



# THE UNION STAR

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2021 Womack Publishing Company, Inc.



VOL. 114, NO. 51

Brookneal Virginia 24528

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2021

\$ 2.00



Submitted/ Chris Payne

Red Cross has been providing aid to those affected by recent tornadoes in Kentucky, which caused severe destruction.

## Local Red Cross volunteers deploy to Kentucky in wake of tornadoes

A.J. O'LEARY  
Special to the Union Star

The American Red Cross has sent hundreds of volunteers to parts of Kentucky devastated by recent tornadoes, including one from Campbell County.

Last week, the Red Cross reported 75 fatalities as a result of the tornadoes with 16 individuals unaccounted for. Long Island, Virginia resident Chris Payne, along with roughly 150 other volunteers from across

the country, was deployed by the Red Cross to help people affected by the tornadoes in areas like Bowling Green and Mayfield in Southwestern Kentucky. Payne has provided aid with the Red Cross after numerous disasters. This is the fourth tornado he has been deployed to.

"This is bigger," Payne said when asked to compare this deployment to his previous tornado deployments. "This is much bigger."

According to the national weather service, two tornadoes travelled near-

ly 166 and 123 miles through Northwest Tennessee and Southwestern Kentucky on December 10.

Payne, a feeding supervisor, left for Kentucky December 13. He and fellow volunteers delivered food and water to residents in the Mayfield area, before travelling to Bowling Green to deliver meals to that area.

Payne said he saw President Joe Biden at one point, who travelled to the area on December 15 to survey damage caused by the disasters.

See VOLUNTEERS, Page 6

## School board addresses social studies concerns, adopts school year calendar

A.J. O'LEARY  
Special to the Union Star

The Campbell County School Board addressed concerns about curricula and adopted a 2022-23 school year calendar at its December 13 meeting.

To start the meeting, the board recognized Rustburg High School softball and volleyball's most recent state championship wins.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Robert Johnson addressed several concerns that have been brought to his attention by parents and others.

Some were concerned that the Pledge of Allegiance and Independence Day were removed from Virginia's Standards of Learning. Johnson clarified that this is not the case, and explained that Independence Day is taught in

Campbell County Schools as a time to remember and celebrate the birth of the United States, and also pointed out that the Pledge of Allegiance is said every morning in all Campbell County Public Schools.

He also announced that information about cultural competency training that the Virginia Board of Education plans to require for school board employees (including teachers) is now available on the Campbell County Public Schools website. A link for members of the public to provide comments on the training is available with this information.

Comments are still being accepted on the draft form of the Board of Education Guidance on Cultural Competency Training for Teachers and Other Li-

See SCHOOL, Page 3

## Pair of local pitchers earn national rankings, heading to UVA

JEFFREY WESTBROOK  
The Union Star

It's a tale of two girls who pitch, two teams, two schools, and two towns. Appomattox and Rustburg, neighboring communities with adjacent high school districts, both won a VHSL state Championship in softball in 2021. And both have their ace pitchers back for one more season this in the spring before they join forces at the collegiate level.

Those two pitchers, Eden Bigham and Courtney Layne, also both happen to be nationally ranked recruits for NCAA softball, and both have signed to the University of Virginia. The pair of pitchers also happen to know each other well, having played both as opponents in high school and teammates in travel softball for a few years. Thus, they will go off to the big university already having a friend on campus and on the Lady Cavaliers softball team.

"We're going to be able to help each other," commented Bigham. "Going with someone we know will boost our confidence and help us [deal with] being nervous about college."

Both Bigham and Layne said that they have been teammates in travel softball for a few years now, playing together as the two pitchers for the Williamsburg Starz Gold, a top-level travel club based in Richmond.

We complement each other and balance each other out," Layne explained. "We will work well together at the collegiate level. I'm a left-handed pitcher, and Eden is a right-handed pitcher. We have different pitching styles which the batters will

have to face."

Layne is ranked nationally as the number 35 overall recruit for next year's freshman class and the number 14 pitcher in the nation. Extra Inning Softball provides the rankings.

She has been a regional Player of the Year, two-time 1st Team All-Region, and two-time Raider Award recipient at Appomattox County High School. The southpaw has pitched six perfect games and five no-hitters in her career, including a state title final perfect game to lead the Lady Raiders to the VHSL Class 2 State Championship. In addition to playing for the Williamsburg Starz Gold, she has also played for Team North Carolina - Eaton.

Lady Cavaliers' Head Coach Joanna Hardin had this to say about Layne. "Courtney Layne is our second single-A state champion [actually class 2] out of Appomattox High School. She threw a perfect game to seal the deal last spring. A left-handed specialist, she's proven she can dissect the best offenses in the country. Though her stature might be on the smaller side, when she steps in the circle she carries herself like she is 6-5. We can't wait for her to make her way down the road to come compete for the Hoos."

Layne explained her decision to attend the University of Virginia. "I chose UVA for their academics. They have really good academics and treat their athletes well. They treat their team like a family, and that's the kind of environment I want to be in for my collegiate career," Layne stated. While she has not yet decided upon her major, the Appomattox

See PITCHERS, Page 3



Submitted/ Eden Bigham

UVA-Bound: Sometimes teammates and sometimes rivals, top-notch pitchers Courtney Layne (left, Appomattox High School) and Eden Bigham (right, Rustburg High School), along with Jade Hylton (center, Bassett High School) will be joining forces at the University of Virginia next year after they graduate from high school. The three have played both together and against each other in high school and (pictured) travel softball tournaments.

