



# Holston haul

South Holston Lake and River cleanup adds to 30-ton total

REGION » B1



Sinking Spring Presbyterian marks a big anniversary

COMMUNITY » D1

# BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

SUNDAY, August 14, 2022

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She's battling long COVID. Her advice? Go at it like you're fighting, **With a sword in your hand.**

BY DAVID MCGEE  
BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

**B**RISTOL, Tenn. — Nineteen months after being diagnosed with COVID-19, Kathy Sharp still copes with the physical and emotional scars the virus has wrought upon on her life.

Sharp, 64, is a former oncology nurse practitioner who retired when the effects of "long COVID" — extreme fatigue and memory issues also known as "brain fog" — refused to dissipate. COVID claimed her husband Danny's life, and nearly hers.

See **FIGHTING**, Page A7



Kathy Sharp went from a nightmare to reclaiming her life

EMILY BALL/BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

Kathy Sharp talks with Bristol Herald Courier Senior Reporter David McGee about her battle with COVID and how it affects all aspects of her life.

## What is 'long COVID'?

BY DAVID MCGEE  
BRISTOL HERALD COURIER  
Nearly 295,000 cases of COVID-19 have been diagnosed across this region since the global pandemic began, and a number of those people continue experiencing some symptoms long after the virus exits their systems.

The condition is called by different names: long COVID, long-haul COVID, post-COVID, and a half-dozen others. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control is among the agencies studying the problem, which has proven elusive to identify and quantify.

**Post-COVID**  
Here's where you can get more information on *Ballad's Center for Post-Covid Care*:  
» Call: 423-952-2183.  
» Email: postcovid@balladhealth.org.

See **COVID**, Page A7

## Tennessee 'Concept' law nets a single filing

Complaint under list of 'prohibited concepts' in schools was denied

BY DAMON MITCHELL  
WPLN-FM

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Tennessee lawmakers have been smack dab in the middle of the national hoopla about bans limiting what can be discussed about race and gender in public schools. Legislators outlined those boundaries in a bill passed in 2021.

But during the most recent school year, only one complaint was filed at the state level, and it was denied.

The legislation took aim at one school of thought in academia. "Critical race theory is un-American," Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee said during a press conference. "It fundamentally puts groups of people above the sanctity of the individual, which is a founding principle of this nation."

But Tennessee's law doesn't outright mention or ban the teachings of "critical race theory," which states that racism is planted in the country's health, economic, education, criminal justice and housing systems.

It instead prevents local education agencies from teaching what the state calls "prohibited concepts," including that an individual has a leg up in life because of their race.

The law also provides a process for parents to challenge curriculums with school districts directly, giving them the option of appealing to the state

See **LAW**, Page A6

A thunderstorm this afternoon. Mostly cloudy tonight with a shower.  
82/65  
Weather » A10  
7 65161 10012 8

## Virginia overhauling how it launches regs

Virginia Del. Michael Webert, R-Fauquier (left), sponsored 2018 pilot legislation on cutting regulations. His 2022 bill failed in the Senate.



### Youngkin's goal: Cut requirements by 25%

BY DAVE RESS and CHARLOTTE RENE WOODS  
Richmond Times-Dispatch

For at least 70 years, Virginia politicians have accepted the notion that some issues are better handled by state agencies than by the courts or the General Assembly — and they've been arguing ever since about exactly how much.

Now, Gov. Glenn Youngkin aims to have a tool to meet his goal of cutting the state's regulatory requirements by 25%. It is the goal of the first major overhaul in

See **REGS**, Page A6

INSIDE: CLASSIFIED E1-8 | COMICS INSERT | DEATHS B2-3 | OPINION A8 | SCOREBOARD C2 | TELEVISION B6

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## Kids and COVID: Do stats mislead?

CDC data suggest many more children infected than thought

BY TOM AVRIL

The Philadelphia Inquirer  
Tribune News Service

With so many people using at-home COVID-19 tests, if they're testing at all, experts acknowledged long ago that the true number of cases is higher than what is officially reported.

New CDC data suggest that among children, the true number is a lot higher.

The evidence comes from the blood samples of children who had their blood drawn at commercial labs for non-COVID reasons, such as measuring levels of cholesterol or lead. Among 26,725 blood samples collected in May and June, nearly 80% contained a type of antibody that the immune system produces only in response to infection — not in response to the vaccines.

Assuming that percentage holds true for all U.S. children, the CDC estimated that at least 57 million youths had been infected with the coronavirus by the end of June, four times

See CHILDREN, Page A4

## BRISTOL CASINO, FUTURE HOME OF HARD ROCK



# Jackpot

Bristol Casino has 'exceeded expectations'

“We couldn't have asked for more.”

— Allie Evangelista,  
Hard Rock Bristol president

## Casino's leader talks changes, community support and the future

BY DAVID MCGEE

BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

BRISTOL, Va. — Citizens of Alaska, where are you? The Bristol Casino, future home of Hard Rock, celebrated six weeks of operation Friday, and during that time has documented guests from 49 states. Alaska is the lone hold-out. Virginia's first casino has attracted thousands of visitors to the former Bristol Mall and operators admit the response has far exceeded their expectations.

