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Radford University interim president Carolyn Ringer Lepré addresses the graduates at the university's winter commencement ceremony.

Radford University winter commencement ceremony honors new graduates

RADFORD - During Dec. 11's ceremonies at the Dedmon Center, supporters looked on as degrees were conferred upon 461 undergraduates and graduates.

Nearly 600 students received degrees during Radford University's winter 2021 Commencement exercises.

Between the 461 graduate and undergraduate degrees awarded on the main campus and the 133 presented at Radford University Carilion events in Roanoke, some 594 Highlanders celebrated considerable milestones in their academic careers and lives.

Ranging in age from 20 to 60, two-thirds of the graduates are female. They

arrived in the New River Valley from all regions of Virginia, as well as states and countries including New York, North Carolina, Ethiopia, El Salvador, Jamaica, Mexico, and Peru.

All told, 193 of those students – about 32% of the total – are first-generation graduates.

Collectively, they represent the penultimate class of Highlanders to graduate before the school welcomes its eighth president, Bret S. Danilowicz, who will assume the role starting July 1. The Board of Visitors announced Danilowicz's selection on Dec. 9.

During the undergraduate ceremony at the Dedmon Center, hundreds of

supporters looked on as degrees were conferred from the Artis College of Science and Technology, the College of Education and Human Development, the College of Humanities and Behavioral Sciences, the College of Visual and Performing Arts, the Davis College of Business and Economics, the School of Nursing, and the Waldron College of Health and Human Services.

The keynote address came courtesy of Brian Robinson '93, Goldman Sachs's head of prime brokerage sales for the Americas.

Robinson's words encouraged the

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Montgomery County receives \$27.6 million grant for fiber optic broadband service

Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam announced recently that Montgomery County has received a \$27.6 million Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) grant to assist with a \$50 million project to bring high speed fiber optic broadband service to thousands of citizens and businesses throughout the county.

The grant funding will allow

for up to 8,822 new connections for unserved citizens and businesses throughout the county.

"Since we initially launched a broadband study in early 2019, our goal has been to find a way to help provide high-speed Internet to all citizens and businesses in Montgomery County," said Montgomery County Administrator Craig Meadows. "We, as

a government entity, understand the only way to achieve this goal is to partner with private companies like GigaBeam and Appalachian Power Company.

"Together, we applied for and were awarded one of the largest VATI grants in the Southwest region of Virginia to date," Meadows said. "This significant grant has created a path for citi-

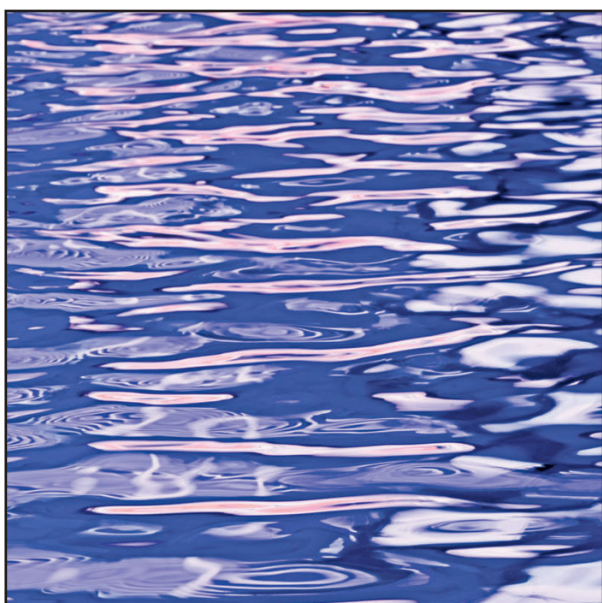
zens and businesses throughout Montgomery County to have access to high speed Internet by the end of 2023."

"GigaBeam Networks is excited to be part of this project that will provide fast, dependable, and affordable broadband to locations that never previously had it," said GigaBeam Chief Executive Officer Michael

Clemons.

"This couldn't have happened without the teamwork and partnership between Montgomery County, Appalachian Power Company, and GigaBeam Networks," Clemons said. "GigaBeam has worked with Appalachian Power to be the first in the

See **Broadband Grant**, page 2



Light on water abstract by Michele Borgarelli

Radford Photo Club announces abstract challenge winners

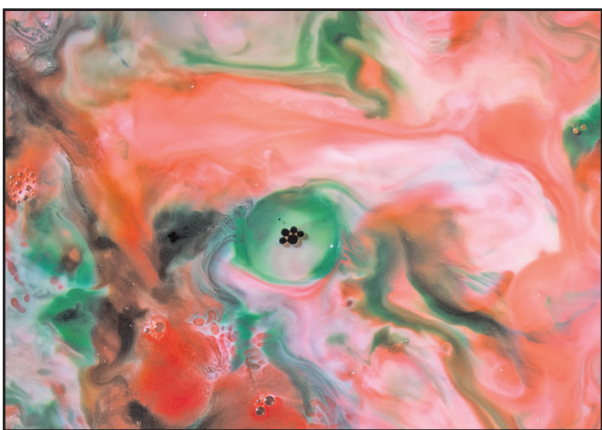
RADFORD - Two entries tied in the Radford Photo Club's recent abstract photo challenge.

Michele Borgarelli, of Blacksburg, won with an image of a fountain in Las Vegas taken at sunset. Linda Waggaman, of Radford, created an abstract image in her kitchen by adding cooking oil and food coloring to a pan of milk and making swirls in the pan with toothpicks to create an interesting design.

