



Wednesday, February 8, 2023 • USPS 387-780 • ourvalley.org • \$1.00

## Radford University students, faculty, and staff attend General Assembly Advocacy Day

**Patrick Reed**  
*Radford University*

Radford University is the home of the 'American Dream' through higher education.

Tatiana Tshibuyi, a senior political science major, delivered those words confidently in an opening pitch across 12 different meetings with members of the Virginia General Assembly over a three-hour span on Wednesday, Feb. 1, inside the Pocahontas Building in Richmond.

Tshibuyi wasn't alone in making a bold statement like this on behalf of Radford University. She was flanked on office

couches and in hallways throughout the building by fellow students who delivered similar impassioned monologues to lawmakers in the state capitol.

"I'm an introvert by nature," Tshibuyi said. "But my voice matters, and what I have to say is important because I have conviction."

She was part of a collection of 50 students who were joined by faculty and staff representatives, Board of Visitors members, and President Bret Danilowicz and First Lady Kay Danilowicz for Radford University's annual Advocacy Day.

A tradition that is in its

23rd year, Advocacy Day allows students to share the importance of their state-supported education with General Assembly members, and to ask elected representatives to consider voting for legislation that would benefit the university.

Tshibuyi, a pre-law student who was born in the Democratic Republic of Congo and became a naturalized U.S. citizen while growing up in Woodbridge, Virginia, clearly communicated to lawmakers the importance of Radford University in her life.

"Education is the great

See Assembly, page 4

## New River Health District warns of door-to-door scam

DUBLIN – The New River Health District is warning area residents to be on the alert about an apparent door-to-door scam that may be targeting people in the New River Valley. Local law enforcement officers in Pulaski County have been made aware of people knocking on doors during evening hours in several Dublin neighborhoods.

The individuals claim to be from the Virginia Department of Health and Human Services. In at least one instance, a solicitor was allowed to enter a home while other members of the group waited in a parked car.



The visitor was equipped with an iPad and asked the resident to participate in a health survey being conducted by the Virginia Department of Health.

"No employee affiliated with the New River Health District will ever make personal visits to homes in our communities without proper credentials, including a photo ID and a health department business card," said New

River Valley Health District Health Director Noelle Bissell. "Anyone claiming to be with the Virginia Department of Health without official identification should never be allowed to enter a home," Bissell said.

Anyone who has been approached by these solicitors on behalf of the Virginia Department of Health should contact the Pulaski County Sheriff's Office by calling (540) 980-7800.

-Submitted by  
*Brookie Crawford,*  
*Public Information Officer, Central Virginia Region Office of Communications; New River Health District*

## NRCC to present Black History Month program



**Dr. Abraham Hardee III will speak on "Chasing Purpose while Maximizing Your Boundaries" at NRCC's Black History Month program on Sunday, Feb. 19.**



**Donna Slaughter and Josiah Williams from Spirit of Life Worship Center will present a musical selection at NRCC's Black History Month program.**



**From Randolph Avenue United Methodist Church, the group Drumbeat will perform at NRCC's Black History Month program.**

In celebration of Black History month, New River Community College (NRCC) and the college's Black History Committee will sponsor a guest speaker and a music program on Sunday, Feb. 19, at 3 p.m.

The event will be held in 117 Edwards Hall at NRCC in Dublin, and admission is free.

Keynote speaker Dr. Abraham Hardee III will present remarks on the topic of "Chasing Purpose While Maximizing your Boundaries." Hardee is a board-certified physician in family medicine. He is Core Faculty with the Family Medicine Graduate Medical Education Clinic at LewisGale Hospital. He also serves as the Rural Medicine and Underserved Primary Care Department Chair at the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM). Hardee graduated from VCOM and completed his doctor of philosophy (Ph.D.) at Virginia Tech in International Health Education.

He is involved with numerous medical committees/organizations including the Medical Society of Virginia Assistant Board of Directors, the National Reserve Corps, the Faculty Advisors of Gold Humanism

Honor Society, and is a member of the Health Equity Collaborative of Virginia. His other community volunteering opportunities include serving as an NAACP member and lay speaker and elementary teacher at Blue Ridge Church. All of Hardee's efforts aim to improve the living experience in the Appalachian Region for all persons.

