



Saturday, December 4, 2021

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VT names Brent Pry, former grad assistant under Frank Beamer, new head football coach

Virginia Tech has its new football coach, Penn State defensive coordinator Brent Pry.

The announcement came in the midst of major coaching changes throughout the country's college ranks.

The new coach is no stranger to Blacksburg. He served as a graduate assistant under Frank Beamer from 1995-97.

He was formally introduced to the media on Thursday in the fifth-floor dining area of Lane Stadium.

"On behalf of Amy and our family, we are extremely grateful to Presi-

dent Sands and Whit for extending us this opportunity at Virginia Tech," Pry said. "Working for Coach Beamer and Coach Foster as a graduate assistant in the 1990s, I was privileged to have been a part of this program as the Hokies established themselves as a national power, consistently proving they could beat anyone in the nation.

"Even after I departed Blacksburg, I always continued to appreciate Virginia Tech, its great players, its championship teams, and its wonderful traditions from afar," the new head coach said. "The resources, facilities, the university's backing of athletics, and the

phenomenal fan support that Virginia Tech enjoys made this a very desirable situation. But just as importantly, the opportunity to raise our children in a community like Blacksburg also has great appeal. We can't wait to meet the team, the support staff, and Hokie Nation. We will be prepared to hit the ground running in order to attract the type of student-athletes to Virginia Tech who can help us achieve sustained success. Go Hokies!"

Pry indicated that J.C. Price will remain on his staff as associate head

See **VT Coach**, page 4



PHOTO COURTESY OF VT ATHLETICS

Virginia Tech's new head football coach is Brent Pry, the defensive coordinator at Penn State University.

Radford University nursing programs ranked as best in Virginia by nursingprocess.org

The Radford University Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) programs have been ranked as the best BSN programs in the state of Virginia by nursingprocess.org.

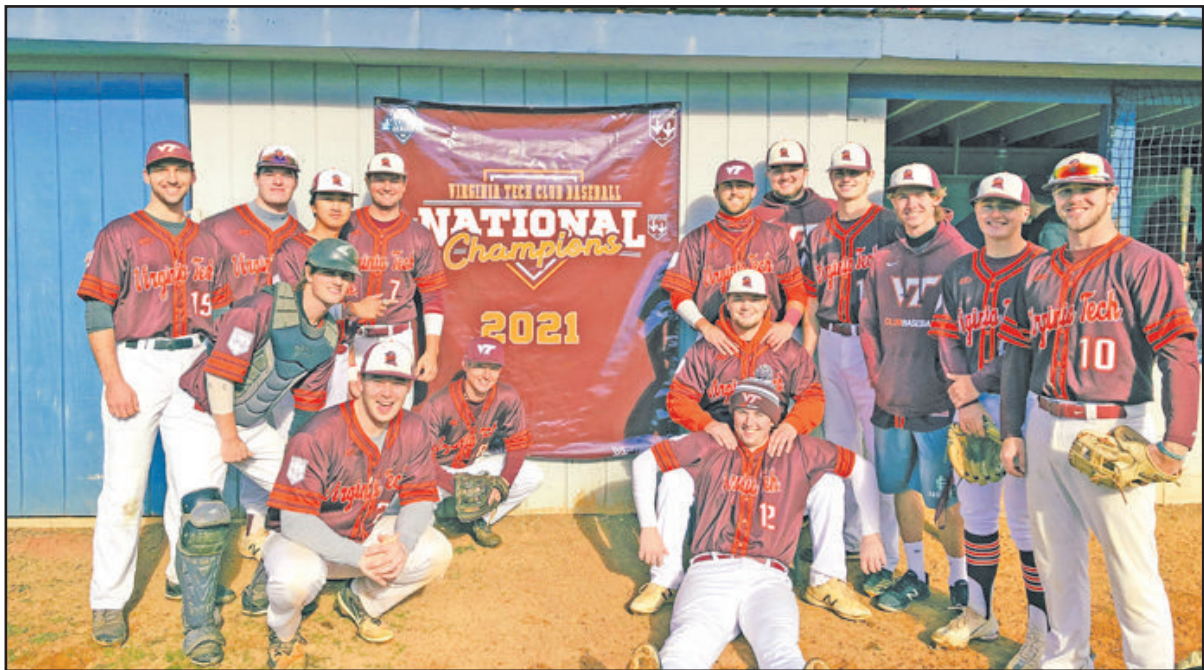
To determine its rankings, nursingprocess.org gathered a list of all nursing schools offering BSN programs in every state and then ranked them based on the following three factors: the average National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX-RN) first-time pass rates of the most recent five years (40% of overall score); the programs' academic quality: enrollment, graduation and retention rates (30% of overall score); and the nursingprocess.org editorial staff ratings and nursing school reputation (30% of overall score).

The data required for the rankings were gathered from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), state board of nursing websites, U.S. News & World Report, Niche,

Grad Reports, Rate My Professors, and the official school websites.

The ranking information on nursingprocess.org's website highlights that U.S. News & World Report cited Radford's BSN programs as some of the best in the country.

"This ranking is a testament to our school of nursing faculty and staff's commitment to quality education and focus on individual students," said Johnnie Sue Wijewardane, dean of the Radford University School of Nursing. "Our students interact daily with committed faculty who demonstrate a passion for educating nurses and for mentoring nursing students and graduates as they transition into practice and beyond," said Wijewardane. "These meaningful interactions with faculty and our exceptional clinical partners provide our students with a first-class nursing education experience."



The Virginia Tech Club Baseball team smiles with its 2021 national champions banner. Photo courtesy of Bill Old.

VT club baseball team celebrates national championship title

The Virginia Tech club baseball team recently celebrated its first-ever national championship by unveiling its national champions banner in a pre-game ceremony at the Old Blacksburg High School.

