





# Richmond Free Press



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**JUNE 16-18, 2022** 

# Unshe tered Plans to house the homeless in Shockoe Valley disappear

### Forgotten no more



Left, Mayor Levar M. Stoney takes part in unveiling a new state historic marker for the Shockoe Hill Burying Ground, the long forgotten public cemetery for 22,000 Black people at 1305 N. 5th St. at the entry to Highland Park. Joining the mayor at the Sunday afternoon ceremony are Ana F. Edwards of the Sacred Ground Historical Reclamation Project, left, and Lenora C. McQueen, a Texas resident who has led a four-year fight to preserve and protect the burial ground where relatives are buried and who has pushed for the cemetery's recognition and designation as a national historic site. Below left, Ms. McQueen proudly stands in front of the new marker that she successfully lobbied the state Department of Historic Resources to install. Below, the choir from Swansboro Elementary performs at the cemetery. The city opened the cemetery in 1816 as the last resting place for slaves and free Black people, and offered burials there until 1879. Now considered the largest municipal cemetery for Black people in the country, the 30-acre burying ground was promptly forgotten, with the city selling off pieces while allowing railroad tracks and highways to be run through the gravesite. The city recently repurchased 1.5 acres, and on Monday night, City Council incorporated the cemetery into plans for a slavery memorial and museum that are to be developed next to Main Street Station.



By Jeremy Lazarus

Plans for a year-round shelter open around the clock for the homeless have suddenly evaporated seven months after being announced.

Commonwealth Catholic Charities, which secured city support to add a 75-bed in-

clement weather operation to be used as a housing resource center at 809 Oliver Hill



Ms. Lynch

Way, has dropped its plans for developing the expanded

CCC Marketing Manager Katie Dillon on Tuesday confirmed in response to a Free Press query that the project to provide a place for the unsheltered to stay during the high heat of Richmond summers, the freezing cold of winter and drenching storms has been dropped.

"Last week, we informed city staff that CCC cannot proceed with the development of the inclement weather shelter at our Oliver Hill Way location," Ms. Dillon explained in an email.

"The project simply faced too many challenges resulting in significant and extended delays," she continued. "Despite our very best efforts, substantial staff time and financial resources, the setbacks made it impossible to complete the

Please turn to A4

# New RPS teachers to earn \$51,182 annually; bus drivers will earn \$23 per hour

By Jeremy Lazarus

Starting pay for Richmond schoolteachers will top \$50,000 for the first time after July 1.

At the same time, bus operators, still in short supply, will see their wages jump to \$23 an hour, with newly hired drivers with commercial driving licenses

receiving a \$3,500 hiring bonus as well. Those were part of salary changes that the Richmond School Board approved at a special meeting Tuesday night along with a finalized budget for the

2022-23 fiscal year that also begins next month.

With wages across the board rising 5 percent, the starting pay for a new teacher with no experience was set at \$51,182, effective with the start of the school year, up from around \$48,600 this year, and rising with each year's experience on the 48-step scale.

Superintendent Jason Kamras, who disclosed



earlier Tuesday that he had tested positive for COVID-19 despite having been vaccinated and receiving booster shoots, participated virtually in the meeting, which two members, Liz Doerr, 1st District, and Kenya Gibson, 3rd District, did not attend in person or online.

"Fortunately, and almost certainly due to my vaccination," Mr. Kamras wrote in the daily RPS Direct email "my symptoms are relatively mild – low fever,

Please turn to A4



is on track By Jeremy Lazarus

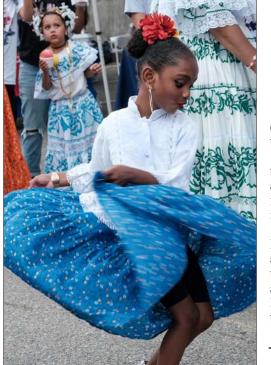
Richmond is on track to sponsor its first gun buyback program — despite substantial evidence that such programs are largely public relations gimmicks that do not affect gun violence.

Monday night, City Council voted 9-0 to approve the request of Mayor Levar M. Stoney to run a guy buyback program as part of initiatives to help quell the surge of shootings and killings mostly plaguing poor neighborhoods.

Five of the nine members signed on as co-sponsors June 6 when council held a special meeting to introduce the legislation and fast-track it for

Among the most enthusiastic is 3rd District Councilwoman

Please turn to A4



Divertido y feliz = happy and fun

Asia Anthony was among the La Palma dance group's energetic performers during Saturday's ¿Qué Pasa? Festival in Shockoe Slip. The Virginia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce sponsors the festival to showcase the diversity and beauty of Hispanic and Latin American cultures. The festival was canceled for two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. More photos on B5.

## Federal court issues July deadline for new elections lawsuit

By Jeremy Lazarus

A new lawsuit seeking to force new elections for the House of Delegates this November is on the fast track.

But it will take at least 30 days to gain a decision, making it dicey as to whether there will still be time for the court process to be completed in time to hold a vote.

U.S. District Judge David J. Novak Monday set the aggressive schedule at a hearing Monday that included the plaintiff, political journalist and author Jeffrey "Jeff" Thomas Jr., and lawyers representing the defendants, the State Board of Elections.

Judge Novak ordered both sides

to provide briefs and responses by to "correct the record." the second week of July.

The hearing came a week after a three-judge panel that Judge Novak led dismissed the first lawsuit filed by political strategist Paul Goldman of Richmond.

In a reversal, Mr. Goldman has decided to appeal the panel's judgment that he does not have standing, or the legal right to bring the case.

He submitted his notice of appeal this week in part as a response to the panel's finding that he had some responsibility for the lengthy delay in hearing his case. He called that finding "completely inaccurate" and described his notice as an opportunity

Mr. Goldman brought the suit to uphold voting rights of Virginia citizens and enforce the requirements of the Virginia Constitution over the opposition from the Attorney General's Office.

At this point, there is near silence among elected officials and voting rights advocates over this new effort. Mr. Thomas has not issued a public statement, nor has Attorney General Jason S. Miyares, who has hired outside counsel to defend the state elections officials.

Mr. Goldman is skeptical that elec-

Please turn to A4

### Black history museum's interim director steps down

Free Press staff report

A leadership change appears to be in the works for the Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia in Richmond, though it is currently shrouded in secrecy.

What has been confirmed is that Dr. Marland Buckner Jr., who was named interim executive director after the death of Adele C. Johnson in April 2021, has stepped down after

Please turn to A4



Dr. Buckner

#### Free COVID-19 testing, vaccines

Free community testing for COVID-19 continues. The Richmond and Henrico County health districts are offering testing at the following locations:

 Wednesday, June 22, 8 to 10 a.m. - East Henrico Recreation Center Pavilion, 1440 N Laburnum Ave. • Thursday, June 23, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. - Neighborhood

Resource Center, 1519 Williamsburg Road. Call the Richmond and Henrico COVID-19 Hotline at (804) 205-3501 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday for more information on testing sites, or go online at vax.rchd.com.

The Virginia Department of Health also has a list of COVID-Please turn to A4

#### News

## Plans to house the homeless in Shockoe Valley disappear

Continued from A1

project in time for winter."

Ms. Dillon stated that CCC has released the remaining portion of the \$1.76 million in federal funds that Mayor Levar M. Stoney and City Council had set aside for the project while also adding that CCC remains "deeply committed to assisting unsheltered individuals and grateful for our ongoing partnership with the city and the Greater Richmond Continuum of Care," an umbrella planning group for homeless services organizations.

Mayor Stoney and administration officials, including Reginald E. Gordon, who oversees human services operations, have not publicly announced the CCC decision and did not respond to Free Press inquiries.

In discussions with council in recent months, the Stoney administration did not indicate there were any backup plans in place in case this development fell through.

Back in October, 5th District Councilwoman Stephanie A. Lynch had greeted the CCC's plan with enthusiasm, calling it the end of a "long hard-fought battle."

Ms. Lynch, who chairs the council's Education and Human Services Committee and has been a leader in pushing for a year-round shelter, called it "disappointing and frustrating" that the promised CCC shelter will not materialize.

Still, she said that she and other council members are not completely surprised the shelter agreement with the city fell apart as the Oct. 1 deadline for providing a winter shelter begins to loom.

There has been skepticism that CCC and the city could get this project "up and running in such a short amount of time, knowing that we do not own the space and it is not a public asset. If it were, it could have been done."