He has approximately a decade of professional experience working in a local urgent free care clinic. He has most recently directed his focus towards empowering young learners of all types to pursue the unnatural act of service and commit to legacy building in their immediate surroundings.

Musical performances will be offered by Jami Martin, an NRCC alumna; Donna Slaughter and Josiah Williams from Spirit of Life Worship Center; and Drumbeat from Randolph Avenue United Methodist Church.

The public is invited to the event, and light refreshments will be served following the program.

-Kelly Kaiser; Public Relations Assistant; New River Community College

## Appalachian Power issues warning about water levels downstream of Claytor, Leesville dams

On Thursday, Feb. 2, Appalachian Power issued a warning to recreational users downstream of Claytor and Leesville dams that water levels on the New and Roanoke rivers could rise rapidly.

The National Weather Service has called for cold temperatures and PJM, the independent regional transmission organization that manages the electric grid in 13 states, has notified Appalachian Power it may need to increase power generation at its hydroelectric plants to maintain the reliability of the regional electric grid if called upon to do so.

According to Appalachian Power, below Claytor Dam, water levels could increase up to two feet in a matter of minutes. Water levels below Leesville Dam could increase as much as eight feet over a seven-hour period. Those considering recreating on the rivers should monitor AEP's website for additional information.

Located on the New River in Pulaski County, the Claytor Dam is operated by Appalachian Power. The total installed electric generating capacity of the plant is 76 megawatts. Leesville Dam, with a generating capacity of 50 megawatts, is part of the Smith Mountain Project, a 636-megawatt pumped storage hydroelectric facility on the Roanoke River.

Appalachian Power has 1 million customers in Virginia, West Virginia, and Tennessee (as AEP Appalachian Power). It is part of American Electric Power, which is focused on building a smarter energy infrastructure and delivering new technologies and custom energy solutions. AEP's approximately 16,700 employees operate and maintain the nation's largest electricity transmission system and more than 224,000 miles of distribution lines to deliver safe, reliable power to nearly 5.5 million customers in 11 states. AEP is also one of the nation's largest electricity producers with approximately 31,000 megawatts of diverse generating capacity, including 7,100 megawatts of renewable energy.

-Submitted by The Friends of Claytor Lake

## Curator's Talk to kick off Radford University art exhibition

Guest Curator Dr. Arthur F. Jones, a former Chair of the Art Department at Radford University, will give an illustrated talk on Jackson Pollock and other artists active at Atelier 17, an important center for experimentation and innovation in 20th-century art for both male and female artists, at 4 p.m. in the Davis Performance Hall at the Covington Center for the Arts.

Sue Fuller's (1914-2006), *Clown, 1945*, Intaglio with stencil, 7 7/8 x 6 inches, pictured here, is one of the pieces on display. The Curator's Talk will be



IMAGE COURTESY OF RADFORD UNIVERSITY

followed by an opening reception of the exhibit, "Pollock & the Artists of Atelier 17: Experimental Printers in an Age of World Conflict," from 5 - 7 p.m. in the Scartelli Atrium at the Covington Center.



# OBITUARIES

## Devens, Mary Katharine (Tansey)

Mary Katharine (Tansey) Devens, 93, passed away quietly on Feb. 2, 2023, in Blacksburg.

Born in 1929 at West Point, N.Y., Mary was the fourth child and the only daughter of Major General and Mrs. Patrick H. Tansey, along with four brothers who later served as field-grade military officers.

Their close-knit, Army family spent her childhood years at various assignments: Waikiki Beach, Hawaii; Washington, DC; Fort Leavenworth, Kansas; and Camp Jackson, South Carolina.

Mary spent her teen years in Washington, D.C. during WWII as her father planned wartime logistics while the family worried about three of her Army officer brothers who served in combat units.