Borgarelli won the open theme contest with

his photo of a rainbow over a windmill captured when he took a walk after a storm in Joshua Tree National Park.

The Radford Photo Club meets next on Jan. 20 at 6 p.m. at the Radford Public Library. Participants will be presented with four stations to test their photographic skills: portraiture, close up, still life, and black and white. The club is on Facebook. Search for "Radford Photo Club." For more information, email trulovesusan@gmail.com.



Abstract by Linda Waggaman



Joshua tree national park rainbow by Michele Borgarelli



Making the RSVP tote bag delivery to the Kroontje Health Care Center on Thursday, Dec. 16, were (left to right) RSVP Coordinator Mandy Hayes, RSVP Volunteer Sarah Carter, Assistant County Administrator Brad St. Clair, Deputy County Administrator Angie Hill, Montgomery County Administrator Craig Meadows, Montgomery County Supervisor Sherri Blevins, RSVP Volunteer Rosemary Jones, RSVP Program Assistant Ava Stilwell, (foreground) Santa (Dennis Minnick), and Mrs. Claus (Cindy Minnick).

Montgomery, Radford RSVP volunteers deliver holiday tote bags to health care center

With the help of Santa and Mrs. Claus, the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) of Montgomery County and Radford delivered 110 holiday tote bags on Thursday, Dec. 16, to residents of Kroontje Health Care Center. The totes were handed out individually to residents by Santa and his helpers.

Helping with the delivery were Dennis Minnick (Santa), Cindy Minnick (Mrs. Claus); Sherri Blevins, Montgomery County Board of Supervisors; Montgomery County Human Services Director Tonia Winn; AmeriCorps Seniors Director Atalaya Sergi; and AmeriCorps Mid-Atlantic Regional Administrator Adrienne

Nash Melendez.

The tote bags were filled by members of the community including Montgomery County employees, Calvary United Methodist Church, Holy Spirit Catholic Church Young At Heart Adults, the Retired Educators Association of Montgomery County, and volunteers of RSVP.

Protect your home from cold-weather disasters when leaving town

RICHMOND—Holiday cheer was put on ice for one Virginia family when they returned home from an extended Christmas vacation to find multi-floor water damage from a burst pipe in the attic.

Ann Hardee, a Virginia Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Co. field claims manager, recalled a stream of water flowing outside from under that customer's front door had turned to ice in the 2018 incident.

"In this case, they turned the thermostat down to 55 degrees while they went out of town for a three-week Christmas holiday, but we had a cold snap right after Christmas," Hardee said. "It was cold as the Dickens!"

As in many newer homes, the hot water tank was located in the attic. A pipe leading to the tank had frozen and burst in the cold snap, causing extensive water damage on the second and first floors, resulting in \$100,000 in losses.

"We had to gut that house back to the stud walls," Hardee said. "And everything had to be removed from the house. It was catastrophic, to say the least."

Even with the thermostat set in the 50s and sink cabinets left open, pipes in the attic can still freeze. Hot water tanks often are installed in attics to enhance the square footage of living spaces.

"We handle many claims related to losses caused by hot water heaters in the attic," Hardee said. "And those

claims are more frequent during a warm winter when temperatures suddenly drop down to the 20s."

Inhabitants of newly constructed homes should be aware of this possibility, she said, and take precautions. Bump the thermostat into the 60s, and have a neighbor, friend or family member periodically check on the house. The same goes for secondary homes that are inhabited sporadically.

"Major losses can happen overnight," Hardee added. "Have somebody come by and check things out."

Virginia Farm Bureau's property experts also recommend letting faucets drip during extreme cold and insulating pipes that are most susceptible to

freezing, such as those running along exterior walls. Inspect and replace weather stripping, if necessary, and caulk around windows and doors to ensure your home's interior stays cozy when temperatures plummet.

If a snowstorm hits, use a snow rake to promptly remove accumulated snow to prevent roof damage. In addition, take steps to prevent ice dams—thick ridges of ice that build up along a roof edge and prevent melting snow from draining.

Finally, perform routine roof maintenance throughout the year, inspecting and repairing any damage to fortify your home against winter-weather disasters and extend the life of your roof.



To prevent catastrophic damage to a home in the event of a sudden cold snap when the family is out of town, bump the thermostat into the 60s, not the 50s, let the faucets drip, and have a neighbor or friend check on the home periodically. Then remove any snow from the roof as soon as possible after returning home to prevent the snow from freezing.

Graduation day one of celebration for the Pedrotty family

The scars are there, forever reminders of the worst day of his life.

There is the trachea scar below his throat; an eye that sits a little off center; a right hand that responds slowly; and a small incision mark behind his ear.

Dominic Pedrotty carried these scars with him when he walked across the stage Friday morning at Virginia Tech's commencement ceremony to receive his undergraduate degree in mechanical engineering from the College of Engineering.

The scars serve as an unwanted reminder of a car accident three years ago that robbed him of a cherished sister, altered him physically and emotionally, left him to endure torturous hours of rehabilitation and the ones yet left to complete, and left him with occasional feelings of guilt.

That accident, though, couldn't rob his work ethic or abscond with his motivation to get his degree or even dent his witty disposition.

"I don't want all the pain and suffering I've endured to be in vain," he said, not referring to the accident, but rather taking a pointed jab at the grueling workload incurred by engineering students at Virginia Tech.

