

Radford City Public Schools names Teachers of the Year

Heather Bell
Editor

RADFORD – Radford City Public Schools has announced its four school-level Teachers of the Year for the 2024-25 school year.

The four winners will vie for the title of RCPS Teacher of the Year, with the division-wide winner going into the running for a state award.

The McHarg Teacher of the Year is first grade teacher Katie Bondurant. The Belle Heth Teacher of the Year is art teacher Michelle Saunders. The John Dalton Intermediate School Teacher of the Year is

reading specialist Kelly Morris. The Radford High School Teacher of the Year is science teacher Jeff Brown.

“Each Teacher of the Year was nominated and chosen by their colleagues and administrators for their outstanding dedication and performance as a teacher,” said RCPS Assistant Superintendent Dr. Melissa McDaniel. “Each school’s Teacher of the Year will submit an application to be considered for the honor of the RCPS Division-wide Teacher of the Year to be chosen in January. “This is a fairly rigorous process that requires letters of recommendation,

essays, and other information about the background and experience of the teachers,” she continued. “We had many deserving teachers who could have been chosen for this honor and we are very proud of this year’s group who were recognized by their colleagues.”

According to McDaniel, the RCPS Division Teacher of the Year will be named at the School Board meeting in January and will send an application in for the Virginia Department of Education Teacher of Year.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF RADFORD CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

(Left to Right) Ms. Jenny Zienius, Assistant Principal; Mr. Cole Wilder, Principal; Ms. Michelle Saunders, Teacher of the Year for Belle Heth Elementary School; Dr. Melissa McDaniel, Assistant Superintendent; and Dr. Adam Joyce, Superintendent.



Seated (left to right) Karen Finch, Patty Abel, Jan Woodward, Col Bud Jeffries and standing (left to right) April Martin, Dot Cupp, Peggy Hemmings, Harriet Williams, Ann Jeffries, Harriet Tuck and Debbie Haught.

Colonel Bud Jeffries honored with Quilt of Valor

Members of Alleghany Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution recently honored Colonel Lewis Ingles “Bud” Jeffries with a Quilt of Valor Ceremony held at the Wilderness Road Regional Museum in Newbern.

Members of the Count Pulaski Chapter, NSDAR, were also represented at the ceremony, which was held to honor Jeffries for his service to our nation and his work to protect our freedoms. The Quilt of Valor was handmade by Karen Finch and Harriet Tuck.

“Bud” Jeffries, the fourth great-grandson of William and Mary Draper Ingles, grew up in Radford. He attended Virginia Tech, majoring in animal science. Jeffries left Radford for a career in the United States Army, serving

27 years, including a year and five days in Vietnam and rising to the rank of Colonel. Jeffries is the author of N&W Giants of Steam, considered to be the encyclopedia of Norfolk & Western Railway’s steam locomotive design, engineering and tractive power. Jeffries is also a longtime member of the Norfolk & Western Historical Society and the Roanoke Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society.

A Quilt of Valor is made by volunteers and is a quality handmade quilt that can be quilted by hand or machine. The quilts are awarded to service members or veterans who have been touched by war to say thank you for their service and sacrifice for this country.



PHOTO BY KAREN FINCH

Karen Finch and Debbie Haught Harriet Tuck, Colonel Jeffries and Debbie Haught

Remembering Nikki Giovanni - renowned poet, activist and Virginia Tech legend

President Joe Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris release statements on her passing

Nikki Giovanni, a renowned literary legend and retired Virginia Tech professor, has completed her final chapter.

The acclaimed poet, activist, and University Distinguished Professor Emerita passed away on Dec. 9, after battling cancer for the third time. She was 81 years old.

Giovanni, whom Oprah Winfrey named one of 25 living legends, retired from Virginia Tech in 2022 after 35 years as a professor in the Department of English.

Still, she continued a busy speaking, traveling and writing schedule, including returning to campus to present the annual Giovanni-Steger Poetry Prize Award to

undergraduate students in April. Giovanni, along with the late Virginia Tech President Charles W. Steger, created the competition in 2006, offering monetary prizes for student poets.

“We can never let words be silenced,” said Giovanni during the Moss Arts Center ceremony. “We can never let words be taken away from us. We can never let people, because they don’t like what we’re saying, shut us up. Words are the most important things that human beings have. And no matter what the situation, we must always remember to use them.”

President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris both offered words



PHOTO BY ANDREW ADKINS FOR VIRGINIA TECH

Nikki Giovanni during her Virginia Tech retirement celebration in 2022.

to honor Giovanni.

In 2020, Nikki Giovanni’s majestic voice echoed her powerful words, “and sometime, there has to be something called courage. You have it in your hands.” Born

in segregated Knoxville, Tennessee, she became a renowned activist, professor, and literary legend who had that courage in her hands and

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Radford University celebrates 2024 Winter Commencement



PHOTO COURTESY OF RADFORD UNIVERSITY

Radford University President Dr. Bret Danilowicz congratulates a graduate during Winter Commencement exercises.

RADFORD-Radford University celebrated the achievements of 562 students during its 2024 Winter Commencement ceremonies, held on Dec. 13 and 14 in Bondurant Auditorium.

Graduates were

recognized across three key events: a graduate commencement and hooding ceremony on Friday evening and two undergraduate

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Radford Animal Shelter continues to recover from October floods



PHOTO BY ALEXANDER TSO

At this point in time, the future of the dog park in Radford has yet to be determined. The site was completely underwater during October’s Hurricane Helene that forced the nearby New River over its banks.

Marty Gordon
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

Animals from the Radford Animal Shelter were moved to higher ground during October’s rising floodwaters from the nearby New River.

Now, city officials are moving quickly to get it back up and running.

The city’s director of communications Jenni Webb said the main building suffered water damage, many supplies and equipment were lost in the flood.

“All of the animals were adopted and fostered out to community members/volunteers. Many animals have since been adopted, are still in foster care and some are

at other local shelters,” she said.

The original facility was opened in 1995 and will need a lot of work to reopen. Another building on the property is being renovated to become the offices/adoption and intake area. Webb said the city is still working on plans for the facility to be fully functional. No timeline has been set.

Meanwhile, the city continues to provide full animal control services.

*Animals are available for adoption currently, but the public is not allowed in the building,” Webb said. “We continue to provide support by caring for animals so that no animal control response is warranted.”

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday, Dec. 18 - Friday, Dec. 20:

Santa coming to town

Santa will start cruising through Christiansburg at 6 p.m. each night from Dec. 16-20 and will drive until the route is complete. Just step outside your home to give him a wave as he drives by! He'll be periodically sounding his siren, so you know when he's on his way. Maps of the routes will be posted in the "News and Announcements" on the Town of Christiansburg's website (Christiansburg.org). There will be five separate maps showing where Santa will be visiting each day.

Wednesday, Dec. 18:

Blacksburg Community Band concert

Winter concert of the Blacksburg Community Band at Blacksburg High School auditorium, 7 p.m. Concert is free, but donations are appreciated.

Blood Drive in honor of Grady Devilbiss

Red Cross blood drive at Grove United Methodist Church, 1020 Tyler Avenue, Radford, noon – 6 p.m. Streamline your donation experience and save up to 15 minutes by visiting RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass to complete your pre-donation reading and health history questions on the day of your appointment.

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>.

Saturday, Dec. 21:

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.

Friday, Dec. 20:

Ukelele Sing-along

Join the Blacksburg Museum and Cultural Foundation for music, community, and merriment at the second Annual Uke-Xmas Uke-led string jam, sing along, and holiday party led by Ash Devine.

The event will be held 6- 8 p.m. at the Alexander Black House, 204 Draper Rd SW, Blacksburg.

Critters of Claytor Lake

At Meadowbrook Library, 2-3 p.m. Ever wondered what critters are crawling around at Claytor Lake State Park? Join a ranger with some pelts and bones to learn all about our native animals!

Teen Movie: Elf (& Breakfast Dessert Pasta!)

At the Radford Public Library; 12:30 p.m. Teens have early release from schools and they can come to the library and enjoy a screening of "Elf" in the Teen Section while eating Buddy's favorite meal: Dessert Pasta!

