

# The Charlotte Gazette

DEVOTED TO THE BEST INTERESTS OF CHARLOTTE COUNTY - FIRST, LAST AND ALWAYS

50 cents

Vol. 149 - Number 51

Wednesday, August 31, 2022

Drakes Branch, Virginia

## Reading, writing and lockdown drills

By Crystal Vandegrift  
The Charlotte Gazette

Years ago, going back to school meant seeing friends, learning new things and the occasional fire drill that stopped classes and teachers ushered students outside.

Today, things look different for students returning to school. Fire drills are still held, but schools across the Commonwealth are holding required lockdown drills.

Charlotte County Public Schools (CCPS) like all Virginia schools are required to complete at least one lockdown drill in the first 20 days of school and at least one additional drill after the first 60 days.

"These drills are conducted at the school level and occur on different dates for each school," CCPS Superintendent Robbie Mason said. "Each of our schools has conducted at least one lockdown drill at this point."

Mason said the goal of lockdown drills are to prepare students and staff to lock down areas quickly and thoroughly should the need arise.

"Lockdown drills are a way to ensure that staff and students can successfully apply the lockdown procedures that we have in place for our schools," Mason said. "These drills allow us to identify any deficiencies that may exist in our procedures or the execution of those procedures in specific locations in the school."

### THE STATE'S REQUIREMENTS

The Code of Virginia Lockdown

Drills § 22.1-137.2. states in every public school, there shall be a lockdown drill at least once during the first 20 school days of each school session. This is so students and teachers may be thoroughly practiced in such drills. Every public school shall hold at least two additional lockdown drills after the first 60 days of the school session.

Pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students shall be exempt from mandatory participation in lockdown drills during the first 60 days of the school session.

Lockdown drills are exercises students and educators practice in the event that an intruder gains access to the school building or a threat is administered. These drills aim to remove students and school staff from the threat and keep the threat isolated from as many areas of the school as possible. Each school and state perform lockdown drills differently. Some schools administer either announced or unannounced active shooter drills, while others stick with classroom door lockdown drills without any simulation.

Another way schools are working to keep students safe is by employing school resource officers (SRO).

The SRO provides a highly visible presence to deter or identify trespassers on school grounds. In addition, SROs provide a service to the surrounding community by addressing concerns such as loitering, running stop signs, or speeding in school zones.



## Sen. Warner visits with community leaders at SVCC

Sen. Mark Warner Spent Wednesday afternoon Aug. 25 meeting with community leaders from Charlotte, Lunenburg and Mecklenburg counties at Southside Virginia Community College in Keysville. As part of the discussion, Sen. Warner heard about a number of local issues, including workforce development, economic development, and inflation. Sen. Warner's visit was part of a three-day tour through Southwest and Southside Virginia.

## Pilot program could help solve housing problem

By Brian Carlton  
The Charlotte Gazette

You may have already seen the sites being marked off. Homes will be going up over the next year, both in Charlotte and two other nearby counties. The goal here isn't just new construction. This project, a joint partnership organized by the Commonwealth Regional Council, is designed to help with the problem of affordable housing.

It's an issue we see both here locally and across the state. Based on a Dec. 2021 report by Virginia's Joint Legislative and Audit Review Commission, 29% of households in the state struggle with housing costs. Nearly half of those spent more than 50% of their income on housing, both rental and owned. And as mentioned, it's a problem here locally. The study found 67% of households struggling with housing costs either lived in this region or in Northern Virginia.

So what's causing this problem? Housing prices keep rising. The median home sales price here in Virginia climbed 28% over the last five years, to \$270,000 at the end of 2021. The key part is in the last three years alone, Virginia's supply of "starter" homes, those usually more affordable to low-and-middle-income households, has dropped by 40%, according to the Virginia Realtors Association.

That's where Virginia Housing comes in.

