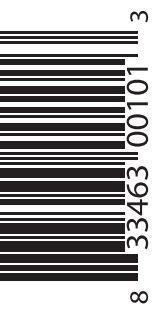


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On-line threats originating in Roanoke affect NRV schools

Heather Bell Editor

Two people are in custody in Roanoke following on-line threats to schools via a Snapchat group used by students at Patrick Henry High School...

superintendent said Monday that was unrelated to the Roanoke on-line threat. "Christiansburg Police are aware of a threat being re-shared throughout our school community through social media..."

lockdown at Radford High and John Dalton Intermediate schools Friday afternoon. "Earlier this afternoon, school and law enforcement were made aware of an online threat made to Radford High School..."

See Threats, page 2



COURTESY IMAGE



PHOTO BY JOYCE CROWDER

Glencoe Mansion, Museum & Gallery has been awarded a \$30,000 grant from the Virginia Museum History & Culture's (VMHC) Commonwealth History Fund.

Glencoe Mansion receives 2024 Commonwealth History Fund Grant

RADFORD – Glencoe Mansion, Museum & Gallery has been awarded a \$30,000 grant from the Virginia Museum History & Culture's (VMHC) Commonwealth History Fund.

chosen to receive a grant. According to Executive Director Scott Gardner, Glencoe Mansion will use the funding "to increase physical accessibility within the museum to assure that more visitors are able to appreciate all parts of the museum."

The funding will also allow for the development of an exhibit, "Building a New Life," which "will take visitors through the history of the post-Civil War Reconstruction period,

See Grant, page 10

Lawrence University student from Radford named co-winner of Concerto Competition

APPLETON, Wisc. - Lawrence University sophomore David Smith, of Radford, thought he was on track to study cello in a conservatory.

But his final year in high school rerouted him. "I kind of fell in love with math and physics in my senior year," Smith said.

He then sought a college path that would allow him to study math and physics at a high level while remaining immersed in music. He found just that at Lawrence, where he is pursuing a double major in mathematics and physics while also being a fixture in the Conservatory of Music.

"I've played cello since I was five," Smith said. And he's done it brilliantly - so much so that he was recently named the co-winner of the Conservatory's annual Concerto Competition (along with junior Annika Schmidt). As a co-winner, he will now take to the Memorial Chapel stage to perform as a soloist with the Lawrence Symphony Orchestra (LSO) on March 8.

After more than a dozen years playing cello, Smith said he found the perfect balance at Lawrence. Drawn to the theoretical, math-heavy side of physics, switching focus from music to math was the right choice, he said. But that yearning to stay connected to his music didn't go away.

"That is why I like Lawrence; I can participate in everything without having to be in the Conservatory," Smith said. "I'm taking lessons, I'm going to studio, I'm in a bunch of chamber groups-I'm in the Con and I'm not."

For the past year, Smith has focused his music on a single work: Ernest Bloch's Cello Concerto. He will perform it in the March 8 LSO concert. It is fully titled "Schelomo: Rhapsodie Hebraique for Violoncello and Orchestra." the immense title is matched by music of similar complexity. "It's unlike any other cello concerto that's been



PHOTO COURTESY OF LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY

Lawrence University sophomore David Smith, of Radford, was recently named the co-winner of the university Conservatory's annual Concerto Competition.

written," Smith said. "At least to me it is different than a lot of the standard repertoire that cellists play. ... It's kind of melismatic and, I wouldn't say atonal, but uses a lot of dissonance and tension and release."

Instead of a melody focus, the cellist works with the orchestra to evoke various moods. Despite Bloch's original plan for a vocal soloist, Smith finds the work highly idiomatic for the cello.

"It was really written with cello in mind," he said. "It's just satisfying to play; there are a lot of very expressive sections where you can take as much time as you want and play with every aspect of it. There is a lot of creative freedom you can have."

Smith has plans to study physics in graduate school but will not abandon the cello along the way, he said.

"I don't see myself ever putting the cello down," he said.

Lawrence University via Merit Pages

Delegates Ballard and Obenshain comment on House budget proposal

Budget includes funds to support labor and delivery services at hospitals

RICHMOND – Delegates Jason Ballard and Chris Obenshain, the New River Valley's representation in the state House of Delegates, have released a statement on the passing of the House Appropriations Committee's budget proposal, which includes funding to support obstetric-gynecological services at hospitals impacted by workforce challenges.

"We were both disappointed to learn of Montgomery Regional Hospital's recent decision to temporarily cease obstetrics services for patients in the New River Valley. Access to healthcare services is already a challenge for many families in Southwest Virginia. Once we learned of the workforce challenges that led to this unfortunate decision, we immediately went to work on trying to find potential solutions. After speaking with leaders at Montgomery Regional, we requested funds for additional graduate residency positions in obstetrics in the biennial budget. Our hope is that these additional residency slots will help facilitate the reopening of obstetric services at Montgomery Regional in the near future."

"Those of us who live in rural areas know that maternal healthcare options in our communities have been in rapid decline," said Ballard. "This is why I found it imperative to take immediate action through the Commonwealth's budget to incentivize the recruitment of these essential healthcare providers. My request of one million dollars in the state budget to fund 10 new OB/GYN graduate medical residency slots is a direct response to our region's declining maternal healthcare options, and its inclusion into the final budget agreement is vital to ensure our region's mothers are not endangered by lack of local access to OB/GYN's."

"While I am disappointed that the Senate did not include Senator Hackworth's budget amendment for this same purpose in their proposed budget, we will continue working to ensure this critical funding is included in the final version of the budget," said Obenshain. "I am grateful to Delegate Ballard for his partnership in working on this important issue facing families in Montgomery County and beyond. Access to care, particularly for women's health and obstetric services, is vital to the workforce and quality of life in Southwest Virginia."

Delegates Jason Ballard and Chris Obenshain

Saturday's Snow Moon a picturesque sight



PHOTO BY REBECCA HARRIS

Radford News Journal reader Rebecca Harris, of Radford, submitted her photo "Once in a blue moon," a beautiful daytime full moon photo. According to Space.com, February's Full Snow Moon on Saturday occurred "while the moon approached its farthest point from Earth in its orbit, known as apogee. That means the full moon appeared up to 10% smaller in the night sky — not enough for most of us to notice, but seasoned moonwatchers were able to tell the difference."

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## Wednesday, Feb. 28:

### Virtual Author Talk with Kim Scott

Hosted by the Radford Public Library; 2 -3 p.m. Why is feedback so difficult, and how can we make it easier? The idea is simple: You don't have to choose between being a pushover and a jerk. Kim Scott, New York Times bestselling author of Radical Candor: Be a Kick-Ass Boss Without Losing Your Humanity, will explain the Radical Candor feedback framework and how you can practice it today. Register now to start your practice! <https://library.org/radfordlibrary>.

### Central Business District Meeting

The Central Business District Committee will meet at 6:30 p.m. in the Administrative Conference Room at Town Hall.

## Thursday, Feb. 29:

### Free Health Screening with Carilion

At the Radford Public Library; 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. February is American Heart Month! It's the perfect time to get these FREE preventative health services: Blood pressure check; Diabetes risk assessment; Stroke risk assessment. No registration required! For more information, contact Sarah Frazier, Community Health Educator, at [sefrazier@carilionclinic.org](mailto:sefrazier@carilionclinic.org) or (540) 633-9361.

