



News Journal

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Radford High takes second in regional competition

RADFORD – The Radford High School forensics team took second place in the 2CD Super Region competition Saturday and several members will be competing at the state level.

“Congratulations to our forensics team for winning second place at the 2CD Super Region competition yesterday,” the Radford High Visual and Performing Arts department posted on Sunday. “These kids worked so hard and we are so very proud of them all. Join us for our community night performance on

March 20 to see all of their amazing pieces. A special congratulations to our students who will compete at states at the end of the month!”

Students participating at state include: First Place Original Oratory- Abbey Napolitano, First Place Humorous Interpretation- Ali Schepisi, First Place Humorous Duo- Collin Baron and James Riffe, Second Place Prose- Princeton Stevens, Third Place Impromptu- Kate Dishon and Storytelling Alternate- Caroline Pappas.



PHOTO COURTESY OF RHS VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

The Radford High School Forensics team took second place at the 2CD Super Region competition and several students will be participating in the state competition.

Staff report



PHOTO COURTESY OF NRCC

Java Brothers will be one of two bands featured at the March 9 installment of New River Community College's Concert Series.

Java Brothers featured at NRCC Concert Series

The music of Java Brothers and Marshall Page & Coal Mountain will be featured during New River Community College's Concert Series event on Sat., March 9.

Music will begin at 6 p.m. in 117 Edwards Hall at NRCC in Dublin.

The Java Brothers bluegrass band members met during a Monday Night Radford Fiddle and Banjo jam. Their musical influences include Bill Monroe, Stanley Brothers, Jimmy Martin, Old and In the Way, The Seldom Scene, Sam Bush, Tony Rice, JD Crowe and Doyle Lawson. The Java Brothers mix standard bluegrass and newgrass with fiery original tunes in their live shows. The band includes Joe Abercrombie on banjo, Ralph Berrier on fiddle, Chris Burgoyne on mandolin, Doug Capobianco on string bass, and Wayne Frye on guitar. Performing

with the band at NRCC on banjo will be Jason Wheeler.

Marshall Page is an accomplished singer/songwriter from Parrott Mountain, a small coal mining community from Southwest Virginia. He is joined by Butch Robbins on banjo, Sam Leary on upright bass, Keith Webb on fiddle, and Richard Burk on mandolin. The band will be performing original songs as well as a few traditional songs.

Corporate sponsors of the music events include Anderson Audiology, Dublin; August Jewelers & Boutique, Inc., Radford; CCKKY, LLC – Fazoli's, Dublin; Deanie Hall – State Farm Agent, Dublin; Estes Auto & Truck Parts Inc., Pilot; First Community Bank, Pulaski; Gregory Seeding and Landscaping Company, Pulaski; King Tire Service, Pulaski;

Lee's Body Shop, Pearisburg; Martin's Pharmacy, Pulaski; Pepsi Cola Bottling Co., Dublin; Pulaski Patriot, Pulaski; SERVPRO, Montgomery & Pulaski Counties; and Southern Furniture Warehouse, Radford.

The doors open at 5 p.m. for the show. Admission is free; however, donations will be accepted to help offset travel expenses for the musicians. The music events are typically held the second Saturday of each month through April at NRCC, a Crooked Road affiliated venue.

For more information about the NRCC Concert Series, please contact Tim Jones at (540) 674-3625 or visit www.nr.edu/concerts.

NRCC

Attorney general announces top 10 consumer complaints

RICHMOND – As part of National Consumer Protection Week, Virginia Attorney General Jason Miyares on Monday announced the top 10 consumer complaints received by the AG office.

“By highlighting these complaints, the Attorney General hopes Virginians will be wary of any suspicious offers and actively report any consumer concern,” the announcement reads. “During 2023, the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Section received and processed 6,677 consumer complaints.”

The top 10 complaint subjects were:

- Internet sales and service
- Automotive sales
- Credit, loans, and debt collection
- Home improvement, service, and repair
- Warranties and rebates
- Automotive service and repair
- Medical/health professions
- Transportation and freight
- Direct sales companies
- Other professional services

The Attorney General's Office serves as the central clearinghouse in Virginia for the receipt, evaluation, and referral of consumer complaints. It also operates a Consumer Protection Hotline. Last year, the Office handled 21,909 calls from consumers needing assistance.

“My Consumer Protection Section is committed to protecting consumers' interests and upholding Virginia's consumer protection laws. Unfortunately, there are bad actors who attempt to exploit Virginians through sophisticated scams and fraudulent activities, not only harming consumers, but also undermining the vast majority of Virginia businesses that play by the rules,” said Miyares. “If you have a consumer complaint, please reach out to my office to see how we can assist.”

In addition to serving as Virginia's clearinghouse for consumer complaints, the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Section also offers dispute resolution services to individual consumers and businesses to assist them in resolving consumer complaints. The Dispute Resolution Unit can serve as a neutral facilitator and point of contact between consumers and businesses as they voluntarily work toward a mutually agreeable outcome.

Last year, the Dispute Resolution Unit and the Section's investigators resolved or closed 4,591 consumer complaints with consumers recovering \$443,965. To learn more about consumer complaints in Virginia, Miyares encourages consumers to check out our Consumer Complaint Database.

Individuals can find the number of complaints filed against a specific business, whether the complaints are open or closed, a description of the complaint topic, the outcome of individual complaints, and other information. The database can be searched by company name, industry, or complaint topic among other categories. Searches also can be limited to geographic areas.

Virginians who have a question, concern, or complaint about a consumer matter should contact Attorney General Miyares' Consumer Protection Section:

- By phone: (800) 552-9963
- By email: consumer@oag.state.va.us

Concerns for future of St. Luke and Odd Fellows historical sites, artifacts shared with Blacksburg Town Council

Lori Graham
Contributing writer

Heather Nicholson, Montgomery County Community Review Council (MCCRC) founding member, presented concerns about the future of historical sites and artifacts to Blacksburg Town Council during their Feb. 27 regular meeting.

During public address, Nicholson asked council to consider, as they move forward in their strategic planning, what will become of the Blacksburg Museum and Cultural Foundation as they work to preserve important African American history in the county.

“Questions remain for the funding of the Blacksburg Museum and Cultural Foundation,” Nicholson said. “How will issues of equity, transparency, and accountability towards St. Luke's and Odd Fellows be addressed? Will the deed be honored? And what cultural expertise is being considered in this important work?”

Christine King, Montgomery County and Nellie's Cave community resident, addressed council with her ongoing issues surrounding the preservation of the St. Luke and Odd Fellows Hall and local artifacts in danger of continued preservation. King also

reviewed the Odd Fellows Hall deed of gift conditions during her public address.

“As a reminder, the deed of gift condition states in letter D, that the Town will form a subcommittee of the Blacksburg Museum that will consist of members of the organizations that built the Odd Fellows Hall and/or their descendant, who is me, and representatives from the community, others who have not been included in these committees that I've actually requested that they be added, interested in the preservation and presentation of the history of the black community whose charge will be to advise the museum committee, develop programs, and raise funds to supplement operating and maintain the Oddfellows Hall,” King said.

