

Radford named in Top 50 Safest College Towns list



Heather Bell
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RADFORD - The Radford City Police Department recently announced that the City of Radford has been ranked among the “Top 50 Safest College Towns” in the United States according to SafeWise. SafeWise is an independent safety ranking organization that reviews FBI crime data, population, and other factors to determine America’s safest college towns. The City of Radford was

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Food City kicks off hunger campaigns for people and pets

RADFORD - Food City is kicking off their two annual hunger campaigns at all locations, including the store in Radford. The first campaign, the Race Against Hunger, raises a substantial amount of money for local hunger relief organizations each year. “Hunger is a serious problem throughout our region and our Race Against Hunger program provides vital support to numerous hunger relief organizations throughout our market area,” said Steven C. Smith, Food City’s president and chief executive officer. This year’s Race Against

Hunger program begins today, Wednesday, Nov. 2, and continues through Nov. 29. Food City customers are invited to make a \$1, \$3, or \$5 contribution as they check out or round up their order total to the next dollar amount with 100% of the proceeds raised benefiting local hunger relief organizations. Approximately four meals are provided for every dollar donated. Customers who contribute using their ValuCard will be electronically entered to win their choice of a season race package at Bristol Motor Speedway or a \$2,500 contribution made to the charity of their choice.

“Millions of Americans need food assistance each year,” said Kevin Stafford, Food City vice president of marketing. “Food City’s Race Against Hunger program is one way we can help those in need right here in our own community.” “Thanks to the support of our loyal customers and associates, last year’s program raised over \$597,700 and we hope to raise even more this year to benefit our friends and neighbors in need,” said Smith. Food City is also kicking off their fifth annual Friends & Pets in Need Holiday Food Drive today,

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A dog and a horse win pet photography challenge

RADFORD - Adi Ben Senior of Christiansburg and Debby Ring of Radford won the Radford Photo Club’s pet photography challenge at the club’s October meeting. Ben Senior’s dog is Chief and Ring’s horse is Awesome Gal.

The winners were a photo of a chained gate by Charles Lynch of Radford and a photo of a child, titled “Lorelai in the Fall,” by Sydney Altizer of Radford. Lynch said of his photo, “It was mainly about a certain tone: a combination of texture, shape, and color that came together nicely.”

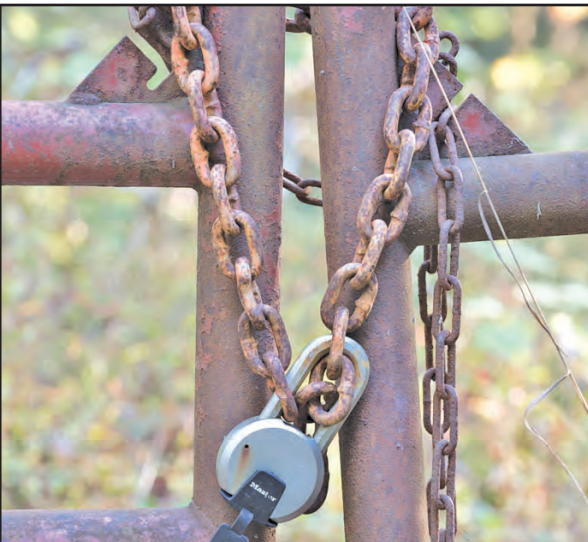
The Radford Photo Club is made up of professional and amateur photographers from throughout the New River Valley. The November photo challenge will be Still Life. The Nov. 10 program, at 6 p.m. at the Radford Public Library, will be about travel photography, presented by Michele Bor-

garelli of Blacksburg. Meetings, events, and outings are open to the public. Learn more about the club by searching for “Radford Photo Club” on Facebook or a browser.

Submitted by the
Radford Photo Club



Adi Ben Senior’s photo of his dog, Chief, tied for the Radford Photo Club’s pet photography challenge in October. Ben Senior is from Christiansburg.



Charles Lynch of Radford achieved a first-place tie in the club’s open category with this photo of a chained fence. “It was mainly about a certain tone,” Lynch said about his photograph.

With eyes in the sky, science studies at Radford take flight

Once upon a time, not so long ago, the only tools an engineering geologist needed to collect cliffside data were a rock hammer, a compass, a rugged pair of boots, and sometimes a climbing rope. “In my career, I spent a lot of time rappelling and rock climbing in order to get the data,” said Skip Watts, professor emeritus in the Radford University Department of Geology. “I would use those tools, and in the old days, we would process a lot of this data by hand.”

One morning, about 25 years ago, Watts was on such a mission when National Public Radio phoned him at Yosemite National Park where he was investigating discontinuities or cracks in

See **Science Studies**, page 2



Geology majors Garrett O'Hara (left) and Kendra Bolen serve as student managers of Radford University's Geohazards and Unmanned Systems Research Center. There, they assist with faculty research and teach drone-piloting classes to the campus community.

Y at VT to celebrate Veterans Day with Mobile Vet Center

the Y YMCA

VETERANS DAY EVENT

The YMCA at Virginia Tech invites local veterans to attend this special celebration.

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 4, 11am til 2pm

At The Y Center, 1000 N. Main St. Blacksburg

MOBILE VETERAN CENTER

Meet VT Corps of Cadets

Resources for Vets

Meals 4 Vets

BLACKSBURG - On Friday, Nov. 4, the YMCA at Virginia Tech will support veterans and their families. with a Mobile Vet Center that will offer information, meals, and food packages vets may enjoy on site or take home. The event is in partnership with the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets who will be on site to meet and interact with the veterans who attend. “While families across our community experience food insecurity, veterans who served in the U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are twice as likely to be food insecure compared to the general population, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs,” said Ryan Martin, CEO and

See **YMCA**, page 2

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Thursday, Nov. 3:

American Legion meeting
American Legion, Harvey-Howe-Carper Post 30 will meet at 7 p.m. at the VFW Post Home on 102 Watts St. In Radford. For further information, call 540-250-2283 or 540-239-9864.