## Saturday, Mar. 2:

### Free Income Tax Prep with VITA

At the Christiansburg Library; 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program is returning with free income tax preparation. Walk-ins only. Income limits apply. Contact NRCA for more information

at 540-320-3217 or <https://www.facebook.com/VITAatNRCA>.

## Monday, March 4:

### Author Talk with David Craig: A Good Shadow

At Christiansburg Library; 6 -7 p.m. Join author David Craig as he talks about his book A Good Shadow: The Real Story of the Mine Wars: Guns, Lies & Spies. Books will be available for sale via cash, check, Venmo, or Paypal. Paperbacks will be \$17.00 and the hardbacks will be \$25.00.

## Tuesday, March 5:

### Medicaid and Personal Care lecture

“Steps To Take When Applying for Medicaid and Personal Care” Lecture Program at 2 p.m. at the Blacksburg Community Center for an informative program led by Chris Conner and her team from Medi Home Health & Hospice to learn the important steps that should be taken when applying for Medicaid and personal care. This program is free, but registration is required. To learn more, call 540-443-1142.

## Monday, Mar. 11:

### 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, Mar. 12:

### 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 at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers of Town Hall (100 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.

## On-going:

### NRV Virginia Passenger Rail Survey

The Virginia Passenger Rail Authority is conducting a survey seeking input on planning, designing, and constructing rail infrastructure improvements to extend passenger rail service to the New River Valley. To participate in the survey, please visit <https://form.jotform.com/240044027996054>. For more information on the New River Valley passenger rail expansion, please visit the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority's website at <https://vapassengerailauthority.org/nrvproject/>.

# Virginia State Parks campgrounds reopen March 4 with burn restrictions in effect through April 30

RICHMOND – Virginia State Parks will reopen its campgrounds for the season on Monday, March 4. Campsites, which have been closed since Dec. 4, are now available for booking online through [reserve.vaparks.com](http://reserve.vaparks.com). Visitors are encouraged to plan ahead and may make reservations up to 11 months in advance to secure their desired camping dates and accommodations.

Managed by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Virginia State Parks offers more than 1,800 campsites, with options ranging from primitive camping to RV sites with electric and water hookups.

Full-service campgrounds with bathhouses are open from the first Friday in March through the first Monday in December, with the exception of Douthat, Hungry Mother, Pocahontas and Shenandoah River state parks, which have full-service campgrounds open year-round.

Campers who begin making reservations in March should be aware that the 4 p.m. Burning Law is in effect from Feb. 15 through April 30. This law bans open fires, including charcoal and wood fires, between midnight and 4 p.m. This restriction applies to all areas of a park, including picnic and cabin areas with grills or fire rings.

During the burn restriction period, gas grills and propane stoves are allowed; however, some parks have personal grill restrictions, so visitors should contact the park before making plans to bring one.

An exception to the 4 p.m. burning law is campgrounds that have an on-duty camp host. In those situations, signage will indicate that open fires are allowed before 4 p.m. if they are maintained within a designated campfire ring or circle. The fire must be under constant supervision until it is completely extinguished. All flammable material should be cleared from a 20-foot area around the fire, and campers must also have ready access to water, a rake and a shovel.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

### Camping in Virginia State Parks resumes March 4.

To check the camp host status, please contact the park directly. Primitive campgrounds do not have hosts. For more information about campgrounds and burning restrictions, please go to [virginiastateparks.gov](http://virginiastateparks.gov).

Visit the camping webpage for more details about reservations, cancellations and severe weather procedures. If you are traveling with horses, visit the equestrian camping page for the policies dealing with

horses while camping.

Reservations can be made online or by calling 1-800-933-PARK (7275) and choosing option 5. You can make lodging reservations up to 11 months in advance or for camping, up to 2 p.m. on the day of arrival, so start planning your next adventure today.

Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

## Threats

from page 1

School and John Dalton Intermediate School were placed in a secure status. McHarg and Belle Heth went into a hold status as a cautionary measure. At this time, we believe it is safe for students and staff at all schools to resume their regular school day.”

“The safety of our students and staff remains our top priority,” the announcement continued. “We take all threats seriously and as always, appreciate the assistance of the Radford City Police. If you have any questions, please reach out to your child’s school principal.”

“Our incident from Friday appears to be specific to Radford High School and does not give the impression of being connected to the other occurrences,” said RCPS Superintendent Dr. Adam Joyce on Monday. “A social media threat was brought to the attention of staff and investigated. Our administrators, working shoulder to shoulder with our SRO’s and the Radford City Police Department, acted swiftly and professionally to end the episode almost immediately.”

Stephen Karl Johnson, 35, was arrested Thursday after an investigation by the City of Roanoke Police Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). According to the U.S. Department of Justice, Johnson was federally charged with one count of communicating in interstate commerce a threat to injure another person. A juvenile connected to Johnson has also been arrested in the investigation.

“This defendant caused fear and emotional distress to the parents and students of the Roanoke City Public

School system and for those actions he has been justly charged,” United States Attorney Christopher R. Kavanaugh said. “If anyone communicates a threat to our schools, our public servants, or our public institutions in the Western District of Virginia, we will seek to hold them accountable under federal law. I am grateful to Chief Booth, the Roanoke City Police Department, and the FBI for their diligence in bringing a peaceful end to this situation.”

“The FBI will vigorously investigate and bring to justice those individuals who threaten to do harm to our communities,” said Stanley M. Meador, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI’s Richmond Division. “We will continue working with our local law enforcement partners to keep our communities safe.”

The Dept. of Justice release said “according to court documents, on the evening of Feb. 21, 2024, several threatening messages were posted to a Snapchat group used by Patrick Henry High School students. Those messages included but were not limited to:

“Im done bro fr on some real sh\*\* I’m pulling up to school with a ak and any kid I see that’s in my sight I shooting fr.”

In reaction to these messages, Roanoke City Public Schools closed all facilities on Thursday, Feb. 22, 2024.

In order to join the Snapchat group reserved for Patrick Henry High School students, users must register with a Gmail addresses. Investigators were able to trace the threatening messages to a Gmail address used by the defendant.”

The FBI and the City of Roanoke Police Department are investigating the case.

## 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.

*Billy is a younger, energetic dog who is full of personality. He enjoys treats and will patiently wait for goodies while sitting in place. He is friendly and likes attention. Stop by to meet Billy!*



*The name’s Catstanza. (George) Catstanza but you might also know him by a couple of aliases: Art Van Delay, Koko, and Gammy. Catstanza is a very sweet, docile boy—but please, don’t ask him to celebrate Festivus. He enjoys affection and lets you know he’s happy when he starts making biscuits... or a marble rye. Jerry, you’ve found your purrfect match!*



# OPINION

## Delegate says lawmakers should address counterfeit pill presses before loud mufflers

Now that the Virginia General Assembly is past the "Crossover" deadline, much of our focus has turned to the Commonwealth's budget. Both legislative bodies will now consider their competing visions of the budget this week before differences between the two are worked out in a conference committee.