Ms. Lynch has pushed for Richmond to emulate Virginia

# Black history museum's interim director steps down

Continued from A1

orchestrating a deal that has helped raise the museum's community profile.

With the support of the board, Dr. Buckner arranged for his museum to become the owner of the city's Confederate statues as well as the state's Robert E. Lee statue and to team with The Valentine to determine their fate, though the mechanics of planned community conversations are still in development.

The departure of Dr. Buckner, who runs a public policy consulting firm with his wife, Melody Barnes, a former White House domestic policy adviser, had agreed to serve until the board named a permanent director.

His departure appears to hint that an announcement may be imminent. However, the board's chair, Dr. Monroe E. Harris Jr., and other members as well as the museum's staff were staying tight-lipped.

#### Free COVID-19 vaccines

Continued from A1

19 testing locations around the state at www.vdh.virginia. gov/coronavirus/covid-19-testing/covid-19-testing-sites. Want a COVID-19 vaccine or booster shot?

The Richmond and Henrico health districts are offering free walk-up COVID-19 vaccines at the following locations:

• Tuesday, June 21, 9 a.m. to Noon - Henrico East Health
Department 1400 N Laburrum Ave. Pfizer and Moderna: 1

Department, 1400 N. Laburnum Ave., Pfizer and Moderna; 1 to 4 p.m. - Gilpin Resource Center Anniversary Celebration, 436 Calhoun St. Suite 105, Pfizer and Moderna.

• Wednesday, June 22, 9 a.m. to Noon - Henrico West Headquarters, 8600 Dixon Powers Drive, Pfizer and Moderna.

• Thursday, June 23, 1 to 4 p.m. - Richmond Henrico Health District, 400 E. Cary St., Pfizer and Moderna.

Children ages 5 to 17 may only receive the Pfizer vaccine. Vaccinations and booster shots are available for all eligible on a walk-in basis. People still may schedule an appointment online at vaccinate.virginia.gov or vax.rchd.com, or by calling (804) 205-3501 or (877) VAX-IN-VA (1-877-829-4682).

VaccineFinder.org and vaccines.gov also allow people to find nearby pharmacies and clinics that offer the COVID-19 vaccine and booster.

Those who are getting a booster shot should bring their vaccine card to confirm the date and type of vaccine received.

RHHD also offers at-home vaccinations by calling (804) 205-3501 to schedule appointments.

New COVID-19 cases in Virginia increased by one percent last week, according to the Virginia Department of Health, while data from the Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association showed a one percent decrease in hospitalizations statewide within the same period.

As of last Thursday, Hanover has again reached high levels of community COVID-19, rejoining Richmond and the counties of Chesterfield and Henrico in this category.

An advisory panel within the Food and Drug Administration began the process to determine if Pfizer and Moderna's vaccines are safe for children under the age of five Wednesday.

The discussion came a day after the same EDA panel

The discussion came a day after the same FDA panel unanimously approved the Moderna vaccine for children ages six to 17 years old. That approval still needs to be authorized by the larger FDA authority.

A total of 2,704 new cases of COVID-19 were reported statewide Wednesday for the 24-hour period, contributing to an overall state total of 1,830,122 cases in Virginia since the pandemic's outbreak. As of Wednesday, there have been 451,938 hospitalizations and 20,448 deaths statewide. The state's seven-day positivity rate dropped to 17.9 percent on Wednesday. Last week, the positivity rate was 18.8 percent.

On Tuesday, state health officials reported that 73.9 percent of the state's population has been fully vaccinated, while 82.4 percent have received at least one dose of the vaccine.

State data also showed that over 3.1 million people in Virginia have received booster shots or third doses of the vaccine.

Among those ages 5 to 11 in Virginia, 321,550 have received their first shots as of Monday, accounting for 44.4 percent of the age group in the state, while 274,966 children, or 37.9 percent, are fully vaccinated and 15,823 children have received a third vaccine dose or booster, making up 2.2 percent of that age group. As of Wednesday, fewer than 153,130 cases, 905 hospitalizations and 11 deaths have been recorded among children in the state.

State data also shows that African-Americans comprised 22 percent of cases statewide and 23.2 percent of deaths for which ethnic and racial data is available, while Latinos made up 11.6 percent of cases and 5.1 percent of deaths.

#### Reported COVID-19 data as of Wednesday, June 15, 2022

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	Cases	Hospitalizations	Deaths	
Richmond	48,977	1,118	512	
Henrico County	71,726	1,497	943	
Chesterfield County	79,923	1,473	765	
Hanover County	23,483	720	287	

Beach in offering a one-stop shop that could provide information, counseling and other services along with shelter, a big step up from the current Richmond operation that provides only an overnight shelter during the winter to keep unsheltered people from freezing to death.

Creation of a year-round shelter running 24/7 is one element of the city's homeless strategic plan that the administration developed with Homeward, the coordinating agency for nonprofit shelter agencies, and that the council approved more than two years ago.

The council also adopted a Lynch-sponsored resolution in 2020 that pressed the administration to develop a year-round operation as a backstop for people who might face eviction, lose jobs or face other challenges that would cost them their residences.

CCC has operated the winter shelter for the city for the past few years. A council policy requires the city to provide an overflow space when the temperature, along with wind chill, are forecast to be 40 degrees or below, to ensure a safe place when other private shelter beds are full.

Last winter, the shelter was housed at the Quality Inn on Arthur Ashe Boulevard. That was supposed to be temporary after CCC agreed to dramatically increase the services and shelter it could provide at its Oliver Hill Way location – even though 75 beds would have fallen far short of the need. On a given winter night, 110 to 150 people slept nightly in the Quality Inn's conference room space.

With CCC out of the picture, Ms. Lynch she hopes "we can find a permanent solution so we do not have to keep kicking this can down the road.

"Our point of entry and homeless services system is only as strong as our provider partners," she said. "We can and should support them by doing our fair share through helping to fund services and providing space for them to operate."

In her view, a year-round service space with shelter is needed more than ever. "We are facing a perfect storm of conditions that could ultimately lead to a significant increase in the number of individuals and families on the street.

That includes the lingering COVID-19 pandemic, the surging inflation in food and fuel prices, the rise in housing costs and the prospects of a jump in evictions for people who can no longer receive government rent relief, she said.

Those challenges could end up being reflected in a fresh tide of homeless people, she said.

Ms. Lynch noted that the homeless count taken every six months in this area shows an increase in individuals and families on the street.

"Against the backdrop of record state and local budget surpluses," she said, "that increase is an indicator that we are living in a moral and social hypocrisy. We cannot absolve ourselves or turn our heads from the humanitarian crisis that is developing in our own backyard."

# New RPS teachers to earn \$51,182 annually; bus drivers will earn \$23 per hour

Continued from A1

sore throat, fatigue."

Still, he continued, the infection meant that he would not attend any of the high school graduation ceremonies this week and was limited to extending written good wishes to the graduates.

At the meeting, the seven members unanimously approved a record \$555.29 million spending plan for RPS for the 2022-23 fiscal year, which also includes a record \$200 million contribution from city taxpayers.

The total includes a \$353 million operating budget, plus about \$201 million

in special fund money for Head Start and other programs. reported on the same day, March 30, seven years earlier. This is the first year

The final package included adjustments to account for an additional \$1.2 million reduction in state support. Overall, state support for operations fell by \$8 million, according to the budget, due to rising real estate values that impact the state's education funding formula and an enrollment that has drooped to 19,425 K-12 students as of March 30.

The reported total of K-12 students enrolled on that date represents a decline of nearly 8 percent from most recent peak enrollment of 21,958 K-12 students

reported on the same day, March 30, seven years earlier. This is the first year Richmond and other school divisions are feeling the impact on state funding from enrollment changes.

While state support for operations shrank, Richmond Public Schools is on track to receive \$4.5 million to spend on improvements to school buildings. With the city's contribution to school maintenance reduced to \$2.5 million in 2022-34, the state support will enable RPS to complete a chunk of work orders that it has been unable to afford to address, Mr. Kamras said.

# Federal court issues July deadline for new elections lawsuit

Continued from A1

tions could be held even if Mr. Thomas, and others who may seek to join his lawsuit, wins a favorable decision from Judge Novak.

In Mr. Goldman's view, appeals could stretch the case past the deadlines for holding primaries and starting early voting, though many of those who would run have already announced for the scheduled 2023 House elections.

New House elections are supposed to Part of the 2021 elections. New districts were put in place in December 2021 based on updated census figures, leading to aboli-

be held, according to the constitution, after the results of the 10-year census lead to boundary changes that provide 100 House districts of relatively equal populations.

