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EDITORIAL

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TODAY IN ... 1914

» President Woodrow Wilson, acting on a joint congressional resolution, signed a proclamation designating the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day.

CELEBRITY BIRTHDAYS

Actor-writer **Alan Bennett** is 86. Actress-turned-politician **Glenda Jackson** is 84. Producer-director **James L. Brooks** is 83. Musician **Sonny Curtis** (Buddy Holly and the Crickets) is 83. Singer **Tommy Roe** is 78. Singer-musician **Richie Furay** (Buffalo Springfield and Poco) is 76. Actress **Candice Bergen** is 74. Pop singer **Clint Holmes** is 74. Actor **Anthony Higgins** is 73. Singer **Billy Joel** is 71. Blues singer-musician **Bob Margolin** is 71. Rock singer-musician **Tom Peterson** (Cheap Trick) is 70. Actress **Alley Mills** is 69. Actress **Amy Hill** is 67. Actress **Wendy Crewson** is 64. Actor **John Corbett** is 59. Singer **Dave Gahan** (Depeche Mode) is 58. Actress **Sonja Sohn** is 56. Rapper **Ghostface Killah** is 50. Country musician **Mike Myerson** (Heartland) is 49. Actor **Chris Diamantopoulos** is 45. Rhythm-and-blues singer **Tamia** is 45. Rock musician **Dan Regan** (Reel Big Fish) is 43. Actor **Daniel Franzese** is 42. Rock singer **Pierre Bouvier** (Simple Plan) is 41. Actress **Rosario Dawson** is 41. Rock singer **Andrew W.K.** is 41. Actress **Rachel Boston** is 38.

VA. LOTTERY

Friday's drawings
Day
Pick 3: 2-2-3
Pick 4: 4-5-2-7
Cash 5: 3-9-11-18-32

Night lottery numbers were not available at press time. Go to newsadvance.com for the latest numbers.

CORRECTIONS

The News & Advance corrects all substantive errors of fact that appear in the newspaper. Please call the appropriate department if you wish to request a correction.

BLACKSBURG

Decontamination station

New facility on Va. Tech's campus aims to clean medical masks for reuse by care providers

By Mike Gangloff
The Roanoke Times

BLACKSBURG — A new facility on Virginia Tech's campus is taking aim at the N95 mask shortage that hampered medical efforts earlier in the coronavirus pandemic.

On Friday, U.S. Congressman Morgan Griffith, R-Salem, and emergency services officials formally unveiled an N95 mask decontamination station set up in a repurposed Marching Virginians Center by Battelle, the Ohio-based science and technology development nonprofit. The station will let masks be cleaned and returned to care providers for reuse up to 20 times, according to a news release from Gov. Ralph Northam's office.

Griffith noted Southwest Virginia and West Virginia — the primary areas to be served by the new facility — have experienced relatively few COVID-19 deaths. Patients have not packed hospitals like in some parts of the United States. But with the new facility, Griffith added, "should we have a surge, we'll be in a much better position to not overwhelm our healthcare system."

Behind a tarp-covered chain link fence, the previously open-air band shelter was wrapped in plastic walls to house four decontamination units that looked like cargo shipping containers. Visible through a narrow window on each unit's door were rows of shelves.

Starting Monday, the shelves are to be covered with masks, and then the units are sealed and filled with sterilizing hydrogen peroxide mist, said Christian Williams, Battelle's site lead for the project.

The facility can decontaminate 80,000 N95 masks per day, the statement from Northam's office said. It is one of three Battelle decontamination operations be-



Battelle decontamination technician Lukas Johnson inspects a control unit. The N95 mask decontamination station in Blacksburg will allow masks to be cleaned and returned to care providers for reuse up to 20 times, according to a news release from Gov. Ralph Northam's office.

ing set up in Virginia and among 60 Battelle is supplying to the Federal Emergency Management Agency to locate around the country.

There is no cost to Virginia for the first six months of decontamination service, Northam's statement said.

Decontamination is being provided free to medical care providers and is supported by federal funding, Battelle Senior Account Supervisor Rose Rankin wrote in an email.

Battelle does not identify who has signed up for the service but a total of 58 hospitals are under contract in Virginia, Rankin wrote.