Before the team members warmed up in the early morning for their game against Coastal Carolina, they gathered with family, friends, and members of the Hokie community for the celebration. They reflected on the euphoric moment when the team won the National Club Baseball As-

sociation's World Series in Pittsburg, Kansas, defeating Iowa State 6-0 behind pitcher Braden Huebsch's perfect game. Huebsch and Skylar Petry were named Co-MVPs of the tournament.

T-shirts were passed around to the first 50 students in attendance from a table where the team's three-tier trophy stood, a display of the club's teamwork and dedication over the year. Guests waited to watch the club baseball team members unveil their 2021 national champions banner and reminisce on the moments that led them here.

"To have the support of family and friends, it's everything," said previous club baseball president and Virginia Tech graduate student Jonathan Spaulding. "We're a good ball club filled with great baseball players. It means a lot to the guys that play on this team. Whether those people who support us know it or not, it really validates all the hard work we've done."

Sport club teams represent Virginia Tech and play against other colleges

See **Championship**, page 4



The halls of The Inn at Virginia Tech and Skelton Conference Center are decked out for the annual Fashions for Evergreens decorated tree contest. Visitors can vote for their favorites until Dec. 12.

Foyer of The Inn at Virginia Tech decked out for annual decorated tree contest

The Inn at Virginia Tech and Skelton Conference Center is getting into the holiday spirit with the return of the popular Fashions for Evergreens decorated tree contest.

Now in its 16th year, the annual competition features themed trees decorated by 15 local businesses and organizations. Public viewing and voting will continue through Sunday, Dec. 12.

Visitors can vote in person by using a QR code at the inn or online on the inn's Facebook page. The winning trees will be announced at an awards ceremony on Wednesday, Dec. 15.

Trees will remain on display through

Jan. 2.

"Each year, our foyer's creatively designed trees present awe-inspiring decorating ideas in an extraordinary display. After you take in all of the dazzling trees, be sure to cast a vote for your favorite," said the inn's sales director, Teresa Hughes.

In addition, from 6 to 8 p.m. on Dec. 10 and 17, the Blacksburg High School Madrigals will sing carols at the inn.

The inn will be closed for seven days beginning Dec. 23 and will reopen on Dec. 30. This will allow for completion of property upgrades and system improvements.

Roanoke Symphony presents holiday pops spectacular at Moss Arts Center

The Roanoke Symphony Orchestra returns to the Moss Arts Center today, Saturday, Dec. 4, from 4 to 5 p.m. for everyone's favorite holiday music tradition, its "Holiday Pops Spectacular."

The orchestra will fill the theatre with the spirit of the holidays and the warmth of home with a merry musical program for

audiences of all ages.

The performance is presented in partnership with the New River Valley Friends of the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra.

Four levels of ticket prices are available: Category A \$75; Category B \$60; Category C \$40; and \$10 for students with ID's and youth 18 and under.



UPCOMING EVENTS

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 mupthe-

grove@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 p.m. 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 MountainTrotter 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.

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

The Virginia State Police are 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.

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



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- ★ **January 6:** U.S. Capitol Day

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PETS OF THE WEEK



Pearl--or Pearly Whirly--as her foster family calls her, is a sweet gal who enjoys cuddling with her humans on the couch, eating snacks, and chasing laser pointers. When she is comfortable and adjusted to her surroundings, Pearl enjoys giving and receiving affection. She would do best in a quiet home without small children since she startles easily. She also prefers being the only pet in the home.



PHOTO BY FIFTYLOVE PHOTOGRAPHY

Colby wants to have a happy fall, y'all, in a forever home. He is a friendly younger dog who likes other dogs and enjoys meeting new people. Colby will need some training to improve his doggie manners and to learn some basic commands.



PHOTO CREDIT: KRISTA TIMNEY

A Virginia Tech wildlife epidemiologist and conservation expert is warning hunters to be cautious in the wake of recent findings that indicate deer populations across the U.S. have been exposed to and infected with SARS-CoV-2.

VT wildlife epidemiologist warns of SARS-CoV-2 infections among deer populations

COVID-19 infections among deer populations risk wildlife conservation efforts, says VT wildlife epidemiologist and conservation expert Luis Escobar. He also warns deer hunters to take precaution while hunting what may be infected deer.

Escobar says that while the role of deer as a source of COVID-19 infections to humans is unclear, wildlife conservation efforts are at risk.

“We know that pathogens circulating in deer could reduce the interest of the people on deer-related activities, which in the end is detrimental for the conservation of many wildlife species,” says Escobar.

According to Escobar, recreational activities linked to deer, such as hunting, are a key element to generate revenue to support wildlife conservation efforts for many endangered species in many different regions of the country, also known as the North American model of wildlife conservation.

“We need more open, widespread, and proactive epidemiological surveillance in wildlife to better inform disease management. We generally have reactive control responses once outbreaks occur,” says Escobar. “Many pathogens circulate naturally in deer, but to understand the extent to which pathogens negatively impact deer populations, disease surveys need to be sustained and studied across multiple federal agencies.”

As a precaution, Escobar says that hunters should avoid handling or consuming deer that appear to be sick because some of the diseases affecting deer may also affect humans.

Luis Escobar is an assistant professor of disease ecology in the Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation and an affiliated faculty at the Center for Emerging, Zoonotic, and Arthropod-borne Pathogens and at the Global Change Center, both at Virginia Tech.

Product shortages pit consumers against each other, according to Virginia Tech expert

Electronics, furniture, appliances, turkeys, pies, Christmas trees, even champagne for New Year's Eve. It's all backordered and held up in the supply chain, or so we hear.

“Resource scarcity of any kind, including the products that consumers may want to buy, is shown to foster a ‘competitive mindset’ – prompting them to keep their own interests front and center,” says VT marketing professor Shilpa Madan.

“Simply put, research shows that such scarce deals can even result in consumer aggression,” Madan says. “This is because deals that limit product quantities inherently pit consumers

against each other and lead them to see others as competitive threats blocking their access to coveted goods.”

