

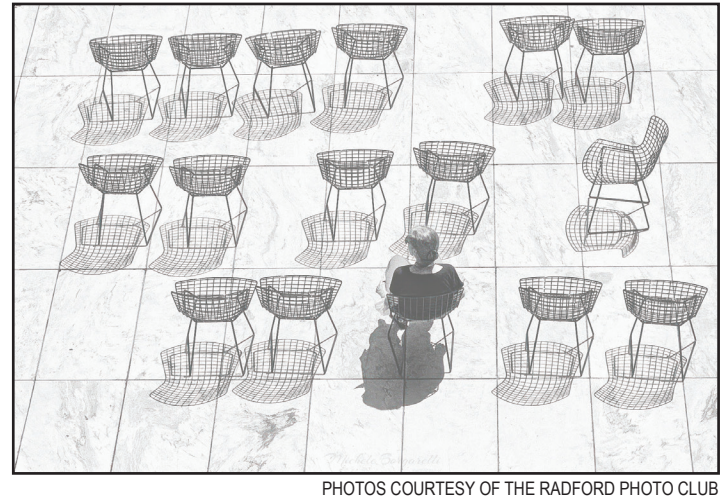
Wednesday, January 17, 2024 • USPS 387-780 • radfordnewsjournal.com • \$1.00

# Borgarelli sweeps monthly photo contest

Michele Borgarelli finished the Radford Photo Club's year by winning both the theme and the open categories in the December contests. The theme category was Best of 2023. Borgarelli's photo, "Hands," was taken during a trip to India. He explains, "Sometimes details may tell a story. This woman owns a little vegetable street shop in the old city of Jodhpur, India. When we noticed her, we stopped by and asked her if we could take a picture. She smiled and said: 'You know I am famous'. This raised our curiosity, so we asked for more details. She showed us a local



"Hands" by Michele Borgarelli

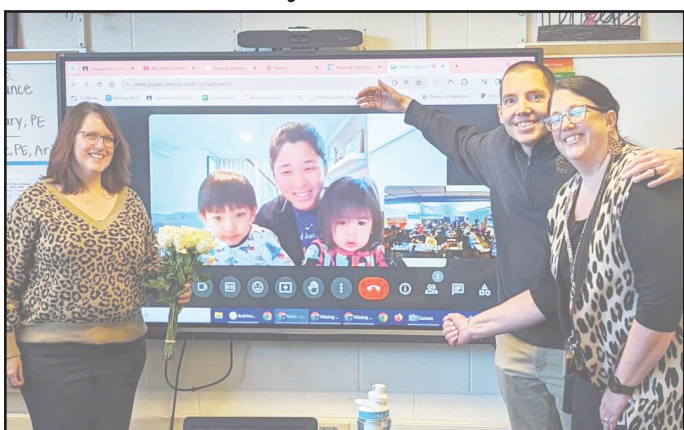


"Waiting" by Michele Borgarelli

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE RADFORD PHOTO CLUB

See **Borgarelli**, page 2

## Radford City Schools Teachers of the Year announced



**Belle Heth fifth grade teacher Robin Hoosier, seen with her children on the big screen, pictured with school board chair Jenny Riffe (left), principal Cole Wilder and assistant principal Jenny Zienius.**



**Radford High School Social Studies teacher John Ferguson, pictured with RHS Principal Ken Keister.**



**Dalton Intermediate School Math teacher Tammy Dye, pictured with DIS principal Darden Freeman and School Board chair Jenny Riffe.**



**McHarg Elementary School first grade teacher Lindsay Lesko, pictured with principal Michelle Greene and school board chair Jenny Riffe.**

PHOTOS COURTESY OF RCPS

RADFORD – Radford City Public Schools has announced the four school level teachers named Teacher of the Year for 2024. "Each school-based teacher winner was given a dozen roses and acknowledged in front of their students within the school where they work. The winners were selected by each faculty," according to the

announcement on the school division website ([www.rcps.org](http://www.rcps.org)). "Congratulations to the four outstanding teachers." The winning teachers are Radford High School social studies teacher John Ferguson, Dalton Intermediate School math teacher Tammy Dye, Belle Heth Elementary School fifth grade teacher Robin Hoosier and McHarg Elementary School first

grade teacher Lindsay Lesko. "These four teachers will now compete for the Radford Division Teacher of the Year," the RCPS announcement continued. "Once this individual is named, after a committee interview in the near future, they will move forward to be considered in the statewide Teacher of the Year competition."