The accident will always be an indelible part of Pedrotty's life, but never something that defines

him, and Friday represented a day of redemption for him. Friday also was a day of celebration for the Pedrotty family.

After more than three long years filled with pain, guilt, and doubt, step one in Pedrotty's recovery process has reached its conclusion.

"We're not looking behind," said Tina Pedrotty, Dominic Pedrotty's mother. "We're looking ahead."

On May 31, 2018, Dominic Pedrotty, who had just completed his junior year at Virginia Tech, picked up his older sister, Madison Pedrotty, a graduate student at Duke University. The two headed for Knoxville, Tenn., where they planned to meet their father's, Steve Pedrotty's, parents and then head to Illinois to attend the funeral of a revered grandfather who had passed away.

Dominic Pedrotty had no history of health issues and felt no symptoms of anything wrong. But 10 minutes from Kingsport, Tennessee, he lost consciousness and veered in front of a tractor trailer. Unable to stop suddenly, the driver of the tractor trailer slammed into the Pedrotty's vehicle, killing Madison Pedrotty instantly.

When rescue personnel arrived, they found Dominic Pedrotty conscious and alert. Then he started vomiting; a sign of a significant head injury.

The doctors at Holston Valley Medical Center, a level-one trauma center, originally were puzzled because a CT scan showed no significant brain injury. Fortunately, an observant doctor noticed a tiny shadow near the cerebellum. A detailed look revealed the issue. Dominic Pedrotty had suffered an aneurysm.

An aneurysm is a weakness in the wall of a blood vessel that sometimes ruptures and leaks bloods into the brain, according to Bijraj Patel, an interventional radiologist at the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine. In Dominic Pedrotty's case, the blood vessel burst, creating a life-threatening situation.

"When an aneurysm bleeds, we typically use the one-third rule," Patel said. "One-third of people are fine; one-third have a debilitating stroke; and one-third don't even make it to the hospital. This patient's aneurysm [Dominic Pedrotty's] sounds to be in the posterior circulation, which results in higher risk of morbidity and mortality."

Pedrotty's team of doctors forced him to rest for a week before performing a 9.5-hour surgery to fix the leak. Then they put him in an induced coma for 12 days to give his body as much rest as possible following the surgery.

"That was pretty tough," he said. "Finding out about my sister, there's

nothing I could have done about it. That part is both ... I wouldn't say reassuring, but I don't feel as bad about that. But on the other hand, I was driving, so I do feel bad about that."

Steve and Tina Pedrotty spent every minute at the hospital. They mourned the loss of their daughter and kept constant vigil over their son.

The Pedrotty's found comfort wherever and whenever it made itself available. They took solace in knowing that Madison Pedrotty's passing had been swift, and they expressed gratitude that the accident took place near one of Ten-

nessee's six level-one trauma centers, knowing that the quick treatment probably saved Dominic Pedrotty's life.

They also welcomed the various members of a local church who came every day, all of whom brought a combination of food, prayers, and support.

Interestingly, the name of the church was St. Dominic's.

Dominic Pedrotty spent five weeks in Kingsport before gaining entry to Shepherd Center, a private hospital in Atlanta that specializes in medical treatment, research, and rehabilitation for people with

traumatic brain injuries.

Physical therapists at Shepherd Center put Pedrotty on an aggressive rehabilitation plan. He needed to get his muscles stronger and retrain them for balance and coordination, and he needed to relearn certain movements. These would help him learn how to perform daily tasks such as eating, showering, and dressing himself.

His days consisted of getting up between 7:30-8 a.m., showering, eating, and then doing an assortment of exercises until 4 in the afternoon.

By Jimmy Robertson



Three years ago, Dominic Pedrotty suffered a brain aneurysm that led to a car accident and the death of his sister. Now, after years of dealing with rehabilitation, physical limitations, memory loss, and stress from a difficult academic workload, he is earning a degree in mechanical engineering.

CARES partners with local shelters to mutually benefit dogs and veterinary students

In August, the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine began fostering dogs from local animal shelters through its new Canine Awareness and Responsibility Experience for Students program — better known as CARES.

Dogs in the program will receive top-notch medical care and the so-

cialization they would not receive in a shelter. Students learn how to conduct examinations, administer monthly preventatives, and perform basic medical procedures through their first-year Professional Foundations course and Normal Animal Clinical Skills labs.

Through CARES, the college will foster dogs

during the fall semester. In the spring, the college will use student- and faculty-owned dogs for teaching labs.

In the lab classes, multiple faculty and veterinary technicians guide first- and second-year students through basic procedures like physical examinations, vaccinations, and catheter placement. Students

practice techniques on a model before progressing to a live animal.

"A lot of other veterinary programs use shelter animals to help train their veterinary students, but they frequently just go out to the shelters for the day to learn techniques on the dogs, and they don't have dogs housed in their facilities," said Jennifer Hodgson, associate dean of professional programs and professor of microbiology. "Our students have had really positive things to say about their daily interactions with the dogs we house. She described the program as a 'win-win' situation.

Fostering frees up valuable resources and space in shelters while CARES dogs live in top-notch facilities that have been given the seal of approval by Virginia

Tech's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee and the American Association of Lab Animal Care.

"The dogs are so grateful. They've got food, they've got these wonderful people walking them. They've got clean runs and air conditioning. It's pretty sweet. They think this is a country club," said Mel Kegley, manager of multi-discipline laboratories.