Madan offers advice to those trying not to panic-shop:

If these scarce products are meant to be gifts, the age-old wisdom of ordering gifts early still applies. If you cannot find your first choice, look for substitutes. Most consumer goods are made by multiple companies, and sites like Etsy and eBay can prove valuable in finding substitutes.

Another idea to avoid supply chain constraints is to buy domestically made, local products. US-based supply chains are running

better than global ones, and hence, local products could be more readily available than foreign-made ones.

If you are absolutely unable to get your hand on a coveted item, give the recipient a gift card for that company or retailer. They might have to wait a bit longer for that cherished item, but it's better than something they do not want or like. And anyway, research shows that half the fun is in anticipation.

Companies worldwide are working at various steps in the supply chain to resolve the backlogs and constraints, so it is unlikely that staple goods will be in short supply for long.



Gustavo Fring for Pexels
“Merely being reminded of product scarcity or being told that they must do their holiday shopping early due to supply chain related shortages makes consumers more likely to act in their own selfish interests,” according to Virginia Tech marketing professor and consumer behavior expert Shilpa Madan.

VT fall commencement set for Friday, Dec. 17

Virginia Tech's Class of 2021 will celebrate fall commencement on Friday, Dec. 17.

The undergraduate ceremony will be at 10:30 a.m., and the graduate school ceremony will take place at 2:30 p.m. Both ceremonies will be held at Cassell Coliseum, where masks are required.

Tickets are not currently required for commencement guests. Both ceremonies will be livestreamed, and graduates may use #HokieGrad to share their photos and be included in the ceremony.

More details are available at vt.edu/commencement.



Virginia Tech's Class of 2021 will celebrate fall commencement on Friday, Dec. 17, at Cassell Coliseum.

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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

COVID-19 update: Flu cases up in region; health officials eye new variant

Noelle Bissell, health director of the New River Health District, said during a meeting with news media Monday a new variant of the COVID-19 virus, the omicron variant, has been detected in other countries. So far, it hasn't made its way to the New River Valley, she said. Dr. Bissell said she suspects that omicron already is in the United States, but it hasn't been officially documented.

Dr. Bissell also told the media that the district has seen a bump in flu cases, in particular flu A,

which often is more severe and symptomatic, Bissell said. Specifically, the virus was spreading among college students just before the Thanksgiving holiday break. In some of these instances, people have been sicker with the flu than they were with COVID-19, Bissell said.

She told the media the district expects to see a rise in COVID-19 cases as a result of people gathering during the Thanksgiving holiday. Still, coupled with the news of the omicron variant, Bissell said she doesn't expect

that the region will have the same big surge in COVID-19 infections as occurred with the delta variant and before vaccines were available.

That's because "we have a substantial number of people who are vaccinated and who have gotten booster shots," she said. "Usually when these viruses do mutate, they're not more deadly. They tend to be more transmissible but less deadly."

Currently, the health district director said, coronavirus cases in the New River Health Dis-

trict have plateaued with about 200 cases a week for the district. Also, hospitalizations for patients with COVID-19 are down in the region.

With the spread of many seasonal respiratory illnesses, people should be tested for both COVID-19 and the flu if they experience symptoms, Dr. Bissell said.

"We are asking that people not assume that it is a cold or allergies," she said.

Right now, it's also important that people take steps to

mitigate the spread of many respiratory illnesses, such as the flu, COVID-19, and others, she said. That includes getting vaccinated for flu and COVID-19, washing hands frequently, avoiding crowded spaces, and wearing masks indoors in poorly ventilated spaces.

"We are asking everyone to do their part and slow the spread of all of these infections," Bissell said. "What works for COVID works for respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and flu as well."

Virginia is 2021's state with the fourth-best elder-abuse protections

To determine how well the states are doing in protecting the elderly from abuse, the personal finance website WalletHub compared the 50 states and the District of Columbia based on 16 key indicators of elder-abuse protection in three overall categories.

The rankings of the survey yielded placed Vir-

ginia as the state with the fourth-best elder-abuse protections.

WalletHub reports that by one estimate, elder abuse affects as much as 10% of the population older than 60, and many cases go unreported. Our elderly population is especially vulnerable during the COVID-19 pandemic, so it's especially

important to make sure they have adequate living conditions and don't get taken advantage of financially.

Fortunately, states recognize that elder abuse is a real and growing issue. But sadly, only some are fighting hard enough to stop it.

According to WalletHub, unless states take

action to prevent further abuse, the problem will grow as America becomes an increasingly aging nation. The U.S. Census Bureau expects the population aged 65 and older to nearly double from 43.1 million in 2012 to 85.7 million in 2050, much to the credit of aging Baby Boomers who began turning 65 in

2011. And by just 2030, one in five U.S. residents will be retirement age.

WalletHub's survey, released Wednesday, Dec. 1, ranked the following states as those with the most protection in place for the elderly: 1) Wisconsin 2) Massachusetts 3) Vermont 4) Virginia 5) West Virginia 6) Washington 7) Iowa 8)

Maine 9) Wyoming and 10) North Carolina.

At the other end, the survey ranked the following states as those with the least protection in place for the elderly: 42) New Mexico 43) Nebraska 44) Nevada 45) Tennessee 46) South Dakota 47) New Jersey 48) California 49) South Carolina 50) Montana and 51) Utah.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Re: City tree-lighting tonight kicks off holiday season; News Journal, Dec. 1, 2021

In the News Journals' article on the Christmas tree lighting event in Radford on Dec. 1, the

word "Christmas" is not to be found in the text of the article, the associated headline, or the caption of the picture.

The Christmas tree's history goes all the way back to Martin Luther. On one particu-

lar Christmas Eve after attending a midnight Christ Mass, he walked home through some evergreen trees. As he looked up through the trees to the heavens, he saw stars twinkling in the sky and thought

it was such a beautiful scene. Hence the tradition of decorating a tree with lights and other things during the Christmas season.

