



News Journal

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IMAGE BY STARLINE ON FREEPIK

The Milk Parlour brings in the new year with two special events

Lori Graham
Contributing writer

It will be a busy and fun weekend for The Milk Parlour as they prepare not one, but two special events: their Saturday Drag Show event with special guest Christina Doll, and a New Year's Eve celebration with featuring 90s-style music with the band, Nice Couch.

The Milk Parlour, located at 211 Draper Rd., NW, Blacksburg, will open their doors on Saturday, Dec. 30 at 8 p.m. for the drag show event that begins at 9:30 p.m. Many performers will be appearing during

the evening to entertain the audience.

"The performances are very theatrical," Manager Michelle Berry said. "Each performer will go up and do a couple of songs that will include lip synching, dance moves, and audience involvement. They each have play lists and songs and it is like a sing along as well."

The New Years Eve celebration at The Milk Parlour will ring in 2024 on Sunday, Dec. 31, headlining 90s rock music with band, Nice Couch. According to their website at www.nicecouch.net, the group has been performing

progressive psychedelic funk rock since 2013 and are a local band beginning their journey in Radford.

"The band will be 90s rock and roll," Berry said. "Everyone over 21 years old can make a champagne toast as they count down to midnight. It will be a good night to hang out and dance and see friends and see live music as well."

The band will begin playing at 10 p.m., so attendees should plan to arrive prior to that time. The Milk Parlour will be open on Sunday until 2 a.m. and there will be a \$10 cover charge for this event.

There are some who call me twig: IDing trees in winter

A big part of appreciating the habitats around us can come from understanding what plants make up those habitats.

Virginia has an incredible diversity of habitats and plant species, including more than 350 species of trees. Of these, 78 or so are considered "common." We use leaves, fruits, and flowers to help us identify these species, but those aren't necessarily helpful when enjoying a winter walk in the woods. Fortunately, there are still plenty of clues that can help narrow down what you're looking at.

Where are you?

Some trees are only found in specific parts of Virginia. A red spruce might be found in the mountains of western Virginia while a bald cypress grows in the floodplains of the Coastal Plain.

Green all year



PHOTO BY STEPHEN LIVING/DWR

The spiky leaves and red berries of a female American holly.

We have a number of evergreen species that keep their leaves all year. This includes conifers like pines. Take a close look at the bundles of needles on the twigs of pine trees—these can help identify the tree. Two needles in a bundle with short,

See **Twig**, page 3

Visiting scholar talks life in Ukraine, motivation to help other refugees

Olha Nimko was on a family ski trip in Ukraine's Carpathian Mountains when she learned Russian forces were invading her country's capital.

Her colleague woke her up with a frantic 5 a.m. call to share the news. She knew there were tensions between the countries, but she never anticipated it would turn into a full-scale war. The February 2022 invasion shocked the world and sparked a war that has killed thousands of civilians and displaced millions of Ukrainians — including Nimko.

Nearly two years later, she is a visiting scholar in Virginia Tech's Department of Political Science. She joined the university

as an assistant research professor in August with help from the Center for Refugee, Migrant, and Displacement Studies and Global Strategic Services. Inspired by her own experiences and

stories of millions across the globe, Nimko, who taught law at a university in Ukraine, is using her new Virginia Tech role to address food insecurity

See **Scholar**, page 4

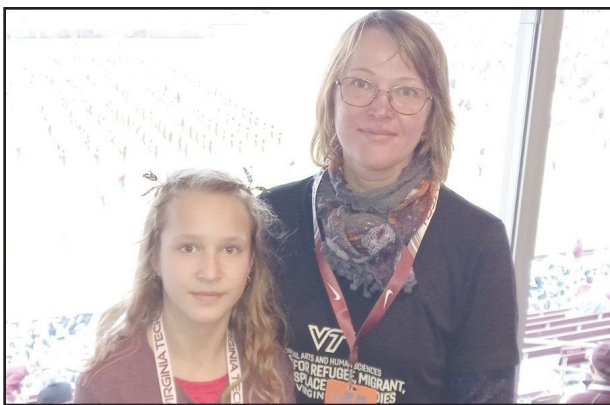


PHOTO COURTESY OF OLHA NIMKO

Olha Nimko with her nine-year-old daughter, Daryna.

Not able to stay up until midnight for the ball drop?

Bull and Bones hosts early New Years Eve celebration in Christiansburg

Lori Graham
Contributing writer

Bull and Bones Brewhaus and Grill is offering up an earlier celebration at their Christiansburg location for those "old farts" that like to be bed in a bit earlier; a 9 p.m. ball drop and champagne toast.

"We did the event last year but did not really advertise, but this year we are making a more active push for it," General Manager of the Christiansburg Bull and Bones, Robbie Hockett said.

The Christiansburg Bull and Bones is in its second year of business and hopes to see a great turnout for the new year's event.

John Coeburn, owner of Bull and Bones, was traveling on vacation where he saw another business offering an earlier countdown to new year's option and thought the concept would be a great idea.

Although reservations are not required, they are encouraged. Hockett suggests getting to the restaurant no later than 7 p.m. to get a seat in the dining room.

"We expect to have room for

everyone in the dining room, but the bar seating will fill up quickly at the Christiansburg location," Hockett said. "We will have the specials as well as the full regular menu."

Some of the many food options include lobster bisque, seasoned grouper, and smoked prime rib.

The dining room usually closes at 9 p.m. on Sundays, but the bar will be open to those who want to hang around. Jukebox music, dancing, and ball games will be going on during the evening. Children are welcome to join the complimentary toast and will be provided with a non-alcoholic option of grape juice.

The Christiansburg Bull and Bones is located at 420 Peppers Ferry Rd., near the New River Valley Mall.

The Blacksburg Bull and Bones will be open for the regular midnight new year's celebration, offering the same menu specials and regular menu options as the Christiansburg location. Big screens will broadcast the ball drop while partygoers enjoy a complimentary champagne toast at midnight.

Dalton Intermediate students handcraft Christmas cheer



PHOTOS COURTESY OF DALTON INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

RADFORD - Prior to winter break, STEM students at Dalton Intermediate School made ornaments and cards for residents at for residents at Radford Nursing and Rehab Center, bringing Christmas cheers to senior citizens. Students at the school also donated small gifts.

"Our Holiday Community Outreach Project was a success," Dalton Intermediate School posted on social media. "Thanks to Mr. Leighton's classes for making ornaments, LED cards, decorating bags, and collecting items. Thanks to many who donated socks, coloring books, coloring supplies, word puzzles, and more. Know that you made someone else smile by spreading cheer this time of year!"

Staff report

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, Dec. 30:

Doughnuts & Destiny: Vision Board Workshop

At the Blacksburg Library; 11 a.m. – 1p.m. Ring in 2024 with intention! We'll set out the boards and supplies, you provide the vision for your year ahead. This self-guided workshop is open to all ages. Breakfast pastries and coffee/tea will be available in the community room.

Saturday, Dec. 30 - Sunday, Dec. 31:

Bag Book Sale

At the Christiansburg Library; 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Start the new year off with some new (to you) books! \$5 for all the books that you can fit in a plastic bag. Proceeds to benefit the Montgomery Friends of the Library.

Saturday, Dec. 30 - Tuesday, Jan. 2:

City of Radford trash pick-up schedule

Trash from Monday, Dec. 25 collected on Thursday, Dec. 28. Tuesday, Dec. 26 collected on Friday, Dec. 29. Monday, Jan. 1 collected on Tuesday, Jan. 2. Please have garbage ready for collection by 7:30 a.m. Drop Center Hours: Closed Jan. 1.

Sunday, Dec. 31:

Town of Blacksburg holiday hours

Blacksburg Transit will operate on reduced service. The Blacksburg Community Center will be closed. The Blacksburg Aquatic Center will be open regular hours.

Monday, Jan. 1, 2024:

Town of Blacksburg holiday hours

All town administrative offices will be closed. The Blacksburg Community Center and Aquatic Center will be closed. There will be no Blacksburg Transit service. There will be no trash pickup in the SE quadrant. Make-up service will be Wednesday, Jan. 3. Please have all materials to the curb by 7 a.m.

Radford Public Library closed

RPL will be closed on Monday, Jan. 1, 2024 for the New Year holiday.

Tuesday, Jan. 9:

Fall Prevention and Balance in the Home

Join Blacksburg Parks and Recreation at 2 p.m. for a presentation on Fall Prevention & Balance in the Home, by Cindy Henderson with CORA Physical Therapy. In addition to the presentation, this program offers participants free injury screenings, live demos, giveaways, and a Q&A session. This program will be held at the Blacksburg Community Center and is free to attend. Registration is required. To register, call 540.443.1142 or email jherbert@blacksburg.gov.