### BUILDING A BETTER PARTNERSHIP

Created in 1972 by the Virginia General Assembly, the Virginia Housing Development Authority

is a self-supporting nonprofit. Their goal is to help people get into affordable housing through a number of different programs. In July 2021, five months before the JLARC study came out, Virginia Housing launched a new type of program. Instead of working with individuals, they gave \$40 million total to planning districts across the state. Each one received a specific amount and a deadline, when they needed to have construction finished.

The Commonwealth Regional Council (CRC), which includes Charlotte, Prince Edward, Buckingham, Amelia and Lunenburg counties, received \$2 million. That money was meant to build 20 homes, a project that needs to be finished by June 2024.

"We have a close working relationship with these organizations," said Virginia Housing CEO Susan Dewey. "This grant program will build upon that partnership by promoting regional approaches to housing development."

For the CRC, that meant putting out a call for partners.

"We did some research," said Melody Foster, CRC's executive director. "We didn't want to recreate the wheel. We had some discussions with our localities and put out a (request for proposals)."

The group received six applications and ended up awarding money to three projects, partnering with Piedmont Habitat for Humanity, the town of Blackstone and Smyth Properties LLC. Piedmont will build 11 homes, the town of Blackstone will help build three

(See HOUSING, Page 2)

## Monkeypox infections remain low

By Crystal Vandegrift  
The Charlotte Gazette

In the fight against yet another global disease outbreak, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) today last week it is expanding eligibility for JYNNEOS, the monkeypox vaccine, to align with the current vaccination criteria laid out by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The expanded criteria for vaccination include Virginia residents who meet one of the following:

- People, of any sexual orientation or gender, who have had anonymous or multiple (more than one) sexual partners in the past two weeks; or
- Sex workers of any sexual orientation or gender; or
- Staff, of any sexual orientation or gender, at establishments where sexual activity occurs.

According to the VDH as of Aug. 23, VDH had received 15,282 vials of the JYNNEOS vaccine, redistributed

(See MONKEYPOX, Page 2)

## Health department releases vaccination form

On Friday, Aug. 26 the Piedmont Health District released an online monkeypox vaccination interest form for anyone interested in receiving the vaccine. Filling the form out does not guarantee you vaccination but will give nurses the opportunity to screen for eligibility and vaccinate those most at-risk.

"We want to ensure that anyone at risk due to a monkeypox exposure or a higher potential for future exposure has access to vaccination," said Piedmont Health District Director Maria Almond, MD, MPH. "Often those who are most at-risk have the most difficult time accessing the care they need, so giving our community the ability to use an online interest form makes it that much

(See FORM, Page 2)

Randolph-Henry remains almost perfect  
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# The Charlotte Gazette

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Vol. 150 - Number 12

Wednesday, November 30, 2022

Drakes Branch, Virginia

## Opioid numbers drop in County

By Brian Carlton and Crystal Vandegrift  
*The Charlotte Gazette*

The numbers are dropping and that's a good thing. As of 2020, the latest data we have, an average of 43.3 opioid prescriptions were given out per each 100 people in the United States. Charlotte County is far below that, coming in at 25.2, according to the

Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

That's also lower than some neighboring counties, as 20.8 opioid prescriptions were given out for every 100 people in Prince Edward County.

"Much of this trend is due to increased caution by many providers in prescribing opiates or any controlled substance," said Piedmont Health District Director

Maria Almond. "Often, the preference now is for primary care providers to refer patients to a specialized pain provider, who balances the prescribing of opiates with other (alternatives)."

In fact, as some other Southside counties find their opioid problem growing, Charlotte is headed in the opposite direction. Now, as money starts coming in from

opioid production settlements, it's going to further help the county clean up.

### OTHER AREAS STRUGGLE

By comparison, as we mentioned, other parts of Southside are still struggling. The city of Martinsville, for example, remains one of the top three areas in the nation in terms of opioid prescriptions, with 343.6 for

every 100 people. The city of Lynchburg is the only other part in Virginia that comes close, with 104.5 prescriptions per every 100 people. Even the city of Richmond remains somewhat low, despite a much larger population, with only 55 prescriptions for every 100 people.