It's a Christmas tree.

Best regards,

Jessee Ring
Radford, Va.
540-250-7291

Editor's note: The name of the tree-lighting event was determined by the Radford Public Library, not the Radford News Journal.

News Messenger

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VT Coach

from page 1

coach/defensive coach. Price led the Hokies to a 29-24 victory over Virginia as interim head coach in Tech's 2021 regular season finale.

Pry worked with Price during his senior season as a player in 1995 when Tech finished the season with 10 consecutive wins, culminating with a 28-10 win in the Sugar Bowl over No.-9 Texas.

Pry, 51, is a 30-year coaching veteran. He has played an instrumental role in coaching top 10 defenses at Penn State, Vanderbilt, Georgia Southern, and Western Carolina. Since his promotion to defensive coordinator in 2016, the Nittany Lions have posted three seasons with 11 wins and four seasons with nine or more victories. He helped the Nittany Lions to the 2016 Big Ten Championship when they defeated No.-6 Wisconsin in that conference's cham-

pionship game.

His longtime association with current Penn State head coach James Franklin dates back to 1993-94 when Franklin was the quarterback for East Stroudsburg University and Pry coached outside linebackers and defensive backs.

Pry was a 2021 Broyles Award nominee for the top assistant coach in the country as the Nittany Lions ranked fourth nationally in Red Zone defense (66.7%), seventh in scoring defense (16.8 ppg), eighth in defensive pass efficiency (111.98), and held their opponents to 4.7 yards per play.

Under Pry's direction in 2020, Penn State ranked third in the Big Ten in total defense (328.8 ypg), good for 17th nationally; second in pass defense (198.6 ypg), second in tackles for loss (6.7 per game,) and fourth in rush defense (130.2 ypg).

Pry's defense helped lead Penn State to an 11-2 record in 2019, ranking eighth nationally in scoring defense (16.0 ppg). The Nittany Lions also led the nation in fewest yards per carry (2.6) and forced fumbles (22), while ranking fifth in rushing defense (95.0 ypg). The Penn State defense led the nation in sacks per game (3.62) and ranked fourth in tackles for loss (8.2) in 2018. His 2018 squad also ranked fifth in the county in yards per pass attempt (5.67), eighth in defensive

pass efficiency (106.1), and 11th in Red Zone scoring percentage (.750).

"Virginia Tech is getting a great coach and a wonderful fit for our football program in Brent Pry," Hall-of-Fame coach Frank Beamer said. "Not only is Brent exceptionally intelligent, he also possesses a great deal of football knowledge. Growing up as the son of a coach, he's been around the game all of his life. I'm confident that he'll do a tremendous job as head coach of the Hokies."

Pry's father, Jim, played collegiately at Marshall and began his own 40-year college coaching career at his alma mater in 1973-74. The elder Pry went on to enjoy a distinguished career that included stints at Illinois, Duke, Dartmouth, Akron, East Stroudsburg University, Buffalo, VMI, and Bethune-Cookman, as well as time as a high school head coach.

"It's been such a pleasure to watch Brent grow, mature, and excel at a very high level in the coaching profession," said former Tech defensive coordinator Bud Foster, who has served as a longtime mentor to Pry. "I'm so excited that he's earned this opportunity to lead our football program. The best coaches are the ones who are always striving to get better, who are open to new ideas, and who can put their players in the best

position to be successful. Brent embodies all of those qualities and so many others that it takes to be a leader. I'm so excited that he's coming back to Virginia Tech."

Pry served as co-defensive coordinator at Vanderbilt from 2011-13 prior to his arrival in State College, Pennsylvania. While at Georgia Southern in 2010, his defensive unit helped the Eagles to a win over No.-1 Appalachian State and an appearance in the NCAA Football Championship Subdivision semifinals. A member of the Memphis staff from 2007-09, Pry's defensive line corps helped the Tigers to back-to-back bowl appearances. He also coached at Louisiana-Lafayette (2002-06), helping the Ragin' Cajuns to their first Sun Belt Conference championship following a four-year tour of duty at Western Carolina (1998-01). During his stint as a graduate assistant at Tech from 1995-97, he was part of a staff that guided the Hokies to three bowl berths.

Pry lettered as a defensive back at the University of Buffalo before suffering a career-ending injury. He began his coaching career as an undergraduate student in 1992. He graduated with a degree in history from Buffalo in 1993. Pry and his wife, Amy, are the parents of a son, Colby, and two daughters: Madeline and Catherine.

Championship

from page 1

and universities, but are not part of the university's National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) athletics program. There are currently 29 sport club teams that are supported by Recreational Sports.

What makes this team's accomplishments more impressive is that sport club teams at Virginia Tech are run by student club officers and supported by Recreational Sports. Team members took it upon themselves to raise the money to afford the trip to Pittsburgh. With the help of family, friends, their marketing team, and fellow athletes, the team slowly accumulated the necessary funds.

"Our marketing guy set up a bingo board that we posted on Instagram. I know a lot of my high school friends pitched in to help us out," said senior finance major Kyle Eagle, last year's treasurer and current president. "Everybody was sending us five dollars or so, and it added up. I don't remember how much we raised, but it was pretty awesome to see the support from different communities so that we could go out and play a club baseball game."

The support for the team didn't end there. Spaulding's lifelong friend and recent Virgin-

ia Tech graduate Evan Hughes volunteered to announce at the Coastal Carolina game. Spaulding and Hughes's friendship began when they were 9 years old. Hughes, who recently received his degree in multimedia journalism, mentioned that Jonathan's love for baseball sparked his own passion for announcing.