After the WWII victory in Europe, MG Tansey received orders to join Gen McArthur's Pacific Theater staff, so Mary sailed with her family on the first troop ship to Tokyo, Japan – even as enemy submarines still patrolled. Stories later surfaced about her family's efforts to feed and support destitute Japanese during post-war recovery.

Mary was even deferred to as "Mary-san" by a classmate: the new Empress of Japan. In 1947 Tokyo, Mary Tansey met William George "Bud" Devens, a dashing second lieutenant and West Point graduate. A

lifetime romance of 59 years began.

Their union yielded a grand legacy of eight children, 19 grandchildren, and 23 great-grandchildren. They served the US Army at Ft Sill, Oklahoma and Ft Leonard Wood, Missouri, and then Mary and her three small children stayed in Washington D.C. during Bud's Korean War combat duty.

After the war, their family reunited in Okinawa, Japan, for Bud's assignment there. Next came Champagne, Ill., and then a faculty assignment to West Point. Hardship tours followed with assignments to Paris and then to a perilous, Soviet-surrounded Berlin in 1962. Mary managed her large family and served the Army community wherever they went.

Together, they completed Bud's final military assignment at Fort Belvoir, Va., and then retired from the Army in 1966. During her 39 years of military life, Mary crossed the Pacific Ocean six times on 26 ships and moved on 26 occasions. After a brief stay in Norwich, Vt., Mary and Bud moved their family to Blacksburg in 1967.

Mary volunteered for her children's activities and hosted many of Bud's departmental events at Virginia Tech. They attended kids' sporting events and activities, plus countless Hokie games. Mary faithfully served St

Mary's Catholic Church as communion minister and as an active member of Church Ladies. She volunteered at the Humane Society Thrift Shop and served in the Trillium Garden Club for 44 years.

All told, Mary Devens was born and raised in the US Army, served as an Army wife, and raised eight children, six of whom served as military officers. She gladly served her country and faced danger. She endured hard living conditions, endless moves, and many tiresome journeys.

Mary was preceded in death by her husband, LTC William George Devens; her brothers Col. Patrick H Tansey Jr., Col. Hubert E Tansey, Commander Mike Tansey, and Col. Robert Tansey; grandson Derek Devens; and great-grandson James Donnally.

Mary is survived by her sisters-in-law: Mrs. Bob Tansey, and Mrs. Mike Tansey; along with many dear nieces, nephews, and friends.

A celebration of Mary's life will be held at St Mary's Catholic Church, Blacksburg, at 11 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 11, 2023. Interment and a reception will follow. The family will receive friends from 6 to 8 p.m. Friday, Feb. 10, 2023, at McCoy Funeral Home, 150 Country Club Drive, Blacksburg. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to a favorite charity or to St. Mary's Church.

## Dobbins, Pearl Hight

Pearl Hight Dobbins, 103, of Radford, went home to be with her Lord on Thursday, Feb. 2, 2023.

She was preceded in death by her parents, J.W. and Bessie Hight; her husband, Burman Dobbins; and a daughter, Darlene D. Havens.

Pearl and Burman were married for 43 years until his passing in 1980. Pearl was a devoted member of Compassion Radford (formerly First Pentecostal Holiness Church) from the time she was 11 years old. She continued attending faithfully right up until her very last days.

She enjoyed sewing and quilting, especially making her personalized baby quilts for new arrivals. Pearl loved being at social events like church activities, senior Bingo games, and day



trips. She loved people, never met a stranger, or missed an opportunity to tell someone about Jesus.

Survivors include her son-in-law, Frank G. Havens of Radford; grandchildren and their spouses, Larry and Kathy Havens, Sherry Feeny, Tina Edmonds and Cindy and Pat Cahill; seven great-grandchildren

and their spouses: April and Josh Tabor, Justin and Katie Havens, Erica Dill, Jesse Edmonds, Joey and Juliana Edmonds, Jenna and Austin Altis, and Becca and Daniel Duncan; 11 great-great-grandchildren: Preston, Addy, Kennedy, Sophie, Hunter, Gracie, Aiden, Haven, Ella, Caroline, and Liliana; and many other relatives and friends.