I'm pleased to report that several budget amendments I submitted have been included in the House Appropriations Committee's recommendation to the full House of Delegates. This includes giving Radford University - as well as other institutions of higher education - authority to reduce non-resident tuition rates to improve the Commonwealth's talent pipeline. Language for another budget amendment of mine, which would create a new Opioid Data Tracking System for the Commonwealth, has also been included. And of local significance, my amendment to the budget which allocates one million dollars over the next two years to fund 10 new OB/GYN graduate medical residency slots has also been included in the House's recommendation. This request is a direct response to our region's declining maternal healthcare options, and its addition to the budget is vital to ensure our region's mothers are not endangered by lack of local access to OB/GYN's.

While the inclusion of my amendments to the House Budget is certainly a positive, Democratic priorities



### Delegate Jason Ballard

Virginia General Assembly

elsewhere in the budget are problematic. As the saying goes, "money talks," and the General Assembly speaks to its priorities in the budget. Governor Youngkin's proposed budget contained tax cuts while making significant investments in education and other areas of focus. House Democrats have put forth different priorities, including placing the enforcement of rules against loud mufflers ahead of protecting kids from counterfeit pills. SB 469, patroned by Senator Mark Obenshain (R-Harrisonburg), would have made it illegal to own a pill press with the intent to manufacture counterfeit pills laced with fentanyl. Although SB 469 passed the Senate on a 38-2 vote, House Democrats refused to give this bill a hearing, citing the "high fiscal impact" of the bill. What is the cost, you might ask? The estimate is \$50,000 over two years. Although Democrats

couldn't find money in the budget for this important public safety measure, they were able to direct \$150,000 towards a Democratic lawmaker's proposal to address vehicles with loud mufflers.

Counterfeit pills have been a major problem as of late. As I've written about in the past, Loudoun County reported eight overdoses at one high school in the span of just one week, late last year. Had teachers not intervened, some of these students may have died from taking these pills. In 2022, there were 2,490 drug overdose deaths; 80 percent of which involved fentanyl or its analogs. Compare that figure with 553 homicides with firearms, also in 2022. Instead of focusing on things like vehicle noise and restricting the lawful ownership of firearms, perhaps Democrats should instead channel their energy on the pressing problem facing Virginia: the scourge of opiate addiction and overdoses.

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.

# Gas prices lower in the last week

Average gasoline prices in Virginia have fallen 4.2 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.19/g today, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,081 stations in Virginia. Prices in Virginia are 18.6 cents per gallon higher than a month ago and stand 6.7 cents per gallon higher than a year ago. The national average price of diesel has fallen 2.6 cents in the last week and stands at \$4.06 per gallon.

According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Virginia was priced at \$2.79/g yesterday while the most expensive was \$3.99/g, a difference of \$1.20/g. The lowest price in the state yesterday was \$2.79/g while the highest was \$3.99/g, a difference of \$1.20/g.

The national average price of gasoline has fallen 1.9 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.24/g

today. The national average is up 13.3 cents per gallon from a month ago and stands 9.2 cents per gallon lower than a year ago, according to GasBuddy data compiled from more than 11 million weekly price reports covering over 150,000 gas stations across the country.

Historical gasoline prices in Virginia and the national average going back ten years:

- February 26, 2023: \$3.12/g (U.S. Average: \$3.33/g)
  - February 26, 2022: \$3.43/g (U.S. Average: \$3.59/g)
  - February 26, 2021: \$2.61/g (U.S. Average: \$2.71/g)
  - February 26, 2020: \$2.27/g (U.S. Average: \$2.45/g)
  - February 26, 2019: \$2.20/g (U.S. Average: \$2.41/g)
  - February 26, 2018: \$2.36/g (U.S. Average: \$2.51/g)
  - February 26, 2017: \$2.10/g (U.S. Average: \$2.28/g)
  - February 26, 2016: \$1.53/g (U.S. Average: \$1.73/g)
  - February 26, 2015: \$2.21/g (U.S. Average: \$2.34/g)
  - February 26, 2014: \$3.24/g (U.S. Average: \$3.43/g)
- Neighboring areas and their current gas prices:  
 Roanoke- \$3.13/g, down 6.3 cents per gallon from last week's \$3.19/g.  
 Richmond- \$3.23/g, down 4.6 cents per gallon from

last week's \$3.28/g.

West Virginia- \$3.22/g, down 4.6 cents per gallon from last week's \$3.26/g.

"Motorists have finally seen a bit of a break in the recent rise in the national average, with more states seeing drops than increases in the last week. While the pause has certainly been nice, this is more like a rain delay than it is a seventh inning stretch," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy. "It's likely only a matter of time before we see the rise re-engage and prices start to head higher, but we'll take any break that we can. Oil prices have shown some signs of struggling last week after coming within arm's reach of \$80 per barrel before falling closer to \$76, but all eyes are on refiners as utilization remained seasonally weak, around 80% of capacity, meaning there's less gasoline and diesel being produced. That's why it's just a matter of time before prices collide with rising demand and start to accelerate again."

GasBuddy

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## AARP Virginia fraud alert: Getting help after the scam

If there is one thing everyone should understand, it is that "scammers" are career criminals skilled at the art of manipulation, and no one is immune. These crooks target people of any age; in fact, 41% of those who reported a fraud loss to the Federal Trade Commission in 2023 were under the age of 30. So, what can a person do if they experience fraud?

One resource is the AARP

Fraud Watch Network Helpline. Every weekday, trained AARP volunteer fraud fighters are helping victims and their families understand what happened, report the crime, and start to put their lives back together. That number is 1-977-908-3360. We also offer an online small group victim support program to help address the emotional harm fraud victimization causes. Learn more at aarp.org/

fraudsupport.

If you or someone you know has been the victim of fraud, make sure to file a report with local police; among other things, you will have this as evidence in the event restitution becomes possible down the line.

Be a fraud fighter! If you can spot a scam, you can stop a scam.

- AARP

Send community news and photos to  
 communitynews@ourvalley.org

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**CLUES ACROSS**

- 1. Bay Area Transit Auth. (abbr.)
- 5. Pull apart by force
- 9. Ancient Egyptian King
- 12. Missing soldiers
- 13. Capital of Japan
- 14. Diamond month (abbr.)
- 15. Spheres
- 16. Surpassing good
- 17. British thermal unit
- 18. Philippine island & seaport
- 19. Legally argued
- 20. Belonging to singer Fitzgerald
- 22. Bowler hats
- 24. Has a strong odor
- 25. Doyens
- 26. London Gallery
- 27. Rural delivery
- 28. Rods
- 31. Stonehenge plain
- 33. Withdraw from membership
- 34. Execute or perform
- 35. Central or Yellowstone
- 36. Municipality in Norway
- 39. Bay of NW Rep. of Ireland
- 40. Skin designs
- 42. Son of Jephunneh
- 43. Baseball's Ruth
- 44. Clare Booth \_\_, Am. writer
- 46. Black tropical American cuckoo
- 47. Filled with fear or apprehension
- 49. 6th Jewish month
- 50. Wide metal vessel used in cooking
- 51. Make by pouring into a cast
- 52. Colombian city
- 53. Heat unit
- 54. Carpenter, red and army
- 55. Adam and Eve's garden

**CLUES DOWN**

- 1. Big man on campus
- 2. Made public by radio or television
- 3. Labelled
- 4. Inform positively
- 5. Drinks habitually
- 6. Supplemented with difficulty
- 7. SW Scottish river & port
- 8. American poet 1874-1963
- 9. Pads
- 10. Ingestion or intake
- 11. Tie up a bird before cooking
- 13. Bulrushes of the genus Scirpus
- 16. Turned rod on a spinning wheel
- 21. Having or covered with leaves
- 23. The 44th U.S. President
- 28. Midway between S and SE
- 29. Tuberculosis (abbr.)
- 30. Inspected accounting procedures
- 31. A twilled woolen fabric
- 32. Potato state
- 33. The work of a sailor
- 35. Involving 2 dimensions
- 36. Fanatical or overzealous
- 37. Consolation
- 38. Wild sheep of northern Africa
- 39. Erect leafless flower-bearing stalk
- 40. Afrikaans
- 41. Weighing device
- 43. Very dry champagne
- 45. Emerald Isle
- 48. A resident of Benin

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## OBITUARIES

## Hill, Sandra Lynn

Sandra Lynn Hill, 56, of Pulaski, passed away Wednesday, Feb. 21, 2024, at UVA Medical Center.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Howard Dietz Burnett and Deanna Mallery.