Friday, Nov. 4:

Homeschool Science: Biogeochemistry
At the Radford Public Library. 11 a.m. to noon. Dr. Mary Jane Carmichael will talk about the study of biogeochemistry: looking at chemical compounds and their relationships to our ecosystems. This program is geared towards homeschooling families. All ages are welcome.

Friday, Nov. 4 and Saturday, Nov. 5:

Book sale
At the Radford Public Library. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Hardbacks are \$1. and paperbacks are \$.50. A free cart and table will be available

Monday, Nov. 7:

Free GED Classes with NRCC
At the Radford Public Library; 9 a.m. to noon. Free GED prep classes offered by New River Community College. Call (540) 674-3682 for additional information.

Crafting for the Holiday: Open crafting
At the Radford Public Library; 1 p.m. Participants can bring their own needlework, painting, or other projects and work with others. These crafting afternoons are not guided and are at the participants' leisure. Some craft items will be supplied for relaxation (paper, coloring books for adults, crayons, etc).

Tuesday, Nov. 8:

YMCA

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Executive Director of the YMCA at Virginia Tech. "We are excited to collaborate with the VA Mobile Vet Center this Veterans Day week to not

Library closed
The Radford Public Library will be closed in observance of Election Day

The Sons of Confederate Veterans meeting
The Sons of Confederate Veterans, Stuart Horse Artillery Camp 1784 will meet at 7 p.m. at Aly's Family Italian Restaurant, 3204 Riner Road. Members of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) are invited to attend. If Montgomery County Schools are closed on Tuesday or Wednesday of this week due to weather, the meeting is canceled. For further information, call 540-320-4315 or 540-239-9864.

Wednesday, Nov. 9:

Montgomery County Chamber Buy Local Business Showcase
Connect with Montgomery County businesses at the 2022 Chamber Buy Local Business Showcase at the Inn at Virginia Tech and the Skelton Conference Center, 901 Prices Fork Rd., Blacksburg. Anyone interested in purchasing a booth may reach out to programs@montgomerycc.org. Business After Hours will be held in conjunction with Showcase at the Inn at Virginia Tech. Come for the showcase and stay for the mixer. Prizes will be given away throughout the day. The event is free and is open to the public. Open to the public from 3:45 to 7 p.m. Open during the Chamber Business After Hours from 5:30 to 7 p.m.

Free GED Classes with NRCC
At the Radford Public Library; 9 a.m. to noon. Free GED Prep classes offered by New River Community College. Call (540) 674-3682 for additional information.

Thursday, Nov. 10:

River City Quilt Guild
The River City Quilt Guild will meet at 9:30 a.m. at Grove United Methodist Church, 1020 Tyler Ave., Radford. All skill levels of quilters are welcome. For more information, call

Anna Handy, 540-320-7791.

Radford Photo Club
The Radford Photo Club will meet at 6 p.m. at the Radford Public Library. The program will be about travel photography, presented by Michele Borgarelli of Blacksburg. The November photo challenge will be Still Life. The club is made up of professional and amateur photographers from throughout the New River Valley. Meetings, events, and outings are open to the public. Learn more about the club by searching for "Radford Photo Club" on Facebook.

Sunday, Nov. 13:

Women's Only swim night
At the Christiansburg Aquatic Center, 6 to 8 p.m. Celebrate an evening of girl power. All participants, including the staff, will be women. The cost is \$6. Registration is required by Nov. 7. To register, call 540-381-POOL.

Monday, Nov. 14:

Montgomery Board of Supervisors meeting
The Montgomery County Board of Supervisors will meet at the Government Center, 755 Roanoke St. in Christiansburg with a closed session beginning at 6 p.m. if needed, followed by an open session at 7:15 p.m. Citizens are invited to attend and are allowed to speak. All regular meetings of the Board of Supervisors are rebroadcast on Montgomery County Comcast and Shentel Channels 190 daily.

Radford City Council meeting
The Radford City Council will meet in the Starnes Council Chambers at the Radford Municipal Building, 10 Robertson St. at 7 p.m.

Tuesday, Nov. 15:

Legislative update
The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce will present a legislative update to discuss the chamber's 2023 legislative agenda at Warm

Hearth Village, 2387 Warm Hearth Dr., Blacksburg, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Several of the representatives from the Virginia House and Senate will be on hand.

Blacksburg Town Council meeting
The Blacksburg Town Council will meet at 6:30 p.m. in the Roger E. Hedgepeth Chambers of the Blacksburg Municipal Building, 300 S. Main St. The meeting is open to the public and televised live on WTOB Channel 2.

Christiansburg Town Council meeting
The Christiansburg Town Council will meet at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers of Town Hall (100 E. Main St.).

Ongoing:

Holiday Parade Registration
Registration is now open for Blacksburg's annual Holiday Parade to be held on Friday, Dec. 2, at 7 p.m. This year's theme will be "Hometown Holidays." The registration deadline is Friday, Nov. 18 at 5 p.m. For more information, contact David Goodman at degoodman@blacksburg.gov or 540-443-1106.

Hand-in-Hand playground design concepts
The Town of Blacksburg has received design concepts from playground designer Leathers Inc. for the new Hand-in-Hand playground. Check them out at <https://letstalk-blacksburg.org/hand-in-hand> and provide feedback by Monday, Nov. 7.

Radford Holiday Parade registration
Radford's Holiday Parade, themed "Jingle All the Way," will take place on Thursday, Dec. 8, 2022, at 7 p.m. The lineup begins at 6 p.m. on East Main Street between Tyler Avenue and University Drive Bridge. The parade will proceed westward along Main Street to the Central Square Shopping Center. Go to www.radfordva.gov to register. Deadline to register is Nov. 30.