Staff report

## The Sauerkraut Band is back, playing at Mountain Lake Lodge



PHOTO COURTESY OF SAUERKRAUT BAND FACEBOOK PAGE

**The Sauerkraut Band has performed in the New River Valley since 1989, providing lively and authentic German band music.**

**Lori Graham**  
 Contributing writer

The Sauerkraut Band originated in the New River Valley in 1989 and became popular playing at Oktoberfest at the Mountain Lake Lodge and other events in the area. They are back for four special performances. The Sauerkraut Band is what is known in the United States as an Oom-pah or traditional German Band. This band typically is comprised of 12-14 people and play brass instruments with trumpets and trombones, drums, and wind instruments, to name a few. The full sound of the various musical instruments is complemented with song and of course, lively dance encouraging participation from the audience. "Most towns would have a community band and they would play outdoors under a gazebo," Tom Williams, long-time band member said. Ed Schwartz is the founder of the group and was previously in a military band. He collected music when he was overseas and has a German background. "We always enjoyed playing Mountain Lake," Williams said. "Most nights we were sold out or nearly sold out. We were playing there during the filming of Dirty Dancing. There were evenings we played there, and some of the cast would come," Williams said. "We performed there until 2012, when

the hotel went in a different direction... of course, the lake had dried up at that point," Williams said. Since that time, the band has traveled around Virginia and surrounding states, including many local breweries. They are available for reservations to perform at events. Heidi Stone, President and CEO of the Mountain Lake Lodge, is excited to see the band come back for their Winterfest event this January. "When we rebranded in 2013, we became known for other things like weddings and such. So, we decided to bring them back. It is something people can do in the wintertime," Stone said. Mountain Lake Lodge is offering a special package that includes performances by the Sauerkraut Band, a buffet of German cuisine, and a stay in the hotel. The band performance will be lively with lots of community engagement and authentic German dances in their traditional Bavarian-style of clothing. The dates of the events will be January 19, 20, 26, and 27. More information about the band's music stylings with audio samples of a couple of their songs can be found on their website at [www.sauerkrautband.com](http://www.sauerkrautband.com) or on their Facebook page. Reservations can be made at [www.mtnlakelodge.com](http://www.mtnlakelodge.com) or by calling their reservation desk at 540-626-7121.

## Researchers receive USDA grant to study changing food spending patterns

After a long day, there's the age-old question of do we eat out or stay in? Over the last decade, that answer has increasingly shifted to eating out. In that timeframe, households have increasingly spent more money on food outside of the home than what's spent on eating at home. In that same time, the farmer's share of the food dollar eaten outside of the home has declined while the share of food eaten at home has increased. With a more than \$550,000 grant from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, researchers George Davis and Anubhab Gupta, in the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics in Virginia Tech's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, are studying the effects of the changing food spending patterns on the profitability and welfare of farmers, food processors, and consumers, or welfare through the United States' food supply chain. "Our project aims to look at the changing profitability and welfare effects in the food supply chain while recognizing that the effects will depend on the underlying market structure and consumer socioeconomic, demographic, and environmental factors," said George Davis, professor in the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics and project lead. The research team has four objectives: Look at how the difference between retail food prices and farm prices have changed over time as spending on food at home and food away from home has changed. Determine to what extent consumers have benefitted from the change in eating food at home versus food away from home. Consider what role the degree of competition within the food supply chain has affected profitability and welfare for the farmer, processors, and consumers as food spending patterns have changed. Consider how alternative policies affecting food at home and food away from home spending will affect profitability and welfare throughout the food supply chain. The project will combine well-established research areas that have not been joined before to understand important policy-relevant questions regarding price and quantity relationships, market structure, and welfare distribution throughout the associated market. To achieve the objectives, the team will utilize public-use consumer expenditure survey microdata from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, NBER-CES Manufacturing Industry Database, and estimates from the literature. "Our integrated framework will answer important policy and scenario questions related to socioeconomic and demographic profile of consumers, COVID-19, Ukraine war, etc. on welfare distribution throughout the food supply chain, while extending our knowledge on the four strands of literature and a unique way of integrating them," Davis said.

Max Esterhuizen for Virginia Tech

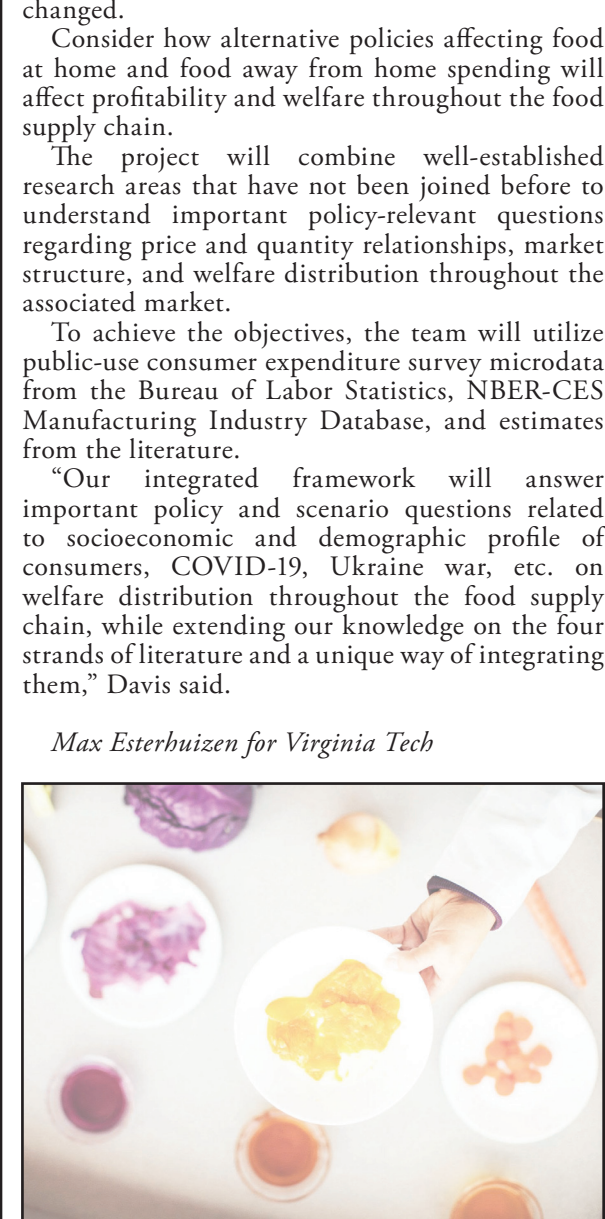


PHOTO BY SAM DEAN FOR VIRGINIA TECH  
**Researchers at Virginia Tech are studying the effects and implications of the changing food spending patterns on the profitability and welfare of farmers, food processors, and consumers.**