The 2020 Census data was delayed, leading to the former districts being used

put in place in December 2021 based on updated census figures, leading to abolition of the districts that the current House members represent.

Both Mr. Goldman and Mr. Thomas argue elections should be held this year to allow voters to elect representatives from the new districts.

## City's gun buyback is on track

Continued from A1

Ann-Frances Lambert. "I am a strong proponent," she told her colleagues during the informal session prior to the meeting. "I am for anything that gets guns off the street"

Council Vice President Ellen F. Robertson, despite casting a vote for the program, expressed skepticism about undertaking the initiative earlier during informal session.

"If this were successful, we would do it all the time," the council veteran said. She recalled years earlier council advancing and then withdrawing a plan for such a program after being told it would have little effect on crime or violence.

Dr. Michael J. Jones, 9th District, said during the informal session that "one more gun off the street is a good thing," but counseled his colleagues that it was likely that the program "would collect a lot of garbage guns" people are trying to get rid of but that have no connection to violence.

The Stoney administration, which has earmarked \$500,000 in federal funds for gun buybacks, is planning to spend about \$83,000 on the first.

Lincoln Saunders, the city's chief administrative officer, said the plan is to provide those submitting guns gift cards of various values depending on the type of weapon: \$250 for a semiautomatic assault rifle, \$200 for other types of operable guns and \$25 for nonfunctional weapons. No questions will be asked.

He said that the city was working with the California-based Robby Poblete Foundation to set up the program. No date has yet been scheduled.

The foundation is the creation of Pati Navalta, who named it for her son who was slain in 2014.

Operating on \$300,000 or less a year, the tiny foundation has made gun buybacks a main element of its limited work. The foundation reports on its website that it previously staged four such programs since 2017, with three in California localities, including San Francisco, and one Augusta, Ga., with a total collection of 1,354 guns. There is no reported evidence that any of the cities experienced any decline in crime or shootings as a result of the foundation's work.

Most criminal justice experts regard such programs, which originated in Baltimore in 1974, as a waste of money.

One expert, Dr. Gary J. Wintemute, has labeled gun buyback programs that are disconnected from a comprehensive violence reduction strategy as "the triumph of wishful thinking over all available ovidence."

His view was validated in a 2021 study that found no impact on violence from 350 gun buyback programs held between 1991 and 2015 in cities across the country.

The study, released through the National Bureau of Economic Research in Cambridge, Mass., instead found that that those communities that did hold the

programs actually experienced "a small increase in gun crimes" after the programs concluded, with the uptick ranging from 3 to 5 percent.

That finding is based on the study's re-

view of 24 years of data from the National Incident Based Reporting System.

That is what happened in Baltimore 48 years ago after the city hosted the first

program. The city reported collecting more than 10,000 firearms and then reported a 5 percent increase in crimes involving firearms after the program ended, according to follow-up review of the program.

According to the 2021 study, two de-

cades of separate data from the National Vital Statistics System, which collects reports on deaths, provided "no evidence that gun buyback programs affected suicides or homicides" in the communities that have run such programs.

"We conclude that gun buyback pro-

we conclude that gun buyback programs are an ineffective policy strategy to reduce gun violence," the researchers stated, because the firearm purchase prices are usually set too low to reduce the supply of weapons; most of those turning in firearms live in areas of low crime risk; and most of the weapons are older and in poorer condition.

Buyback programs do well to collect 1,000 weapons, an almost unnoticeable number in a country where private citizens already own an estimated 390 million guns and in which gun manufacturers produce 9 million additional guns each year.

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#### Meet this week's Personality B1



#### **Nichelle Nichols** was first to chart path B3



# Richmond Free Press



**Mayor Stoney** 

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**AUGUST 4-6, 2022** 

# Big mistake on Lee statue protesters

# was in error

By Jeremy M. Lazarus

Twenty-five minutes before an 8 p.m. curfew was to go into effect, Richmond Police officers began firing tear gas and other noxious chemical agents to disperse hundreds of demonstrators who had gathered around the now removed Robert E. Lee statue in the city's West End.

More than two years later, the mystery appears to be solved as to why dozens of officers undertook what appeared to be an

illegal action on June 1, 2020 — violating people's constitutional right to assemble peaceably and stoking the local fires of protest over the Minneapolis Police murder of George Floyd.

In a seven-page report released July 29, Richmond's top prosecutor, Colette W. McEachin, confirmed what Mayor Levar M. Stoney and then-Police Chief William C. Smith tried to tell an angry crowd of

people who marched to City Hall the next day to protest the gassing — that the release of chemical agents at the Lee statue before the curfew took effect was a mistake. She issued that conclusion in announcing that none of the of-

ficers who deployed chemical agents would face criminal charges, though the action has led to multiple civil suits for damages.

Mrs. McEachin determined that the officers acted after re-

Please turn to A4



### The city's 'Night Out'

The Richmond Police Department celebrated National Night Out, which it calls "the biggest citywide party of the year," on Tuesday, Aug. 2. The annual event brings together police and neighbors to support crime prevention during an evening of music and entertainment. Among this year's festivities were fun and games at the Satellite Restaurant, 4000 Richmond Highway in South Side. Below right, Acting Lt. Brian Sheridan of Richmond's Second Precinct plays a little b-ball with area children while above rappers ShaaBiggaa and Hiii Siddity of Girll Codee perform. At Meadow Park in the Fan, below left, Richmond Police Chief Gerald M. Smith chats with area residents Matt and Nancy Costello.





#### City housing director, church leaders discuss shelter options

\$3M on the table for homeless

By Jeremy M. Lazarus

Ninth District City Councilman Michael J. Jones hopes a network of churches can be developed to provide shelter for the homeless during inclement weather,

particularly during winter cold. Dr. Jones, a full-time pastor himself, sought to make that happen by convening a meeting last week between a city official with money to spend and 15 to 20 pastors whose churches

might have space that could be used. The official was Sherrill N. Hampton, city director of housing and community develop-

ment, who has \$3 million to spend with faith groups and nonprofits who would operate the shelter.

Dr. Jones got involved after opposing the city's plan to create a central shelter for 150 people at the Liberation Church, 5501 Midlothian Turnpike, in his district.

He rejected that idea, arguing that a decentralized approach that would have multiple sites to handle 25 to 30 people apiece would be better and have less impact on surrounding communities.

Please turn to A4

### City jail inmate charged for attacking deputy

By Jeremy M. Lazarus

It took three weeks, but a Richmond City Justice Center inmate with a long rap sheet has been charged with the malicious wounding July 7 of a female deputy whose jaw was shattered



#### Ready to reel

Father and son fishermen, Denzel Terrell and 6-yearold Deion Terrell, trek the pedestrian bridge from Brown's Island to Belle Isle looking to land a big catch this summer.

and who suffered other serious facial injuries in a brutal attack.

SheriffAntionette V. Irving disclosed the arrest of Sakeem J. Bell on July 29 in a rare press release from her office con-

cerning an action taken against an inmate alleged to have committed serious offenses.

Already jailed for a year awaiting a probation revocation hearing that is to be held later this month, Mr. Bell was arraigned Aug. 1 in the new case and is scheduled for a preliminary hearing Sept. 13 in Richmond General District

Behind the scenes, the Free



**Sheriff Irving** 

that Sheriff Irving came under serious pressure to act to prevent the Richmond Police Department from taking over the case. Ahead of her ac-

Press has been told

tion, the Free Press was told police detectives had interviewed the deputy and were preparing to file charges against Mr. Bell if the sheriff, who has gained a reputation for not preferring charges against inmates, did not.

The sheriff, before bringing the charge, had sent Mr. Bell to Central State Hospital for evaluation. The Free Press was

Please turn to A4

### **Appreciation: Bill Russell** lived a life like very few others



Bill Russell, the Boston Celtics legend, receives the Medal of Freedom at the White House in February 2011. Mr. Russell is shown accepting his medal from then-President Obama. The award is presented to civilians for being "the best of who we are and who we aspire to be.'

**By Tim Reynolds** The Associated Press

Bill Russell hated autographs. Saw no point to them. If he was out dining and got approached by someone asking for his signature, Mr. Russell's usual response was to instead ask the person to join him at the table to have

#### Related story on A9

a conversation about life.

The autograph-seekers almost

always declined. Oh, the stories they missed.

