



David Rotenizer joins Montgomery County as regional tourism director

David Rotenizer was named executive director of the Montgomery County Blacksburg Christiansburg Regional Tourism Office on Nov. 9, 2021.

"After conducting a search for someone to spearhead our regional tourism program that yielded several great candidates, David was selected to fill the position and continue the great work our regional tourism office has been doing for the past several years," said Montgomery County Administrator Craig Meadows. "David has a lot of related industry experience, and we are fortunate to have him leading our tourism program."

As executive director of the regional tourism program, Rotenizer will report to the Blacksburg town manager, the Christiansburg town manager, and the Montgomery County administrator. He will be responsible for managing and initiating programs that foster and support tourism initiatives throughout both towns and the county, working closely with the Montgomery County Tourism Board.

"This is home. I was born in Radford, grew up in Blacksburg, and Montgomery County has always held a

special place in my heart and soul," said Rotenizer. "I've seen the great work that has been done by my predecessor with the regional tourism program. I welcome this opportunity to pick up where she left off and continue the great work to both support and grow the tourism industry in our community."

Prior to joining Montgomery County, Rotenizer worked for Franklin County as the director of tourism with the Office of Economic Development. Prior to that Rotenizer worked for West

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A graduate of Radford University, David Rotenizer is the county's new regional tourism director.

After more than 150 years, Thomas Fraction receives honorable discharge from U.S. Army

Elizabeth Margulies
Contributing writer

On Nov. 6, members of Virginia Tech's Black Cadet Organization presented descendants of Thomas Fraction with a certificate of honorable discharge 155 years after he was demoted and discharged without cause from the Union Army.

Fraction fought in the Civil War alongside his brother Othello Fraction for the 40th United States Colored Infantry from Tennessee. Thomas Fraction became a soldier after escaping the Smithfield and Solitude plantations, now part of the Virginia Tech campus, where the Fraction family was enslaved by the Preston family.

In July 2021, the U.S. Army made a correction to Thomas Fraction's military record after his third great-granddaughter, Kerri Moseley-Hobbs, author of "More Than a Fraction," petitioned them to review Thomas Fraction's case. In addition to receiving the honorable discharge, Thomas Fraction was reinstated to the rank of sergeant, retroactive to April 25, 1866.

The ceremony took place at Smithfield Plantation, near the Fraction Family House at Solitude Plantation, which in April 2019 was named to acknowledge the McNorton, Saunders and Fraction families who all resided on the site at some point. While the ceremonial event commemorated the correction of Thomas Fraction's military record, it also honored the service of all those who were enslaved and fought for their freedom during the Civil War.

"The recognition of the Fractions and the other families enslaved is an important step in Virginia Tech maintaining a more complete and truthful history," said Michele Deramo, associate vice provost for diversity education and engagement.

"Acknowledging all dimensions of Vir-

ginia Tech history is necessary in order to authentically fulfill the aspirational values set forth in our Principles of Community," Deramo said. "I hope that we as a university can bring the story of the Fraction family alive so that the little house near the Duck Pond is as notable to future generations of Hokies as Burruss Hall or Lane Stadium," she added.

The Fraction Family House was placed on the National Historic Registry, along with the rest of Solitude in 1989, but a living family connection remained hidden for decades.

"It feels like the naming was a spiritual homecoming for all of them who actually wanted to build their homes there," Moseley-Hobbs said. "It's like vindication. You were right. You have a right to be there, and now you get to go home."



PHOTO BY DAN MIROLI FOR VIRGINIA TECH
A plaque is displayed at the Fraction family house in honor of the Fraction family and all others who were enslaved at Solitude.



Second Sheetz proposed for Roanoke Street

Sheetz recently renovated its North Franklin Street location in Christiansburg and has now submitted plans to the town for a second location on Roanoke Street near the Fatback Soul Shack restaurant.

The new 6,077-sq.-ft building would be adjacent to Industrial Lane to the front of the town's industrial park. The property is currently home to a convenience store. Gasoline pumps would be located toward the front of Roanoke Street and would provide easy on-off access to Interstate 81.

The Christiansburg Planning Commission has also received a recent update on the Marketplace project on North Franklin. The developer, Walt Rector, is indicating it will now contain two Mar-

riott hotels joined at the lobby. This is a new concept hoteliers like Marriott are employing with two different levels of cost, room sizes, and suite sizes with buildings that will share the same lobby, food facility, maid service, and security for efficiency. The proposed hotels will be five stories high with stick construction.

Rector also told the planning commission at a recent meeting that this project began as a \$30 million undertaking, but is now in the range of \$250 million because of the quality of the location and the growth of the community, among other factors.

Plans for another hotel, a Tru by Hilton, have also been submitted for Hampton Boulevard.

VT's Theriogenology Club gives vet students hands-on experience with Puppy Palooza

Puppy Palooza was back in action this semester, providing students with a unique opportunity to experience the proper handling of young dogs.

This extravaganza of cuteness, put on by the Theriogenology Club, brought 18 Australian and German shepherd puppies to the college by dedicated breeders with responsible reproductive practices.

Tripp Oliphant, president of the Theriogenology Club, described the event as "a vaccine clinic put on by our club for breeders to bring in litters of puppies and allow us pre-clinical veterinary students to perform examinations, vaccinations, microchipping, and deworming."

Julie Cecere, clinical associate professor and one of the faculty volunteering to support Puppy Palooza, expressed appreciation for the Theriogenology Club and its success in giving students an experience they couldn't get otherwise. "Clubs are an essential part of vet school and give students additional education and further learning opportunities outside of the formal curriculum in areas they have an interest in."

Puppy Palooza was a huge success the first time it was put on in 2019 but was canceled in 2020 due to COVID-19. Second-year Makayla Minton was sad to miss out last year but said she was ex-

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After being cancelled in 2020 because of COVID, an "extravaganza of cuteness," otherwise known as Puppy Palooza was back this semester, giving Virginia Tech veterinary students the chance to experience some of their profession's most challenging patients: barking, licking, wiggling, squealing, chewing, and generally mischievous puppies.

BREAKFAST with Santa

Saturday, December 4, 8am-12pm
\$5 Children 12 & under \$8 Children 13-99

Christiansburg High School Cafeteria
Yummy Breakfast- Holiday Fun- Live Music!
Bring a camera for a photo op with Santa! Cash Only

Sponsored by the CHS Music Department

As an event held in a Virginia Public School, masks must be worn at all times with the exception of when eating.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesday, Dec. 1:

Radford Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony
Radford Coffee Company (RCC) will offer hot cocoa and cookies from the library parking lot prior to the lighting of the tree. The Radford Public Library Lamp-lighters are funding the refreshments from RCC. Libby and Olivia, members of the Grove United Methodist Handbell Choir, will perform music and also lead interactive handbell playing for little ones. Radford Mayor David Horton will provide the countdown for the tree lighting, and Santa will be on hand to flip the switch. This event takes place outside, rain or shine, so those attending should dress accordingly.

Talking About Books: "Perestroika in Paris"
At the Christiansburg Library at 11 a.m. This month's book to be discussed is "Perestroika in Paris" by Jane Smiley, in-person and virtually.

Talking About Books: "Crying in H Mart"
At the Meadowbrook Public Library at 6 p.m. To be discussed is "Crying in H Mart" by Michelle Zauner. Call the Meadowbrook Library at 268-1964 to reserve a copy. Everyone is welcome.