The dogs were selected by Kegley and instructor Virginia Edwards and a canine behaviorist, who spent countless hours assessing dogs for the program. The 28 dogs that made the cut were determined to be friendly, not dog aggressive or selective, and not food or toy aggressive. They also passed a screening for heart problems.

Kegley and Edwards arrived back at the college with a variety of dog breeds, ages, and personalities. This year's CARES dogs range from four months to five years old, from twenty pounds to eighty pounds, and from terriers to shepherd mixes. Kegley noted that the variety represents what veterinary students might see in clinical practice.

Some of the dogs had underlying health issues like skin problems or Lyme disease, and they immediately received treatment upon arrival at the college. By the time they leave the program, all CARES dogs will be fully vaccinated, spayed or neutered, and will have received other preventative treatments like flea/tick and heart worm preventatives donated by Boehringer-Ingelheim.



Foster dogs in the CARES program receive top-of-the-line care.

Graduation from page 1

class to always be striving, to brace for adversity and to develop and rely upon such resources as family, friends, and their alma mater.

"Remember there's more value in progress than perfection. Forward movement is our goal," Robinson said. Earlier he was elected to the board of trustees of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation.

"Look, we've all invested in Radford, and in return, Radford's given us the tools,

given us the swag, and given us the confidence," he said, pausing briefly to brush off his shoulders in a gesture of facetious vanity.

"As you embark on your journey, know there are going to be potholes, peaks, valleys, ups, downs, whatever. But put some soul into it. Put your soul into it.

"I promise you today, if you rise and grind, a magic carpet ride awaits you. Greatness is upon you," Robinson said

Two members of Radford's Board of Visitors delivered remarks as well: Rector Robert A. Archer and faculty representative Katie Hilden.

"This is one accomplishment that no one can ever take away, and I predict that the degree you have earned here at Radford will serve you well throughout the rest of your life," Archer said.

Hilden addressed the fact that the graduates' terms had been complicated by the emergence of COV-

ID-19 nearly two years ago and acknowledged "it has not always been easy, as we learned to navigate Zoom, masks and plexiglass shields together.

"We have appreciated your flexibility and adaptability during the pandemic. We know these two characteristics will serve you well in your future," Hilden told the crowd.

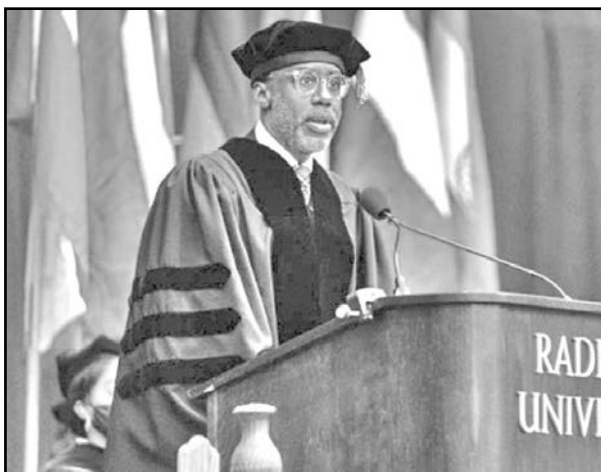
At the ceremony's close, interim President Carolyn Ringer Lepre sent the new

alums forward with praise and optimism.

"This is a life-changing moment for all of our graduates and a day of justly deserved celebration," she said. "I am amazed by the drive, dedication, motivation, and inspiration of our students, especially those of you who have overcome obstacles and barriers along your educational journey and your life's

path. Graduates, I hope that today you can look back on your education and know the meaning of resilience."

By Neil Harvey, with contributions by Chad Osborne and Pam McCallister



Commencement keynote speaker Brian Robinson, a 1993 RU graduate, speaks to students during the ceremony about striving for their best.

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OPINION

Buddy King: My bowl game column

I am a frustrated sports writer. My first ambition was to become the next Dan Jenkins, an iconic Sports Illustrated writer who covered college football and professional golf for SI for a quarter century. Dan also wrote about a dozen raunchy and irreverent sports novels, the best known of which is *Semi-Tough*, published while I was in college. Most recently he wrote his autobiography, *Life its Ownself*. His books are must reading for sports fans of my generation.

Dan died a couple of years ago, but his legacy lives on through his daughter, Sally Jenkins, an accomplished sportswriter in her own right for the Washington Post.

Dan lived the life I would have liked to have had, covering America's great sporting events with humor and passion and enjoying life to the fullest while laughing at it. So every now and then I like to do a sports piece in his honor. Given the time of the year, this is my "bowl game column." So I am going to do a list of the most memorable (to me) bowl games of my lifetime (or before).

The 1947 Sun Bowl. Several years before I was born. Historic because it was Virginia Tech's first-ever bowl. The Gobblers, as they were then known, were coming

off an amazing regular season with a record of 3-3-3. Amazing for its symmetry, not its excellence. The Blacksburg boys were the third pick to oppose an 8-2 Cincinnati Bearcat team. The first two, Hardin-Simmons and Texas Tech, turned down the chance to spend New Year's 1947 in freezing, blustery El Paso. Legend has it that one of the Sun Bowl committee members was a Tech alum who got the Hokies the bid after the prior rejections. Each team received the whopping sum of \$9,438 per Wikipedia, and the game was played on a frozen turf with three inches of snow on top.