Now fewer opioid

(See OPIOID, Page 2)



## Cheerleaders in the Thanksgiving Day Parade

Five Randolph-Henry students had the honor of performing in the annual Philadelphia Thanksgiving Day Parade. These students attended a Universal Cheerleaders Association Cheer Camp over the summer, where they were given the opportunity to audition to be on the All-American Cheer team. This team is composed of the top 10% of cheerleaders in the nation. Randolph-Henry cheerleaders Madison Harding, Rayah Edelson, Kate Hamilton, Quederiah Roberts and Autumn Rundstrom made the All-American Cheer team and were able to perform alongside cheerleaders from across the nation in front of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. This performance was featured on live television and streaming services around the country.

## How do you feel about COVID19?

Do you feel the pandemic is over? How are you handling masks and booster shots this winter? The Piedmont Health District (PHD) wants answers to these and other questions.

On Tuesday, PHD released a survey, asking people in Charlotte County and the surrounding area to weigh in.

The idea is to collect information about how area residents approach COVID-19, what they do to protect themselves and how they handle vaccinations. District officials also want to know what people think about booster shots, COVID-19 testing, wearing masks and other issues involving the pandemic. In addition, it includes questions that seek to assess feelings and opinions surrounding the pandemic, for instance, whether or not residents consider the pandemic to be over.

"This information is so useful in helping us plan for

the future," said Brianna Marcum, public relations specialist at the Piedmont Health District. "Gaining knowledge of how our communities feel about different public health topics is a vital part of us helping them."

In addition to Charlotte County, Piedmont covers the counties of Amelia, Buckingham, Cumberland, Lunenburg, Nottoway and Prince Edward. Anybody who wants to take the survey needs to do it before Friday, Dec. 23. That's when it'll be closed. You can find the survey online by going to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WRFLWWF>.

The survey comes as Virginia reported its lowest number of new COVID-19 cases since last April, with just a seven-day average of 895 as of Tuesday, Nov. 29. Health officials warn that those numbers could spike in the next week, if only due to Thanksgiving celebrations with large crowds.

### ANOTHER WARNING ISSUED

Piedmont officials are also asking for the information as they prepare to tackle another problem in the region. Just before Thanksgiving, health district officials said the hospitalization rate this past month for flu, in Charlotte and the surround area, is the highest it's been since 2010-2011 for this time of year.

Piedmont District Health Director Dr. Maria Almond said the VDH reported a steep rise during the month, as 9% of emergency department and urgent care center visits were for influenza-like illnesses with the highest in the state recorded at 10%. Charlotte, Lunenburg, Cumberland and the rest of the Central region recorded 8% of ER visits were linked to the flu.

This percentage is a large jump as previous years between 2018 and 2021 saw numbers over the same period in the 0.5% to 2% range.

## WFLO-AM set for relaunch this week

By Brian Carlton  
*The Charlotte Gazette*

A familiar radio station will be returning to the airwaves later this week. Over the weekend, the new owners of WFLO-AM confirmed to The Herald that the purchase of the radio station has been finalized. The station is expected to start broadcasting on Thursday, Dec 1 at 870 AM or via livestream, which you can connect to through their Facebook page. Just search for wfloradio. The announcement comes almost a year after the operation shut down. The original WFLO-AM and FM

(See WFLO-AM, Page 2)



## Twysted Systems offer glazed goodness

By Abigail Grifno  
*The Charlotte Gazette*

You may have seen her over at Long's Farm Supply in Brookneal, with lines forming to try her product. Few things light up a child's eyes the way donuts do. If you've ever tried one of Rhoda Hostetler's selection at Twysted Systems, you probably understand why.

Hostetler has been serving Charlotte County with her pop-up shop since 2020, bringing some unique donut

(See GLAZED, Page 3)

Central Middle repeats as champions

Page 4

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# Student loan repayments extended again

By Crystal Vandegrift  
The Charlotte Gazette

For 45 million Americans who carry a total of \$1.6 trillion in outstanding student loans, the federal government has placed another pause on loan repayments making this the seventh time.