Mr. Russell, the greatest winner in the history of team sports, died Sunday, July 31, 2022 at 88. The basketball legacy is beyond well-known: 11 championships in 13 years with the Boston Celtics, first Black coach

Please turn to A4

### Conflict of interest sparks tense discussion for RPS School Board

By Holly Rodriguez

The Arthur Ashe Jr. Athletic Center arose as a topic of discussion during the Richmond School Board meeting Monday night.

But the potential conflict between the School Board and the city, regarding rights and ownership of the facility in light of Mayor Levar Stoney's Diamond District redevelopment plan,

was not the cause of discussion. A conflict of interest for the Board's legal counsel, revealed during executive session, was at issue for Vice Chair Kenya Gibson, 3rd District.

The public is not allowed to be present during the School Board's executive sessions. Ms. Gibson said she believed the matter of the

Please turn to A4

#### Free COVID-19 testing, vaccines

Free community testing for COVID-19 continues. The Richmond and Henrico County health districts are offering testing at the following location:

• Thursday, Aug. 4, 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. - Fulton Neighborhood Resource Center, 1519 Williamsburg

Call the Richmond and Henrico COVID-19 Hotline at (804) 205-3501 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday for more information on testing sites, or go online

The Virginia Department of Health also has a list of COVID-

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#### **News**

# Tear gas released on Lee statue protesters was in error

Continued from A1

ceiving a lawful, though mistaken order from Chief Smith, who resigned a few days later.

According to the report, Chief Smith erroneously believed he was authorizing officers to deploy the chemical agents against a crowd that trying to pull down the Stuart statue then located on Monument Avenue 500 feet east of the Lee statue.

Overall, the report paints a picture of a confused and overwhelmed police command that was ill-prepared for this test of the department's ability to maintain order amid the huge uproar over police brutality and racial injustice.

The report indicated that Chief Smith did not assign or dispatch a ranking officer, such as a lieutenant, captain or major, to take charge of the response at either statue as the protests began that night, leaving sergeants and patrol officers in charge.

Chief Smith also never established a clear line of communication from either scene, the report indicated, but instead allowed himself and his staff to be bombarded with reports over multiple channels from individual officers.

One glaring error, according to the report, involved how officers were dispatched from the staging area, located north and west of the statues, to deal with the upheaval that night.

The dozens of officers who responded around 7:30 p.m. mostly came east along Monument Avenue, arriving at the Lee statue first and stopping there, instead of moving past to reinforce the nine officers at the Stuart statue who had issued a mayday call for help dealing with their crowd of 400 people. Essentially, those arriving officers had no direction as to where to go and made the decision themselves after seeing the crowd at the Lee statue, the report stated.

The most egregious error, the report found, was the failure of Chief Smith and his staff to demand location information from the multiple officers who were delivering reports or to provide location information themselves, particularly when it came to authorizing the use of chemical agents.

This lack of clarity contributed to the overall confusion and chaos," the report stated, and led Chief Smith to authorize he first use of chemical agents at the wrong place, the Lee statue.

Flying overhead, an officer around 7:29 p.m. reported and transmitted video to Chief Smith of people climbing onto the

#### City jail inmate charged for attacking deputy

Continued from A1

told that the hospital quickly sent him back without doing an evaluation after he allegedly assaulted a staff member.

The Free Press has been told that inmates alleged to have committed lesser assaults on deputies, including punching them or throwing hot water on them, have yet to be charged.

That also appears to be the case in instances where inmates have stabbed other inmates or have committed sexual assaults against other inmates.

Allegations that the sheriff has not brought charges against inmate attackers can be found in complaints victims have filed with the federal court seeking damages. Most of the complaints, though, have either not succeeded or have not been pursued after the initial filing.

Serving at the jail is stressful for the staff. The Free Press has been told that at least two captains have been hospitalized in the past two weeks as the result of stress-related spikes in their blood pressure.

#### Free COVID-19 vaccines

Continued from A1

19 testing locations around the state at www.vdh.virginia.gov/ coronavirus/covid-19-testing/covid-19-testing-sites.

Want a COVID-19 vaccine or booster shot? The Richmond and Henrico health districts are offering free

walk-up COVID-19 vaccines at the following location:

• Thursday, Aug. 4, 1 to 4 p.m. – Richmond Henrico Health District, 400 E. Cary St., Pfizer for ages six months and older, Moderna for ages six months to 5 years old and ages 12 years and older, appointments encouraged. People can schedule an appointment online at vase.vdh.

virginia.gov, vaccinate.virginia.gov or vax.rchd.com, or by calling (804) 205-3501 or (877) VAX-IN-VA (1-877-829-4682)

VaccineFinder.org and vaccines.gov also allow people to find nearby pharmacies and clinics that offer the COVID-19 vaccine and booster.

Those who are getting a booster shot should bring their vaccine card to confirm the date and type of vaccine received.

RHHD also offers at-home vaccinations by calling (804) 205-3501 to schedule appointments.

As with last week, new COVID-19 cases in Virginia have largely stayed at a flat rate, according to the Virginia Department of Health, while hospitalization data from the Virginia Hospital

& Healthcare Association increased by three percent. As of last Thursday, the city of Richmond and counties of Chesterfield, Henrico and Hanover are still at high levels of

community COVID-19. A total of 3,239 new cases of COVID-19 were reported statewide Wednesday for the 24-hour period, contributing to an overall state total of 1,968,329 cases in Virginia since the pandemic's outbreak. As of Wednesday, there have been 453,071 hospitalizations and 20,995 deaths statewide.

The state's seven-day positivity rate rose to 23.1 percent on Wednesday. Last week, the positivity rate was 22.9 percent. On Wednesday, state health officials reported that 71.9 percent of the state's population has been fully vaccinated, while 82.2

percent have received at least one dose of the vaccine. State data also showed that more than 3.6 million people in Virginia have received booster shots or third doses of the vaccine.

Among those ages 5 to 11 in Virginia, 328,797 have received their first shots as of Wednesday, accounting for 45.4 percent of the age group in the state, while 285,468 children, or 39.4 percent, are fully vaccinated and 36,743 children have received a third vaccine dose or booster, making up 5.1 percent of that

On Wednesday, 31,114 children from the ages of zero to four have received the first doses, making up 6.8 percent of the population in Virginia, while 4,188 are fully vaccinated. As of Wednesday, fewerthan 165,300 cases, 989 hospitalizations and 15 deaths have been recorded among children in the state.

State data also shows that African-Americans comprised 22.1 percent of cases statewide and 23 percent of deaths for which ethnic and racial data is available, while Latinos made up 11.3 percent of cases and five percent of deaths.

#### Reported COVID-19 data as of Wednesday, Aug. 3, 2022

	Cases	Hospitalizations	Deaths			
Richmond	53,142	1,172	520			
Henrico County	77,772	1,569	973			
Chesterfield County	86,377	1,566	791			
Hanover County	25,059	735	305			
Compiled by George Copeland Jr.						



Mrs. McEachin

Stuart statue and trying to hacksaw the legs, Ms. McEachin's reported stated, noting that no similar aerial surveillance was over the Lee statue.

The officer overhead shortly thereafter notified the chief that people were trying to put ropes around the statue to pull it down. "Based on the information transmitted

by Air 3 about what protesters were doing at the Stuart monument, an RPD sergeant requested permission from command to disperse the crowd with

chemical agents," according to the report. According to the report, Chief Smith, who had just seen the video of the attack on the Stuart statue, authorized the sergeant to use the chemical agents at 7:31 p.m., but "neither the sergeant nor RPD command ever specified at which monument the chemical



agents was authorized to be deployed. "Officers began deploying the agents at the Lee statue four minutes later, the report noted.

"The evidence is clear that RPD command believed that permission was being granted to 'use gas' at the Stuart monument," according to the report. "It is also clear that the sergeant requesting permission believed that permission was being granted to 'use gas' at the Lee monument.'

Those who deployed the chemical agents did so "only after receiving a lawful order and authorization from command – that is, from the chief of police.

"There is no evidence that any officer violated the chain of command and deployed chemical agents prior to receiving Chief Smith's permission to do so," she wrote in exonerating the officers.

#### City housing director, church leaders discuss shelter options for homeless population

Continued from A1

However, he said that the need for shelter is just too great for him to just state a viewpoint and then step aside.

He took out his Rolodex and began dialing pastors whom he thought might have in an interest or would be willing to at least listen to Ms. Hampton's pitch.