Survivors include her husband, Patrick Shannon Hill; stepfather, Gary Mallery; sister, Vicki Hawkins (Jerry); special stepsister, Melinda Reeder (Rich); stepsisters, Missy Hill, and Lori Caudill (Ronnie); mother-in-law, Ann Hill Jameson; brother-in-law, Roger Hill (Cindy); sister-in-



law, Courtney Dunavat (Chuck); her special feline companions, Billy Boy, Ann and Potsy; special sisters of the LRBC; and many other relatives and friends.

Special thanks to Frances Davis, Leslie Martin and the sisters of LRBC.

A celebration of her life will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday, Mar. 9, 2024, at The River Company at the Pete Dye River Course.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to the UVA Hospitality House, your local ASPCA/pet rescue, or the National Kidney Foundation.

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

## Hypes, Belinda C.

Belinda C. Hypes, 69, of Rich Creek, went to be with the Lord Feb. 17, 2024, at the Forsyth Medical Center, Winston-Salem, N.C. She was born at Panama City, Panama Jan. 22, 1955.

Belinda was a graduate of Christiansburg High School and New River Community College. She was the daughter of the late Aubrey and Mary Frances Cruise. She was also preceded in death by her sister, Rodonna Sutphin; brother-in-law, Allen Sutphin; brother, David L. Cruise; and



sister-in-law Debbie Cruise.

She is survived by her companion/forever friend James (Jug) Donathan; daughter, Oceanna Cruise Matney;

son-in-law, Geoff Matney; sister, Pamela C. Young; brother-in-law, Thomas E. Young; nieces Mary Dennis, Whitney Young; nephews, John Young, Shawn Cruise; great nephews Aubrey Ford, Joey Culverhouse, Westyn Ware; great niece, Casandra Cruise; great-great nephew, Zaylen McGraw; and three special fur babies, Smokey, Bandit, and Rambo.

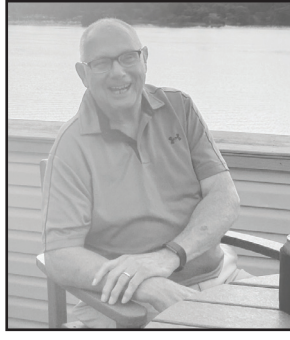
Visitation was held Sunday, Feb. 25, at McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg. The funeral immediately followed.

## Nash, Sr., Robert Howard

Robert Howard Nash, Sr., 77, passed away Sunday, Feb. 25, 2024, at his home in Dublin.

He retired from Lowe's and was a member of First United Methodist Church in Pulaski. He was preceded in death by his parents, John and Mary Virginia Nash; and a brother, Johnny Nash, Jr.

Bobby was survived by his wife, Karen "Penny" Nash; children, Robert H. Rob" Nash, Jr. of Pulaski, Lesley Nash McCarthy (Pat), and Chad Nash (Tonya); brother, James "Bill" Nash (Tammy);



sister-in-law, Violet Nash; grandchildren, Declan and Nash McCarthy, Megan, Brett, Emma, Etta, Issac, Silas and Lettie Nash; many special nieces and nephews; and

other relatives and friends.

The family will receive friends 10 a.m. until 12 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 29, 2024, at the Mullins Funeral Home in Radford. Memorial services will begin at 12 p.m. with Pastors Danny and Pat Collins officiating.

In lieu of flowers, please consider donations to the Pulaski Presbyterian Church Choir or to First United Methodist Church Choir in Pulaski.

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

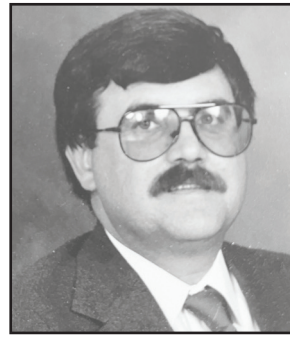
## Phillips, Richard Keith

Richard "Rick" Keith Phillips, 75, of Radford, formerly of Williamsburg, passed away Sunday, Feb. 18, 2024.

Born in Oakland, Calif. where his father was stationed in the Navy, Rick spent most of his childhood with his four siblings in Indiana and graduated from Princeton High School in 1966. Rick was a U. S. Navy veteran and served in the Vietnam War. After his time in the service, he settled in Williamsburg where he raised his family and was a successful businessman and entrepreneur.

Rick was known throughout Williamsburg for his hospitality skills. He was a member and past president of the Williamsburg Hotel and Motel Association. Most notably, he founded and operated the Sportsman's Grille. "Mr. Rick" was one of the best "saloon keepers" around and had many customers who became friends. He was a hard worker who loved his family, dogs, fishing, hunting, and putting up his light tree on the deck every year at Christmas.

An enthusiast of unique and poorly functioning vehicles and boats, you may have seen



him driving around in his red truck, early 90's-era limousine, or one of his many Volkswagen vans. You could also find him working on his boat, the "Jolly Bateau" at the Kingsmill marina. Or perhaps you saw him stuck in the middle of Kingsmill Pond in a plug-less John boat with a dead trolling motor.

Rick spent most of his adult life in the Tidewater area, but eventually relocated to Radford to be close to his daughter's family. He loved his grand dog "Pippa" and looked forward to her visits.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Harold and Margaret "Peg" Phillips; sisters, Susie Harrod and Anne "Pooh" Spear, as well as her husband Ron.

Survivors include his daughter, Lisa Carter (John) of Christiansburg;

son, Alex Phillips (Jessica) of Santa Barbara, Calif.; grandchildren, Maxton "Max" Carter and Lou Phillips; brothers, Chris Phillips (Sharon) of Williamsburg, and Jim Phillips (Connie) of Ocala, Fla.; brother-in-law, Byron Harrod of Williamsburg; and many cousins, nieces, nephews, and friends.

The family would like to thank his special longtime caregiver, Cynthia Black, as well as the staff at Radford Rehab and Carilion NRV Medical Center who provided exceptional care to Rick in his final days.

In lieu of flowers, please consider contributions to the National M.S. Society at nationalmssociety.org or Guiding Eyes for the Blind at guidingeyes.org.

A celebration of Rick's life will be held in Williamsburg later this year with details to follow.