## Schools, law enforcement respond to rumored TikTok threats

JEFFREY WESTBROOK  
The Union Star

Area school and law enforcement officials are responding with alertness and caution to alleged threats that have been circulating on the social media platform TikTok about violence in schools on Friday, December 17. While they report that they have investigated and there are no specific threats to local schools, they

are remaining vigilant to ensure students' safety. School districts, sheriff's offices, and police departments across Central Virginia have issued statements about the matter and how they are dealing with it.

Campbell County Public Schools issued the following statement.

"Dear Families, Campbell County Public Schools has become aware of a troubling post that has been shared nationwide this week on the social

media platform TikTok. The post refers to a threat to school safety 'for every school in the USA, even elementary,' on Friday, December 17.

"The post appears to be part of a national TikTok trend and did not originate in our school district. We have heard reports from other districts that the same post is circulating in their schools. While we do not believe the threat to be credible, we are

See TIKTOK, Page 3

## Local organization hosts Memory Tree remembrances

Brookneal Lions Club offers a Memory Tree Project each Christmas to raise funding to help our community. Its benefit is two-fold, as it also gives us an opportunity to recognize our friends and loved ones in a special and meaningful way at the

holiday season. Those listed here have been submitted in honor or in memory. In memory; gone, but never forgotten, and honored; recognized for their contribution to our community or of special consideration. These lists were seen on the

See MEMORY, Page 2

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# The Lore of Christmas Plants

By **KATHY CONNER CORNELL**  
VCE Southside master Gardener

I got to thinking about why certain plants symbolize Christmas and did a little research. Their uses go way back in time primarily to the Norse and Druids. Although Christian leaders tried to discredit using these plants, the practices remained. So, let's take a look at the history of a few Christmas plants.

Most likely the plant you most associate with Christmas is the poinsettia, *Euphorbia pulcherrima*. The legend goes that a poor girl named Pepita was on her way to church on Christmas Eve and was sad that she had nothing to offer Baby Jesus. She picked a bouquet of roadside weeds and when presented, the bouquet turned a brilliant red. Even the lowliest gift, if from the heart, had importance to the Christ child. Surprisingly, it is not the flowers that are red but the leaves. The flower is actually the yellow part in the center.

The plant is native to Mexico, so here it must be treated as a house plant. I remember a book and I believe it was "One True Thing" about a women's beautification group putting poinsettias in a park display after the asters went dormant and since the book took place in upstate New York, the next day presented a mound of red mush! Sounds like these women would have benefitted from taking the Master Gardener Course. By the way, if you are interested in taking the 2022 course starting on January 11, it is not too late. Just contact Bill McCaleb, the Master Gardener Coordinator at [wmccaleb@vt.edu](mailto:wmccaleb@vt.edu) or calling the Halifax Extension Master Gardener Help

Desk at (434) 830-3383. Be sure to give your first and last name, telephone number and the nature of the call.

Poinsettias first came to the United States from Mexico in 1828 when Dr. Joel Poinsett, the first U.S. ambassador to Mexico, brought the seeds back to the US. The Ecke family, in Southern California, were early sellers of poinsettia plants. Previously, only bouquets were sold. In a bold entrepreneurial move, the Ecke's sent free poinsettia plants to TV shows including "The Tonight Show" and Bob Hope's holiday specials. They took off as popular Christmas plants. The Ecke family are still the primary producers of poinsettias in the country.

In my personal opinion, they are a disposable plant but there are those that relish having them return year after year. Poinsettias are what is called a short day plant, meaning it requires a long period of darkness for the leaves to achieve the red hue. The plants are sensitive about this. In Baltimore, there is a wholesale grower named Babikow Greenhouses that is located at the end of a dead end road. The poinsettias in one greenhouse just weren't changing colors. They realized that when people reached the dead end, they would turn around and the car lights would shine in the greenhouse. All this takes more patience than I can muster!

English Holly, *Ilex aquifolium*, plants had been brought into the home for centuries. Norse and Druid societies would bring stems of evergreen plants to celebrate the winter solstice. Ivy, bay, fir, rosemary, laurel, boxwood and mistletoe were also used but the holly was favored

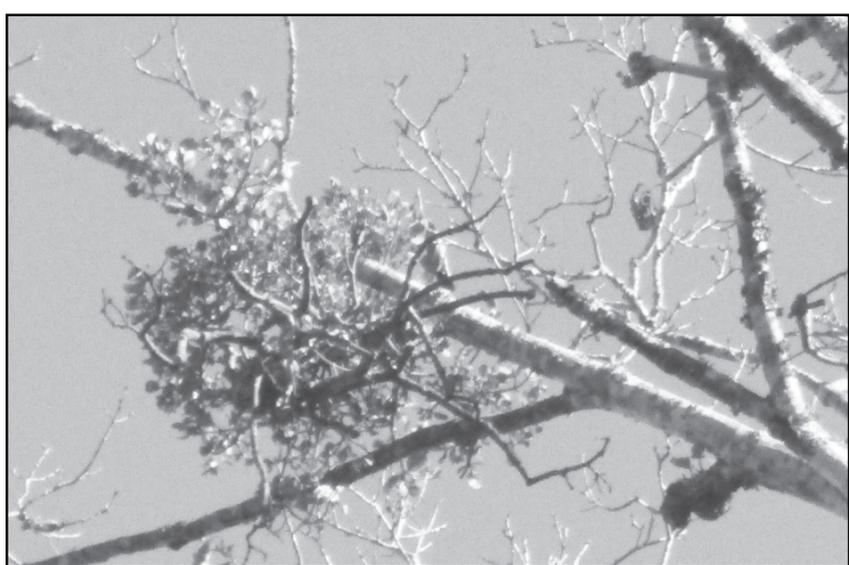


Photo by Chris Cornell

Mistletoe can be found in tree tops of deciduous trees. It is easy to spot the green leaves on a bare branch.