According to Nicholson, the MCCRC is “a collective of community members in Montgomery County, Virginia, committed to promoting equity in our grassroots approach to preserving the diverse history and culture of the County. As a grassroots initiative, in alliance with the Christiansburg Institute, we have been able to educate, advocate, and raise awareness of the significant inclusive social narratives.”

One recent event supported by the MCCRC was held on Feb. 15 at The Lyric Theater in downtown Blacksburg, with speaker Jordan Bell discussing the history of African Americans in the local areas of Roanoke and Montgomery County.

On Mar. 28 at 7 p.m., Karice Luck-Brimmer will be presenting, “Reclaiming History Through Preservation & Genealogy: One Woman's Story,” also at The Lyric Theater. This event is through the partnership of the Christiansburg Institute and the MCCRC, with additional support from Virginia Tech Humanities. Tickets, along with a schedule of additional upcoming events, are available at www.christiansburginsitute.com.

“On March 28, 1905, James Anderson, John Anderson, Gordon Mills, John Rollins, Grandville Smith, and Robert Eaves met at 8:30. James Anderson proposed to the gathered members of the Tadmore Light Lodge 6184 of Grand United Order of the Odd Fellows to purchase a small lot on the corner of Gilbert and Barger streets in the center of New Town, an African American community in Blacksburg, Virginia. The price of \$95 was agreed upon, as was

See Historical, page 3

Office of the Attorney General



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Radford

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MACADO'S

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, Mar. 7:

American Legion meeting

The American Legion, Harvey Howe Carper Post 30 will meet at 6 p.m. at the VFW Post Home on 102 Watts St. in Radford. If Radford City Public Schools are closed on Thursday or Friday of this week due to weather, the meeting will be cancelled. For further information, please call 540-250-2283 or 540-239-9864.

Saturday, March 9:

Mount Tabor Ruritan Biscuit Breakfast

Mount Tabor Ruritan Club will be serving up hot biscuits topped with delicious sausage gravy, or with the latest batch of our "world-famous" apple butter. We will also have scrambled eggs, orange juice and coffee. Breakfast will be served in the Fellowship Hall of Slusser's Chapel, 1543 Mount Tabor Rd, Blacksburg, 8 – 10 a.m. This is below the Sanctuary, on the lower church parking lot level. This is a fundraiser for our club to help us as we serve our community, and donations will be accepted for the breakfast.

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.

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.

Wednesday, Mar. 13:

Hahn Horticulture Garden talk

How mushrooms can save the world! with Benjamin Harder. The world is spinning out of control but mushrooms are prepared! They eat our waste, clean our water, grow our food and create compounds to treat our diseases. The talk is at the Hahn Horticulture Garden, 200 Garden Lane, Blacksburg, at noon. You do not need to register for these talks, just show up and attend. Parking passes for these educational events will be provided by the HHG thanks to supplementary funding provided by the School of Plant and Environmental Design.

Thursday, Mar. 21:

Sons of Confederate Veterans meeting

The Sons of Confederate Veterans, Stuart Horse Artillery Camp 1784 will meet at 7 p.m. at Aly's Family Italian Restaurant at 3204 Riner Rd. Members of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) are also invited to attend. Member Dana Jackson will speak on the "History of the Confederate Veterans Home in Richmond." If Montgomery or Floyd County Public Schools are closed on Thursday or Friday of this week due to weather, the meeting will be cancelled. For further information, please call 540-320-4315 or 540-239-9864.

Saturday, Mar. 30:

Easter Egg Hunt

Come join Pilot Community Center for its first annual Easter Egg Hunt; 2 – 3 p.m.! Kids 10 years old and under are invited to search for candy and prize-filled eggs. There will be refreshments for parents and kids of all ages. So come and join in the fun! This event will be held weather permitting. If there is rain or snow, the event will be cancelled and cannot be rescheduled. For more information: Call Brenda Eanes at 540-382-0857.

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://vappassengerrailauthority.org/nrvproject/>.

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.

Perdita is ready to sniff out her furever home, though, this gal doesn't always display the typical hound qualities of always having her nose to the ground or up in the air. She tends to be independent but doesn't seem to mind other dogs. Her future humans may need to provide some lessons in basic dog commands.



Nerida is a short-time resident at the Animal Care and Adoption Center. She's a younger dog who is very sweet and friendly. She's pretty smart, too! She knows some commands and will happily follow them in anticipation of a treat. Nerida loves attention and affection.

OBITUARY

Sledd, Donovan Lane

Donivan Lane Sledd, 52, of Riner, died Feb. 28, 2024, at his home.

He was born Oct. 1, 1971, in Florida to the late Edward and Ruth Sledd. Donivan was a loving husband who enjoyed playing games with his children and grandchildren.

He is survived by his wife of 24 years Tammy

Sledd; stepchildren Roger Linkous (fiancé Victoria Graham) and April Linkous; granddaughters Lindsey Myers, Destiny Myers, Violet Linkous, and Kristen Myers; grandson Michael Myers; mother-in-law Jeanie Jones; sister-in-law Becky Hunter; son-in-law Dillon Myers; nephews

Andrew Hunter, Dustin Martin, and Logan Martin.

Funeral services were conducted Saturday, Mar. 2, 2024, at 11 a.m. at McCoy Funeral Home Chapel, with the Pastor Simmon Jones officiating. Interment followed in the Westview Cemetery, Blacksburg.

Historical

from page 1



The historical site of St. Luke and Odd Fellows Halls are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



PHOTOS BY LORI GRAHAM

St. Luke and Oddfellows Hall, established 1905, is located at 203 Gilbert Street, Blacksburg, VA.

the formation of a joint stock company with the Saint Francis Council of the Right and Worthy Grand Council of the Independent Order of Saint Luke," according to information at www.blacksburg.gov.

The museum is free and open to the public by appointment. Appointment information can be found at the forementioned website.

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OPINION

Professional conferences perfect combination of business, networking and fun

Last week I spent three days out of the office attending a legal conference in Miami, having been asked by one of my partners to participate on a panel of law firm general counsel. Actually, I should say that I spent one day at the conference and the rest of the time in airports in West Virginia and Charlotte and Miami. If you live where I do and don't want to drive to Pittsburgh and spend half the day trying to find a place to park at the airport before you depart and then have a two-



Evans "Buddy" King

Columnist

hour drive home when you return if you can find your car, you get used to "connecting." Or missing a connection, as the case may be.

As conferences go, this one was great - I was "volunteered" by my friend and law partner Melissa for the second year in a row to present to the IADC. Melissa is "high up" in this group and an excellent lawyer and charismatic person,

See **Business**, page 10

The 2024 General Assembly Legislative Session enters the final stretch

As we enter the final stretch of the 2024 General Assembly Legislative Session, the overarching themes have become clear. Democrats are united in their efforts to make Virginia more like California, but they are still conflicted internally over how to do so. Many actions (or inactions) taken by House Democrats this year appear to be motivated by next year's election cycle, while other moves seem to be driven by no particular strategy at all.

