

RAAP search for chem tanks paused but not stopped

Marty Gordon
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Officials from the Radford Army Ammunition Plant say a search for missing totes of chemical washed away during October's floodwaters has been paused but not stopped.

Mark Kane is a public affairs specialist with the Joint Munitions Command. He said Friday the Radford Army Ammunition Plant (RFAAP) continues to search for the missing totes.

After the extensive 45-day search by helicopter (35+ miles), drone (60+ miles), boat (11 miles), and by foot search (13+ sq. miles) on and surrounding RFAAP property up through West Virginia, the plant and its operating company, BAE Systems paused the search this past week to analyze data and determine the best way ahead for continued search efforts.

"With the defoliation of the trees, the range of visibility has been extended. To take advantage, BAE Systems personnel

will continue to search along the New River. Our team continues regular check-ins with Pulaski County, Giles County, Montgomery County, and the Virginia Department of Emergency Management to maintain outreach efforts with the wider emergency response network. We are actively engaged with debris clean-up efforts to recover the remaining containers that may be hidden in the extensive debris piles," Kane said.

Chemicals from the Radford Army Ammunition Plant were swept away by last month's floodwaters, but plant officials say they feel there is no danger to the public.

Last month's flood caused problems throughout the New River Valley including at the RAAP. Prior to the flood, the plant team tried to mitigate impacts from the flood. This included moving 14 tractor trailers of material up ground from the river, prioritizing the product based on safety and potential for rapidly rising water levels in buildings. Despite

that work, 13 totes of Dibutyl phthalate (DBP) were swept away by the flooding from a warehouse near the New River.

DBP is a liquid plasticizer found in nail polish and hair spray, which was being stored in Area 13 of the facility.

Eight 275-gallon containers, 4'-by-4'-by-4' cubes, white in color, with silver caging around them, are still missing. The size of the containers are close to a small car. If the label is intact, they may have a BAE Systems logo on the side. The lids on the top of totes are red, green, or black.

Kane said should the community locate one or more of these containers, please contact your local authorities non-emergency line.

"They know how to connect with the Radford Army Ammunition Plant. To avoid causing additional spillage or injury, please do not touch the totes," he said.

Throughout the process, the community support has been remarkable.

According to Kane, recently BAE Systems was notified by a local resident of a potential tote finding.

"We quickly contacted the individual to complete a comprehensive review of the tote's condition and contents. We are currently coordinating recovery and return of the tote to RFAAP," he said.

The team continues to search the New River and land surrounding the Radford Army Ammunition Plant.

"There are debris piles along the river all the way up to the Blue Stone Dam (West Virginia) that are, in some cases, 10-12 feet high. It is entirely possible these totes are underneath the debris piles and won't be discovered until those piles are cleaned up," Bane said.

But through all of the information, Virginia Department of Environmental Quality officials say there is no major concern to the public when it comes to the containers. No water intakes currently exist past the plant's location on the river.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GEORGE JACKSON
An aerial photograph shows how large the debris field was after Hurricane Helene.



PHOTO COURTESY OF U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and contractors (contracted through FEMA) corralled debris into a centralized location in preparation for debris removal by crane.

Recovery continues on Claytor Lake

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The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers says Claytor Lake and its aftermath from Hurricane Helene is one of the largest debris removal missions in Virginia since 2003, and it aims to clear 300-acre feet of debris from the waterway to ensure the public safety and restore normal conditions in the region.

The lake is back open, but it could be a long time before the entire area is back to normal.

While local organizations, including Friends of Claytor Lake (FOCL), had begun initial cleanup efforts, the arrival of USACE's specialized equipment, such as survey vessels, modular pontoon barges, hydraulic excavators, and a 300-ton crane is helping expedite the process.

"FEMA's primary directive for us is to clear surface debris from the water," said Maj. Ryan Hall, USACE Operations Officer. In what marks Virginia's largest debris removal mission since 2003, Army Corps debris specialists are collaborating with contractors to clear an estimated 300 acre-feet of debris from Claytor

Lake.

"With a hydroelectric dam and drinking water supply at risk, the Governor of Virginia has designated this an emergency area," Hall explained. "Public safety is paramount for both the state and the federal government. For that reason, Gov. Youngkin has requested assistance to ensure the safety of residents and infrastructure downstream."

The lake's connection to the New River, part of the Ohio River Basin, makes this operation especially complex. Flowing south to north from North Carolina, where severe flooding from Hurricane Helene occurred, the New River has carried significant debris to Virginia. "Debris continues to flow in from upstream, posing ongoing risks to public safety, drinking water, and power generation," Hall added. He also noted that regular surveys are essential to continuously assess the quantity of debris and resource needs as removal efforts progress.

Brodrick Havens, Park Manager at Claytor Lake State Park, emphasized the collaborative approach to restoration, highlighting early efforts by local agencies such as the Friends

of Claytor Lake (FOCL) and VDEM to address initial hazards.

"Initially, it was Pulaski County emergency management which then became Virginia Department of Emergency Management," Havens explained. "They came in and started setting up the removal of hazardous materials. Now, with USACE on site, we're able to address the larger debris field impacting safe navigation and the overall health of the lake."

USACE's National Debris Program Manager, Kayla Stull, outlined the phased approach to debris removal, beginning with surveys to identify concentrated debris fields for targeted surface collection.

Once debris is collected, containers are transported to a separation yard, where teams sort materials into green waste, construction debris, general trash, and hazardous waste. The final step involves moving the separated materials to designated disposal sites. Stull noted that, while many resources were sourced locally, additional equipment was brought from other states to meet

See **Recovery**, page 10

Women's Resource Center of the NRV earns accreditation from Dept. of Criminal Justice Services

RADFORD — The Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley (WRCNRV) is now accredited by the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS).

The accreditation "recognizes the center's commitment to providing exceptional services and support to survivors of domestic and sexual violence in the community" WRCNRV announced.

"Achieving DCJS accreditation reflects the center's adherence to standards of service delivery, organizational efficiency, and best practices in victim advocacy and the criminal justice system," the announcement reads. "This milestone is a testament to the dedication and hard work of the Center's staff, volunteers, and community partners who have been instrumental in creating a safer and supportive environment for individuals in need."

Kelly McCoy, Interim Executive Director with

the Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley, said the distinction is an honor.

"It is the goal of the Women's Resource Center to provide the best possible services to survivors as we envision a community free of sexual and domestic violence," said McCoy. "We are honored and proud to be recognized by the Department of Criminal Justice Services for our commitment to best practices and exceptional services."

The Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley has been serving the community since 1977, offering crisis intervention, counseling, legal advocacy, emergency shelter and transitional housing, educational programming, and a 24/7 hotline.

"With this accreditation, the center is poised to continue expanding its reach and impact," the announcement reads.

Staff report

FOCL fights to keep the lake open

In the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, the Claytor Lake community faces the crucial task of restoring the lake's environment and supporting local recovery efforts.

A key question has emerged: should the lake remain open for recovery, or be closed to the public?

Friends of Claytor Lake (FOCL), a nonprofit dedicated to the lake's restoration, is advocating for the lake to stay open. While some closures and restrictions have been necessary, FOCL believes keeping the lake accessible

See **FOCL**, page 10

Holiday Open House to support flood relief



"Mountain View" by Mei Shu

RADFORD - Stop by the annual holiday open house hosted by local artists this weekend, Dec. 7 and 8, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. for an opportunity to assist Giles County families devastated by Hurricane Helene.

Artists ZL Feng, Mei Shu, Pippi Miller, Teri Hoover and Susan Lockwood are donating artwork for the event at 408 Eighth Street in Radford. For \$10 attendees may purchase a ticket for a chance to win

original art. Winners will be drawn at the close of the show.

All proceeds from the ticket sales will benefit flood relief.

Art featuring the five artists will also be on display during the free event and available for purchase just in time for the perfect holiday gift.

Questions may be directed to Susan Lockwood at 540-230-5986.

Staff report



"New River in Winter" by Z. L. Feng

IMAGES COURTESY OF SUSAN LOCKWOOD

Letter From the Publisher

The Radford News Journal and News Messenger will begin publishing on one day each week beginning the week of Dec. 1, 2024. We will continue publishing an enhanced version of the Wednesday editions of the Radford News Journal and News Messenger.

