

Salute to champions anew

It is a special time for Buckingham County High School athletics, and this fact was underscored several times more last week.

The Buckingham varsity boys basketball team clinched a share of the James River District (JRD) regular season championship Tuesday, Feb. 11. In their regular season finale that night, the Knights defeated host Nottoway High School 76-57.

Knights Head Coach Taylor Boyers confirmed this was the first time Buckingham had won the district regular season title since the 2012-13 season.

The Knights secured the No. 1 seed in the JRD Tournament, which featured the top four teams in the district.

The tourney semifinals were Friday, Feb.

14, and Buckingham routed visiting No. 4 Randolph-Henry High School 77-45.

This set up a rematch between the Knights and the team with which they shared the regular season title — the Goochland High School Bulldogs.

Buckingham started the season 11-0, and it was the Bulldogs who handed Buckingham its first loss on its home floor, 58-55 Jan. 14.

The Knights returned the favor and then some Feb. 6 in Goochland when they routed the Bulldogs 65-48.

Adding to the weight of Saturday night's district tournament title game in Buckingham was the sense that it was an extension of a year-long rivalry between the schools that started during football season.

Buckingham completed its return to the stature of a team that can win in the playoffs, going 10-2. Its second loss came in the regional semifinals to East Rockingham High School, and its regular season would have been an undefeated one had it not been for who else but the Bulldogs.

Goochland prevailed 13-7 in double overtime Sept. 13. It was a game many Buckingham fans would say should have been a Knights victory after junior quarterback Gerry "Tae" Toney appeared to have broken the plane of the goal line for the game-winning touchdown in overtime. But officials did not call the play dead, and the ball was knocked up in the air amongst the pile of players as the play continued. Officials opted to re-do the play, and the Knights did not score on the second attempt.

The Bulldogs later scored to earn the win.

The schools' basketball teams feature some of the same players that competed against each other on the gridiron, including Toney and Goochland senior Quincy Snead, who were announced as district Co-Players of the Year Saturday night for boys basketball.

This announcement followed the tourney championship game in which the Knights, down 37-31 midway through the fourth quarter, scored 15 unanswered points to win 46-37.

The teams' fan bases traveled well, as the stands were packed at each team's gymnasium during this season.

Victories over the Bulldogs are made all the more satisfying for the Knights because of the fact Goochland has ascended to a different Virginia High School League classification. Because of its large student body, Goochland has moved up to Class 3, while Buckingham remains in Class 2.

Mutual respect between the teams Saturday night was on open display after the game, as all-district honors were announced. Also sharing a top honor were the teams' coaches, Boyers and Preston Gordon, who were named district Co-Coaches of the Year.

Each team will continue on in their respective classification's regional tournament, and so continues this special time for Buckingham athletics.

Last year, it was the Lady Knights varsity basketball team winning the district regular season and tourney titles. This season, in addition to the varsity boys, the Buckingham junior varsity boys and girls teams also won district regular season titles.

TITUS MOHLER is the sports editor for *The Farmville Herald* and Farmville Newsmedia LLC. His email address is Titus.Mohler@FarmvilleHerald.com.



**TITUS' TAKE
ON THINGS I**
TITUS MOHLER



TITUS MOHLER | HERALD

Buckingham County High School junior guard Amari Toney, center, invites the Knights home crowd to their feet as the final seconds tick off the clock in No. 1 Buckingham's 46-37 district tournament title win over visiting No. 2 Goochland High School Saturday night, Feb. 15.

Knights win district tourney title

Secure No. 2 seed in Region 2B Tournament

BY TITUS MOHLER
The Farmville Herald

The varsity boys basketball 2019-20 James River District regular season co-champions faced off against each other in the district tournament championship game Saturday, Feb. 15, in Buckingham County, and it ended up being a celebratory night for the Knights.

Buckingham County High School's varsity boys basketball team affirmed its No. 1 seeding in the tourney, showing grit in the fourth quarter to come back against visiting No. 2 Goochland High School. Trailing by six with less than four minutes to play, the Knights went on to score 15 unanswered points and emerge with a 46-37 title-clinching victory in front of a large crowd.