Democrats thought that they were setting the tone for this session early, with both the House and Senate caucuses introducing legislation to ban guns and raise the minimum wage. Never mind the underlying facts that restricting lawful gun ownership will do nothing to prevent criminals from committing crimes, and that typical minimum wage jobs are meant to be a starting point of employment for our youth, not a career in which to support a family. Democrats also killed legislation that sought to relax rules about electric vehicles and the mandate that 100% of new passenger vehicles sold in Virginia must be electric by 2035. Never mind that we are not even close to having the infrastructure needed to support this massive shift in policy, and that accompanying green energy mandates have made power more expensive and less reliable.



Delegate Jason Ballard

Virginia General Assembly

Once this initial burst of unity between House and Senate Democrats had subsided, the two caucuses went in very different directions on just how they should use their slimmest possible majorities. As a reminder, Democrats hold a 51-49 majority in the House of Delegates, and a 21-19 majority in the Senate of Virginia. In the House, Democrats chose to "continue" (or "push") some of their most controversial bills to the 2025 session - including those that put unconstitutional limits on firearm purchase and possession. They also chose a more conciliatory tone in working with the Governor by including his arena authority legislation - for the Washington Wizards and Capitals to move to Alexandria - in the House version of the budget.

Senate Democrats on the other hand chose a much more confrontational route, stripping the arena language out of the budget and attacking Northern Virginia Democrats by removing funding for Metro from their version of the budget. This has created conflict between the two majority caucuses, as they begin the process of holding each other's legislation hostage. The rancor is already at such a level that Democrats are openly anticipating a Special Session to complete budget work - when both chambers are controlled by Democrats!

Republicans will continue to monitor the situation closely as we head into the final week of session, and we will use any pressure points we can find to stand up for everyday Virginians and our shared common-sense values.

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 DelBallard@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.

How to weather an unexpected job loss

News of mass layoffs in major sectors of the economy has reignited interest in how to prepare financially for a job loss. If you've recently been laid off - or if you're simply preparing for the prospect of job cuts at your organization - it can help to develop



Josh Smith, CRPC

Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC

insurance benefits. Take action right away to make sure you don't experience a lapse in coverage. Unexpected illnesses or accidents can happen to anyone, and the financial impact can be significantly higher without the right insurance plan. If you received health insurance through your employer, you may qualify for COBRA insurance offered through the federal government. Costs, length of coverage and specific plan options (including coverage for your spouse, partner or dependents) may vary depending on your circumstances, so contact the U.S. Department of Labor or the Department of Health and Human Services for more information. Job loss is considered a qualifying event, which means you may shop the health care marketplace to find a plan that works best for you and your family.

Keep long-term goals on track

To the extent possible, try to maintain making contributions toward your long-term goals, such as college or retirement. Even modest contributions add up over time, so continue to save what you can. Additionally, avoid dipping into your retirement accounts. Borrowing or withdrawing money from a 401(k) is taxable and will incur a 10 percent penalty fee. Further, you could also miss out on months or even years worth of compounding and potential market growth that can be challenging to make up.

Seek guidance from trusted professionals

Any change or interruption in your salary warrants a visit to a trusted financial professional. Meet with a financial advisor to review your financial position and determine what measures you can take during an income drought to minimize the impact on your portfolio. You may also consider meeting with a career counselor to plan the next phase of your career.

Josh Smith, CRPC is a Financial Advisor with Ameriprise Financial Services, LLC. in Radford (540-639-5153), 202 Third Ave., Radford. He specializes in fee-based financial planning and asset management strategies and has been in practice for three years.

a game plan. Here are some strategies to keep in mind.

Reassess your financial situation

Start by reviewing your recent bank statements, current portfolio and upcoming financial obligations. Talk with your spouse or partner about how to reduce discretionary expenditures to ensure you meet all essential expenses such as mortgage, insurance, utility and car payments. Managing your budget carefully is critical in a period of job uncertainty.

Understand your severance package

If you receive a severance package, be sure you understand the terms, timeframe and payment amount. Your deal may include several paychecks, reimbursement for unused paid-time-off or sick days, and stock options, among other possible sources of income. Consider reviewing the terms with a trusted attorney or financial professional, particularly if you have the option to negotiate your severance. Some companies also offer career coaching, human resources support or other non-monetary benefits that could be helpful in your transition and search for new employment.

File for unemployment benefits

While government unemployment benefits aren't likely to replace your previous income stream, they may help you meet your day-to-day living expenses while you are out of work. File as soon as you can, as there typically is a waiting period to begin collecting.

Manage your health care coverage

The loss of a job may also mean the loss of health

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- CLUES ACROSS**
- European Common Market
 - Poetic go quickly
 - Parts per thousand (abbr.)
 - Pigeon pea
 - Sao __, city in Brazil
 - Longest division of geological time
 - __ Alto, California city
 - Small terrestrial viper
 - Coming after all others
 - Penetrate with a sharp fork
 - Still-hunt
 - Chinese frying pan
 - Cave-dwelling salamander
 - Any thick messy substance
 - About the moon
 - AKA Tao
 - Jet cabin requirement
 - Prince Hirobumi, 1841-1909
 - An easy return in a high arc
 - Italian commune
 - L. Comfort's illuminator
 - Foot digit
 - Minute tunicate genus
 - Green regions of desert
 - Direct a weapon
 - __ de Janeiro
 - Equestrian animals
 - Across Tomei
 - Head of the RCC
 - Twines
 - Scientific workplace
 - Minerals
 - Hypothetical original substances
 - Hit with the open hand
 - Political action committee
 - Winged goddess of the dawn
 - W. states time zone
 - Electronic data processing
 - Man or boy (Br.)
 - W. African nation
 - Fault's incline from vertical
 - Method of birth control
 - City founded by Xenophanes
 - Legumes
 - Beckham's spice girl
 - Explosive
 - 1936 Nobel winner Otto
 - Greenbay teammate
 - Brass that looks like gold
 - School graduates
 - Lively, merry play
 - Make indistinct
 - Egyptian mythological figure associated with floods
 - Washing sponge
 - Old name for nitrogen
 - Impounds for lack of payment
 - Radiotelegraphic signal
 - MN 55731
 - Sun in spanish
 - Helps little firms
 - Cease living
 - Flames up
 - Egyptian sacred bull
 - To wit
 - Mire
 - Bring two objects together
 - Filths
 - Israeli dance
 - Oil cartel
 - A particular instance of selling
 - Microelectromechanical system
 - Var. of 45 across
 - Goat & camel hair fabrics
 - Soda
 - A firm's operational head
 - Seaport (abbr.)

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Student Achievements

Tommie Bloomer of Radford makes Dean's List at RIT

ROCHESTER, NY - Tommie Bloomer of Radford (24141) was named to the Dean's List at Rochester Institute of Technology for the fall semester of the 2023-2024 academic year. Bloomer is in the biomedical engineering program. Full-time degree-seeking undergraduate students are eligible for Dean's List if their term GPA is greater than or equal to 3.400; they do not have any grades of "Incomplete", "D" or "F"; and they have registered for, and completed, at least 12 credit hours.