"I was beyond ecstatic to hear about the team's national championship, because I know just how much work that everybody puts into this," Hughes said. "The amount of fundraising and the amount of travel they had to do last year, plus the commitment during COVID when there were a lot of restrictions, shows that they were willing to go and do whatever they needed to do. I have this distinct image in my head of Jonathan and me being 10-year-old kids in elementary school, and I remember watching him play baseball, and now he's a national champion."

At the celebration, members noted that they're a competitive group who play club baseball, not for a coach or a title, but for themselves.

Written by Tayten Allison

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- CLUES ACROSS
1. German rapper
 4. Aries sign
 7. Atmosphere
 8. Send payment for
 10. Digs
 12. Pathetically weak
 13. Give a thrashing to
 15. How a witch laughed
 16. Being of use or service
 17. Lassie's breed
 18. XXX Olympic site
 21. Tax collector
 22. Above average in size
 23. It carries genetic information
 24. E. central English
 25. Baked pastry-lined dish
 26. Basics
 27. Manson murder book
 34. Actress May
 35. Dry white Italian wine from Verona
 36. Easily conversed
 38. Java pepper vine
 39. Eagle nests
 40. Irish mother of gods
 41. Belongs to St. Paul's architect
 42. Soak flax
 43. CGS work unit
 44. Tooth caregiver
 - CLUES DOWN
 1. Common detergent
 2. Island in Venice
 3. Establish by law or with authority
 4. Exuding a strong odor
 5. Walked leisurely
 6. A unit of length equal to 1760 yards
 8. Return to a useful condition
 9. CNN's Turner
 11. Young herring in Norway
 12. Disengagement
 14. The lion zodiac sign
 15. Mt. Washington railroad
 17. The brain and spinal cord (abbr.)
 19. Last decade of the 20th cent.
 20. A major division of geological time
 23. Causes to expand
 24. Ed Murrow's network
 25. Happening in quick succession
 26. They ___
 27. Perceiver of sound
 28. The last part of anything
 29. Top left corner key
 30. Opposite of quiet
 31. Knights' outer tunic
 32. Made level
 33. Refutes in a legal case
 36. Sound of a crow
 37. In this place

Virginia Tech researcher tackles restoring the Florida Everglades

During the past century, the Florida Everglades have faced habitat loss, declining biodiversity, and an ecological collapse.

This area has been dramatically altered by water management decisions to improve flood management, urban water supply, and agricultural production across south Florida and now must compete for water with urban and agricultural areas. Southern Florida is now in turn polluted by contaminated runoff from these two sectors.

Nearly 21 years ago, then-President George W. Bush signed Senate bill S.2796 into law. This bill enacted the Water Resources Development Act of 2000, legislation that authorizes projects for water resources development, conservation and other hydrology-related studies across the United States. One mandated study in particular would gather a diverse group of researchers, including a member of the Virginia Tech community, to tackle one wicked eco-

logical problem: restoring the Florida Everglades.

Jeff Walters, the Harold Bailey Professor of Biological Sciences and Global Change Center affiliate, joined Virginia Tech's College of Science in 1994. Specializing in the behavioral ecology and conservation of birds, Walters has worked with government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the public to achieve and promote conservation of bird populations. His research of the Red-Cockaded Woodpecker and other endangered birds in the United States led him to Florida, home to many of our nation's avian species, where he has worked for nearly 30 years at Eglin Air Force Base in the Florida panhandle.

Through this multi-billion dollar project, Congress mandated biennial reviews of restoration progress by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM). The National Academies' Committee on Everglades Res-

toration Progress, of which Walters is a member, has provided this independent scientific review since 2004.

"A lot of times, people making policy decisions hear different versions of science from different stakeholders," Walters said. "So, there is often a need to bring in people from the outside who aren't part of the stakeholder groups but have the right expertise to review everything and tell them what they think of the science."

Walters' knowledge of avian ecology and experience in science arbitration made him a natural candidate for helping the nation restore the Florida Everglades, the largest subtropical wilderness reserve on the North American continent.

Now in its ninth rendition, the committee continues to work with several federal and state agencies, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the South Florida Water Management District. Walters has been appointed to six

out of nine NASEM committees including the current one, which held its first meeting this past August. The most recent report, Progress Toward Restoring the Everglades: The Eighth Biennial Review – 2020, was made public in August after making the rounds with the legislature, executive branch staff, agency personnel, and other key stakeholders.

"The panel has projected what will happen with more rainfall and higher temperatures due to climate change," Walters said. "As you can imagine, sea-level rise is a huge issue with the restoration. Two feet is a dramatic amount of elevation in the everglades so they have to incorporate that into their planning."

Sea-level rise isn't the only concern that the restoration efforts are facing. Much of Florida sits atop an intricate aquifer system that provides fresh water that supports the ecosystem and human populations. As the fresh water moves south

from the Kissimmee River towards Lake Okeechobee and finally to the Everglades in the wet season, it begins to mix with saltwater from the coasts. This slightly salty water, or brackish water, helps to create estuarine ecosystems which provide critical habitat to a variety of species. However, increasing the "saltiness" of the water too much can have dangerous implications for its resi-

dents.

Walters says, "The restoration is not just about the Everglades; it's the water supply plan for South Florida, how they're going to have enough water for urban areas, agriculture, and the ecosystem. It's also flood control. All of these things are interwoven."

Written by Heather Drew



ADOBE STOCK.

The Roseate spoonbill, one of six species of spoonbills in the world and the only one found in the Americas, is one of many wading birds who call the Everglades their home.

ANGLICAN CATHOLIC

St. Peter the Apostle Anglican Church, 230 W. First St., Christiansburg, VA. Fr Peter Geromel OHI Th.M., Vicar, Fr. Alex Darby, "Associate", 540-382-0432/540-270-9166. Sundays: 8:00 am & 10:00 am Holy Eucharist followed by Christian Education and refreshments. Holy Communion most Thursdays at 12Noon, other Holy Days as announced. Traditional services use the 1928 Book of Common Prayer and 1940 Hymnal. Handicapped accessible. All are welcome. Come worship with us! Website: www.stpetersacc.org. Follow us on Facebook

St. Philip's Anglican Church, 306 Progress Street, NE, Blacksburg, Virginia 24060, (540) 552-1771, www.stphilipsblacksburg.org. Reverend Fr. Wade Miller, Priest. Eucharist Sundays at 11am and Wednesday's at 12pm.