The family intends to compile a record of memories, photos, and stories from Rick's life ahead of the event. Please email any contributions to memoriesofrickphillips@gmail.com by May 31.

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

## Spence, Sr., Richard Dale

Richard Dale Spence, Sr., 64, of Blacksburg, passed away peacefully Wednesday, Feb. 21, 2024, at a nursing home in Roanoke.

Richard was born July 24, 1959. He was the son of Paul and Barbara Spence. He retired as a construction worker for CL Draughn. He enjoyed spending time outdoors, collecting and watching Nascar and love for antique cars.

He is survived by his children Richard Spence Jr., Chrissy Agnew and husband Chris, Elisha



Spence and fiancé Scott Goad; grandchildren Riley Spence, Arabella Spence, Carter Agnew and Cole Agnew; brother Michael Spence; a very

special niece Sabrina Wesel and husband Mike McCoy; nephews Jonathan, Alex and Mikey Spence; uncle Ronnie Snider; aunts, uncles and cousins in Mt. Tabor; and great nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents Paul and Barbara Spence; sister Sandra Duncan.

Memorial service will be conducted Saturday, Mar. 2, 2024, at 2 p.m. in the McCoy Funeral Home Chapel. The family will receive friends from 1-2 p.m. before the service.

## Local teen blues player and band travel to Memphis for International Blues Challenge

Lori Graham

Contributing writer

A New River Valley band called Bunco recently had the unique opportunity to experience the International Blues Challenge in Memphis, Tenn. and record an album in the historical Sun Studios.

Performing with the band as drummer and percussionist is Nyo Allen, 15 years young with an intense passion for music.

The band made the trip to Memphis, during the week of Jan. 18, not as one of the approximately 160 competitors at the international event, but to experience the grandness of the sheer talent and environment of the incredible musicians appearing. What they did not expect was the snowstorm that blanketed the city, shutting almost everything down and delaying their recording session.

Harmonica player and Bunco member Thor Hanes said that due to the recording schedule change, "we gathered in the Airbnb and did what any music group would do in a snowstorm."

They played music. Unfortunately, Allen had planned to use the studio drums and did not travel with his own set.

Allen's Mom Lucy Lamana said they started grabbing whatever they could find to put together a percussion set for him.

"Using chopsticks, setting him up with upside down trash cans, and whatever else we could find to drum on," Lamana said.

Hanes said the terrible winter storm and the single digit temperatures in an area that typically does not see weather like this, did put some kinks in their plans.

"They did not plow the streets," Hanes said. "The whole city was closed except for Beale Street, because 160 bands came from around the world, some as far as Australia. It's thousands of dollars to get there from Australia. The Blues Foundation that puts on the event doesn't want that trip to be made in vain. It was packed, despite the fact that the city was closed. I have been six times and I love it. They keep things rockin'."

Once in the studio, the experience of being in a place where music greats such as Elvis Presley, B.B. King, and Johnny Cash once sat, they were met with the music engineers and an array of audio and sound equipment. This was an incredible experience for Allen.

"They had a tape machine that they had running, I didn't think they used it for anything, just for show, but it was just for this echo sound," Allen said. "It was the perfect Blues sound "There were also a lot of pictures of Elvis. Once you walk out of the studio, there is a whole merch area and a bar, there is like an '80s milkshake parlor too."

Bunco's recorded album is planned to come out in the spring with all original music, with Allen utilizing his passion and experience in mixing the album for the band. He is interested in learning



PHOTO BY CLOUD BOBBY

Drummer Nyo Allen on stage in Floyd.

to master music as well.

"He has fantastic music production ability," Hanes said.

Allen is a part of the Blues Initiative, supported by the New River Blues Society and Christiansburg Institute to encourage the growth of the next generation of blues musicians and enthusiasts. The Initiative offers youth in the area the chance to join in on free music lessons and opportunities to learn how to play individually or with a band. Hanes frequently has provided group introductory harmonica lessons at a variety of locations in the New River Valley, with each participant receiving a free harmonica. Harmonica is only one of the instruments that youth can receive musical instruction in through the program. The International Blues Challenge event is also a benefit that young musicians can be a part of through the encouragement of the Initiative. This was Allen's first year traveling to the International Blues Challenge.

Blues is one of the many styles of music Allen enjoys and actually plays with five different musical groups. In addition to Bunco, he is a member of the popular local band Music Road Co, along with his father Janiah Allen, a founding member of the group. Janiah Allen, a vocalist, bassist, and drummer, has been a great influence on his son and encouraged him in his musical gifts from a young age. Janiah Allen started out as a drummer and now plays bass for Music Road Co.

Their music is, "a smooth blend of funk, rock, reggae and afrobeat to get you groovin' and your hip bones movin'," according to Music Road Co's Facebook page.

Along with other events, Music Road Co will be playing at Floyd Fest 2024, at their new location this summer in Check, Va.

Solazo, a traditional Latin American band, is another group Nyo Allen drums for, adding to his range of musical talent and experience.



PHOTO BY THOR HANES

Bunco at Sun Studio, Memphis Tennessee. (left to right) Sun Studio engineers, Stacie Hanes, Dan O'Donnell (obscured), Travis Holland, and Nyo Allen.

The Ambassador and the Chosen Few, a reggae, soul, and rock band, provided an opportunity for young Allen to perform on stage with the group at Floyd Fest 2022. He continues to play with this group as well.

Last but not least, father and son, Nyo and Janiah Allen, are members of a group they started called Father Sun. The group performs reggae and island music.

Hanes expressed how Allen's passion and dedication as well as talent can be seen in other instruments that he has learned to play, and he has even been writing some music.

New River Blues Society member Holly Hunnicutt made the first connection between Nyo Allen and the Blues Initiative. Honnicutt, along with NR Blues Society, were seeking youth musicians or those interested in learning to play the Blues, and that is when they discovered Allen.

"Allen is capable of playing what he wants to play on most instruments," Bunco member, Hanes said. "He went to the first practice and had a blast."

"He is thoroughly convinced this is his calling in life," Lamana said.

"I am really grateful to the Blues Society for all the support they've given me, I feel the love and it feels great," Allen said. "Music is my therapy."

Looking to the future, Allen isn't sure yet what direction he wants to go in, and certainly has time to figure this out, but he knows that music will be a big part of it.

"I know I want to do music for the rest of my life but where that is placed is still unknown."

The Blues Initiative continues to seek youth in the community that would like to either learn to play an instrument or grow their already budding musical talents with Blues music. Any parents or youth interested in finding out more information about the Blues Initiative can visit the New River Blues Society's Facebook page or their website at newriverbluessociety.com.



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# RADFORD SPORTS

## Auburn claims third-straight regional championship



Auburn head coach Terry Millirons looks on after his team hits a three pointer in Saturday's contest at Virginia Tech's Cassell Coliseum in a double overtime win against George Wythe.



Auburn High School players hold up the regional championship trophy.

**Marty Gordon**

[NRVsports@ourvalley.org](mailto:NRVsports@ourvalley.org)

Auburn and George Wythe high schools are very familiar with each other's boys' basketball programs. Matter of fact, they have met four times this season including Saturday's Region C Class 1 championship at Cassell Coliseum on the Virginia Tech campus. All four times, Auburn has claimed the victory.

Saturday's contest took a little longer, going to four overtimes before Auburn took the 54-52 win.