Jack Nussbaum named to the dean's list at Tufts University

MEDFORD, Mass. - Jack Nussbaum, Class of 2027, of Blacksburg, was named to the dean's list at Tufts University for the Fall 2023 semester. Dean's list honors at Tufts University require a semester grade point average of 3.4 or greater.

Ogechi Nkeonye of Christiansburg awarded degree from Wilkes University

WILKES-BARRE, Pa. - Ogechi Nkeonye of Christiansburg received the MSN degree in Nursing from Wilkes University. The degree was one of 339 bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees awarded to winter graduates. A commencement ceremony featuring winter and spring graduates will be held in May 2024. More information can be found at www.wilkes.edu/commencement.

Local Emerson College students earn Dean's List

BOSTON, Mass. - The following students are named to Emerson College's Dean's List for the Fall 2023 semester. The requirement to make Dean's List is a grade point average of 3.7 or higher for that semester. Diego Centeno, of Blacksburg, is majoring in Media Arts Production and is a member of the Class of 2025.

Aryssa Guerrero, of Blacksburg, is majoring in Media Arts Production and is a member of the Class of 2026.

Kaitlyn Jacobs named to President's List at Coastal Carolina University

CONWAY, S.C. - More than 1,300 students were named to the President's List at Coastal Carolina University for the Fall 2023 semester, including Kaitlyn Jacobs from Christiansburg. Students who made the President's List have achieved a 4.0 grade point average during the semester.

Mallory Yancey earns a spot on the Dean's List at Coastal Carolina University

CONWAY, S.C. - More than 3,000 undergraduate

students at Coastal Carolina University were named to the Dean's List for the Fall 2023 semester, including Mallory Yancey, from Christiansburg. Students who make the Dean's List have achieved a grade point average of 3.5 or higher (3.25 for freshmen) for the semester.

Eastern Mennonite University Fall 2023 Dean's List

HARRISONBURG, Va. - Eastern Mennonite University congratulates Laney Cline, of Radford, and Nate Lehman, of Blacksburg, on being named a Fall 2023 Dean's List honoree. The Dean's List, compiled at the end of each semester, includes degree-seeking students who achieve a semester GPA of at least 3.75 with no W, I, or F grades for 12 semester hours of standard grades.

Georgia Tech Fall 2023 graduates announced

ATLANTA, Ga. - The Georgia Institute of Technology presented degrees to approximately 6,300 undergraduate and graduate students during the Institute's 265th Commencement exercises Dec. 15 - 16, 2023, at McCamish Pavilion. Among the graduates were Elijah Barrett and sajjad Khodadadian of Blacksburg.

Cameron Earle named to Worcester Polytechnic Institute's Dean's List

WORCESTER, Mass. - Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) has announced that Blacksburg resident Cameron Earle, a member of the class of 2024 majoring in Robotics Engineering, was named to the university's Dean's List for academic excellence for the fall 2023 semester. A total of 2,299 undergraduate students achieved the criteria required for WPI's fall 2023 Dean's List. The criteria for the WPI Dean's List differs from that of most other universities as WPI does not compute a grade point average (GPA). Instead, WPI defines the Dean's List by the amount of work completed at the A level in courses and projects. "WPI's academic programs are rigorous and require a level of independence beyond what is required in traditional courses. WPI students work on open-ended problems for communities around the world. The problems are important and the impact is real," said Professor Arthur C. Heinricher. "Some of this nation's best and brightest students come to WPI to study engineering and science and business and the humanities. Those named to the Dean's List have excelled in all of their work, and we are exceptionally proud of these outstanding students."

Cole Eastwood of Blacksburg named to fall Deans' List at Nebraska

LINCOLN, Neb. - Cole Eastwood of Blacksburg

has been named to the Deans' List at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln for the fall semester of the 2023-24 academic year. Eastwood, a sophomore majoring in sports media and communication, was named to the Dean's List for the College of Journalism and Mass Communications.

Hollins University announces Dean's List for Fall 2023

ROANOKE, Va. - Hollins University congratulates students who earned Dean's List honors during the fall 2023 semester. To attain this distinction, students must earn at least a 3.5 average on a 4.0 grading scale. Congratulations to these distinguished scholars on earning this academic achievement. Local students include: Ameena Alsmadi and Logan Lynxwiler, of Blacksburg; Emmabeth Caddy, Savannah Campbell, Andrea Gomez Munza and Elizabeth Rowland, of Christiansburg; and Melanie Stout, of Pilot.

Garrett Knobl named to University of Delaware Dean's List

NEWARK, Del. - Garrett Knobl of Blacksburg has been named to the University of Delaware Dean's List for the Fall 2023 semester. To meet eligibility requirements for the Dean's List, a student must be enrolled full-time and earn a GPA of 3.5 or above (on a 4.0 scale) for the semester.

Elijah Seright of Newport named to Harding University Dean's List

SEARCY, Ark. - Elijah Seright, a freshman studying graphic design, is among more than 1,300 Harding University students included on the dean's list for grades achieved during the Fall 2023 semester. The dean's list is published each semester by Dr. Marty Spears, University provost, honoring those who have achieved high scholarship. To be eligible, a student must be carrying 12 or more hours with a 3.65 or higher grade-point average and no incompletes.

Tanner Long of Christiansburg named to fall 2023 dean's list

CHARLESTON, S.C. - Tanner Long of Christiansburg is among the more than 1,300 cadets and students recognized for their academic achievements during the fall 2023 semester. The dean's list is a recognition given to cadets and students who are registered for 12 or more semester hours and whose grade point average is 3.20 or higher, with no grade of I (Incomplete) and no grade below C for work in a semester. Cadets who are named to the dean's list receive a medal, which is worn on their uniform during the semester following their academic achievement. Non-cadet students on the dean's list are presented a certificate.

Virginia State Parks campgrounds now open with burn restrictions in effect through April 30



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

Camping in Virginia State Parks resumed March 4.

RICHMOND – Virginia State Parks reopened its campgrounds for the season on Monday, March 4.

Campsites, which have been closed since Dec. 4, are now available for booking online through reserveaparks.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.

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.

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

Five individuals receive the “Above and Beyond Award” for heroic acts in saving a life

Lori Graham
Contributing writer

BLACKSBURG – Blacksburg Fire Chief Drew Smith and Firefighter Jeff Robinson, recognized five individuals during the Feb. 27 Blacksburg Town Council meeting for saving a life.

Andy Harper, CJ Linares, Fred Linkous, Greg Polan, and Pam Linkous Polan were awarded the “Above and Beyond Award” for their heroic actions in saving a woman’s life on Christmas Eve, 2023.

The award reads “Above and Beyond Award presented by Blacksburg Volunteer Fire Department in recognition of your courageous actions during an emergency situation on December 24, 2023. At great risk, you came to the aid of a fellow citizen with dedication and diligence saving a human life.”

“Last year, the National Fire Administration says that there were over 1.4 million fires in the United States and in those 2,160 people died,” Smith said. “If it had not been for the action of these five individuals, there would’ve been one more number added to that, to that total.”