Saturday, Dec. 21:

Holiday Cheer Celebration

At the Blacksburg Library, 2- 4 p.m. Join a Claytor Lake State Park ranger for a festive celebration filled with holiday crafts. Get creative with tree cookie ornaments and a holiday tree pinecone craft!

Family Movie Matinee: The Muppet Christmas Carol

At the Radford Public Library; 11 a.m. Scrooge, an old miser who dislikes Christmas, is visited by spirits who foretell his future and share secrets from his past and present, which helps change his view on life. Rated G; 85 min.

Sunday, Dec. 22:

Santa Police Cruise

Santa will be trading his sleigh for a ride with the Radford City Police Department starting at 1 p.m. This year's Santa Police Cruise will follow the same route as last year, making it easy for everyone to catch a glimpse of Santa as he makes his rounds through our city. Check Facebook for updates.

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.

Carilion New River Valley Medical Center named to U.S. News & World Report 2025 best hospitals for maternity care

CHRISTIANSBURG – U.S. News & World Report has named Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital and Carilion New River Valley Medical Center as 2025 High Performing Hospitals for Maternity care.

This is the highest award a hospital can earn for U.S. News' Best Hospitals for Maternity Care.

The designation is measured by factors such as newborn complication rates, birthing-friendly practices and more. With the largest team of obstetricians, gynecologists and maternal fetal medicine specialists in the region, Carilion is the only system in southwest Virginia to receive this designation. This is the fourth consecutive year Roanoke Memorial has been recognized.

"We are truly honored to receive this recognition as a system committed to clinical excellence," said Isaiah M. Johnson, M.D., Chair of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Carilion. "This acknowledgment reflects our daily focus on patient safety and our ongoing dedication to quality improvement. It highlights the hard work and collaboration of our team in delivering high-quality, patient-centered care to

achieve the best possible outcomes. I am incredibly proud to represent such a compassionate and devoted group of providers and caregivers."

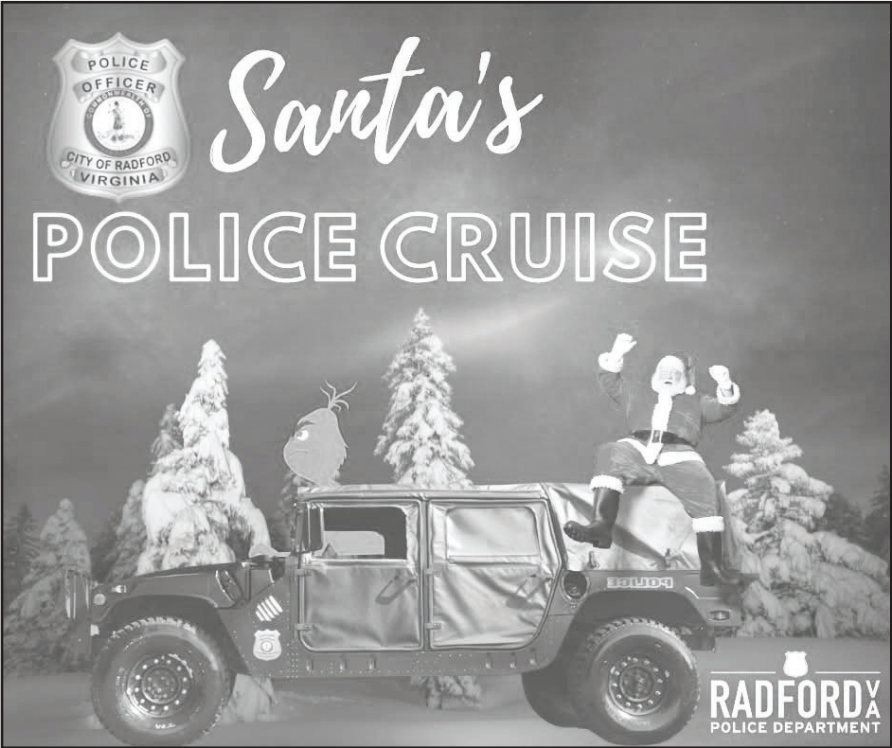
Best Hospitals for Maternity Care is an annual evaluation designed to assist expectant parents, in consultation with their prenatal care team, in making informed decisions about where to receive maternity care that best meets their family's needs.

"The hospitals recognized by U.S. News as Best Hospitals for Maternity Care showcase exceptional care for expectant parents," said Jennifer Winston, Ph.D., health data scientist at U.S. News. "These hospitals demonstrate significantly lower C-section rates and severe unexpected newborn complications compared to hospitals not recognized by U.S. News."

Carilion Women's Obstetrics and Gynecology offers gynecologic, prenatal, maternal fetal medicine, delivery and postpartum care, along with the region's only level IIIB NICU at Carilion Children's. To learn more about Carilion's OBYGN services, visit CarilionClinic.org.

Carilion Clinic

The Santa Police Cruise is coming to town



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF THE RADFORD CITY POLICE DEPARTMENT

RADFORD - Mark your calendars! On Sunday, Dec. 22 at 1 p.m., Santa will be trading his sleigh for a ride with the Radford City Police Department.

"We're thrilled to spread holiday cheer throughout our community again this year and can't wait to see all your smiling faces along the way," the department announced.

This year's Santa Police Cruise will follow the same route as last year, making it easy for everyone to catch a glimpse of Santa as he makes his rounds through our city. Keep an eye on the Radford City Police Department Facebook page to see where Santa will

be and approximately when he'll arrive in your neighborhood.

"Get ready to wave, cheer, and snap some photos as Santa brings holiday magic right to our streets," the announcement continues. "Help us make this year's event extra special by inviting your friends and neighbors to join in the fun. Let's show Santa the love and spirit of Radford. We can't wait to celebrate the season with you!"

Stay tuned for updates and follow the department on Facebook for all the latest details.

Staff report

History major C.J. Garland builds a future on preserving the past

At Radford University's Center for Archives and Digital History, "you can actually hold history in your hands," C.J. Garland said, looking over open black boxes full of decades-old letters and documents.

For the past year and a half, the senior from Manassas, Virginia, has learned firsthand what it's like to grasp and preserve important moments from the past. Important moments in the history of our world. Important moments in family legacies.

After transferring to Radford, Garland began working in the then newly opened center, transcribing and digitizing boxes of handwritten letters penned by Frank Elliott, a U.S. Army soldier who bravely served in the South Pacific during World War II.

"He was at Okinawa the whole time, and he stuck around for about a year, saw it through until the end of the war, and stuck around as part of the occupation," Garland said of the soldier's war-time service. "And from the moment he left home to do basic training to the moment he came back home after finishing his service as part of occupation, he wrote two or three letters a day, and he saved all of it."

Frank Elliott's daughter, Ann Elliott, a retired Radford psychology professor, donated the letters to the center. There were nine boxes in total containing documents and letters written by Ann's father.

"Whenever I read one of these letters, it feels like I'm right where he was because a lot of these letters describe what his day was like," explained Garland, whose grandfather was also a WWII veteran and part of the Dunkirk evacuation. "I feel like I've been transported to the 1940s in the midst of World War II. I'm seeing what this person is seeing. That sort of thing is incredible. It really is incredible."

There is an enormous "sense of responsibility," Garland said, that goes along with this work. "Because everyone has their own unique story when it comes to history. And every passing day, letters like these get lost and destroyed," he said. "But the Center for Archives and Digital History can preserve these stories so future generations can learn from them and can appreciate them."

There's great honor in these preservations, too, and preserving the past is work that Garland, who is set to graduate from Radford in December, plans to do far into the future.

"If I can make my career out of archiving letter collections, oral histories and documents that tell the average person's stories to as many people as possible, that's what I want to do," said Garland, whose mother is a historian. "That's what Radford has instilled in me. That's what Radford helped me realize what I wanted to do for a career."

Garland found his place here at Radford by immersing himself in his work – he completed two summer internships there through the Highlander Works program – and in the university's Department of History. Helping him find a home there and in the center was department chair and professor Sharon Roger-Hepburn, who, "more than anyone else," Garland said, "was the professor who instilled the path I wanted to take in history in my time here at Radford."