Science Studies

from page 1

the rocks that could lead to more landslides like the slide that happened at the park a year earlier. "Right now, I'm about 1,800 feet above the valley floor, sitting on a rock eating an apple," Watts said, answering NPR's Scott Simon's question, "Where are you right now?" during the live radio interview. "I'm looking up Tenaya Canyon, and directly in front of me is the Merced River and two beautiful waterfalls." But in addition to the possible perils, collecting data "the old way," as Watts said, can take a lot of time. "You might be able to get 100 to 200 data points in a day the way we used to do it," he said. Times and tools have changed.

These days, students and faculty in Radford's Department of Geology are using unmanned aerial vehicles, more commonly known as drones to collect geological data. "In the old days, it would take all day just to get a couple of hundred data points while hanging off a cliff, but now we can fly a drone over and around a site and gets thousands of data points in 40 to 60 minutes," said Radford University senior geology major Garrett O'Hara. "And we can do it all safely from the ground." This is certainly not your parents' geology program. A walk into Radford University's Geohazards and Unmanned Systems

Research Center first reveals a fleet of drones stationed around the room. There are small drones, like the DJI Mavic 2 Mini, that can sit in a hand, and there is one large drone, the Matrice M600, which looks like it could have arrived from another planet. These drones are used by Radford students and faculty for flight protocol development, photography, mapping, and research into battery life extension, to name a few operations. O'Hara and senior geology major Kendra Bolen are the center's student managers. Bolen's responsibilities as the center's overall manager include drone procurement, maintenance, and inventory. O'Hara manages spatial data processing for the center, a position that makes him light up like a Christmas tree when he talks about his work. The same goes for Bolen. "It is pure joy coming to work here," she said. "I love walking into the center and seeing people who are wanting to learn and are excited about drones and also knowing I get to fly today. Being able to come to work smiling every day is a cool thing." "And we give the students and the faculty – anybody who's on campus – some time to fly around the lawn in front of Reed and Curie Halls," said Bolen, who is FAA Part 107 certified. "Anyone can come into the center and learn to fly." Teaching others is just one aspect of the students' work at the center. They're also heavily involved with faculty on research projects and community outreach, just as many geology majors before them, like studying rockslides on

West Virginia roadsides, consulting on a mountaintop hotel project in Maryland and helping Watts with studies on the disappearance of Mountain Lake and research on the structural integrity of Natural Bridge. There at the bridge, in Virginia's Rockbridge County, the field tool of choice is a drone. Safety is a key component to students' and faculty's work at the center, and that sometimes means watching over Radford students, as they did on Highlander Float Day in August when many students drifted in boats and inner tubes along the New River. Bolen and O'Hara were part of a team that day that piloted drones up and down the river and livestreamed video back to the Radford Emergency Services Center. "We want to do our part to make sure everyone is safe," Bolen said, "whether it be on campus or out in various communities. That's what we are about." "Everyone can benefit from an eye in the sky," Watts said while sitting in his office explaining the interdisciplinary nature of unmanned aerial flight research. "It can be aiding police by flying over schools to create campus maps for incident planning, but it can also be geophysics and anthropology and archaeology." In addition to her geology major, Bolen is minoring in anthropology. Last summer, she worked as a representative of Radford's Department of Geology with Paleo Prospectors to help excavate a triceratops skull. Then she went a step further, constructing 3D models of the skull using drones from the UAS Center. Bolen first learned about the center when she transferred to Radford University. She had meetings with faculty, who showed her around the UAS Center, let her sit in on a geology class with Watts and encouraged her to explore the department's maker space, the Museum of the Earth Sciences and all the tools and resources available to students. O'Hara transferred to Radford partly because of the UAS Center. He wanted to study at the university because he knew the educational experiences would lead him to a career field "involving structural analysis research and slope stability," he said, and to working in a field where he can "help prevent hazards and make a difference in communities like our professors do."

Chad Osborne
Radford University

EARLY DEADLINES FOR
THANKSGIVING PAPER

There will be early deadlines for the November 23 issue because of Thanksgiving.

Please send your news items, photos and church news by **Thursday, November 17 at noon** to communitynews@ourvalley.org. Send ads by **Thursday, November 17 at noon** to advertise@ourvalley.org. The paper will be printed on Tuesday, Nov. 22 in order for subscribers to receive it by mail before Thanksgiving. You may also drop off news items and ads at our offices at 1633 W. Main Street, Salem, VA 24153.

The offices of the News Messenger and Radford News Journal will be closed on Thursday, Nov. 24 for Thanksgiving.

Send community news and photos to communitynews@ourvalley.org

PETS OF THE WEEK



Snoop Dog is a lovable, happy pup, and he’s an Animal Care and Adoption Center staff favorite. He enjoys attention and affection. From Halloween costumes to T-shirts, Snoop doesn’t mind looking extra dapper and sporting doggie clothes. Stop by to meet this pawsome boy.



Sweet doggo Bliss is a friendly good girl. She will gladly lounge on a couch and enjoy a cuddle from her favorite people. Bliss is a smart cookie, too! She knows a couple of commands, including “sit” and “stay.”

Wonder Universe holds first 5K, family run event

CHRISTIANSBURG – Wonder Universe children’s museum recently hosted its first annual 5K and Family Fun Run on the Huckleberry Trail in Christiansburg. Forty community members turned out to join in the fun. Kids and adults of all ages chose to walk, run, skip, or stroll in celebration of the mission of Wonder Universe to educate, amuse, and inspire kids and families through play. “Our first 5K and Family Fun Run event was a tremendous success,” said Shelby Koninckx, the museum’s Executive Director. “This event marked another important occasion

as we find creative ways for area families to enjoy all that Wonder Universe offers, inside our museum walls and out. “It was amazing to see how the kids and adults cheered each other along,” Koninckx said. “For many kids, it was their first race event and to witness their proud smiles as they crossed the finish line was incredible. Participants received a free family day pass to enjoy Wonder Universe after the event, and children received special ribbons and awards to celebrate their achievement. “We’re already looking forward to our 2023 race event.” Sponsoring the race

for Wonder Universe were Martin Wealth Solutions, Austin DeVincent with MR Real Estate, Skyline National Bank, Exper-T’s, and RunAbout Sports. Wonder Universe is a 501(c)3 nonprofit children’s museum located at Uptown Christiansburg mall. The museum offers 18 hands-on exhibits that educate, amuse, and inspire children and families through play. Wonder Universe hosts educational field trips, birthday parties, and special events. Three-month and annual memberships are available. Visit www.wonderuniverse.org to learn more.