Thursday, Dec. 2:

Radford Holiday Parade
Radford's Holiday Parade, themed "Winter Nights and Magical Lights," will take place at 7 p.m. The lineup begins at 6 p.m. The parade route will line up

on East Main Street between Tyler Avenue and University Drive Bridge and proceed westward along Main Street to the Central Square Shopping Center.

Saturday, Dec. 4:

CHS Music Department Breakfast with Santa
At Christiansburg High School from 8 a.m. until noon. The Christiansburg High School Music Department presents its annual Breakfast with Santa featuring a pancake breakfast, games, crafts, and a photo op with Santa. Families may bring their own camera or phone and take a picture with Santa, his elves, the reindeer, and the high school's music students. As an event in a Virginia public school, masks must be worn at all times by those attending except when they are eating. The cost for children 12 and under is \$5, for ages 13 and up \$8.

Creative Writing Group
At the Meadowbrook Public Library at 11 a.m. In person or on Go-To-Meeting for support, feedback, and writing tips. Email mupthegrove@mfrl.org or call 540-268-1964 for more information. A Go-To-Meeting account is not needed to join.

PAWS to Read - Dog Edition
At the Blacksburg Library at noon. Read to Derek the therapy dog. Registration is required.

Teen Dungeons and Dragons
At the Blacksburg Library at 2 p.m. Teens. Dungeons. Dragons.

Sunday, Dec. 5:

Luminaries Display
The annual Stroubles Mill Neighborhood Association luminaries display in Blacksburg will begin at 5:30 pm. The rain date is Dec. 6.

Chess Club
At the Blacksburg Library at 3 p.m. Kids and teens ages 8 and up can come sharpen their chess skills. Supplies will be provided. All skill levels are welcome.

Monday, Dec. 6:

Photos with Santa
Photos with Santa at the Radford Public Library from 5:30 to 6 p.m. Registration is required. Call (540) 731-3621 to reserve a time for free photos with Santa. (Photos will be delivered digitally by email.)

Wednesday, Dec. 8:

Brown Bag Book Club
On the second Wednesday of each month from noon to 1 p.m., the Radford Public Library offers a book discussion. Those attending may bring a lunch. To be discussed this month is "The Great Alone" by Kristin Hannah.

Holiday Pop-up Market
Have your picture taken with Santa and roast marshmallows under the stars from 5 to 8 p.m. at the Holiday Pop-Up Market in the Triangle Pocket Park on West Main Street in Radford. Sweets and treats, coffee and hot cocoa will be available. Vendors will be set up in the New River

Valley Community Service parking lot.

Thursday, Dec. 9:

Storytime with Dancin' Dee
At the Radford Public Library from 11 to 11:30 a.m. This is a special storytime with local artists. Those attending may make a leather bookmark from Dancin' Dee Leatherworks to take home while enjoying stories about creating new art from old things.

Saturday, Dec. 11:

Handcrafted Holiday Pop up Market and Holiday Open House at Glencoe Mansion
The annual handcrafted Holiday Pop-Up Market hosted by Mountain-Trotter Arts from noon to 4 p.m. at Glencoe Mansion, Museum and Gallery. The market will offer one-of-a-kind and high quality handcrafted works by local artisans perfect for holiday shopping. Hot beverages, sweet treats, and live holiday music will be part of the fun. Those attending can get into the spirit by checking out the gallery's holiday display, "Christmas in Virginia," which will transport participants through Virginia's past into the present. Glencoe Mansion's gift shop will feature a wide variety of items. As a special feature, the museum will offer works by local artists in its gallery space for holiday gift-giving ideas. The event and the museum are both open to the public with no admission charge. In case of weather issues, the rain date will be Dec. 18.

Tuesday, Dec. 14:

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

Wintery Storytime
At the Radford Public Library from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Those attending should wear their favorite (or ugliest) sweater for a winter-themed storytime.

Through Dec. 15:

United Way Festival of Trees
At the Old Town Mall in Downtown Christiansburg. Come see these beautiful trees in person and vote for your favorite. Voting ends at 9 p.m. on Dec. 15, but the trees will be on display until Jan. 3. Visit <https://UWTrees.givesmart.com> to vote. Votes are \$1, and no limits are placed on the number of votes allowed. All proceeds stay local supporting the United Way NRV and its 22 partner agencies. Event sponsors are Corning, Inc., Foxridge Apartment Homes by HHHunt, and Quest Floor Care LLC.

Through Dec. 19:

Va. State Police Operation Christmas 2021
Virginia State Police is currently accepting

donated items for Home Instead Senior Care and Turning Point Domestic Violence Shelter through Dec. 19 at the state police Division VI headquarters at 3775 W. Main St. in Salem. The following items are being accepted: blankets, sheets, white towels, white wash cloths, canned vegetables, shampoo, conditioner, body wash, lotion, deodorant, baby wipes, size 5 and 6 baby diapers, word search books, adult coloring books, crayons, and colored pencils.

All month of December

Free COVID-19 Test Kits
Available at all branches of Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library, curbside only: free, rapid at-home COVID-19 antigen test kits. Tests are available at no cost with no library card needed. This pilot program is made possible through a partnership with the Virginia Department of Health. Users will need a Wi-Fi connection, a form of ID, and a mobile device or computer to complete the test.

Ongoing:

Second annual Radford holiday display contest
The Radford Chamber of Commerce's second annual holiday display contest is underway as Radford businesses and residents are urged to come up with their best window or home displays. The entry fee is \$25, and the entry deadline is Nov. 30 with decorations required to be up by Dec. 10. Public voting will then take place from Dec. 10 through Dec. 22.

Puppy Palooza from page 1

cited to get more experience after the pandemic. This is precisely what Puppy Palooza provided: an invaluable chance to become familiar with what could be the most challenging patient of all: a barking, licking, wiggling pup. Indeed, the room was full of squeaks and squeals as the puppies chewed, licked, barked, and found mischief. Meanwhile, students applied the skills they've been acquiring throughout their time at the college. The benefits of Puppy Palooza extend beyond its hands-on components, though. "The event serves as an avenue for breeder education and the importance of veterinary care for puppies before going to their new forever homes," Oliphant said. "It also

allows for students to interact with breeders and understand how important reputable breeders are for the preservation and improvement of purebred dogs." Students left Puppy Palooza more prepared, confident, and equipped to serve dogs such as the 18 puppies present that will go on to work in crucial areas like bomb detection and search and rescue. While it was apparent students were gaining the skills necessary to become excellent practitioners, the cuteness of Puppy Palooza can't be overlooked. Oliphant said it's an "excellent outlet for students to get out of 'study mode' and play with some adorable puppies." -- Written by Florence Gonsalves M.F.A '23, writer with the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine

Remember:

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- ★ January 6: U.S. Capitol Day

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Warm Hearth Village, VT industrial design students work to keep seniors living independently

For 12 years now, the Warm Hearth Village (WHV) staff and residents have helped Virginia Tech's Industrial Design Department Senior Living Studio class create products designed to improve living independently for seniors.

Each fall, teams of students meet with village residents to find out what tools could make their lives easier and aid them in their homes. The teams then return to the studio to design prototypes of the products they have decided to create. Everyone meets again, and residents

give feedback on concepts and prototypes. In the final step, teams formally present the finished designs at Warm Hearth Village. Due to the pandemic restrictions, the meetings and the final presentation for the last two years have been via Zoom.