School Board meeting

The Radford City School Board will convene for its regular meeting at 6 p.m. at the School Administration Building, 1612 Wadsworth St. The agenda for the meeting can be viewed at www.rcps.org.

Saturday, Jan. 13:

Mount Tabor Ruritan Biscuit Breakfast

Mount Tabor Ruritan Club will be serving up hot biscuits topped with delicious sausage gravy, or with

the latest batch of our "world-famous" apple butter. We will also have scrambled eggs, juice and coffee. Breakfast will be served in the Fellowship Hall of Slusser's Chapel, 1543 Mount Tabor Rd, Blacksburg; 8 – 10 a.m. This is below the Sanctuary, on the lower church parking lot level. This is a fundraiser for our club to help us as we serve our community, and donations will be accepted for the breakfast. More information at <https://fb.com/MtTaborRuritan>

On-going:

Now through Jan. 15:

Blacksburg Transit reduced service

Blacksburg Transit will operate on reduced service for the holiday season beginning Dec. 14. Reduced service will remain in effect until Jan. 15. There will be no bus service on Christmas Day and New Year's Day. For more information, please contact 540-443-1500.

Now through Jan. 1:

Free downtown Blacksburg parking

Free holiday parking will be in effect downtown. Normal parking rates will resume on Tuesday, Jan. 2.

Blacksburg Comprehensive Plan Amendment application process

In 2021, Town Council adopted the updated Comprehensive Plan. As part of the mid-way evaluation between five-year updates, the town accepts privately initiated applications for amendments to the plan. Amendments include changes to Future Land Use Map designations or the text of the Plan. Applications due on Jan. 15, 2024. A pre-application meeting is required prior to submittal. Contact Maeve Gould, Comprehensive Planner, at (540) 443-1300 or CompPlan@blacksburg.gov, with questions, or to schedule a pre-application meeting.

Food City receives Gold MyPlate Champion achievement



FILE PHOTO

ABINGDON, VA – Food City was recently recognized with the Gold MyPlate Champion achievement for the grocery retailer's participation in the MyPlate National Strategic Partnership and for their promotion of the MyPlate program.

"We're committed to the communities we serve. Our team works hard to provide our customers and associates with the information necessary to make more informed dietary choices," says Steven C. Smith, Food City president and chief executive officer.

Sponsored by the USDA Center for Nutrition, the MyPlate program promotes the health benefits that can be achieved by making small dietary changes over time, such as eating more fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat or fat-free dairy milk and yogurt. Food City highlighted MyPlate messaging through media segments, health fairs, and community education events. The dietitian team integrated

key topics to create a virtual store tour presentation and recipe booklet to support customers shopping MyPlate at Food City.

"The USDA MyPlate provides a simple and straightforward guide to build a balanced plate. By sharing this message in the grocery store we can empower people to explore how food impacts their mood, energy, and health status. The dietitian team at Food City can offer support for diet education, but the biggest impact is giving guidance for what foods to choose and how to incorporate them for better health," says Kirby M. Stanton, Food City registered dietitian. "We are honored to be part of the MyPlate partnership and provide nutrition guidance to the communities we serve."

For more information about using MyPlate at Food City, visit the "Diet and Lifestyle" page at www.foodcity.com.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MEGAN MARCHITELLO

Megan Marchitello, clinical instructor of equine medicine, works with two of the weanling foals during treatment.

Six feral foals recover under care of equine hospital clinicians and staff

Treating a sick foal is a challenge in itself, but when feral foals arrive one after the other in quick succession, it adds a different level of complexity.

Six weanling foals were transported to the Marion duPont Scott Equine Medical Center (EMC) in Leesburg for emergency evaluation and treatment after being purchased at an auction by Colby's Crew Rescue, based in Keswick, Virginia.

Veterinary professional with two foals. Megan Marchitello, clinical instructor of equine medicine, works with two of the weanling foals during treatment. Photo courtesy of Megan Marchitello. The foals are the offspring of formerly domesticated animals that had either escaped from or been set free by their owners. They were fearful, suffering from life-threatening health issues and being held at a slaughter holding facility before being offered at auction.

The first two foals to arrive at the Equine Medical Center were referred by Gary Kubala of Littlestown Veterinary

Hospital in Littlestown, Pennsylvania.

Janice, a three-to-four-month-old filly, had bronchopneumonia and an umbilical hernia. Morocco, a 4- to 5-month-old filly, had swelling on her left hind leg, other minor scrapes and scratches, as well as a disfigured right ear tip, thought to have been caused by frostbite. Morocco also showed signs of facial trauma.

The remaining four and yet unnamed three-to-four-month-old foals arrived soon after, all with bronchopneumonia and superficial wounds, and one with an orthopedic issue.

The foals were initially received for emergency treatment by Krista Estell DVM '09, clinical associate professor of equine medicine, and transferred into the care of Elizabeth MacDonald M.S. '15, clinical instructor of equine medicine for continued care. The entire equine team worked together to ensure that these fragile patients received the best care possible.

It became apparent early on that staff would need to spend time each

day handling the foals to make treatment less stressful and create a positive interaction with humans. Staff worked on general handling, picking up their feet, and leading. "The care and compassion that the weanlings received from EMC staff during their treatment and the dedication of their owners gave them the best opportunity for making a full recovery," MacDonald said.

Once stabilized, the foals continued their recovery at Always There Horse Care in Haymarket, Virginia, under the care of licensed veterinary technician Malena Brisbois. "Each goodbye was bittersweet, but knowing we contributed to their remarkable turnaround made every effort worthwhile," Brisbois said.

After a couple of months with her pneumonia resolved and her health and body condition improved, Janice returned to the Equine Medical Center for surgical repair of her umbilical hernia.

Send community news and photos to communitynews@ourvalley.org

Foals

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Sophie Boorman, clinical assistant professor of equine surgery, repaired the hernia. Due to Janice's history of pneumonia, she was carefully evaluated prior to surgery to ensure that she was healthy

enough to safely go through the surgical procedure. The partnership between the Equine Medical Center, Colby's Crew Rescue, and Always There Horse Care highlights the outcomes possible

when skilled medical expertise is combined with compassionate, dedicated care.

Andrew Mann for Virginia Tech

Twig

from page 1

twisted needles is a sure sign that you've found a Virginia pine.

Some of our broadleaf trees are evergreen as well. The scalloped edges and glossy leaves of American holly are unmistakable. Female holly trees also have bright red berries that are a favorite of winter songbirds.

Bark
Many tree species have distinctive bark. For species like American sycamore, it's enough to identify the tree all on its own. Irregular patches of gray or tan flake off to reveal smooth pale bark below. It gives the trunk of the tree a jigsaw or camouflage pattern that is unmistakable. Sweet gum may have corky ridges.

Persistent fruits or leaves
Some trees like beech or many of our oaks hold onto leaves well into winter. This can be a good clue when the surrounding trees are sporting bare branches. Sometimes distinctive fruits will remain on the tree through the year. The cone of winged fruits from a tulip poplar or the gumball of a sweetgum are dead giveaways.

Detective work
Even if none of these clues are obvious, you can still solve your tree mystery. The twigs of trees have a variety of unique

characteristics that help us identify the tree species. There aren't any special tools needed to investigate, but a hand lens and a pocketknife can be useful.

When the leaves fall off a tree in the fall, they leave behind scars where they attached to the twig. These scars have unique shapes and arrangements. The thing to look at is how the leaves (or their scars) are arranged on the twig. Do they alternate from side to side or were they opposite each other on the twig? The shape of the leaf scar can be distinctive as well—hickories have large, heart-shaped leaf scars sometimes referred to as "monkey faces."

What do the buds look like? The buds themselves can be pretty identifiable. Beech trees have long narrow buds covered in overlapping scales. Tulip poplar buds have only two scales—almost like a clamshell.

The center of a twig is usually made up of soft spongy tissue called pith. The color and shape of this can also provide clues to identifying your tree. Hickories have a pith that is somewhat star-shaped in cross-section, while tulip poplar's pith is segmented into chambers.

Putting it all together
With so many different features, how



PHOTO BY STEPHEN LIVING/DWR

A sweet gum seed ball - a spiky, round, dried ball - among dead leaves.

can you begin to decipher the trees you see when you're exploring habitats around you?

Pick up a copy of the Virginia Department of Forestry's Common Native Trees of Virginia Identification Guide. This easy-to-use guide has keys and full descriptions of the species you are likely to encounter.