The family received friends on Tuesday, Feb. 7, 2023, at Compassion Church in Radford. Funeral services followed with Pastor Chris Blackburn, Pastor Mike Laster, and Pastor Chandler Jones officiating. Burial followed in the Appalachian Conference Cemetery in Dublin.

The Dobbins family is in the care of Mullins Funeral Home and Crematory in Radford.

## PETS OF THE WEEK



Ice

Handsome boy Ice is ready to make a love connection with a great adult human (or multiple!), ready to share a home. He would love to go on hikes and be able to explore the outdoors. Ice is a one-dog kind of guy and would do best as the only pet in the home. His adoption is sponsored by Montgomery County Friends of Animal Care and Control.

Shy Tori would spend the bulk of her time in a cat cubby, if she could. She enjoys getting cuddled up into a little ball and watching the world go by. She currently resides in a cat community room at the Animal Care and Adoption Center and hangs out with a few other felines friends. Stop by to meet Tori. She could be your purrfect match.



Tori

## POLICE REPORT

### Radford City Police Department Report Jan. 23 - 29, 2023

**Monday, Jan. 23:**  
9:28 a.m. Cruelty to animals, 100 block of Bolling St.

3 p.m. Vehicle/aircraft/boat/etc.: destroy/injure, Petit larceny: less than \$200 not from a person, 1600 block of West Main St.

**Tuesday, Jan. 24:**  
8 a.m. Contribute to delinquency of minor, Purchase/Possession of Nicotine under the age of 21, Dalton Dr.

11:56 a.m. Petit larceny: less than \$200 not from a person, Monument: intentional damage, value greater

than or equal to \$1000, 200 block of Allen Ave.  
2:20 p.m. Assault and battery of a family member, 300 block of Seventh Ave.

**Wednesday, Jan. 25:**  
2:25 a.m. Reckless driving; generally, plus revoked license and cause death, Driving while license revoked/suspended, Possession of marijuana – civil, Failure to carry concealed weapon permit, 500 block of Davis St.

8:33 a.m. Grand larceny, false identify self to law enforcement, 700 block of Auburn Ave.  
1:30 p.m. Petit larceny, 1700 block of

Second St.  
2:18 p.m. Monument: unlawful damage, no intent to steal, 1700 block of West St.  
5:56 p.m. Disorderly conduct, West Main St.

**Thursday, Jan. 26:**  
2:20 p.m. Petit larceny, 300 block of Berkley Williams Dr.  
12:45 a.m. Disabled vehicle, I-81 Exit 105  
4:25 a.m. Assault: (Misdemeanor) 300 block of Tyler Ave.

**Friday, Jan. 27:**  
1:52 a.m. Medical emergency, 1100 block of Clement St.  
11:23 a.m. Dog: fail to register w/dangerous

See Police Report, page 4

## Nutter, Kenneth Robert

Kenneth Robert Nutter, 77, of Blacksburg, died Wednesday, Feb. 1, 2023, at his home.

He was born in Christiansburg on Nov. 8, 1945, to the late Jesse and Cordie Shelor Nutter. He was also preceded in death by twin infant sons.

Kenneth was a Veteran of the United States Air Force. He is survived by his wife, Alice S. Nutter; daughters and sons-in-law, Tammy and Ronnie Turpin, Julie and Danny Hagy, and Tonya Blackwell; grandchildren Dalton, Faith, Caleb, Dylan, Alexis, Kaylee,



Isabella, and Jaxon; sister and brother-in-law Lois and Darrel Semones; brother and sister-in-law, Gary and Sue Nutter; aunt Edith Hurt; mother-in-

law, Mary Jane Surface; and several sisters-in-law, brothers-in-law, nieces, nephews and other relatives; and his furry companion, Sebastian.

Funeral services were conducted Monday, Feb. 6, 2023, in the McCoy Funeral Home Chapel with the Rev. Jimmie Lee Price officiating. Interment followed in the Mt. Zion Lutheran Church Cemetery. In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made to Long Shop-McCoy Fire and Rescue P.O. Box 489, McCoy, Va. 24111.