This year's projects included an illuminated bedside handle to help people in and out of bed while providing light to prevent falls, a bracelet that provides reminders and connects with family via an app to ensure pills are taken and appointments are met, a pill

manager and dispensing device, a digital tile smart puzzle, a virtual window that displays scenes designed for those with dementia to help combat sundowning, an indoor gardening station that provides a common space for gardening year-round in a community setting, a reengineered cane, and a collapsible, lightweight shopping cart.

Warm Hearth Village is a nonprofit senior living community in Blacksburg that provides a full continuum of living options on its campus and in the home.



A digital smart tile puzzle is just one of the products Virginia Tech's Industrial Design Senior Living Studio class has created in conjunction with Warm Hearth Village to make independent living better for seniors.

Local students achieve success at college

Radford's Andrew Rehak initiated into honor society

Andrew Rehak, a native of Radford, was recently initiated into the Hampden-Sydney College Circle of Omicron Delta Kappa, the national leadership honor society.

Students initiated into ODK must be sophomores, juniors, seniors, or graduate/professional students in the top 35% of their class, must demonstrate leadership experience in at least one of the five pillars, and must embrace the society's ideals. Fewer than five percent of students on a campus are invited to join each year.

ODK was founded in Lexington, Va., on Dec. 3, 1914. A group of 15 students and faculty members established the society to recognize and encourage leadership at the collegiate level.

Blacksburg medical student Lingzhi Liu recognized for service to student groups

The New York Institute of Technology has recognized Lingzhi Liu, a medical student from Blacksburg, for his involvement with campus organizations.

Liu is a member of the American Osteopathic College of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and the Student American Osteopathic Academy of Orthopedics. The New York Institute of Technology's six schools and colleges offer undergraduate, graduate, and professional degree programs in in-demand disciplines. A nonprofit, independent, private, and nonsectarian institute of higher education founded in 1955, it welcomes nearly 8,000 students worldwide.

Radford's Connor Herndon graduates from Coastal Carolina

Connor Herndon, an inter-dis studies major from Radford, was among the nearly 350 students who took part in Coastal

Radford, Riner students earn awards from WGU

Three local students have earned awards of excellence at Western Governors University. Emily Barbour of Radford earned an award of excellence at Western Governors University Teachers College. Tamara Weston of Radford earned an award of excellence at Western Governors University College of Health Professions. Lisa St. Clair of Riner has earned an award of excellence at Western Governors University

Blacksburg's Henry Skutt graduates from Ohio University with MBA

Henry Skutt from Blacksburg graduated with a Master of Business Administration (MBA/Sports Administration) from the College of Business at Ohio University during the Summer 2021 semester.

Riner's Olivia Rutledge graduates from Emory & Henry with Doctorate

Olivia Rutledge of Riner was among the students from Emory & Henry College's Health Sciences campus in Emory, Va., to graduate with a Doctorate of Physical Therapy during the summer commencement ceremonies. Emory & Henry College's Health Sciences campus was launched in 2014 with the goal of preparing compassionate, patient-centered, highly-skilled health care professionals who not only provide quality health-care to their patients but also actively engage in leadership and service opportunities within their professional organizations and communities.

College of Health Professions

Established in 1997 by 19 U.S. governors with a mission to expand access to high-quality, affordable higher education, Western Governors University is online, nonprofit, and serves more than 125,000 students nationwide with more than 250,000 graduates in all 50 states.

excellence, and alumni become global leaders. The university is committed to fostering, embracing, and celebrating diversity in all its forms.

Virginia growers present grand champion tree and wreaths to governor's family

RICHMOND—A Canaan fir seedling planted 10 years ago has grown into the tree that debuted this Christmas season at the Virginia Executive Mansion.

The grand champion tree and handmade wreaths, selected by a three-judge panel for the annual Virginia Christmas Tree Growers Association competition, was delivered to Gov. Ralph Northam and his family on Monday, Nov. 29.

Tree entries are judged on straightness, fullness, and overall health and color in the contest that celebrates the diverse variety of Virginia-grown Christmas trees. Trees and wreaths were judged at the association's annual meeting in August.

This year's grand champion fir was grown by Louisa County Farm Bureau members Virginia and John Carroll of Claybrooke Farms. They have planted trees on 25 acres since 1984, and their trees previously have been presented to former governors Bob McDonnell and Terry McAuliffe.

"It was a nice surprise because there were a good number of entries in the contest this year," John Carroll said. "We are honored to win and present the tree to Gov. Northam and the first lady at the mansion."

August's winning Canaan fir was 7.5 feet tall with green-blue hues, a pleasant aroma and sturdy branches. A similar, somewhat larger Canaan fir will have a holiday home at the governor's mansion.

"The contest encourages growers to continue to keep growing better trees with quality at its best for our consumers," Carroll said, adding that cultivating gorgeous Christmas trees is a family endeavor. "I didn't grow the tree by myself," he said. "But I

did cut it!" Robert O'Keeffe, who organizes the association's competitions, said four categories of trees can be grand champion: firs, pines, spruces and others, like cypress or cedar.

"Fraser fir is the Cadillac of Christmas trees, and most in-demand by consumers," he said. "But the other trees are eligible and do win."

Ken and Elaine Rhoades of Mountain View Christmas Tree Farm in Shenandoah County

submitted August's grand champion wreath. The family will create similar, fresh wreaths to adorn the mansion's gates and doors.

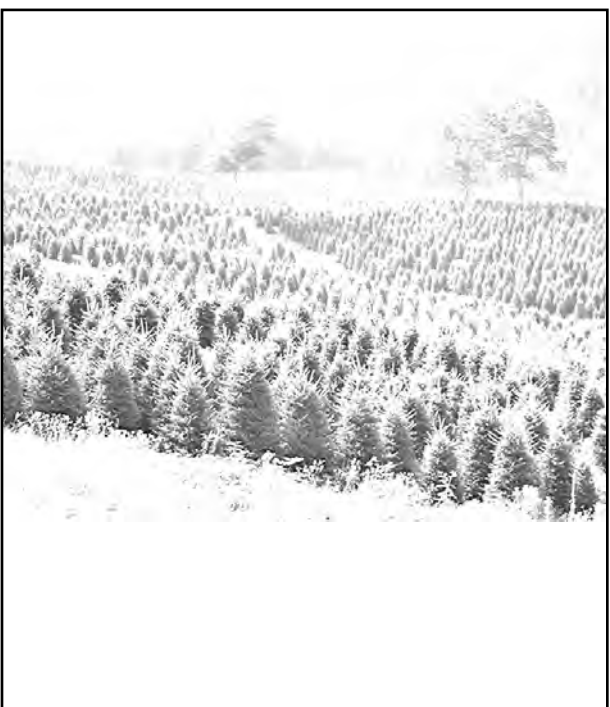
The Rhoades' winning mixed green wreath was made with Scotch pine backing, topped with white pine, arborvitae and Turkish fir, with blue ice cypress accents.

Rhoades said his parents, Stephen and Sharon Rhoades, have long created the stylish natural wreaths, which have fetched the grand prize in

past association contests. "It promotes a little competition in the orga-

nization, plus it's a fun event," O'Keeffe said. "And it's beneficial for new

growers to see the quality and variety of champion trees."



A Canaan fir is the Virginia-grown grand champion tree that was delivered to the governor's mansion on Nov. 29.