The fact that VPI lost 18-6 is totally irrelevant. This first-ever bowl appearance for VPI became mythical since the Hokies did not get another bowl bid for 20 years. People in our area talked about the time Tech went to the Sun Bowl much as the Spaniards must have talked about the time Columbus discovered America.

The 1966 and 1968 Liberty Bowls. These bowls have to be considered together as they represent the high-water marks of Jerry Claiborne's very successful career at Virginia Tech. Jerry's teams were packed with over-achieving, reckless defenders like Frankie Loria (a Clarksburg

kid, two-time All-American, and the subject of a prior column), Frank "his own self" Beamer, George Foussekis, Clarence Culpepper, Dan Thacker, and Mike Widger.

I was a junior-high age football player during this time and tried to model myself after these stalwarts. Unfortunately, the Hokies' offense during this period was as uninspiring against quality teams as the defense was noteworthy for its fanatical effort. So Tech lost the 1966 Liberty Bowl to Miami 14-7 (The first Hokie game ever televised I believe. I remember watching from my parents' den.) and the 1968 game 34-17 to Ole Miss (I vividly remember Tech running a trick play on the second play of the game with quarterback Al Kincaid acting like he was tying his shoe and snapping the ball to Radford High's own Kenny Edwards, who went about 60 yards for a touchdown. This was perhaps the only completion of Kincaid's career. This piece of trickery was referred to as the "swinging gate" in those days. It apparently perturbed the Rebels mightily, as the game went downhill from there, although the Hokies had a 17-0 lead until an ill-fated outside kick failed. This loss almost ruined my Christmas season, particularly since my Cousin Bobby was at Ole Miss and did not share my love for the Gobblers.)

The 1984 Peach Bowl. My Wahoos' first ever bowl game, an event that most thought 10 years earlier was less likely to occur than man walking on the moon. In fact, it came 15 years after Neil Armstrong's walk. The Hoos dominated Purdue with three tremendous

running backs — Howard Petty, Barry Word and Antonio Rice — and the "Magic Man," Don Majkowski, at quarterback. One of the early highlights of George Welsh's remarkable coaching career at Virginia. I remember watching the game in West Virginia with one of my law-firm colleagues, a fellow Hoo. We were a good six beers in during the early part of the third quarter when my friend's priest stopped by for a visit. Thankfully, the Father realized the significance of the moment and seemed not to mind being ignored.

The 1995 Peach Bowl. I was in attendance and the Hoos beat Georgia 34-27 on a last-minute kickoff return for a touchdown by 150-pound Petey Allen. This was the UVA team that handed Florida State its first-ever ACC loss. My greatest memory, though, of the event was running into Christiansburg High's and Emory & Henry's all-time great Mike Griffith at the UVA party. His son Travis was a first-year defensive end for the Wahoos.

Mike had been my position coach my senior year at Christiansburg High in 1970, and I reminded him that during a preseason scrimmage that year, after I had made several consecutive tackles as a 160-pound outside linebacker, he had pounded me on the helmet and yelled "if King weighed 195, he could play anywhere in the country." That night in Atlanta I reminded him of the story and said "Coach, I made it. I weigh 195. 25 years too late."

The 1961 and 1962 Rose Bowls. I was in the second and third grades, and the University of Min-

nesota made its only Rose Bowl appearances. My love of sports was just taking off, and games from sunny Pasadena broadcast back to the frigid and snowy mountains of Virginia were special. But what makes these two games particularly special was that the Golden Gophers were led by an African-American quarterback named Sandy Stephens. This was unheard of during this era when the SEC and ACC had no black players.

Sandy led the Gophers to the 1960 national championship before the 1961 Rose Bowl and returned to Pasadena for the "granddaddy of them all" the following season. I was fascinated with Sandy, beginning a lifetime of rooting interest in the Gophers and a secret desire to someday write Sandy's biography. This desire was further fueled when I learned that Sandy was a product of Uniontown, Penn., near Clarksburg where I have made my home for the last 40 some years. This ambition has now been tempered by the realization that the day for this project has probably passed as Sandy died in 2000 and the chance of interviews of his contemporaries is long gone.

The 1966 Rose Bowl. UCLA beat my Michigan State team that had Bubba Smith and George Webster (two members of the defensive team picked by Sports Illustrated for its first century of college football all-time team). Charles "Mad Dog" Thornhill, probably the greatest player ever at Lucy Addison High in Roanoke, an all black school during the era of segregation, was also on this team. This bowl game is particularly memorable because I recall it as the first Rose Bowl and Tournament of Roses parade after

my family had a color television. The game enhanced my lifelong love affair with the sun-drenched beauty of Pasadena at its 2 o'clock kickoff on New Year's Day.

The 1950 Tangerine Bowl. Two of the most important men in my life, and two of the best, my Dad and James E. "Buddy" Earp, would come back from their graves and confront me if I omitted this game. Like the VPI Sun Bowl, it was played several years before I was born, but took on mythical proportions in my life. My father's alma mater, Emory & Henry, took on the Saint Vincent Bearcats in Orlando and lost 7-6. Both teams were undefeated, and Buddy Earp, who a few years later became the head football coach at Christiansburg High and eventually principal of the school, was the captain and starting center for the Wasps.

This E & H team became a rallying point for the college for many years, and its members established a scholarship fund at Emory under the name the "Tangerine Bowl Team." Coach Earp became one of my Dad's dearest friends, a second father to my Cousin Joe, and one of old Christiansburg's finest. I grew up hearing many stories about this bowl team and its accomplishments, so it has to be on my list.