St. Thomas Anglican Church - located at 4910 Hubert Rd, NW Roanoke, Va. Traditional Liturgical Lenten Services, Sunday at 10:30 am. Call (540) 589-1299 or visit www.sttofc.org for midweek masses and events. (In Roanoke, go E on Hershberger, L on Hubert to 4910).

BAPTIST

First Baptist Church on 3rd Ave., 215 Third Ave. at the corner with Downey St. We are committed to personal spiritual growth and to providing leadership in 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: www.fbcradford.org, 540-639-4419. Worship is broadcast live on JOY radio, 93.1 FM and 890 AM.

Trinity Community Church, 1505 N. Franklin Street, C'burg. John Altizer, Lead Pastor, Brian Cockram, Associate Pastor, 382-8121. Worship at 10:45 a.m., Outreach Ministries - 6:00p.m. Wednesday, Growth Groups - 5:00p.m. Sunday, Youth and Children's Ministry - 5:00p.m. Sunday, www.trinitycburg.org

CHURCH OF CHRIST

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

Faith Christian Church of Christ, 305 3rd Street, Christiansburg, David Rhudy, Minister, 382-4628, Sunday School 10 am; Worship 11 am; Evening Worship 6:30 pm; Wednesday night Bible Study for Women and Men 6:30 pm. We welcome you to any and all of our services.

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.

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

Christiansburg Church of the Brethren, 310 South Franklin Street. Pastor: Paul J. Stover Jr. 540-797-5015. Sunday School 10 a.m.; Morning Worship 11 a.m.; Bible Study 10:30 a.m. Tuesdays. Website: www.christiansburgcob.org. A loving family, fueled by the Holy Spirit, grounded in God's Word, and delivering Jesus forgiveness and love to all people. Come as you are... you are welcomed!

ECKANKAR

Eckankar, the Path of Spiritual Freedom, is located at 1420 3rd St. SW, Roanoke, VA 24016. However, due to COVID-19, the Light & Sound Services and other ECK programs are currently available online through Zoom. Visit www.eck-va.org for program listings, www.meetup.com/Roanoke-Spiritual-Experiences-Group, or call 540-353-5365 and leave a message. We will return your call. Also visit www.eckankar.org for more information about how the teachings of Eckankar lead you to spiritual freedom.

EPISCOPAL

Grace Episcopal Church, 210 4th Street, Radford, 639-3494. A friendly, mission-oriented spiritual community sharing the Word of God. ALL ARE WELCOME. In person and live-streamed services 10:30AM Sundays. Holy Eucharist twice a month. Morning Prayer twice a month. Fellowship and refreshments follow services. Find us on Facebook: Grace Episcopal Church and www.graceradford.org.

LUTHERAN

Luther Memorial Lutheran Church ELCA, 600 Prices Fork Rd, Blacksburg. Weekly Online Worship at www.lmlc.org. We are a Reconciling in Christ congregation that welcomes and affirms all people just as they are. For information on Bible studies and Wednesday Vespers, email luthermemorial-blacksburg@gmail.com, or contact the church office, (540) 951-1000. Rev. Monica Weber, pastor.

MULTI-CULTURAL

NON-DENOMINATIONAL Christian Growth Center, 1850

Electic Way, Christiansburg, VA 24073 (beside Hubbell Lighting). Sunday Worship: 9:30am Prayer, 10:00am Service *Nursery Available. Lead Pastor: Todd Hallinan. Founding Pastor: Rob Sowell. Mission: Sow, Grow, & Go Sow Faith! Grow in Righteousness! Go into all the world in the authority of the believer! 540-382-2908.

PENTECOSTAL HOLINESS Merrimac Pentecostal Holiness Church, Rev. Richard Hall (540) 552-7194. pastorhall29@gmail.com. Sunday School at 10 a.m. and morning worship is 11 a.m. Evening service at 6 p.m. and Wednesday at 7 p.m.

Compassion Church, 1820 Second Street, Radford, 639-6287, Our music is passionate, our worship is real, and Pastor Chandler Jones brings relevant messages for everyone at any place on their journey, Sunday Worship Experience at 9:30 AM & 11:00 AM, Wednesday Family Night at 7 PM, Children Ministry provided for all services. Our vision is to see all Saved. Freed. Restored. Fulfilled. Find us on facebook and Instagram

Walton Pentecostal Holiness Church, 4003 Morning Glory Rd., off Walton Rd. on Rt. 114. 731-1755. Lee Sarver, pastor. Sun. School 9:30 a.m., Worship 10:30 a.m. & 6: p.m., Wed., 7 p.m.

UNITED METHODIST

Asbury United Methodist Church, 500 Stuart Street, Christiansburg, 540-382-0743. Rev. Dr. Patricia Jones. Sunday School, 9:45 a.m., Sunday Worship, 11:00 a.m. All are welcome.

Central United Methodist Church, 803 Wadsworth Street, Radford. 639-3529. 8:30 a.m. Sunday Services: 8:30am (interpreter provided); 9:45am Sunday School (interpreter provided); and 11:00a.m. Wednesday Bible Study: 6:30p.m. Child care is provided. www.centralmethodist-church.com.

St. Paul United Methodist Church, 220 W. Main St., C'Burg. Rev. Mike Derflinger (540) 382-2410. Sunday Worship 10 a.m., Sunday School 9 a.m. Live streaming Sunday Service - www.twitch.tv/stpaulumc
Wesley Memorial United Methodist Church, 350 Stafford Drive, Christiansburg, VA 24073, Sunday School 10am, Sunday Worship Service 11am.