PHOTO PROVIDED BY WONDER UNIVERSE EX-OFFICIO BOARD MEMBER JENNY MARTIN

Daylight saving can create driver fatigue and hazards on the road, says expert

As clocks “fall back” on Nov. 6 and daylight saving time ends, many Americans will be driving longer at night, which could translate to more driver fatigue and hazards on the road, says Virginia Tech Transportation Institute expert Matt Camden. Camden says that any time change can exacerbate drowsiness and the driver’s body may need a few days to adjust accordingly. He offers the following advice for drivers to avoid fatigue. 1. Avoid driving during rush hour and from 2-4 a.m. Crash risk increases during rush hours and from 2 to 4 a.m. Driving between 2 and 4 a.m. is particularly dangerous

because a person’s circadian rhythm is at its lowest during this time-frame. And when a driver is already sleep-deprived, the desire to sleep during the circadian low is even greater. 2. Get a full night’s sleep. Drivers should try to sleep at least seven to eight hours in order to avoid drowsiness. However, one night’s rest may not be enough for someone who has experienced several sleepless nights. In those cases, the driver will need several days of restful sleep to compensate for the sleep debt. 3. Pay attention to signs of drowsy driving. Signs of drowsy driving include: slow eyelid

closures, yawning, gentle swaying of the head, seat fidgeting, difficulty staying in the correct lane, difficulty maintaining speed, and delayed reactions. 4. Be aware of other factors impacting drowsy driving. Situations that increase drowsiness are driving alone, monotonous road conditions (such as long straightaways with limited changes in the environment), long drives, and extended periods of heavy traffic. About Matt Camden: Matt Camden is a senior research associate and team leader in the Research to Practice & Outreach team of the

Virginia Tech Transportation Institute’s Division of Freight, Transit, and Heavy Vehicle Safety. He is an expert in occupational driving safety with 14 years of experience conducting applied driving research and translating that research to industry practice. Camden specializes in light-vehicle and heavy-vehicle fleet safety with an emphasis on developing and evaluating behavioral safety programs and advanced vehicle technologies to improve driver performance. His research portfolio includes the evaluation of advanced vehicle safety systems, organizational safety culture, driver distraction and fatigue, driver training, and driver impairment.



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OBITUARIES

Dowdy, Charlene Marie Thomas

Charlene Marie Thomas Dowdy, 76, of Christiansburg, went to be with the Lord Thursday, Oct. 27, 2022.

She was born on May 29, 1946, to Edgar “Bud” and Kathleen Linkous Thomas of Christiansburg. She was preceded in death by her husband of 56 years, Irvin “June” Dowdy; a great-grandson, Hayden Quesenberry; her father, Edgar “Bud” Thomas; and siblings Linda Thomas, Patricia “Trish” Jones, Edwina “Cricket” Crouse, and Michael “Mike” Thomas.

Charlene is survived by three children: Tracy Smith (Chris), Cheryl Hudgins (Steve Rapp), and Tami Hall (Calvin), her mother, Kathleen Thomas; a sister, Vicky Jones (Jerry); a brother, Ricky Thomas (Lois); grandchildren Josh Quesenberry (Brooke), Amber Flesher (Jared), Terri “Michelle” Forbes (Ben), Brandon Ear-



les (Sara), and Spencer Earles (Candace); great-grandchildren, Hunnter Quesenberry, Heith Quesenberry, Dallas Sheppard, McKinley Sheppard, Lane Sheppard, Trampus Flesher, Jeremiah Sanders, Jordyn Forbes, Jocelyn Forbes, Jensen Earles, and Piper Earles; as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

Charlene owned and operated Irv’s Car Care with her husband for over 30 years in Radford. She attended Cornersview Pentecostal Holiness Church in Snowville. The family extends their respect and gratitude to all the staff of Radford Health and Rehab Center.

Funeral services were conducted Tuesday, Nov. 1, 2022, in the McCoy Funeral Home Chapel with Pastor Frankie Graham officiating. Interment followed in Roselawn Memorial Gardens, Christiansburg.

Hutchison, Barbara Ann Thomas

Barbara Ann Thomas Hutchison, 80, of Dublin, passed away on Monday, Oct. 24, 2022.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Cecil Elbert Thomas and Deanie Worrell Turner, and her daughter, Rita Ann Hall.

Survivors include her sons and daughter-in-law, Allen and Sharon DeHart and Robert “Bobby” Taylor; grandchildren Cassandra DeHart, Ashley and Robert Rogers, Greg and Beth DeHart, Jacqueline Taylor, Danielle Taylor, and Dallen Taylor; 12 great-grandchildren; canine



companion Petey; a sister, Mary Thomas Gravely; a sister-in-law, Barbara Thomas; special nieces Kathy Tomas and Gail Thomas White; a special nephew, Curt Thomas; and many other relatives, and friends.

The family received friends on Friday, Oct. 28, 2022, at Trinity Baptist Church on Robinson Tract Road in Pulaski. Memorial services followed.

The Hutchison family is in the care of Mullins Funeral Home & Crematory in Radford.

Pack, Wilma Lee

Wilma Lee Pack, 68, of Christiansburg, went to be with our Lord and Savior Oct. 27, 2022, at her home. She was born in Montgomery County on Aug. 18, 1954. She was a loving mother and grandmother.