BUCKINGHAM

"We fought for this all year, we wanted this, and this is what we got," Buckingham junior forward Gerry "Tae" Toney said. "I'm proud of it. I'm proud of me and my team for coming a long way and accomplishing this."

The Knights ended up 7-13 overall during their 2017-18 season, they went 11-14 last season, and they are 21-3 this season, earning district regular season and tournament titles and the No. 2 seed in the Region 2B Tournament. Buckingham will host Strasburg High School in the regional quarterfinals Tuesday, Feb. 25, at 7 p.m.

Reflecting on Saturday's win, Knights Head Coach Taylor Boyers said it means a lot.

"It was a great game

tonight," he said. "It was a wild game. It was back-and-forth, two really good basketball teams going at it, and I was just proud of the way our guys hung in there."

Unlike the teams' last regular season meeting Feb. 6 when Virginia High School League Class 2 Buckingham blew out the Class 3 Bulldogs in Goochland 65-48, Saturday's showdown was close throughout. Goochland pulled ahead 37-31 midway through the fourth quarter.

"I know we struggled offensively for a while, but we just kept buckling down on defense, and we knew we were going to get something offensively at some point, and I'm just really proud of our guys, proud of the grittiness of them," Boyers said.

The Knights closed

the game with a 15-0 run that included a go-ahead basket from Gerry Toney, which made the score 38-37. Junior guard Amari Toney then converted a 3-point play and added two more free throws later to push the lead out to 43-37.

Amari Toney readily identified the key to victory for his team.

"Composure — we just kept it," he said.

He also highlighted lockdown defense, hitting clutch free throws, boxing out and rebounding.

"Every little thing got us that win tonight," he said.

He led Buckingham for the game with 13 points. Gerry Toney contributed nine points and 10 rebounds. Junior forward Xavier Copeland and senior center James DeVore each added eight points.

Eagles boys, girls swim teams finish second in Region 2A

BY TITUS MOHLER
The Farmville Herald

Prince Edward County High School's varsity girls and boys swimming teams each placed second at the 2020 Virginia High School League (VHSL) Region 2A Swimming Championship Wednesday, Feb. 12, in the Williamsburg Indoor Sports Complex Aquatics Center.

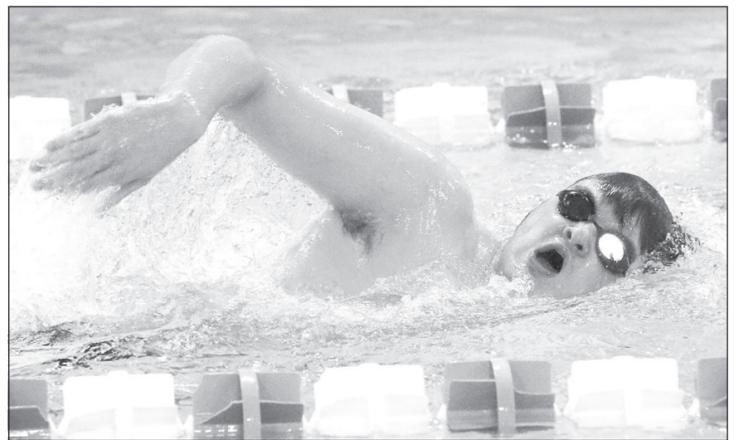
Bruton High School produced the winning girls and boys teams, earning 390 and 257 points, respectively, in fields of six schools. The Lady Eagles generated 232 points, and the Eagles scored 184.

Prince Edward had relay teams qualify for states in five different events, along with 11 individuals in 10 different individual events.

Lady Eagles and Eagles Head Coach Elise Hemmer said she was proud of her teams' finishes.

"They really did great," she said. "There's a lot of nerves going into it. It's also a yard pool, and we swim meter pools all season, so that's kind of a little bit of an unknown, and next year I'm hoping to try to get into a yard pool so that way it's not so different."