Check out this key from Virginia Tech (<https://dendro.cnre.vt.edu/dendrology/>

twigkey.htm). After you answer a series of questions, it will steer you toward an answer about your tree. There are also apps like Seek, PlantNet, LeafSnap, or others.

By Stephen Living/Department of Wildlife Resources

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Legals - Montgomery County

LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

OF THE TOWN OF CHRISTIANSBURG

TOWN COUNCIL

The Town of Christiansburg Town Council will hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday, January 9, 2024, at 7:00 PM in the Council Chambers of the Christiansburg Town Hall, 100 E. Main Street, Christiansburg, Virginia 24073. The purpose of the public hearing is to receive public comments concerning:

A. Conditional Use Permit request by Trustees of Blacksburg Church of Christ Missions & Cole Burch Properties LLC, Property Owners, and Carter Machinery Company, Inc., Applicant, to allow for machinery and equipment sales, service and storage, and for a contractors equipment storage yard, and for rental of equipment commonly used by contractors, on approximately 5.81 acres located south of Roanoke St. and west of Simmons Rd. SE, also addressed as 2091 and 2095 Roanoke St. including several vacant parcels, identified as Tax Parcels 499-(16)-1-4, 8A, 9-12; 499-(16)-4A, 5-8; 529-(1)-13-17, 23-26; 529-(1)-18, 19; 529-(2)-4-9; 499-(A)-15; Parcel IDs 007705, 014072, 007704, 014069, 020750, 230046; zoned General Business District B-3.

The property is designated as Mixed Use with Buffer (Residential/Business) on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan. A copy of the application, the Town's Zoning Map, Zoning Ordinance, and Future Land Use Map may be viewed in the Planning Department Office, 100 E. Main Street, Christiansburg, VA 24073 during normal office hours of 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Contact Andrew Warren, Assistant Town Manager, at (540) 382-6128, ext. 1130 or by email at awarren@christiansburg.org, with any questions or if you require reasonable accommodations.

Legals - Montgomery County

LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

OF THE TOWN OF CHRISTIANSBURG

TOWN COUNCIL

The Town of Christiansburg Town Council will hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday, January 9, 2024, at 7:00 PM in the Council Chambers of the Christiansburg Town Hall, 100 E. Main Street, Christiansburg, Virginia 24073. The purpose of the public hearing is to receive public comments concerning:

A. Conditional Use Permit request by HS Development II LLC & STMOB LLC, Property Owners, and HS Development II LLC, Applicant, to allow for a Planned Housing Development consisting of a 114-unit apartment community on approximately 7.497 acres located at the terminus of Sunset Drive NE, identified as Tax Parcels 436-((A))-43; 436-((A))-23A; 436-((A))-42, 436-((A))-22A; Parcel IDs 001575, 021982, 007729, 024266; zoned General Business District B-3.

The property is designated as Mixed Use with Buffer (Residential/Business) on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan. A copy of the application, the Town's Zoning Map, Zoning Ordinance, and Future Land Use Map may be viewed in the Planning Department Office, 100 E. Main Street, Christiansburg, VA 24073 during normal office hours of 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Contact Andrew Warren, Assistant Town Manager, at (540) 382-6128, ext. 1130 or by email at awarren@christiansburg.org, with any questions or if you require reasonable accommodations.

Legals - Montgomery County

LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

OF THE TOWN OF CHRISTIANSBURG

TOWN COUNCIL

The Christiansburg Town Council will hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday, January 9, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Christiansburg Town Hall, 100 E. Main Street, Christiansburg, Virginia 24073. The purpose of the public hearing is to receive public comments concerning:

A street vacation request by HS Development II, LLC for the vacation of a 0.151 acre portion of the existing public street and right-of-way at the southern terminus of Sunset Drive NE. Information on the preceding ordinance, the Town's Zoning Map, Zoning Ordinance, and Future Land Use Map may be viewed in the Planning Department, 100 E. Main Street, Christiansburg, VA 24073-3029 during normal office hours of 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Contact Andrew Warren, Assistant Town Manager by phone at (540) 382-6120 ext. 1130 or by email at awarren@christiansburg.org with any questions or if you require reasonable accommodations.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, By the Board of Supervisors of the County of Montgomery, Virginia

that the Board hereby schedules a public hearing on Monday, January 8, 2024 at 7:15 p.m., in the Board Chambers, Montgomery County Government Center, 755 Roanoke Street, Christiansburg, Virginia for the purpose of receiving citizens' comments on the following:

Fiscal Year 2024-2025 County Budget
The purpose of this public hearing is to gather citizen comments on the upcoming 2024-2025 fiscal year budget.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Angela M. Hill
County Administrator

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

OF THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY

PLANNING COMMISSION

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 15.2-2204 & 15.2-2285 of the Code of Virginia of 1950, as amended, the Montgomery County Planning Commission hereby gives notice of a public hearing to be held on JANUARY 10, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. in the County Government Center, 755 Roanoke St., Christiansburg, Virginia, in order to hear citizen comments regarding the Planning Commission's intention to act on the following Special Use Permit request:

A request by Roy Bolen Estate, Sharon Dalton Bolen for a Special Use Permit (SUP) to allow a Manufactured Home on a vacant lot located within the R-3 Residential Zoning District. The property is located at the intersection of Fire Tower Road (State Route 600) and Radford Road (State Route 11). The property is further identified as Tax Map 090-10 1 (Parcel ID: 170194), .483 acres, zoned Residential (R-3) in the Riner Magisterial District. The property currently lies in an area designated as Village Expansion in the 2025 Comprehensive Plan and is further designated as Medium Density Residential in the Plum Creek Village Plan. Copies of the proposed plans, applications, ordinances or amendments may be examined at the Department of Planning and GIS Services, County Government Center, 755 Roanoke St., Suite 2A, Christiansburg, Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. or at <http://www.montgomerycountyva.gov/pendingapplications>.

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

OF THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY

PLANNING COMMISSION

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 15.2-2204 & 15.2-2285 of the Code of Virginia of 1950, as amended, the Montgomery County Planning Commission hereby gives notice of a public hearing to be held on January 10, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. in the County Government Center, 755 Roanoke St., Christiansburg, Virginia, in order to hear citizen comments regarding the Planning Commission's intention to act on the following request:

A request by Shah Development, LLC (Agent: Foresight Design Services) to amend the proffered conditions approved as part of the rezoning of the property located at 3966 Prices Fork Road, originally approved by the Board of Supervisors on February 11, 2019. The proposed amendments would allow any of the following by-right uses, as defined in the Zoning Ordinance, to be permitted on the property: automotive, light truck, sales, service, rental, and repair, without motor fuel sales; bed and breakfast inn; cabinet shop, furniture, upholstery, craft industry of less than one thousand two hundred (1,200) square feet; church; civic club; community center; conference or training center; day care facility; farm machinery sales and service; financial services; fire, police, rescue facility; garden center; general, convenience store less than three thousand (3,000) square feet, without motor fuel sales; library; medical care facility; office, administrative, business or professional less than three thousand (3,000) square feet; park, unlighted; pet, household; post office; printing service; public use, public facility; public utility lines, other; public utility sewer; restaurant; retail sales and services less than three thousand (3,000) square feet; roadside stand; school; school of special instruction; or telecommunication tower, attached. The proposed amendment to the

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PLANNING COMMISSION

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proffered conditions also includes proposed conditions related to site improvements, landscaping, and lighting. The property is located at 3966 Prices Fork Road (State Route 685), at the intersection of Prices Fork Road and Kyle's Way. The property is further identified as Tax Map Numbers 052-A-32A (Parcel ID: 017475), totaling 1.5 acres, currently zoned Community Business (CB) in the Price's Fork Magisterial District.

The property lies in an area designated as Village Expansion in the 2025 Montgomery County Comprehensive Plan, and is further identified as Low-Density Residential in the Price's Fork Village Plan. Copies of the proposed plans, applications, ordinances or amendments may be examined at the Department of Planning and GIS Services, County Government Center, 755 Roanoke St., Suite 2A, Christiansburg, Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. or at <http://www.montgomerycountyva.gov/pendingapplications>.

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Scholar

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among refugees.

Thanks in large part to a donation from the Cranwell International Center, Nimko and her 9-year-old daughter, Daryna, have a house in Blacksburg. Nimko's husband and Daryna's father had to stay behind in Ukraine because of a nationwide mandate forbidding men between the ages of 18 and 60 to leave.

In Blacksburg, Virginia Tech faculty and community members helped Nimko to make her new home. Volunteers moved furniture into her house, gave her food and a bike, and assisted with various tasks during Nimko's summer relocation.

Also, Global Strategic Services, part of Outreach and International Affairs, helped Nimko navigate complex immigration regulations.