Radford University is a fantastic choice for any student who loves history, Garland continued.

"The history department here is a very welcoming, positive work environment. All the professors genuinely want to help you, and they're all genuinely fun to be around, and you will find your place in the



PHOTO COURTESY OF RADFORD UNIVERSITY

C.J. Garland

history department because the faculty and students are so incredibly nice.

"We're all very passionate about history, and if you are too," he continued, "you'll find your place here, too."

Chad Osborne for Radford University

OBITUARIES

Hamblin, Vernon “Kyle”

Vernon “Kyle” Hamblin, 39, passed away Saturday, Dec. 7, 2024.

Survivors include his loving parents, Vernon and Carolyn Hamblin; sister and brother-in-law, Jennifer and John Crowder; niece, Ava; paternal grandfather, Bobby Hamblin; and many other relatives and close friends.

Kyle never liked being the center of attention, so



per his wishes no services will be held. The family

sincerely appreciates your thoughts and prayers and respectfully requests privacy during this difficult time.

In lieu of flowers or meals, donations and memorial contributions may be made to Mayberry4Paws (www.mayberry4paws.com).

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

Hix, George Duane

George Duane Hix, 84, of Draper, passed away Friday, Dec. 6, 2024. He attended Emory and Henry College on a football scholarship after he graduated from Pulaski County High School, and then transferred to Concorde College. George retired as a store supervisor after 36 years of service from A.E.P. He was a member of Anderson Memorial Presbyterian Church. George enjoyed sports, especially baseball and football, and had a passion for old cars, going



to cruise-ins and car shows. He was preceded in death by his loving wife, Betty Eller Hix; and his parents, George Thomas and Hazel Welch

Hix.

George was survived by many friends that were like family to him. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

A visitation was held Friday, Dec. 13, 2024 at the Mullins Funeral Home in Radford. Funeral services followed with Terrie Sternberg officiating. Burial will follow in Oakwood Cemetery in Pulaski.

The friends of George Hix are in the care of Mullins Funeral Home & Crematory in Radford.

Wade, Marion Snell

Marion Snell Wade, 98, of Radford, passed away Thursday, Dec. 12, 2024.

Born Oct. 29, 1926, she was preceded in death by her parents, Archie Newburn and Gertrude Hubbard Snell, and her loving husband, William Arthur Wade, Sr.

She is survived by her daughters and son-in-law, Gertrude Moore and Norma Walker (Ronald); son, William A. Wade, Jr.; seven grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren;



numerous great great-grandchildren; and many other family members and special friends.

The family will receive friends from 12 - 1 p.m. Friday, Dec. 20, 2024, at the Mullins Funeral Home in Radford. Funeral services will begin at 1 p.m. with Pastor Vivian Simmons, Rev. Betsy King, and Rev. Jenene Lewis officiating. Entombment will follow in Highland Memory Gardens in Dublin.

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

Hubbard, Robert McCoy

Robert McCoy Hubbard, “Bob,” entered his heavenly home Tuesday morning, Dec. 10, 2024, at Radford Nursing & Rehab.

Bob was 88 years old, born Sept. 2, 1936, in Floyd County to Ren McCoy Hubbard and Myrtle Sloan Hubbard. Bob was a member of Fairlawn Grace Brethren Church. He has joined his faithful wife, Faye Harrell Hubbard, who went to heaven in March of 2024. He is also predeceased by his daughter, Sandy Dalton.

He is survived by his two sons, Lawrence Hubbard and David Hubbard; sister, Sue Sisson Foster; brother, Doug Hubbard (Lovedia);



granddaughter, Amanda Dalton; and great granddaughter, Kadie Stump; two nephews, Scott Sisson and Cory Hubbard; and many other relatives and friends.

Bob worked at the RAAP for 37 years and never missed a day. He was a hardworking man, loved by many. He

was dedicated to Blank Angus Cattle farming. He was a good neighbor who was ready to lend a helping hand. We are going to miss Bob’s sweet jovial way of talking and greeting everyone.

The family received friends Monday, Dec. 16, 2024, at the Mullins Funeral Home in Radford. Graveside services followed in Highland Memory Gardens in Dublin with Pastor Cameron Mitchell officiating.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Fairlawn Grace Brethren Church.

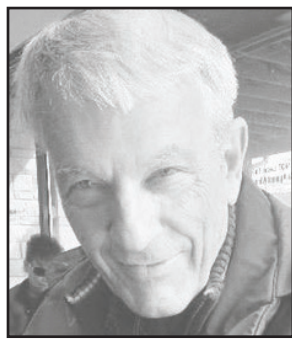
The Hubbard family is in the care of Mullins Funeral Home & Crematory in Radford.

Klaus, Martin

Martin Klaus, 77, Professor Emeritus of Mathematics at VPI&SU, died peacefully at home Sunday, Dec. 1, 2024, in Blacksburg after a courageous battle with cancer.

He is survived by his wife of 51 years, Silvia; his children Anne-Louise Klaus with Heikki Topi and Philip Klaus; brother Georg Klaus with Dagmar; and grandchildren Leila and Saara Topi. He was preceded in death by his parents, Marta and Ernst, and a beloved uncle, August (Gusti).

Born in 1946 in Switzerland, he grew up wanting to work for the railroad like his father. At 14, his academic potential was recognized by a teacher who convinced his parents to send him to high school. Martin studied mathematical physics at the ETH



(Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule) in Zurich through his master’s and received his PhD and Habilitation (secondary doctorate) at the University of Zurich. Following a post-doc at Princeton University and a visiting professorship at the University of Virginia, he returned to Europe briefly before receiving an invitation from the Mathematics Department at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. At VPI & SU, he served for 40 years as

a mathematics professor, dedicating his life to his students and his research.

Martin was very much a family man, and he loved coaching soccer, going hiking, camping, and spending time with his family. He was an avid chess player and “do-it-yourselfer,” and he loved playing the piano. Martin excelled at and enjoyed skiing and mountain climbing and was, like his father before him, in the mountaineering division of the Swiss Army.

A service of remembrance will be held Saturday, Dec. 21 at 2 p.m. at the Blacksburg Presbyterian Church, 701 Church St. in Blacksburg. Those who wish to remember Martin in a special way may make a donation in his memory to Doctor’s Without Borders or the Blue Ridge Cancer Center (BCC) in Blacksburg.

relatives and friends.

The family received friends Saturday, Dec. 14, 2024, at the Mullins Funeral Home in Radford. Funeral services followed with interment to follow in Highland Memory Gardens in Dublin.

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



Malinda; and many other

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ceremonies on Saturday.

The undergraduate events were divided by college, with morning recognition for graduates from the Artis College of Science and Technology, the College of Humanities and Behavioral Studies and the Davis College of Business and Economics. The afternoon ceremony honored students from the College of Education and Human Development, the College of Visual and Performing Arts, the School of Nursing and the Waldron College of Health and Human Services.

Radford’s winter graduates represented a diverse group, with nearly 500 students hailing from Virginia and others coming from nine states, including North Carolina, Maryland and Ohio. The class also included

international graduates from countries such as India, Canada, Egypt and Zambia. Notably, 91 members of the Class of 2024, about 16%, were the first in their families to earn a college degree.

Keynote speaker Nicole Gwanzura ’12, MBA ’13, shared a powerful message on resilience and embracing challenges. As CEO of Education Advancement Consulting LLC, Gwanzura has dedicated her career to helping students and professionals build meaningful lives and careers. Her speech encouraged graduates to focus on their unique strengths and operate within their “zone of genius” as they embark on their next endeavors.

Justin Ward for Radford University

Teachers

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(Left to Right) Dr. Adam Joyce, Superintendent; Ms. Katie Bondurant, McHarg Elementary School Teacher of the Year; Ms. Kelly Morris, Dalton Intermediate School Teacher of the Year and Dr. Melissa McDaniel, Assistant Superintendent.