This change is necessary for us to continue to offer you a quality community newspaper. We exist because of your support and look forward to bringing you local news for years to come.

Sincerely,
Michael Showell
Publisher

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday, Dec. 4:

Blacksburg Farmers Market
At Market Square Park, 100 Draper Rd SW, Blacksburg, 2 - 6 p.m. The Blacksburg Farmers Market is a local, family-friendly gathering place in downtown Blacksburg featuring farmers of locally grown produce and meats, alongside artisans of baked goods and handmade crafts. For more information, visit <http://blacksburgfarmersmarket.com>.

Friday, Dec. 6:

Friday Forums with VTWC
The Virginia Tech Women's Club (VTWC) will host another Friday Forum at 10 a.m. Dr. Virginia Buecher-Maxwell, DVM will speak about "Exploring the Human Pet Bond." She is a professor of large animal medicine at the VA-MD College of Veterinary Medicine at VT. Her talk promises to be full of lots of good facts with stories to share. Maxwell will be addressing aggressive pet behavior and sharing some simple tricks to use for this issue. Forums welcome the community to come to the fellowship hall of the Lutheran Memorial Lutheran Church, 600 Prices Fork Rd., Blacksburg. The event begins at 10 a.m. but come a little early for coffee and conversation.

Blacksburg holiday parade and festival
Holiday market on College Avenue, 3 p.m. Visit with Santa at the Lyric Theater, 4 p.m. Tree Lighting 5:45 p.m., Music by TubaChristmas 6 p.m. and Parade at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 7:

Christiansburg Lions Club Craft Show
At the Christiansburg Recreation Center, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. 150 vendors, food and beverages. The event assists the Lions Club community outreach programs.

Blacksburg Farmers Market
At Market Square Park, 100 Draper Rd SW, Blacksburg; New Hours for Nov. through Dec.: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. The Blacksburg Farmers Market is a local, family-friendly gathering place in downtown Blacksburg featuring farmers of locally grown produce and meats, alongside artisans of baked goods and handmade crafts. For more information, visit blacksburgfarmersmarket.com.

Gingerbread House Decorating Party
Gather your family and show off your creative side by building a gingerbread house for the holidays at the Radford Public Library, 11 a.m. – noon. Each group will receive one gingerbread house kit to decorate over the course of an hour. Register to reserve a spot for your group, as supplies and thus spots for this program are limited. Call the library at 540-731-3621, speak to a librarian, or email morgan.esterhuizen@radfordva.gov to register. Please limit group size to six people. You will leave your house at the library to display on top of the bookshelves for the community to enjoy! All ages are welcome.

Sunday, Dec. 8:

Vintage Market
Market Square Park, 100 Draper Rd. SW, Blacksburg, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. The market is made up of a carefully chosen group of vendors who sell a wide selection of quality vintage items, upcycled crafts, and occasional antiques.

Monday, Dec. 9:

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. Citizens are invited to attend and allowed to speak at each meeting. See the agenda at www.radfordva.gov.

Montgomery County Board of Supervisors meeting
Public meetings are normally held 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, Dec. 10:

Radford Christmas Parade

Radford's holiday "Making Spirits Bright" parade will be held at 7 p.m. The parade will start on East Main Street near Radford University and will head west on Main Street, ending at Central Square.

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.

Friday, Dec. 13:

Christmas on Main
Each December, the Town of Christiansburg holds Christmas on Main in Downtown Christiansburg. Join us on Dec. 13 starting at 5 p.m. for Christmas at the Market featuring local crafters and other vendors, followed by the Tree Lighting Ceremony and Christmas Parade. The Tree Lighting Ceremony with the mayor will take place at Town Square at roughly 6:50 p.m., with the Christmas Parade starting at 7 p.m. The theme for this year's parade is "Decorations, gifts and jingle all the way. Here comes Santa in his big red sleigh."

Ongoing:

Now through Dec. 24:

Wrapping for a Reason booth to support MCEAP
The Montgomery County Emergency Assistant Program "Wrapping for a Reason" booth at Uptown Christiansburg, formerly called the NRV Mall in the old Zales location. Hours will vary but will be from about an hour after the mall opens to an hour before it closes from now through Christmas Eve. All proceeds go to MCEAP which provides year-round emergency assistance-food, clothing, utilities, and housing to those in need in Montgomery County. Please go to mceap.com for more information.

Christiansburg Lions Club Annual Christmas Craft Show

CHRISTIANSBURG - The Annual Christiansburg Lions Club Craft Show is set for this Saturday, Dec. 7, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Christiansburg Recreation Center.

This is the Lion's Club 33rd craft show and "we are just as excited as if it were our first," said Doug Kanney, longtime Lions Club member.

"It is a wonderful way for our community to continue our shopping and preparing for Christmas as we have almost 150 craft vendors with their homemade crafts and items for sale," said Kanney. "Almost anything that you could desire and think of is available from the many vendors including jewelry, wooden items and crafts, baked goods, handmade sewing items, canned products, and many other items and areas of interest. All will make wonderful Christmas presents!"

Each year the Lions Club Christmas Craft Show attracts 150 vendors, several thousand shoppers and "a crowd of folks who just come for the fun, food and fellowship," added Kanney, who says the snack bar at the craft show is open all day, from breakfast to lunch and almost 'til closing, with food for all to enjoy.

"The Craft Show is our major event and fund raiser for the year with our 64 Lions Club members working and serving during the day," said Kanney. "As we live up to our Lions Club Motto, "We Serve!" our goal is to make a difference in our community, work with Lions Club International and make a difference in the world around us. There are some one and a half million Lions around the world, in over 200 Lions Clubs, in communities, cities and towns in all kinds of places, all striving to make the world a better place for us all."

"Some, but not all, of our programs and areas we sponsor are Vision Screening of Montgomery County School children, providing glasses to those in need, Leader Dog Program, Childhood Diabetes Program, Carilion Children's Clinic, Christmas Store, Montgomery County Emergency Assistance Program, Boys and Girls State, rescue squads, fire departments, Hope to Walk, and some others," he continued. "We are excited about the way in which we support our community and our fellow citizens."

As we work for the Craft Show, we are indebted and grateful to our local sponsors who also make our work



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CHRISTIANSBURG LIONS CLUB

There are hand crafted items galore at the annual craft show, set for this Saturday.

possible by contributing to our show in their financial and encouraging support. Our sponsors range from Major to Gold and Silver and not only contribute but also participate in our work.

So, as we look forward to our Annual Lions Club Christmas Craft Show, we

invite all of our friends and neighbors to a good day of crafts, fun, food and fellowship. Come and visit with us and see what wonderful crafts are available and have a good time!"

Staff report

Belle Heth students take on police in basketball game



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE RADFORD CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

The final day of the Law Enforcement Club at Belle Heth ended with an epic showdown recently: a Students vs. Police basketball game. "Both teams gave it their all, displaying incredible effort and teamwork," the school posted on social media. "A huge thank you to Radford City Police Department for dedicating their time over the past few months and serving as outstanding role models for our students."

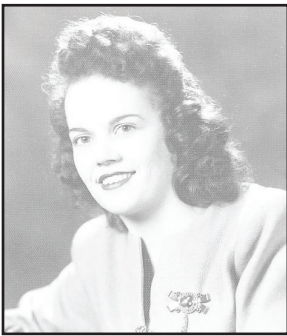
OBITUARIES

Bibee, Wanda Lee Shelor

Wanda Lee Shelor Bibee, born Feb. 26, 1929, passed away on Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 28, 2024, in Radford. She was born to the late Samuel Lee Shelor and Stella Mae Sowers Shelor and was raised in Snowville.

She worked much of her adult life for Burlington Industries in Radford and was a member of the Mount Tabor United Methodist Church. She loved to travel, take numerous photographs, liked growing flowers, and doing handcrafts like quilting and crocheting. Wanda was a gentle, thoughtful woman with a beautiful smile and genuine interest in helping others.

Wanda was preceded in death by her parents as



well as her husband of 67 years, Berkley Anderson Bibee; her sister, Agnes Shelor Marion; brothers, Samuel Thomas Shelor, and Alvin Elwood Shelor; nephews, Samuel Thomas Shelor, Jr., and Alvin Elwood Shelor, Jr.; and nieces Diane Quesenberry and Kimberly Shelor-Hare.