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## Wednesday, Jan. 17:

### Frances Frederick art exhibit opening and reception

At the Blacksburg Museum and Cultural Foundation, 204 Draper Rd SW, 5:30 -7:30 p.m. Frances Frederick is the Blacksburg Regional Art Association's (BRAA) longest-tenured member, joining in 1952. Her style has changed over these years but has always been rich in color and texture and influenced by a variety of subject matter. In this exhibit, we take a look back on some of her most vibrant work, on exhibit Jan. 17 - March 13.

## Thursday, Jan. 18:

### City scenes, urban landscapes photo club topic

Adi Ben-Senior will present the program on photographing city scenes and urban landscapes at the Radford Photo Club meeting at 6 p.m. at the Radford Public Library. The presentation is a follow-up of an earlier meeting on the same topic led by Michele Borgarelli. The two professional photographers have somewhat different styles and equipment preferences.

Attendees should feel free to bring a cityscape or urban landscape photo if they wish feedback and bring two photos to the February meeting to receive further critique. The photo challenge for January is black and white outdoor photography. There is also an open challenge. The Radford Photo Club is made up of professional and amateur photographers from throughout the New River Valley. Meetings, events, and outings are open to the public. If you have questions about the club, email Lucy Gilmore at lucyg.gilmore@gmail.com or Michele Borgarelli at mborgarelli@gmail.com.

### Sons of Confederate Veterans meeting

The Sons of Confederate Veterans, Stuart Horse Artillery Camp 1784 will meet at 7 p.m. at Aly's Italian Family Restaurant on 3204 Riner Rd. Members of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) are also invited to attend. For further information, please call 540-320-4315 or 540-239-9864.

### Community Quilting Bee

At the Blacksburg Library; 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. Join us for our weekly quilting and sewing group. Bring your supplies and join us for conversation.

## Friday, Jan. 19:

### Blood Drives

At the Radford Public Library and the Blacksburg Library; 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. Give Blood. Give Life. Register online at [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org). Walk-ins welcome.

## Monday, Jan. 22:

### Radford City Council meeting

The Radford City Council will hold its regularly scheduled meeting at 7 p.m. in council chambers at the Radford Municipal Building, 10 Robertson St., Radford. See the agenda at [www.radfordva.gov](http://www.radfordva.gov).

### Montgomery County Board of Supervisors meeting

Public meetings are the second and fourth Monday of each month at the Montgomery County Government Center, 755 Roanoke St. in Christiansburg. Closed sessions begin at 6 p.m. if needed. Open sessions begin at 7:15 p.m. Citizens are invited to attend and allowed to speak at each meeting. All regular meetings of the Board of Supervisors are rebroadcast on Montgomery County Comcast and Shentel Channels 190 daily.

## Tuesday, Jan. 23:

### Virtual Author Talk with Rajiv Nagaich

On-line event hosted by the Radford Public Library; 2 – 3 p.m. Over his 20-plus years of experience in United States elder law, Rajiv has developed a step-by-step guide to retirement planning by connecting the various dots of the retirement planning process. The LifePlanning approach is a system that brings together legal, financial, and housing issues into a coordinated effort that can work to make sure you don't end up

being forced into institutionalized care, going broke, and being a burden on your family. In this enlightening and informative webinar, Rajiv explains why "retirement plan failure" happens and how you can keep it from happening to you. To avoid the hidden traps in retirement planning, register now! Register: <https://library.org/radfordlibrary>.

### Blacksburg Town Council meeting

The council meets in regular session the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at 6:30 p.m. in the Roger E. Hedgepeth Chambers of the Blacksburg Municipal Building, 300 S. Main St. These meetings are open to the public and televised live on WTOB Channel 2.

### Christiansburg Town Council meeting

Regular Town Council meetings are held on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month beginning a 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers of Town Hall (109 E. Main St.). The public is welcome and encouraged to attend, with a citizen hearing time reserved at each meeting for residents to bring any matter they desire before the entire council.

## Friday, Feb. 2 and Saturday, Feb. 3:

### Book Sale

There will be a book sale at the Radford Public Library 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Lots of selections and low prices. Come and support the Radford Library.