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Property has frontage on Morning Dew Lane and accessed by Buffalo Lane. Buffalo Lane is a private road that extends from Morning Dew Lane and goes through a portion of the property. Buffalo Lane is also the access for two homes adjacent to this property. In addition, there is a 25' easement that expires in two years giving access to adjoining 113.15 acres to the south. The fire road running along the border of the 96.26 acres being sold and the 113.15 acre adjoining is the property line and a shared road that either property can use to access the back wooded portions of both properties. This fire road does not go through property but along the border. Refer to survey and deed in bidder pack for complete understanding of Right of Way and Fire Road.

Preview - Wednesday December 8th @ 4 PM

Terms - 10% Buyer's Premium will be added to final high bid to arrive at contract price. Earnest Money Deposit of \$10,000 per lot required day of sale. Close in 45 days. Subject to seller confirmation. Property sold as is, where is with any and all faults. Buyer is expected to complete their own due diligence. Auction starts ending at 4 PM on December 16th, 2021. Please note that during the last two minutes of bidding, if a new bid is placed, the clock is automatically extended an additional two minutes. Download Bidder Information Pack for complete terms and conditions, purchase contract and maps at VaAuctionPro.com

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OPINION

Researchers working to help Antarctic fishes adapt to warming Southern Ocean

At first glance, Antarctica seems inhospitable. Known for howling gales and extremely cold temperatures, the continent is blanketed with a mile-thick ice shelf. Occasional elephant seals and seabirds fleck the glacial shorelines.

Yet dipping below the waves, the Southern Ocean teems with biodiversity: vibrant swaths of sea ice algae and cyanobacteria, swarming krill and crustaceans, bristling kelp forests, gigantic polar sea spiders and sponges, whale pods, and abundant Antarctic fish fauna.

These fishes play a vital role in the Southern Ocean's food web of 9,000 known marine species, yet their subzero haven may be at risk. A 2021 climate analysis posited that by 2050 some areas of the Antarctic continental shelf will be at least 1 degree Celsius warmer.

Researchers from Virginia Tech's Fralin Biomedical Research Institute at VTC have published a new study in PLOS ONE describing how two species of Antarctic fish – one with hemoglobin in its blood cells and one without – respond to acute thermal stress.

The research team, directed by Virginia Tech Vice President for Health Sciences and Technology Michael Friedlander, observed that both species responded to progressive warming with an elaborate array of behavioral maneuvers, including fanfanning and splaying their fins, breathing at the surface, startle-like behavior, and transient bouts of alternating movement and rest.

"Remarkably, our team found that Antarctic fishes compensate for increasing metabolic demands by enhancing respiration through species-specific locomotor and respiratory responses, demonstrating resilience to environmental change and possibly to global warming," said Friedlander.

Iskander Ismailov, the study's first author and a research assistant professor in Friedlander's laboratory during the study, said "Behavioral manifestations that we've described show that these fishes have powerful physiological capacities to survive environmental changes."

Through millions of years of isolation from the rest of the world – corralled by the Antarctic Circumpolar

Current – Southern Ocean fish species have become well adapted to their frosty ecosystem.

Blackfin icefish, one of the two species studied by the team, have unique opalescent blood. These fish are among the few known vertebrates lacking hemoglobin, a molecule in red blood cells that efficiently carries oxygen from the lungs of land-dwelling vertebrates, or from the gills of aquatic vertebrates, throughout tissues in the body. Instead, blackfin icefish transport oxygen dissolved in blood plasma, harboring roughly 10% of the oxygen carrying capacity of hemoglobin.

Oxygen is more soluble in cold water, allowing white-blooded icefish to thrive in the Southern Ocean. As water temperature rises, however, these species experience increased

metabolic demand, potentially making white-blooded fish more vulnerable to global warming. To test this hypothesis, the team examined five specimens of white-blooded blackfin icefish and five red-blooded black rockcod, *Notothenia coriiceps*, in a climate-controlled shoreline laboratory that circulated, and progressively warmed, saltwater straight from the Southern Ocean.

The fishes acclimated to the lab conditions, before being transferred to the experimental tank, where water temperature rose from -1.8 degrees Celsius to 13 degrees, at a rate of 3 degrees per hour. The researchers captured extensive video recordings, allowing them to examine and quantify the fishes' motility, breathing rate, maneuvers in the tank, and fin movements.

As the water temperature rose, the white-blooded icefish displayed intensive pectoral fin fanning – a behavior previously observed in icefish during egg guarding – that the researchers suggest may help facilitate respiration. By contrast, the red-blooded fish employed complex maneuvers, including pectoral fin fanning and splaying, followed by startle-like C-turns, which may augment gill ventilation, according to Ismailov.

Preparation for the expedition began in early 2014. The research team designed, custom-built, and shipped laboratory equipment to Palmer Station in Antarctica before living there for three months in 2015. The journey included a flight to Punta Arenas, Chile, then crossing the Drake Passage by boat during the austral fall.

Ismailov was the first to arrive, setting up experimental rigs. Six weeks later, he was joined by Jordan Scharping, then a second-year VTCSOM student conducting research in Friedlander's lab. The pair worked in overlapping 12-hour shifts running experiments in the laboratory at near-freezing temperatures.

"One stormy night while we were fishing, a two-story wave overtook the stern, drenching me from head to toe in ice-cold seawater – the captain of the boat stopped the fishing after that," Ismailov recalled. "As a graduate of medical school, I never could have imagined that my career would lead me to Antarctica to study fish, but this research project has become one of the most extraordinary and memorable in my life."



PHOTO BY JORDAN SCHARPING

Researchers from Virginia Tech's Fralin Biomedical Research Institute at VTC recently published a new study describing how two species of Antarctic fish - one with hemoglobin in its blood and one without - respond to warming water temperatures. Iskander Ismailov, the study's first author, lived at Antarctica's Palmer Station for three months.

News Messenger

Established 1869

(540) 389-9355

P.O. Box 1125 • Salem, VA 24153

USPS 016-490 Online: www.ourvalley.org

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The News Messenger (USPS 016-490) is published twice a week for \$44 a year in Montgomery County, \$53 elsewhere in Virginia, and \$57 out of state by Virginia Media Inc., P.O. Box 429, Lewisburg, WV 24901. Periodical postage paid at Christiansburg, VA. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to NEWS MESSENGER 1633 W. Main St., Salem, VA 24153.

Virginia gas prices continue to fall

Virginia gas prices fell 2.9 cents per gallon in the past week, averaging \$3.24/g as of Monday, Nov. 29, according to GasBuddy's daily survey of 4,081 stations in Virginia.

Gas stations in Virginia are five cents per gallon lower than a month ago but are still \$1.17/g higher than a

year ago. According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Virginia was priced at \$2.89/g Monday while the most expensive was \$3.89/g, a difference of 100.0 cents per gallon.

The national average price of gasoline fell 3.4 cents per gallon last week, averaging \$3.37/g Monday, Nov. 29. The national average is down 1.4 cents per gallon from a month ago but is still \$1.26/g higher than it was a year ago.

"Gas price declines are slowly picking up momentum. With oil's recent fall

and the jury out on a new COVID variant, Omicron, we could be in store for lower prices based on many countries turning back to travel restrictions, limiting oil demand, and potentially accelerating the drop in gas prices," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis for GasBuddy.

"There remains a very high level of uncertainty ahead of us as OPEC has delayed its meetings to await more market movements and information on Omicron," said De Haan. "But so far, Americans can expect the new variant to push gas prices even lower.