She is survived by her sister, Nadine Shelor

Burton of Maryland; sister-in-law Patty Lewey Shelor; and many nieces and nephews and special friend, Anna Handy.

The family received friends Tuesday, Dec. 3, 2024, at the Mullins Funeral Home in Radford. Funeral services followed with Ken Farrar officiating. A graveside service will be held at 10 a.m. Wednesday Dec. 4, 2024 at Highland Memory Gardens in Dublin.

In lieu of flowers, family request that donations be made to Mount Tabor United Methodist Church, 1742 Walton Road, Christiansburg, VA 24073.

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

McCoy, Clifton Lee



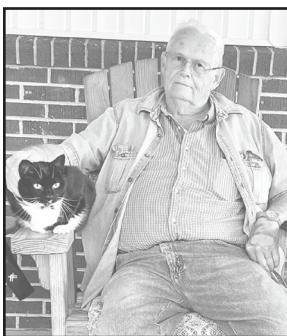
Clifton Lee McCoy, 72, of Christiansburg, died Saturday, Nov. 30, 2024. He was preceded in death by his father, William S. "Buddy" McCoy and infant children, Veronica Lynn and Paul Lee McCoy.

He is survived by his wife, Jackie McCoy; mother, June L. McCoy; mother-in-law, Ruth Johnston; son, Charlton Lee McCoy; stepson, Ross Blount (Elizabeth); grandsons, Brody and Hunter Blount; sisters and brothers-in-law, Vanessa and Kenneth McCoy, Rebecca and Mark

Johnston; numerous nieces and nephews.

Funeral services will be conducted Thursday, Dec. 5, 2024 at 12 p.m. in the Centennial Christian Church with Rev. Todd Millsaps officiating. Interment will follow in the Centennial Christian Church Cemetery. The family will have a visitation Thursday from 10:30 a.m. until service time at the church. In lieu of flowers memorial contributions may be made to the Centennial Christian Church of Longshop-McCoy Fire and Rescue.

King, William Mark



William Mark King, 82, passed away Monday, Nov. 25, 2024. He was preceded in death by his parents, Herman William and Ada Rutherford King; and his in-laws, Jack and Mary Ellison.

Survivors include his wife, Ellen Ellison King; sons and daughters-in-law, Mark (Carolyn) King and David (Noella) King; grandchildren and their spouses, Will (Ashlyn) King, Nikki (Connor) Rogers, Drew (Allie) King, Cameron (Sydney) King and Cody King; great-grandchildren,

will be held at 1 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2024, at Sunset Cemetery in Christiansburg with Neal Turner officiating. The family requests that you please dress casually if you are attending the graveside service.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to Carilion Hospice, 1615 Franklin Rd SW, Roanoke, VA 24016, or to a charity of your choice.

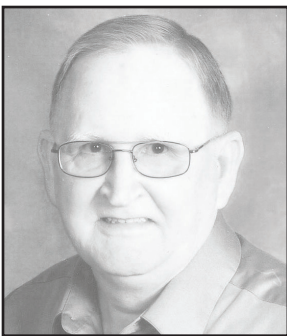
The King family is in the care of Mullins Funeral Home & Crematory in Radford.

Hanks, Bobby Lee

Bobby Lee Hanks, of Hiwassee, Va., stepped into the loving arms of our Savior in Heaven Nov. 26, 2024.

He was born in Los Angeles, Calif. to Franklin and Wilma Hanks. He was a faithful member of Auburn Baptist Church in Riner, Va. He was preceded in death by multiple family members.

He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Lucy Hanks; children, Bobbi Loughlin, James and Christina Hanks, David Hanks, John and Stephanie Hanks, and



Jessica Hanks Smith; siblings, James Hanks (brother), and Ruth Hanks Crenshaw (sister); grandchildren, Keith and Elizabeth, McKenzie, Haven, and Owen; as well as multiple other family

members and friends.

The family will receive friends 4 - 6 p.m. Friday, Dec. 6, 2024, at the Mullins Funeral Home in Radford. Funeral services will be at 11 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 7, 2024, at Auburn Baptist Church in Riner. Interment will be private.

In lieu of flowers, please donate to either Wounded Warrior Project or St. Jude's Children's Hospital.

The Hanks family is in the care of Mullins Funeral Home & Crematory in Radford, Virginia.

Sarver, Belvia B. Mullins

Belvia B. Mullins Sarver, 95, of Parrott, passed away peacefully at home, surrounded by her family Sunday, Nov. 24, 2024.

She was born Aug. 10, 1929, in Pound, Va. She was preceded in death by her husband of 42 years, Earl Sarver, Jr.; grandson, Dustin Earl Sarver; and her great-granddaughter, Jodi Bolland.

Belvia is survived by her children, Joyce Farmer (Eddie) of Snowville, Betty Long (Danny) of Dublin, Mary Hall (Tex) of Dublin, Jim Sarver of



Dublin, and Jack Sarver (Melinda) of Parrott. She was most proud of her nine grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren, and two great great-

grandchildren.

The family received friends Wednesday, Nov. 27, 2024, at the Mullins Funeral Home in Radford. Funeral services followed with Pastor Bill Neely officiating. Burial will follow in Sifford Cemetery in Parrott with Douglas Hedge officiating.

The family would like to thank Good Samaritan Hospice for the care that they provided Belvia.

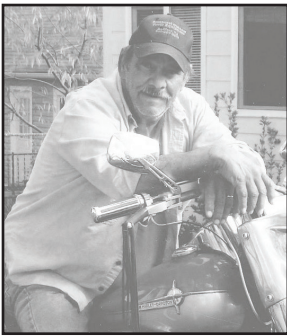
The Sarver family is in the care of Mullins Funeral Home & Crematory in Radford.

Saul, Jr., Isaac Webb

Isaac Webb Saul, Jr., 73, passed away Monday, Nov. 25, 2024.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Isaac Webb, Sr. and Georgia Ross Saul; and his grandson, Joshua Bryant Cabell.

Survivors include his loving wife of 48 years, Deborah Smith Saul; children and their spouses, Stanley and Michelle Smith and Sheila and Kenny Cabell; grandchildren, Crystal (Roberto) Ruff,



Kenny (Christina) Cabell, Nicholas Smith, Chelsea Smith and Samantha Smith; great-

grandchildren, Elijah, Olivia, Isaacs, Ella and Adeline; sister, Wanda Sue Matney; special friend, Nick Fraiser; and many other nieces, nephews, family members and friends.

The family received friends for a visitation Friday, Nov. 29, 2024, at the Mullins Funeral Home in Radford.

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

Shephard, Greta Odell

Greta Odell Shephard, 88, of Christiansburg, died Monday, Nov. 25, 2024. She was born in Montgomery County on Aug. 6, 1936, to the late Basil Lee and Clara Graham Elliott. She was also preceded in death by her husband, Jerold (Jerry) Shephard; sons, Wayne Shephard, Jr., Joey Lee Shephard; brothers, Duane Sherwood, Gary Elliott.

She is survived by her grandchildren, Terri Shephard Murray (Eddie), Ashley Shephard Cridlin (Jacob), Kacie Shephard (Cody Pendergrass); great-grandchildren, Jade Murray Parker (Caleb), Carter Wayne Murray,



Kylie Emmersyn Pendergrass; great-great-grandchildren, Lily Grace Murray, Finleigh Irelynn Parker; brother-in-law, Frankie Shephard; sister-in-law, Cindy Elliott; as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

The family would like

to extend a special thank you to Pulaski Health and Rehab for their loving care and compassion for Greta.

Funeral services were held Friday, Nov. 29, 2024 in the McCoy Funeral Home Chapel with Pastor Jube Burk officiating. Interment followed at Roselawn Memorial Gardens, Christiansburg.

The family received friends prior to the service at McCoy Funeral Home.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Merrimac Pentecostal Holiness Church, 894 Merrimac Road, Blacksburg, VA 24060.

Final Glencoe Session set for this Friday



PHOTO COURTESY OF GLENCOE MANSION

Domino will perform at the final Glencoe Sessions concert, set for this Friday, Dec. 6.

RADFORD - FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge and Glencoe Mansion are pleased to host the fourth and final of "The Glencoe Sessions" with an evening of music inside the Glencoe Mansion with the talented trio Domino on Friday, Dec. 6, 6 -7:30 p.m. Tickets are available to purchase online and in person while supplies last.