"From the beginning, there was a tremendous outpouring of university support to invite Olha to Virginia Tech," said Belinda Pauley, J-1 services program manager. "Her experience as a scientific researcher and practicing attorney, as well as her experience in food security, human rights protection, socially vulnerable citizens' rights protection, and environmental law, made her an excellent candidate for her research work here."

Nimko's journey to Virginia was far from simple. She

and her daughter still hear the bombing and wailing of air-raid sirens in their dreams, and the two constantly worry for the friends and family they left behind.

After the invasion, Nimko embarked on a two-day journey home to Zhytomyr — a city in the north of the western half of Ukraine. At times, it took 12 hours to travel 200 miles. There, she was employed as an assistant professor of law at Polissia National University. Family members from Kyiv travelled to her home after the invasion. But Russia attacked Zhytomyr — the province's administrative center and a major transportation hub — in the first days of the war.

She and her family spent sleepless days and nights underground in the cold, just waiting for the bombing to stop in her region, which, according to statistics, occurred nearly 30 times a day.

"It was incredibly scary to hear the sounds of automatic gunfire and see Russian planes and helicopters flying over our city, randomly dropping bombs," Nimko said. "They even broke into a house not far from my home, killing the owner."

For Nimko, deciding to leave her country and family was the hardest part. Seeing the hospital where her daughter was born and the school she attended destroyed were factors in her decision. But at the time, her sleep-deprived mind found it difficult to make an evacuation plan.

That's when Judit Sandor, a professor and mentor during her fellowship at Central European University in Budapest, proposed Nimko and her daughter evacuate Ukraine, and offered to help arrange the logistics. The university provided dormitory housing and three meals a day for Nimko and her daughter.

"She's my mentor and I followed her advice," Nimko said. "That was very important for me because I couldn't make a decision. But I knew I needed to listen to somebody. As a child, my father told me to follow the advice of wise people. When she told me to flee, I grabbed my daughter and left my house within 15 minutes."

She had to say goodbye to her husband. Farewell tears and the loud cries of a child are her most difficult memories. While her husband offered to drive his wife and daughter to the border, she decided it would be safer to take the train.

"He misses us, and we miss him," Nimko said. "My daughter has a very close connection with her father. But we couldn't stay in Ukraine."

She and her daughter immediately fled by train to Lviv, a city in western Ukraine not far from Polish and Hungarian borders, where they spent the night at the station in below-freezing temperatures. The next morning, they took a bus to the Hungarian border, crossing it by foot. From there, a stranger offered to drive the group 300 miles to Budapest.

She quickly began searching for a job in Budapest and secured a 15-month position in the Environmental Policy Lab at ETH Zurich, a public research university in Switzerland, chaired by Rachael Garrett, a professor of environmental policy. The Swiss National Science Foundation provided funding through the Scholars at Risk program. Because Nimko was under severe stress, Nimko said Garrett made invaluable efforts to organize the position.

When a colleague asked her daughter what the scariest part of the invasion was for her, she replied, "mommy's eyes," Nimko recalled through tears. After her appointment was over, Nimko decided it was still unsafe to return to Ukraine and began searching for other opportunities.

"I saw a job opening at Virginia Tech and applied," Nimko said, noting that if it were not for the opportunity, she and her daughter would have been forced to return to dangerous conditions.

Nimko said her research at Virginia Tech is focused on food security among refugees — a growing crisis as "more than 80 percent of refugees globally face food insecurity."

She is working on a survey to learn more about food insecurity in Ukraine. Since the war began, Russia has targeted the country's power grids, leading to widespread power outages and making it extremely difficult for individuals to stay warm as well as keep and prepare food. Russian bombs also have targeted personal and commercial farms, destroying crops and equipment.

Nimko's research has also focused on those displaced by climate change and other conflicts. Since the beginning of the fall semester, she has shared her story at Virginia Tech through a webinar series and chatted with students in a disaster resilience seminar.

Katrina Powell, who is founding director of the Center for Refugee, Migrant, and Displacement Studies at Virginia Tech, led the search for Nimko's position earlier this year.

"We sent out a call and we got lots of applications," Powell said. "We had three finalists. Olha was the person who really rose to the top for us because of the interdisciplinary nature of her work."

Powell said from her experience working with Nimko, she is someone really eager to work.

"She's done a lot of research about refugees' ability to feed their families," Powell said. "She's continuing the important work she started in Zurich, but she's also starting new work here. I see someone who's very determined not only to do that work, but also to help tell the story of what's happening in Ukraine with ordinary people."

Laura Belmonte, dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, was immediately supportive of providing the funding for a visiting scholar from Ukraine.

"I believe it is as important for the world to be brought to Blacksburg as it is for our faculty and students to go out into the world," Belmonte said. "Dr. Nimko's experience as a refugee is one that is sadly shared by millions of people across the globe. Providing her the opportunity to share that experience with the VT community and giving her a safe haven where she can continue her important research on the climate exemplifies our commitment to the ideals of Ut Prosim."

Powell said securing additional supports was also crucial to bringing Nimko to the U.S.

"Visiting international scholars come to Tech all of the time, but then when you add the dimension of someone being displaced, the Cranwells' support was key," Powell said. "Because when someone is a refugee, they need additional supports. Being able to not only pay her salary, but also support her housing costs has been key."

As the war drags on, Nimko is finding it difficult to remain optimistic about her country's future.

"The war in Ukraine has global implications as Ukraine faces exhaustion, potentially leading to broader consequences for the entire world," she said.

Nimko said she is grateful to Virginia Tech for giving her an opportunity to continue her research and to stay safe. She enjoys riding her bike in her free time and she is happy that her daughter is safe and adjusting to life in Blacksburg.

Still, she hopes to one day return to her home country.

"For now, the situation in Ukraine remains insecure," Nimko said. "But if it gets better, I definitely want to rejoin with my husband."

Jenny Kincaid Boone for Virginia Tech

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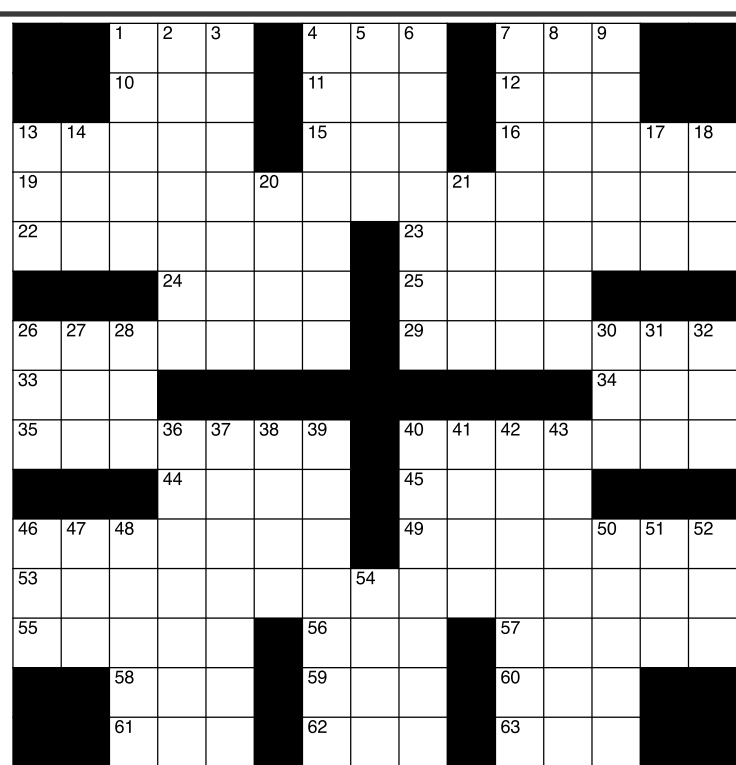
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CROSSWORD