Beyond the next few weeks, it remains nearly impossible to predict where oil and gas prices will head, though turbulence is guaranteed."

GasBuddy is the authoritative voice for gas prices and the only source for station-level data spanning nearly two decades. GasBuddy's survey updates 288 times every day from the most diverse list of sources covering nearly 150,000 stations nationwide, the most comprehensive and up-to-date in the country. GasBuddy data are accessible at <http://prices.GasBuddy.com>.

Rotenizer

from page 1

Virginia State University as an extension agent in community development with specialization in historic preservation and tourism development in partnership with the New River Gorge Regional Development Authority, serving Raleigh County and the City of Beckley. He served as the first Director of Tourism for both the Carroll County Office of Tourism and the Martinsville-Henry County Economic Development Corporation.

In addition to tourism, Rotenizer has a rich background in community development and historic preservation, including ethnography and archaeology. From 2009-2013, he served as the site manager for the Grave Creek Mound Archaeological Complex, a historic site, museum, and collections management facility under the auspices of the West Virginia Division of Culture and History. Rotenizer served as an AmeriCorps VISTA with the Carroll County Office of Economic and Educational Development and served as a Preserve WV AmeriCorps supervisor through the National Coal Heritage Area and the Preservation Alliance of West Virginia.

The new regional tourism director is no stranger to Montgomery County. Earlier in his career, Rotenizer served as the Director of Environmental Conservation, assisting with the development and launch of the annual Broom' & Bloomin' and Keep the New Riv-

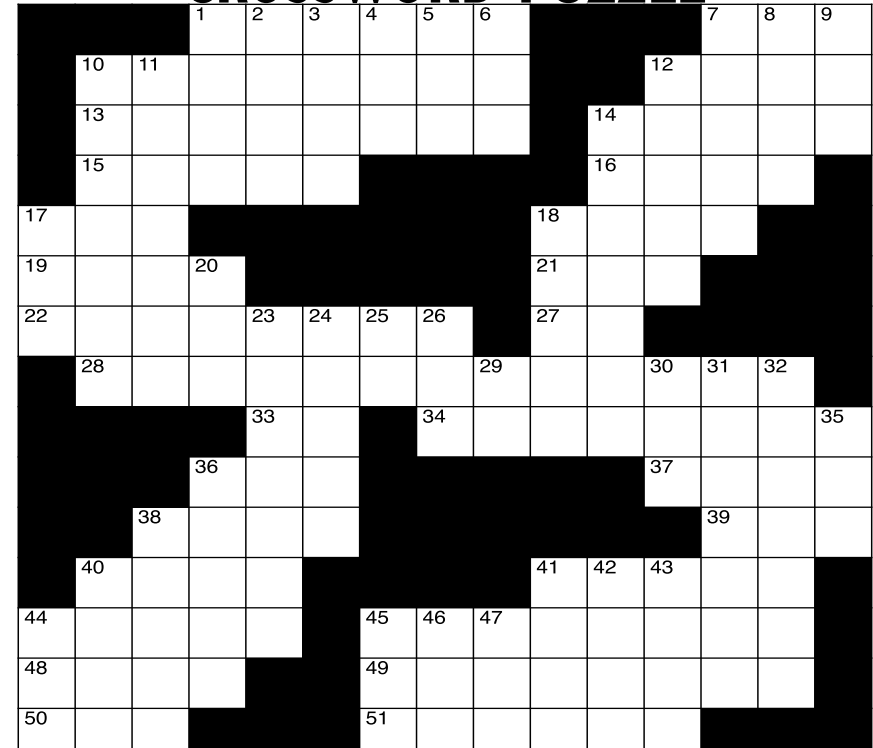
er New Clean environmental campaigns, as well as the development of a county recycling program that included glass, aluminum, and used motor oil. He promoted Operation Waste Watch, a K-12 environmental curriculum and was sponsor of the Riner Archaeology and Ecology Club.

Rotenizer is a board member of the West Piedmont Planning District Commission, the Blue Ridge Parkway Association, the Virginia Association of Destination Marketing Organizations, the Crooked Road: Virginia's Heritage Music Trail, and Habitat for Humanity of Franklin County.

Previously, he was board member of the Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation, the Blue Ridge Travel Association, 'Round the Mountain: Southwest Virginia's Artisan Network, the Carroll County Historical Society, the New River Historical Society and Archeological Society of Virginia, and was a charter board member of the Montgomery Museum and Lewis Miller Regional Art Center and the New River Valley Preservation League.

Rotenizer is a graduate of Radford University with a bachelor's degree in general studies with a concentration in Appalachian heritage resources. He has completed coursework in anthropology and Appalachian studies and general studies from New River Community College. He is also a graduate of the Marketing College of the Southeast Tourism Society.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



- CLUES ACROSS**
1. Topsides
 7. Sino-Soviet block (abbr.)
 10. A Sultan's court
 12. Maine city
 13. Largest living land animal
 14. Appetizer
 15. Encounters
 16. Leader
 17. The source of bacon
 18. Nuclear near reach weapon (abbr.)
 19. Celery (Spanish)
 21. Pie ___ mode
 22. Eye disease
 27. Hello (slang)
 28. Those in their 80s
 33. Law enforcement agency (abbr.)

34. Business organizations
36. Mimic
37. For indicating speed of rotation (abbr.)
38. Feeling
39. Visual way to interact with computers (abbr.)
40. "Let It Snow!" songwriter
41. Essential oil used as perfume
44. Norwegian composer
45. Coast
48. ___ lang syne, good old days
49. Gland behind the stomach
50. Tooth caregiver
51. King of Camelot

- CLUES DOWN**
1. N. American indigenous people
 2. Fascinated by
 3. Root of out
 4. Patti Hearst's captors
 5. Atomic #50
 6. Habitual drunkard
 7. Arabic for "peace"
 8. Trickery
 9. One's physique (slang)
 10. Not quite there
 11. Wistfully mournful
 12. Popular dance
 14. Cut of meat
 17. A way to stand
 18. "Gunga Din" screenwriter
 20. 10th month of the year (abbr.)
 23. A way of jumping

24. Utah town
25. Of I
26. Actress de Armas
29. Silver
30. Play a role
31. ___ Falls
32. Attaches to
35. Japanese title
36. Expressed pleasure
38. Buckets
40. Dirt
41. Hypnotists' group (abbr.)
42. Restaurant drive-___
43. Digs up
44. He voices "Olaf"
45. Relaxing place
46. Body part
47. Pesky house critter

RUC biomedical science students, faculty and staff participate in wastewater epidemiology study

This fall, faculty, staff and students in the Radford University Carilion (RUC) biomedical science program have been participating in a study that compares methods for the detection of SARS-CoV-2 virus in wastewater.

The SARS-CoV-2 virus is the causative virus of COVID-19.

The study, in the Roanoke and Salem areas, is a collaboration with the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), Western Virginia Water Authority (WVWA) and Carilion Clinic's Basic Sciences Research Lab, with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

"What we're doing in this study is wastewater-based epidemiology, or WBE," said Sara Reed Houser, assistant professor of biology at RUC and lead faculty member on the study. "Broadly, that means we are using results from the analysis of sewage for public health surveillance."

Houser explained that WBE is used to monitor environmental pollutants, track usage of pharmaceuticals and substances of abuse and determine the prevalence of infectious diseases, including bacterial and viral infections as well as trending antimicrobial resistance.