Auburn's Nick Millirons hit the jumper from the elbow for the win with three seconds left in the extra click.

Auburn head coach Terry Millirons said it takes a lot of work by everyone involved to be able to get back there and win another regional championship. "These guys have put in the work and have really come together as a tight knit team," he said.

"We just have to stay focused on the next game in front of us. I feel like the tournament this year is wide open."

This is Auburn's third straight regional championship and fourth in six years. Millirons, the player, finished with 30 points including four 3-pointers.

Who knows? Auburn and George Wythe could meet a fifth time as both make the state tournament quarter finals.

Auburn is now 20-8 overall on the season including a 14-0 regional mark. They were scheduled to host an opening state playoff game against Chilhowie last night (Tuesday). George Wythe was set to play Honaker with the two possibly meeting again.



Nick Millirons hits the winning three-pointer in Saturday's regional championship contest.



PHOTOS BY ASHLEY AKERS

This is Auburn's fourth win this season over George Wythe (MED tournament and two regular season games), and they will continue their story this week in the state quarterfinals at home.

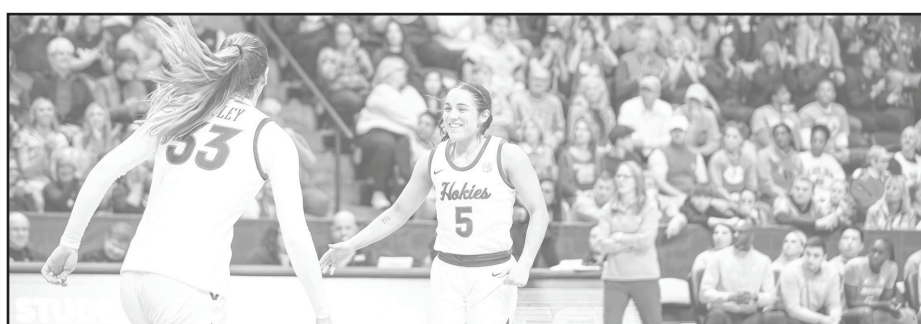


PHOTO COURTESY OF VIRGINIA TECH ATHLETICS

The Virginia Tech fan base said goodbye to female basketball players, Liz Kitley (left) and Georgia Amoore, on Senior Day. Amoore does have another year of eligibility. Kitley does not as this was her second Senior year.

## Amoore still pondering return

**Marty Gordon**

[NRVsports@ourvalley.org](mailto:NRVsports@ourvalley.org)

Liz Kitley and Georgia Amoore are probably the top duo this year in women's college basketball.

Kitley is a fifth year senior and walked onto the court as part of Sunday's Senior Day one last time, but the question is whether Amoore will have a second senior year and come back for another one in Blacksburg. She is eligible for another run but told onlookers and media on Sunday she had not made up her mind.

For the second time this season, No. 8 Virginia Tech women's basketball took down the Tar Heels, 74-62, marking the 10th straight win for the Hokies as they wrapped up regular-season play undefeated in the Cassell. Coincidentally, it was in front of another sold-out crowd.

With the win, the Hokies have the No. 1 seed in the ACC tournament for the first time in team history.

The dynamic duo of Kitley and Amoore took what might be their last regular season bow at home, but it is expected there would be a home contest in the NCAA tournament next month.

Kitley took center stage and racked up 34 points and six rebounds. Amoore added a double-double with 19 points and 11 assists and Matilda Ekh chipped in as well with 11 points.

The Hokies' defense held North Carolina to only 39 percent shooting from the field, including 29.4 percent from beyond the arc. The Tar Heels did not have much luck cleaning up their misses on the offensive glass either, as they finished with six offensive rebounds and managed seven second chance points while Virginia Tech cleared 32 defensive rebounds.

In other notes from Sunday, Amoore became the program's all-time leader in assists in the game.

Tech won its 25th consecutive home game, tying the program record. The 15-0 record in the regular season is the third time in program history that the Hokies have gone unblemished at home.

Amoore notched a double-double for the Hokies with 19 points and 11 assists.

The Hokies never trailed after taking a 21-5 first quarter lead. Virginia Tech tallied 16 total assists in the game.

Kitley, Amoore and Ekh combined to account for 86 percent of the Hokies points.

Amoore racked up 11 assists for Virginia Tech.

Virginia Tech had a 36-27 edge on the boards in the win.

Virginia Tech got a game-high 14 rebounds from Olivia Summiel.

"College Game Day" made its way to Blacksburg on Sunday morning shortly before the UNC contest.

Kitley and Coach Kenny Brooks made appearances on the show.

Brooks told the broadcasters that the situation at Virginia Tech was a "healthy culture", and he described the team as "chicken salad".

"And you gotta have the chicken to make the salad, and that is Georgia (Amoore)," he said.

At the end of the show, the four female announcers took jello shots and thanked the crowd for coming out early in the morning.

Brooks has gone international with several of his incoming recruits. This past week, Amelia Hassett, a 6-foot-3 native of Australia announced on social she has verbally committed to Virginia Tech. Amoore is also Australian.

Hassett, from New South Wales, is averaging 20 points, 13 rebounds and two blocks in 24 minutes this season. She is shooting 55.9% from the field. She made 48 3-pointers in 26 games.

## Sports notes: Lady Hokies claim indoor title

**Marty Gordon**

[NRVsports@ourvalley.org](mailto:NRVsports@ourvalley.org)

For the first time in program history the Virginia Tech women's track and field team claimed its third consecutive ACC Indoor Championship on Saturday in Boston, Mass.

The women's team secured three first place finishes on the final day of competition along with seven additional athletes scoring in the top eight earning the team 67 points five events. With a combined 92 points, Virginia Tech heads home to Blacksburg with its third straight title. The women's team has won four of the last five indoor conference championships. Clemson placed second with 80.5 points, followed by Notre Dame in third with 70 points.

Senior Victory Gorlova was awarded ACC Women's Field MVP for the third time in her career tallying 18 points in two events. Gorlova finished first in the long jump (6.39m) on Friday and second in triple jump (44' 2.50" (13.47m)) on Saturday. Cierra Pyles finished seventh in triple jump with a mark of 41' 4.25" (12.60m).

Freshman Chiara Siermann won her first conference title in the women's pole vault clearing a personal-best height of 14' 2.25" (4.33m). Siermann ranked first in the conference prior to the meet clearing a height of 14' 0" (4.27m) at the Virginia Tech Challenge one week ago. Journey Gurley and Kennedy Drish cleared 13' 6.50" (4.13m) finishing fourth and sixth, respectively. Tech has won the women's indoor pole vault title seven straight years since Lisa Gunnarsson first claimed the title in 2018.

Junior Barbara Malikova added 10-points to the team's score running a personal-best 52.56 in the 400m final winning her first conference title.

Lindsey Butler and Star Price sprinted their way to finish line place first and second with a difference of .03 seconds between them. Butler edged out Price to claim her third indoor 800m ACC title with a time of 2:03.86. Price crossed the line second with a time of 2:03.89.

Katrin Brzyszkowska and Katie Seyfang secured the win for the team finishing second and sixth in shot put. Brzyszkowska finished second with a collegiate personal-best 55' 6.25" (16.92m), Seyfang placed sixth at 51' 5.75" (15.69m).