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| CLUES ACROSS
1. Type of health plan
4. Atmospheric haze
7. A period of time
10. Auricle
11. Copycat
12. Manpower
13. Delicate fern genus
15. Diego, Francisco or Anselmo
16. Zanzibar copal
19. Jackie's 2nd husband
22. Calcified tooth tissue
23. Conjoined twins
24. Mythological birds
25. This (Spanish)
26. Lowest hereditary title
29. Pre-transplant plot
33. Fiddler crab genus
34. Professional legal | organization
35. Most thick
40. Sleeve indicator of mourning
44. Far East housemaid
45. Hmong
46. With three uneven sides
49. Tempts
53. Jewelry finding
55. Showed intense anger
56. Black tropical American cuckoo
57. Sculpture with a head
58. A single entity
59. What part of (abbr.)
60. Before
61. Confined condition (abbr.)
62. Hurrah
63. Transport faster than | CLUES DOWN
1. Sorli's Tale hero
2. A musical master
3. Speech
4. Swiftest
5. Opaque gem
6. Origins
7. Proceed from a source
8. Rechristened
9. Liquorice flavored seed
13. Small amount
14. Mineral aggregate
17. Prefix for wrong
18. Point midway between E and SE
20. A single instance
21. French river
26. Undeveloped blossom
27. One pip domino
28. Flew on foot | 30. Sheep bleat
31. One point N of due E
32. Father
36. A projecting part
37. Improved by editing
38. Made melodious sounds
39. Treatment
40. Agreeableness
41. Bell sound
42. Tennis contests
43. Furnace vessels
46. Sirius Satellite Radio (abbr.)
47. Licensed accountant
48. Crude potassium bitartrate
50. Insert mark
51. Election Stock Market (abbr.)
52. A health resort
54. So. Am. Indian people |
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OBITUARIES

Branscom, Martha Phillips

Martha Phillips Branscom, 82, (Teresa); grandchildren, Brandi Milewski (T.J.), Craig and Clay Branscom, and Jehu, Callie and Hattie Maxwell; great grandson, Campbell Milewski; brother, Lloyd Phillips (Rosemary); and many other relatives and friends.



She passed away Friday, Dec. 22, 2023, at her home in Radford surrounded by her family. She retired from nursing and was a member of Valley Harvest Ministries. She was preceded in death by her parents, Burman and Hattie Phillips. Survivors include her husband, Hubert Casper Branscom, Jr.; daughters, Karen Campbell (Randy), and Renee Coleman (Josh); sons, Scott Branscom (Rhonda), and Steve Branscom 2024. The Branscom family is in the care of the Mullins Funeral Home & Crematory in Radford.

The family will receive friends 1 - 2 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 2, 2024.

Furrow, Elsie Marie

Elsie Marie Furrow, 84, of Blacksburg, died Saturday, Dec. 23, 2023.

She was born in Blacksburg on June 3, 1939, to the late Brinston and Sally Cooper Davis. She was also preceded in death by her husband Charles Cleveland Furrow; sisters Alberta Songer, Virginia Caldwell and Peggy Mitchell; and one infant brother.



She is survived by her three daughters and sons in law Lori and Chris Heslep, Debra and Steve Womack, and Sharon and Francis Young; grandchildren Amanda Young, Diana Roark, Amy Lytton, Sara Ladd, Ethan Heslep, Brett Heslep, Ryan Furrow, and Zach Furrow; many great-

grandchildren; sisters Marlene Cox, Martha Smith, Lorene Cooper, Gloria Smith, and Erma Whitlock; numerous nieces and nephews; special friend and family, Reba and Oakley.

Elsie adored her family and enjoyed playing bingo, board games, and rummy with them.

The family would like to extend a special thank you to all the staff, nurses, and doctors at Skyline Nursing and Rehabilitation Center and Good Samaritan Hospice.

Funeral services were conducted Thursday, Dec. 28, 2023 in the McCoy Funeral Home Chapel. Interment followed in the Westview Cemetery.

ANGLICAN CATHOLIC

St. Philip's Anglican Church, 306 Progress Street, NE, Blacksburg, Virginia 24060, (540) 552-1771, www.stphilipsblacksburg.org. Reverend Fr. Wade Miller, Priest. Eucharist Sunday's at 11am and Wednesday's at 12pm.

St. Thomas Anglican Church- located at 4910 Hubert Rd, NW Roanoke, Va. Traditional Liturgical Lenten Services, Sunday at 10:30 am. Call (540) 589-1299 or visit www.sttofc.org for midweek masses and events. (In Roanoke, go E on Hershberger, L on Hubert to 4910).

BAPTIST

First Baptist Church, 555 West Rock Road, Radford, 639-3873. Rev. Corwin C. Casey, Pastor. Worship with us: 9:45 a.m.; Sunday School: 10:45 a.m.; Praise and Worship: 11:00 a.m. Morning Worship Service; Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. 1 Corinthians 15:58.

First Baptist Church on 3rd Ave., 215 Third Ave at the corner with Downey St. We nurture meaningful connections to God and others through worship, spiritual growth, and community ministry. We celebrate the dignity and worth of all persons, created in the image of God. Sunday Bible Study Groups - 9:45, Sunday Worship - 11:00. Website: fbcradford.org 540-639-4419. Worship is in-person and live-streamed on Facebook and on our YouTube channel: First Baptist Church Radford.

Trinity Community Church, 1505 N. Franklin Street, C'burg. John Altizer, Lead Pastor, Brian Cockram, Associate Pastor, 382-8121. Worship at 10:45 a.m., Outreach Ministries - 6:00p.m. Wednesday, Growth Groups - 5:00p.m. Sunday, Youth and Children's Ministry - 5:00p.m. Sunday, www.trinitychurch.org.

CHURCH OF CHRIST

Blacksburg Church of Christ, 315 Eakin St., 552-1331. Sun. Bible Classes 9:30 a.m., Sun. Worship 10:30 a.m. & 6 p.m., Wed. Bible classes, 7 p.m., Outreach Minister Curt Seright, Dean Meadows, Campus Minister.

CHURCH OF GOD

Childress Church of God, 4187 Piney Woods Rd., C'Burg. 381-3693. Sun. School 10 a.m.; Worship 11 a.m. & Wed. 7 p.m.

New Hope Church of God, 1404 Mud Pike Rd., C'Burg. Rev. T. Michael Bond, pastor, 731-3178. Sun. School 10 a.m., Worship 10:50 a.m., 6 p.m. Thurs., 7:00 p.m.

West Radford Church of God, 1824 West Main Street, Radford, VA 24141, Sunday School - 10:00A.M. Morning Worship - 11:00A.M., Children's Church 11:00A.M. Sunday Evening - 6:00P.M., Wednesday Night - 7:00P.M., Pastor Danny Newman, Church Office - 540-639-6562 or 804-921-0828

CHURCH OF GOD IN CHRIST

Radford Church of God in Christ, 206 Russell Ave., Radford. Supt. Ronald A. Watson, Sr.; Elder, 639- 5948. Sun. School 9 a.m.; Prayer 11:30 a.m.; Worship 6 p.m.

(DOC - DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

Snowville Christian Church, 5436 Lead Mine Rd., Hiwassee, VA 24347, Pastor: Jerry King, Website: www.SnowvilleChristianChurch.com (and Facebook), Office: 540-633-3761, Email: office@SnowvilleChristianChurch.com, Sunday Worship Service: 11:00 a.m., Sunday School: 10:00 a.m., Thursday Bible Study: 6:00 p.m., We are: "Inspiring hope, helping people grow their faith, and sharing God's love with others!"

EPISCOPAL

Grace Episcopal Church, 210 Fourth Street Radford. Welcoming and accepting, we have been a part of the Radford community for more than 130 years. ALL ARE WELCOME. Grace offers an 8:00am Contemplative Eucharist and a 10:30am Eucharist with organ music and a choir, with refreshments served afterwards. The 10:30am service is also available on YouTube for those unable to leave their house. Find us on Facebook and www.graceradford.org.

Radford

WORSHIP DIRECTORY

READY OR NOT

Read Revelation 22:1-21

At the turn of the century, the world was in a panic. On the eve of a new millennium, no one was sure what midnight would bring. Experts claimed a programming glitch could cause computers to struggle with the date change. The acronym Y2K became a household phrase connected to the possible collapse of computer-dependent industrialized nations.

Some scoffed, but others prepared. They stockpiled canned goods and bottled water. They outlined a strategy for living without electricity. They took the doomsday warnings seriously and wanted to be ready.

John's Revelation contains a similar foretelling of a future event that will change life on earth.

"Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done" (Revelation 22:12).

Whether or not you prepared for Y2K, the forewarned tragedy did not amount to anything. As believers, however, we all must be ready for Christ's return. The events prophesied in Scripture will come to pass. So, as 2012 comes to a close, ask yourself this question: Am I ready?

Prayer Suggestion: Lord, help me be ready for Your soon return.

Quicklook: Revelation 22:7-17

If your church is not listed and if you are interested, call Wendi Craig at 276-340-2445 or email at advertise@mainstreetnewspapers.com

LUTHERAN

Christ Lutheran Church, 201 Harvey St. Sunday worship with communion at 10am; fellowship & snacks at 11am. All are welcome. Upcoming events and fellowship opportunities (Senior Brunch, Faith & Film, Rough Draught, etc.) detailed in weekly email and on website: clcradford.org. 540-639-2671.