Several academic centers and metropolitan areas across the U.S. and other countries have been

using similar data to predict trends in COVID infections in the population. This helps healthcare providers and public health agencies prepare for outbreaks of pandemics and other mass health crises.

"Considering the fact that many clinical cases progress without symptoms, are not tested and are therefore not reflected in case data, information generated from WBE may give a more accurate description of true case numbers in the population and any trends," said Houser. "Because virus is shed in feces before a person becomes symptomatic, community infection can be detected a couple of weeks before case numbers rise."

The wastewater, Houser explained, is collected pretty much the way you would imagine.

"We open a manhole, drop in a sterile collection bucket by rope and collect about 500 milliliters of sewage coming from homes, businesses and healthcare facilities," she said. "We then transfer this liquid to sterile bottles to be stored at -80 degrees Celsius."

Before freezing, the RUC laboratory team, including Academic Lab Manager Susan Tolliver, Lab Assistant Gregory Steeves and biomedical science students like Anna Lewis, measure factors such as sample temperature, total dissolved solids and pH. The samples are

then transferred to the analytical lab in order to quantify viral load. These tests are all performed in the labs at RUC and Carilion.

This fall, some samples have begun to be processed in the biomedical science research lab on the sixth floor of Carilion Roanoke Community Hospital, home to RUC.

Preliminary results have reflected nationwide trends. Virus has been found in all locations collected and levels have fluctuated with case numbers.

"We have found that community caseload numbers are about two weeks behind what we see from the wastewater," said Houser. "Interestingly, when we looked at our data locally in early 2021, we found significant spikes of virus in the samples after both Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays."

All of the data collected is reported back to the VDH for local public health surveillance and uploading to the National Wastewater Surveillance System (NWSS). Later, this type of data may be used to determine and predict case "hot spots," measure vaccine impact and help detect the appearance of variants.

The collection of wastewater also allows the CDC to determine the accuracy and efficiency of new modified instrumentation compared to that seen in traditional methodology.

The biomedical science program's participation in the study came from a well-established partnership in teaching and research with the WVWA. Through that relationship, the program was introduced to the local health department's wastewater division.

Last year, the VDH and a research faculty member from the University of Virginia approached Tolliver and Houser about collaborating on a study that would measure SARS-CoV-2 levels in wastewater samples from areas in the Roanoke Valley. They began collecting samples from five to seven various locations.

Since then, RUC has been collecting and processing samples weekly, providing initial analysis and sending the samples on to UVa to be analyzed for the presence of SARS-CoV-2.

Students from Virginia Tech have also accompanied the collection groups to use in a separate study to determine opiate concentrations in wastewater.

"Everyone involved has participated with the intent of serving the community and providing research and teaching avenues," Tolliver said. "For our biomedical science students, the study provides the opportunity to perform valuable scientific research that is particularly pertinent to current events."

Houser said the study will also increase the profile of RUC and Carilion in the community and beyond, showing how both institutions are contributing to improving and maintaining the good health of our families, friends and neighbors



RADFORD UNIVERSITY PHOTOS
RUC Biomedical Science student Anna Lewis collecting samples for the wastewater epidemiology study.

across Southwest Virginia.

Mark Lambert
Radford University

OBITUARIES

Robbins, Howard Leroy

Howard Leroy Robbins, 68, of McCoy, passed away on Friday, Nov. 26, 2021, at his home.

He was born in New York on March 2, 1953, to the late Leroy Wilkey and Edythe Weaver Robbins.

Howard grew up in the Adirondack Mountains where he excelled in downhill skiing and whitewater canoeing. He was a member of Community Christian Church, McCoy, and cherished his days at Blue Ridge Christian Camp and all the campers and staff. Howard was a master carpenter by trade.

He is survived by his wife, Patricia Hicks; daughters Tara Rush, Sammy



Robbins, and Izzy Robbins; sons Ehron Hicks and his wife, Melissa Adams Hicks; and Braden Rush and Megan Enzina; a grandchild, Logan Hicks; sisters and brothers-in-law, Marion and Tom Bastian and Meg and Mike Town; a niece, Haley; a nephew, Ian; and a dear friend, Bobby Roop.

A funeral service will be held today, Wednesday, Dec. 1, 2021, at 2 p.m. at Community Christian Church with Mr. Chris Brando officiating. The family will receive friends from 1 to 2 p.m. prior to the service at the church. Arrangements by McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg.

Russell, Frances Hutcheson

Frances Hutcheson Russell, 90, of Blacksburg, passed away peacefully on Nov. 22, 2021. Frances was the oldest of the three children of Mac and Eleanor McEver and was born in the heart of downtown Blacksburg in 1931.

She was a devoted daughter and sister, taking care of her parents and younger brother Buddy as they aged. She graduated from Westhampton College and returned to Blacksburg to teach English (She was a lifelong grammarian.) where she met and married Thomas B. Hutcheson, Jr. They began their life together in Raleigh where Tom earned his Ph.D., then moved to Lexington, Kentucky, where their three children were born.

Returning to Blacksburg in 1964, Frances was a dedicated servant not only of her family but of her community. She loved history and served as a docent at historic Smithfield Plantation, helped organize the Smithfield Foundation, and served on the Board of Directors of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA).

Over the years she was a Girl Scout leader, a Vacation Bible School director, and chair of the Sunday School at Blacksburg Presbyterian Church, which she joined as a child and attended her whole life. She was a Rotarian, a Paul Harris Fellow, and a Kentucky Colonel.

After Tom's death, she married Dr. George E. "Buddy" Russell and spent the remaining years of her life with him, celebrating their 35th anniversary just a week before her death. She was a tremendous help to her husband in his efforts to involve the alumni of Virginia Tech in their alma mater. Together they



traveled the country and the world, but her favorite times were spent with her family, especially at Claytor Lake. She found great peace gazing over the water there and swimming in it. She had her father's smile and spread it to others who were blessed to be in her presence. She taught her children to love God and to spread his light on Earth. Hers was a life well-lived.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Herbert M. "Mac" McEver and Eleanor S. McEver; brothers Buddy and Bill McEver; and her first husband, Thomas B. Hutcheson, Jr. She is survived by her husband, George E. "Buddy" Russell; a sister-in-law Vicki McEver; children Elizabeth Domico, Tom Hutcheson (Beth), Joel Hutcheson (Kelly), Mike Russell (Chevella), Cindy Mason (Chip), and Jeff Russell; grandchildren Patrick Domico (Lucy), Adam Domico (Margot), Tommy Hutcheson (Paige), Henry Hutcheson, Mac Hutcheson, John Hutcheson, Eleanor Hutcheson, Thomas Hutcheson, Emma Van Stone, Allie Van Stone, Katie Russell, Holly Mason, and Christopher Mason; and a nephew Mark McEver (Brenda).

Interment of her ashes will take place on April 9, 2022, at 10 a.m. at Westview Cemetery followed by a celebration of her life and reception at Blacksburg Presbyterian Church at 11 a.m.

In lieu of flowers, please make donations to the Blacksburg Presbyterian Church (blacksburgpres.org) or The Smithfield-Preston Foundation (historicsmithfield.org) Arrangements By McCoy Funeral Home, Blacksburg.