Dr. Jones said he was happy with the response from churches. He said that pastors from South Side and North Side participated in the call. Whether the meeting results in space being made available remains to be seen.

Ms. Hampton has set an Aug. 25 deadline for receiving applications from faith groups or nonprofits for shelter operations. How far the \$3 million will stretch is uncertain. Her hope is the funding will ensure an overflow shelter at one or more locations for the next two winters.

For decades, the city has arranged for a winter shelter to provide overflow space when private shelters fill up to prevent people from freezing to death. Last winter, more than 300 people a night were sheltered at two locations during cold weather, though both locations have since closed.

For years, Oct. 1 has been the opening date under a policy the council put in place, but Ms. Hampton has already stated Nov. 1 would be the first date when a city-supported overflow shelter would open.

Meanwhile, members of City Council, most notably 5th District Councilwoman Stephanie A. Lynch, have been pushing for the creation of a year-round shelter where people could have a place to stay when a major storm is forecast or a summer heatwave grips the area.

City Hall has backed the idea but

indicated support only for a 75-bed to a 100-bed shelter, which would have potentially left dozens of people without any place to go when bitter cold set in, a tropical storm struck or heat spikes to dangerous levels.

Hopes that Richmond and its two neighbors, Chesterfield and Henrico counties, could work together to buy a motel to become a year-round shelter have yet to work out. The localities collectively have \$11 million in federal funds to use for that purpose, but have yet to find a location that would work for that price.

Council President Cynthia I. Newbille had indicated the governing body might hold a special meeting this month to focus on the shelter issue with winter beginning to loom, but no session has been scheduled

#### Bill Russell lived a life like very few others

Continued from A1

in the NBA, first Black coach to win an NBA title, Hall of Fame player, Hall of Fame coach, Olympic champion, NCAA champion, member of the league's 75th anniversary team, and the namesake of the NBA Finals MVP award which, had it existed when he played, he would have won at least a half-dozen times.

But if those souvenir hounds had taken Mr. Russell up on the chance to sit with him for a meal, they might have heard about his obsession with golf. Or the mating habits of bees, something he penned a column about once. Or expensive cars with souped-up sound systems so he could blare the music of Laura Nyro, Janis Ian, or Crosby, Stills and Nash — some of his favorites.

"His mind was bigger than basketball," author Taylor Branch, who spent about a year living with Mr. Russell near Seattle in the 1970s while working with him on a book, said Sunday. "And so was his personality, as great as he was in basketball."

Take away all the on-court accomplishments, and Mr. Russell still lived a life.

He stood side by side with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in the 1960s, the height of the Civil Rights Movement. He was in the audience when Dr. King delivered the "I Have A Dream" speech in Washington in 1963. He marched in Mississippi after the slaying of civil rights leader Medgar Evers. He supported Muhammad Ali when the fighter refused to go to Vietnam. He helped start the National Basketball Players

Association. President Obama — at about 6-foot-2, a taller-than-average individual had to stretch a bit when draping the Presidential Medal of Freedom around Mr. Russell's neck in 2011, even after Mr. Russell crouched down to accommodate the moment.

"He endured insults and vandalism, but he kept on focusing on making the teammates who he loved better players, and made possible the success of so many who would follow," Mr. Obama said that day. "And I hope that one day, in the streets of Boston, children will look up at a statue built not only to Bill Russell the player, but Bill Russell the man."

Mr. Russell once was asked about being a Black star in Boston, a city with a complicated history when it comes to race. The premise was that it had to be difficult for Mr. Russell to live in such a place, to play for fans in such a city.

What I ascribed to do, and I did quite well, is every time I came into an adversarial situation, I decided to take control of it so that if a guy came up to me and tried to give me a bad day, I made sure that he was the one who left with the bad day," Mr. Russell said. "And so, to do this took thought, planning and discretion and intelligence. That was the way I conducted my life."

Case in point: The apparent invasion of raccoons into Reading, Mass., around

In his second season with the Celtics, Mr. Russell bought a house in Reading. He left for a road trip and his garbage cans got turned over. Same thing happened during the season's second road trip. Mr. Russell went to the police, who surmised that raccoons must be the culprits. Russell asked for a gun permit.

'The raccoons heard about that," Mr. Russell said. "Never turned the trash cans

The gun never got purchased, either. It would be a disservice — an insult, really — to look at Mr. Russell as only a basketball player, even as one of the greatest ever. He's still second on the NBA's all-time rebounding list, behind only Wilt Chamberlain, and will probably be in that spot forever since nobody has come remotely close to him in the last 50 years. He won five MVP awards, tied for second-most with Michael Jordan, one behind Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's league record.

"That's what I did," Mr. Russell said in 2009. "It wasn't who I was."

That's the lesson. He didn't shut up and dribble. He stood for what he believed, stood with who he believed in. Being fearless on the basketball court was easy. Being fearless in the real world — even when dealing with matters of race in some of the nation's darkest times on that topic was somehow even easier.

"He had such curiosity about human nature, about psychology," Mr. Branch said. "It was a treasure for me to be around Bill and see how he viewed the world in all of its dimensions."

The world has many of them. So did Mr. Russell. And on Sunday, the world lost an absolute legend.

Oh, the stories we will miss.

### Conflict sparks discussion for RPS School Board

Continued from A1

School Board's counsel having a conflict of interest, and, whether or not the School Board had counsel to explore the board's legal rights regarding the Arthur Ashe Jr. Athletic Center is a matter that should be discussed in public.

"We own a piece of property that Richmond City wants to purchase for development," she said. "And now we are being told [our] legal counsel has a conflict of interest — it seems late in the game to be told."

School Board Chair Dr. Shonda Harris-Muhammed, 6th District, disagreed. "Anything related to legal discussion should be done in executive session," she countered.

Jonathan Young, 4th District, read part of the state code regarding closed meetings of public bodies in government before offering his opinion that discussing the board's options, given the admitted conflict of interest by counsel, should be public.

The exchange became more heated when Dr. Harris-Muhammed again said, "I am not going to discuss legal matters in public."

Ms. Gibson said the School Board is a public body required to have public sessions, and there are certain circumstances that do require closed sessions. But this was not one of those circumstances.

... There is no litigation right now," she shot back. "We are talking about whether or not we have a lawyer . . . a matter of public interest." Mr. Young made a motion for Dr.

Harris-Muhammed and Mr. Kamras to identify if it is appropriate to solicit pro bono legal services to offer a legal analysis of the School Board counsel's position. Stephanie Rizzi, 5th District, seconded, and the motion passed. Dr. Harris-Muhammed volunteered to provide a report on her and Mr. Kamras' findings. In other matters, Mr. Kamras provided

an update on employment vacancies, transportation and food service employee vacancies. Early last month, Richmond, Chesterfield and Henrico all reported teacher vacancies above 200. During the last two weeks of July, RPS cut teacher vacancies by 22 percent, from 209 on July 15 to 163 on July 29. Half of bus driver vacancies have been filled, from 18 to 9 covering the same period with five offers pending. Food service vacancies have been reduced by 25 percent, from 67 to 50. There also are 21 additional vacancies for custodians, nurses and social workers. Progress has been made, but a total of 243 positions need to be filled.

RPS has ramped up recruitment efforts, with sign-on bonuses and outreach, Mr. Kamras said. Mr. Kamras also reported that school lunch is changing for the coming school year. Students, teachers and staff can expect "full, in-house meal prep" at schools with fully operational kitchens. School cafeteria staff will receive food to be prepared on-site, instead of the prepackaged meals served last year. Food for several schools that do not have full kitchens will be prepared at "kitchen hubs" and distributed to those schools.

Regarding transportation, Mr. Kamras said RPS is analyzing enrollment data for route planning this upcoming year. Transportation schedules are scheduled to be ready by Aug. 22, one week before school begins.

Dana Fox, director of RPS school construction, gave a report on the status of the George Wythe High School and William Fox Elementary School construction projects. This week at George Wythe, crews are

working to identify any asbestos that may exist on the property and the civil engineer is working on early site work plans to submit to the City for approval. The CSX tract of land running from Westover Hills to Hopkins Road behind the school is being purchased by the City.

"There will likely be a shared use path through it — a path for walkers, bicycles, etc.," Ms. Fox explained in an email. "That is a long-range plan for the City."

RPS, RRMM, the design firm for the project, and the Department of Public Works met and will continue meeting to discuss use of the CSX tract, bus stops, access paths, and overall traffic patterns surrounding Wythe.