In the heart of Nashville, the trio of Cole Ritter, Luca Chiappara and Addie Levy weaves a stellar blend of bluegrass, jazz, and swing. Their music, polished through years of exploration, brings a magic to the stage. All three members are nationally touring musicians, working for multiple artists

and touring under their own names.

The Glencoe Sessions series provides for an intimate listening experience with a diverse array of musical talent from the Blue Ridge region. Tickets are \$15 per person per session. Children 12 and under are free admission with the purchase of an adult ticket. For more information or to purchase tickets please visit blueridgejamboree.com or blueridgefriends.org. Tickets may also be purchased in person at the Glencoe Mansion and the FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge Office.

Glencoe Mansion is located at 600 Unruh Dr. in Radford.

Glencoe Mansion

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OPINION

Delegate details legislative priorities for upcoming session

The deadline to apply for FEMA Individual Assistance grants for those affected by Hurricane Helene closed on Dec. 2. Our region has received millions of dollars to help families, businesses, and local governments mitigate the damage done by this historic storm, and the work to build ourselves back will continue for the foreseeable future. I'm pleased to see how our community continues to rally back from Hurricane Helen's impact in the New River Valley, and our local governments, friends and neighbors, non-profits, and other entities should be proud of their response. Funds for regional recovery will continue to be a top focus of mine as we head into the 2025 General Assembly legislative session, and I'll be sure to keep you updated on these ongoing efforts.

Speaking of the topic of Virginia's upcoming legislative session, I'd like to give you a preview of what House Republicans and I plan to do when we return to Richmond in January.

House Republicans and I will be focused on reducing the cost of living for our citizens, tax cuts and tax reform to save you money and put more money back in your pockets, public safety, parental rights, protecting our constitutional rights, and ensuring our elections are managed appropriately. Specifically, we plan to submit legislation to eliminate the dreaded car tax while simultaneously making our localities whole. We will also push legislation that eliminates the tax on tips and overtime pay, and we will work on expanding the SRO Program to protect our children in our schools while also addressing the rise in Artificial Intelligence crimes. We will protect our ballot boxes, require photo IDs to vote, and work to repeal same day voter registration that places a massive burden on our hardworking registrars. These are but a few areas that my Republican colleagues and I will address in January 2025.

Additionally, in partnership with Attorney General



Delegate Jason Ballard

Virginia General Assembly

Miyares, I plan to submit legislation that would create a civil cause of action for victims of terrorism. As someone who joined the military in the aftermath of 9/11, this is an issue that is near and dear to me. What this bill would do is create a state cause of action for someone who is injured by an act of terrorism – or by an act facilitating or furthering terrorism – for three times the actual damages sustained. There is already a similar civil cause of action in federal code, and there is no reason why the Commonwealth should not afford extra protection and assurances to our citizens should an unspeakable act of terror occur on Virginia soil.

Also, I plan to resubmit legislation that was killed by the Democrat-led Committee on Finance last session with the hope it will encounter better chances this year. The legislation I'm referring to would extend a tax credit for those who purchase "gun-safety devices," including a gun safe, gun case, lock box, or other similar device at a retail store. In most cases, people who would take advantage of this tax credit would do so after the purchase of an expensive gun safe. In current law, a purchaser can qualify for this tax credit if a gun safe was purchased from a Federal Firearms License holder, like a gun store. If my legislation is passed into law, you could apply for this tax credit if you purchase a gun safe from

a non-FFL business, such as Tractor Supply, Walmart, or similar store. It will help put money back into the pockets of responsible firearm owners, encourage the purchase of gun safes, and is a win-win for everyone involved.

I also plan to resubmit my legislation from the 2024 session that would increase the Virginia Tobacco Region Revolving Fund's territory to incorporate Planning District 4, which includes Giles, Montgomery, and Pulaski Counties and the City of Radford. Funds disbursed by the Virginia Tobacco Commission are meant to enhance the economic growth and development of regions of Virginia that traditionally relied upon tobacco for economic prosperity, which has obviously come into decline. While it may be true that localities in our region do not have quite the same tobacco growing history as localities in southside or farther southwest Virginia, much of our region had (or still has) industries that rely upon the tobacco trade. I would like to get our region added into the Tobacco Commission's footprint as I believe we could really benefit from the additional funding.

I look forward to providing you more information in a future column about additional legislation I'm carrying, including important budget items for the region – like funding for the widening of Route 100 and more.

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 DelJasonBallard@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 a donor advised fund can help you maximize charitable gifts

Charitable giving is often a key pillar of estate and legacy planning for many investors. If philanthropy is important to you, consider the following details of donor advised funds and evaluate if they make sense for your plans to support causes that matter most to you.



Josh Smith, CRPC

Financial Advisor,
Ameriprise Financial
Services, LLC

What is a donor advised fund? A donor advised fund (DAF) is a monetary fund or charitable account managed and operated by a sponsoring organization, commonly a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, religious or financial entity. Contributors to a DAF make an irrevocable donation to the fund that is managed by an investment professional in accordance with the fund's long-term goals and objectives. The donor is then able to advise the fund manager on which organizations and grants to allocate the money to.

What can be donated to a DAF? One of the attractive features of a donor advised fund is that multiple appreciating asset types, such as publicly traded securities, mutual funds, restricted stock, and cash, can be donated to the account.

Why utilize a donor advised fund? In addition to the possible upside on invested assets, potential tax advantages for donors and charities alike are another DAF benefit. Because this type of fund is typically professionally managed and operated by a section 501(c)(3) organization, the donated assets can appreciate tax-free over time, therefore increasing the value of funds that can be distributed to grants and organizations.

Beyond having access to investment professionals, donors can generally take advantage of an immediate tax deduction on the amount of assets contributed, even if the funds are not

going to be allocated directly to the intended charitable organizations until future years. Cash contributions are eligible for a 60% deduction of your adjusted gross income. Other assets may be eligible for up to 30% of your adjusted gross income. Be sure to work with a CPA or tax adviser to determine the most effective way to give to a DAF.

What are the downsides of donor advised funds? There are three main limitations of donor advised funds that are important to keep in mind. To start, there are administrative costs for donor advised funds. The cost for management of different funds can vary, but it is important to understand cost structures to determine if the benefit of having professional management outweighs any administrative costs.

Depending on the donor advised fund that you chose to utilize, there may be restrictions on the organizations or grants you can support. While donor advised funds allow investors to maintain a relationship with the fund management as an advisor and make recommendations on where to direct the donation, the investment professional will ultimately decide what causes to support.

Lastly, contributions to a donor advised fund are irrevocable. Once you allocate assets to a DAF and a sponsoring organization, they no longer belong to you. It is important to work with a financial professional to determine the appropriate amount and asset types to donate to a fund, so that you can do so with confidence.

A donor advised fund may be an advantageous way to support charitable causes that align with your passions and can ultimately make a difference for those in need. Consult with a financial professional and your tax adviser to determine if a donor advised fund is right for your financial plan.