Our Saviour Lutheran Church ELCA, 1845 Cambria St NE, Christiansburg. Worship each Sunday at 10 am, in person and online at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMsB-gbyjmV5ce9mr43dbCw. Please visit our website at www.oslc-cburg.org and our Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/oslcchristiansburg to learn more about us. Little Free Pantry and Little Free Library located in our parking lot. Pastor Joshua L. Copeland; church office 540-382-2223.

St. Michael Lutheran Church, 2308 Merrimac Road, Blacksburg, VA 24060. Worship service each Sunday at 10 AM, Sunday School 9 AM. We are a community of God's people where we gather for worship, learning and service. Visitors and new members are always WELCOME! Google comments: "Wonderful, welcoming congregation." A place where all are truly welcome." You'll love our minister, The Rev. Dr. Wes Jamison, who engages us in God's word. St. Michael started and administers Micah's Caring Initiative which includes Micah's Backpack, Soup for Seniors, Garden, Closet, and Mini Pantry, with tremendous community impact. Partnering with Rainbow Riders and Total Action for Progress, we opened the first Early Childhood Head Start in our community (6 weeks to age 3). We sponsor an awesome Scouting program of Scouts Boy & Girl Troop, Venture Scouts for older youth, and a Cub Pack for girls & boys kindergarten - 5th grade, amongst many other programs. Directions: From Price's Fork Road, turn onto Merrimac Road. St. Michael is ~quarter mile on the left. For more information: Phone 540.951.8951; Email hope@stmlc.us; Website www.st-michael-lutheran-church.org

PENTECOSTAL HOLINESS

Merrimac Pentecostal Holiness Church, Rev. Larry

Christopher (540) 552-7194. l.christopher695@comcast.net. Sunday school at 10 a.m. and morning worship is 11 a.m. Evening service at 6 p.m. and Wednesday at 7 p.m.

Compassion Church, 1820 Second Street, Radford, 639-6287, Our music is passionate, our worship is real, and Pastor Chandler Jones brings relevant messages for everyone at any place on their journey, Sunday Worship Experience at 9:30 AM & 11:00 AM, Wednesday Family Night at 7 PM, Children Ministry provided for all services. Our vision is to see all Saved. Freed. Restored. Fulfilled. Find us on facebook and Instagram

Walton Pentecostal Holiness Church, 4003 Morning Glory Rd., off Walton Rd. on Rt. 114. 731-1755. Lee Sarver, pastor. Sun. School 9:30 a.m., Worship 10:30 a.m. & 6: p.m., Wed., 7p.m.

PRESBYTERIAN

Join us at **The Presbyterian Church of Radford**, 201 4th Street, at the corner of 4th & Randolph. Sunday School is at 10:00 a.m. and Sunday Service 11:00a.m. Rev. Don Makin will be leading worship. Phone 540-639-2585, Email pcofradford@gmail.com, Website www.pcradford.org. We are called to share the love of Christ in this community and beyond.

UNITED METHODIST

Asbury United Methodist Church, 500 Stuart Street, Christiansburg. 540-382- 0743. Rev. Ryan Schaeffer. Sunday School, 10:15 a.m., Sunday Worship, 11:30 a.m., Wednesday Bible Study 7pm, alternating month's with Schaeffer Memorial Baptist Church, Senior Bible Study Thursday, 10:30 a.m. All are welcome.

Central Church, 803 Wadsworth Street, Radford. 639-3529. 8:30 a.m. Sunday Services: 8:30am; 9:45am Sunday School; and 11:00a.m. Child care is provided. www.centralmethodistchurch.com.

St. Paul United Methodist Church, 220 W. Main St., C'Burg. Rev. Moonsup "Paul" Song (540) 382-2410. Sunday Worship 10am, Sunday School 9am. Live streaming Sunday Service - www.twitch.tv/stpaulumc.com

Send community news and photos to communitynews@ourvalley.org



PHOTO BY CHRISTINA FRANUSICH FOR VIRGINIA TECH

Virginia Tech has pedaled its way to national recognition as a gold level Bicycle Friendly University, a prestigious designation awarded by the League of American Bicyclists.

Virginia Tech achieves gold-level recognition as a Bicycle Friendly University

BLACKSBURG - Virginia Tech has pedaled its way to national recognition as a gold level Bicycle Friendly University, a prestigious designation awarded by the League of American Bicyclists.

Among the 220 colleges and universities in 46 states and the District of Columbia enrolled in the Bicycle Friendly University program, Virginia Tech has secured its position in the top 18 percent of all bicycle-friendly campuses.

The League of American Bicyclists, a trailblazing grassroots advocacy organization dedicated to advocating for better bicycling conditions and the rights of cyclists, bestowed this accolade upon Virginia Tech as part of its Bicycle Friendly America program. Virginia Tech's gold level recognition signifies the university's dedication to not only fostering a sustainable and eco-conscious campus, but also to creating a vibrant and healthy community for its students, employees, and visitors.

"It is inspiring to see so many universities committing to the vision of a Bicycle Friendly America," said Bill Nesper, executive director of the League of American Bicyclists. "These institutions, including Virginia Tech, are leading by example and helping to set the standard for better bicycling. Each Bicycle Friendly University acts as a trailblazer to develop and promote safer, more accessible transportation infrastructure, and supportive programming for new bicyclists in their communities."

Virginia Tech's gold level achievement is more than just an honor. It's a testament to the university's effort to create a holistic campus environment. By investing in the comfort and safety of bicyclists, the university is driving positive change in multiple spheres:

Reduced carbon footprint: Embracing bicycling as a primary mode of transport significantly reduces the university's carbon footprint. More people choosing bikes over cars means a greener, more sustainable campus.

Reduced health care costs: Encouraging physical activity through bicycling leads to healthier lifestyles among students and staff. By promoting regular exercise, the university is indirectly lowering health care costs associated with sedentary lifestyles.

Connected to community: Bicycling fosters a sense of community. It connects students, faculty, and staff, creating a network that extends beyond the classroom. This interconnectedness strengthens the bonds within the Virginia Tech family.

A fun and healthy campus culture: Bicycling promotes a vibrant campus culture. It encourages outdoor activities, promotes wellness, and fosters a sense of camaraderie among cyclists. The result is a campus alive with the joy of movement and the thrill of exploration.

Nick Quint, Sustainable Transportation's network manager, expressed his excitement about the recognition, stating, "We are incredibly proud to be recognized as a gold level Bicycle Friendly University. This achievement underscores our dedication to sustainable transportation and creating a vibrant, bike-friendly campus. We will continue to enhance our biking infrastructure and support initiatives that encourage more people to embrace bicycling as a sustainable and enjoyable means of transportation."

Stephanie Overton for Virginia Tech

Pajama Day at the office? My, how things have changed

Evans "Buddy" King
Columnist

'Tis the season (or tis at the time I'm writing this); decorating, shopping, caroling, etc. We all know the drill. The normal Christmas craziness.

It's also the time for crazy things at my law office - mainly "good" crazy, but nonetheless crazy. Since the week before Thanksgiving, we have had a catered Thanksgiving luncheon, a Happy Hour hosted by the firm's management committee, an offsite Christmas luncheon, an Ugly Sweater contest, an Ornament Exchange, a Cubicle and Hallway Decorating Competition, the trimming of the "Kozakewich tree" in memory of a deceased partner, and frequent unofficial "after hours" in various offices.

These have all been great in their own way - convivial, morale building, festive, nice respites from the drudgery of a business where the inventory is how many billable hours you put on the shelf in a year (thankfully I have moved past those days, but it IS the lifeblood of the business of the practice of law).

Yesterday took things to a new level, however, sort of a "work from home" on steroids. Yesterday at S & J was "Pajama Day". Yes, everyone was encouraged (allowed?) to wear pajamas to work. And many did. I fought off the urge.

My normal nighttime attire is a pair of UVA lacrosse shorts and a long sleeve Red Sox tee shirt, so it was easy to explain why I came in my normal work clothes. And in full candor, this was mainly a staff event, although a number of the younger lawyers worked all day in their PJs. At times when walking through the halls I thought I was in line for the Polar Express.

It was inevitable that my thoughts turned to the way things were when I came to the firm straight out of law school in 1980. The firm founders

- Phillip Steptoe and Louis Johnson ("The Colonel" - Secretary of Defense under President Truman) - were long gone, but many of the lawyers who were still around carried on their tradition of excellence - and formality. Suits were the "unofficial" uniform of the day. Our lawyers would have been more likely to come to the office in clown costumes than not wear a dark suit with a freshly pressed white shirt and tasteful tie. The few female lawyers then were equally conservative and professional in their dress.