## On-going:

### Now through Feb. 2:

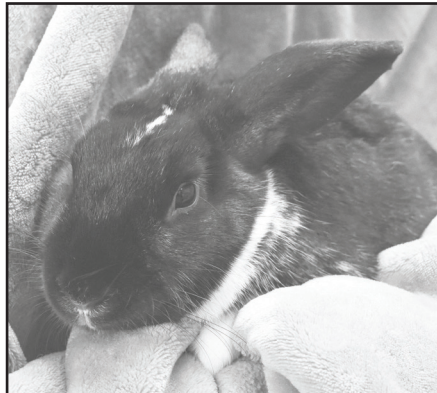
### Radford Tree Collection

Christmas Tree collection has begun and will run until Feb. 2. Simply place your tree curbside and Radford Public Works will collect it.

# PETS OF THE WEEK

These pets and many others are available for adoption at the Montgomery County Animal Care and Adoption Center, 480 Cinnabar Rd., Christiansburg. Phone: (540) 382-5795.

*Juniper is known for his gentle spirit. He's a quiet guy, and he doesn't mind being carried and held. He is also litter trained. Hop by the Animal Care and Adoption Center to meet Juniper.*



*Meet happy, energetic boy, Tony! He loves to run and play with toys. He will gladly sit for a yummy treat and may need refresher on doggie manners. Tony would do best in a home where he is the only dog.*

## Borgarelli

from page 1

newspaper showing a picture of her that was published in the National Geographic magazine. I believe her hands tells the story of her life."

He titled his winning photo in the open category "Waiting." Borgarelli explains, "A woman is sitting outdoors at the MoMA (Museum of Modern Art) in New York. The chair placed in a different direction may suggest she is waiting for somebody to come. At the end that is what we all do."

Adi Ben-Senior will present the program on photographing city scenes and urban landscapes at the Thursday,

Jan. 18, Radford Photo Club meeting at 6 p.m. at the Radford Public Library.

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*The Radford Photo Club*

## Virginia Credit Union, Member One Federal Credit Union announce intent to merge

RICHMOND – Virginia Credit Union, Inc. (VACU) and Member One Federal Credit Union (Member One) are excited to announce their plans to merge pending regulatory approval and a positive Member One membership vote.

If approved, the combined credit union would serve close to 500,000 members with 37 branch locations and employ approximately 1,100 employees throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Both organizations believe "Better Together" is a great way to describe the partnership, because this merger is between two financially healthy, future focused credit unions committed to providing unparalleled branch and digital access, along with amazing service for the members and the communities they serve. In a highly competitive financial services industry where consumers want things easier and more seamless than ever, this merger positions VACU and Member One to be a leading credit union doing just that.

"This partnership represents the heart of the credit union industry's cooperative mind-set," Chris Shockley, President/CEO, VACU said. "Fundamentally, credit unions came into existence when people saw an opportunity to band together and pool their financial resources in order to provide access to financial products and services to people who needed them."

Combined, the organization would not only be the third largest credit union in Virginia, but it would become one of the top 50 largest credit unions in the United States, with assets of approximately \$6.8B. While the asset size is notable, both organizations are more excited about what the spirit of this partnership and their combined strength would mean for the credit union's future.

Frank Carter, President/CEO, Member One agrees.

"When I first sat down with Chris and we started to share our visions for our respective credit unions, everything about partnering together felt right," Carter said. "From the onset, both of our boards of directors have focused on ensuring that together we'd continue to provide the best member, employee, and community value."

"Becoming a larger organization with more locations, more talent, and more resources will ultimately result in greater economies of scale which is a good thing," Shockley added. "What becoming larger does not mean, however, is that we sacrifice our mission and our purpose. We would continue to invest in our members, our people, and our communities."

Chris Shockley would remain the President/CEO of the combined organization. Frank Carter would remain with the organization in an executive role until he retires. It's also important to note that no employees would lose their job and no branch locations would be closed as a result of the merger.

As member-owned cooperatives, and under the guidelines of the National Credit Union Administration, a successful merger is contingent upon Member One Federal Credit Union member approval. Upon that approval, the entities legally join sometime in 2024.

As the merger process moves forward, both credit unions will provide information to their respective memberships via their websites ([vacu.org](http://vacu.org) and [memberonefcu.com](http://memberonefcu.com)), along with other relevant communication channels.

*Submitted by Virginia Credit Union and Member One Federal Credit Union*

## Citizens Support Group celebrates Law Enforcement Appreciation Day

### Lori Graham

Contributing writer

The Citizens Support Group celebrated Law Enforcement Appreciation Day on Jan. 9, one of the many ways the organization highlights the hard work and dedication of law enforcement professionals.

The Citizens Support Group was formed in April of 2016 as a 501-3C non-profit organization and works to support Montgomery County's police officers, but organizes support for other law enforcement officers as well.

Ken Hester is currently serving as the President of the Citizens Support Group. Fran Hester serves as Secretary. They enjoy the variety of ways the organization is able to be there to assist in events for the local officers throughout the year.

Ken Hester said they do things like, "being there for them through a life event, during training sessions by providing lunch, if there is a weather-related incident or a search and retrieval and they need help with water and support."

Additional ways that the group may support officers are in having retirement celebrations. The retiring officer can decide if they prefer a formal reception or something more casual.

Also, if an officer is hospitalized then the citizens' group provides them with a fruit basket. If married or have a child, they can also receive a gift. They are also there to offer support in very difficult times for an officer or their families such as the passing of a loved one, providing flowers and a sympathy card.