She was preceded in death by her father; James Pearson Bailey; a granddaughter, Daisy May Pack; and a sister, Reba Linkous.

She is survived by her mother; Thelma Collins; son, Jayson Lee Pack (Melissa); daughter, Rita Ann Pack (Stephen Thompson); grandchildren, Justin Taylor, Megan Taylor, and Peyton Pack; sisters and brothers-in-law, Delores Wall, Evelyn McGlothlin (Danny), Becky Lynn



Williams (Ervin); brother, David Pearson Bailey; special niece, Stephanie Linkous; special friends, John Stevens, Jr., Alice Bishop, Barbara Pack (ex-husband, Bobby Pack); fur grandbabies, Johnny Cash, Winchester Dan, Harley, and Lola.

Funeral services will be conducted Wednesday, Nov. 2, 2022 at 11 a.m. in the McCoy Funeral Home

Chapel with Rev. Danny McGlothlin officiating. Interment will follow in Roselawn Memorial Gardens. The family will receive friends from 10-11 a.m. Wednesday prior to the service at the McCoy Funeral Home, 150 Country Club Dr. S.W. Blacksburg.

Rakes, Kimberly Dawn “Kimmie”

Kimberly Dawn “Kimmie” Rakes, 55, of Christiansburg, passed away unexpectedly Wednesday, Oct. 26, 2022.

She was born in Montgomery Co. on July 19, 1967. Kimmie was known for love and affection in all aspects for nieces and nephews.

She is survived by her parents, George W. “Bill” and Janice A. Rakes; a sister, Lisa Shepherd; brothers and sisters-in-law Shawn and Kim Rakes, Billy and Hope Rakes; nieces Amber Perdue (Daniel), Megan Hopkins (Ben); nephews Joshua



Rakes (Chelsea), William Rakes; great-nieces, Paisley and Piper Perdue, Macy Rakes, Caroline Hopkins; and great-nephews John and Theo Hopkins, and Steven Rakes.

Funeral services were conducted Monday, Oct. 31, 2022, in the McCoy Funeral Home Chapel with Pastor Mike Johnston officiating. Interment followed in the Sunset Cem-

etery. In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made to the Open Door Baptist Church PO Box 2524, Christiansburg, Va. 24068.

Gragnani, Donna Hawkins

Donna Hawkins Gragnani, 65, of Christiansburg, passed away on Tuesday, Oct. 25, 2022, with her daughters by her side. She was preceded in death by her parents Lyndal Allen Hawkins and Barbara Ashworth McGuire.

Donna is survived by her daughters, Kimberly Elaine Gragnani of Richmond, Stephanie Marie Pfeil and Taylor Lyn Gragnani, both of Christiansburg; sons-in-law, Damon McIntosh and Will Pfeil; brothers, Dennis Hawkins, Barry



Inge, Gerald Inge, Robert Hawkins and Rick Hawkins; sister, Trina Hawkins; and many other relatives and friends.

Donna will be remembered as a strong, independent woman who loved her three daughters forever selflessly. She will always be a meaningful piece of our family puzzle and will be loved eternally.

The Gragnani family is in the care of Mullins Funeral Home & Crematory in Radford.

Lovell, Sr., Leo Thomas “Buckeye”

Leo Thomas “Buckeye” Lovell, Sr., 83, passed away on Tuesday, Oct. 25, 2022, at his home in Elliston with his family by his side.

He was a former crane operator at Roanoke Electric Steel and a member of Harbor of Hope Church.

He was preceded in death by his parents, W. T. and Delia Ann Lovell; and a daughter, Sandra Gail Lovell.

Buckeye always had a good sense of humor and was a hardworking man. He was a very loving man, loving the Lord and his family. He took care of his cats, and he loved feeding the birds. He loved having a garden and giving people vegetables out of his garden.

Survivors include his loving wife of



64 years, Bertha Lovell; daughters Debbie (Tony) Andrews and Teresa Lovell, both of Salem, and Bonnie (Terry) Pryor of Roanoke; son Tommy (Linda) Lovell of Elliston; six grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; and many other relatives and friends.

The family received friends on Tuesday, Nov. 1, 2022, at Mullins Funeral Home in Radford.

Funeral services followed with the Rev. Craig Reed and the Rev. Josh Collins officiating. Interment followed in Snowville Baptist Church, 3238 Gum Log Road, Hiwassee, Virginia.

The Lovell family is in the care of Mullins Funeral Home & Crematory in Radford.

Wilkins, Frank Melvin

Frank Melvin Wilkins, 80, of Fairlawn, died Thursday, Oct. 27, 2022.

He is survived by his wife, Sharon McCoy; a daughter and son-in-law, Melinda and Steve Slusser; grandchildren Matthew McCoy (Shannon), Billy Graham (Tiffany), Harlie Clinch (Jeremy), Ethan Slusser, Devon Viars (Chelsea),

and Hannah Viars (Josh); 11 great-grandchildren, and an extended family in Florida.

Military services were conducted Monday, Oct. 31, 2022, in the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery. In lieu of flowers donations can be made to a charity of your choice.



Improved benefits for 2023

When it comes to Medicare, UnitedHealthcare® offers you choices.

With UnitedHealthcare®, it's easier than ever to get even more for your Medicare dollar. Our licensed sales agents will help you find a plan with more benefits – including better-than-ever dental, vision, and prescription drug coverage, plus access to Medicare Advantage's largest national provider network.

Stop by during the times listed to get answers to your questions from a Medicare Plan Expert.