About 13 years ago our firm moved into our current digs (in an office park of all things), deserting the old 12 story Union National Bank building in downtown Clarksburg where we had been housed for 97 years. So, the whispering and scowling of the ghosts of the likes of Herb Underwood and Ralph Bohannon and Ernie Swiger that surely occurred yesterday were probably more present in those abandoned hallways than in our new ones. But I assure you many came back from their graves.

Things have certainly changed over my years. Shortly before I began my career, my wife and I took a trip to a Jos A. Bank warehouse in Baltimore and I bought two gray suits (charcoal of course) and a couple of "power ties" of the day - maize and red. Eventually I accumulated over 200 ties and many suits, none of which I have worn much in the last five years. The suits have tended with the passage of time to shrink dramatically in my closet, as I discover on the occasions of funerals or court appearances I am forced to attend. And after a couple of spells of work from home forced by caregiving duties and Covid, ties became unnecessary.

I was a member of the first generation of

S & J lawyers to shed their suit jackets while in the office (and to call their secretaries by their first names). I think it started with Bob Steptoe, grandson of one of our founders, and longtime leader of the firm. I found it not only uncomfortable to sit at a desk or in a conference room with a jacket on, but also expensive, it being much less a financial burden to replace a dress shirt than a suit when the elbows wore out. But I also remember the concern I had when walking down the hall in my nice, crisp white shirt sans jacket early in my days at the firm and senior partner Bob Steele saying, "oh, I didn't realize we changed the dress code".

A couple of apocryphal stories from those days.

Over time I had started to occasionally wear a sports coat (a blue blazer of course) and dress slacks, even khakis, to the office. My great 101-year-old friend Pete had a wonderful traditional men's store in downtown Clarksburg in those days. His store rivaled the great ones of Charlottesville and Williamsburg where I had window shopped while in school. I walked into Pete's place one day at lunch wearing a nice pair of khakis with my blue blazer and rep tie. Looking sharp and professional I thought. Pete looks me up and down and says, "Buddy, when did they start letting you wear jeans at the firm?" And he was serious - it was Southwick suit all the way in his world.

My other great "professional dress" story probably comes from the 1990's. Bob Steptoe, a classy dresser if there ever was one, was our managing partner. He was approached by one of the younger lawyers who asked, "Can we have a casual day once a week, Bob?" Without blinking an eye, Bob's response was, "We already do, we call it Saturday". Nuf ced.

Oh, how far we've come.

ESPNU tabs Radford at Longwood as its Jan. 11 Big South wildcard selection

CHARLOTTE, N.C. - ESPNU has selected the Radford at Longwood men's basketball contest as its first Big South Wildcard broadcast of the 2023-24 season, it was announced today by the Big South Conference office. The game will move from its current Wednesday, Jan. 10 date to Thursday, Jan. 11 and will tip at 9 p.m. inside the new Joan Perry Brock Center in Farmville, Va.

The match-up will mark the second meeting between the squads on ESPNU. It will be Radford's 14th appearance in the Big South's ESPNU Wildcard series, and seventh for Longwood. The teams are currently 1-2 in the Big South standings, as the

Lancers currently have the league's best record at 12-2 -- including an 8-0 record at the JPB, while the Highlanders are tied for second at 10-4.

Longwood had the nation's longest winning streak at 12 games from Nov. 11-Dec. 20. The Lancers are ranked No. 109 in the NET and their non-conference wins include Maryland-Eastern Shore, N.C. Central, Delaware State (twice), Bethune-Cookman, Morgan State, Milwaukee and VMI. Picked fifth in the conference preseason poll, the Lancers currently rank first in the Big South in scoring defense (61.6), scoring margin (+17.6), field goal

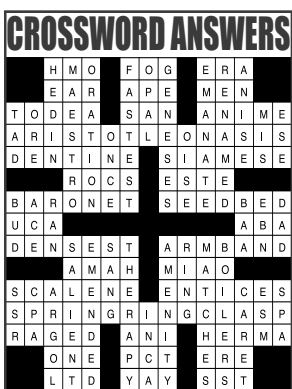
defense (39.3) and rebounding margin (+13.6). Longwood is led by Walyn Napper (14.4 points, 4.9 assists, 1.9 steals).

Radford enters this week on a five-game win streak with wins over Elon, N.C. Central, VMI, Bucknell and West Virginia during that span. The Highlanders, with a NET rating of 139, have also knocked off Marshall, Morgan State and Northern Colorado, while two of their four losses have been by one possession. Radford is tops in the Big South in three-point percentage (38.0) and three-point defense (28.3), while ranking second in scoring defense (66.9), free throw percentage (74.7) and field goal

defense (39.9). The Highlanders have three players averaging double-figures, led by Kenyon Giles (14.6).

This is the 11th year of the Big South's ESPNU Wildcard series, which again features six Thursday broadcasts -- Jan. 11 (Radford at Longwood), Jan. 18, Feb. 1, Feb. 15, Feb. 22 and Feb. 29 -- that are selected 14-21 days in advance. A total of 47 games have been played in the series that began in 2013-14, and while the home teams are 31-16, the 47 contests have been decided by an average of 9.30 points, with 28 59.6 percent) of those being decided by single-digits.

Radford University Athletics



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RADFORD SPORTS

A look back at emotional photos from the 2024 NRV sports world

Our photographers caught some great photos this year, including several with the raw emotion of the sports world. Here are a few of those.



The joy is seen in Auburn High School volleyball players after they won another state championship, their seventh straight, in November.

PHOTO BY ASHLEY AKERS



PHOTO BY KYMN DAVIDSON-HAMLEY

Tanner Evans suffered a season-ending injury in the seventh game of the year. His emotions are shared on Senior Night with his coach Alex Wilkens.



PHOTO BY JON FLEMING

The Blacksburg volleyball team huddles before they take to the court in a state semifinal match at James Wood High School. The team wore purple ribbons in memory of senior Serenity Hawley who lost her life in November. Many members of the team were close friends with Serenity and competed in the post-season to honor her memory.



PHOTO BY BRYANT ALTIZER

The state championship was so sweet this past month for the Radford Bobcats. Here, the defense celebrates with the interception by a lineman (Dawson Martin) for a touchdown that put the icing on the cake at the end of the game.

Should they stay or should they go?

From the Sidelines
Marty Gordon



Thanks College Football Committee, for you have set the stage for the dismantling of the ACC as we know it. Florida State is standing on the edge and ready to jump to another conference, and they are using being left out of this year's Final Football Four as a reason to look elsewhere. I have always been told "things are not always greener on the other side of the hill." A prime example is the departure of the University of Maryland. Yes, they gained lots of money to leave the ACC, but it has not spelled better athletics. If FSU leaves, they will have to pay up and the exit fee is probably more than they would want to pay. In 2016 when the ESPN deal was announced, ACC officials said the conference's grant of rights makes it financially untenable for a school to leave, guaranteeing

in the 20 years of the deal that a school's media rights, including revenue, for all home games would remain with the ACC regardless of the school's affiliation. The underlying fact is that the ACC is locked into the current agreement through 2036. But FSU says woeah that roll. There is major discrepancies of the television contracts in comparison of the ACC and the Big Ten and SEC. The ACC schools are making \$27 million compared to as much as \$57 million for the SEC. Earlier this month, one solution which was floated is the creation of an unequal revenue distribution with some schools like FSU and Clemson receiving more depending on their success on the field. This seemed to appease the schools in the short term, but FSU used the furor of being left out of the College Football Playoff picture to reignite the controversy all over again. The bigger question in this whole scenario is who might play "follow the leader". It is obvious that Clemson would also be considering a similar move. But this discussion is not new, and others like North Carolina, Virginia and Virginia Tech have talked about it. Virginia Tech does not fit the Big Ten or Big 12 level of athletics, and the SEC does not seem to fancy the Hokies joined a crowded room. Could the ACC exist without one, two or the four others leaving? Yes, it could continue to be a conference, but not a player in the college athletic landscape. FSU and Clemson have been big dogs not only for football but other sports over the past 10 years. Without them,

the ACC would fall back to the high grass. There is no real solution in any of the ACC schools joining another conference. Most of the others including the SEC have maxed out creating a mess for scheduling of all athletics. The Big Ten is an option but will it create better competition for everyone involved? The ACC's only option, which will keep everyone still in-house, is to convince ESPN to restructure the television contract. While it might not be comparable to that from the SEC or the Big Ten, it could keep everyone under the same umbrella. Let's get smart and finally think about the best for college athletics.