### Big South indoors in Blacksburg

The Radford University women concluded the Big South Indoor Track & Field Championships Saturday with lots of medals, personal records and a third-place finish as a team. Chloe Wellings took first place in the 3000m, MegAnne Gilmore came in second in the mile, Raichelle Cornelius earned silver in the 400m and the 4x400 relay team took

third, walking away with a school record.

The team was made up of Jordan Jackson, Elyssia Fisher, Jaslyne Robinson and Cornelius. The record holders earned this title with a time of 3:52.23, beating their previous time and having the second best time in school history.

Wellings ran to victory at 9:33.72 to earn gold in the 3000m. Sophie Magson came in fourth place in this event at 9:52.30 with MegAnne Gilmore right behind her to land in fifth place. Abby Seigel earned a personal best in the 3000m to beat out her previous time in Radford's record book. To round out the Highlanders in this event, Mackenzie Brownrigg came in 12th place.

Gilmore's time of 4:58.43 in the mile put her in second place with Magson not too far behind landing in fourth place at 5:00.25, adding five points to the Highlanders. Kate McLearn came in ninth place for the Highlanders. Cornelius also earned second place in the 400m, running 56.74, a new personal best.

Former Bruin tops in RBIs

Emily Dickerson is currently ranked in the nation for RBIs in D3 college softball. She is a freshman softball player at Pfeiffer College.

### RU baseball commit

Eli Baker, a standout junior player from Eddyville, Kentucky, has made his collegiate intentions clear. Baker took to social media last week to announce his commitment to Radford University, where he will continue his baseball career with the Highlanders.

During his sophomore campaign in 2023, Baker showcased his prowess on the mound, boasting an impressive 7-1 record with an outstanding 0.98 ERA. Throughout the season, he accumulated 57 strikeouts over 50 innings pitched.

### SEC honors Worley

Fifth-year University of Kentucky senior Raena Worley has been named Southeastern Conference Gymnast of the Week. The Christiansburg native wins the conference honor for the second time this season following her first 10.0 on the uneven bars and 26 career all-around title.

In the most recent matchup against No. 24 BYU, Worley was nothing short of a standout on all four events. On vault, she recorded a 9.900 for her giant Yurchenko one and a half to kick off the evening in Rupp Arena at Central Bank Center.

On bars, Worley recorded her first ever perfect score on the apparatus to secure the 13th individual win of her career. Her stellar anchor routine proved why she is No. 1 in the national rankings, tied with Oklahoma's Jordan Bowers who also scored a 10.0 on the event this week.

# Amoore from page 9



PHOTO COURTESY OF VIRGINIA TECH ATHLETICS

Virginia Tech honored its senior women basketball players on Sunday before its game with UNC. Coach Kenny Brooks is pictured with (from left) Kayla King, Olivia Summiel, Georgia Amoore and Liz Kitley.

## Beamer recognized with legacy award

The Quarterbacking Children's Health Foundation has recognized Coach Frank Beamer as a recipient of the 2024 Nick Saban Legacy Award at Red Mountain Theatre Company in Birmingham.

Beamer served as head coach for the Virginia Tech Hokies from 1987-2015, whom he put on the map by leading them to a national championship appearance in 2000, three Big East championships, and four ACC titles. He was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame three years after his retirement in 2018.

The Nick Saban Legacy Award

was created in 2022, honoring the achievements of college coaches and their contributions to the game of football. Two coaches were presented with the NSLA on Monday, Coach Frank Beamer and the late Coach Bobby Bowden, who is known as one of the greatest coaches in college football, leading Florida State to two national titles.

Previous NSLA recipients include the late Vince Dooley and Bill Snyder in 2023 and Steve Spurrier and the late Eddie Robinson in the inaugural year.

Staff report

## Tech softball hoping to make some noise

Marty Gordon  
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Softball season is officially underway on the collegiate diamond, and Virginia Tech is ranked in the top 25 and hoping to make some noise this season.

Tech is 7-2-1 after an unusual start that includes an out-of-the-ordinary tie with Auburn University.

February 23-25, the Hokies will participate in the Georgia Classic hosted by the University of Georgia. The weekend slate includes two matchups with NRV neighbors Radford University, Dartmouth, and two contests against No. 3 Georgia.

Tech will face UGA after the Bulldogs eliminated the Hokies last May in the Athens Regional, defeating Tech 12-3.

Coincidentally, this year's Virginia Tech's roster includes a transfer from Radford University. Cori McMilan is a junior infielder that should lots of action this season.

In all 10 games so far this season, seniors Emma Ritter, Addy Greene, and Cameron Fagan have occupied the 1-2-3 spots in some fashion. The trio has a combined 38 hits, .418 batting average, and .714 slugging percentage.

Greene and Fagan lead the team with five doubles, and Greene and Ritter lead the team with 13 hits each. In seven games, all three batters have produced at least one hit. At least one of them has recorded a hit in nine games and at least two of them have recorded multiple hits in six games.

Sophomore Lyndsey Grein leads the Tech pitching staff with 27 strikeouts and ranked 3rd in the ACC. She recorded 10 strikeouts in the 2-1 win

against BYU, where she gave up only 3 hits, 1 walk, and 1 run. In 10.2 innings pitched last weekend she gave up only 7 hits, and 3 walks. Grein recorded a career-high 12 strikeouts in the win against No. 20 Auburn on February 9.

Freshman Michelle Chatfield made a significant impact in the lineup last weekend, producing a .333 batting average. Chatfield hit a timely RBI in the 2-1 win against BYU to tie the game in the fifth inning. She also smacked two home runs against Grand Canyon and Illinois State.

Chatfield ranks second on the team in home runs with four and RBI with eight, behind Rachel Castine. Additionally, she is ranked fourth in the ACC with a .955 slugging percentage.

The Hokies will match up against 10 schools that reached the 2023 NCAA Tournament, including two Super Regional participants and one Women's College World Series participant.

The slate features 21 home games at Tech Softball Park, including four ACC series in Blacksburg.

The Hokies' roster is split evenly with 12 returners and 12 newcomers. Key returners include Emma Lemley, Emma Ritter, Bre Peck, and Cameron Fagan who received All-ACC honors last season.

Other returners include: outfielders Addy Greene and Trinity Martin, infielders Maija Louko, Rachel Castine, and Teagan Thrunk, catcher Kylie Aldridge, pitchers Molly Jacobson and Lyndsey Grein.

The Hokies lost three starters: outfielder Kelsey Brown, infielder Kelsey Bennett and infielder Jayme Bailey (who returns this year as a student assistant).

# ESPN's, RU alum Smith headlines Red and White Gala

Radford University Athletics and the Highlander Club will host the 2024 Red and White Gala on Friday, April 26 inside the Dedmon Center.

The evening will feature a silent auction that can be attended in person or virtually, as well as a live auction, dinner, music, and an open bar. Attendees are encouraged to wear their Radford red however they can, whether it be a dress, a tie, or a pair of shoes.

Radford University alumnus, Giles County native, and beloved ESPN

personality Marty Smith will serve as the evening's guest of honor.

Smith is one of ESPN's most popular and recognized reporters and hosts who currently covers a variety of sports including college football, basketball, both the NFL and NBA, NASCAR and others. Smith's features and reporting are often seen on ESPN platforms including SportsCenter and ESPN.com. Smith, who joined ESPN in 2006, launched his own show Marty Smith's America in August 2017 on ESPN2.