At Fox, six firms submitted proposals to be considered for the school's renovation. Quinn Evans Architects was selected. The contract cost was reported to be a basic contract total of \$1,598,791 with selected additional services totaling \$385,286, for a total of \$1.984.077. Debris removal has started in the auditorium area and will continue into the second floor classroom wing.









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# 'It feels like a nightmare'



From left, Devin Chandler, Lavel Davis Jr. and D'Sean Perry, the University of Virginia football players who were killed Sunday.

# UVA shooting deaths create wave of grief

By Holly Rodriguez

The three University of Virginia football players killed in an on-campus shooting on Sunday were remembered by their head coach as "incredible young men with huge aspirations and extremely bright futures."

Devin Chandler, Lavel Davis Jr., and D'Sean Perry were juniors returning to campus from a class trip Sunday night when authorities say they were killed by a fellow student identified as Petersburg High School graduate and former UVA football player Christopher Darnell Jones Jr.

The young men were journeying through periods of transition in their careers — whether it was bouncing back from a season-ending injury, changing positions on the team or transferring in from another school.

"They touched us, inspired us and worked incredibly hard," head football Coach Tony Elliott said in a statement.

Mr. Chandler was a second-year University of Virginia student from Virginia Beach and a wide receiver and kick returner for the UVA Cavaliers football team.

Mr. Davis Jr. was a third-year student from Ridgefield, S.C. preparing to graduate in December, and a wide receiver for the team.

Mr. Perry was a fourth-year student from Miami and a line-backer and defensive end for the team.

Two other students — identified by various news outlets as Marlee Morgan, and UVA running back Michael Hollins — also were hospitalized with serious injuries on Monday. In an email,

Please turn to A4



Jeremy M. Lazarus/Richmond Free Press Gayle Freeland waits to enter shelter 2807 Hull St.

# 2 City-supported shelters temporarily open for homeless

By Jeremy M. Lazarus

At 80, Gayle Freeland is struggling to keep a roof over her

The retired welder said her Social Security check only allows her to rent a motel room, at most, for two weeks, and then she is on the street trying to find a doorway or some other place to clean

That's why Ms. Freeland was grateful to learn that she could find a warm space to spend the night at the newly opened RVA Sister's Keeper shelter at 2807 Hull St. The South Side location was formerly the New Pathways counseling center.

Ms. Freeland was among the early arrivals at the 40-bed shelter for women and women with children that partners Kia Player, a licensed therapist, and Gerri Archer, a real estate agent, have opened, with a promise of city financial support.

"We just wanted to help people," Ms. Archer said. The shelter provides cots to sleep on and provides guests with two meals

and counseling to assist in getting them off the street.

The shelter operates from 5 p.m. to 8 a.m. when nighttime temperatures drop below 40 degrees, which is predicted to be the

Please turn to A4

# City reportedly has a \$70M general fund surplus

By Jeremy M. Lazarus

Richmond's treasury is bulging with unspent dollars, according to two members of City

While neither would go on the record, both told the Free Press that they have been advised that City Hall will report a record general fund surplus of up to \$70 million from the 2021-22 fiscal year that ended June 30.

"It's going to be in that ballpark," one member said.

Although the surplus could end up smaller, both council members said the total in unspent

money from fiscal 2022 would be far greater than the \$29 million surplus the administration projected in May and would be separate and apart from the \$155 million the city has received in federal American Rescue Plan funds since 2021

So far, Mayor Levar M. Stoney and his team have declined to confirm or deny the information and have not posted any financial documents that would disclose the amount.

City Hall has until Dec. 15 to submit its annual audited financial report to the state. That

document would end the suspense.

If it turns out those two council members are

correct, the oversized surplus could be political bad news for the mayor and the council, both of which have rebuffed any cuts to city government or the tax rate. A windfall of unspent dollars would undermine arguments that the current property tax rate is needed to pay for

essential services.

The members of the governing body have been besieged with calls from people facing surging tax bills as the value of property rises. This year, City Assessor Richie McKeithen reported values rose more than 13 percent across the city, with the home values averaging a record \$336,000.

"You're killing the city's momentum with a tax rate that is too high," said John T. Selko, owner and operator of Woodland Construction Inc.

Despite that, the council followed the mayor's advice Monday and refused to lower the current real estate tax rate from \$1.20 per \$100 of assessed value — substantially higher than in neighboring suburban counties — with only 4th District Councilwoman Kristen Nye and 8th District Councilwoman Reva M. Trammell opposing.

Please turn to A4

#### GOP wins slim House majority; Trump announces candidacy despite criminal problems



Mr. Trump

By Eric Tucker The Associated Press

WASHINGTON Republicans won control of the U.S. House on Wednesday, returning the party to power in Washington and giving conservatives leverage to

blunt President Biden's agenda and spur a flurry of investigations. But a threadbare majority will pose immediate challenges for GOP leaders and complicate the party's ability to govern. More than a week after Election Day, Re-

publicans secured the 218th seat needed to flip the House from Democratic control. The full scope of the party's majority may not be clear for several more days — or weeks — as votes in competitive races are still being counted.

But they are on track to cobble together what

could be the party's narrowest majority of the 21st century, rivaling 2001, when Republicans had just a nine-seat majority, 221-212 with two independents. That's far short of the sweeping victory the GOP predicted going into this year's midterm elections, when the party hoped to reset the agenda on Capitol Hill by capitalizing on economic challenges and President Biden's lagging popularity.

Meanwhile, Donald Trump's early announcement of his third White House bid won't shield

Please turn to A4



#### Helping hands

Wearing a thoughtful smile on her face, Richmonder Mekhi Anthony, 10, was among volunteers on Nov. 12 who assisted residents during the 5th Annual Thanksgiving Turkey Give-Away at the South Side Community Center on 6255 Warwick Road. This project was sponsored by 9th District City Councilman Michael J. Jones.

#### Free COVID-19 testing, vaccines

Free community testing for COVID-19 continues.
The **Richmond and Henrico County health districts** are offering testing at the following locations:

• Thursday, Nov. 17 & Nov. 24, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. - Southside Women, Infants and Children Office, 509 E. Southside Plaza; 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. - Fulton Neighborhood Resource Center, 1519 Williamsburg Road.

Monday, Nov. 21, 8 to 10 a.m. & 1 to 3 p.m. - Eastern Henrico Recreation Center, 1440 N. Laburnum Ave.

Call the Richmond and Henrico COVID 10 Helling at (204).

Call the Richmond and Henrico COVID-19 Hotline at (804) 205-3501 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday for more information on testing sites, or go online at vax.rchd.com.

Please turn to A4

#### Artist Paul Rucker awarded \$2M from the Mellon Foundation and Art for Justice Fund

Free Press staff report

The Mellon Foundation and Art for Justice Fund have awarded multimedia

visual artist, composer and musician Paul Rucker \$2 million to create Cary Forward — a multidisciplinary arts space, interpretive center, artist/researcher residency and archival lending library, according to an announcement by Virginia Commonwealth University.

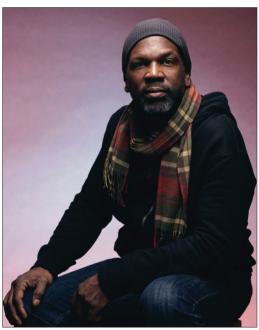
"The award and future center aim to address false narratives and preserve and promote the omitted histories of race and gender – in Richmond," states a VCU news release.

"This project will support Mr. Rucker's role at Virginia Commonwealth University developing creative collaborations connecting VCU and surrounding communities."

Mr. Rucker is curator for creative collaboration for the VCU School of the Arts and an iCubed Arts Research Fellow.

"Addressing false narratives and the denial of histories are two of the unspoken foundational goals of critical race theory," Mr. Rucker said. "Cary Forward will deliver its programming and initiatives from a place of 'show and tell' in how we approach shows and public engagement. The stories will include the ones that were not taught in school and are now banned."

The space will house artifacts from Mr. Rucker's collection of more than 20,000 items of American history and offer visitors opportunities to connect



Mr. Rucker

their everyday experiences with visiting artists and scholars and a corps of traveling docents who will lead dynamic community-centered programs. Regular offerings will include exhibitions, public programs, a banned-book library, digital archives, publications and onsite print

Please turn to A4

#### News

# UVA shooting deaths create wave of grief

Continued from A1

Eric Swensen, public information officer for UVA said "one patient is being discharged from the medical center Tuesday; the other patient is in serious condition." He would not confirm the surviving students' identities.