If you were looking for stories of the 2015 Rose Bowl or the 2018 Sugar Bowl, I'm sorry to disappoint. Like I said at the outset, these are MY memories.

Evans "Buddy" King is a proud native of Christiansburg, CHS Class of 1971. He resides in Clarksburg, W.Va., where he has practiced law with the firm of Steptoe & Johnson, PLLC, since 1980. He can be reached at evans.king@steptoe-johnson.com.

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Virginia gas prices fell another 1.8 cents per gallon last week

According to GasBuddy price reports released Monday, Dec. 20, Virginia gas prices fell 1.8 cents per gallon in the past week, averaging \$3.17/g. Gas prices in Virginia are 10.9 cents per gallon lower than a month ago and stand \$1.08/g higher than a year ago.

According to GasBuddy, the cheapest station in Virginia was priced at \$2.72/g Monday while the most expensive was \$3.89/g, a difference of \$1.17/g.

The national average price of gasoline fell 2.9 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.30/g Monday. The national average is down 11.1 cents per gallon from a month ago but still stands \$1.09/g higher than a year ago.

"For yet another week, average gasoline prices continue to fall as omicron cases surge, leading oil demand, and thus oil prices, to stall. The decline in gas prices will likely continue until new COVID cases slow down," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis for GasBuddy. "With gas prices very likely to continue declining this week in most states, we may see Christmas gas prices fall just under their all-time high on the holiday, which was \$3.26 in 2013. Beyond Christmas, with omicron cases likely to continue climbing, I do believe we'll see a more noticeable hit on gasoline demand once the holidays are over," De Haan said. "There's a rising likelihood that we won't see gas

prices rising for the rest of the year - with one caveat- gas prices in the Great Lakes states have plummeted by 30 to 50 cents in some areas, and stations in those areas may raise prices slightly should oil prices slow their decline. Aside from those areas, declines at the pump are likely to continue as we close out 2021."

GasBuddy is the authoritative voice for gas prices and the only source for station-level data spanning nearly two decades. GasBuddy's survey updates 288 times every day from the most diverse list of sources covering nearly 150,000 stations nationwide, the most comprehensive and up-to-date in the country. GasBuddy data are accessible at http://prices.GasBuddy.com.

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Richmond lands on WalletHub's list of America's neediest cities

With the giving season reminding us to be selfless and 38 million people in the U.S. lacking access to adequate food, the personal-finance website WalletHub followed up on its report on the Most Charitable States for 2022 with an in-depth look at 2021's Neediest Cities, and Richmond, Va., made the list at No. 18.

To determine its rankings, WalletHub compared more than 180 U.S. cities across 28 key metrics to determine where Americans are most economically disadvantaged.

According to the website, in 2020, 11.4% of the U.S. population lived in poverty. In the absence of more affordable housing or accommodations provided by relatives or friends, many people took to the streets or shelters. According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, more than 580,000 people — many of them children — were homeless at one point in January 2020.

The neediest cities in America that ranked

ahead of Richmond, as determined by WalletHub's report, released Monday, Dec. 20, are 1) Detroit 2) Brownsville, Texas 3) Cleveland 4) Fresno, Calif. 5) Gulfport, Miss. 6) Los Angeles 7) Newark 8) Baltimore 9) New Orleans 10) St. Louis 11) Laredo, Texas 12) Shreveport 13) Miami 14) Memphis 15) Jackson, Miss. 16) Birmingham 17) Philadelphia.

To determine the cities with the neediest populations, WalletHub compared 182 cities — including the 150 most populated U.S. cities, plus at least two of the most populated cities in each state — across two key dimensions: "Economic Well-Being" and "Health & Safety."

The website then evaluated those dimensions using 28 relevant metrics.

The metrics employed in the Economic Well-Being were the child poverty rate, the adult poverty rate, the unemployment rate, the underemployment rate, the homelessness rate, the presence of

homeless criminalization laws, the change in family homelessness (2020 vs. 2019), the consumer bankruptcy rate, the foreclosure rate, the share of delinquent debtors, the median credit score, the high school dropout rate, the undereducated rate, the share of children eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, an "economic security" ranking (based on the economic security scorecard produced by the Wider Opportunities for Women nonprofit organization), and economic mobility.

The metrics employed by WalletHub in the Health and Safety dimension to determine its rankings were the uninsured rate, the food insecurity rate, the share of homes with inadequate plumbing, the share of homes with inadequate kitchens, the share of severely overcrowded homes, the share of offline homes, the share of adults who needed to see a doctor but couldn't, the share of depressed adults, the suicide rate, and the crime rate.

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Legals - City of Salem
Notice is hereby given to
all interested persons that the Council of the City of Salem, at its regular meeting on Monday, January 10, 2022, at 6:30 p.m., in the Community Room of the Salem Civic Center, 1001 Roanoke Boulevard, in the City of Salem, Virginia, will hold a public hearing, pursuant to Sections 15.2-2204 and 15.2-2285 of the Code of Virginia, as amended, to consider approval of the following requests relative to the CODE OF THE CITY OF SALEM, VIRGINIA:

Hold public hearing to consider the request of Sia Asset Management, LLC, applicant, and Helm Building Enterprises, LTD, property owner, for a Use Not Provided For Permit to allow crypto mining at 1401 Southside Drive, Tax Map # 165-4-2.1.