The 2020 VHSL Class 2 Swimming Championship is set for Thursday,



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Prince Edward County High School sophomore Charles Swanson qualified for the state championship in the boys 500-yard freestyle and the 200-yard freestyle.

PRINCE EDWARD

Feb. 20, at SwimRVA in Richmond.

Senior Renee Stimpert and junior Josephine Hemmer each qualified in all four of their events. Stimpert competed in the girls 50-yard freestyle and the 100 backstroke. She also joined Hemmer on the 200 medley relay and the 400 free relay. Hemmer's individual events included the 200 free and 500 free.

Joining them on the 200 medley relay are senior Kevynne Dimanno, sophomore Alyson Lucas and freshman Julianna Swanson as an alternate.

The other members of the 400 free relay are Lucas, freshman Carrington Detrick and junior Callyn Vogel as an alternate.

For a complete listing of Prince Edward's state entries with this story, go to www.FarmvilleHerald.com.

Lancers go 2-3 in UCF Invitational

Longwood University's softball team saw its first action this past weekend since it was announced Head Coach Kathy Riley would take a leave of absence for the remainder of the 2020 season to address a private matter.

The Lancers went 2-3 in Orlando, Florida, at the University of Central Florida (UCF) Invitational, which spanned Feb. 28-March 1.

Ball State University handed Longwood a 12-3 defeat Friday, Feb. 28, but the Lancers recovered later that day to win 2-0 against Columbia University.

Longwood opened its day Saturday, Feb. 29, with a 4-1 victory against Long Island University, but then fell 3-1 to host UCF in the evening.

The Lancers capped their play in the invitational with another game against UCF Sunday, March. The Knights used late-inning success to win 2-0.

All-Big South pitcher Sydney Backstrom was tabbed for the start in the circle for the Lancers Sunday, and she did not disappoint for

LONGWOOD

Longwood (5-9). She pitched four scoreless innings before UCF's offense was able to put up the first run of the game in the fifth inning.

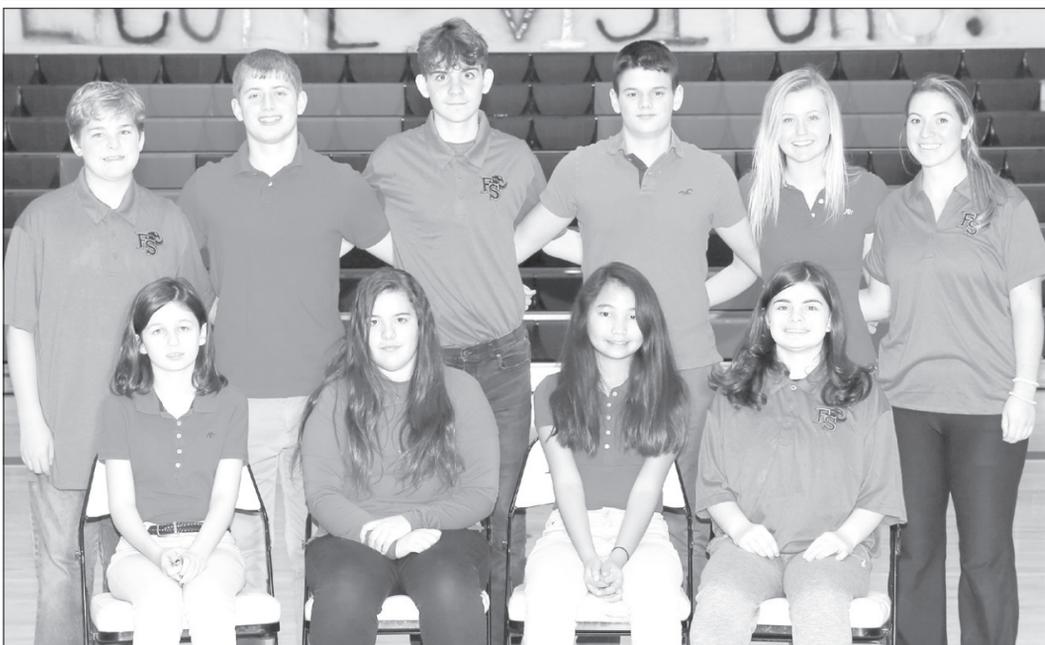
Backstrom and UCF's duo of Breanne Vasquez and Gianna Mancha put on a pitching display as the trio combined to allow only 10 hits and two runs in the game.