The Associated Press reported that a family spokesperson for Mr. Hollins said that his condition was improving after a second operation on Tuesday.

In a press conference on Monday, University of Virginia police chief Tim Longo said the police arrived on the scene of the crime after receiving a call around 10:30 p.m. that shots had been fired on campus. The campus was immediately placed on lockdown, with students huddling in classroom closets and dorm rooms as a manhunt ensued, according to reports.

UVA President Jim Ryan confirmed that the students involved in the shooting were on a charter bus with fellow classmates returning from a field trip to see a play in Washington, D.C. when the incident occurred.

According to the Washington Post, most in the group didn't know Mr. Jones, who'd briefly played football himself in 2018. Although Mr. Jones wasn't in their class focused on African-American playwrights, he'd been invited along by their professor because he was taking a social justice class with her, said Ryan Lynch, a 19-year-old neuroscience major.

Mr. Jones, 22, sat apart in the theater as the two dozen or so students watched a Mosaic Theater Company play about Emmett Till, whose young life was cut short by racial violence, the Post reported.

Upon arriving back on UVA's campus, Mr. Jones started shooting, seemingly aiming at specific people, and one witness reported that he shot one of the football players as he slept, a prosecutor said in court Wednesday.

After a 12-hour search on Monday, the accused, Mr. Jones, was apprehended by law enforcement in Henrico County. He has been charged with three counts of second degree murder, three counts of using a handgun in the commission of a felony and two counts of malicious wounding.

On Tuesday, Coach Elliott and Director of Athletics Carla Williams said during a press conference that their primary focus was caring for members of the football team as they navigated their collective grief one day at a time.

The grief felt by the loss of student-athletes Chandler, Davis and Perry extended beyond the university campus.

Former UVA football player Eric Clay, '89, said there is a mix of emotions being felt by the alumni and friends of the university. "I am hearing that people don't want to ever see this again — that they are asking 'What can we do to make sure that this never happens again?""

This sentiment was echoed by UVa. Professor John Edwin Mason. While there is understandably much attention given to

Free COVID-19 vaccines

Continued from A1

Want a COVID-19 vaccine or booster shot?
The Richmond and Henrico health districts are offering free walk-up COVID-19 and flu vaccines at the following locations:

• Thursday, Nov. 17, 1 to 4 p.m. - Richmond Henrico Health

District, 400 E. Cary St., Pfizer for ages 6 months and older,

Moderna for ages 6 months to 5 years old and ages 18 years

436 Calhoun St.; 12:30 to 4 p.m. - Henrico East Health Department,

1400 N. Laburnum Ave.; 3 to 6 p.m. - Southwood Resource Center,

• Thursday, Nov. 17, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. - Gilpin Resource Center,

Friday, Nov. 18, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. - Fairfield Resource

Tuesday, Nov. 22, 1:30 to 3:30 a.m. - Whitcomb Resource

People can schedule an appointment online at vase.vdh.

VaccineFinder.org and vaccines.gov also allow people to find

Those who are getting a booster shot should bring their vaccine

RHHD also offers at-home vaccinations by calling (804) 205-

New COVID-19 boosters, updated to better protect against the

As with previous COVID-19 boosters, the new doses can

The Richmond and Henrico Health Districts are now offering bivalent Pfizer and Moderna boosters to children between the ages

of 5 to 11 in clinics in the near future. Children in this age range will

be eligible after at least two months since their last vaccine dose.

the last week, according to the Virginia Department of Health, and

data from the Virginia Hospital & Healthcare Association showed

Hanover have remained at low levels of community COVID-19.

No localities in Virginia are ranked at high community COVID

Wednesday for the 24-hour period, contributing to an overall state

total of 2,135,778 cases in Virginia since the pandemic's outbreak.

As of Wednesday, there have been 456,133 hospitalizations and

22.253 deaths statewide. The state's seven-day positivity rate

dropped to 7.4 percent on Wednesday. Last week, the positivity

million COVID-19 doses had been administered, with 73.1 percent

of the state's population fully vaccinated at the time. State data

also showed that over 4.7 million people in Virginia have received

shots as of Tuesday, accounting for 46.9 percent of the age group in the state, while 298,308 children, or 41.2 percent, are fully vaccinated. In this age group, 54,232 children have received a monovalent

booster, making up 7.5 percent, while 17,896 have gotten a bivalent

have received their first doses, making up 12.5 percent of the

population in Virginia, while 42,292 are fully vaccinated, or 9.3

percent of the population. On Tuesday, fewer than 176,830 cases,

1,066 hospitalizations and 15 deaths were recorded among

State data also shows that African-Americans comprised 22.1

percent of cases statewide and 22.9 percent of deaths for which

ethnic and racial data is available, while Latinos made up 11.2

As of Tuesday, 56,997 children from the ages of zero to four

booster shot, accounting for 6.2 percent of this group.

Among ages 5 to 11 in Virginia, 339,723 have received their first

On Wednesday, state health officials reported that over 17.7

hospitalizations statewide were largely unchanged.

levels, while 18 are ranked at medium.

booster shots or third doses of the vaccine.

percent of cases and 4.9 percent of deaths.

rate was 8.1 percent.

children in the state.

New COVID-19 cases in Virginia dropped by 5 percent during

Richmond and the counties of Chesterfield, Henrico and

A total of 988 new cases of COVID-19 were reported statewide

latest variants of the virus, are now available. The new Pfizer

booster is approved for those age 12 and up, while the new

only be received after an initial two vaccine shots, and those who qualify are instructed to wait at least two months after their

virginia.gov, vaccinate.virginia.gov or vax.rchd.com, or by calling (804) 205-3501 or (877) VAX-IN-VA (1-877-829-4682).

nearby pharmacies and clinics that offer the COVID-19 vaccine

coronavirus/covid-19-testing/covid-19-testing-sites.

and older, appointments encouraged.

and booster.

1754 Clarkson Rd., Flu shots, walk-ups only.

Center, 2311 North 25th St., Flu shots, walk-ups only.

Center, 2106 Deforrest St., Flu shots, walk-ups only.

card to confirm the date and type of vaccine received.

Moderna booster is for those age 18 and older.

3501 to schedule appointments.

second COVID-19 vaccine.

The Virginia Department of Health also has a list of COVID-19 testing locations around the state at www.vdh.virginia.gov/ the young men who were murdered, Mr. Mason said there is also grief in the family of the shooter. wanted at this level. He was just a big kid, had a smile all the time, loved to dance and loved to sing; loved to compete, even though

"For a lot of us there is grief for the killer as well," he said. "What happened to that young man, you wonder, who, at one time, showed so much promise?"



Mr. Clay said he has a son that is close to the same age of the victims. A graduate of Varina High School, where the accused shooter attended school from ninth to 11th grade, Mr, Clay said the grief and loss of these once promising lives is rippling through all of the communities these young men came from.

"I'm numb, I'm frustrated, I'm angry," he said. "I want to remain hopeful that there can be some solutions to mental health and gun violence, and I just hope we don't become desensitized to this."

When asked, during the press conference, how he was personally coping, Mr. Elliott, whose one-year anniversary as UVA head coach is in December, responded: "It feels like it is a nightmare to be honest with you, and I'm ready for somebody to pinch me, wake me up and tell me this didn't happen."

James Harris, a professional counselor and advocate working to end the stigma surrounding mental health, said in an email, "It's important to 'feel your feelings' — something I say to all MEN." He continued: "Oftentimes they feel it's only OK to show two emotions, happiness and sadness — but there are others that will help you process."

During the often-tearful press conference, Coach Elliott's described the slain football players as "beautiful individuals." In speaking about Mr. Chandler, he said, "He was what you

wanted at this level. He was just a big kid, had a smile all the time, loved to dance and loved to sing; loved to compete, even though the guys revealed he was not very good at video games but thought he was. Loved to compete. He was just happy with where he was, comfortable in his skin, and just had a bubbly personality."

Mr. Davis, he said, often wore a "big smile, had a gentleness about him, but was passionate about what he believed in. (He) would do anything for his teammates."

Mr. Perry, Coach Elliot continued, "was very, very, very artistic, could draw, could shape pots with clay, loved music and was very, very cultured and well-rounded. Just a great teammate and his sense of humor one of a kind."

Like Mr. Clay, Mr. Mason said he hoped this tragedy will bring attention to the need for more attention to be paid to mental health and a reduction of gun violence. But he is not that optimistic.