Smith said that in his 29 years of service with the fire department, he has known of two situations when a civilian was rescued before the fire department arrived. Once, several years ago by Chief Anthony Wilson and then again, this past December Eve by these five people being recognized at the Blacksburg Town Council meeting.

Four of the individuals, Pam and Greg Polan, Harper and Linkous, happened to be spending Christmas Eve together, enjoying a holiday meal, when a pager alert interrupted their gathering. The structure fire was just across the street from them, and they knew that an elderly woman lived there. On arrival



PHOTO COURTESY OF PAM LINKOUS POLAN

(Left to right) Pam Linkous Polan, Fred Linkous, Greg Polan, BVFD President JD Robinson, Andrew Harper, CJ Linares and BVFD Fire Chief Drew Smith. Graphic courtesy of the Blacksburg Volunteer Fire Department

at the house, they did not see anyone outside. Linares, visiting family down the road, also showed up to meet the four at the house.

“These individuals went inside, and smoke conditions were beginning to get very bad in there. I was the first one to get there with the fire department, other than Fred and Greg, and when I got there, they had her on the front porch. Got her to a safe place. I went back to shut the door and flames were rolling from the ceiling to the floor in the living room there,” Smith said. “There’s no doubt in mind, if it wasn’t for the actions of these five individuals this lady would have lost her life that night.”

Linkous and Greg Polan, along with a Riner Volunteer Firefighter, also received another award as selected by the Vocational Service Committee.

“Blacksburg Volunteer Firefighters, Fred Linkous, and Greg Polan were honored by the Rotary Club of Blacksburg for the Club’s 2023 First Responder of the Year Award along with Mike King of Riner Volunteer Fire Dept,” as stated on Blacksburg Volunteer Fire Department’s Facebook page.

AARP Foundation tax-aid opens in Virginia

Program provides free tax prep help to all

WASHINGTON — AARP Foundation Tax-Aide is providing free in-person and virtual tax assistance and preparation now through April 15 throughout Virginia.

The nation’s largest free, volunteer-based tax assistance and preparation program helped secure more than \$1.1 billion in refunds for more than 1.5 million taxpayers last year. Tax-Aide is offered in conjunction with the IRS, and AARP membership is not required.

Tax-Aide volunteers provide free tax preparation and filing services to adults with low to moderate income in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Volunteers are trained and IRS-certified every year to ensure they understand the latest changes to the U.S. Tax Code. Since the pandemic, AARP Foundation has seen a significant increase in volunteer applications nationwide, with over 20,000 people applying to help older adults file their tax returns in 2023.

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide offers several options for taxpayer assistance:

In-person service: In Tax-Aide’s traditional in-person service, taxes are prepared and filed by IRS-certified tax counselors.

One-visit scan (Internet access required): Tax documents are scanned at the Tax-Aide site and then Tax-Aide volunteers prepare the return remotely.

Two-visit scan: Tax documents are scanned at the Tax-Aide site and then volunteers prepare the return remotely. During a second visit, taxpayers work with a volunteer to finalize their return and obtain a printed copy for their records.

Drop off service: Tax documents are left at the Tax-Aide site with an IRS-certified volunteer and the return is prepared remotely. During a second visit, taxpayers work with a volunteer to file their return and obtain a printed copy and their original documents.

No site visit required: (Internet access required): Taxpayers upload tax documents to the IRS-provided software. Tax-Aide volunteers prepare the return remotely and work with the taxpayer to file the return electronically.

Online coaching: The taxpayer prepares their own return and receives online support from an IRS-certified volunteer to help them along the way.

Facilitated self-assistance: Taxpayers schedule an appointment at a Tax-Aide site to work with a volunteer to complete and file their own return.

Self-preparation: The taxpayer prepares their own return using a software product made available through our website.

Access to the different types of taxpayer assistance varies by location.

“AARP Foundation Tax-Aide helps anyone secure tax credits and much-needed refunds they’ve earned while saving on tax preparation costs,” said Mioshi Moses, Vice President of AARP Foundation Volunteer Programs. “Millions of people, especially older adults living on fixed incomes, depend on their refund to pay for monthly expenses like food and utilities. Last year, older adults with low income saved over \$564 million in total with the help of Tax-Aide.”

Users can find the nearest Tax-Aide location in their area and assistance options by visiting the Tax-Aide site locator. The site locator features a Tax-Aide chat bot that can help book an appointment, answer questions about the program and transfer the conversation to a live agent if needed or requested. For more information, including which documents to bring to the tax site, visit aarpfoundation.org/taxaide or call 1-888-AARP NOW (1-888-227-7669).

AARP

Low-intensity ultrasound shows promise as a noninvasive approach to alleviate pain

Virginia Tech researchers at the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute at VTC report that applying low-intensity focused ultrasound to an area deep within the brain may point to new ways to help people cope with chronic pain.

In a study published in the Journal of Neuroscience, scientists demonstrated the effectiveness of using low-intensity focused ultrasound to modulate the activity in a critical region in the brain that processes and regulates pain signals.

Researchers, including first author Andrew Strohmman, a Virginia Tech M.D./Ph.D. student conducting research at the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute, found the application of low-intensity ultrasound to a structure known as the dorsal anterior cingulate cortex reduced pain, diminished bodily responses to pain, and decreased pain-related brain activity without the need for invasive procedures, researchers said.

Strohmman is a student in the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine and the Translational Biology, Medicine, and Health Graduate Program.

“This study points to a noninvasive and effective way to modulate a critical region of the brain involved in pain processing while eliminating many of the risks associated with surgeries,” said Wynn Legon, assistant professor at the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute and senior author of the study. “It provides a potential new means to modulate the brain activity in response to pain that may serve to better understand the mechanisms of chronic pain to provide a new, innovative therapeutic option that could change how we approach and treat pain in the future.”

In a study with 16 healthy volunteers, researchers focused ultrasound energy on the dorsal anterior cingulate cortex to see if it could change how people feel

pain. To test whether it changed someone’s perception of pain, they applied brief heat to the skin and measured pain perception, heart rate variability, skin responses, and brain electrical signals.

Data was collected in three sessions on three separate days along with an imaging visit consisting of a CT scan and MRI to accurately and reliably target this hard-to-reach area in each individual.

The results showed that the ultrasound made people feel less pain, and it also altered how the brain and heart communicate. Overall, the heart did not respond as strongly to pain, and certain brain signals changed.

“Chronic pain patients often experience cardiovascular issues, which may either be at the root of their chronic pain or play a role in contributing to it,” said Legon, who is also assistant professor in the College of Science’s School of Neuroscience and in the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine’s Department of Neurosurgery. “Understanding this intricate relationship is crucial because it enhances our comprehension of pain mechanisms and suggests the importance of addressing both pain perception and cardiovascular health.”

The results suggest that using ultrasound applied to this specific region of the brain may help reduce pain and change how the body reacts to pain.

Even more recently, in a study published in the journal PAIN on Feb. 5, the researchers found soundwaves from low-intensity focused ultrasound aimed at a brain region called the insula can also reduce both the perception of pain and other effects.