Backstrom went the distance for the Lancers with six innings of work, with the Knights scattering six hits and two runs, while Backstrom finished with three strikeouts.

The Knights (16-2) are not a team to take lightly as they extend their winning streak to 11 games, including two victories over then-No. 12 University of Tennessee.

The Lancers will stay in Florida to finish a stretch of 15 straight games in the Sunshine State with "The Spring Games" March 6-8. Longwood will play five games over the three days, with Niagara, Valparaiso, Creighton, Bethune-Cookman and No. 9 Florida on the schedule.

HIGH FIVE!



2019-20 Fuqua School swimming team

The 2019-20 Fuqua School swimming team members pictured are, from left, front row: Ella Estes, Caylen Copley, Katherine Sadler and Grace McMichael. Back row: Cole Foster, Ryan Ledger, Aiden Schwerdfeger, Tyler Harris, Sophie Watson and Head Coach Emmalee Klein. (To nominate your favorite team or standout group for High Five!, email a photograph and names of people pictured to HighFive@FarmvilleHerald.com.)

The VHSL should make another change

The Virginia High School League (VHSL) undoubtedly has a difficult job on its hands managing different aspects of the athletics of 317 schools in the state. As the organization has engaged in realignments to its classifications at the state and regional levels the last several years, that job seems to have become significantly more challenging and more fraught with issues leading to complaints.

One of those latest issues comes in the form of John Marshall High School's presence in VHSL's Class 2 this school year, the same class as Buckingham County High School, Prince Edward County High School and other area schools.

John Marshall's student body size shrunk slightly to technically place the school in Class 2, a move down after the school had been in Class 3.

The school is without question a perennial powerhouse in boys basketball and had been outstanding at the Class 3 level.

Now one might argue that schools have long been divided up into subcategories based on student body size, and John Marshall has



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simply been moved to the subcategory in which it now appropriately belongs. However, the issue is a little more nuanced than that.

From what I understand, John Marshall was not interested in moving down to Class 2, petitioning rather to stay in Class 3.

The school is used to a much higher level of competition as it remains part of the Colonial District, which includes six Class 5 schools, one Class 3 school and two Class 2 schools, including John Marshall.

The fact these schools remain a major part of the John Marshall Justices' regular season schedules in different sports gives John Marshall a major advantage in sports that employ power points to help determine seeding. Teams

get more power points for taking on and beating programs in higher classifications.

For example, among Region 2A boys basketball teams for 2019-20 games played through Feb. 8, the Justices stood atop the region with 21.99 points, with Greenville County High School being their nearest competitor with 12.46.

John Marshall entered the regional tournament as the No. 1 seed with an overall record of 17-2 and went on to win the tourney, pushing them to 20-2.

Now one might say, "They've lost two games. See, they're not unbeatable."

That's a fair point, but it's worthwhile to check out who they lost to.

They fell 70-69 to McEachern High School, which is 22-6, the No. 6-ranked team in Georgia and the No. 92-ranked team in the nation according to MaxPreps.com.

The Justices' other loss came with a 66-55 final score against the Sierra Canyon High School Trailblazers, who are 28-4, the No. 1-ranked team in California and the No. 2-ranked team in the nation according to MaxPreps.com.

It's possible you've seen highlights of the Trailblazers on ESPN because their roster includes freshman guard

Bronny James, the son of NBA superstar LeBron James, and senior point guard Zaire Wade, son of retired NBA superstar Dwyane Wade.

Helping the Justices is the fact they have four players who are 6-foot-5-inches or taller, including 6-10 junior power forward and team captain Roosevelt Wheeler.