## Marshall, Sylvia Meredith

Sylvia Meredith Marshall, 96, of Radford, passed away on Thursday, Feb. 2, 2023.

She worked her whole life as a telephone operator. She loved gardening, especially her rose bushes.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Wayne and Eula Haley Meredith; her husband, Walter Howard Marshall; brothers Rudolf Meredith, Kenneth Meredith, and Merle Meredith; and her sister, Elouise Capps.

Survivors include her son, David Howard



Marshall; grandchildren and their spouses Leslie and Anthony Eads, and Abigail and Raven

Cunningham; great-grandchildren Emma, Avery, and Brenden; and many other nieces, nephews, relatives and friends.

The family received friends on Monday, Feb. 6, 2023, at the Mullins Funeral Home in Radford. Services followed with Mr. John Croft officiating. Entombment followed in Highland Memory Gardens in Dublin.

The Marshall family is in the care of Mullins Funeral Home and Crematory in Radford.

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# Assembly from page 1

equalizer," she said during a meeting. "Our institution has helped first-generation students like me be able to afford Radford while getting a first-class education, which should be important to everyone."

The goal of Advocacy Day is to create a mutually beneficial experience.

"Advocacy Day is a wonderful leadership opportunity for our students," said Dr. Susan Trageser, Vice President for Student Affairs. "For members of the General Assembly, it's impactful to actually hear what the opportunity for an education at Radford University means to students."

Trageser, who coordinates Advocacy Day activities, led preparation meetings that began during the fall semester for interested students. The meetings covered topics including the legislative process, university funding and support priorities, and communication tactics.

Advocacy Day also allowed students to have meetings with elected officials from their home districts.

Jamori Harris, an aspiring vocalist and a criminal justice major, met with his representative, Delegate John McGuire (R-Glen Allen). Harris, a Louisa native, crossed paths with McGuire during an internship with his brother, Louisa County Commonwealth's Attorney Rusty McGuire. Advocacy Day gave Harris the opportunity to have a conversation with the delegate about why supporting Radford University is important. "I'm proud of Radford because of the opportunities

it's given me," Harris said. "Hearing feedback from people (like John McGuire) is beneficial and I'm glad that I was afforded the chance to be a representative for myself and my peers."

Some connections between students and legislators ran deeper.

Troy Stallard, a senior at Radford University Carilion and an Air Force veteran, spent part of his Advocacy Day attending a meeting of the General Assembly's Military and Veterans Caucus. Stallard also met with Delegate Jason Ballard (R-Giles), Radford University's representative and an Army veteran, who is sponsoring legislation aimed at establishing new behavioral health treatments for former armed service members.

Stallard, who plans on attending medical school and practicing in the VA medical system, saw the Advocacy Day exercise as one that deepened his own connection to Radford University.

"Being in a science-heavy academic program, this has been a good way for me to be part of the overall college experience," Stallard said. "Advocating and supporting the university is beneficial for current students and will help us continue to do that as alumni."

Advocacy Day allows students to speak about issues important to them, like access and affordability. Some also share how the university's academic programs and their career choices can support state legislative priorities.

Katrina Sainovich, a second-year occupational therapy graduate student at RUC, advocated for how lawmakers can support healthcare workers through education.

"By making sure that our education stays affordable, we can help fill the shortage gaps in the industry," she said during one meeting. "Radford does an amazing job with its healthcare focus, and by supporting the university, we can support the commonwealth."

For Sainovich, advocacy for her profession goes beyond one day of meetings in Richmond. Throughout her RUC education, she's been encouraged to be vocal about the benefits of occupational therapy.

"Being able to do this, get out of your comfort zone and tell people why occupational therapy is important is a great experience," she said.

For all students, the day gave them a new perspective about elected officials.

"They're human," Harris said. "To get into a one-on-one conversation with people that you see in the media and know that we're dealing with authentic people is reassuring."

They also saw how advocacy is an opportunity for lawmakers to understand what's important to their constituents.

