

Send community news and photos to communitynews@ourvalley.org