Kroger
7480 Lee Highway
Fairlawn, VA 24141

Mondays & Wednesdays
9:30AM-1:30PM
Fridays
12PM-4PM

Christiansburg Aquatic Cnt
595 N. Franklin Street
Christiansburg, VA 24073

Community Meeting
11/7
10:30AM-11:30AM

Dublin Insurance Center
453 E Main Street
Dublin, VA 24084

Mondays & Wednesdays
9:30AM-1:30PM
Fridays
12PM-4PM

Glenvar Library
3917 Daugherty Road
Salem, VA 24153

Community Meeting
11/17
10:30AM-11:30AM

It's time to take advantage

To search for meetings and find agents in your area, visit myuhcagent.com

For accommodations of persons with special needs at meetings call 1-540-283-7852, TTY 711. Plans are insured through UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company or one of its affiliated companies, a Medicare Advantage organization with a Medicare contract. Benefits, features and/or devices vary by plan/area. Limitations and exclusions apply. Enrollment in the plan depends on the plan's contract renewal with Medicare.

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Send community news
and photos to
communitynews@ourvalley.org

VT School of Performing Arts’ production weaves a tale of truth and lies in Russia

“True is what happens. False is what does not happen.” So says Nikolai Yezhov, a character in the play “Describe the Night” by Rajiv Joseph and a real-life member of Stalin’s secret police who oversaw the worst of the Great Purge and was himself executed under Stalin’s orders.

The production from Virginia Tech’s School of Performing Arts will run in the Squires Studio Theater for six performances from Nov. 10-15.

The award-winning epic follows eight characters over the course of nearly 100 years.

“The story takes place in Poland, Russia, and East Germany, and bounces back and forth between 1920 and 2010, held together by the through-line of a personal diary’s accidental journey,” said director Susanna Rinehart, a faculty member in the School of Performing Arts. “It is gorgeous in its theatrical construction, its language, its comedy and wit, and it has unnerveingly timely resonance in its subject matter, given Putin’s invasion of Ukraine and our own struggles with truth and lies.”

Fact and fiction become blurred when real historical figures such as Nikolai Yezhov, Joseph Stalin, Russian Jewish writer Isaac Babel (whose diary journeys 90 years over the course of the play), and another too-familiar contemporary figure mix into the theatrical tapestry woven by the playwright. Joseph, a Pulitzer Prize finalist for his 2010 play “Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo” writes from a storyteller’s vantage.

“Like Babel’s diary, we are only given fragments of the past through which we can attempt to discern a logic. This is simply the nature of storytelling and memory,” Joseph told Walter Bilderback of The Wilma Theater. “But darker forces throughout history (continuing to the present day) have preyed upon the fragmented nature of information in order to control people and create fear and confusion. Or as others might say, in order to keep the peace.”

Themes of global citizenship, reality, and the value of art are revealed through scenes that time travel from the front lines of the Polish-Soviet war, a modern car rental agency, and the tearing down of the Berlin Wall.

“The play is hilariously funny at times, deeply serious at others, and speaks in particular to the nature of lies and truth,” Rinehart said.

Lighting designer Daryl Norman Soh, a first-year Master of Fine Arts student, illuminates the different scenes, structures, and a menacing incinerator. The design and technical elements of the show tell their own story of destruction, including a multi-layered soundscape design by sound design faculty member Allen Sanders, assisted by theater major Kate Gonzales; and costumes designed by faculty member Tyler Holland, assisted by theater major Justin Buontempo. Theater major Maya Jaffe leads the stage management team.

“In the shadow of Putin’s war on Ukraine and our own contemporary mis/disinformation age,” said Rinehart, ‘Describe the Night’ reminds us, ‘When we say something is true, it becomes true. When we say something is false, it becomes false.’”

Survey: Half of young adults in Virginia consider a college degree a burden

CodeWizardsHQ, a provider of coding classes for kids and teens, questioned 2,008 young Americans (18-24) about whether they consider a college degree (and its associated fees) as a benefit or a burden. Almost half (43%) of young adults in Virginia consider a college degree a financial burden compared to a national average of 47%. When broken down by gender, 49% of women consider it a burden compared to 45% of men.

Indeed, CodeWizardsHQ also carried out a comprehensive study identifying the most and least progressive states when it comes to access and enrollment to computer science courses across high schools.

The company analyzed data from Advocacy Coalition to determine a ranking from 1 to 50 (with 1 being the highest ranking) of each state’s I.T. progressiveness. Ranking factors included rural accessibility, race accessibility, minority student accessibility, female enrollment, economically disadvantaged student enrollment, and the number of high schools offering computer sciences to students

Surprisingly, the study revealed that some of the poorer states, including South Carolina and Alabama, are among the most progressive. Topping the rankings as the #1 most progressive state for computer science study opportunities is South Carolina. The Palmetto State stood out on a number of factors. These include a high rural access rate of 92%, and a minority student access rate of 98%.

Most progressive states in computer science studies inclusivity ranking: 1. South Carolina 2. Arkansas 3. Maryland 4. Nevada 5. Alabama

Least progressive states in computer science studies inclusivity ranking: 46. Montana 47. Minnesota 48. Kansas 49. Idaho 50. Louisiana

Across America, September marked a month of contrasting feelings for millions of college-bound kids (and their parents). While many will have been exhilarated with their newfound freedoms, others will have been dreading the beginning of associated debts, potentially up to \$200,000 in tuition and room and board, which will be incurred over the next few years, and could take a lifetime to settle.

Astronomically high tuition fees do not only apply to private schools, but state schools, too. Payments of loans taken out by students, like any debt, can be postponed, but ultimately they need to be repaid, and statistics show that millions of students will never be able to settle their loans. Moreover, even community colleges encourage students to take out loans, which is particularly problematic as many come from low income backgrounds. Within three years of entering repayment, 9.7% of student loan borrowers default, according to the Education Department.

Critics of the college system say that defaulting on loans can have serious consequences for a young person’s future. Doing so will lead to bad credit reports, which can prevent them from securing property or cars, among other things. Among these critics is President Biden, whose administration recently announced a debt-forgiveness law due to come into effect shortly. Proponents, however, point out that a college education is now more important than ever as it provides an extremely strong return on investment, and the numbers speak for themselves. Graduates with bachelor’s degrees pay \$563,000 more in taxes than high-school graduates who never attended college.