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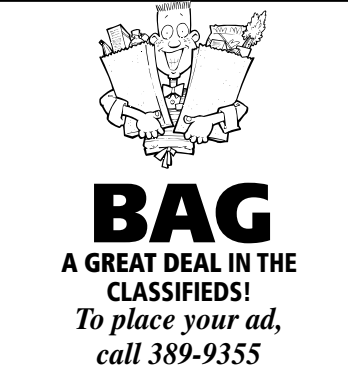


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MONTGOMERY SPORTS

Javonte Green's road from Radford to the NBA to a retired jersey

Marty Gordon
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

Sunday afternoon, Javonte Green's Radford University jersey was retired during a special ceremony at halftime of the school's men's basketball game with Eastern Kentucky.

Green came to Radford University in 2011 as a graduate of Brunswick High School in Petersburg, Va., with high hopes of making a name for himself on the basketball court. Four years later, he ranked and still does rank first in program history for career games played (133) and career steals (243) and second in program history for career points (1,911), field goals made (701), and career rebounds (1,064).

He was an All-Big South Conference selection all four years he was at Radford and was the 2-14-15 Big South Defensive Player of the Year.

Since leaving Radford, Green has played overseas, in the NBA's G-League, and in the National Basketball Association with the Boston Celtics and presently with the Chicago Bulls.

Green called his journey to the big show almost surreal. "I just tried to be the best player I could be. Everybody's journey is different, and I appreciate mine," he said.

During his time at Radford, Green guided the Highlanders to back-to-back postseason berths and 22-win seasons and ended his college career averaging 14.4 points and eight rebounds per game.

In 2019, Green became the first player in program history to sign a contract with an NBA organization when he inked a two-year deal with the Celtics. During the 2020-21 season, he was traded to the Bulls, re-signed with them in the summer of 2021, and has become a fan favorite in the Windy City with his

energy, his defense, and his electrifying slam dunks.

His advice to others when looking at anything both on the basketball and off is simple: "Don't settle. If you fail, then at least you tried."

So far this season with the Bulls, Green has appeared in 19 games with eight starts. He is averaging 5.5 points, 4.2 rebounds, and nearly a steal per game while shooting 51.3% from the field.

His Radford jersey now hangs from the rafters at the Dedmon Center with two previous retirees; guard Doug Day, Radford's all-time leading scorer for men's basketball with 2,027 career points, and Stephanie Howard, who from 1985-89, set 27 RU school records. She holds the university's all-time scoring record with 2,146 points along with the Big South single-game scoring record of 42 points, set against Charleston Southern in 1987. Howard earned All-



PHOTO BY MARTY GORDON

Former Radford University and current Chicago Bulls basketball player Javonte Green (center) had his jersey retired Sunday afternoon at halftime of the RU/Eastern Kentucky ball game. Pictured with Green, from left, are Acting RU President Carolyn Ringer Lepre and Athletic Director Robert Lineburg.

America honors four consecutive seasons and was the first RU athlete, male or female, to have her jersey number retired.

During the jersey retirement ceremony, Green presented RU Athletic

Director Robert Lineburg and former RU coach Mike Jones with framed Chicago Bulls jerseys.

District, region honors for Auburn's Martin, Millirons

Marty Gordon
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

Just a week after Auburn won a third straight state volleyball title, the team's coach, Sherry Millirons, and junior leader Allyson Martin were honored as the Mt. Empire District and Region 1C coach and player of the year.

The school also placed five players including Martin on the district's first-team in announcements made recently,

which included all five Montgomery County and Radford schools.

Joining Martin on the first-team all-MED were Anna McGuire, Madeline Lavergne, Avery Zuckerwar, and Stacy Lewis in the libero spot. Madison Ketterer was named to the second-team.

Eastern Montgomery placed four players, Lilly Underwood, Laken Smith, Morgan Bahnken, and Logan Boone, on the Pioneer District first team.

Anna Ryan and Abigail Felty were second-teamers. Skyann Holloway was named to the honorable mention squad.

Auburn's Martin headed up the Region 1C first-team along with McGuire, Lavergne, Zuckerwar, and Lewis.

Eastern Montgomery's Morgan Bahnken, Boone, Smith and Underwood were named to the Region 1C second-team.

Radford High School's Laney Cline was named to the Three-Rivers first-team while

Hollybrook Cline and Autumn Howard were second-teamers. Cline was also named to the Region 2C first-team.

Christiansburg and Blacksburg high schools placed two players on the All-River Ridge District first-team. Baylee Reasor of CHS was joined by Rylee Sloss of BHS. Each school placed two players on the district's second-team (Addison Reasor and Braelynn Williams from Christiansburg, and Ella Poff and Gabby Brooks from

Blacksburg).

Christiansburg's Danielle Draper was named to the Region 3D first-team while Baylee Reasor was on the second-team.

In Region 4D, Blacksburg's Rylee Sloss was joined by Gabby Brooks and Peyton Seeley on the first-team. Blacksburg's coach, Nicole Taylor, was named 4D coach of the year. Blacksburg's Anna Hanowski made the Region 4D second-team.

Blacksburg High outfielder commits to Concord

Marty Gordon
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Blacksburg High School outfielder Bryce Ferguson has committed to play baseball at Concord University.

In an announcement this weekend, he said he chose Concord because the school's program has great facilities and is a short distance from his hometown.

He anticipates playing outfield at Concord. This past spring, Ferguson led Blacksburg in RBI's and had a .361 batting aver-

age. His long-term goal is to be the fourth player ever drafted from Concord by Major League Baseball.

Ferguson's signing continues a connection with as many as six other players from the New River Valley at Concord. Christiansburg grads MJ Hunter and Ty Dunkleman and former Auburn outfielder Keith Reed are already on campus. Christiansburg's Dawson Gragg and Nate Hall also recently committed to the Athens, W.Va., school.

Concord University is

a public university with a current enrollment of 1,875, is an NCAA Division II school in athletics, and is a member of the Mountain East Conference.

This past year, the Concord University baseball team lost the Mountain East Conference Championship series to West Virginia State and finished the season at 18-23.

Ferguson hopes to major in something related to business and sports. His father, Brian, is the offensive coordinator for the Concord football team.

Four Highlanders earn Big South men's soccer conference awards

A league-wide vote by the head coach of each program in the conference has tabbed four Radford University Highlanders for all-conference honors. Joseba Incera and Yoshiya Okawa were named to the All-Big South Second Team, Octavio Ocampo was an Honorable Mention pick, and Okawa was honored again for the All-Freshman team. Dondre' Robinson was also named to the Big South All-Academic Team.

While the season began with a battle for the starting goalkeeper position, Incera quickly staked his claim and put together a string of impressive performances. The junior from Santurtzi, Spain, led the entire nation with 5.92 saves per game, finishing the year with 71 total saves across 12 starts. He played every single minute in those 12 appearances, putting himself in the Big South top-10 for goals-against average, save percentage, and shutouts.

Okawa burst onto the scene, seemingly out of nowhere. From Tokyo, Japan, he joined the team a bit late but immediately contributed with his long-range strikes. He tallied six goals and one assist for 13 points across 16 games that included 13 starts. Fifteen

of his 27 shot attempts landed on frame, giving him a .556 shots-on-goal percentage.

A veteran leader whom head coach Chris Barrett and company knew they could rely on entering the year, Ocampo was forced to combat injuries all season that limited him to just seven starts. Nevertheless, the native of Guadalajara, Mexico, played 518 minutes and scored a pair of goals, most notably his game-winner against Concord in the season opener. He has earned postseason award honors every year of his collegiate career.