All of this likely adds up to some athletic directors at the VHSL Class 2 level feeling like their programs are playing for second place, at best, in boys basketball this season.

Unfortunately, the outstanding Buckingham Knights' 2019-20 season came to an end Friday night, Feb. 28, in the Region 2B semifinals, but if they had won, the Justices would likely have been waiting for them at some point in the VHSL Class 2 State Tournament.

It's not that I wouldn't want to see what our 22-4 Knights could do against them, but as the VHSL continues to navigate the challenges of managing high school athletics in the state, I think it makes sense for the organization to grant John Marshall's request to be in a classification higher than Class 2.

TITUS MOHLER is the sports editor for *The Farmville Herald* and Farmville Newsmedia LLC. His email address is Titus.Mohler@FarmvilleHerald.com.



NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING MARCH 10, 2020

Pursuant to Section 15.2-2504 of the Code of Virginia, the Prince Edward County Board of Supervisors will hold two public hearings on Tuesday, March 10, 2020 at 7:30 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors Room, Prince Edward County Courthouse, 111 N. South Street, 3rd Floor, Farmville, VA, to receive citizen input prior to considering the Planning Commission's recommendation on the following:

1. Proposed amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to regulate the siting, installation, operation and decommissioning of Alternative Energy Facilities.
2. Request by Holocene Clean Energy for a Special Use Permit to construct and operate a solar generation facility located on properties identified as Tax Map 69-A-14 and 69-4-B in the vicinity of 1827 Piney Grove Road (SR606)

A complete copy of the proposed amendment to the County Zoning Ordinance and Special Use Permit Application are available for public review in the office of the County Administrator, 111 N. South Street, 3rd Floor, Farmville, VA or on the County's website at www.co.prince-edward.va.us. It is the County's intent to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Should you have questions or require special accommodations, please contact W.W. Bartlett, County Administrator at 434-392-8837.



NOTICE OF INTENT TO APPLY FOR FUNDING AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Town of Farmville hereby provides notice that it intends to file an application for funding with USDA Rural Development to purchase new radios for use by the Farmville Police Department.

A public hearing on the application will be held on Wednesday, March 11, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. Anyone requesting information on this project or who would like to offer comments should attend this meeting, which will be held in the Council Chamber on the second floor of the Farmville Town Hall, 116 North Main Street, Farmville, Virginia. Anyone who would like to receive information on the project or offer a comment, but will not be able to attend the public hearing, may contact Scott Davis, Interim Town Manager. He can be reached at sdavis@farmvilleva.com or P.O. Drawer 368, Farmville, Virginia 23901.

It is the intention of the Farmville Town Council to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Should you need special accommodations, please contact the Town Office prior to the meeting date.

Scott Davis
Interim Town Manager, Town of Farmville

Notice of Public Hearing Buckingham County Board of Supervisors Monday, March 9, 2020 • 6:00 p.m.

The Buckingham County Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing on Monday, March 9, 2020 beginning at 6:00 p.m. in the Peter Francisco Auditorium of the Buckingham County Administration Complex to hear citizen comments regarding an application for a Special Use Permit for the following:

Case 19-SUP269: Application for a Special Use Permit to operate a commercial garage and the sales of Ag related equipment in an Agricultural District (A1) Owner/Applicant is listed as James Southworth. Tax Map Section 119, Parcel 3, Lot C containing approximately 29 acres on Meadow Creek Road, Gladstone, Va 24553 (Rt. 604) in the James River Magisterial District.

Anyone wishing to review the file or anyone with questions may contact the Office of the Zoning Administrator at 434-969-4242 or email nedmondston@buckinghamcounty.virginia.gov. The complete application package and proposed conditions may be reviewed on the Buckingham County website www.buckinghamcountyva.org under the February 10, 2020 Board of Supervisors packet.

Those wishing to speak during the public hearing must sign up. The signup sheet will be in the Administration Foyer from 5:30 p.m. to 5:55 p.m.