When broken down across the states, it was the respondents in New Hampshire who felt most strongly about this, with 81% of young people believing that further education and its high costs will saddle them with debt for years to come. Maine’s young people were more optimistic, however. 68% consider a college degree as a benefit.

The survey also found that, given the high levels of student debt within the country, only 38% of those aged 18-24 felt they would be able to achieve the same levels of financial security as their parents in their lifetimes.

While students from low-income backgrounds are disproportionately affected by loan defaults, more encouraging news is that when it comes to high school students and the courses they take such as computer science, the playing field is more level.

Virginia Tech Percussion Ensemble to perform Thursday with guest xylophonist Heather Thorn



The Virginia Tech Percussion Ensemble, under the direction of Associate Professor of Percussion Annie Stevens, will perform with guest xylophonist Heather Thorn on Thursday, Nov. 3. The concert will be held in the Creativity and Innovation District living-learning community building, at 7:30 p.m.

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ibly virtuosic xylophone player and someone very unique in our field. Her specialty is mainly jazz music from the 1920s era, and she has done much study into the performance practice of this music,” said Stevens. “She has a unique background in both theater and music and as a result is a charismatic, engaging and superb performer.”

According to Stevens, the program will feature some unique aspects of percussion ensemble repertoire, including a piece for just six tambourines, a historical piece written in 1941 by Lou Harrison, a trio for one bass drum, and a piece for just hands.

Virginia Tech Percussion is a university ensemble open to music majors and non-majors by audition in the fall semester. It performs a wide body of repertoire from classical transcriptions and chamber works to traditional West African drumming music and large percussion orchestra pieces. The ensemble features several guest artists throughout the year, and students have the opportunity to participate in master classes with visiting guest artists on several occasions.

Tickets are \$15 general/\$12 senior/\$10 student and may be purchased through the Moss Arts Center ticket office in person or online. Tickets will be available at the door beginning one hour prior to the performance. The Creativity and Innovation District building is at 185 Kent St. on the Blacksburg campus.

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Radford Sports

Final week of high school football: Radford, Christiansburg look to playoffs

Marty Gordon
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

The 10th and final week of high school football is upon us with two of our five area teams preparing for the postseason. Radford fell to Glenvar, while Christiansburg picked up a win over Cave Spring. Both teams are sitting in the top four of the specific classifications and regions.

In addition, the two should have at least the first round at home.

Christiansburg and Cave

Spring could meet in the first round of 3D, while Radford will be the number one or two seed in 1C.

A win this Friday night could help both teams in their prep for the playoffs.

Blacksburg is still looking for its first win of the season, while Eastern Montgomery is trying to finish the 2022 season on an upside.

In last week's win over Cave Spring, Christiansburg jumped out to a 21-0 lead before quarterback Tanner Evans was knocked out of the game. He is expected

to play in this week's contest with Pulaski.

Radford's lucky charm, from two weeks ago in stopping Floyd on a two-point conversation as the clock ran out for the win, was on the opposite end of the spectrum as Glenvar scored in the last seconds of the game.

Radford remains 8-1 going into the final regular season matchup with James River. Christiansburg will host Pulaski, who will miss the playoffs with a loss. A win over the Blue Demons could give the Cougars an outside shot despite only

winning three games this season.

Christiansburg sits at #4 in the Virginia High School League 3D standings with 22.875 points. Cave sits at #5 with 22.75. A total of eight will advance.

Lord Botetourt is in a commanding first place in the 3D with 25.875 and will hold home field advantage for the sixth year straight in the playoffs. Bassett moved up to second at 23.625 points. Magna Vista is third at 23.375.

Staunton River and Abingdon sits in sixth and seventh with a surprising 3-6 Hidden Valley looking

at the last playoff berth.

In other points standings, Radford remains first in 2C with 27 points. Martinsville, Appomattox, Glenvar, Floyd and Alleghany are 2-6.

E.C. Glass leads 4D by a .25 fraction over Salem.

Area top five: 1) Salem, 2) Radford, 3) Narrows, 4) Christiansburg, 5) Floyd.

Predictions this week: Christiansburg 29, Pulaski 24; Cave Spring 41, Blacksburg 14; Radford 48, James River 20; Eastern Montgomery 32, Parry McCluer 20.

Radford Bobcats win the 2022 NRV Junior League football championship



Radford wide receiver Braydon Barrow catches a pass from quarterback Emory Honaker to set up fourth and short deep in Christiansburg territory during the NRV Junior League Superbowl Saturday at Blacksburg High School.



The Radford Bobcats were the 2022 NRV Junior League Championships.



Radford Junior League quarterback Emory Honaker scored twice on short touchdown runs to help Radford to a 24-6 Superbowl victory over Christiansburg.



PHOTOS BY JON FLEMING

The Radford Bobcats were runners-up in the 2022 NRV Senior League Championships after a 34-6 loss to Narrows.

RHS observes 50th anniversary of football state title

Marty Gordon
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

The Radford Bobcats capped off a 13-0 football season in 1972 with a 41-20 Double-A state championship win over Southampton. That title stretched the team's winning streak o 32 games.

Dave Morton, Ralph Fisher, and Mike Mauck scored to give Radford a 20-0 lead in the second quarter. Southampton would trim the score to 20-6, but Morton put the game away with a 95-yard kickoff return.

Friday night, members of the record-setting team gathered 50 years later during the Radford-Glenvar contest. Several members of the team spoke to the Bobcats in the locker room before they took the field.

The championship road began with a 39-6 victory over Galax on Sept. 2, 1972 and would be followed up by a 15-0 run over Blacksburg.

Kenny Alderman tossed two touchdowns, and Morton rushed for 114 yards.