with its shiny green leaves and red berries. Because this was a pagan ritual, Christian leaders unsuccessfully tried to eliminate this custom. So, with the old adage if you can't beat 'em, join 'em, the holly tree was shown to have Christian symbolism. The prickly leaves symbolized the crown of thorns, the red berries became drops of blood and the evergreen aspect was eternal life. The Christmas carol "The Holly and the Ivy" lays this out quite clearly. I would be remiss not to mention my favorite rendition of a holly carol. In the movie "A Christmas Story", the Bumpass dogs steal Ralphie's family's Christmas turkey. The father directs all to get dressed. They go to a Chinese restaurant, the only one

open on Christmas Day. The waitstaff gave a resounding version of "Deck the Halls". If you have never had the pleasure of seeing this movie, it is usually on this time of year.

Mistletoe, there are over 1000 species, also has roots back to the Norse and Druid people. Mistletoe is a parasite, meaning it germinates on trees and sucks water and nutrients from the host. Because mistletoe remained green while the host leaves had fallen, it was thought to symbolize life. Hanging mistletoe above a doorway meant that only goodness could enter the house. In England, young men would pluck a ber-

See **MISTLETOE**, Page 5

## SCHOOL

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Training for Teachers and Other Licensed School Board Employees in Virginia Public Schools. The draft currently calls for such employees to "Communicate with students, staff, families, and the community in linguistically and culturally responsive ways," to "Continuously reflect on one's own beliefs, behaviors, lived experiences, and practices and their impact on one's educational decision making, and on one's interactions with others generally," and to follow various other "micro-competencies." The draft calls for school employees to at least be introduced to the concepts in the 2022-23 school year. Once the draft is adopted, all Vir-

ginia school boards are required to adopt the guidance on cultural competency training to comply with state law.

Donations made to the school system accepted by the board include \$1,000 to purchase pregame meals for the Altavista girls' and boys' basketball teams, \$1,669.03 to purchase warmups and travel apparel for William Campbell's boys basketball team, \$2,000 for "support & assistance to students of WCCS during holiday season" and various others for items like Angel Tree donations. There were a total of 27 donations recorded on the agenda. The board also approved an aca-

demic calendar for the 2022-23 school year. The first day of school is scheduled for August 17, and the last is scheduled for June 2. The schedule also has a total of three teacher "inservice" days, on which students do not come in and are used for staff training, a 9-day winter break, weeklong Spring Break, 3-day Thanksgiving break, 2-day fall break (falling the Friday before, and Monday after a weekend) and six days off besides.

The board also approved adding teacher workdays on January 18, February 22 and March 21 in 2022.

## PITCHERS

CONT. FROM PAGE 1

tox Ace is considering studying business.

Layne's past and future teammate Bigham plays down the road at Rustburg High School. She is nationally ranked number 28, the highest of a strong recruiting class for the Lady Hoos. The right-handed pitcher is ranked number 10 among pitchers nationally and is an Extra Inning Softball All-America honoree. Bigham is a 1st-team All-State pitcher and has been 1st team All-Region and All-District twice each. She has also been named All-Area Player of the year. She led the Lady Red Devils to the 2021 VHSL Class 3 State Championship and is also a member of the back-to-back Class 3 Volleyball State Champion Lady Red Devils team. She has played with the Williamsburg Starz Gold club since 2018.

Coach Hardin had this to say about Bigham. "Eden has won two state championships in two different sports. She's a right-handed pitcher who throws hard and spins it well. She has proven success against some of the best teams in the country. Her edge for us is her diligent work ethic and her competitiveness. She's a winner and that's who you want in the circle. We believe she'll make an immediate impact for us upon her arrival to Grounds."

Bigham, like Layne, said she chose The University of Virginia first and foremost for academic reasons. "As I went through the recruiting process, I wanted a school with a good academic program. I want to go into the medical field. You can't find better than UVA."

Not only was it a great academic environment, but the softball program proved itself quite serious about recruiting her. "They started recruiting me from September 1 of my junior year [the first day colleges may recruit high school softball players], and every day someone from the program was in contact with me, encouraging me and following my progress." The Lady Red Devil pitcher attended softball camps at the university and was impressed with both the new stadium and the quality of the camps.

Softball has been a way of life for Bigham. "I've been playing since about six years old. I played T-ball with my dad and brother first, and then the next year started playing softball," she recollected.

Bigham and Layne won't be the only familiar faces for each other when they arrive in Charlottesville for their freshman year. Two of their Starz teammates--one of whom is also a Lady Raiders teammate of Layne's--will be

joining them on the Cavaliers' NCAA team.

Kelsey Hackett plays shortstop for Appomattox but is at home anywhere in the infield. "We have a good chemistry on and of the field and in school," Layne said of teammate Hackett. "She'll bring a spark plug to UVA. She's a great shortstop and a leader on the field."

Hackett will be an infielder for the Lady Hoos. She ranks number 103 nationally among recruits and 21st among infielders. She is also an Extra Inning Softball All-America honoree. She has been 1st Team All-Region and All-Area. Hackett was a key member of the Lady Raiders' 2021 State Championship squad. She has played with Williamsburg Starz since 2017.