Copies of the proposed plans, ordinances or amendments may be examined in the Office of Community Development, 21 South Bruffey Street, Salem, Virginia.

At said hearing, parties in interest and citizens shall have an opportunity to be heard relative to the said requests.

Legals - City of Salem

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SALEM, VIRGINIA BY H. Robert Light Clerk of Council

ORDER OF PUBLICATION

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA VA. CODE §§ 1-211.1; 8.01-316, -317, 20-104
Case No. CL21000359-00
City Of Salem Circuit Court 2 East Calhoun Street, Salem, VA 24153
DANA LYNN FRANCISCO MEADOR v. PAUL CLINTON MEADOR
The object of this suit is to: FOR ENTRY OF DIVORCE It is ORDERED that PAUL CLINTON appear at the above-named court and protect his/her interests on or before JANUARY 20, 2022.
November 19, 2021
Stacy L. Owen

Legals - Montgomery County

LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, pursuant to Section 15.2-3107 of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, that on January 11, 2022, at 7:00 P.M. in the Christiansburg Town Hall, 3rd Floor Council Chambers, 100 East Main Street, Christiansburg, Virginia, the Town Council of Christiansburg, Virginia ("the Town") shall hold a public hearing on the Town's intent to approve a proposed Boundary Line Adjustment Agreement between the Town of Christiansburg and County of Montgomery and will thereafter consider for passage a resolution approving the Agreement. The Agreement is authorized by Section 15.2-3106 et seq. of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, and provides that the boundary line between the Town of Christiansburg and the unincorporated area of the County of Montgomery will be adjusted as follows:

Moving 68.866 acres from the unincorporated area of the County of Montgomery into the incorporated Town of Christiansburg. The proposed boundary adjustment area is commonly known as Falling Branch Corporate Park Phase II, Parcel 2, Tax Map Number 94-A-8 (formerly the Cox property) and is located on the southern boundary of the Town of Christiansburg, west of the intersection of Technology Drive SE and Parkway Drive SE, shown more particularly on the plat entitled "Plat Showing Boundary Line Adjustment Between The Town of Christiansburg and County of Montgomery for Portion of Falling Branch Corporate Park Tax Parcel 94-A-8"; dated June 7, 2019.

As part of the Boundary Line Adjustment Agreement, the Town has agreed to provide the County Three Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$300,000) to assist the County in the cost of extending Town water and sewer to the first developed pad on the 68.866 acres. Once a contract is signed by the County for this project, the Town agrees to provide the County the money within sixty (60) days of receiving a written request for the funding from the County Administrator.

A true copy of the proposed Boundary Line Adjustment Agreement is on file and may be viewed in the office of the Clerk of Town Council, Christiansburg Town Hall, 100 East Main Street, Christiansburg, Virginia 24073. A copy of the Agreement will also be available at the public hearing. The public is invited to attend the public hearing and comment on the Agreement.

Legals - Town of Vinton

ABC NOTICE

Dahal Brothers LLC, trading as Be Quick Market 2, 210 W Virginia Ave, Vinton, Roanoke County, Virginia 24179-3318.

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Dilli Dahal

NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at www.abc.virginia.gov or 800-552-3200.

LEGAL NOTICE TOWN OF VINTON, VIRGINIA NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Please be advised that the Vinton Town Council will hold a public hearing at its meeting on Tuesday, January 4, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard, in the Council Chambers of the Vinton Municipal Building, located at 311 South Pollard Street, Vinton, Virginia, concerning the proposed amendment to the Town of Vinton's FY 2021-2022 budget to appropriate funding for eligible expenditures on multi-year grants, paving, capital projects, and other expenditures in the amount of \$2,750,167.73.

Any additional information on this public meeting is available in the Town Manager's Office, located in the Vinton Municipal Building, (540) 983-0607. Persons requiring special assistance to attend and participate at this public meeting should contact the Town Manager's office at (540) 983-0607.

Susan N. Johnson
Town Clerk

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The annual Marty awards



From the Sidelines

Marty Gordon

The movie and the entertainment world have the Emmys and Oscars while ESPN has the ESPY's.

Well for the past nine years, I have been handing out the Marty's for outstanding effort in the world of sports both on the national and local level.

This year as many as 20 Marty's are being given to the deserving athlete/athletes, coaches, teams and/or sporting events that occurred over this past year.

The first Marty goes to Christiansburg High School's football staff for the outstanding effort this past year in leading the Blue Demons to the state playoffs and 10 wins. Congrats to Coach Alex Wilkens.

Another Marty is presented to the Christiansburg offensive

line for such an outstanding year in blocking for the Blue Demon running backs. They could not have gotten over 2,000 yards combined without the guys up front.

The Auburn volleyball team and its coach Sherry Millions deserve an award for producing a win streak of 70-plus games spread over two years. In addition, congrats for winning your third straight state title.

Nationally, a Marty is given to the ownership of the Jacksonville Jaguars for taking the right step in firing Coach Urban Meyer. The former college coach and television analyst was out of his league and was not the right man for the job. It happened, but along the way Meyer became an embarrassment not only to the NFL team but the sport in general.

The NCAA deserves a Marty for finally figuring out a way to make sure student-athletes are paid while in college for their name and likeness. Too many

colleges were making millions of dollars on these men and women. While the details need to be examined and tightened up, it is a good start.