(Left to Right) Dr. Adam Joyce, Superintendent; Ms. Katie Bondurant, McHarg Elementary School Teacher of the Year; Ms. Kelly Morris, Dalton Intermediate School Teacher of the Year and Dr. Melissa McDaniel, Assistant Superintendent.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF RADFORD CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

(Left to Right) Ms. Brandi Ray, Assistant Principal; Ms. Candice Davis, Assistant Principal; Mr. Adam Simpson, Principal; and Mr. Jeff Brown, Radford High School Teacher of the Year.

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21 and older event only.



Bee & Butter

Midnight Masquerade

Celebrate New Year’s Eve at Radford Highlander!
Join us for unforgettable night of elegance, music, and celebration!

Dinner at Bee & Butter (6:00 PM - 10:00 PM)

Option 1: All-Inclusive Midnight Masquerade Package \$300/couple

Includes: Room for the night, Dinner for two at Bee & Butter, 1 bottle of red or white wine. Engraved Highlander keepsake glasses.

Option 2: Dinner Only \$85/person

Includes: Special New Year’s Eve menu, Champagne toast with flute Wine available for \$22/bottle (House Wine: Silvergate)



Ballroom Celebration (6:00 PM - 1:00 AM)

Free Admission if:

You booked (Option 1) Midnight Masquerade Package (all inclusive)
You booked (Option 2) Purchased a dinner package w/out the room

Admission Without Packages:

\$16/person (includes keepsake wine flute)
\$10/person (without keepsake flute)

Reservations Required

Important Details:

Guests must be 21+ with valid ID.
No Walk-ins allowed - reservations are required for all events.
Dress to impress and enjoy a night of elegance and fun!

Let’s Make This New Year’s Eve Unforgettable!

THE HIGHLANDER HOTEL RADFORD

604 Tyler Avenue, Radford, Virginia 24141
Hotel: 540.744.1500 | Reservations: 855.326.2695 | highlanderradford.com



OPINION

Thanksgiving is a delightful time for bonding with the “grands”

I am just off a delightful Thanksgiving with my daughters and their husbands and their kids (I just can't bring myself to use the modern grandparent vernacular of “g-kids” or “grands” so they will hereinafter be referred to as the “grandkids”). The holiday events were at the home of my oldest daughter in Ohio and also in attendance were my ex and her guy, who just happens to be one of my best friends since early Christiansburg days. It was a time for thankfulness for our many blessings, particularly the “grands” (oops).

The holiday was successful. The cousins love being together and relate exactly the way you would want them to - they long for the occasions, dote on or worship each other as birth order would predict or ordain when together, hate the partings, and cherish the memories. It seems to me at least that each cousin believes the other cousins to be larger than life. It isn't always that way between the siblings, but what's the old expression? Familiarity breeds contempt?

Cousins hold a special place in my heart and my life history. I had no siblings to dilute my affections or attentions, so my feelings for my cousins Joe and Bobby, who grew up at the top of the hill from me, were special and my memories of them poignant. Much older than me, they vied for my affection from my birth until their passings. If they were still living, I am sure there would be an argument over whether I should have written “Joe and Bobby” or “Bobby and Joe.” Thankfully, I was pretty much oblivious to this competition until well into my adulthood and was eventually able (I think) to lessen the tension between them to some extent.

But I thought it would be fun to write a little about the grandkids as my grandkids, not as each other's cousins or siblings. The calendar (and my body when I get out of bed in the morning) tell me that I won't be around to see what they become, where their lives will lead, what they will be as adults. At their current ages - 4,5,6,7, and 12, with each about to move up a year - it would be a wonderful time to freeze us all in time. But, as every generation before ours has learned, it doesn't work that way. So I will (somewhat whimsically) imagine what they will become.

Maggie, three months away from becoming a



Evans “Buddy” King

Columnist

teenager, is remarkably sweet and gentle. She still plays with and watches over the younger ones, while very gradually withdrawing into the cocoon of adolescence. She is also dedicated enough to practice three nights a week at an advanced gymnastics school, currently doing back walkovers on the balance beam among other terrifying things! She is also a voracious reader. I see her as a teacher and coach, perhaps a dance instructor. We fear for her because of her naïveté, but it will be an asset I predict. She will avoid being jaded.

Molly is the middle of the three M's, as I call them. She will turn eight the day after Christmas, missing being a Christmas baby by 15 minutes. Born on December 26 and a middle child, you might predict the possibility of being overlooked. This won't happen to Molly! Naïveté will not be an issue!

Molly is street smart and contemplative. Her coaches and teachers have commented on her concentration - her kindergarten teacher told her parents that when other kids were acting up, Molly would look at her and shrug her shoulders, as if to say, “I don't know what's wrong with them.” When adults talk to her, she gets a furrowed brow and seems to listen to every word. She also rarely agrees with what she hears and seems destined for the debate team. I predict lawyer, probably a litigator.

Max is soon to turn six, lucky to be surrounded by two older sisters who are teaching him the ways of the world, even if just by osmosis. And he needs the help - a typical five-year-old boy with the attention span of a gnat but the ability to focus on what he wants to focus on. Recently, Max pronounced to everyone “I'm a sports guy now.” He is beginning ice hockey and is noted for having no fear of crashing into the boards. He will pass the football with me

until I can't go on. Like me at his age, Max wants “army soldiers” and a “nerf gun” for Christmas. I see him as a West Pointer someday, with a career as a military officer.

Next, I turn to the Chicago grands (oops again). Henry is in first grade and suffers in some ways from being at least a head taller than most of his contemporaries. When he was younger, people believed he was much older and did not understand why he was acting and talking like a three-year-old when in fact he WAS a three-year-old. Sweet and loving and extremely active would describe Henry. He seems to run everywhere he goes and has boundless energy. Just like his grandfather was at his age, H is obsessed with dinosaurs and with the planets and the solar system. When he heard recently that Pluto was no longer considered a planet, Henry looked at his mom and said, “we need to go to the library and check this out.” I see Henry as an astronomer or a paleontologist someday, or maybe an astronaut, if he can fit in a capsule.

Last, but far from least, is the lovely Virginia. Virginia is beautiful and curious and assertive. Perhaps the most assertive of all the grandkids, the only one who might give her a race is Molly. I would describe Virginia as cunning, while Molly's current self might perhaps best be described as devious. Maggie and Henry and Max have no chance. Virginia sweetly has her entire family wrapped around her finger. Molly pushes hers along. Virginia has a strong sense of style and taste as well, so I could see her as a designer or an artist in her future. But most likely she will be a politician or a CEO.

A couple of recent stories too good not to tell. When asked at kindergarten about his family, Max answered, “I have two sisters, one is tall and nice, the other short and mean.” And one of the highlights of the Thanksgiving weekend - Max gives me pencil and paper to write down what he wants for Christmas. He then says, loudly enough for Molly to hear, “I like Christmas way more than Molly.” Molly's brow furrows and a long “debate” ensues.

Regardless of what they become, I hope the grandkids will always love their parents and grandparents and each other the way they do now and continue to spread happiness.

School construction projects to be a top priority for 2025 legislative session

A top priority of General Assembly Republicans and the administration of Governor Glenn Youngkin in the 2025 legislative session will be support for school construction and modernization. For too long, our K-12 educational facilities in rural Virginia have been falling into states of disrepair or are just plain old and out of date. Safe, comfortable, and modern schools are a crucial factor in keeping our students engaged and retaining our educators. Acting upon these needs, the Governor has recently announced an additional investment of \$290 million to further support school construction and modernization, which brings the total investment in this area of need to \$700 million in the biennium budget.

The additional \$290 million in non-general funds will support critical public school construction projects by expanding grant opportunities for school divisions in high-need areas, and addressing urgent infrastructure needs, which will ensure safe and conducive learning environments for K-12 students. Prior to this recent investment, the current biennial budget included \$410 million dedicated to school construction loans



Delegate Jason Ballard

Virginia General Assembly

and competitive grants. In the last budget, \$1.25 billion was dedicated to targeted assistance, formula-based modernization grants, and low-interest loans for school divisions to help schools address critical infrastructure challenges and create learning spaces that meet the demands of today's education system. It's no secret that technology and alternative forms of learning have become a huge part of today's K-12 education – much more so than our generation experienced. It's imperative that our students are afforded the best opportunity to succeed, and proper school facilities are a major component of that success.