For Law Enforcement Appreciation Day this year on Jan. 9 Chick-Fil-A provided breakfast and citizen volunteers were there to deliver and give out the food.

If community members eat at Mission BBQ restaurant in Christiansburg and purchase a Hometown Hero cup, some of the proceeds will also go to local law enforcement funds.

"Sheriff Partin reached out to them. They offered to let us be one of the organizations when they do their cup effort," Hester said.

There are many other events throughout the year to bring local police officers and law enforcement families

together including a spaghetti dinner around Halloween and a sit-down dinner for Christmas where they have door prizes that are donated by local businesses or purchased through fundraising by the citizens group.

"Part of that evening is also the Employee of the Year is announced for each section of the sheriff's office," Fran Hester said.

Another big event that the citizens group does each year is producing the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office calendars. Calendars are produced locally by Southern Printing but designed and organized in-house by the volunteers. Very little cost is involved so that all money can go to the officers. They have around 140-160 businesses, depending on the size of advertisements they purchase. The calendars are free for the public and approximately 400 were distributed to local businesses and the public this year.

Not only are the citizens supportive of their local law enforcement but the first responders are supportive



# OPINION

## Looking back over the four stages of a law career

**Evans "Buddy" King**  
*Columnist*

As I near the end of a legal career that now spans over four decades (all at the same firm, pretty much unheard of these days), I have concluded that there are four stages or phases of the experience.

First, there is the "whippersnapper" stage. This is when you first get out of law school, when you start your career, hopefully a path to partnership if you are in private practice, when you still like to talk about the law at cocktail parties and lunch, when some like to throw their weight around with store clerks and auto mechanics by telling

them "I'm a lawyer!" (Like you're going to take them to court for \$39.99 for a bad muffler job). I hope I didn't do that; not a trait I admire.

It's not a term you hear much these days, but I remember my dad using it. I heard him occasionally refer to someone as a "whippersnapper." Not an insult, more of a way of referring to an incomplete canvas. If you look it up, it means "young, presumptuous, inexperienced, overconfident." Pretty apt term for many of us coming out of law school, but when you join an established, institutional firm like I did, with many much older and truly iconic lawyers, you soon get the "overconfident" kicked out of you. It

didn't take me long to realize that not only was I not the smartest person in the room, I couldn't even find the hallway that led to the room!

Another part of the "whippersnapper" stage is that you tend to hold on to some insecurities from law school days. You still harbor deep resentment for those on the other side of you in an argument - if you don't shake this characteristic at some point, it can be detrimental to your career, not to mention your personal relationships. In West Virginia, we lawyers in private practice like to say, "you never know who will be judge someday." In larger markets, you might never again run into someone you called an "\$%#^&" in practice

- in West Virginia they might be on the bench in your county for the next 30 years. The main takeaway from the "Whippersnapper Period" is "don't burn bridges."

The second phase of the legal career is the "Young Gun" stage. This occurs five to seven years after you are in practice and lasts until there are newer and more lethal weapons around than you. I capitalize "Young Gun" because in my mind the term originated from magazines put out under that title (usually by regional or statewide newspapers) to sell ads and to have

See Law, page 8

## Ballard looking forward to legislative session

The Virginia General Assembly is now in session, and soon the House and Senate will begin considering legislation in earnest. With a new General Assembly comes the potential for new committee assignments; committees of course being the legislative bodies that deal with most of the deliberation on bills before they reach the House floor. Last Wednesday, I was named by the Speaker of the House to the following committees: Courts of Justice, Counties, Cities and Towns, and Labor and Commerce. Labor and Commerce is a new assignment for me, and it considers consequential matters from energy policy to the minimum wage. I'm excited about my assignments, and I'm ready to start the real work of analyzing and debating hundreds of bills in detail.

Legislation that we'll see in the 2024 legislative session has begun to be made publicly viewable, and I'm disappointed to report that the new Democratic majority seems intent on making overreaches like they did in 2020 and 2021. Instead of focusing on solving the real problems that Virginians face, they instead continue down the path of introducing policies and themes that are more at home in Washington, DC than we are accustomed to in Richmond.

While Democrats are busy appeasing the more extreme elements of their base by making energy more expensive, Republicans remain focused on making life more affordable for every Virginian. You and I know that the cost of energy continues to rise, and along with inflation, renewable energy mandates from the state do nothing to relieve the pressure typical Virginia families are feeling. Rather than relax these mandates and accept a realistic approach toward renewables, House Democrats feel emboldened to move toward mandatory "Green New Deal" style policies that will only make life more expensive. That includes their continued insistence on an electric-vehicle mandate - which our infrastructure is not currently equipped to handle.

I'm equally perplexed to see the introduction of legislation that would reduce penalties for gangs involved in organized "smash and grab" style shoplifting, like we have seen in San Francisco, California. Soft-on-crime policies against brazen criminal acts only emboldens criminals and will undoubtedly hurt our business climate. This used to be considered common-sense, which is something that seems to be getting in shorter supply.

Part of being in the minority party is holding the majority accountable. There will be many instances this session in which Democrats and Republicans work together toward common goals, but that does not mean that Republicans should comprise our core values. We can be fair while standing firm on policies that make our communities safer, and we should not let special interests ram "green energy" policies through the legislature without fully vetting their practicality and impact on Virginia families. As my committee work begins, I look forward to reviewing all legislation before me with a discerning eye.