Carilion Clinic plans to work with Battelle, spokeswoman Hannah Curtis wrote in an email. "We have been doing in-house ... de-

contamination using UV light and vaporized hydrogen peroxide, and this resource will allow us to build on those efforts. We appreciate the support of both the state and federal governments for bringing this resource to our region," she wrote.

A LewisGale spokeswoman could not be contacted immediately Friday about whether her hospital system plans to send used masks to Blacksburg.

Williams said Friday the decontamination facility heats a solution of 35% hydrogen peroxide to produce a mist that destroys viruses and bacteria. In the sterilization units, the mist condenses on the masks, with a 4½-hour contact time. It takes another two hours for the hydrogen peroxide to dissipate, Williams said.

The sterilization units' vents pass through filters and there should be no environmental effect from the facility, Williams said.

The setup mirrors standard procedures for sterilizing laboratory equipment, but hydrogen peroxide mist has not been much used for cleaning N95 masks, Williams said.

The masks are designed to be used, then discarded for safety.

The Blacksburg site — one of three such facilities opening in the state — is to be jointly operated by the Virginia Department of Emergency Management and the West Virginia Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, Northam's statement said. The other two Virginia sites are in Chesterfield County and Newport News.

ELECTION2020: APPOMATTOX TOWN COUNCIL

Spiggle seeking sixth term on town council

By Sarah Honosky
shonosky@newsadvance.com



Spiggle

After 10 years on Appomattox Town Council, Mary Lou Spiggle is seeking her sixth term.

Spiggle, 72, said she wants to continue to listen to and represent Appomattox citizens by promoting and supporting business, both big and small, and helping to grow the local economy, should she win another two-year term.

Among her other priorities is continuing to make improvements to the water and sewer infrastructure and keeping the new system working as efficiently as possible. She wants to see the completion of the current project to shut down the 70-year-old trickling filter plant on the south side of town, off Church Street.

She also hopes to keep taxes low, bring jobs to the community and provide tax relief for town residents by continually working to maintain fiscally conservative practices and retaining a strong "rainy day fund."

In her time on council, Spiggle said she is proudest of projects

such as the upgrades to the Kiddie Park on Hunter Street and the improvements to the Meadowlark neighborhood — a project funded by the federal government's Community Development Block Grant program.

She is excited to see improvements along Main, Church and Court streets after the town was awarded \$700,000 in grant money for downtown revitalization, a project she said she has been a part of since the beginning.

Spiggle has lived in Appomattox since 1968 and raised her family here.

"I love my town, and I love the wonderful people who live here," Spiggle said. "I want to see us grow even stronger and better."

According to county registrar Sabrina Smith, Spiggle has filed all of her paperwork and qualified for candidacy. All six town council seats are on the ballot in the May 19 election.

Reach Sarah Honosky at (434) 385-5556.

Colonial Systems founder running for council seat

By Sarah Honosky
shonosky@newsadvance.com



Simpson

Nathan Simpson, founder of Colonial Systems LLC, an Appomattox-based company providing digital media services to the public and commercial sector, is seeking a two-year term on Appomattox Town Council.

Simpson, 19, is an Appomattox native who said he wants to help the community succeed using the skills he has learned while building a business in the private sector.

Simpson said the first platform he is running on is infrastructure — ensuring the town has the ability to support economic development opportunities. Chief among these efforts are improvements to the town's water and sewer infrastructure and the pursuit of broadband expansion.

He said he wants to bring in more internet providers and negotiate on behalf of business owners. It's essential, Simpson said, to have an active approach to marketing and identifying businesses in the community looking to grow and relocate.

With strong water and sewer infrastructure, fiber internet, cheap

land and low taxes, he said Appomattox would be well-positioned to encourage new business.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, Simpson said council needs to find a way to take advantage of a push for American manufacturing, helping to pull jobs back into the community.

Simpson currently sits on the county Economic Development Authority, regularly attends town council meetings and has rebuilt two websites for the town. While doing so, he worked out of the historic train depot and said he gained a unique insight into Appomattox's inner workings.

His father, Donald Simpson, is the current Appomattox County Sheriff.

According to county registrar Sabrina Smith, Simpson has filed all of his paperwork and qualified for candidacy. All six town council seats are on the ballot in the May 19 election.

Reach Sarah Honosky at (434) 385-5556.

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