Student loan payments have been on hold since March 2020. The latest pause was set to expire at the end of this year.

The Department of Education announced last week it is extending the pause of federal student loans until June 30, 2023, while legal battles to the administration's student debt relief program wage on in the courts.

The pause includes a suspension of loan payments, a 0% interest rate and stopped collections on defaulted loans. This policy does not apply to private student loans.

"The payment pause has been a lifeline that allowed millions of Americans to focus on their families, health and finances instead of student loans during the national emergency," said U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona. "As our nation's economy continues to recover from a deep hole, this extension gives students and borrowers the time they need to plan for the restart

and ensure a smooth pathway back to repayment."

This fall, the Biden administration announced a student loan forgiveness plan that called for thousands of dollars of debt to be wiped away from borrowers.

The plan calls for up to \$20,000 to Pell Grant recipients and up to \$10,000 to non-Pell Grant recipients will be forgiven according to the plan.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, if education debt were slashed by \$10,000, student loan debt across the country would fall from \$1.7 trillion to \$1.3 trillion.

Borrowers are eligible if their individual income is less than \$125,000 or \$250,000 for households.

According to a Department of Education analysis, the typical undergraduate student with loans now graduates with nearly \$25,000 in debt.

Two lawsuits blocking the Biden plan have been appealed by the Justice Department, but the legal process could take months which has caused the administration to extend the pause nothing that it was not fair to ask those with loan debt to begin repayments while details of the plan was hashed out in the court system.

Since taking office, Biden

has approved more than \$17 billion in loan debt forgiveness for more than 700,000 borrowers including students with disabilities, public service workers and students who were defrauded by their schools.

Since 1980, the total cost of both four-year public and four-year private colleges has nearly tripled, even after accounting for inflation.

White House officials say Pell Grants once covered nearly 80 percent of the cost of a four-year public college degree for students from working families but now only cover a third.

This leaves students from low- and middle-income families with no choice but to borrow if they want to get a degree. Pell grants don't need to be paid back, but they often don't cover the full cost of college.

If you are faced with student loan debt, The U.S. Department of Education offers a variety of repayment plans.

For example, an income-driven repayment (IDR) plan is based on how much money you make. Under an IDR plan, payments may be as low as \$0 per month.

For more information on how to prepare for loan repayments, visit <https://studentaid.gov/articles/6-ways-prepare-repayment-begin-again/>.

## OBITUARIES

### Blaine Gledhill Larson

Prominent D.C. artist and former, much-loved, professor at the Corcoran School of Art, Blaine Gledhill Larson, passed away on Nov. 24, at his home in Phenix. He was 85 years old.

According to Andrew Hudson, former art critic for the Washington Post, he was the "Master of Diamond Painting". He was known for going against "safe taste", and for his encyclopedic knowledge of art and his marvelous eye. He was a beloved father, grandfather and great-grandfather.

Blaine was born in Salt Lake City, Utah on July 13, 1937 to Blaine Cowley Larson and Margaret Gledhill. His father was



very active in public service and local politics and his mother was a concert pianist. Later, he would live and study art in California and then at American University in Washington, D.C. He married Rayna Gay Pace on August 2, 1957 (div.) and had two children. They served in the very first Peace Corps in the Philippines from 1961-63. He married Anne Virginia Donovan on December 23, 1967 and had three children.

He is survived by his wife, Anne Virginia Larson and his children, Kai P. Larson (Dorothy), Candelyn L. McCall (Scott), Peter Q. Larson (Kristi), Mora A. da Silva (Thomas) and Benjamin I. Larson (Jessica (div.)). His grandchildren are Elizabeth Call, Christian McCall, Samuel McCall, Rachael Brandenburg, Jared Larson, Wesley Larson, Claire Larson, Sterling Larson, Arianna Larson, Ambrose Shay, Emilia da Silva, Olivia Larson, Ivy Larson, Jack Larson and Samuel Larson. His great-grandchildren are Charles Call, Henry Call, George Call, Jackson McCall, Emma McCall, Caroline McCall and Abigail McCall.