Coach Hardin commented on Hackett's versatility. "Kelsey is one of our two single-A high school state champions from Appomattox High School. She's our Swiss army knife who can play multiple defensive positions, she sprays the field from the plate and runs exceptionally well. She plays the game with passion and enthusiasm and will be a huge asset to our team when she arrives next year."

Another Starz teammate who also plays infield and particularly shortstop will be joining her three teammates from central Virginia as a Cavalier: Jade Hylton of Bassett County High School in Southside Virginia will be a middle infielder at UVA. She ranks number 56 nationally.

Hylton is a two-time All-Region player and a 2021 Alliance Home Run Derby Finalist. As a freshman, she earned the title Piedmont Region Tri-Player of the Year, hitting 15 home runs, scoring 36 runs and 36 RBI, with a batting average of .681.

Coach Hardin commented on Hylton. "Jade adds athleticism and speed to our class. She's one of the top middle infielders in the state and has played shortstop her entire life. Her agility and her game savvy allows her to play any position defensively. She can hit for power and average. She has speed, and we expect her to steal double-digit bases while she's here. All around, she elevates the level of our program."

Thanks to these student-athletes from Central and Southside Virginia, the UVA recruiting class is one of the top recruiting classes in the nation. Keep an eye an ear out for great things from these area softball stars as they make their mark at UVA next year.

## TIKTOK

CONT. FROM PAGE 1

closely monitoring the situation and taking it seriously.

"Additionally, the district has been in contact with the Campbell County Sheriff's Department regarding the post. We may have an increased police presence in our buildings on Friday as an added precaution."

School district officials urged people to refrain from sharing social media posts about rumored, potential, or alleged threats involving schools. "This situation serves as a good example of why it is important to avoid sharing posts online that refer to school safety threats. Even if they are not credible threats, they can cause a great deal of stress and anxiety for our students, families, and staff. We ask our families to monitor their children's social media activity and speak with them about proper behavior online and the severe consequences of making threats."

People learning of information regarding threats to the safety of schools should contact a school staff member or school official. "If you or your child become aware of any potential threat posted to social media or anywhere else, please notify a school staff member or trusted adult right away."

The district letter to parents concluded, "As always, thank you for your partnership as we work to ensure a safe, secure, and positive learning environment for our students."

The Campbell County Sheriff's Office likewise issued a statement regarding the threat. "The Campbell County Sheriff's Office is aware of a troubling post being shared nationwide via the social media platform TikTok. The post refers to a threat to school safety nationwide this Friday, December 17th. While this social media threat did not

originate in our school district, the Campbell County Sheriff's Office is taking the threat very seriously. While we have not received any direct threats toward the Campbell County Schools, we will continue to monitor this situation closely and ensure that additional resources are in place at every school.

"The Sheriff's Office has been coordinating with School Officials, Virginia State Police, Campbell County Public Safety, Brookneal PD, and Altavista PD to ensure the safety of our students and faculty throughout the school day. If you have any information regarding a threat to our school system, immediately call 911."

Altavista Police Chief Tommy Merricks issued the following statement to the Altavista Journal. "We have been made aware of threats that have been going around on TikTok. We always want to make sure students are safe; student safety is our top priority. We are working with Campbell County Sheriff's Office on this matter."

Superintendent of Pittsylvania County Schools, Dr. Mark Jones, told the Altavista Journal, "We sent a message to our families last night. I've spoken several times with the Pittsylvania County Sheriff's Office. We're going to have extra presence of deputies in close proximity to schools today, and the School Resource Officers have been made aware of the situation."

Other districts in the area, including Bedford, Amherst, Franklin, and Halifax Counties have issued similar statements about taking similar measures. Other districts, including Appomattox County Public Schools, have already gone on Christmas break and are not open for students today.

Words cannot express our gratitude for the love, thoughts, and prayers during this difficult time. Your support and kindness is greatly appreciated! May God Bless each of you! With love, The Family of Sheria L. Parrnell

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Serving the community since 1906

2021 Womack Publishing Company, Inc.

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VOL. 115, NO. 22

Brookneal Virginia 24528

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16, 2021

\$ 2.00

## Mobile vaccination clinics come to Lynchburg

(Lynchburg, Va.) -- The Virginia Department of Health's Central Virginia Health District, in coordination with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) and other supporting partners, has announced the dates and locations of mobile vaccination clinics scheduled through Saturday, June 19 in Lynchburg.

These mobile clinics will offer free Johnson and Johnson COVID-19 vaccines for those 18 and older in a series of smaller and more local clinics, primarily in areas where vaccine access can be challenging. They are designed to reach

unvaccinated Virginians at convenient times and in easily-accessible places.

The currently scheduled clinics are:

Tuesday, June 15 - 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. - Lynchburg Public Library, 2315 Memorial Ave., Lynchburg

Wednesday, June 16 - 9 a.m. - noon - Moose Lodge 2307 Lakeside Drive, Lynchburg

Wednesday, June 16 - 2 - 5 p.m. - Jefferson Park 405 N. York St., Lynchburg

Thursday, June 17 - noon - 3 p.m. - Diamond Hill Recreation Center 1005 17th St., Lynchburg