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CLUES ACROSS

1. Chop up
5. Ones who utilize
10. Sings with closed lips
14. South American hummingbird
15. Serves as a coxswain
16. Liquor distilled from coconut or rice
17. Spur
18. Senile
19. Tanzanian people
20. Cruel
22. Boxing's "GOAT"
23. Yokels
24. London soccer team
27. Chinese chess piece
30. Supervises flying
31. 007's creator
32. Shaft horsepower (abbr.)
35. A spider makes one
37. Liquefied natural gas
38. Opaque gem
39. Brazilian palm
40. Periodical (slang)

CLUES DOWN

41. You might step on one
42. Marvin and Horsley are two
43. Partner to cheese
44. Unpleasant smell
45. Field force unit (abbr.)
46. Fashion accessory
47. Cool!
48. Time zone
49. Songs to one's lover
52. German river
55. Go bad
56. Sword
60. Very eager
61. Leaf bug
63. Italian seaport
64. Napoleon Dynamite's uncle
65. Member of Jamaican religion
66. Large wading bird
67. Carries out
68. Eternal rest
69. It holds up your head-words

CLUES DOWN

1. Not low
2. Small water buffalo
3. A mark left behind
4. Archaic form of have
5. Fiddler crabs
6. Popular Hyundai sedan
7. Deport
8. Making over
9. Midway between south and southeast
10. Arabic masculine name
11. Type of acid
12. Popular 1980s Cher film
13. Outdoor enthusiasts' tools
21. Chinese city
23. "Star Wars" character Solo
25. The bill in a restaurant
26. Old, ugly witch
27. Burn with a hot liquid
28. To claim or demand
29. "A Doll's House" playwright
32. Involuntary muscular contraction
33. Pea stems (British)

CLUES DOWN

34. Double or multiple fold
36. No longer is
37. Lakers' crosstown rivals (abbr.)
38. S. American plant cultivated in Peru
40. Cloth or fabric
41. Flanks
43. Disfigure
44. Angry
46. Baltic coast peninsula
47. Large, flightless birds
49. Plants of the lily family
50. Medieval Norwegian language
51. Polio vaccine developer
52. Not soft
53. Exchange rate
54. Voice (Italian)
57. Baseball's Ruth
58. Famed guitarist
59. Take a chance
61. Wife
62. Elaborate handshake

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Danilowicz joins AI discussion panel at Disrupt Up conference on emerging technology

Artificial intelligence is a topic that, of late, obviously provokes a wide range of reactions.

Some people are extremely excited about potential uses for AI. Others approach its implications with anxiety and trepidation. And still countless more have no shortage of questions about what it is, what it does and how it will affect our futures.

Some short answers: AI is technology that’s capable of performing tasks that are typically associated with the human brain, such as visual and auditory perceptions, decision-making and interpretation of languages. A subset, called generative AI, is a deep-learning form of the medium – like ChatGPT, for example – that draws from vast amounts of data to produce new content by creating text, images, music and video.

Recently, the Disrupt Up Emerging Technology Conference, held at the Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center on Nov. 14-15, dove deeply into the phenomenon and what it could mean for the state, the nation and the planet as a whole.

About 200 guests and dozens of panelists, including Virginia Del. Michelle Maldonado (Manassas), took part in the presentations, breakout sessions and workshops, all sponsored by the Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council.

One of Disrupt Up’s first events was a morning roundtable discussion, “AI Trends: Disruption in Transformation,” featuring Radford University President Bret Danilowicz alongside David Townsend, the Schulze Professor of Entrepreneurship at Virginia Tech; William “Eddie” Amos, chairman of GO Virginia Region 2, and Brett Malone, CEO of the University of Tennessee Research Park at Cherokee Farm.

Malone, who moderated the chat, pointed to the opposing ends of the AI spectrum. On one extreme, he said, it can be used to produce junk email; conversely, however, he observed that surgeons treating children with cleft palates can now employ the technology to predict how their patients’ faces will mature as they age.

“They work backwards so the surgeon has a guide to be able to make the surgery more precise so that the future adult

face has a more accurate look,” Malone explained. “That’s a transformational surgery for these children.

“You’ve got to look at both sides of this coin, and what I’m really excited about is where we’re headed for positive applications and how we can start to get smart about removing some of the negative connotations ... and start to apply it in the right ways,” he said.

One of those paths runs through education.

Danilowicz noted that as a regional public university – one of just eight in Virginia – Radford is part of a system that produces 43% of the nation’s college graduates.

“We are continually innovating how we teach to try to develop the workforce,” he said, citing the fusion of students, research and technology through Radford’s Venture Lab, its Wicked Festival problem-solving event and its courses, one of which employs an AI-based virtual company that helps business students grasp complex elements like supply chains, marketing and customer service.

“It doesn’t give them the answer,” Danilowicz said. “They have to learn how to use AI to further those business proposals. And the amazing thing with that is the students are learning both traditional hard skills and soft skills. So ... by integrating AI, it’s given these students a much more balanced perspective on how business works. It makes them really competitive.”

Townsend, too, spoke against the common notion that AI is capable of doing all the work for students, and he likened the technology to earlier generations’ use of electronic calculators.

“Should we allow students to have access to these tools?” he ventured. “I think that’s exactly the wrong question. They’re using the tools.”

The more precise decision, Townsend said, is “How do we better leverage those tools in an underlying model, an educational model? And so, I think in that particular space, it’s going to be enormous.

“Every issue is going to be touched by this.”

Indeed, if the fourth member of the panel, Amos, is proven correct, artificial intelligence will eventually scramble



PHOTO BY PATRICK REED

Disrupt Up’s morning roundtable discussion, “AI Trends: Disruption in Transformation,” featured Radford University President Bret Danilowicz (speaking, center) alongside David Townsend (left, seated), the Schulze Professor of Entrepreneurship at Virginia Tech; William “Eddie” Amos (right, seated), chairman of GO Virginia Region 2, and Brett Malone (far left, standing), CEO of the University of Tennessee Research Park at Cherokee Farm.

most current modes of employment.

“One of the things I found in my research recently ... is a sobering aspect: 85 million jobs are going to be displaced by A.I. worldwide,” Amos said. “Now, on a bright note, there’s going to be 97 million new jobs created by A.I.”

“I look at this as the Industrial Revolution 2.0,” he continued, citing a recent article in which computer scientist Ray Kurzweil predicted that “the amount of innovation that you’ll see over the next five to 10 years will match what we’ve seen over the last 50 years.”

“So, think about that,” Amos concluded. “Change is coming.”

Other topics examined over the day-and-a-half that followed were the use of AI to automate businesses, the expanding field of biotech, security issues and a student roundtable, hosted by Carilion Clinic, called “Your Future in AI.”

Maldonado presented Friday’s opening lecture, “Policy with Purpose: Driving Virginia’s Innovative Future.”

Among the breakout sessions was “GenAI Powered Research: Tools for Academic, Policy, Corporate and Entrepreneurial Leaders,” led by Samantha Steidle, director of Radford’s Venture Lab and Entrepreneurship Faculty. Steidle gave an overview of some current AI tools – ChatGPT, but also

Perplexity, Research Rabbit, Consensus and Cite – and discussed their practical applications in a range of fields.

Also among the breakout sessions was “GenAI Powered Research: Tools for Academic, Policy, Corporate and Entrepreneurial Leaders,” led by Samantha Steidle, director of Radford’s Venture Lab and Entrepreneurship Faculty. She gave a substantive overview of about 10 AI tools – ChatGPT, but also Perplexity, Research Rabbit, Consensus and Cite – and discussed their practical applications in a range of fields.

Using a tool called Gamma, she transformed a text-based document into a fully formatted and richly illustrated visual presentation within seconds, drawing audible reactions even from a tech-savvy crowd.

“It really is going to be the people that can use these platforms in the most responsible way that is going to move this forward,” Steidle said.

“There’s no putting it back in the bottle now,” she said. “Right now, the world needs entrepreneurs and innovators more than ever, and that is because we see opportunities in problems, and we have plenty of problems to work on.

“I think now is the time for all of us.”

Neil Harvey for Radford University

BAPTIST

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

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

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

CHURCH OF GOD

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

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

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Snowville Christian Church, 5436 Lead Mine Road, Hiwassee, VA. 24347, Website: <http://www.SnowvilleChristianChurch.com> & Facebook. Email: Office@Snowvillechristianchurch.com, Sunday School: 9:30, Worship Service: 11:00, Bible Study: Thursdays @ 6:00pm. We are: “Inspiring hope, helping people grow their faith and sharing God’s love with others.”

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LUTHERAN

St. Michael Lutheran Church, 2308 Merri-mac Road, Blacksburg, VA 24060. Worship service each Sunday at 10 AM, Sunday School 9 AM. We are a community of God’s people where we gather for worship, learning and service. Visitors and new members are always WELCOME! Google comments: “Wonderful, welcoming congregation.” A place where all are truly welcome.” You’ll love our minister, Pastor James Henricks, who is a guiding light

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Read 2 Timothy 1:1 through 4:22

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15).

The Greek word orthotomeo, translated here as “correctly handles,” is rendered “rightly dividing” in other versions.

It carries the idea of cutting straight like a surgeon and getting to the heart of the matter. Paul’s letters to Timothy emphasize sound doctrine, which must be taught in the churches so believers will be established in the truth. Is false teaching being advocated? Stand firm on God’s truth. Do unbelievers mock our Christian life? Stand firm on God’s truth.