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RADFORD SPORTS

Radford boys down Pulaski



Daniel DeHart-Lewis goes up for a fast break dunk in last week's cross the New River game against Pulaski as Radford picked up the 61-56 win. Lewis finished with 18 points.



Radford's Koreyon Ferguson, who had six points in the win, puts up an off balance shot in the lane in a physical game versus Pulaski County.



Luke Woodard drives to the basket for a layup in the Bobcats' victory. Woodard would tally 18 points in the contest.

PHOTOS BY BRYANT ALTIZER

Former assistant back in RU volleyball fold

An extraordinarily successful assistant coach with the Highlanders from 2011-2018, Chris Hertel has been named the 12th head coach of the Radford Volleyball program, Director of Athletics Robert Lineburg announced this past week.

"I'm thrilled to be returning to Radford University," said Coach Hertel. "I want to thank Robert Lineburg, Malinda Tasler and the rest of the Radford staff for their confidence in me, and for bringing me back to the NRV."

"I think the program is in a good place and poised to make some waves in the Big South Conference, and I'm excited to get started," Hertel continued. "I would also like to shout-out my alma mater, Coach Jordan and all the people that make New Mexico State so special to me."

"We are delighted to have Chris Hertel return to Radford University," said Director of Athletics Robert Lineburg. "He was instrumental in the success we had while an assistant coach under Marci (Jenkins) Byers. These were some of the best years in Highlander Volleyball

history. Chris has also been a part of an outstanding program at his alma mater, New Mexico State University. These experiences, as well as his knowledge of Radford University and the Big South Conference, have prepared him very well to lead the Radford University Volleyball program."

"I'm happy to welcome Chris back to Radford," added Associate Athletics Director for Compliance/Senior Woman Administrator Malinda Tasler. "The committee was very impressed with him and we're looking forward to the future of our volleyball program."

Hertel returns to the New River Valley following five seasons as an assistant coach at New Mexico State. He helped guide the Aggies to a 99-38 record across those five seasons, winning three consecutive WAC championships from 2019-2021 before reaching the Conference USA title game in 2023.

Under Hertel's tutelage, the Aggies received 21 all-conference honors with 16 coming in the WAC and five being handed out by Conference USA. Megan Hart was named WAC Player of the

Year, AVCA All-Region and an AVCA Honorable Mention All-American in her first year playing for Hertel in 2019, and Victoria Barrett was named WAC Freshman of the Year in 2020-21.

Most recently, Hertel helped Darian Markham earn Conference USA Libero of the Year honors for the 2023 season.

Before leaving for New Mexico State, Hertel served as the Highlander's assistant coach from 2011-2018. His teams posted a 167-82 record during that time and went 83-35 during Big South conference play. The Highlanders reached six Big South Tournament championship matches, coming away with a pair of titles and NCAA tournament appearances.

In 2018 alone, Hertel's assistance helped Radford reach the National Invitational Volleyball Championship (NIVC) for the first time in program history, where the squad came away with an opening-round victory.

Hertel coached more than 30 Highlanders to all-conference status in the Big South while at Radford. He helped Maddie Palmer reach new heights as the two-time Big South Player of the

Year, just the third player to win the conference's top award during back-to-back seasons. Palmer was also named an American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA) Southeast Region Honorable Mention.

Not only have Hertel's teams shown success on the court, but his squads were named AVCA Team Academic Award winners from 2012-2017. In 2016, his team's grade-point average ranked in the top-25 nationally across all division one volleyball programs.

A 2011 graduate of New Mexico State, he also played an essential role in the Aggies success from 2006-08 when the team made three-straight NCAA Tournament appearances.

Hertel was a part of the New Mexico State coaching staff in 2007, when the program reached 13th nationally, the highest ranking ever for New Mexico State in the AVCA poll. He also assisted in the team's NCAA run in 2008, when the Aggies reached the second round of the postseason tournament.

Radford University Athletics

Swain mixes academic, athletic cocktail at RU

As a standout soccer player in high school, Amy Swain knew when she started looking at colleges that one of her key priorities was a school with a solid and successful women's team.

Swain is from Ashburn, Virginia, about four hours to the northeast, but Radford University hadn't really crossed her radar until a coach she knew recommended she give it a look. In the winter of her senior year, she visited the campus, and a match was made.

"I fell in love with the coaching staff, the support system and the team, and I just knew," Swain said of her tour. "I was like, this is the place where I can succeed both academically and athletically."

On the academic front, she chose to study marketing and, in doing so, was following a family tradition. Her father, Bob Swain, is a client executive

with Cisco Systems, and her elder siblings, Maggie and Charlie, at that time were also marketing majors.

"My goal is to go into sales, and I recently found, after doing an internship with Iron Bow [Technologies], that I really like technology sales," she explained. "I like the idea of technology because both my dad and my sister do it, and I like hearing what they do, but then I get to find my own specific areas that I can focus on."

"You can go into working with the D.O.D. (Department of Defense) or working in education or other fields like that."

In addition to her internship with Iron Bow Technologies, Swain served as a marketing and game day intern with Radford Athletics. She also minored in communication and coaching education

and, since high school, has taught youth soccer in Loudoun County to children ranging in age from 3 to 12.

Swain's athletic career has been prosperous as well. Although her freshman year coincided with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, she excelled on the field despite having to work within rigorous safety restrictions. She ultimately shifted from playing defender to forward, earning a starting position in 38 of the 40 matches that spanned her junior and senior years.

In 2022 and 2023, she also collected a pair of Big South Championship rings, and in November, Swain and her teammates reached the NCAA Tournament, where they fought hard against the top-seeded Clemson Tigers, shutting out their opponents in the first half. In the end, Clemson

prevailed with two points, but Swain said the outcome showed the Highlanders rising to a considerable challenge.

"I'm not gonna lie. Losing 2-0 to a No. 1 seed and coming from a smaller school, a smaller conference, that's a win for us," she professed. "It was really cool."

She's not turning in her cleats just yet, either.

Although she's about to collect her marketing degree, Swain has already begun Radford's accelerated MBA program, which means that as a continuing student, and due to the pandemic, she remains eligible to play soccer for a fifth year.

"I love challenging myself," she said of pressing forward with her advanced degree in accounting.

"There have been times when I was doubting that I wanted to continue with soccer, just because it's so mentally draining. But it also taught me about overcoming obstacles."

"I've also had great coaches and a great support system of my family and friends that have pushed me to be the player and person I am today. I'm just

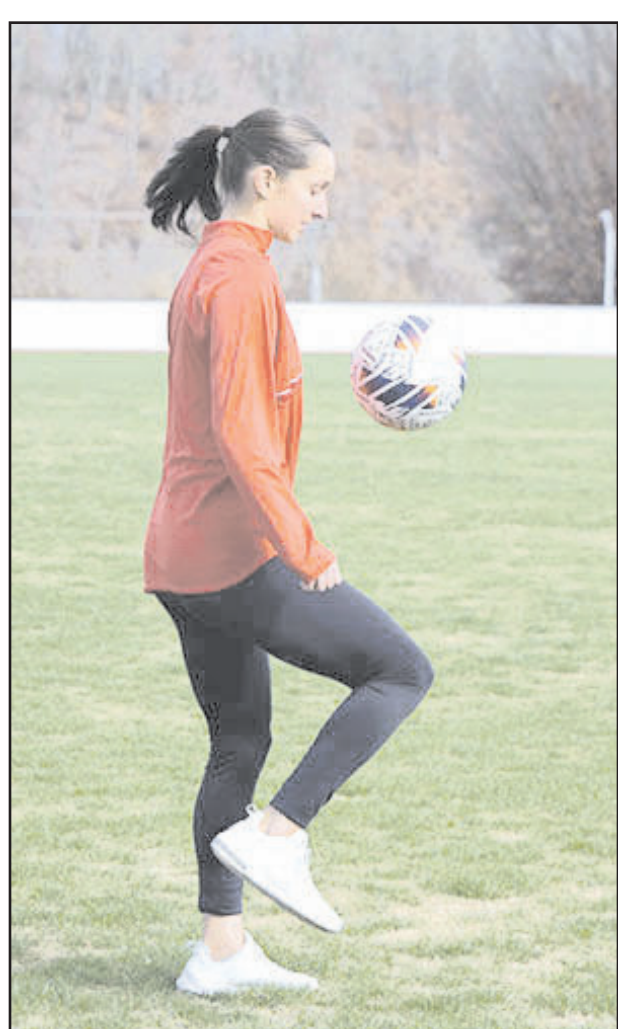


PHOTO COURTESY OF RU

Amy Swain has found her time at Radford University the perfect mix in the classroom and on the soccer field.

really grateful to have all those people who built me into who I am now."

Radford University Athletics