Thursday, June 17 - 5 - 8 p.m. - College Hill Recre-

ation Center 811 Jackson St., Lynchburg

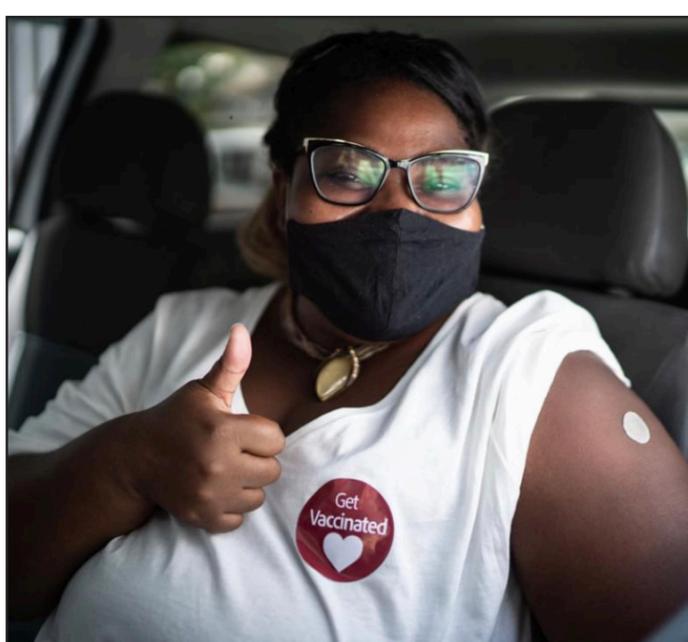
Friday, June 18 - 2 - 5 p.m. - Lynchburg High Apartments 1301 Park Ave., Lynchburg

Saturday, June 19 - 9 a.m. - noon - Diamond Hill Baptist Church 1415 Grace St., Lynchburg

Vaccines are free and no insurance or appointments are needed.

These vendor-operated, mobile vaccination clinics will move from place to place to support local health department efforts in the Central Virginia Health District and across the Commonwealth.

See Clinics Page 3



Virginia Department of Health (VDH)

Vaccination rates were still rising as of last week, according to VDH.



Campbell County Sheriff's Office Sherry Marie Wright has been charged in connection with a recent shooting.

## Police respond to two shootings Sunday morning

Rustburg - Campbell County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) responded to two shooting incidents in different areas of Campbell County in the early hours of Sunday, June 13, 2021. One subject is in custody, while one remains at large.

At approximately 1 a.m., the Campbell County E-911 Call Center received a distress call directing assistance to the parking lot of a convenience store located on U.S. Route 29 (14480 Wards Road, Lynchburg, VA). The caller indicated that a subject was shot. Upon investigation, deputies were able to locate the injured subject at a different convenience store (14074 Wards Road, Lynchburg, VA), and the subject received assistance for a gunshot wound to the upper torso.

This remains an active, ongoing investigation.

At approximately 3 a.m., the Campbell County E-911 Call Center received a distress call indicating that two subjects had been shot and injured at a residence on Caroline Avenue, located in Brookneal, VA. Upon arrival, first

See Shootings Page 3



Jeffrey Westbrook/ Special to the Union Star

William Campbell's #11 Jacob Halsey streaks for home in the third inning while the Appomattox catcher and pitcher wait futilely for the throw. The Generals prevailed 8-7 in extra innings.

## Generals spoil Raiders' fun with senior night win

JEFFREY WESTBROOK  
Special to the Union Star

Nearly four weeks after Appomattox County High School's baseball team showed up in Naruna and stuck it to the Generals 13-3, the Generals got their chance to turn the tables at the Raiders' Senior Night. In a close contest that started with sun and ended with several innings of rain, the visitors from William Campbell snuck past the home team in extra innings, 8-7.

A bases-loaded walk brought home the winning run for the Generals in the top of the 9th inning, almost an anti-climactic ending after such a close game.

The Generals' batters amassed 11 hits - including four doubles and a homer, eight walks, and seven RBIs. They struck out 15 times. Colten Allen hit a double and a home run to help the winning cause. Tyler Mason hit successfully three times as the lead-off batter. Sloan Seals and Randy Crabtree each

stole a base.

Three William Campbell pitchers split the game evenly on the mound, with 3.0 innings each. Ethan Mason led off, giving up four hits, six runs, four errors, four walks, and striking out one. Tyler Mason was up next, giving up two hits, no runs or errors, one walk, and fanning four. Allen finished off the game, giving up two hits, one run, no errors, three bases on balls, and a strikeout.

Appomattox tallied eight hits - including three doubles, eight walks, five RBIs, and six strikeouts. Trey Martin led the side with two singles and a double. The Raiders stole three bases.

Three pitchers worked the game for the Raiders. Zach Dillon pitched the first three innings, Camron Smith pitched 5.2 innings, and Hunter Garrett pitched the final out. They combined for 11 hits, eight runs, six errors, eight walks, and 15 strikeouts.

The Generals started off in bold fashion, See Generals Page 3

## Plans for new festival in county take shape

A.J. O'LEARY  
Union Star Editor

Altavista On Track (AOT) has been granted \$10,000 in seed money for a new Fall festival called Uncle Billy's Barbecue, Bourbon and Beer Festival.

Jeremy Funderburk, an Altavista native who currently lives in Evington, approached Altavista town manager Waverly Coggsdale with the idea for the festival last Fall. Funderburk said Coggsdale liked the concept, and after formally presenting his idea to town council in April, Funderburk became an AOT board member and the group adopted his idea. Current plans are for the festival to take place in English Park from 1 a.m. to 8 p.m. on October 2. There will be blues and country bands, bourbon and beer vendors, a barbecue contest and ice cream.

"I have a love for barbecue, entertainment and letting everyone have a good time," Funderburk said about the festival after a recent AOT meeting.