As the Delegate representing the 42nd House District in the Virginia General Assembly, your concerns are my greatest priority. If ever I may be of assistance to you and your family, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at DelJBallard@House.Virginia.Gov. You can also follow me on Twitter @JasonBallardVA or like my Facebook page, Jason Ballard for Delegate, to keep up to date with what I am doing in Richmond and in our community on your behalf.

Del. Jason Ballard

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Michael Showell, *Publisher*  
Heather Bell, *Editor*.....hbell@mainstreetnewspapers.com  
Aila Boyd, *Executive Editor*.....aboyn@ourvalley.org  
Wendi Craig, *Advertising Consultant*.....advertise@ourvalley.org

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## Average Virginia gas prices 24-cents a gallon lower than last year

Average gasoline prices in Virginia have fallen 1.9 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$2.91/g today, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,081 stations in Virginia. Prices in Virginia are 5.5 cents per gallon lower than a month ago and stand 24.0 cents per gallon lower than a year ago.

The national average price of diesel has fallen 2.0 cents in the last week and stands at \$3.89 per gallon.

According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Virginia was priced at \$0.32/g yesterday while the most expensive was \$3.99/g, a difference of \$3.67/g. The lowest price in the state

yesterday was \$0.32/g while the highest was \$3.99/g, a difference of \$3.67/g.

The national average price of gasoline has risen 0.6 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.04/g today. The national

See Gas, page 8

## AARP Virginia fraud alert: Know your seller when shopping online

One key to shopping online is reading the fine print, including who you're actually buying from. While we often think of giant online retailers like Amazon, Walmart and Target as a store they can be more like a mall or flea market where you are buying products from a variety of sellers. However, some of those sellers are more reputable than others.

Criminals use these websites to resell stolen products or items that either don't work or contain dangerous chemicals. One easy way to protect yourself is to make sure you are buying directly from the retailer that runs the website. You can usually find the seller's name on the product page near the button for buying the item.

Shipping times and return policies are another sign of who you are buying from as products from the branded retailer will often ship faster and have a clear return policy.

As of the third quarter of 2023, online shopping scams were the second highest category of fraud reported to the Federal Trade Commission, and 51% of those reporting lost a combined \$308 million. The actual losses are likely far higher since fraud is significantly under-reported. Be a fraud fighter! If you can spot a scam, you can stop a scam.

AARP Virginia

**CROSSWORD**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
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**CLUES ACROSS**

- Correct code
- Foundation
- A pulpy condition
- Venezuelan river
- Orange-red chalcid
- The shallowest Great
- Floating ice mountain
- Japanese cervids
- Special Interest Groups
- Divertimentos
- Indian wet nurses
- Flatfishes
- Haitian currency (abbr.)
- Southeast
- One point N of due W
- 10 decibels
- Wild oxes of SE Asia
- Ancient Greek City of SW Italy
- A passing glancing
- Marriage announce-
- ment
- Tandoor bread
- Mag. \_\_\_\_: Time
- Portended
- Alicante's 7th city
- Gulf of, in the Aegean
- Strike
- Hill (Celtic)
- Stuart Little's author
- White
- Male sheep
- Indian dresses
- Pears
- Tardy arriver
- Smudge of ink
- Youngsters
- About aviation
- Fante and Twi peoples
- Round shape
- Of she
- Beard lichen genus
- Brings into being
- Displaced liquid
- Frigid Zone
- Newsman Rather
- Prefix for inside
- Short-billed rails
- Sensory receptor
- Egyptian temple \_\_\_\_
- Ombo
- Challenges
- Photograph (slang)
- Declined gradually
- Tilapia nilotica
- One-edge sword
- Wets
- Small coins (French)
- Twine together
- The middle point
- Sea eagle
- Activist Parks
- Humbug
- Atomic #79

**CLUES DOWN**

- Strikes lightly
- Fencing sword
- Hooked pericarp
- Entreats
- Edison's Corp.
- Cooks in an oven
- Amounts of time
- Tooth caregiver
- Spellbind
- Solo opera piece
- Audible exhales
- Siddhartha author
- Coach's game area
- Gross revenue
- Toff
- 1896 Italian defeat (alt. sp.)
- Auto fuel
- A woven structure
- Reveal a secret
- Hawaiian geese

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# RADFORD SPORTS

## Local gymnasts compete at this weekend's Rockstar event



**Christiansburg's Brooklyn Proccacio finished second in Saturday's Rockstar Invitational Level 10.**

**Marty Gordon**  
*NRVsports@ourvalley.org*

Walking across a beam that is roughly four inches wide, 16.5 feet long that is four feet off the ground would be tough for anyone, but gymnasts at the top level make it look easy as they literally dance across it during a three-to-four-minute routine.

Christiansburg High School student Brooklyn Proccacio made it look easy, bringing the crowd to their feet. Saturday, the 15-year-old scored a 9.450 on the beam during the Level 10 competition (one of the highest in the sport) at the 16th Annual Rockstar Invitational at the Christiansburg Recreation Center. She would receive silver in the event.

This past year, she participated in the Eastern Nationals and Regionals where she finished seventh. She also finished fourth in the Beam at state competition. On Saturday, onlooking judges called her a "rising star."