“We couldn't have asked for more. We knew it would be a positive opening,” Hard Rock Bristol President Allie Evangelista said last week. “We knew that the community was excited about it and the team members were excited about opening the property, but I don't think I could have anticipated the excitement that came with the

See CASINO, Page A3



At left, Allie Evangelista, Hard Rock Bristol president, pauses for an interview during a media tour before the grand opening of the Bristol Casino.

EMILY BALL  
BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

### INSIDE

National teacher shortage not having big impact on local districts

» B1



Mostly cloudy and humid today with a thunderstorm. Expect less than two hours of sun.



80/66

Weather » A12



7 65161 10012 8

INSIDE: CLASSIFIED E1-8 | COMICS INSERT | DEATHS B2 | OPINION A8 | SCOREBOARD C2 | TELEVISION B6



Jennifer Oakley, MD  
Glaucoma Specialist



Michael Shahbazi, MD  
Glaucoma Specialist



Joshua Busscher, MD  
Cornea Specialist





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# BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

## Will new test solve mystery?

No tips, few leads in 2020 death of man found in Bland County **REGION B1**



## 'Learn to do good ...'

Isaiah 117 House expansion brings mission of love to Washington County **COMMUNITY D1**



Sunday, October 2, 2022

WHERE YOUR STORY LIVES

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### HURRICANE IAN

# Ian's wake: Ruin, death

Focus turns to rescue, recovery in storm's path

REBECCA SANTANA AND MEG KINNARD  
Associated Press

FORT MYERS, Fla. — Dozens of Florida residents left their flooded and splintered homes by boat and by air on Saturday as rescuers continued to search for survivors in the wake of Hurricane Ian, while authorities in South Carolina and North Carolina began taking stock of their losses.

The death toll from the storm, one of the strongest hurricanes by wind speed to ever hit the U.S., grew to nearly three dozen, with deaths reported from Cuba, Florida and North Carolina. The storm weakened Saturday as it rolled into the mid-Atlantic, but

Please see IAN, Page A3

# It turns out you're not in the Army now

Missed recruiting goal may pressure Guard, Reserve

LOLITA C. BALDOR  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Army fell about 15,000 soldiers — or 25% — short of its recruitment goal this year, officials confirmed Friday, despite a frantic effort to make up the widely expected gap in a year when all the military services struggled in a tight jobs market to find young people willing and fit to enlist.

While the Army was the only service that didn't meet its

Please see ARMY, Page A3

### BALLAD HEALTH CENTER FOR POST-COVID CARE



'People are desperate. They know something is wrong.'

ILLUSTRATION BY KRISHNA MATHIAS, LEE ENTERPRISES

DAVID MCGEE  
BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

Thousands in this region continue to cope with the effects of the SARS-CoV-2 virus months after their primary symptoms subsided, but many aren't seeking available treatment, according to providers at Ballad Health System's Center for Post-COVID Care.

Ballad established the clinic in April 2021, just over a year into the pandemic, to treat a growing number of patients whose symptoms lingered. To date it has had more than 850 appointments.

Most who contract the virus experience symptoms for up to two weeks, then get better.

But for about 33% of COVID patients, it has been a nightmare of months to more than a year of symptoms ranging from extreme fatigue, shortness of breath and brain "fog" to joint pain, heart issues and extremely high blood pressures.

# 50K+

## Thousands here have long COVID. Help is available.

Many are likely going untreated or may not recognize their malady is related to COVID-19, said Dr. Paul Jett, who oversees the program.

"Conservative estimates, there should be way over 50,000 people in our Ballad footprint that are dealing with these types of problems. We know they're not all coming forward, nor can we

handle them all at once, but we'd like to create a dialogue that this is legitimate," Jett told the Bristol Herald Courier. "It is real and there is a lot of research being dedicated to this."

Since March, more than 53,000 cases of COVID-19 have been diagnosed across Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia. Since the pandemic began

in March 2020, that total is more than 320,000. And nearly 5,000 area residents have died from COVID-19 and complications from the virus.

Throughout the pandemic, health care providers have dealt with considerable misinformation regarding the virus and its impacts.

"There was so much consternation and politicizing about the virus itself, especially in our region. Now, even this — it's something you can't see, you can't feel, you can't really measure with a test. How do you quantify that? How do people legitimize that in their own brain? There is a place for these folks to get evaluated," Jett said.

Established in an office complex near the MeadowView Conference Resort and Convention Center in Kingsport, the long COVID clinic is relocating to the

Please see COVID, Page A3

## Remembering former Bristol Herald Courier columnist Jack Kestner

COMMUNITY, PAGE D1

**Weather**  
Rain at times.  
**High 58 • Low 48**  
FORECAST • A10

Inside	
Calendar	A2
Classified	E1-E6
Deaths	B2, B4
Opinion	A8
Scoreboard	C2
Television	B6



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