"I learned that a lot of legislators have become more open-minded and more focused on the policy than the politics," Tshibuyi said. "We all need to focus on doing the real-world work."

Be sure to 'Like' the Radford News Journal on Facebook.

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Radford News Journal (USPS 387-780) is published twice a week for \$45 a year in the City of Radford, \$54 elsewhere in Virginia, and \$58 out of state by Virginia Media Inc., P.O. Box 429, Lewisburg, WV 24901. Periodical postage paid at Christiansburg, VA. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to RADFORD NEWS JOURNAL 1633 W. Main St., Salem, VA 24153.

# POLICE REPORT from page 3

dog registry, 400 block of Sanford St.  
 2:30 p.m. Possession of marijuana – civil, Dalton Dr.  
 4:01 p.m. Possession of controlled substance, Tyler Ave.  
 7:53 p.m. Petit larceny: less than \$200 not from a person, Dalton Dr.  
 8:36 p.m. Medical emergency, 600 block of Clement St.

**Saturday, Jan. 28:**  
 1:48 a.m. Petit larceny: less than \$200, not from a person, 1100 block of Clement St.  
 7:38 p.m. Monument: intentional damage, value less than \$1000, Strangulation: results in wounding/bodily injury, Phone: injure/tap line; copy/obstruct message

11:26 p.m. Weapon: fail to carry concealed weapon permit, 100 block of Third Ave.  
**Sunday, Jan. 29:**  
 12:08 a.m. Identity theft: possession fictitious I.D. card, Alcohol: Purchase/Possession By Person under 21 years old, Profane swearing or intoxication in public, no address given  
 2:37 p.m. Profane swearing or intoxication in public, 300 block of West Main St.  
 10:43 p.m. Suspicious person, 1200 block of Second Ave.  
 Alcohol round-up  
 DUI- 0  
 Drunk in Public- 2  
 Underage Possession of Alcohol- 1

# New spherical antennas enable clear, reliable cell service at Lane Stadium

When you come to Lane Stadium for commencement, Hokie football, or another activity, you might have experienced that cell service can vary dramatically depending on where you are in the stadium. The next time you are there, look for the distinctive new antennas above the west side press box that have been added to improve cellular performance.

Demands for cellular bandwidth are ever-increasing, and Lane Stadium itself presents a challenge for cellular service providers. Its monolithic concrete and steel construction impacts the signal and makes it challenging to mount antennas. This effect has been especially noticeable in the lower East stands. Mounted on the west side, the new spherical MatSing Lens antennas direct the signals across the field to the East stands, delivering greater capacity to fans, greatly improving signal quality throughout the stadium, and making it possible to enhance service at other campus locations.

During the past two years, the Virginia Tech Foundation has worked with the university and wireless carriers to expand the capabilities of the cellular network. Through its subsidiary, Virginia Tech Technology Assets, the foundation worked with specialists from Mobile Communications America, and cellular carriers Verizon and AT&T to install the new lens antennas on Lane Stadium. The foundation also worked with AT&T to make other improvements to its equipment on the main distributed antenna system (DAS) structure, located behind Lane Stadium.

MatSing Lens antennas use a proprietary dielectric polymer that mirrors the human eye's capacity to refract

light and apply it to radio frequency transmissions. The antennas are typically installed in elevated locations where signal can be targeted to serve specific needs within the venue. The antennas can be customized to fit the needs of cellular carriers, making it possible to optimize the venue for their customers.

In addition to improving the user experience, this new technology will position the system for 5G services in the future.

The current round of improvements is nearly complete. AT&T began using the new antennas at the end of the 2022 football season, and in the coming months, Verizon will start using them.