Virginia's investments have been leveraged to generate an estimated total of \$3.4 billion, including contributions from local governments and federal matching funds, which significantly amplifies the impact on school construction and modernization

efforts. Over the past several years, Republicans have been on the forefront of providing teacher pay raises and investing in school infrastructure. These efforts have been important contributors to how Virginia is ranked among the best states in the nation for education – which plays a huge part in Virginia's ranking as the top state to do business. These successes do not happen by accident – it takes vision and commitment to ensure a top-notch educational system, which will translate into a top-notch economic ecosystem. General Assembly Republicans will continue to make this an area of priority heading into the 2025 legislative session.

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

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CLUES ACROSS

1. Baseball stat

4. Blaze

8. Sea eagles

10. Tails in Italian

11. Monocot genus

12. Mother or father

13. The Jungian inner self

15. Covered with gold

16. Residual oil

17. Signs up for school

18. Furniture for daily meals

21. Extinct flightless bird of New Zealand

22. Lower limb

23. Guy (slang)

24. Get free of

25. Snakelike fish

26. Adult female bird

27. Formal window coverings

34. Break into small pieces

35. "1836 siege" of U.S.

36. Made violet-red

37. Food chopper

38. Removes writing

39. Ethiopian monetary unit

40. Wine bottle

41. English prelate

42. Small storage

43. A jelly-like substance

CLUES DOWN

1. A brief comment

2. Sultanate of NW Borneo

3. Importune

4. Forelimb

5. Models of ethical behavior

6. Harangues

7. This (Spanish)

9. Springfield Area Mobile Intensive Care

10. Sang at Christmas door to door

12. Partly or nearly blind

14. Posterior pituitary gland hormone

15. American Nurses Association (abbr.)

17. The 7th Greek letter

19. Strives to equal

20. Toff

23. Coleoptera insects

24. The color of blood

25. Slipped by

26. Of she

27. A short musical passage

28. CNN's founder Turner

29. Radioactivity unit

30. Exculation defense

31. Walking back and forth

32. Come forth from

33. Oxalis

34. A soft twilled fabric of silk

36. The two large chest muscles

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Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce celebrates excellence with annual awards

The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce announced the recipients of its 2024 Annual Awards during a celebratory Annual Meeting & Awards Dinner on Thursday, Dec. 5 at the Inn at Virginia Tech & Skelton Conference Center.

These awards recognize the outstanding contributions and achievements of businesses, organizations, and individuals shaping the future of the Montgomery County business community.

"Each nominee and recipient demonstrate the dedication, innovation, and commitment that make Montgomery County a great place to live, play, and work. We are proud of our Chamber Members, and the impact they have on us

all" said Steve Baffuto, President & CEO of the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce.

- 2024 award recipients include:
- Business of the Year: Paint 'N Fun Ceramics
 - Distinguished Business Leader: Paige Guynn of Dance.tech
 - Small Business of the Year: Ed & Ethel's Fine Jewelry
 - Distinguished Government Leader: Montgomery County Clerk of Court Tiffany Couch
 - Green Business of the Year: Ink Works Studio
 - Tech Business of the Year: Revivacor
 - Leadership New River Valley's

- Sparkplug Award: Austin DeVincet of Nest Realty
- Minority Business of the Year: Beauty Lab
- New Member of the Year: Volunteer Montgomery
- Community Service Organization: Onward NRV
- Large Non-Profit of the Year: Community Housing Partners
- Small Non-Profit of the Year: Vittles for Vets
- Non-Profit Leader: Ann Cassell of The Blacksburg Partnership
- Community Service Individual: Paige Guynn
- Board Engagement Award: Jenn

- Majdanik of BAE Systems
- Ambassador of the Year: Ben Jackson of Jackson Financial
- 2024 Hall of Fame Inductee: Dr. Pat Huber of New River Community College
- Legacy of Service Award: In memory of Cody Thompson, honored for his lasting impact on the community.
- The Chamber extends its heartfelt congratulations to the winners and sincere appreciation to all nominees for their unwavering efforts to enhance the region's economic vitality and community spirit.

Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce

Giovanni

from page 1

in her heart," said Biden. "A pioneering poet of the Black Arts Movement and the Civil Rights era, she used her pen to advance racial and gender equality and confront violence, hate and injustice, alongside some of the most esteemed artists and icons of the past century.

"Author of over 25 books, her wit and intellect earned her numerous accolades, including the Langston Hughes medal, an Emmy award, and a Grammy award nomination," Bien's statement continued. "A three-time cancer fighter, Nikki offered words of wisdom that gave hope to countless others fighting disease and despair. Jill and I send our love and condolences to her family — including her wife Virginia, her son Thomas, and her granddaughter Kai — and all those who loved and admired that something special, her courage. May God bless Nikki Giovanni."

"Nikki Giovanni was a brilliant poet, a big-hearted educator, and an unapologetic voice for justice and equality," said Harris. "As a leading voice of the Black Arts Movement, she used her poetry to celebrate Black joy and resilience — while also speaking out for racial and social justice.

"Nikki was committed to lifting up the next generation too," Harris continued. "Over more than three decades as an educator, she empowered her students to express themselves through creative writing, mentoring hundreds of them along the way. Throughout her career, Nikki never stopped demanding, and fighting for, an America that lives

up to our highest ideals: of freedom, opportunity, fairness, and dignity for all. She leaves behind a storied legacy — in literature, education, and in the fight for a more just America. Doug and I send our prayers to her family, and to all who were touched by her work."

Many Hokies can attest to the power of Giovanni's words — both spoken and written. She is known around the world for her poetry, essays, and written work that delve into social issues, such as race and gender, and call for action. She has received more than 30 honorary degrees, published at least 11 illustrated children's books, and even won an Emmy for Exceptional Merit in Documentary Filmmaking for "Going to Mars: The Nikki Giovanni Project."

Her latest book of poetry, called "The Last Book," is set for publication in fall 2025.

"To know Nikki was to be forever changed by her," said Laura Belmonte, dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences. "One minute, she would say something that would make you laugh so hard you would cry. The next minute, she would say something that would haunt you for months and make you reevaluate the world as you knew it. She was a force of nature and our college, Virginia Tech, and the world itself are better for her impact on all of them."

Giovanni used her words to mark some of the university's historic and untimely events. She wrote poems for the April 16 tragedy and for the Class of

2020's commencement ceremony at the height of the pandemic.

"Nikki Giovanni was a treasure who lived out Ut Prosim in countless ways, using her literary gifts to motivate change, encourage critical thought, inspire us to dream, and provide comfort in times of sadness and grief," said Virginia Tech President Tim Sands. "Her spirit endures through her words and the students she inspired to express themselves through writing and poetry. She will be deeply missed and forever remembered by her Hokie family."

In 2023, she was the fifth recipient of Virginia Tech's Ut Prosim Scholar Award.

Giovanni also supported the university in a variety of ways, including as a member of the Legacy Society. In 2010, Giovanni and Virginia Fowler, a retired English professor and Giovanni's wife, created the Fowler-Giovanni Fund, a legacy gift to support initiatives for visiting scholars and students in the Department of English.

Giovanni grew up in Ohio, but spent summers with her grandparents in Knoxville, Tennessee, where she was born. She joined Virginia Tech in 1987, when Fowler recruited her. Giovanni brought to campus a unique spirit of community and inclusion, from hosting a campus-wide fish fry to inviting renowned authors Maya Angelou and Rita Dove.

When she retired, she said she would miss talking with Virginia Tech students regularly. Her ultimate goal as a

professor was to teach students to think deeply and ask questions.

"I want my students to not accept what they are hearing, but to look and say, 'what kind of sense does this make?' and 'what is going to be the end result?'" said Giovanni at the time of her retirement.