By Order of the Buckingham County Board of Supervisors
Rebecca S. Carter, County Administrator

CUMBERLAND COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING

The Cumberland County Planning Commission will meet on Monday, March 9, 2020, at 6:30 p.m., or as soon thereafter as may be heard, in the Circuit Courtroom of the Cumberland County Courthouse, at 17 Courthouse Circle, Cumberland, Virginia, to conduct public hearings pursuant to Virginia Code Section 15.2-2204, which such hearing may be continued or adjourned, as required under applicable law, and to consider the following items and taking actions in furtherance thereof:

Capital Improvements Program (CIP) for Fiscal Years 2020-2021 through 2024-2025. The Planning Commission will make recommendations to the County Board of Supervisors regarding CIP projects.

Copies of the complete text of the proposed program are available for public review at the office of the Cumberland County Administrator's Office, County Administration Building, 1 Courthouse Circle, Cumberland, Virginia between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm of each business day. The public is invited to attend this hearing at which persons affected may appear and present their views. Questions or comments may be directed to the office of the County Administrator at (804) 492-3625. Persons with disabilities are urged to contact the County Administrator's Office at (804) 492-3625 at least five (5) days prior to the meeting to arrange for any necessary accommodations.

| WAY TO GO! |



Boy Scouts aid library

A big “thank you” to Mason, pictured, and Hayes Lang from the Friends of the Barbara Rose Johns Farmville-Prince Edward Community Library. Mason and Hayes, both members of Boy Scout Troop 6516, collected multiple boxes of books, which will be distributed to the Friends group’s Little Free Library kiosks around the county. This was part of their reading merit badge project. The Friends of the Library currently have Little Free Libraries in Rice, Prospect, Meherrin, Darlington Heights, Worsham and at Parkview Gardens. (Send “Way to Go!” photos with a description and names to WayToGo@FarmvilleHerald.com.)

Entire parole board should resign

Last week I told you how the parole board was under investigation by the Office of the State Inspector General (OSIG). The investigation was set in motion due to the release of Vincent Martin, who was convicted in 1979 of killing Richmond Police Officer Michael Connors.

The Republican leadership has been working for the better part of a week to get the unredacted document from the OSIG. That was finally released late last Wednesday.

Throughout the parole process, we heard concerns and complaints from both prosecutors and family members of Patrolman Connors that the Virginia Parole Board (VPB) was not following the law or established policies. Specifically, the release of Martin was being fast-tracked, and testimony from the family, the prosecutors, and the public was being ignored.

The OSIG report found all of that to be true. More disturbingly, the OSIG report found this to be a pattern of behavior from both the current and former chairwomen of the Virginia Parole Board. The report shows that the parole board — under former Chairwoman Adrienne Bennett and current Chairwoman Tonya Chapman — disregarded the law and established procedures in an effort to tilt the scales of justice in favor of their desired outcome.

Former Chairwoman Bennett made it clear to employees of the parole board that she saw victim input as an



| YOUR TURN |
TOMMY WRIGHT

impediment to a project she had been pursuing for years — the release of Martin. From the report, “OSIG determined that VPB did not allow the victim’s family or other interested parties to meet with VPB in accordance with VPB policy and procedures.”

She and the rest of the board repeatedly ignored and attempted to short circuit victim input.

For example, Chairwoman Bennett and the rest of the parole board did not show up for a scheduled conference call with the victim’s family. In another instance, the family asked Chairwoman Bennett if they could speak to each member on an individual basis, but she denied this based on the COVID-19 pandemic.

When a former inmate — a co-defendant who had already been paroled — reached out to the board with concerns about Martin’s release, current Vice Chair Linda Bryant advised the current chair not to contact the co-defendant, in violation of established policy. However, the board allowed other former and current inmates to provide input in favor of the release of Martin.

“Ignited by the officer’s family, the Richmond police chief along with other law enforcement organizations have joined in a disappointing chorus of opposition to the parole board’s decision. While this tactic has worked with parole boards in other states, this board does not respond to this type of pressure campaign,” Bryant said in a written statement.