“This study provides some of the first evidence we can change three major areas of activity, those being pain perception, brain activity, and cardiac activity,” Strohmman said.

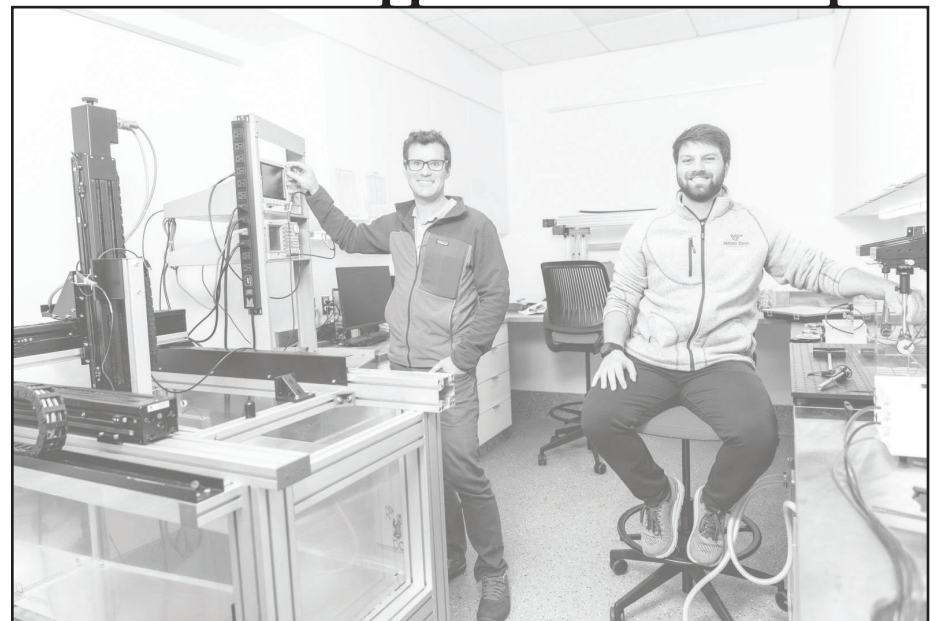


PHOTO BY CLAYTON METZ FOR VIRGINIA TECH

Wynn Legon (at left), the faculty director of the transcranial MR-guided focused ultrasound facilities at the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute, and Andrew Strohmman, an M.D.-Ph.D. student at Virginia Tech, were among researchers reporting that application of low-intensity focused ultrasound to an area deep within the brain may potentially help people cope with chronic pain. The research was published in the Journal of Neuroscience.

“The next steps are to look at how these metrics relate to each other and explore how these findings can be applied to improve the lives of patients suffering from chronic pain.”

“While there has been tremendous progress in recent years in the use of high-intensity focused ultrasound for creating small lesions in patients’ brain to treat disorders such as essential tremor and for tumor ablation, we are at the very beginning of exploration of the use of low-intensity focused ultrasound to mildly modulate brain activity and affect perception and behavior,” said Michael Friedlander, executive director of the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute, who was not involved with the study.

“The new work by Strohmman and Legon and their pioneering team represents some of the most exciting new advances of this approach,”

added Friedlander, who is also Virginia Tech’s vice president for health sciences and technology.

“The fact that it is addressing one of the most debilitating diseases, chronic pain, represents a major step in this important emerging field of biomedical research and provides hope for better treatments that may avoid the untoward effects of many drugs used for treating pain,” Friedlander said.

Research Assistant Brighton Payne, medical student Alexander In, and M.D./Ph.D. student Katelyn Stebbins of the Legon lab at the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute contributed to the study.

The work was partially supported by grants from the Seale Innovation Fund of the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute.

John Pastor for Virginia Tech

Cryptography students bound for London

The technology is more than 75 years old, but that’s not dampening the enthusiasm for a small group of Radford students heading for their upcoming trip to London’s Bletchley Park, where during World War II, British codebreakers cracked what German engineers thought was their unbreakable Enigma enciphering machine.

“This is a World War II-themed trip centered around cryptography,” explained Neil Sigmon, a professor and chair of the Department of Mathematics and Statistics who teaches the London-bound students in a cryptography course. “We are going on this study abroad trip with a point of emphasis being the work of the Bletchley Park codebreakers.”

Before flying across the Atlantic Ocean, the 12 globetrotting students will visit the National Cryptologic Museum and the Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. Once in

London, the group plans to visit the Churchill War Rooms, the HMS Belfast warship, the Imperial War Museums “and many other sites,” Sigmon said.

Later, the group will visit the D-Day invasion site in Normandy, France, and make a brief stop in Paris.

To prepare for the trip, the class has been meeting twice a week, Sigmon noted, “to learn about cryptology in general, how the German Enigma cipher worked, and to introduce how the Turing Bombe, the mechanical device the codebreakers used to break the Enigma machine, worked.”

The cryptography course has a diverse group of majors, from the expected, mathematics, cybersecurity and criminal justice – to the unexpected.

Tessa Harmon fits in the latter group. The junior from Lebanon, Virginia, is double

majoring in biology and theatre. She developed an interest in World War II in a middle school history course. “Ever since, I haven’t been able to get enough information about it,” and that’s the reason, she said, she enrolled in Sigmon’s course. “Plus, he is such a welcoming person,” Harmon said of her professor.

Adam Downs chose to enroll in the course and his majors – mathematics and cybersecurity – in order to pursue a career in cryptology.

“I am especially interested in the cryptanalysis of the Enigma machine,” said the senior from Riner, Virginia. “Though it is now obsolete as a cipher, studying the processes used to break the machine can still provide useful insights in modern times. Some of the most popular encryption schemes today are based on theorems from hundreds of years ago.”

Chad Osborne for Radford University

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RADFORD SPORTS

Big South tournament starts today, Wed. Mar. 6

Marty Gordon
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

The Big South Conference Tournament starts today, Wednesday, Mar. 6, in High Point, N.C.

USC Upstate and Radford tied for eighth in the standings at 5-11, and the Spartans landed the No. 8 seed. The teams split the season series, and the tiebreaker was Upstate's 1-1 record vs. first-place High Point, compared to Radford's 0-2 mark vs. HPU. Upstate and Radford will go head-to-head in the first round at 8 p.m.

Regular-season champion High Point (13-3) is the No. 1 seed -- its first No. 1 seed in

the Big South Tournament since 2015-16. Defending champion UNC Asheville (12-4) is the No. 2 seed, with Gardner-Webb finishing 11-5 for the No. 3 slot. Winthrop ended league play in fourth place at 8-8 and will be No. 4. Longwood, Presbyterian and Charleston Southern all tied for fifth place at 6-10. The Lancers earned the No. 5 seed based on their 3-1 season record against PC/CSU, while Presbyterian clinched the No. 6 seed (2-2 vs. LWU/CSU) - the program's highest-ever seeding in the Big South tournament. Charleston Southern secured the No. 7 spot (1-3 vs. LWU/PC) for the final auto-berth into the quarterfinals.