We are all to be students of God’s Word—diligently studying it, faithfully putting it into practice in our daily lives, and effectively sharing it. We should never be ashamed to be identified with Christ, nor do we want to be embarrassed by our lack of preparation for witnessing.

We need to be ready with knowledge of the truth and guided by God’s Spirit in sharing it with others.

Thought for Today: Train in the truth and trust its teaching.

Quicklook: 2 Timothy 2:7–15

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Asbury United Methodist Church, 500 Stuart Street, Christiansburg. 540-382- 0743. Rev. Ryan Schaeffer. Sunday School, 10:15 a.m., Sunday Worship, 11:30 a.m., Wednesday Bible Study 7pm, alternating month’s with Schaeffer Memorial Baptist Church, Senior Bible Study Thursday, 10:30 a.m. All are welcome.
St. Paul United Methodist Church, 220 West Main Street, Christiansburg. Rev. Mike Derflinger (540) 382-2410. Sunday Worship at 10a.m. with Children’s Church at the same time, Sunday School at 9 a.m. Worship is in-person and Live-streamed on our YouTube Channel: StPaulUMCChristiansburgVA. All are welcome. Website: www.stpaul-vaumc.org



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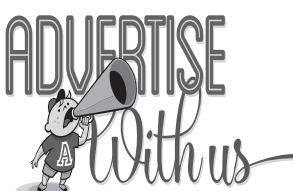
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Virginia Tech is going bowling, while UVA's football team is going home and planning for next season.

The Hokies retained the Commonwealth Cup on Saturday for the fifth consecutive year. Both teams entered the contest with a 5-6 mark. The winner would go to a bowl game, while the loser would not.

Pop Watson threw for 254 yards and a touchdown and rushed for a score to lead Virginia Tech to a 37-17 victory in bitterly cold temperatures. But the Hokies were red hot, keeping the mercury higher than the cold temps throughout the stadium.

Bhayshul Tuten added 124 yards rushing and two scores for the Hokies, who finish the regular season at 6-6 and snapped a three-game losing streak.

On Saturday, Virginia Tech defensive end Antwaun Powell-Ryland finished with three of the Hokies' five sacks and now has 19 sacks on the season to go with 19 tackles for a loss and three forced fumbles. This year's performance has PR in the talk for the ACC Defensive Player of the Year.

PR took over the national sack lead with the three on Saturday. He is

currently in fourth place on the most sacks list in a season at Tech.

To say, Tech has been dominant in this Commonwealth matchup is an understatement as they beat UVA for the 23rd time in the last 25 matchups. Since Tech joined the ACC in the 2024, they have a 19-1 mark against their cross-state rivals. Also, they have not lost to UVA in Blacksburg since 1998 and hold a 61-35-8 mark in the series.

Overall, UVA still leads the Commonwealth All-Sports Competition. The Commonwealth Cup has been a part of the rivalry since 2014 and is an all-sports points competition. UVA captured the 2023-2024 trophy and has won all five other competitions this fall. Following Saturday's game, UVA now leads 5-1.

Saturday's game finished the 60th year of at Lane Stadium.

The Hokies are projected to play Tulane in the Fenway Bowl on Saturday, Dec. 28. The Fenway Bowl is one of three active bowl games played in a baseball stadium, along with the Pinstripe Bowl at Yankee Stadium and the Rate Bowl at Chase Field. The Hokies played in the Pinstripe Bowl four years ago. So, they are slowly trying to accomplish the trifecta.



PHOTO COURTESY OF VT ATHLETICS

Virginia Tech players celebrate with the Commonwealth Cup after being cross-state rival UVA on Saturday at Lane Stadium.

Buying or selling Hokies

Thirteen ACC teams are eligible for bowl games, and now it includes Virginia Tech. But this year has not gone as every Hokie fan had hoped.

National media say Hokies have been one of the nation's bigger disappointments this season. It's hard for fans to swallow this pill after the expectations were very high. There was even talk of an ACC championship game appearance. It simply did not happen.

The end result is a 6-6 record.

But Coach Brent Pry was optimistic after Saturday's game. As a matter of fact, he said without a doubt they are a better team.

"There's plenty of growth and development. We have so many first and second-year players that are making strides. That's why I think this bowl prep is going to be really important for a bunch of them. We're going to lose some old guys who have certainly made a lot of plays around here, but we've got a good group coming."

"We're very competitive in practice against one another, and I think it showed up each and every week. We're a resilient bunch, a very coachable bunch. They've stuck together. They didn't point fingers. A lot of good signs, a lot of good things that, to me, are important in building a foundation in a team that can sustain



Marty Gordon
**FROM THE
SIDELINES**

some success and remain humble and hungry and keep growing and pushing the thing forward," he said.

Pry has become a television regular, posting commercials for the Motor Mile car dealership. Thus, he has learned to be that car salesman. The question is whether he is still trying to sell fans on an attractive used car or a completely new one.

So far, the choice has been difficult for Hokie fans, hoping for a major turnaround from what they have seen for the past 10 years since Frank Beamer stepped down.

All the bells and whistles are there. Pry has even stepped up and added air conditioning to the old version left sitting in the parking lot by former Coach Justin Fuente. The new tires add to the splash, but now

it depends on what's under the hood. An offseason tune up could be in the works.

Fans have been hearing it is a "little engine" that could. It just hasn't happened as quickly as everyone had hoped.

Let's put this into some perspective. Frank Beamer took over a wreck of a ship and in his first six years, the Hokies were 2-9, 3-8, 6-4, 6-5, 5-6 and 2-8. It took seven years before he would produce nine wins.

Then he retired things started to unravel. Fuente had a great first year, and the car start to sputter. Ongoing oil changes and a new paint job just could spark a new chapter in the Hokies novel.

Pry inherited a program that couldn't get many high school coaches in the state of Virginia to return calls from Blacksburg.

That has all changed. Virginia Tech is now back in the fast lane of recruiting its home state.

All the positive talk has lent itself to a renewed shot in the arm for a program desperately needing it. The question remains: Are you buying or selling when it comes to the Hokies? How long will fans and the administration wait? Most used cars only have a few good years in them before needing to be replaced.

Annual Turkey Trot held in Blacksburg



Children race in the kid's fun run on Draper Street before the Blacksburg Turkey Trot race on Thanksgiving morning.



The Blacksburg Turkey Trot was a family affair with relatives and multiple generations jogging and walking the route together. Almost 1200 people participated in the event on Thanksgiving morning.

BLACKSBURG — The Annual Turkey Trot run brought more than 1,000 runners out to downtown Blacksburg on Thanksgiving morning.

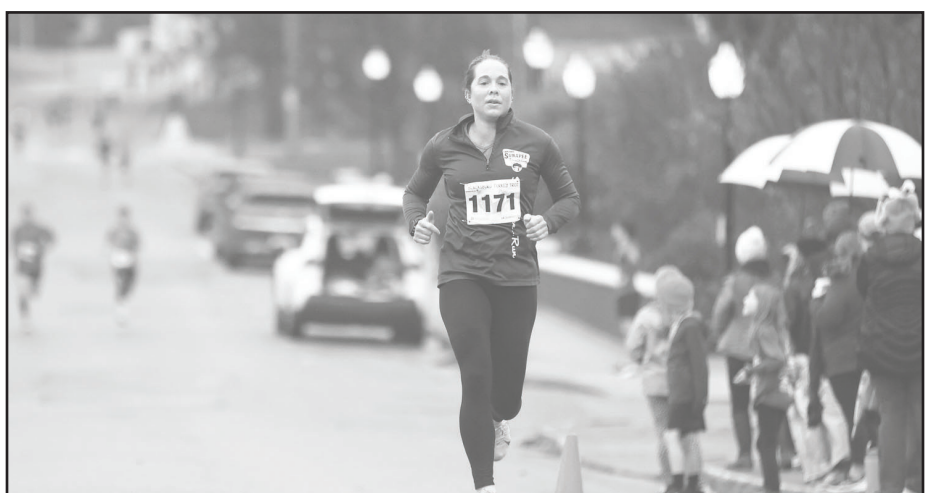
The race has become a much-anticipated tradition for Blacksburg, bringing out runners of all ages. This year's Top 40 Turkey Trot results

include:

1) Ryan Bagchi, 16:40.65; 2) Nicholas McCumsey; 3) Conner Rutherford; 4) Jakob Nipper; 5) Bowen Varney; 6) Landon Dinkel; 7) Aaron Stanger; 8) Tamirlan Zharmagambetov; 9) Trent Nichols; 10) Spencer McGehee; 11) Scott Huxtable; 12) Johnny Lowry; 13)



Blacksburg High School senior Ryan Bagchi (672) leads out the field under drizzly skies for the 2024 edition of the Blacksburg Turkey Trot. Bagchi would win the 5k race in a time of 16:40.