WESLEYAN

Christ Wesleyan Church, 525 Harkrader Street, Christiansburg. Public Worship service at 11:00 AM. Sunday School for adults - 10:00 AM. Pastor: Gale Janofski 574-306-7682. Website: christwesleyanchurch.org

Montgomery County WORSHIP DIRECTORY

NO LONGER A STRANGER

Read: Ephesians 1:1 through 3:21

Being a stranger in a new setting always causes a little anxiety. There are new faces and places. There are strange smells and sounds. There are new sights. The more foreign the land, the more intense these differences seem. Having a guide, someone who is familiar with the place and who can introduce us to new people, is very helpful.

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household (Ephesians 2:19).

At one time, we were all strangers to God's kingdom and to His promises. But in Christ, we find our way. He has "brought us near" when once we were "far off." It is through His blood that He has brought us into the Kingdom. Because of Him we are no longer strangers and foreigners, but we are fellow citizens in God's house.

Like a guide, Jesus is the one who has bought our passage and shown us the way. Because of Him, we can claim the status of being part of God's household.

Prayer Suggestion: Thank God for bringing you into His Kingdom.

Quicklook: Ephesians 2:11-22

If your church is not listed and if you are interested, call Randy Thompson at 540-389-9355 or email at advertise@ourvalley.org

MONTGOMERY SPORTS

Blacksburg girls fall to Lord Botetourt



Blacksburg's Kailyn Brawley dribbles in for a fast break layup in the first quarter against Lord Botetourt Tuesday. The Cavaliers came away with a 43-31 win.



Blacksburg's Katie Mathena is fouled by Lord Botetourt's Grayson Alfano as she drives to the basket.



Blacksburg's Gabby Brooks puts a shot up against Lord Botetourt Tuesday.



PHOTOS BY JON FLEMING

First-year Blacksburg varsity head coach Matt Linkous talks to his team during a timeout in Tuesday's game against Lord Botetourt.

Comcast to broadcast ACC Network to NRV

Marty Gordon
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

Comcast customers in Blacksburg will finally be given the chance to see Virginia Tech football and other athletic events, beginning almost immediately.

Announced earlier this week, Comcast will distribute the ACC Network (ACCN) to its Xfinity customers, allowing fans and followers of the Atlantic Coast Conference to access the multi-platform network in the coming weeks. The availability of ACCN is part of Comcast's and The Walt Disney Company's content carriage agreement renewal that will continue to make Disney's programming available to Xfinity TV customers.

"ACCN provides tremendous value to college sports fans, and we are excited about this agreement with Comcast, which ensures subscribers will have access to the full slate of content offered on ACCN and ACCNX," said Ilan Ben-Hanan, Senior Vice President of Programming and Acquisitions for ESPN. "ACC fans will now have the opportunity to watch ACCN's extensive lineup of live sporting events, studio shows, and original programming in the coming weeks," Ben-Hanan said.

"We are thrilled that ACC Network has reached full distribution with the addition of Comcast to our already robust lineup of providers," said ACC Commissioner Jim Phillips. "ACC Network, led by Jimmy Pitaro and Burke Magnus, continues to be an outstanding partner that does a tremendous job of showcasing our student-athletes, coaches, and programs. This is a milestone moment in the short history of ACCN, and we appreciate the continued leadership at Disney, ESPN, and ACCN for working diligently to make this a reality."

ACCN annually televises more than 500 regular-season and tournament games from across the conference's 27 sponsored sports, including football, baseball, softball, field hockey, volleyball, wrestling, men's and women's basketball, lacrosse, and soccer, plus a complement of news and information shows and original programming.

During this past year's football season, Hokie fans were left in the dark and had to find other ways to watch football games as the ACC Network games were not available in the area.

Together, ACCN and its digital platform, ACCNX, combine to feature more than 1,500 ACC events each year. The network is an all-access pass to nationally competitive events, expert analysis, documentaries, classic games, and in-depth features on the premier athletic and academic conference in college athletics.

The ACC Network is owned and operated by ESPN in partnership with the Atlantic Coast Conference, ACC Network (ACCN) and its digital platform ACCNX, which is a 24/7 national network dedicated to ACC sports that launched on August 22, 2019.

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In addition to all benefits included in the social membership, the XLife membership offers:

- 50% off a la carte dining during every visit.
- Local and travel dining benefits.
- 50% off a la carte dining at all stadium clubs.
- Dining access at participating golf clubs and city clubs.
- Travel golf benefits.
- Access to the club collection based on your home club and destination club (participating clubs may vary).
- 12 rounds of golf per year, up to two rounds per club, per month, per participating club (play rates and cart fees apply).
- 25-day advance tee times.
- Access to premium Callaway rental clubs at a preferred rate (\$25 per set, subject to availability).

Virginia Tech University Club opens at Lane Stadium

ClubCorp, a company considered to be one of the world leaders in private clubs and Virginia Tech, have partnered to build a new, premier venue within Lane Stadium, the University Club of Virginia Tech, designed to bring an already engaged fan base even closer to the university. The event area officially opened this week.

The University Club is a year-round private dining and social club located inside what was previously the President's Suite of Lane Stadium. With its soft opening on Dec. 1, 2021, the University Club of Virginia Tech offers premium dining, event and meeting spaces, engaging programming, and pre-game celebrations designed to bring Hokie fans, faculty, alumni, and the Blacksburg community together.

"The University Club of Virginia Tech is another opportunity for us to create memorable experiences for our fans, donors, alumni, campus community, and beyond," Director of Athletics Whit Babcock said. "I believe the partnership between Virginia Tech and ClubCorp will provide members and guests with an exceptional experience within Lane Stadium. As the industry leader in building and managing private clubs, ClubCorp will help enhance the connection with our community and Virginia Tech."