Proccacio is one of the local athletes, who discovered there was no gymnastics at her high school, thus she turned to Virginia Techniques, a Christiansburg gym that has turned out its share of successful gymnasts.

Over 1,100 athletes competed in this week's competition, and according to Virginia Technique's Cheryl Johnson which hosts the event, the numbers have continued to grow almost every year.



PHOTOS BY KYMN DAVIDSON-HAMLEY

**Brooklyn Proccacio is congratulated by Coach Cheryl Johnson after taking one of the top spots in the beam competition during Saturday's Rockstar competition at the Christiansburg Recreation Center.**

"Participation in gymnastics continues to rise," she said.

The Christiansburg gym listed 110 of its own participants with 21 gyms being represented this weekend from five different states. A similar event is slated to be held later this year.

Proccacio was one of those Virginia Techniques representatives and follows in the footsteps of six previous gymnasts that are all participating at the next level in college including University of Kentucky All-American Rae Worley.

"I was never at the gym when she coached or participated, but I know some of the others," Proccacio said.

The teenager recently attended camp at the University of North Carolina where her interest was peaked even more.

"I want to be a gymnast at the next level," she said after the Rockstar Invitational on Sunday. She is leaning toward UNC.

Her mother says Brooklyn was doing cartwheels at the age of four so relatives told her you have to get her into gymnastics. The rest seems to be history as she has fell in love with the sports and practices five times a week.

She also participates in the floor exercise, bars and vault, but the beam is her favorite.

Proccacio admits she has fallen off the beam several times in practice and competition, but she just gets right back up and climbs back on the beam.

She is scheduled to participate in state and regional competition later this year.

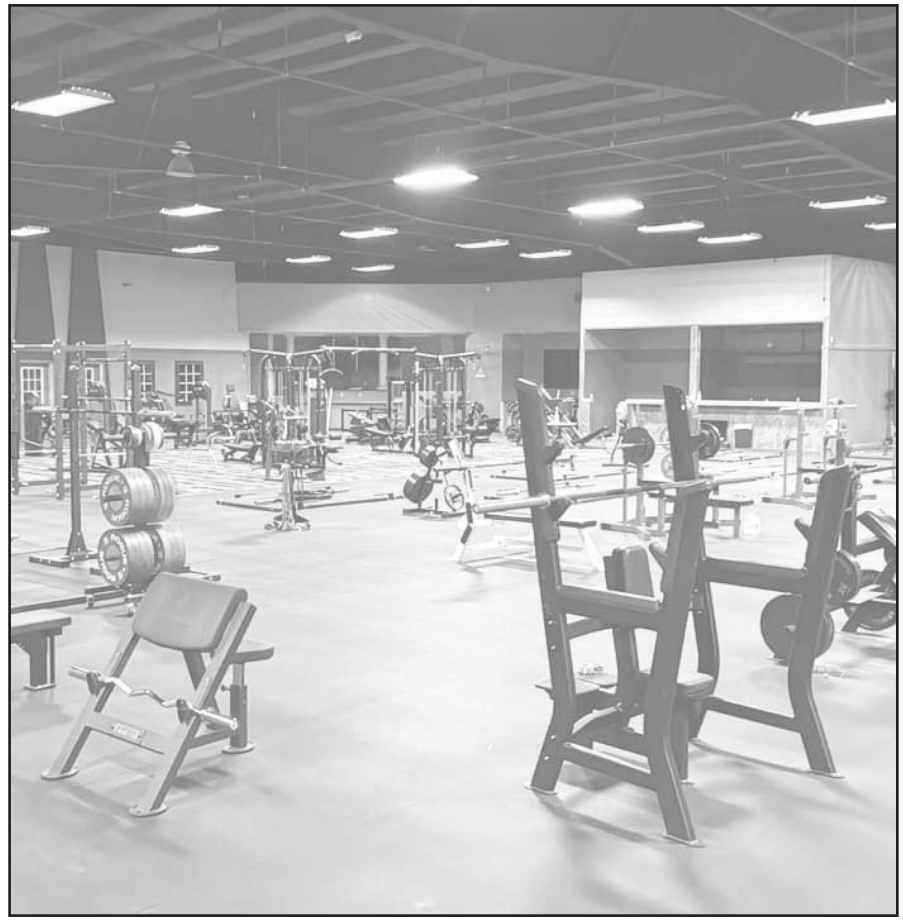


PHOTO BY MARTY GORDON

**A former trampoline park has been transformed into a 12,000 sq. ft. powerlifting gym in Christiansburg.**

## New weight club opens in Christiansburg

**Marty Gordon**  
*NRVsports@ourvalley.org*

Weightlifters in the New River Valley have a new place to call home. Very Good Gym has opened at a former trampoline park/skating rink at 200 Midway Plaza in Christiansburg.

Virginia Tech Spencer Wilhelm felt there was a need, and he jumped at the opportunity, opening this past September. They took over a 12,000 square ft. facility, which had previously been home to a trampoline park.

"We had to do some work to the floor, but for the most part, it works perfectly for a powerlifting gym," Wilhelm said.

The powerlifting aspect seems to have caught on as membership is starting to soar. There are no current plans to avert from the power lifting aspect.