One former student, now a New York Times bestselling author and Emmy Award-winning producer, can attest to the ways that Giovanni set him on a path to success. As a sophomore at Virginia Tech, author Kwame Alexander's first class under Giovanni was advanced poetry. It didn't go well initially.

"I was that student who argued everything and pushed back on anything she offered," Alexander said. "I thought I knew more than she did about poetry. Yet she kept letting me take her classes, kept teaching me, saw what was possible for me, and shaped me into who I am today."

Giovanni became who Alexander described as his literary mother.

"I'm so grateful and so much better because of her," he said.

Giovanni is survived by Fowler, her son, Thomas Giovanni, her granddaughter, Kai Giovanni, and other family members.

"We will forever feel blessed to have shared a legacy and love with our dear cousin," said Allison Ragan, Giovanni's cousin, in a statement on behalf of her family.

Virginia Tech

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 stedfast, 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.

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

(DOC - DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

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."

EPISCOPAL

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

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 for our lives. St. Michael started and adminis-

Radford

WORSHIP DIRECTORY

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"I am the way, the truth and the life.
No one comes to the Father except through Me." John 14:6

In our culture, almost anything goes. The overwhelming idea is: whatever works for you. It's okay to believe in God, but it's not acceptable to suggest there is only one way to know Him. The problem is that if you believe in Christ, you must also believe His words. He did not say, "I am a way." He said, "I am THE way." Think about it. If anything would work, why suffer? If anything else could save us, why would God send His son? Read Isaiah 43:10-11. First, understand that God does want us to know Him. It's why He sent His son in the first place. Second, recognize that there is only one Savior and put your trust in Him. Perhaps you have long since accepted that only Christ can save you, but have you really accepted that only He can save somebody else? Knowing how much others need Christ motivates us to tell them about Him. After all, "how, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?" (Romans 10:14) Tell someone about the Savior today!

Worship: Today, thank God for sending the Savior. Pray for those who do not know Him, those who live and work right around you as well as those in foreign lands. Read Romans 10:14-15. Pray that God will send His people to preach good news and ask Him to give you opportunities today to share His love with someone.

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



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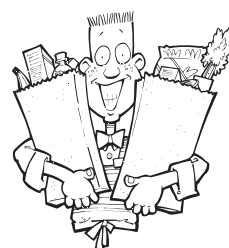
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RADFORD SPORTS

Blacksburg soccer player headed to King



PHOTO COURTESY OF KING UNIVERSITY AND ERIN BISHOP

Marty Gordon
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

One of the area’s top female soccer players, Erin Bishop of Blacksburg, has announced a commitment to continue her playing career at King University in Bristol, Tennessee.

“I chose King because as soon as I walked on campus it felt like home, I loved the team environment,” she said this past weekend.

Last year as a junior at Blacksburg High School, Bishop scored 22 goals and had 14 assists, being named River

Ridge District and Region 4D first-team, second team all-state, all-region ECNL-RL, and selected to the Continental Tire Selection Game for travel soccer.

The King athletic teams are called the Tornado, and the university with a current enrollment of 1,357 students, is a member of the NCAA Division II ranks, primarily competing in the Conference Carolinas (CC) since the 2011–12 academic year.

King finished 2-10-3 this fall. Bishop is hoping to major in nursing and has already been accepted into the BSN program.

Radford High’s Page to E&H for wrestling

Marty Gordon
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

Female wrestling is growing in popularity in Virginia.

Two years ago, the Virginia High School League (VHSL) approved it as an emerging sport, even holding a girls’ wrestling invitational.

High schools around the Commonwealth like Radford have welcomed females into what was once a male-only event. Eight girls dot the varsity roster this year, and earlier this week, one of those, Maggie Page, verbally committed to wrestle for Emory & Henry Wrestling.

Page, a senior who is in her third year of wrestling at RHS, is a team captain. She has won multiple wrestling tournaments and placed third in the 2024 VHSL Girls State Tournament and will be the first woman from Radford High School to wrestle in college.

The E&H women’s squad includes Molly Keller from Pulaski County High School.

The Emory & Henry University Women’s Wrestling Team and first-year Head Coach Maria Ramos join South Atlantic Conference Carolinas consortium, which begins this year with eight NCAA Division II schools from across the Southeast.

Last season, the Emory & Henry College Women’s Wrestling Team opened the postseason at the NCWWC Region II Championships and finished fifth as a team out of eight competing schools. E&H saw three wrestlers qualify for the 2024 National Collegiate Women’s Wrestling Championships.

Page hopes to continue her success when she joins the Wasps.

Her first year in wrestling, Page (150 pounds) finished eighth at states and then third the following year, going 20-2 overall on the season.

Earlier this year, Page wrestled in Fargo, North Dakota and several other tournaments. She became



PHOTO COURTESY OF MAGGIE PAGE

Maggie Page of Radford High School works across the top of an opponent during competition earlier this year in Fargo, North Dakota.

an All-American at the Mid-West Nationals.

Page started wrestling after her high school coach, Dwayne Martin, kept telling her she would be really good at the sport.

“After about two weeks, I went to a practice and just fell in love with the sport,” she said.

Page is proud of the number of girls wrestling at RHS.

“It feels so good to have so many girls and know that they are loving the sport just as much as I do.”

Her first year, she had to wrestle a majority of boys and still will this season, but that is slowly changing with the rise in female numbers.

Once she learned E&H had a wrestling program, it was an eye opener for her.

“The more I started advancing in the sport made me really want to look into wrestling in college,” Page said. “Overall, this sport has been amazing for me and has opened up so many new friendships and opportunities in my life.”

Martin calls her a trailblazer for women’s high school wrestling in Virginia.

“She is a fierce competitor that is extremely goal focused. She uses previous losses as motivation throughout the season to train harder in

hopes of always winning gold medals,” he said.

Martin also took a moment to brag about the rising female numbers in his program.

“We have a long history in Radford of having girl wrestlers in our rec league programs. These same girls have continued through middle school and now into high school. They recruit their friends to join in as well. The biggest recruitment and retention is that girls in the Radford program are seen as equals to their male counterparts. We all practice together, travel together, and compete together.”

The coach also points out that girls’ wrestling is in its third year of emerging sport status, it is his sincere hope that the VHSL executive committee will vote in favor of Women’s Wrestling becoming its own sport.

“Once that happens, the sky’s the limit for female wrestlers throughout Virginia. My hope is for Radford High School to produce additional female college wrestlers, female wrestling officials, and female wrestling coaches,” Martin said.

Page and her female teammates will be part of the Lady Cats Invitational scheduled for Radford High School on Dec. 21.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TELENA MEGAN

Radford High School swimmers Evie Grim (left) and Trent Hollandsworth signed their National Letters of Intent this past week in the school’s gymnasium. Hollandsworth will swim at University of California San Diego. Grim will swim at University of Maryland Baltimore County.

Radford athletes to swim at next level

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Two of the area’s top swimmers have announced plans to take their talent to the collegiate level.

Evie Grim and Trent Hollandsworth from Radford High School signed their National Letters of Intent this past week in the school’s gymnasium.

Hollandsworth will swim at University of California San Diego. Grim will swim at University of Maryland Baltimore County.

Both are defending state champions and will lead their school into the postseason with a lot of optimism.

Hollandsworth crushed his own Class 1/2 record last season in the 100 breast stroke by more than two seconds to highlight the VHSL Championships. He defended his state titles in both the 100 breast (55.91) and 200 IM (1:55.94), making it a three-peat in the latter event. In the 100 breast, he annihilated his own Class 1/2 record of 58.43 from last year. Hollandsworth has been as fast as 54.97 in the 100 breast and 1:05.94 in the 100 fly, both in December. He added a personal-best 50 back (24.38) leading off Radford’s runner-up 200 medley relay (1:49.50).

Trent competed on behalf of Radford High School and broke his own state record twice on Saturday. He swam a Class 2 record time of 58.57 in the 100 breast stroke during the morning preliminaries before conquering the evening finals with a winning time of 58.43 at the VHSL Class 1 and 2 swimming championships. Hollandsworth also won the 200 individual medley.