PHOTOS BY JON FLEMING

Blacksburg's Maïke Holthuijzen was the women's race winner in the Turkey Trot 5k with a time of 19:37 on Thursday morning.

Louis Semtner; 14) Carter Middleton; 15) Lance Wilhelm; 16) Tyler Hamlin; 17) Maïke Holtuijzen; 18) Reece McFall; 19) Joshua Arce; 20) Allison McDonald; 21) Aaron Brantly; 25) Connor Doyle; 26) Katelyn Lafon; 27) Brad Schmitt; 28) Chris Webb; 29) Charles Phillips; 30) Josiah Humphreys;

31) Harrison Tracy; 32) Ava Geiger; 33) Ian Mcrae; 34) Alexander Howe; 35) Dianna Grayson; 36) Landon Lacroix; 37) Michelle Lowry; 38) Elijah Furey; 39) Nathaniel Arce; and 40) Kyle White.

Staff report

Blacksburg’s Ferguson to play at Ferrum



FILE PHOTO

Brynn Ferguson takes a jumper during this past year’s game against Floyd County.

Marty Gordon
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A four-year starter for the Blacksburg girls’ basketball team has announced plans to continue her playing career at Ferrum University. Brynn Ferguson, a 5-6 point guard, made the announcement last week.

Ferguson earned all-district and all-region honors for the past three years and averaged 12 points per game during her sophomore and junior years. She is also close to hitting the 1,000-point milestone this season.

She said she chose Ferrum due to its coaching staff being in contact and showing interest since her freshman year. “I’ve always had dreams of furthering my athletic career and Ferrum felt like the great place to do it. I also deiced to commit to Ferrum because of location and being close to home.”

Ferrum is a private college in Rocky Mount, Virginia, and has a current

enrollment of 780 undergraduate students. Its athletic teams compete in Division III of the NCAA in the Old Dominion Athletic Conference (ODAC). In 2025, Ferrum will move to NCAA Division II as a member of Conference Carolinas.

The school’s basketball team is currently 2-1 in the earlier season. Last year, they finished 10-16.

Bryan Harvey is in his 20th year as the head coach.

As an incoming freshman, Ferguson plans to do whatever it takes to see the floor the first year.

“My ultimate goal is to start as a freshman and hopefully win all conference awards,” she said.

Ferguson plans on majoring in sports marketing/management with a possible minor in sports medicine.

“Sports have always been a big part of my life, and I’ve always wanted to stay around sports whenever my playing career is over, which is why I choose these career paths,” she said.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PURDUE-FT. WAYNE UNIVERSITY

Former RU point guard Quinton Morton-Robertson (third from left) played against his former school, Radford University.



PHOTO COURTESY OF RADFORD UNIVERSITY

The Radford University men’s basketball team at the 2024 Sunshine Slam in Daytona Beach, Florida.

RU wins title, familiar face on floor

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The Radford University men’s basketball team turned a beach trip into a championship this past week with a 69-56 win over Purdue-Ft. Wayne in the Ocean Bracket of the 2024 Sunshine Slam in Daytona Beach, Florida.

With the victory, Radford improved to 6-2 on the young season, which has now officially matched the 2018-19 squad for the best start to a campaign in seven years. It is the second straight win for the Highlanders and improved the team to 6-1 over their last seven contests.

The win was another impressive notch for Radford as Purdue Fort Wayne is coming off a 22-13 campaign last season and was picked in the top spot of the Horizon League Preseason Poll. The Highlanders never gave up the lead in the impressive wire-to-wire victory.

When the Highlanders took the floor, there was a familiar face at point guard for Purdue-Ft. Wayne. Quinton Morton-Robinson played in 22 games for RU in the 2020-21 season after graduating from Radford High School.

Morton-Robinson started all 36 games last season and ranked 34th in the nation and best in the Horizon

League in 3-point percentage (40.4), making 105 3-pointers.

Morton-Robinson helped lead Radford High School to a combined 112-6 record including a 30-0 (2018-2019) record as a senior. He won the 1A State Championship as a freshman (2015-16) and sophomore (2016-17) and a 2A State Championship as a senior (2018-19). In addition, he committed just 26 turnovers as a junior, averaging 21.1 points per game that season.

In his time at RU, he averaged 7.4 points per game. After his sophomore season, he transferred to Purdue-Ft. Wayne.

Morton-Robertson only managed five points in this week’s contest.

RU’s Jarvis Moss was named the Sunshine Slam Ocean Bracket Tournament Most Valuable Player and Truth Harris joined him as an All-Tournament Team selection.

Moss dropped his fourth 20-plus point game of the season with a 23-point outing. He also added three rebounds and tied for the game-high with three steals.

Harris was nearly perfect in his 18 minutes off the bench with 12 points, two assists, one board and a swipe. He went 4-of-5 from the field (.800), and a perfect 1-of-1 from three (1.000) and 3-of-3 (1.000) from the charity stripe.

Hole-in-one at Auburn



PHOTO COURTESY OF AUBURN HILLS GOLF COURSE

Austin Lane celebrates after making a hole in one on Hole #11 this past week at Auburn Hills Golf Club.

Sports notes: Six Blue Demons first-team All-River Ridge

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The River Ridge District has announced its 2024 football all-district team, and Christiansburg has six first-teamers and three four second-teamers. Blacksburg received six on second-team offense and defense.

Christiansburg offensive lineman Carter Stallard was joined by teammate all-purpose offensive player Izaiah Cotto. Christiansburg’s defensive end Donovan Richardson, linebacker Josiah Ratley defensive all-purpose defensive player Chandler Webb and Cotto at defensive back were named to the first-team defensive unit. Matt Annis was named second-team running back with Richardson and Jacob Evans being named wide receivers. On defense, Christiansburg defensive lineman Tristian Sutphin was named second team.

Blacksburg placed six to the second teams. On defense, Blacksburg had Luke Mann and Kadin Deeb, both at linebacker and defensive back Nate Means. The offensive unit included Blacksburg’s offensive lineman Owen Castleberry, running back Jaxon Keys and tight end Kaden Deeb.

The River Ridge player of year was Salem’s Josiah Persinger and his coach, Don Holter, was coach of the year. The defensive player of the year was Donte Davis, also of Salem.

Class 1 volleyball team
Giles junior outside hitter Sophie Taylor is the Class 1 Player of the Year, and Auburn

head coach Sherry Millirons is the Class 1 Coach of the Year.

Millirons guided Auburn to a 29-2 record and its sixth straight Class 1 championship and ninth overall. Millirons led the Eagles to the Class 1 state volleyball title with a 3-0 (25-10, 25-10, 25-16) win over Rappahannock in the state finals. Millirons has guided the Eagles program since 1995 and won 538 matches, the third-most wins in VHSL history. Along with her nine championships over the past 13 seasons (2012-14, 2019-24), the Eagles were runners-up in 2015.

Auburn had four players named to the all-state first-team: Gretchen Surface, Megan Earnest, Leah Wimmer and Briel Underwood.

Gaither gaining attention
Radford quarterback Luke Gaither is only a sophomore, but he has already received several college offers from Division I schools. Upon a recent visit to Liberty, Coach Jamie Chadwell made an offer to go along with Toledo, UNLV and Appy State.

This past season, Gaither led the Bobcats to the Class 1C semifinals and an 8-4 record. He completed 208 passes on 360 attempts with 20 touchdowns and 2,472 yards.

Hokies fall in tipoff tourney
Virginia Tech’s Ben Burnham surpassed 1,000 career points but South Carolina prevailed 70-60 in Wednesday’s third-place game of the Beach Division at the Fort Myers Tip-Off. Tech’s Tobi Lawal was named to the tournament’s all-star team.