"There are some cardio pieces of equipment, but we are built just for lifting," said Wilhelm graduated from Virginia Tech in 2019 with a Masters in Nutrition and has been involved in powerlifting for a number of years.

The biggest attraction is the fact users have access to the new gym 24/7.

Currently, there are no personal trainers available, but Wilhelm is considering for the future.

Already, people are scratching their head over the unique name of the gym. Wilhelm said a friend came up with the idea and it sort of just stuck when he kept saying it over and over.

Already, the facility has attracted a national super weightlifting event for later this spring. The World Raw Power Federation WRPF has announced the 2024 BlueRidge Beat Down (Tested) at the at Very Good Gym in Christiansburg on March 23.

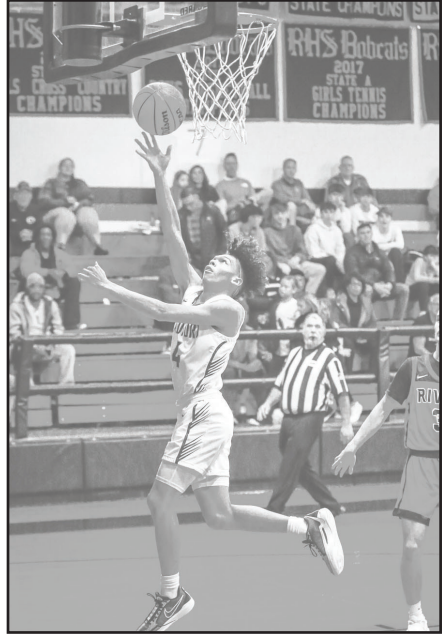
Registration is now open, and you can secure your spot by visiting the event section at the link on the gym's webpage: [verygoodgym.org](http://verygoodgym.org).

"We feel honored to host an event of this stature and hope to have more in the future," Wilhelm said.

The gym hopes to have as many as four more events by the end of the year.

Very Good Gym has monthly rates with a 20 percent discount for "heroes", which include military and those in the EMS, fire and/or police sector.

## Radford pulls out win over James River



**Mekih Martin glides in for a layup on a fast break for Radford. Martin finished with 13 points.**

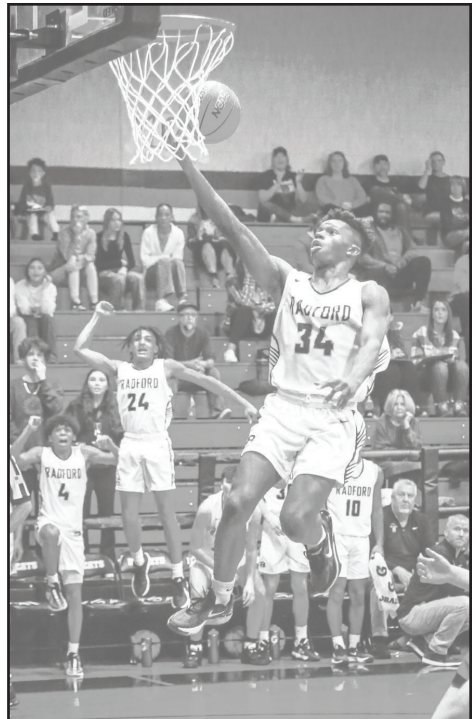
Radford is now 2-0 in Three Rivers District play. The Bobcats also took the junior varsity contest by a 73-6 score.



**Reece Honaker scores inside against James River.**



**Sincere Taylor gets free in the paint to score a Bobcats' bucket and two of six points in the win.**



**Jaden Hendricks scores on a breakaway lay-up in Friday's 55-29 win.**

PHOTOS BY BRYANT ALTIZER

## Christiansburg girls first, boys seventh in indoor meet



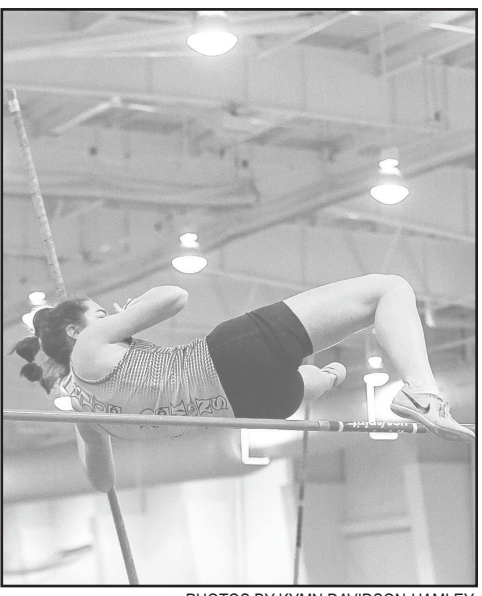
**Christiansburg High School's Leila Haley placed first in the girls 55 Meter at this past week's East Coast Elite indoor meet at Roanoke College.**



**Donovan Richardson placed third for the Blue Demons and achieved a personal best with a jump of 6.5 meters.**



**Christiansburg's Summer Hamlin finished first place in the 1,000 meters.**



**Sophomore Jenna Saia took the girls pole vault competition with a 2.13-meter mark.**

PHOTOS BY KYMN DAVIDSON-HAMLEY