A celebration of life service will be held at the family home, 13027 Furnace Mountain Road, Lovettsville, at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 3.

# GLAZED: A winning recipe

FROM PAGE ONE

selections to the region. She says the business came about after she relocated to Cumberland County, to be with her family during the pandemic.

As the world around her changed, Hostetler and her sister reflected on good times in their childhood. A key memory? Donuts.

"We were going to a small country school for kids, and one of the moms there would bring donuts one day every school year," she said.

The donuts were a highlight for Hostetler and her sister. Many years later, they knew exactly what they wanted their business to be.

### A GROWING INTEREST

She explained that, at first, she and her sister were "making donuts and giving them away to see if people liked them. And it was kind of a hit."

The two developed the name for their business out of their love for the tv show Grey's Anatomy. In the show, doctors Meredith Grey and Christina Yang were called the Twisted Sisters, because of a friendship that survives a lot of hardship.

Hostetler said, like the two Twisted Sisters on the show, "the two of us are great friends, and we're kind of crazy," so they thought the name would suit their business perfectly. They wanted to keep their business fun and creative and their donuts certainly reflect that.

### BUILDING THE TWYSTED SYSTEMS BUSINESS

Since those early days, Hostetler's sister decided to step away from the business, but it's been full steam ahead for Rhoda. She has expanded from the original product, now showing up at events in Brookneal, Charlotte Court House, Red House and Farmville. She is available for catering too and often provides sweet treats for birthdays, weddings and other events.

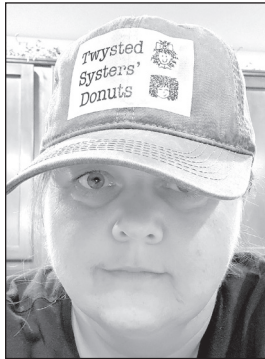
While Hostetler's donut recipe originated from the country school, she has continued to improve her craft over the years. At first, she started with making classic glazed donuts, cinnamon sugar and chocolate dipped, which have remained popular.

Since then, Twysted Systems decided to mix up the offerings with unique seasonal options, which Hostetler rotates about

once a month. She's done flavors like blueberry, salted caramel bourbon and lemon poppy seed. The bestseller, though? Boston cream filled. She explained that she "can't make enough of those" for how popular they are.

Hostetler thinks these special donuts are set apart because they are small, mini-filled donuts, which makes them the perfect treat at any event. They've become her trademark.

Making donuts can be hard work, filled with long days of baking and tabling, but Hostetler wouldn't have it any other way. She said, "You know, this kind of surprised me, but the thing that inspires me to keep going is the fact that making donuts brings people a lot of joy."



Rhoda Hostetler

### 'THE BEST DONUTS IN THE WORLD'

Hostetler explained that kids will come up

to her awe-struck at the fried goodness, "Just today," she said, a child came up to her and said, "These are the best donuts in the world." She described that as one of the best feelings ever.

Hostetler currently travels around the community and bakes out of her own kitchen, but she has big plans on the horizon. She's working on a food truck now, so that she can be more mobile and make

donuts all across Virginia. Renovating the truck is a slow process, but it paves the way for a bright future. By next summer, Hostetler hopes to be making good use of it and bringing her donuts to new places.

For now, you can keep up with Twysted Systems Donuts on Facebook, where Hostetler posts her upcoming events and new flavors. She's excited to start offering a pumpkin spice donut to ring in the fall season.

If you're interested in hosting Twysted Systems' Donuts at your next event or ordering catering for a celebration, reach out to Hostetler on Facebook or by calling (917) 741-6532.