"I don't understand this country's obsession with guns and why we can't get over it," he said. "But unfortunately, if the killing of elementary school students in Uvalde, Texas, does not prompt a change in our attitude about guns, then, unfortunately, I doubt that the death of three young, promising Black men will either."

Ms. Lynch, who transferred to UVA from Hampton University, according to the Washington Post, said she has been haunted by the image of her friends — Lavel, D'Sean and Devin — as they lay bleeding on the bus.

"They were so caring and amazing to me, to everyone in that class," she said in the Washington Post article. "The one thing that gives me comfort is I know each one of them had somebody in our class trying to help them. I want their families to know that. In their last moments, they weren't alone."

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

### 2 shelters temporarily open for homeless

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case through most of the rest of November, according to weather.com's extended forecast. Lows were forecast to be in the 20s through Tuesday, Nov. 22, and to be in the 30s and low 40s through Tuesday, Nov. 29.

RVA Sister's Keeper shelter is one of two city-supported temporary shelters that opened Sunday night when temperatures dropped into the low 30s, expanding housing options for people on the street trying to avoid freezing to death.

United Nations Church is operating the second, a 60-bed shelter for single men located in the gymnasium at Wall and West 19th streets. That facility also opened Sunday night.

The church, led by Bishop Orin K. Pullings Sr., volunteered to house homeless people in October when there was a cold snap and agreed to continue operations.

Both RVA Sister's Keeper and United



Kia Player, left, and Gerri Archer of RVA Sister's Keeper.

Nations Church were listed as city partners for shelters, but were not supposed to open until the city found additional operating funds. The only space that the Mayor Levar M. Stoney's administration told City Council that it planned to initially fund was a shelter that Commonwealth Catholic Charities proposed operate at

1900 Chamberlayne Ave.

According to the city, CCC was to receive more than \$600,000 to operate a 60-bed shelter at that location.

However, with the city acknowledging that it could be January before CCC might open the space, officials made urgent calls to RVA Sister's Keeper and United Nations Church, which agreed to open as temporary shelters.

Whether those shelters will be large enough remains a question. Few people showed up at either location, a spot check indicated. Council President Cynthia I. Newbille expects more people will seek shelter at the two locations as bitter night time cold arrives.

Other nonprofit shelters, such as those Caritas and Salvation Army operate, reportedly are full, and early estimates from homeless advocates suggested that a minimum of 150 beds might be needed to handle the potential demand.

## City reportedly has a \$70M general fund surplus

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No one on the council mentioned the potential surplus during the discussion.

Ms. Nye and Ms. Trammell had jointly proposed a 4 cent cut in the tax rate to \$1.16 per \$100 of assessed value, and Ms. Trammell separately had proposed a cut of 10 cents in the tax rate. Both proposals were rejected, with only 9th District Councilman Michael J. Jones joining them.

Lincoln Saunders, the city's chief administrative officer, successfully pleaded with the council to stick with the deal they made with the mayor Nov. 9 to maintain the tax rate at \$1.20 and then spend \$18 million of the fiscal 2022 surplus to provide a 4 percent rebate to property owners.

Armed with a report from the city's financial advisor, Davenport & Co., Mr. Saunders argued that lowering the tax rate could create a revenue challenge for the city in the 2023-24 budget that will be approved in the spring now that a potential recession is looming. He also noted the

city facing a host of unmet needs, ranging from improving employee wages to addressing deferred maintenance on city buildings.

As announced last Wednesday after Free Press deadline, the mayor and seven members of the council agreed to rebate the equivalent of 5 cents in real estate tax to property owners while keeping the tax rate at \$1.20.

The mayor explained that the rate needed to be maintained to ensure the city could full fund services and maintain its borrowing power in proposing the rebate that would cut the effective rate property owners paid in the 2022 fiscal year to \$1.15 per \$100.

For a property valued at \$300,000, a 5 cent tax rebate would amount to \$150.

Several ordinances to authorize the rebate were introduced Monday night. The council is set to approve them at the next meeting, Monday, Dec. 12, so the city could issue the checks after the new year.

The administration dropped a hint about

the size of the surplus by stating in one ordinance that the \$18 million represents more than 10 percent of the fiscal 2022 surplus, an indication that information from the two council members is on track.

Separately, the council was advised of major improvements that have speeded up the permits and inspections operation by Kevin J. Vonck, director of planning and development review, and his team, Deputy Director Leo Mantey and Commissioner of Buildings David Alley III.

Among other changes, Mr. Vonck said the depleted department has been rebuilt with the hiring of more than 70 employees to handle development paperwork and inspections. As a result, he said, initial paperwork is being handled in one to three days, instead of taking 60, and most plan reviews are being accomplished in less than three months, depending on the complexity.

The trio also cited other changes, including reopening the front lobby at Mr. Alley's City Hall operation in the mornings and creating a customer service operation.

#### Artist Paul Rucker awarded \$2 million

Continued from A1

and podcast studios.

"At one point in collecting the 20,000-plus artifacts I felt that there was a need to share these items in a way that would be beneficial to addressing false narratives while instilling pride by making things that have been made invisible, visible," Mr. Rucker said.

Cary Forward is expected to open in the fall of 2024 on Richmond's Cary Street, which is named after enslaver Archibald Cary, who supported the Confederacy. His daughter, Constantine Cary, designed the first Confederate battle flag.

Richmond is a hub of highly contested views of history, and Cary Forward will use its vast collection to ensure that the full stories of race and gender are told. Within the collection is one of the largest photo collections of early U.S. incarceration and the convict leasing program, it was announced. Diverse artifacts such as an autographed photo of Frederick Douglass taken just prior to his passing, early photographs of Jesse Owens breaking records at the 1936 Berlin Summer Olympics and American civil rights activist Pauli Murray's full output of writing will enable a study center and loaning library at a scale unfound in the United States.

Through its use of art, historic objects

and documentation, Cary Forward will support factual knowledge around histories that include enslavement, incarceration, systemic racism and the destruction of communities, as well as the stories of

resilience, perseverance and the thriving communities that once existed in Richmond and beyond, the VCU news release further states. It will also offer physical space for community members to gather and actively use their history in planning for Richmond's future.

"We are proud to support Cary Forward," said Agnes Gund, art collector and Art for Justice Fund founder. "Paul Rucker's vision to build a future where all can be celebrated in the fullness of their histories and identities aligns with the fund's mission. Only by acknowledging our country's history of racism and exploitation can we imagine a more just and safe world, free from mass incarceration and systemic harm. We're inspired by artists like Paul who are illuminating the past to secure a better future."

#### GOP wins slim House majority; Trump announces candidacy

Continued from A1

the former president from the criminal investigations already confronting him as an ordinary citizen, leaving him legally and politically exposed as he seeks the 2024 Republican nomination.

The Justice Department is pushing ahead with its probes. And with the midterm elections now mostly complete and the 2024 presidential campaign months away from beginning in earnest, federal prosecutors have plenty of time to continue their work even as Mr.Trump

hits the campaign trail.
"I don't think the department

runn tunink the department is going to hesitate as a result of Trump nominating himself and anointing himself as the first candidate in the 2024 election," said former Justice Department prosecutor Michael Weinstein. "I just think they will see that as him trying to game the system as he's done very successfully in the courts," and they're prepared for his "blowback."

Mr. Trump enters the race facing federal investigations related to his efforts to overturn the 2020 election results and into the hoarding of top-secret

government documents at his Florida estate — plus a separate state probe in Georgia. The Mar-a-Lago investigation has advanced especially swiftly, with prosecutors this month giving a close Donald Trump ally immunity to secure his testimony before a federal grand jury. Justice Department lawyers in that probe say they have amassed evidence of potential crimes involving not only obstruction but also the willful retention of national defense information.

It remains unclear if anyone will be charged, as does the

timetable for a decision. But former officials say the best way to ensure the outcome is seen as above reproach is to conduct a by-the-book investigation showing no special favor or ill treatment because of Trump's former high office.

"The public will have the most faith in what you're doing, and you will get the most successful results, if you treat Donald Trump like any other American," said Matthew Miller, who served as Justice Department spokesman under former Attorney General Eric Holder.

Reported COVID-19 data as of Wednesday, Nov. 16, 2022 Cases Hospitalizations **Deaths** Richmond 59,243 1,229 Henrico County 82,820 1,651 1,026 **Chesterfield County** 93,146 1,686 832 Hanover County 27,044 830 325 Compiled by George Copeland Jr.

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