Robinson has now been named to the conference's All-Academic team in back-to-back years. The senior forward has excelled in the classroom, earning a 3.59 grade point average as a management major. He also started 10 games on the pitch, scoring two goals.

The Highlanders' season came all the way down to the regular season finale, which required either a win or a tie to secure a bid to the Big South Tournament. A pair of second-half goals by the Lancers concluded Radford's season with a 5-11 overall record and a 3-5 record in conference action.



FILE PHOTO

Bryce Ferguson produced a .361 batting average this past spring for Blacksburg High School.

Send community news and photos to communitynews@ourvalley.org

Gift ideas for sportsmen this year



A personalized maple cutting board is a perfect gift for your favorite person this Christmas from personalizationmall.com.



Everyone needs the gift of a sports bow tie from the Tied up Bow Ties store.



This sportsman thermometer from BougieBetties for \$10 won't give you the correct temperature outside, but it will provide a few laughs on a trip.

Marty Gordon

NRVsports@ourvalley.org

Finding a gift for your favorite sportsman or sportswoman is not as hard it seems. Here are some suggestions that should be high on your list with most of the gifts being found online.

- Jerky of the Month Club. Buy the gift of beef jerky at www.craftjerkyco.com for as little as \$18.
- Bacon of the month club. What's better than the Jerky of the Month Club? How about the Bacon of the Month Club? Check out www.zingermans.com. They will ship to the lucky recipient each month, just in time for weekend frying.
- A personalized BBQ cutting board. www.personalizationmall.com has a great idea with a cutting board that can say almost anything you would like the gift receiver to remember. This unique gift can be found for as little as \$45.
- Mt. Glo Tent Light. Illuminate your tent or campsite using patent-pending mtnGLO® Tent Light Technology. \$14.98 to \$29.95. Find this gift at www.bigagnes.com.
- Flashlight gloves. Fingerless LED flashlight gloves. These are hands-free flashlights that are great for fishing, repairs, camping, and/or hiking. \$14.99 on Amazon.
- Tickets to a Roanoke hockey game. The Roanoke Rail Yard Dawgs are a professional ice hockey team and members of the Southern Professional Hockey League. The Rail Yard Dawgs play their home games at Berglund Center. For more information, go to www.railyarddawgs.com.
- The Motor Mile driving experi-

ence in Radford. Drive the racecar by yourself, no instructor riding shotgun. All of your laps are hot laps and passing is allowed. The Rusty Wallace Racing Experience is the largest racing school in the country. Prices range from: Taste of Speed (5 Laps) \$81; Qualifier (10 Laps) \$150; Shootout (15 Laps) \$180; Start Your Engines (20 Laps) \$210; Green Flag (30 Laps) \$300; Checkered Flag (40 Laps) \$390; and Race Day (50 Laps) \$480. The driver can choose to have an instructor in the car, too.

- Sportsman Park Print. As little as \$19.95 on Etsy.com.
- Basketball bow tie. What is better than a special sportsman bow tie for men or women just under \$12 at the Tied up Bow Ties store.
- Sportsman team cup. TMW-CustomCreations offers specialized cups for several types of sports and activities for as little as \$20.
- Personalized bobblehead. Have you ever wondered what you or your favorite sports fan would look like with his or her own bobblehead? Pricing makes this an interesting choice from \$59 to \$79 at hibobbleheads.com
- Kobe Bryant abstract painting. The late Laker great remains a favorite for many fans. MagicArt21 has a way to remember him with a \$39 painting featuring Kobe quotes.
- Everything man buckets. Sometimes, it's simply hard to buy a gift for that special someone. Everything man buckets are designed to make the hobbies he or she already enjoys even more enjoyable. Everything is ready to be put to use, including the bucket. All items come assembled in the gift bucket, wrapped, with a bow (made of super useful rope), and

topped with a ready-to-use ratchet strap. \$45-\$69 means plenty to play with for the outdoors person. This can be found at www.everythingman.com.

- Sportsman thermometer. This might not give you the right temperature outside, but it will provide a laugh to start the adventure. BougieBetties has this unusual gift for \$10.
- Basketball court wall hanging. For \$90, Cool Corks.com has a personalized, full-color, cork bulletin board with artwork or photo images printed right onto the cork.
- Sports Number Necklace. For \$22.99, Moonlight Collections has custom-number necklaces for your favorite little or big athlete.
- Hunting images on wood. HintsLaserEngraving has the perfect way to take your hunting photo and place it on wood. Make lasting memories for \$44.99.
- Custom football player caricature. SfenksCaricature will take your sports photo and turn it into a memorable caricature for as little as \$20.
- Fisherman Christmas stocking. MarfysCrazyCreations can send you an outdoor person's dream: a special Christmas sock this year for as little as \$20.
- Personalized hatchet. Throwing-ax attractions are popping up everywhere including the New River Valley, and what could be better but to give the gift of a personalized ax? LaserMetalDesign will put the hatchet-thrower's name on his personal hatchet for \$22.99.
- Gun cylinder car coasters. SweetTDesignsTx has something everyone needs to fit into the drink holders of their favorite pickup or car for as little as \$10.



A Kobe Bryant abstract painting of quotes from the longtime Laker makes a great gift this year from Magicart21.

Hokies turn out for Thankful Three-Miler

As part of this season of giving, 158 Hokies participated in the second annual Thankful Three-Miler on Nov. 14 on the Buford Meredith Cross Country Course on the Virginia Tech campus.

Sponsored by Virginia Tech's Department of Recreational Sports, the run/walk is a new tradition that blends physical exercise, the expression of gratitude, and Ut Prosim (That I May Serve).

"Watching students, staff, community members, and even a few dogs come together in person for movement and reflection, that made me grateful," said Kelly McPherson, the event coordinator for Rec Sports. "Also, being witness to people completing their first-ever running event

and finding success. That makes me smile."

As part of the event, Rec Sports partnered with VT Engage to collect nonperishable food items for The Market, a resource designed to provide food assistance to students who have a hard time obtaining regular, healthy meals. More than 2,000 items were collected and delivered in truckloads to the Market, an increase from the 300 items donated in last year's inaugural event.

"The Thankful Three Miler was a great event because it gave me something to look forward to during a stressful time of the year," said participant and Student Affairs employee Mary Desmond. "It allowed me to focus on my well-being, giving me an excellent opportu-

nity to get in tune with my body and to enjoy the beautiful Blacksburg weather while being supported by my loved ones."

In the event's second iteration, many elements felt back to "normal" compared to the inaugural run, which required many COVID-19 mitigation strategies such as staggered start times and a registration cap.

"It felt amazing to run with people again," said Desmond. "I had really missed that sense of belonging that you get when you run in a common route with others; it's like a little pilgrimage."

To enhance the feelings of gratitude, motivational signs were placed along the route along with volunteers who cheered for participants along the

way.

"I am always grateful for the generosity of Coach Dave Cianelli for allowing us to use the cross-country course for this event," said McPherson. "It is a gorgeous venue that not a lot of people have been to, and it is a beautiful place for both movement and grate-

ful reflection. Also, the Corps of Cadets shows up in great numbers to volunteer on the course. The Thankful Three-Miler couldn't be successful without their humble dedication to serve."

--Will Trent, Virginia Tech

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PHOTO COURTESY OF VT

The Thankful Three-Miler on Nov. 14 drew 158 members of the Virginia Tech community to run or walk the Buford Meredith Cross Country Course on the university's Blacksburg campus.

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