The USC Upstate-Radford winner will advance to the quarterfinals on Friday, Mar. 8, and play No. 1 High Point. No. 4 Winthrop vs. No. 5 Longwood will follow at 2 p.m., with No. 2 UNC Asheville vs. No. 7 Charleston Southern. No. 3 Gardner-Webb vs. No. 6 Presbyterian will conclude quarterfinal day. The semifinals will be Saturday, Mar. 9 at noon and 2 p.m., with the Championship game on Sunday, Mar. 10 scheduled for noon.

The 2024 Hercules Tires Big South Men's Basketball Championship will be televised on ESPN+ Wednesday-through-

Saturday, while Sunday's Championship game will air live on ESPN2. The title game will also be broadcast nationally on Westwood One Sports. The Big South's Tournament champion receives an automatic bid to the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament.

On the women's side, Radford University finished at 9-7 in the Big South and will be the No. 3 seed when action starts this week.

Regular-season champion High Point (14-2) is the No. 1 seed - its second No. 1 seed in the Big South Tournament in four years and fourth time overall. HPU has secured the Big South's automatic bid to the WNIT should the Panthers not win the tournament. USC Upstate (10-6) is the No. 2 seed -- the Spartans' highest seeding since becoming Big South members in 2018-19, followed by Radford (9-7) at No. 3. Charleston Southern, Presbyterian College and Winthrop all tied for fourth place at 8-8. CSU earned the No. 4 seed based on its 4-0 season record against PC/WU - marking the Bucs' highest seed since 2010 (also No. 4). Presbyterian is the No. 5 seed (2-2 vs. CSU/WU), with Winthrop landing in the No. 6 slot (0-4 vs. CSU/PC). Longwood (6-10) locked in the No. 7 seed for the final auto-berth into the quarterfinals.

Gardner-Webb finished the league slate at 5-11 for the No. 8 seed, with UNC Asheville (4-12) at No. 9. Those two teams will go head-to-head in the first round on Wednesday, Mar. 6 at 6 p.m.

The Gardner-Webb/UNC Asheville winner will advance to the quarterfinals on Thursday, Mar. 7, and play No. 1 High Point. No. 4 Charleston Southern vs. No. 5 Presbyterian will follow with No. 2 USC Upstate vs. No. 7 Longwood. No. 3 Radford vs. No. 6 Winthrop will conclude quarterfinal day. The semifinals will be Saturday, Mar. 9 at 6 and 8 p.m., with the Championship game on Sunday, Mar. 10 scheduled for 6 p.m.

Sports notes: RU in hunt for Memphis eighth grader

Hokies number 1 in lacrosse, Region 4D all-star team

Marty Gordon
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College basketball recruiting has become more competitive off the court than the games on the court. Two Memphis, Tennessee, eighth graders are garnering a lot of attention from programs around the state, but the only one to officially offer so far is Radford University.

Braylon Williams and DJ Okorth led their middle school team to a 69-0 record over the past two years and are standouts on the court.

Williams is 6-1 point guard, and Okorth is a 6-4 forward. Williams is the on the radar by RU after averaging 18.4 points and 8.5 rebounds this past season.

Tech Lax nationally ranked

Virginia Tech held off former No. 4 South Carolina on Friday night to help keep the Hokies' stranglehold on the top spot in week two of the MCLA Division I New Balance Lacrosse Coaches Poll.

Virginia Tech (5-0) gobbled up 25 of the 26 first-place ballots cast this week, keeping the Hokies over 30 points clear of the field. Tech hosts No. 7 Liberty (2-1) on this evening in what could be a preview of the Atlantic Lacrosse

Conference (ALC) tournament final.

Georgia Tech (6-0), which was awarded the remaining first-place vote, remains at No. 2 heading into a weekend when it entertains New Hampshire (2-0) and Texas A&M (2-2).

After sweeping a pair of ranked opponents on the road, Chapman (3-0) remains solidly in the third spot followed by Utah Valley (2-0) in fourth.

Appy all-star game to JC

The Johnson City Doughboys and the Appalachian League announced that the 2024 Appalachian League All-Star Game presented by Visit Johnson City will take place at TVA Credit Union Ballpark, home of the Johnson City Doughboys. The 2024 All-Star Game will be a two-day event with a full slate of events. The league's Home Run Derby will be Monday, July 22, and the All-Star Game on Tuesday, July 23. There will be many more exciting additions added to the event in the coming weeks.

This signature event will be broadcasted on MLB Network and will bring together the Appalachian League's top players in the league that features the nation's top rising college freshmen and sophomores.

ACC sets basketball schedule formats

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The Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) will maintain a 20-game conference schedule beginning next year.

The announcement came late last week and had been a head scratcher as the conference adds Cal, SMU and Stanford to the overall membership.

"As the 2023-24 ACC women's and men's basketball regular-season competition continues and our teams look ahead to the postseason, we are thrilled to announce each school's opponents for our first year as an 18-member league," said ACC Commissioner Jim Phillips, Ph.D. "We look forward to having Cal, SMU and Stanford join the ACC this summer and we know there's already

great excitement and anticipation for our teams, alumni and fans for what's ahead surrounding this incredible conference."

Now, each school will play two games home and away versus its two current partners. In the case of Virginia Tech, those two partners would be Miami and Virginia.

The men's schedule will then include one repeat opponent, home and away. Tech will then play one of the remaining 15 teams in a year. For the next two years for Tech, Clemson would be the opponent. The remaining 14 league opponents will be seven home only and seven away only.

Below is a breakdown of Tech's scheduling matrix for the 2024-25 season. The full conference schedule with specific game dates, times and networks will be announced early

this fall.

For 2024-25, Virginia Tech's opponent line up this way:

Home/Away: Clemson, Miami, Virginia

Home only: Louisville, North Carolina, NC State, Pitt, SMU, Syracuse, Wake Forest

Away only: Boston College, Cal, Duke, Florida State, Georgia Tech, Notre Dame, Stanford

On the women's side, under the new format, each school will play 18 league games, but only have one partners they play twice with one time apiece at each school. For Tech, the partner is the University of Virginia.

For the next two years, Virginia Tech's women's opponents line up this way:

2024-25
Home - Cal, Stanford, SMU,

Florida State, Wake, Louisville, Notre Dame, Syracuse

Away - Pitt, Miami, Clemson, Georgia Tech, NC State, North Carolina, Duke, Boston College

Partner - Virginia
2025-26

Home - Pitt, Miami, Clemson, Georgia Tech, NC State, North Carolina, Duke, Boston College

Away - Cal, Stanford, SMU, Florida State, Wake, Louisville, Notre Dame, Syracuse

Partner - Virginia

As previously announced by the league, the ACC men's and women's basketball tournaments will include only the top 15 teams at the end of the 2024-25 regular season. The 2025 ACC Men's Basketball Tournament will be contested March 11-15 at Spectrum Center in Charlotte, North Carolina.



Virginia Tech quarterback Kyrone Drones is teasing Hokie fans of the new college Football 25 video game.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF EA SPORTS

The new game also includes the famous Virginia Tech "lunch box."