When asked, Funderburk also acknowledged that the event was partially inspired by Uncle Billy's Day.

"I felt like there was a void that needed to be filled," he said.

Uncle Billy's Day has now been cancelled two years in a row. The Chamber announced earlier this year that it will no longer be hosting Uncle Billy's Day, and as yet no other groups have stepped up to take responsibility for the event.

"You're getting an Uncle Billy's Day

See Festival Page 3

## Seamster retires from Patrick Henry Memorial Library

TINA BARBOUR  
Special to the Union Star

In June 1987, Gale Seamster interviewed for and got the circulation job at Patrick Henry Memorial Library. For 34 years, she has served the Brookneal community through her work as branch manager, and she's retiring with many good memories and lasting friendships.

At first Gale was the lone employee at PHML, and the library was housed in the Brookneal Community building. In the summer of 1990, the library moved to its current building. The newly formed Friends of Patrick Henry Memorial Library fundraised and worked with the county to pay for the building and make renovations inside and outside.

Gale said the Friends group has helped the library tremendously.

"While many of the original members are not in the present group, their hard work and contributions and goal of providing the community with a better library still continues," she said. "They still strive to provide support both financially and physically to the library."

The Children's Literacy Room is one of the contributions that Gale is most proud of.

Just as the world has changed over three

decades, so has the work at the library. When she started her job, Gale communicated chiefly by phone, and deliveries were made with the county bookmobile van.

With the advent of the internet and more computers in workplaces, library services became much quicker and the ways of communication changed. But the needs of the patrons remained much the same.

"The overall basic needs and requests of patrons have not changed that much from pleasure reading to the need for information such as medical, school reports, etc. but the 'how' of getting these materials have changed," she said.

Gale has worked hard trying to meet the needs of patrons.

"The favorite part of my job has always been about the patrons," Gale said. "My heart has been with having story time for the children and programs that were fun as well as educational. I've looked for ways to provide services that helped the area whether it's having the mobile DMV or hunter safety, tax forms, etc."

Her service to the community was recognized 2016 by the Virginia Library Association in naming her Outstanding Employee.

Along with great service to patrons, she has helped to provide a welcoming space.

See Seamster Page 6



Campbell County Public Libraries

Seamster and Joan Agee's coworkers wanted them both to have a whale of a time during their final week as employees of Patrick Henry Memorial Library.

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**FESTIVAL**

CONT. FROM PAGE 1

George Sandridge said In a recent interview about the festival. "Maybe not the exact same event, but you're getting something in the Fall down at the river at our wonderful park."

During the town council meeting in which seed money for the event was approved, council member Tracy Emerson suggested the event pay homage to Uncle Billy's Day in some way, hence its current title.

Though Uncle Billy's Day was a free event, the new festival will raise money for AOT which, Funderburk said, "can fund other events."

Funderburk said he hopes the new festival will eventually make enough money for Altavista to host large community events every six to eight weeks throughout the year.

Organizers hope to draw 500 people to the festival this year. Tickets will range in price from \$20 for general admission to \$40 for a VIP package that will include two drinks, a barbecue sandwich and a commemorative cup. Children aged 5 and under will enter free.

There will also be a magician at the festival and lawn games like giant Jenga, a giant chess board and more. Mike Collins, a Kansas City Barbecue Society-certified pit master who beat Bobby Flay in a televised cook off, has already committed to help judge the event. There are currently 35 slots open for both amateurs and professionals in the barbecue contest.

Funderburk, a steel fabricator by trade, will be making handmade trophies for the

barbecue contest.

"Beer and bourbon goes with barbecue," Funderburk said. "It always has."

Sandridge said the event's website should be up and running by July, which will allow ticket sales to begin. More information about distilleries, brewers and competitors will be added to the website as it becomes available. Sandridge also said AOT will begin looking for volunteers to staff the event as it approaches.

"The revenue that's generated from the event is going towards planning for future events, but also for redeveloping and re-investing into downtown Altavista," Sandridge said.

Sandridge said he hopes the festival can become similar to other successful festivals hosted in Richmond, Appomattox, Rocky Mount and other areas.

Funderburk said he wants the festival to draw barbecue competitors and attendees from all over the state, and hopes the festival will some day draw as many as 10,000 people. Others, like Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett, have also expressed a desire to host big events in Altavista.

"I would like to see Altavista be the entertainment capitol of Central Virginia," Bennett said during discussion of the new festival at a June 8 town council meeting.

When and how the town will achieve that status remains to be seen, but at the same council meeting an outside group received approval and a fee waiver to use English Park and the Booker Building for a two-day blue grass event on April 22 and 23 next year.

**GENERALS**

CONT. FROM PAGE 1

with Tyler Mason singling and Allen following with a home run over the left field fence. Seals followed with a double, stolen base, and a run on Jacob Halsey's double. The Raiders responded in the bottom of the inning with three runs of their own, and a showdown was underway.

The Generals had another big inning in the third, scoring four more runs. It included loading the bases and a Mason Scott double driving in two runs. The next at-bat saw an outfield error bring in another run, and then a ground out gave Scott a chance to score.

**SHOOTINGS**

CONT. FROM PAGE 1

responders and law enforcement personnel immediately treated and transported two subjects for treatment. At last contact, both victims were in stable condition.