A Marty is given to the World Boxing Association as it tries to create some excitement in the sport once again with the three bouts between the world's top two heavyweights, Tyson Fury and Deontay Wilder.

Gymnast Simone Biles deserves a Marty for stepping away from the Olympics shortly after they started because of her mental health. More attention needs to be given to this matter.

The University of Cincinnati deserves a Marty for finally crashing the Power Five's college football championship.

Radford University got it right and should be honored for the hiring of former Radford High School standout Darris Nichols to be its new men's basketball coach.

Javonte Green deserves a Marty after making the roster

and starting for the National Basketball Association's Chicago Bulls. His jersey was retired last month at Radford University.

A Marty is given to the Virginia Tech rugby team for bringing another national club championship back to Blacksburg. This comes after the VT club baseball team did the same in the spring. The baseball team receives another Marty award for its effort.

The Atlanta Braves earn a Marty for giving baseball fans something to cheer about by winning the World Series in the same year of Brave-great Hank Aaron's death.

Virginia Tech Interim coach J.C. Price deserves a Marty for taking over the football program after the firing of Justin Fuente.

Tom Brady and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers deserve a Marty for bringing home the Lombardi trophy this past year in the NFL.

A Marty is presented to the universities of Texas and Oklahoma for changing the landscape of college football by joining the Southeastern

Conference.

David Seabaugh receives a Marty for taking the coaching job at Auburn and moving all the way from Mississippi to fight the battle of the lack of numbers in fielding a team this year. He managed to jumpstart the program and play four games with what was mostly a junior varsity squad.

A Marty is given to Chuck Munsey who retired from the Christiansburg Recreation Center after a long career of providing service to young athletics in our community. He then took the job as golf coach at Christiansburg High School.

Blacksburg native James Conrad receives an award for winning the Pro World Championships in disc golf. His 247-foot birdie over the summer was the shot heard around the world as he was featured on Sports Center.

The final Marty goes to fans and local athletes who battled the chaos associated with COVID-19 and finally, well maybe, getting back to a sense of normalcy. Fans in the stands are important.

VT's Emily Gray taken in women's soccer league draft

Making program history Saturday, Virginia Tech midfielder Emily Gray became the highest National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) draft selection to hail from Blacksburg as the Hokies' co-captain was taken at No. 3 overall by the North Carolina Courage during the first round of

the 2022 draft.

Upon hearing her name come off the board, Gray joins Tech legends Jazmine Reeves (2014) and Mandy McGlynn (2020) as the program's third all-time NWSL draft selection.

"There are not enough words to describe today," Gray said. "I was just

watching the TV screen, and once I heard my name called, I was shocked. I am really excited and grateful for the opportunity."

"This is so exciting for Emily and her family," said Tech women's soccer head coach Chugger Adair. "I think this is a wonderful day for the program. It shows the type of environment we strive for here at Virginia Tech: continuing to push our student-athletes to the next level and to be the best they can be."

With several NWSL clubs expressing interest in selecting her during the week's lead-up to draft day, Gray shot into the top 10 on many mock draft boards. After Stanford's Naomi Girma (2021 Pac-

12 Defender of the Year) and Florida State's Jaelin Howell (2021 ACC Midfielder of the Year) had respectively been taken at No. 1 and No. 2 overall, North Carolina made its move to scoop up the Tech attacker before the rest of the league could bid its first-round turns.

Playing their home matches at WakeMed Soccer Park in Cary, N.C. – frequent site of the ACC Women's Soccer Championship – the Courage offer Gray a familiar geographic location from where her professional career can take root.

"East coast is definitely closer to home and probably where I would love to be the most," said Gray. "North Carolina is not too far away. Tech

has played at that stadium before. I hope my current teammates can come watch me play with my future teammates."

On a tactical level, Adair is confident the Courage are proper suitors for the Hokies' No. 2 all-time leading point-eater.

"We think going to North Carolina and the system that they play will be a wonderful fit for her," said Adair.

Having started each of her 69 career appearances at Tech, Gray anchored a four-year stretch of Hokies history that yielded three NCAA tournament berths (2018, 2019, 2021), a trip to the 2018 Sweet Sixteen and mid-season top-20 national rankings during the 2019 and 2021 campaigns.

Along the way, she scored 27 career goals with the Hokies (ranking in a tie for the fourth most all-time) while tallying 24 career assists (ranking second all-time).

Among her collegiate accolades, she is a two-time All-ACC honoree, a three-time United Soccer Coaches All-Atlantic Region selection, and also earned 2021 United Soccer Coaches Scholar All-American Third Team distinction. She graduated from Virginia Tech on Friday with her bachelor's degree in sports media and analytics with a 3.96 GPA through the spring 2021 semester.

"I think Emily has grown on and off the pitch here," said Adair. "On behalf of the program, the staff and the players, we are proud of her, are extremely excited, and are so pleased that she represents Virginia Tech so well."

For Gray, the next stage in her soccer career comes with the deepest appreciation for all who have helped her reach this point.

"I would like to thank my family, who was with me today," said Gray. "I would also like to thank my closest friends, all my teammates, freshman through senior year. I am grateful for the coaching staff for giving me this opportunity to play at Tech."

"Additionally, I would like to thank the support staff, those in academic support services, student-athlete development, the video team, athletic communications, and especially those in sports medicine. They know me all too well in there. Everyone has been so supportive of my dreams, and I am really excited to move on to this next chapter."

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