Some of sport's biggest names including Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo, Major Golf champion Rory McIlroy and Oklahoma City's Paul George have sat down with Smith for his show in addition to stars outside of sports including music artist Sam Hunt. Smith has also traveled the world for various features including his trip to Rome with Coach Jim Harbaugh and the University of Michigan football team where he spent a week following the team as they saw the sites of Italy.

In addition to

hosting Marty Smith's America, Smith co-hosts the popular radio show Marty and McGee on SEC Network and ESPN Radio. Smith also guest-hosted SEC Network's traveling college football show, SEC Nation, during Fall 2019.

Prior to joining ESPN, Smith covered sports for daily newspapers in Roanoke and Lynchburg, Va., before joining NASCAR.com. As a Radford student, he worked in the Sports Information office throughout the mid-to-

late 90's for notable SID's such as Rick Rogers, Mike Ashley and Chris King.

All proceeds from the event will go towards the Highlander Club Annual Fund, providing Radford Athletics with the necessary resources and flexibility to compete for championships and provide the best collegiate experience on-and-off the playing field.

Individual tickets will cost \$175 per person while a pair can be purchased for \$300. More details to come soon regarding a block of rooms that have been reserved at the new

Highlander Hotel and will be available to Gala attendees for a discounted rate.

For more information visit TheHighlanderClub.com or contact Cory Durand, Deputy Athletics Director, at cdurand@radford.edu. Those interested in becoming a sponsor of the event can reach out to Assistant Athletic Director for Business Development Mat Harman at charman2@radford.edu.

Radford University Athletics

# Outdoor report: NRV deer harvest up from 2022

During the 2023-24 deer hunting season, hunters reported harvesting 206,586 deer in Virginia, up approximately 12% from the 184,968 deer taken during the same time frame the previous season. This year's total included 105,201 antlered bucks, 982 bucks that had shed their antlers, 12,567 button bucks, and 87,836 does (42.5%).

The youth and apprentice deer hunting weekend resulted in a harvest of 2,890 deer. Archery hunters took 14% of the total deer harvest, while muzzleloading deer hunters and firearms hunters took 26% and 60% of the total harvest, respectively. In counties where dogs could be used to hunt deer, 50% of deer were harvested with the aid of dogs during the general firearms season.

Montgomery County saw a major increase from 2,498 in 2022 to 2,777 in 2023. This includes 1,449 antlered males. Floyd rose from 2,344 to 2,689, and Giles rose to 2,159 from 1,819.

Overall, 2023-24 deer harvest was up 5% from the previous 10-year average of 196,862. This season's harvest represented a rebound from the 2022-23 season, when harvests were down due to a bumper crop of acorns. The dip in harvest last season likely created a "stockpile" of deer for hunters this season. Additionally, deer experienced a mild winter, entering 2023 on a higher nutritional plane and enabling the herd to be more productive. White oak mast was scarce during the fall of 2023, which could have made deer move more in search of this preferred food item, increasing their visibility to hunters. Additionally, a number of new deer hunting regulations designed to increase

harvest opportunities went into effect, which also may have contributed to the increased harvest.

Data presented in this summary are preliminary and do not include deer taken during the late urban archery or special late antlerless-only deer seasons, on out-of-season deer kill permits, or deer hit and killed by vehicles.

While the deer harvest showed an increase in numbers, turkeys were down through the Commonwealth.

A total of 1,443 wild turkeys were harvested in Virginia during the 2023-2024 fall turkey hunting season, an 11% decrease over the 2022-2023 harvest of 1,621.

While Virginia's turkey population appears to remain robust, fall turkey harvests have been declining for over two decades. A recent DWR survey of turkey hunters indicated that many turkey hunters are choosing to save their turkey tags for the more popular spring turkey season, choosing to pursue other game during the fall.

Reproductive success is another variable that can alter fall hunting success. Inclement weather in May and June can lead to nest losses or death of the young turkey poults. In 2023, the productivity estimate (1.8 poults/hen) was below the long-term average (2.6 poults/hen) on a statewide basis for the second year in a row, marking one of the lowest recruitment index measures over the last 15 years. Since juvenile birds account for 40-60% of the fall harvest, reproductive success greatly influences turkey population size and subsequently fall harvest.

As in the last several years, the archery harvest remained relatively high, making up approximately 22% of the overall

harvest. Thanksgiving Day and the Wednesday before Thanksgiving continue to be popular fall turkey hunting days. This year a total of 383 birds were harvested during that two-day timeframe, accounting for nearly 27% of the total fall harvest. Thanksgiving Day accounted for the single highest day of harvest with 232 birds, or 17% of the total fall harvest.

Declines in this year's harvest were most apparent east of the Blue Ridge with a decrease of 17% as opposed to a 4% decrease west of the Blue Ridge. The greatest declines were noted in the Tidewater (27%) and Northern Piedmont (22%) regions. The harvests in the Southwest Mountains and Southern Piedmont were similar to last year's.

The decline in fall turkey hunting participation has been an ongoing issue for Virginia and many other eastern states. One of the goals of the DWR Wild Turkey Management Plan, which is under revision, is to reverse the general decline in fall turkey hunting interest. The October youth and apprentice fall turkey hunting weekend and the late January season were designed to encourage interest in fall turkey hunting. Unfortunately, it appears the declining trend is continuing despite these efforts.

But the New River Valley continued to balk at the trend. Floyd County was even with 18 recorded for each of the last two years. Giles rose from 23 to 31 and Montgomery was also up from 18 to 25 birds.

Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources

## Grant from page 1

especially as it relates to the African-American experience in Southwest Virginia. Additionally, funding will be utilized for preservation efforts to assure that Glencoe and its contents are protected for generations to come."

"We're grateful for this incredible opportunity as it will allow our museum to become more accessible and welcoming to our guests," said Gardner. "It will also permit us

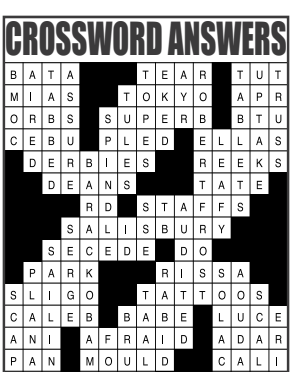
to better preserve and promote the history and culture of Radford and the surrounding region."

The VMHC, in partnership with Virginia's Department of Historic Resources (DHR), awards grants to history organizations and projects throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia through its Commonwealth History Fund. There are several key selection criteria to be considered for the grants, including the significance of the project or resource, its impact on its community and the Commonwealth, the focus on historically underrepresented topics and communities, and the need for funding and urgency of the project. One of the largest initiatives of its kind, the

Commonwealth History Fund is expected to award up to \$2,000,000 over its first five years. Eligible recipients include Virginia non-profits, educational institutions, and state recognized Virginia Indian tribes. The fund was made possible through the generosity of Dominion Energy and others.

"The Commonwealth History Fund continues to exceed our expectations in supporting a wide range of historic preservation projects and initiatives across the state," said VMHC President and CEO Jamie Bosket. "We remain committed to reaching more Virginians with this wonderful opportunity to invest in Virginia history."

Staff report



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