COURTESY PHOTO  
**The new MatSing lenses were installed at Lane stadium in the fall, significantly improving cell service for Hokie fans during events.**

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE

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**CLUES ACROSS**

1. Functions
5. Records electric currents associated with contractions of the heart
8. Trigonometric function (abbr.)
11. Secret political clique
13. Type of gibbon
14. Nocturnal S. American rodent
15. Famed American playwright
16. Mesopotamian goddess
17. Abba \_\_, Israeli politician
18. Long ridge of gravel and sediment
20. A place to stay
21. Actor Idris
22. One who behaves in a rebellious way
25. A way to measure movement

30. Distinguish oneself
31. Type of drug (abbr.)
32. Basketball great Baylor
33. Masses of salivary matter
38. Calls balls and strikes
41. Plant that grows along the ground
43. A recreational activity in the air
45. Consumes too much
47. Island nation
49. Pistol
50. Mixtures of soul and calypso
55. Ancient Greek City
56. Similar
57. Roughly trimmed tree trunk used in a Scottish game
59. Semitic fertility god
60. Born of
61. Frogs, toads, tree toads
62. School in the northeast (abbr.)

63. Soviet Socialist Republic
64. "\_\_\_ the Man" Musical, baseball player

**CLUES DOWN**

1. Fiddler crabs
2. Discount
3. Partner to "flows"
4. Ethnic group of Laos
5. Beloved "Seinfeld" character
6. Book of tickets
7. The last name of "Hermione"
8. Type of TV package
9. Helps to heal a cut
10. Town in Galilee
12. Actor Horsley
14. "Hocus Pocus 2" actor Ed
19. Bird-loving group (abbr.)
23. They respond when someone is sick
24. Emerged

25. Midway between south and southeast
26. Monetary unit of Afghanistan
27. Unit of work or energy
28. Indicates near
29. Famed river
34. For each
35. News organization
36. CNN's founder
37. They \_\_\_
39. Areas off to the side
40. Satisfies
41. A spare bed
42. Legendary singer Diana
44. Frothy mass of bubbles
45. A kind of sorcery
46. River in South Africa
47. Philippine Island
48. County in China
51. S. American plant
52. Beverage containers
53. Edge
54. Protein-rich liquids
58. Moved quickly on foot

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# Bears from page 7



home underpinnings and porches are closed and secured prior to Dec. 1 each year.

Tips if you find a den  
If you find a den on your property or while recreating, do not disturb it or approach the area. Leave the area and if it's on public property, alert an employee of the location.

If you inadvertently flush a female bear from a den, DO NOT approach the den. Take a GPS point of the location (or mark a nearby area with flagging) and leave the area immediately. If you have a dog with you, leash it and keep it maintained on a leash as you leave the area.

Contact the Wildlife Helpline (1-855-571-9003) to report the den location.

Most often when left alone, the female will return to the den, although she may not return until night. Do not go back to the den area as additional disturbance may cause the bear to leave again and not return.

*-Submitted by Paige Pearson, Public Information Officer, Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources*

# Special Olympics Unified Basketball to rock Cassell Coliseum Sunday Feb. 12

Starting at 9 a.m., on Sunday, Feb. 12, Special Olympics Virginia will host the Special Olympics Southwest Virginia Region basketball tournament in Cassell Coliseum at Virginia Tech.

Seventeen Special Olympics teams from around Virginia will be competing for a chance to go to the state championships. The teams will Run the Court while they Play Unified. Unified Sports joins people with and without intellectual disabilities on the same team. The idea was inspired by a simple principle: training together and playing together is a quick path to friendship and understanding.

Virginia Tech's Head Men's Basketball Coach Mike Young will speak to the Special Olympics teams during the midday ceremony. Dozens of Virginia Tech student-athletes and local law enforcement officers will greet the Special Olympians, present awards, and help run the games. The ceremonies' recognition of teams and torch lighting will occur



PHOTO COURTESY SPECIAL OLYMPICS VIRGINIA

around 1 p.m.

Nancy Morehouse, Sr. Director with Special Olympics, Virginia Southwest Region, said "The fans are the key to a great game-day atmosphere, so we want to fill the stands with SUPER fans."

Fans and groups can pre-register at <https://tinyurl.com/volunteer2cheerSWVA> or just show up at the coliseum, pick a team, and rock the Cassell. Games begin at 9:00 a.m. and will end around 4:00 p.m.