Grim led the Radford High School girls’ team to a runner up state finish and also gained a win by .04 seconds

in the 50 free with a winning time of 24.44. Grim also won the 100 free with a time of 53.27.

Hollandsworth who competed at this past weekend’s USA Winter Junior Nationals chose

UCSD because of its breathtaking location, amazing coach and support staff, the familial nature of the team, and incredible academics. “I knew that I wanted a college that offered both amazing academics and a competitive team culture,” he said. “I hope to break the team records for breaststroke and make it to NCAA’s during my collegiate career.”

He is a 2022-2023, 2023-2024 USA Swimming Scholastic All-American, 2023-2024 National Interscholastic Swimming Coaches Association (NISCA) Honorable Mention All-American, (2023, 2024) Winter Junior National Finalist, 2024 USA Swimming U.S. Open Qualifier, and 2022 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards National Gold Medal (for his artwork).

Grim expressed her choice as being home. “Everyone I met was incredibly welcoming and I immediately connected with the team and coaches. UMBC sits right next to both Baltimore and Washington DC, and that creates an extra level of excitement as those areas are completely different from Radford,” she said.

Grim also has a long-term goal that could be the U.S. Olympic Trials.

Grim plans on majoring in Biology and minoring in Spanish. After college I am planning to continue my education in medical school. Hollandsworth will major in either Human Biology or Microbiology with the intent to pursue medical school after his undergraduate degree.

Local tennis standout to play at Tech

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The Virginia Tech women’s tennis team has announced the signing of one of the top players in the state, and when coaches look across the court, they will see a very familiar face. Kirsten Woods is a standout player from Christiansburg and the daughter of current Tech tennis coach Terry Ann Zawacki-Holdren.

Woods joins the Hokies as a four-star recruit by TennisRecruiting.com, ranking as high as no. 2 in Virginia and top-70 nationally.

Woods has won two L2 national opens and four L3 national opens. She was a doubles quarterfinalist at the 2023 Eddie Herr International Championships and was awarded the National Sportsmanship award at the UTSA clay court championships in 2021.

“I really want to make a difference in the Virginia Tech program and really improve my mental stability on

the court and confidence. I really look forward to developing my game and being a part of a team environment,” Woods said.

Terry Ann Zawacki-Holdren is in her 20th year of running the Tech program. She has guided Tech to two NCAA Tournament appearances, and the Hokies advanced to the second round of the 2015 NCAA Tournament for the first time in program history. Zawacki-Holdren has produced eight nationally ranked singles players, four nationally ranked doubles teams and seven All-Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) selections.

Zawacki-Holdren, herself, was a two-time All-American at Wake Forest, leading the Demon Deacons to three ACC finals and three top-15 finishes nationally. As a student-athlete, Zawacki-Holdren was Wake’s first tennis player to land on the All-ACC list four years in a row and was the first to compete

Christiansburg downs Radford



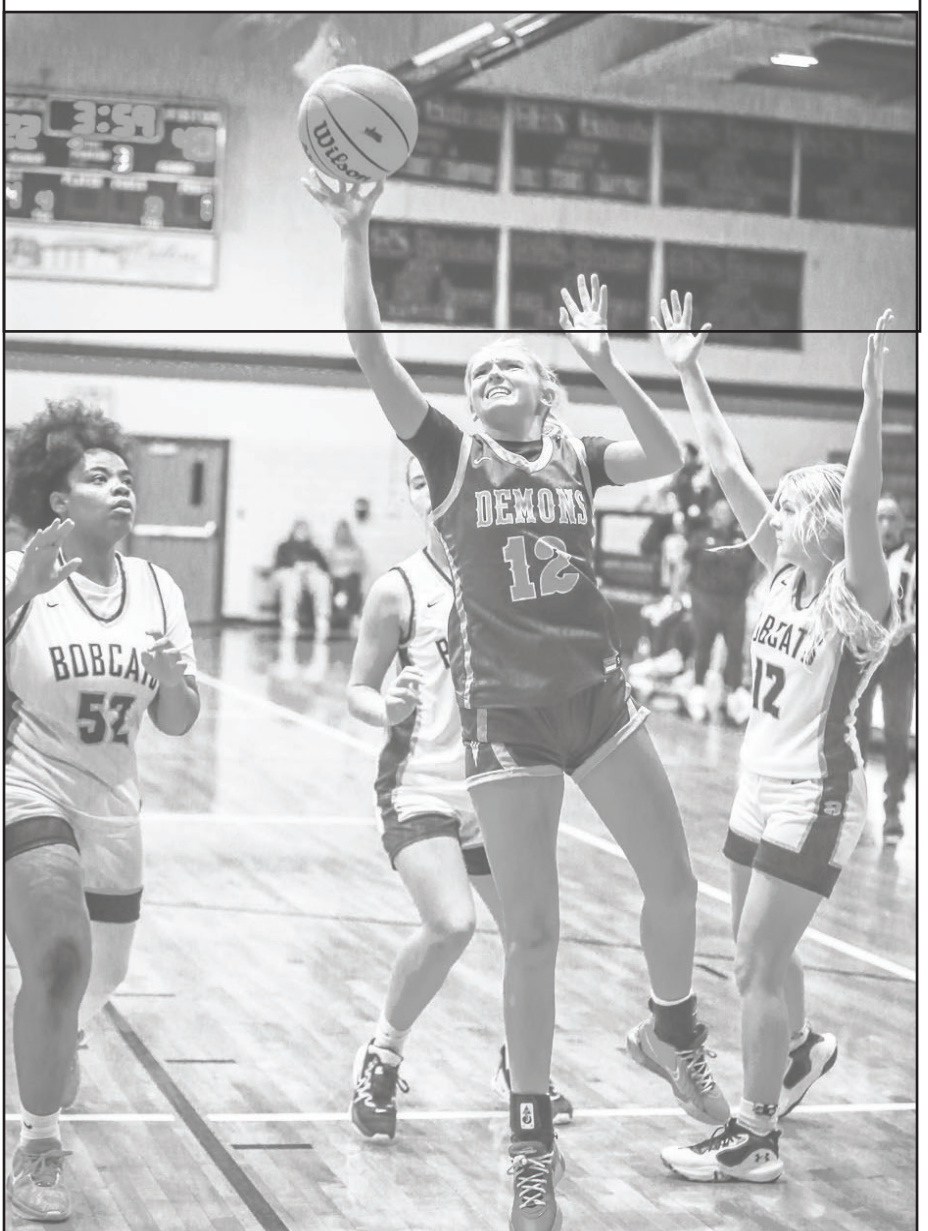
Lauren Owens drives to the basket in Radford's game against Christiansburg. With the loss, Radford remains winless on the season.



Adouncia Hayes battles inside the paint in the Bobcats' season opener on Wednesday.



Blythe Akers stretches to get a blocked shot as Christiansburg downed Radford 62-40 in Wednesday's game. Christiansburg is now 4-1 overall on the season.



Katy Hoover gets free inside for a bucket against the Bobcats. Hoover led Christiansburg with 26 points. Mia Robinson led the way on the boards for Christiansburg with 15 rebounds. She also added 11 points.

PHOTOS BY BRYANT ALTIZER

Bobcats dominate All-TRD team, region honors also announced

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The Three Rivers District released its 2024 all-district football team, and Radford High School dominated the list.

Defensive back Pace Prioleau was named to the first team. He was joined on the first team by teammates, linebacker Cole Martin, defensive lineman Reece Honaker, center Nolan Dalton and running back J.D. Grubb.

The second team all-TRD included Radford defensive back Bryant Weaver, kicker Louis Webster, and receivers, Jaden Hendricks, Luke Woodard and Sincere Taylor.

Prioleau, Honaker, Dalton and Martin were

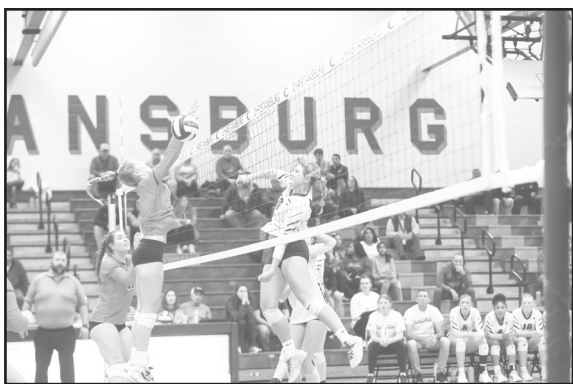
named 2C region first team along with Sincere Taylor.