Of course, the team was led by legendary Radford coach Norm Lineburg. He said the '72 team was a special group that gelled together every week.

In the fourth game of the sea-

son, Radford rolled to a 40-0 win over Floyd as Morton and Fisher combined for 243 yards and three touchdowns as the old New River District quickly seemed a one-horse race.

A week later, Radford rolled up 297 yards on the ground in a 36-0 shutout of Christiansburg.

When the season ended, Radford had outscored its opponents by a 384-32 margin in the regular season. The difference was even greater in the playoffs: 146-20.

The Blacksburg game was the closest anyone came to the Bobcats.

In the state playoffs, Radford started with a 62-0 beatdown of Richlands. Morton scored six touchdowns to lead the team to its 30th straight win and a Region IV title. Morton rushed for a career high 247 yards.

Quarterback Kenny Alderman connected with Mike Mauck for three scores, and the defense forced 10 turnovers.

In the state semis, Radford jumped out to a 28-0 halftime lead and never looked back.

Morton rushed for 191 yards, and Alderman passed for 181 yards with three touchdowns.

The 1972 team was a really special team that may never be matched.

Hooker for 2022 Heisman



From the Sidelines

Marty Gordon

Tennessee football fans need to send a fruit basket and a thank-you note to Virginia Tech.

If the Blacksburg school had not kicked Hendon Hooker to the curb, Tennessee might not be having the success it is experiencing this season.

His name is already being mentioned in the conversation for this year's Heisman Trophy, and this coming week a game against Georgia could send him to the top of the list.

He transferred to Tennessee in 2021 after being benched by then-coach Justin Fuente.

His success comes as no surprise to those who first knew him.

Hooker had attended James Dudley High School in Greensboro where his career included passing for 5,047 yards with 33 touchdowns while rushing for 2,975 yards and 48 touchdowns.

He was named the North Carolina Preps All-State player of the year and was selected for the all-state team twice.

Dudley won two state championships while Hooker was in high school includ-

ing the 2016 title game where he was the MVP, passing for six touchdowns. When he signed with Virginia Tech, he was considered a 4-star recruit by 247Sports.

But his success did not follow him to Blacksburg. He was 98 of 150 passing in his final season (2020) as the Hokies were only 2-5. He passed for 1,339 yards with nine touchdowns and five interceptions.

His career changed when he moved to Knoxville. In his first year (2021), he did struggle to learn a completely different offensive scheme (206 of 302 with 2,945 yards with 31 touchdowns) if you can say he struggled.

This season, he has led the Vols to an undefeated record and the number two spot in the Associated Press Poll.

He says this season has been a blessing and thanks God for his success.

Hooker has taken that faith and his knowledge of the Bible to another step. His younger brother and he have created a children's book called "The ABC's of Scriptures for Athletes" with the idea of influencing kids with a sports-themed alphabet to help them learn scripture.

Tech fans are sending a card back to the Vols that says, you're welcome. We may never know what happened in his last game as a Hokie where coaches said he got cold and was fighting breathing problems.

This season, Hooker is 156 of 219 passing, completing 75 percent of his passes with 2,325 yards and only one interception with 21 touchdowns.

Hooker deserves the Heisman Trophy.

Blue Demons, Bruins named to River Ridge all-district volleyball team

Marty Gordon
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

Christiansburg and Blacksburg both placed student-athletes on the recently released All-River Ridge District volleyball team. Addison Reasor and Braylen Williams, both of Christiansburg, were named to the first team as was Blacksburg's Rylee Sloss. Blacksburg's Avery VanGlider was

named to the second team as was teammate Ella Poff. Christiansburg placed Sierra Carneal and Ela Shepherd on the honorable mention all-district team. Blacksburg's Sophia Johnston was also named to the honorable mention team. Hidden Valley's Caleigh Ponn was named the Player of the Year in the River Ridge District and her coach, Carla Ponn, was Coach of the Year.

VT men's basketball senior Justyn Mutts named to Malone Award watch list

The Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame has named Virginia Tech senior Justyn Mutts among the 20 watch-list members for the 2023 Karl Malone Award, an annual honor in its ninth year that recognizes the top power forwards in Division I men's college basketball. Mutts thus became the second straight Hokie to make the watch list after Keve Aluma did so last season. In the 2021-22 season, Mutts averaged 10.1 points per game while shooting 53.7% from the floor. With the reputation of being an elite passer, Mutts led the Hokies with 123 assists. He was also Tech's leading rebounder at 7.4 per game. Fans are encouraged to participate in fan voting, presented by Dell Technologies. In late January, the watch list of 20 players will be narrowed to 10 and then in late February to just five. In March, the five finalists will be presented to

Malone and the Hall of Fame's selection committee where a winner will be selected. The winner of the 2023 Karl Malone Award will be presented on a to-be-determined date, along with the other four members of the Men's Starting Five. Additional awards being presented include the Bob Cousy Award (point guard), Jerry West Award (shooting guard), the Julius Erving Award (small forward) and the Kareem Abdul-Jabbar Award (center), in addition to the Women's Starting Five. Previous winners of the Karl Malone Award are Keegan Murray, Iowa (2022), Drew Timme, Gonzaga (2021), Obi Toppin, Dayton (2020), Zion Williamson, Duke (2019), Deandre Ayton, Arizona (2018), Johnathan Motley, Baylor (2017), Georges Niang, Iowa State (2016), and Montrezl Harrell, Louisville (2015).

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Graham rolls to 56-7 win over Blacksburg



Blacksburg's Spencer Campbell attempts to strip the ball away from Graham's Chris Edwards as he, Ethan Walker (left), and Thomas DeMasi (right) team up to make the tackle. Graham won the game 56-7.



Blacksburg's Javier Waldron leaps in front of Graham's Drez Clements to make the first of three second-quarter interceptions for the Bruins.



Blacksburg's David Oliver snares an interception against Graham on Homecoming night.

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