*-Submitted by Nancy Morehouse, Director Southwest Section, Special Olympics Virginia*

# Blacksburg Bruin boys defeat Pulaski County 71-61



On Senior Night, Blacksburg senior Aaron Howard draws a foul from Pulaski County's Lane Nester during a first-quarter drive to the basket.



Blacksburg's Jon Henry Distler grabs an offensive rebound for the Bruins during a Tuesday night home game against Pulaski County.



Blacksburg's Spencer Campbell launches a 3 point shot over Pulaski County's Marcus Reed. Campbell scored 15 points on Senior Night to help the Bruins defeat the Cougars, 71-61.

PHOTOS BY JON FLEMING

# Virginia Tech students' prison book project enriches lives of incarcerated persons



Students write notes to recipients of donated books at a book wrapping party for the Virginia Tech Prison Book Project.

**Mary Crawford**  
*Contributing writer*

When students come together to package books for the Virginia Tech Prison Book Project, they start with a reminder of why they do what they do.

At these book wrapping parties, hosted by different campus service organizations throughout the semester, students respond to requests for books from incarcerated people across Virginia. The students match a book from the project's collection to each request.

But they stop to read each letter aloud before the wrapping begins.

The letters are a window into the lives and the thoughts of the people they're helping.

"I would like to thank you for such a wonderful service to prisoners during the pandemic," one book recipient wrote. "It was difficult to get books unless they came in the mail. Being locked down for two years was rough, but thankfully, books brought us through."

The requests span a wide range of interests. Some requesters want to read fiction, from classics such as Dante's "Inferno" and the works of H.G. Wells to modern-day legal thrillers and graphic novels. Others ask for nonfiction, wanting to learn more about topics such as auto mechanics, quantum physics, local history, languages, law, and even chess.

"Those letters are the best evidence of how these books and this project impact the recipients," said Brian Britt, a professor in the Department of Religion and Culture and the director of the Prison Book Project. "We get letters making

comments on how those books have really made a big difference in their frame of mind and their gratitude for contact with people on the outside."

After the reading, the room is filled with the sound of packing tape as the students begin their job of selecting and wrapping the books, carefully packaging each in white paper with a handwritten note.

They are limited to books they have on hand in their growing library of donations, which means niche requests are often hard to fulfill — but when someone does find a match for something specific, it's a celebratory moment.

The Prison Book Project is one of several recent efforts by the Department of Religion and Culture faculty in support of prison education programs. In September, Professor Sylvester Johnson piloted a humanities course for inmates at a Virginia correctional facility, and in 2021, Britt hosted a panel called "Interfaith Perspectives on American Prisons."

"The purpose of this university is to serve the learning and educational needs of the people in Virginia, and this is one very important area of learning and educational need," said Britt.

However, the first connection that led to the partnership happened even earlier. While Britt was serving as chair of the department, an activist wrote to him on behalf of the Appalachian Prison Book Project, a nonprofit organization that has been sending books to prisoners throughout the Appalachian region since 2006. Religious books are one of the most commonly

requested genres through the project, and the organization wanted Britt's help to identify books about a particular religious tradition.

"They've built a really wonderful presence in this area," said Britt of the organization. "They have established relations with facilities all around the region, so a package with their return address on it is guaranteed to get through."

After that relationship was established, Britt realized that starting a satellite program for the Virginia Tech community could be a perfect fit for the department's interest in prison education.

The Prison Book Project began hosting wrapping parties on campus in November 2021. Since then, it's sent out almost 800 packages of books donated by the community, some containing more than one book.

The project has received an enthusiastic response from students, and its events frequently attract student organizations looking for a service project. This particular wrapping party included students representing Lambda Phi Epsilon and the Society of Women Engineers, and Britt also has hosted events through VT Engage and the Meraki Living-Learning Community.

"I think the culture among Virginia Tech students is unusual for their desire to provide meaningful outreach and service to communities they live in," said Britt. "There's also a much higher level of awareness among young people these days about issues of mass incarceration, so they're very excited about this work."

### CROSSWORD ANSWERS

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