Unfortunately, in Virginia this situation does not appear to be exceptional. Over a 30-day period, this board released 95 violent felons, including 35 convicted murderers. There have been many news reports from across Virginia about the same erroneous practices being employed in many of those other cases. This board is clearly unable to perform its duties in a dispassionate manner. Rather than balance the rights of victims and the potential release of inmates, this board has its thumb on the scale in favor of murderers.

Gov. Ralph Northam’s spokesperson said the review was procedural and had nothing to do with the merits of the decision to release Martin.

I believe the entire board should resign. Failing that, they should be fired by Gov. Northam. In addition, Republican leadership has called for the governor to immediately rescind the parole of Vincent Martin and return him to prison.

Any other outcome further illustrates this governor — and Virginia Democrats as a

Awaiting the full return of opportunity

In the spring when the COVID-19 pandemic led to the shutdown of all spring sports and then when the shutdown extended to Dixie all-star season, I remember thinking this was going to be a really strange half-year in my life as a sports editor.

Now with the cancellation of most fall sports, I’m coming to grips with 2020 being a really strange full year.

“Friday nights in the fall are a social event in Lunenburg County,” Central High School Athletics Director Wallace Owen said recently, talking about high school varsity football home games.

I think every athletics director in the area would agree with that description in application to their own localities. The absence of that event will be strongly felt.

As of this writing, fall sports for Fuqua School and Kenston Forest School remained a possibility, though it was looking fairly doubtful for Fuqua.

The Virginia Independent Schools Athletic Association (VISAA) has declared it will not be holding state championships this fall, but Fuqua and Kenston Forest have still been investigating the possibilities of holding regular seasons and conference championships for fall sports.

That would mean the Friday night lights could still be illuminated in Farmville for Falcons home games this fall, unless administrators move football to the spring like the public schools did. And the Cavaliers, since switching to eight-man football in 2018, play outside the VISAA for that sport, meaning they could potentially still vie for a state championship in the Virginia Independent Schools Football League.

Longwood University, which is set to resume in-person



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classes soon, still has most fall sports resuming as well.

Lancer student-athletes who are active this fall could see more coverage than usual, potentially taking the athletics stage by themselves in the latter part of 2020.

Beyond that, the hope is that a quiet fall will give way to an incredibly busy winter and spring that will feature the majority of the 2020-21 sports calendar.

Student-athletes have a limited window of time to shine at the high school and college levels before it is time to move on with life.

Sports may be minor in the grand scheme, but they serve as a stark reminder to me that while much is being put on hold to weather the pandemic, we’re not able to put ourselves in a cryo chamber like in a science fiction movie to freeze the aging process. Time marches on.

This informs my hope that all of us — from top decision-makers and health officials to everyday citizens — will handle the pandemic as wisely and responsibly as possible to expedite the full return of opportunity in athletic endeavors and life that awaits beyond them.

TITUS MOHLER is the sports editor for *The Farmville Herald* and Farmville Newsmedia LLC. His email address is Titus.Mohler@FarmvilleHerald.com.

whole — continuing to put the comfort of killers above the rights of their victims.

SPECIAL SESSION

Gov. Northam has called the Special Session for the budget and “criminal justice reform.” We will convene on Aug. 18 at the Seigel Center at VCU.

Reopening our schools will be one of the most pressing challenges facing Virginia this fall, yet neither the majority party nor Gov. Northam made any mention of schools in the special session announcement.

Instead, Democrats have said they will focus on the budget and criminal justice reform. To date, we have seen no concrete ideas, bills, or any

other information that would point us toward proposals that can be discussed in detail. What we have heard are the same suggestions we have been hearing for weeks, such as defunding our law enforcement agencies, defelonizing assault on law enforcement officers, and elimination of mandatory minimum sentences for violent crimes.

Rest assured, I will be in Richmond next week continuing to defend our law enforcement officers and fighting to keep violent offenders off the streets.

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