Second-team all-region included Bobcats Honaker, Woodard, Grubb, Webster, Hendricks and Sam Kahndan-Barani.

Alleghany swept the top three awards — Des Jordan (offensive player of the year), Gavin Via (defensive player of the year) and Will Fields (coach of the year) — and had 13 players combined to fill 15 spots on the team.

Region 3D also released its 2024 football team with Christiansburg having four players honored. Offensive lineman Carter Stallard was a first teamer with linebacker Josiah Ratley and defensive back Izaiah Cotto. Donovan Richardson was named to the second team as a receiver and defensive lineman.

Sports notes: Two Blue Demons all-state volleyball



Addison Reasor

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The Virginia High School League has announced the 2024 Class 3 all-state volleyball team with two from Christiansburg High School being honored. Ela Shepherd and Addison Reasor were named to the first team.

Caliegh Ponn of Hidden Valley was named the Class 3 player of year, and David Keeter of Grafton was named coach of the year.

Highlander player of week



Ela Shepherd

FILE PHOTOS

See **Volleyball**, page 10

Cross river rivals face off on the court



Sunday was kid's day at VT women's contest against Radford University. Hokie players signed basketballs and other items for youngsters in attendance.

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The Virginia Tech women's basketball team was a terrible host for their Radford neighbors during a contest Sunday at Cassell

Coliseum. Tech took the 73-34 win. The Lady Highs only shot 22 percent from the field 17.4 percent from behind the arc. Meanwhile Tech short 45 percent from the field and 50 from the three-point mark. The hosts also owned

an advantage on the glass 41-35. Tech rejected 10 shots in the game, the most they have recorded this season.

Tech scored the last 14 points of the first quarter to grab a lead they would not relinquish as they squeezed Radford on the defensive

end only allowing 34 total points.

Tech's Lani White led all scorers with 23 points, her career high, and she was followed closely by Carkleigh Wenzel who dropped 22 behind six triples.

The game was the 39th

in the NRV clash with the Hokies now holding a 30-9 edge in the series The meeting marked the third time in the last four seasons that the two squads faced off in Blacksburg with Virginia Tech taking all four contests.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF VT ATHLETICS

Carkleigh Wenzel scored 22 points for Virginia Tech in Sunday's win over Radford University.

Volleyball

from page 9

The Big South Conference announced Adelyn Traylor-Walker has been named freshman of the week after solid performances against Loyola (MD) and Clemson.

Traylor-Walker earned her first career start for Radford University this past week at Clemson and had a career performance. The redshirt freshman dropped a career-high 15 points with 11 of those points coming in the opening quarter. Her 15 points are the most scored by a Radford freshman this season. In a tight contest against Loyola (MD), she also added a single-game best four assists in the comeback effort.

Traylor-Walker is the first Highlander to earn a weekly award this season. The honor also marks the third straight season a Radford freshman has earned a weekly award from the conference office.

RU men on ESPN

One of the most highly anticipated conference openers in school history for the Radford University men's basketball program got even sweeter as the Highlanders will take on rival High Point in front of a national audience on ESPN on Thursday, Jan. 2.

Tip from the conference showdown is set for 7 p.m. from the Quebein Center.

ESPN and the Big South Conference announced the showdown between the Highlanders and Panthers will be the first Big South Wildcard broadcast of the 2024-25 season.

The match-up will mark the first between the two programs on ESPN and the 17th Big South ESPN Wildcard game for Radford all-time.

Both teams are currently first for first place in the Big South standings at 9-2 overall. The Panthers are a perfect 7-0 at home to start the year, while the Highlanders three true road wins lead the conference.

Radford's 9-2 record is its best start to a season since 1988-89. Winners of five straight, the Highlanders are ranked No. 122 in the NET and their non-conference wins include William & Mary, Old Dominion, Evansville, Chicago State, Purdue Fort Wayne, Saint Francis, North Carolina Central and Bucknell.

Lincoln boasts fourth top-time

The Virginia Tech track & field sprints group opened their 2024-2045 indoor competition slate on Friday at the Clemson Opener, hosted by Clemson with Justin Lincoln IV in his third year with the program, boasted a top ten program time with his 32.37 finish, just .09 off the current program record held by Jacory Patterson.

His result topped his previous career-best in the event and replaced his second-place slot in the program's top 10 performances list of 32.60. Previously 11th in the NCAA 300m records, Lincoln now skyrockets to fourth all-time for the 300m.

Tennis

from page 8

to compete in the NCAA Singles Championships. She went on to compete at the NCAA Singles Championships for four straight years, playing in the No. 1 spot her entire collegiate career.

Woods said her mother as a coach was one of the reasons she chose Virginia Tech. "I really love the team environment and we have such great facilities. I truly think my mom is one of the best coaches I could compete for and put my trust into. I also heavily love the beauty of campus and the fact Virginia Tech is a part of the ACC conference and is a bigger school as well," she said.

Having her mom as her coach will

really not be anything different than what she has experienced for the past few years, it just steps it up a notch.

"My mom has always been my coach throughout my whole life so I do not see it being much different besides the fact I will have two more assistant coaches working with her as well. But now, she'll see me more as her player instead of her daughter on the court and during practices and competition. So, I'm ready to be competitive and tough out there," Woods said.

For now, Woods says her major is undecided but is leaning toward psychology.

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.

Don't let her look fool you. Hot Tamales is sweet gal. She's curious and likes to spend time with her favorite humans. While at the Animal Care and Adoption Center, she lives in a community cat room with some of her best feline friends. Stop by to meet this purrecious girl.



Noelle is ready to find her furever home. She is an older puppy who is a little unsure in new environments but is likely to warm up with a kind, patient human by her side to give her confidence.

Planning a holiday shopping budget is the best way to navigate the season, says Virginia Tech experts

As the holiday season approaches, it is important to begin budgeting for your gift shopping ahead of time. Taking proactive steps now will help you manage expenses wisely and make the most of the festive season. Virginia Tech economics and finance experts share why.

"Shoppers need lists of recipients and gifts, prioritizing essential items, and tracking expenses to avoid overspending," says Jadrian Wooten, collegiate associate professor in the Department of Economics at Virginia Tech. "It's tempting to be lured by good deals and go off-budget, but staying disciplined is incredibly important."

Wooten explains that consumers are often presented with promotions that create the impression of financial losses if they don't make an immediate purchase. "In reality, sticking



PHOTO COURTESY OF VIRGINIA TECH

to a budgeted plan is a wiser choice."

"Responsible budgeting, before we start shopping, ensures a joyful holiday season without the added stress of financial burden," says Wooten. "The holiday shopping culture revolves around generosity, tradition, and emotional spending, which often leads to emotional spending."

To avoid falling into this trap, Wooten recommends people be aware of these cultural dynamics and set up realistic spending limits that are in line with their financial situation.

"It's no secret that inflation has increased the prices of the goods we want and need," says Virginia Tech finance expert Jesse Lineberry, who also offers his perspective on the effect of holiday budgeting. "If you're having a hard time budgeting for gifts this year, consider making crafts or building gifts instead of purchasing items at the

store."

Looking past the holidays, Lineberry advises avoiding high-interest-rate debit use through credit cards.

"Avoid buying gifts with interest-bearing debt and consider using a debit card or cash if you can." If you are going to use a credit card, Lineberry recommends paying it off in full every month. "Pre-emptive budgeting can help ensure that we have the proper funds to avoid taking on debt."

Budgeting in advance allows shoppers to worry less about gifts when the holidays finally arrive and allows for more quality time with friends and family. "A budget will allow you to shop with freedom knowing that you can celebrate the holidays without causing damage to your financial well-being," says Lineberry.

Sarah Hern for Virginia Tech

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