As a result of a preliminary investigation, Sherry Marie Wright, age 41, of Brookneal, VA has been charged with two counts of malicious wounding, and two counts of using a firearm in the commission of a felony. Wright is currently being held at the Blue Ridge Regional Jail with-

**CLINICS**

CONT. FROM PAGE 1

The mobile clinics will offer the one-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine, which eliminates the need to return for a second-dose shot. For more information about the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, please talk to a healthcare provider or visit [www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/)

In the bottom of the fourth inning, the Raiders scored four more to tie the game at seven. The game would remain scoreless until the winning run in the ninth. The Generals defensively avoided a loss by stopping the Raiders with base runners stranded in scoring position twice: two runners in the fifth, and the bases loaded in the seventh.

The Generals' regular season finale was scheduled for home on Friday against arch-rivals Altavista, but heavy rains and thunderstorms swept across the region all afternoon.

out bond.

Anyone with information regarding either of these incidents has been asked to contact the Campbell County Sheriff's Office at 434-332-9574 or call Crime Stoppers at 1-888-798-5900. You may also visit Central Virginia Crime Stoppers at [www.cvcrimestoppers.org](http://www.cvcrimestoppers.org), enter a tip online at <http://p3tips.com>, or use the P3 app on your mobile device.

[sites/191/2021/05/JJInformation.pdf](http://sites/191/2021/05/JJInformation.pdf).

To find a convenient vaccination site, visit [vaccinate.virginia.gov](http://vaccinate.virginia.gov) or [www.vaccines.gov](http://www.vaccines.gov). There is more information available about the vaccine, its safety and answers to frequently asked questions at [www.vdh.virginia.gov](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov) and CDC's website.

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VOL. 115, NO. 2

Brookneal Virginia 24528

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2021

\$ 2.00

## Northam lays out vaccination plan

A.J. O'LEARY  
Union Star Editor

Governor Ralph Northam discussed the vaccine at his most recent COVID-19 briefing on Wednesday, January 6.

"I want you to know that we begin this new year with optimism," He said shortly after starting the briefing. "After many hard months, we can finally see a path forward for the world."

Northam said getting vaccinated is "the right thing to do" for one's personal health, and the health of one's neighbors.

He also said case numbers are roughly four times higher than they were last spring, that new single-day highs are set nearly every day, and that a University of Virginia statistical model shows that cases could continue rising until Valentine's Day or later.

"We have a long winter ahead of us," Northam said.

Northam said it will take 17 million shots to vaccinate everyone in Virginia. The state is currently receiving about 110,000 doses of the vaccine per week.

"We're now three weeks into the most extensive

public vaccination campaign in modern history," Northam said.

Currently between 10,000 and 15,000 individuals are being vaccinated daily. Northam said he hopes first to work towards a goal of vaccinating 25,000 individuals per day, and then 50,000, in hopes of vaccinating all Virginians by this summer.

The first group of people to receive vaccines will be healthcare workers such as doctors, nurses and EMT. Northam referred to this group as "one A."

The next group to re-

ceive vaccines will be residents of long-term care facilities, followed by essential workers.

Northam classified firefighters, police officers, hazardous materials handlers, grocery store and food processing plant employees, bus drivers, teachers, mail carriers, farmers and more as essential workers, referring to them as group one B.

The next group to receive vaccines will be those employed in transportation, food service, construction and energy. Anyone aged 65 or older will also receive

vaccinations with the rest of this group.

Northam urged those administering vaccines to do so as quickly as possible.

"Empty those freezers, clear those shelves, deploy those doses, show us shots in Virginia's arms," He said.

He also asked them to vaccinate healthcare workers, long term care facility residents and essential workers in the order he laid out, but said that their highest priority should simply be vaccinating as many as possible.

"You are allowed to use

your judgement. If you need to make adjustments now and then, do it. We need to get as many people vaccinated as quickly as possible," Northam said.

Northam also said he believes the vaccine is safe, citing his experience as a doctor, and saying that he and his family would all be vaccinated.

Northam said that as of January 6 roughly 115,000 people have received the vaccine in Virginia, 2,000 of whom have already received a second dose.

"We'd like to have all See Northam Page 3

## Good, Kaine offer thoughts on riots in Capitol Building

A.J. O'Leary  
Union Star Editor

A mob breached the Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. yesterday to protest the counting of electoral votes in the Senate.

Senators finished counting votes early on the morning of January 7, returning the result that President-Elect Joe Biden and Vice President-Elect Kamala Harris won the election.

Congressman Bob Good tweeted the following in response to the storming of the Capitol Building:

"Peaceful assembly, protesting & petitioning our government to express our grievances is fundamental to our constitutional republic. We are also a nation established on the rule of law and we must never resort to violence. I call on everyone to express their views peacefully and to respect our Capitol and courageous law enforcement officers working nobly to keep us all safe. I am thankful that my staff and I are safe and my prayer is for the safety of everyone today."

Senator Tim Kaine also tweeted about the incident, calling on lawmakers and law enforcement officials to hold both the individuals who stormed the Capitol building and President Trump accountable.

Kaine suggested that Congress invoke the 25th amendment to the Constitution against Trump, an amendment that provides for the replacement of presidents who are either dead or deemed unfit to serve.

Kaine also tweeted that Trump should not be allowed at the upcoming presidential inauguration on January 20, that "insurrectionists" who stormed the Capitol should be punished by law enforcement officials if necessary and that Congress

See Good, Kaine Page 3



Allen Bailey/ Union Star

Rustburg's Kyle Fields shoots a layup through contact.

## High school basketball returns

ALLEN BAILEY  
Sports Correspondent

Sports returned Thursday night to the Seminole District after a long wait due to the pandemic. The Brookville Bees boys' basketball team traveled to Rustburg to open the season up against the Devils, a young team with only 3 returning players.