Board of Supervisors agrees to help with jail staffing needs

Angelica Ramos
Contributing writer

MONTGOMERY COUNTY - Montgomery County Sheriff Hank Partin addressed the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors during their Monday, Nov. 25 meeting stating that the jail needs more staff on duty. They require a specific number of deputies on shift at a time to preside over the jail every day and currently with the number of deputies they have, Partin explained they are spread thin. “Recently,” Partin said, “and recently is the last couple years to me, we have noticed a concerning trend that’s caused us some pretty major concern. So, a little bit of background, we have four deputies assigned to four shifts that work 12 hours each, so two daylight and two midnight.” Partin explained the jail has 29 employees and 16 of them work 12-hour shifts. The few that don’t are federally mandated positions that work 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. every day, and don’t work holidays or weekends. Partin also said sometimes they have to hold their employees over to provide coverage. “Let’s concentrate on the 4 p.m. hour,” Partin said in proposing a typical scenario, “from there until the 8 o’clock hour the next morning. So, at 6 p.m. four deputies will come in to relieve the four who have been on the floor during the day. One of those deputies is immediately not used on the floor because they are locked in the control room and cannot leave. That shift is down to three people. One of those deputies is sick, they’re off, family death, FMLA, whatever they’re not there. At 10 at night, we have a medical emergency. Sheriff’s Office policy - we

don't travel with one deputy, always two deputies. If there's only two people left in the jail and we have a medical emergency that the rescue squad can't take because they're an inmate, we have to take them. You can see where I'm going with this. We have some major issues. Hardly ever is there a time when all three of the remaining deputies are working because we're working so much that they have so much comp time built up. We have to let them off for the comp time and then there's training and everything else that deputies are off for, that anyone's off for. Long story short, we have for years been doing what many, many other agencies have been doing, which is working far too short, far too hard for too many hours with not enough people trying to cover more work.” Comparing the current jail staffing to other counties like Roanoke County, Partin explained Montgomery County is well behind in those numbers and they’ve been making it work for a long time, but they should be on par with the surrounding counties. He explained that at a minimum they need four more deputies, but in reality they need eight more. However, he said, he and his department were only present to request four new deputy staffing positions. In the original agenda for the Board of Supervisors meeting, the presentation from Partin was not to be voted on; it was just to be heard. The Board of Supervisors made a motion to vote and allocate funds and staffing positions for the jail. They voted to approve eight new positions instead of the four that were originally asked for so that the sheriff's department can hire the deputies they need.

Recovery

the demands of the large-scale response to Hurricane Helene's extensive impact. Gregg Williams, USACE ESF 3 Assistant Team Leader, detailed the importance of the centralized Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in Richmond, which houses representatives from VDEM, FEMA, and various state agencies. "The EOC functions as the mission's command hub," Williams explained. "We're in constant communication with local agencies across Virginia, receiving updates and requests for resources, and dispatching support as needed to field sites like Claytor Lake." The operation is supported by an amended disaster declaration from the Biden Administration which allows 90 days of federal assistance at a 100% cost share for the state. Following this period, assistance can continue if needed, though the cost share will adjust to 75% federal and 25% state. "The 90-day window doesn't mean that we're going to speed this up and get this done as fast as possible as unsafely as possible," said Hall. "The first and foremost piece of this is safety, clearing the lake of debris in such a way that protects both the public and our team members." Hall also highlighted an initial Virginia Tech assessment which estimated around 135 acres of debris spread across the lake's surface. "The last projection we got was using artificial intelligence for a flyover, and at its peak, they estimated 135 acres worth of debris here on site," Hall said. This measurement refers to the surface area covered by debris, while the 300 acre-foot estimation indicates the total volume of debris present, enough to cover 300 acres at a depth of one foot. "As FEMA and subsequently USACE are present and operating here at the request of the Commonwealth, Virginia leadership would make the final determination as to what a state of completion will be", he added.

Havens noted the importance of the operation as fall marks a peak season for fishing, boat rentals, and recreation on the lake. "Removing that debris and letting people get back to their livelihoods would be great," said Havens, emphasizing that clearing the lake supports both safety and the community's economy. As the operation progresses, community members along with state and federal agencies continue working together to restore Claytor Lake and support local livelihoods. Stull highlighted that Claytor Lake is one of several locations where USACE is actively supporting recovery efforts in the wake of Hurricane Helene. "This is part of a larger response mission," she explained. "Hurricane Helene impacted several states, and we're performing technical assistance, monitoring, and debris removal operations in multiple areas." Her statement underscores USACE's commitment to vital infrastructure restoration and public safety support for the communities impacted by Hurricane Helene. Jackson Beamer is the president of FOCL and pointed to the large number of items taken and recovered from the debris. The list includes: 1,860 tons of wood debris, 23 tires, 31 bags of trash, three barrels, 29 refrigerators, two water heaters, one oil tank, two camper frames, three boats, 21 docks, two jet skis, five pontoon boats, two kayaks, a canoe, and a lot of gas cans and propane tanks with several of the latter being of 100 lbs. Residents near Claytor Lake who believe they lost personal items in the lake during Hurricane Helene are encouraged to contact the State Park Rangers or the Friends of Claytor Lake group as soon as possible. These organizations can assist in arranging for any salvageable items to be held temporarily. Please note that any items found during USACE's debris removal operations will be disposed of unless prior arrangements are made for retrieval.

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FOCL

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essential for both environmental recovery and the economic well-being of the surrounding community. “Closing the lake would seriously hinder our restoration efforts and harm local businesses that rely on it,” said Jackson Beamer, FOCL president. “We need to keep it open to clear debris and support the community's recovery.” FOCL's cleanup began immediately after the storm, collecting 1,950 tons of woody debris on top of various structures and hazardous materials. Through collaborations with FEMA and the US Army Corps of Engineers, additional debris and recreational vehicles have been removed, ecosystems have been restored, and structures have been salvaged. A temporary closure was needed initially to remove hazardous materials for safety. FOCL worked hard to ensure the lake was safe before reopening. However, a second proposed closure, made without local input, would have disrupted peak fall tourism. FOCL supported Pulaski County's efforts to prevent further closures. “Closing the lake now would prevent businesses and residents from returning to normal,” said Laura Walters, FOCL's Environmental Committee Chair. “We're doing everything we can to ensure the lake is safe and accessible, and we need continued support from federal, state, and local governments, as well as our community, to make that happen.” Pulaski County has been vital in establishing a weekly committee with the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), FEMA, FOCL, the State Park, and other agencies to minimize disruptions during the cleanup. FOCL

also thanked federal, state, and local leaders, including Senators Mark Warner and Tim Kaine, Congressman Morgan Griffith, Governor Glenn Youngkin, Lieutenant Governor Winsome Sears, Senator Travis Hackworth, Delegate Don Scott, Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates, and Delegates Jason Ballard and Jed Arnold, for their support. Additionally, various state agencies, such as the Department of Wildlife Resources, Department of Conservation and Recreation, and Department of Environmental Resources, along with Pulaski County staff, EMS, Fire and Rescue, and PSA operations, have all contributed to the swift and effective cleanup. Currently, the State Park boat ramp is closed, but a shuttle service is available to help boaters launch at the public ramp. Parking at the State Park is available, and salvageable docks are being collected for residents. Updates are posted on the Claytor Lake Home Owner's Facebook page. “We're not just cleaning debris—we're protecting the entire community,” Walters said. “The lake is vital to residents, businesses, and wildlife. The sooner we return to normal, the better. The lake remains open—please be cautious of remaining debris, especially in the lower lake.” Learn more about FOCL and how you can get involved whether through volunteering your time or making a donation, every contribution makes a difference in preserving this vital resource for future generations. For more information and to get involved, visit focl.org.

Aime Dalton, FOCL



Homes located at Claytor Lake face a lot of clean up after over 200 acres of wood, garbage and other items were trapped in several of the lake's coves.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF GEORGE JACKSON

A photo from the middle of the lake shows the debris field includes docks, boats and other items.

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.

Smokey is a good boy who is ready to find his furever home. He enjoys delicious treats and may paw at his favorite humans to get one tossed his way. Stop by the Animal Care and Adoption Center to meet this pawsome dog!



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Sweet Rhae is a little shy when she first meets people but warms up quickly when she finds a new friend. She likes to play with toys and enjoys being outside from time to time.