Familiar sights part of planned EA Sports release

EA Sports says after 10 years without any video game EA Sports College Football, it's back.

NCAA Football 14 will be released this summer, but already bits of the game are being teased to customers.

The last time fans of the game saw any video hype was when Denard Robinson was QB1 at the University of Michigan. Many people wondered what had happened since NCAA Football 14.

According to the company, Collegiate Licensing killed the franchise in those days because they had to use fake players. Now with

the new NIL program, that has changed.

The new game will include in-game action with individual stadiums, mascots, locker rooms, jerseys and helmets. Expect Lane Stadium and rowdy crowds. But so far, the company has not secured the rights for the game to the "Enter Sandman" entrance.

Under the new rules, college players can opt to be in the game and be paid for being on your television screen in the form of EA Sports.

Staff report

Christiansburg Town Council rejects permit request for multi-family dwelling near rec center

Lori Graham
Contributing writer

CHRISTIANSBURG - Christiansburg Town Council unanimously declined a request to allow multiple-family dwellings located on the southside of Cambria Street, west of the Christiansburg Recreation Center at their regular Feb. 27, 2024, meeting.

The request was made by Last Resort, Inc.

In the previous regular Council meeting on Feb. 13, citizens expressed disagreement with the placement of an apartment building at that location, citing concerns of increased traffic congestion, safety issues and residential density.

"I just want to share that it is impactful when those residents come out and share their thoughts," Council member Tanya Hockett said.

Also on Feb. 27, conditional use permit request by Shah Development, LLC, property owner, and Kevin Conner, applicant, to allow a single-family dwelling on each of two vacant lots in the Snidow Heights Subdivision, was unanimously approved by Christiansburg Town Council. A public hearing was held at the Feb. 13, 2024 council meeting.

Council member Johana Hicks also discussed the county's decision to destroy the old sheriff's building.

"The old building is going to be demolished by the county," she said.

"I just want to express how sad that makes me. Especially because, I know we have no control over this...it was the county's decision obviously to take down that building along with the Phlegar building."

According to Hicks, the buildings will make way for a single level construction with a change in the parking lots as well.

An agreement to establish ongoing monthly work sessions around many upcoming budget items and committee agenda items was also agreed upon by council members.

Council member Tim Wilson said, "Do you have topics already?"

"We do. We want to discuss new position requests and also cost of living and merit increases potentially," Town Manager Randy Wingfield said.

Wilson requested adding tourism to the work session agenda as well.

"If we are going to do a work session, I would like to see tourism and the Main Street project as budget items," Wilson said.

The Council budget work sessions will be on the first Monday of the month at 7 p.m.

In other

Other resolutions voted and agreed upon by Council were in recognition of Mar. 21, 2024 as Down Syndrome Day and recognizing Mar. 29, 2024, as Vietnam War Veterans Day.



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF THE TOWN OF CHRISTIANSBURG

Business from page 4

relatively new to our firm in our relatively new Dallas office, respected by all.

Last year Melissa got me on a panel at the IADC midyear event in Austin - another wonderful experience. After my part of the program was over, I visited the LBJ Presidential Library, Darrel Royal Stadium on the campus at the University of Texas, a great barbecue house where ribs are taken to the highest level, and a couple of country bars on Sixth Street where Lone Star flows freely and the next Waylon Jennings or Willie Nelson may be on stage and everyone does the Texas two-step in cowboy or cowgirl boots. All of this was

sandwiched between "conniving" with other conference attendees, a requirement at these events. I recommend Austin to all.

For the second year in a row, my panel did its thing at 7:30 - in the morning. I think in part this time slot is a reflection of the level of interest most lawyers have in discussions of ethics (sadly) and in part the desire to finish the programs by noon so that folks can play golf or tennis or sight see. If everyone I spent time with at the pool party or the hotel bar the night before who said, "I can't wait to hear your talk" had shown up the next morning, it would have been standing room only.

As it was, there were plenty of empty chairs and the ones that were full contained lawyers I didn't recognize, people who had the good sense not to have hung out with me the night before. At least they got their one hour of ethics credit.

A couple of the "I can't wait till the wake-up call comes in the morning so I can attend" guys didn't attend but invited me to join them at the horse track that afternoon after my program. I forgave them for missing since they were left coast lawyers whose body clocks were three hours behind. I admired their stamina in closing the bar with me, and I told them

that I had not bet either of them to win, place, or SHOW. They were no different than the nags that I chose that afternoon, but we stood along the rail in 75-degree weather without a cloud in the sky, staring at the Miami skyline in the distance. There are worse ways to spend a free afternoon.

This event brought back memories of many of the legal conferences I have been lucky enough to attend over the years. Most have been annual meetings of my firm at wonderful places like The Greenbrier and The Homestead and Nemaocolin. These events have been with friends you work with and their significant others and helped form part of the fabric of relationships that became lifelong friendships. As our firm has grown, these conferences have provided opportunities to meet new folks in distant offices and to misbehave with them in safe environments. I think these get-togethers remain beneficial even if sometimes it seems like speed dating as you try to spend time with as many new faces as you

can. Not that I have ever speed dated.

A few memories of firm conferences past - eating breakfast at Bones Diner in downtown White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia at four in the morning in black tie (with Susan Brewer in evening gown) after having been driven by the staff at The Greenbrier after everything there had closed; normally respectable lawyers jumping into the pool at Nemaocolin in full evening gowns or tuxedos; singing Hail to the Redskins at a bar in the basement of the Homestead; toasting the memories of deceased partners and the President of the United States (goes back to our founder Louis Johnson, who "worked" for Roosevelt and Truman).

There have also been great junkets to outside conferences like the IADC midyear meeting I just attended, such as a trip to South Africa (where my wife and I had the pleasure of a snake in our room while on safari) and Mexico City (amazing history), each hosted by an international organization of law firms we belong to, taking me to places I would never have gone otherwise. And the annual meetings of our professional liability carrier, at such incredible venues as Banff in the Canadian Rockies and La Costa in San Diego and the Broadmoor in Colorado Springs and

the Grove Park Inn in Asheville. I even got to see the original Zamboni machine at Hockey Town Cafe in Detroit!

One thing these events all have in common is that they are about 25% business, 25% "mingling" or "networking" and 50% fun. I feel blessed for the experiences, the people I met or got to know better, and the sights I got to see and the things I got to do.

I am sure some readers are curious about my references to the "IADC". What does it stand for? Why hasn't the dumb so and so told us? Well, I live in a world of acronyms, getting emails or calls from all sorts of people using them without definition, often without meaning to me. I usually don't ask questions.

Last year when I returned from Austin, I was filling out my expense report and said that I had attended the "IADC" conference. The diligent scrooges who handle our firm's finances asked me what is the "IADC"? I had no idea - I had to look it up.

Anyway, it's the International Association of Defense Counsel, a great organization with a great staff and great members, sort of like the American Trial Lawyers Association, only with people you don't mind being around. Thankfully our Melissa is a star! It pays to have friends in high places. And to know your acronyms.



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