Things are a little different at games due to COVID-19. There is no jump ball to start the game and balls are wiped off during every timeout and quarter. Few people besides

players and coaches are allowed in the gym.

The night started rough with a lot of defense, missed opportunities and clangs off the boards. Everyone was rusty, but the players were excited to finally be back on the court. The game scoreless for the first five minutes, but everyone eventually settled in and Brookville took a 6-5 lead. Going into the half it was all tied up at 17 apiece.

Brookville broke away in the third quarter with a 12-2 run. The Bees led by as much as 15 points at times, and Rustburg couldn't

See Basketball Page 3

## Liberty files suit over changes to VTAG program

A.J. O'LEARY  
Union Star Editor

Liberty University is suing Governor Ralph Northam and State Council of Higher Education of Virginia (SCHEV) Director Peter Blake in their official capacities for amending the Virginia Tuition Assistance Grant (VTAG) to make online students ineligible to receive funding through the program.

VTAG is a grant program that provides funding to assist students attending private, accredited, non-profit colleges and universities in the Commonwealth.

A statement issued by Liberty claims that the changes to the program amount to discrimination.

See Liberty Page 3

## Several Virginia residents dead, under arrest after Capitol Building riots

A.J. O'LEARY  
Union Star Editor

US Capitol Police Officer Brian D. Sicknick died shortly after responding to the riot that took place in the US Capitol Building on January 6.

Sicknick was a resident of Northern Virginia. According to a statement issued by the United States Capitol Police, Sicknick was injured in the fray inside the Capitol Building and collapsed after returning to his division office. He passed away at 9:30 p.m. on January 7 in a local hospital.

Governor Northam released the fol-

See Riots Page 3

## Small Business Spotlight

### Local restaurant owners adapt, open Happy Heifer food truck

JENNY HAUGH  
News Correspondent  
Union Star

The Tribble family has been serving food to the Brookneal community for almost 20 years. "My wife owned a small catering business while I farmed," says Sonny Buck owner Wayne Tribble. Angela Tribble's catering business, A&E Catering, has also been in the community for almost 20 years. The Tribbles opened up a single location for both Sonny Buck Diner and A&E Catering in 2016.

"Sonny Buck was a nickname for my son, and the name stuck" laughed Tribble. The restaurant is cafeteria-style and features home-style and southern favorites. It is known locally for fried chicken, meatloaf, dirty fries and corn pudding. A&E Catering and Sonny Buck Diner are both run from the same location at 238 Main Street in Brookneal.

The Tribbles have moved their business into a mobile food truck called The Happy

Heifer. "We haven't run out of the restaurant since the sixteenth of March. Since we have a cafeteria-style restaurant it's difficult to control with safety. You come down the bar, you pick meat, sides, dessert, help yourself to the drink machine and pay at the end," said Tribble.

As COVID-19 restrictions make this style of dining difficult, the Tribbles decided a mobile truck was the safest option. Tribble said, "It's still the same food. We're kind of waiting for things to calm down so people can come back in. It's just a lot to go through to keep the inside restaurant COVID safe." In the meantime, the Tribbles are adding new menu items like fried catfish and their version of fried blooming onion.

The catering side of the restaurant, A&E Catering, has also continued to stay open during the pandemic. Tribble said, "We do weddings, events, parties, anything from 10 people to 500. We can make anything you want, not just the food from the restaurant."

See Heifer Page 3



Sonny Buck Diner

The Happy Heifer food truck serves Brookneal and surrounding areas.

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**LIBERTY**

CONT. FROM PAGE 1

“The 2020 VTAG amendments, as applied by SCHEV, treat two identical students taking the same classes and using the same online resources differently if one is administratively classified by his or her school as part of an ‘online program’ and

the other as part of a “place-based” program. This is unconstitutional discrimination.”

According to the statement funding through VTAG had been available to online students since 1973.

**BASKETBALL**

CONT. FROM PAGE 1

close the gap by less than 10 points. Brookville walked away with the win, 46-35.



**HEIFER**

CONT. FROM PAGE 1

Tribble added, “We’ve been catering to churches that want to have meals together, but everyone can’t come in and sit down. They have the church service in their car, and then we hand out individually packaged meals and drinks.”

With restaurant and food restrictions in place, Tribble noted, “We really try to do everything we can do to keep customers safe with sanitation procedures.”

Sonny Bucks also offers a call in option, where customers can call ahead to the food truck to have their food ready for pickup. “Most of the customers seem to like the option of calling in,” noted Tribble. The mobile unit travels around to Brookneal, Altavista, Rustburg and other locations, but their daily location and menu can be found through their Facebook page, Sonny Buck Diner.

**GOOD, KAINE**

CONT. FROM PAGE 1

should evaluate the lack of security that allowed the incident to occur. “The sun is up on a new day,” he tweet-

ed. “But there must be accountability for yesterday.”

**NORTHAM**

CONT. FROM PAGE 1

Virginians vaccinated certainly by the

summertime,” Northam said.

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**RIOTS**

CONT. FROM PAGE 1

lowing as part of an official statement after Sicknick’s death:

“Officer Sicknick was killed while doing his job—defending those trapped in the Capitol building amid a violent attack on our democracy. His death is a tragedy, and those responsible must be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.”

It is unclear at this time who fatally injured Sicknick.

Other Virginia residents involved in the incident include Douglas Sweet of Hudgins, VA and Cindy Fitchett of Cobbs Creek, VA, who were both arrested on January 7 after storming into the Capitol Building.

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