*In Memory of*  
**MIKE DOUGLAS**  
March 13, 1950 - November 27, 2017  
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they walk beside us every day.  
Unseen, unheard, but always near;  
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# OPINION

## HER THOUGHTS

### Tis the Season; I don't mean the midterms

Tis the season and I'm not talking about the midterm elections although they are important. I want to thank the many readers who read *The Charlotte Gazette* and take a little time to read my column. Your words of encouragement are a blessing and truly a gift. Looking forward to 2023 discoveries.

It's hard to believe that the Advent season is soon to be upon us as well as the season for honoring Christ's wondrous birth. As Christmas approaches we should remember why we celebrate the holiday. We do so to honor His coming down to Earth

as a child to bring hope and light into this world. He is God who was manifested in human form to bring peace to all taking on our pains and hurts. We demonstrate that love when we share the Good News with others, lending a helping hand sharing in the Christmas spirit.

In addition, many will trim the trees, bake cookies, cook a scrumptious meal, sing carols-some sacred, others secular and attend church services. Let's not forget those who may not be able to do many of these activities. Moreover, we can share what we have with these individuals by

showing them the Christmas spirit. Be kind, loving and live peaceably with one another.

In conclusion, I pray we do these acts of love and kindness. Enjoy Christmas, stay safe and share in the miracle of Jesus's birth. The strength of His light and love holds power now as it did over 2,000 years ago.

**Judy Moore** lives in Wylliesburg and can be reached at [v5agabond2@gmail.com](mailto:v5agabond2@gmail.com). She is a tour guide at The Central High Museum.



**Judy Moore**  
Guest columnist

## HIS THOUGHTS

### What's the plan?

Last year, the Virginia Community College System approved a strategic plan for the 23 community colleges in the Commonwealth. That plan provided an overarching blueprint for achieving equity in access, learning outcomes, and success for students from every race, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic group. Each college, including Southside Virginia Community College, was given individual responsibility for shaping a corresponding plan that would identify how it would meet objectives and goals within its own unique service area.

SVCC responded by working to develop a plan that would be inspirational, aspirational, and measurable. The job involved an intense, collaborative effort to gather input from many voices. Faculty and staff members, students, community leaders, education partners, local businesses, and industry leaders all participated. We

also conducted listening sessions across our service area to hear what people had to say.

I am pleased to announce the results, a plan titled "Aspire 2027: Pathways to Opportunities." This plan, which will guide our mission over the next five years, describes how we will pursue excellence, effectiveness, and efficiency in all we do, and it outlines a strategy for meeting important goals and objectives. The plan is founded on updated mission and vision statements.

Our mission statement states that, "Southside Virginia Community College serves as a gateway to education, training, and employment opportunities by providing relevant and innovative programs responsive to the diverse communities we serve in a student-centered, inclusive learning environment."

Our forward looking vision statement proclaims, "SVCC is dedicated to inspiring ex-



**Quentin R. Johnson**  
SVCC President

cellence and transforming lives while contributing to the economic vitality of the diverse communities we serve."

The core content of "Aspire 2027: Pathways to Opportunities" focuses on five areas. Let me briefly introduce each of them.

First is Student Success. This task involves promoting individual prosperity by advancing student completion and post-graduation success. It includes goals regarding enrollment from currently underrepresented and underserved populations and work to increase retention, program completion, and transfers.

Next is Teaching and Learning. This area's work ensures that academic and workforce pathways prepare students for career and transfer opportunities. This includes making sure all programs are relevant and responsive to current needs, and it entails strengthening partnerships with others, such as school systems involved in dual enrollment programs and local business leaders who serve on advisory committees.

The third area is Community Engagement. These efforts are focused on improving economic opportunities in our service region and expanding community partnerships. In addition, because we recognize the value of varied perspectives and we honor the strength that comes with diversity, these tasks include examining our efforts to be welcoming, inclusive, and respectful.

The fourth area is Our People. SVCC has been identified as a premier place to work, and we will build on that success with a renewed focus on inclusive excellence

and innovation. This involves opportunities for professional development, social interaction, and meaningful dialogue to broaden understanding of gaps in our diversity, equity, and inclusion goals.

Finally, the fifth area is Our Resources. We must ensure the efficient and effective use of our resources as we look to the community, industry, individuals, and grant makers to help sustain and advance the College's mission today, and for years to come.

As a college president, there's nothing that makes me prouder than to have a strong-collaborative strategic plan which was developed by our entire community. For more information about "Aspire 2027: Pathways to Opportunities" please visit <https://southside.edu/strategic-planning>.

**Dr. Quentin R. Johnson** is president of Southside Virginia Community College, which covers 10 counties and the City of Emporia. He can be reached via email at [quentin.johnson@southside.edu](mailto:quentin.johnson@southside.edu).

## HIS THOUGHTS

### An update on the Paris Climate Pact

Seven years ago, leaders of nearly 200 countries flew their jets to Paris, France to save the world from climate change. During that period, some told us that we had only twelve years to save the world from irreversible damage. So called experts, such as Al Gore and Greta Thunberg, became media stars.

Many promises and claims originated from that meeting. Every leader made a promise of what goals their nation would achieve. Each country agreed to certain goals with little or no consideration of what they had accomplished prior to that year. Some countries, such as China, were given 15 years to add to their pollution before their level of emissions would be established. During the grace period, China has been busily increasing their pollution by building coal power plants as fast as they can. In 2021 alone, China was building 176 power plants.

Half of those in China and the others were built in nations that have longer time frames to reduce pollution. Compare that to the United

States that has built no new coal power plants since 2015. In my opinion, the goal is more about politics than the environment.

#### ANNUAL MEETING

As they hold their annual conference in Egypt this time, now seems to be a reasonable time to look at what has been accomplished or not accomplished. Each year, the countries return to the table to reevaluate their emission commitments and see if they are meeting their pledges. As in every year, few nations are making any serious attempts to improve their environment. Globally, the number of coal power stations is actually growing as new construction has more than offset the closure of old plants.

#### DATA MANIPULATION

There has been little explanation as to why the year 1900 was selected as the baseline year. However, often when folks cite statistics, they slant them to strengthen their case. A different starting point might have weakened their case.

As an example, in the 70's a case was being made that, because of global cooling, we might be entering a new ice age.

Assuming that we knew accurate temperatures in 1900, it is believed temperatures have risen 2 degrees in the last century. Some believe temperatures will rise another 2.6 degrees in the next century using computer modeling that may or may not be accurate.

The premises of all this is the driving force for much of the climate change initiatives that have been passed by our federal government and many states. So far, it has cost our economy over \$3 trillion dollars. The result is that we have increased the use of 'green energy' only a minute amount.

In Virginia, under former Governor Northam, he entered Virginia under regulations named Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), a compact with New England, New York, and other northern states. Under this agreement, energy rates have risen and will

continue to rise. Those extra dollars that you pay every month are then channeled into projects that some think will save the planet.

They might be right. However, they may have used the wrong data in their modeling. Their actions may well destroy jobs and our way of life while China cons us and becomes the manufacturing center of everything in our lives. All of us want clean air and water, but in everything there must be a balance.

You cannot have zero pollution and still have manufacturing to provide goods. Likewise, growing food to feed people will require some

mitigation for us to maintain healthy bodies. We should all work toward an environment that protects the earth but flying fuel burning jets around the world to meet to discuss the issue is not one of them.

Neither is providing water in disposable plastic bottles at rallies to protect the environment. The reality of all of this is that some only push causes that sound good with little consideration of how their actions affect the lives of others.

In Richmond every year, so called environmental groups rate legislators on how they voted on environmental related bills. Interestingly, those of us who represent rural communities are always rated below the urban and suburban legislators who believe that food miraculously appears at grocery stores. We in rural Virginia understand the balances that are necessary for life.

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State senator

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