Offering stunning views of the stadium and campus, the club is in an ideal location to deliver memorable experiences and exceptional hospitality during football season and beyond.

"We are thrilled to be partnering with Virginia Tech to bring this one-of-a-kind facility to their campus," said David Pillsbury, CEO of ClubCorp. "Lane Stadium is one of college football's most electrifying arenas, and we look forward to leveraging that excitement year-round at the new University Club of Virginia Tech."

Features of the University Club include:

- A welcoming lounge and meeting space.
- Premier dining at the Club.
- Modern private event spaces and meeting rooms.
- Best-in-class productivity spaces for working and collaborating.
- Pre-game events that bring excitement to the club and its members.
- Enriching year-round educational, cultural, and social programs.

The University Club offers two membership categories: social membership and XLife membership. All memberships include spouses and dependent children under 26 years of age who are full-time college students and have primary residence at the home of the club member. Members may enjoy full access to the University Club of Virginia Tech's facilities and social events at the Lane Stadium location and access to worldwide travel privileges as part of the ClubCorp network.

The social membership allows access to the club including complimentary breakfast Monday through Friday; waived room rental on any private event; and access to various member-only events such as Chef's Tables and Wine Dinners. Multiple levels are available: faculty/staff including official university partners, resident, non-resident, and young executive.

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- 50% off a la carte dining during every visit.
- Local and travel dining benefits.
- 50% off a la carte dining at all stadium clubs.
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- Travel golf benefits.
- Access to the club collection based on your home club and destination club (participating clubs may vary).
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- 25-day advance tee times.
- Access to premium Callaway rental clubs at a preferred rate (\$25 per set, subject to availability).



Located inside the President's Suite of Lane Stadium, the University Club of Virginia Tech will serve as a place for members and guests to host, connect, work, play, and celebrate.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF VT ATHLETICS

The new University Club of Virginia Tech will offer outdoor dining areas overlooking Lane Stadium.

VHSL partners with Dairy Alliance naming chocolate milk its official protein beverage

The Virginia High School League has entered into a multi-year partnership with The Dairy Alliance naming chocolate milk as the VHSL's official protein beverage.

According to recent studies and the Center for Disease Control (CDC), 8.9% of reported high school sports related injuries in the 2020-2021 school year were due

to fractures. The VHSL-Dairy Alliance was a response to those statistics.

Chocolate milk is a natural source of high-quality protein with a 3:1 carb-to-protein ratio to refuel muscles, which is scientifically shown to help restore muscles quickly to their peak potential. Milk also has vitamins and minerals to help build and maintain

strong bones, essential in reducing the risk of stress fractures.

"We are excited and are very appreciative to have The Dairy Alliance join the VHSL as a partner and help support the student-athletes in the Commonwealth of Virginia," said Billy Haun, the VHSL's executive director. "The Dairy Alliance will be a great partner with the VHSL in providing the very

best support for education-based athletics and fulfilling our mission to provide high standards and outstanding experiences for school activities and competitions."

"On behalf of the dairy farm families of Virginia, The Dairy Alliance is proud to partner with the VHSL in naming chocolate milk as the official protein beverage for the Virginia High School

League," said Geri Berdak, CEO of the nonprofit group. "We are very excited to educate high school athletes, parents, and coaches on the benefits of chocolate milk's unique package of 13 essential nutrients, including eight grams of high-quality protein, to help fuel optimal athletic performance for student athletes across the commonwealth."

Former RU soccer teammates are now pros in Puerto Rico

Former Highlander legends Nelia Perez and Jasmine Casarez have moved on as teammates for Puerto Rico Sol FC, a professional soccer club based in Mayaguez, Puerto Rico, that competes in a league called Liga Puerto Rico.

Casarez and Perez were stars when they wore the Highlander uniforms. On the field together in 2018, the duo paired up on nine goals that were assisted by the other and totaled 12 goals in the three years they spent together at Radford.

The most notable shining moment for Casarez and Perez came in 2018 when Radford won the first of two straight Big South Tournament Championships for which Casarez earned Tournament MVP honors in addition to her Attacking Player of the Year award. Perez was named to the All-Tournament team in that 2018 championship run.

After Casarez graduated

in 2019, the duo was split up for a while. Casarez pursued her professional career while in her senior season Perez led the Highlanders in points and earned First-Team All-Big South honors and her own Big South Tournament MVP nod as Radford won that second-consecutive title.

While Perez continued to make her mark on the field for the Highlanders, in October 2019, Casarez announced that she had signed with Puerto Rico Sol FC. Her relationship with her coaches in Puerto Rico helped Perez eventually to wind up with the club. In addition to her decorated career in Radford, Perez competes for the Puerto Rican senior women's national team.

That place on the national team and some advocacy from Casarez allowed the Puerto Rico Sol brass to see Perez play, and in September 2021, Perez announced

that she had signed with the club. Since then, the pair of Highlanders find themselves regularly in the starting 11 for the club, continuing their rich history of on-field success.

Casarez lists the 2018 Big South title as her favorite memory in Radford red, but the connection the two players share on the field extends off the field. When Casarez speaks of that 2018 championship, the love she holds for her teammates comes through so that winning the title is a cherished memory but doing it with a group of people who truly cared about each other made it that much better.

Said Casarez, "It was so great. [Nelia] got that beautiful goal; it was just so cool to experience something like that, being able to graduate with a ring."

Ultimately, the belief instilled in Casarez and Perez by Radford head coach Ben Sohrobi allowed them to



PHOTO COURTESY OF RU ATHLETICS

Nelia Perez (left) and Jasmine Casarez are former teammates at Radford University who now take the field together in a professional soccer league in Puerto Rico.

see the possibility of turning pro.

"Without Coach Sohrobi and our teammates, we wouldn't be here right now," said Perez. "He encouraged us and told us all 'you have the ability to play pro.'"

Casarez echoed the sentiment, saying, "I feel re-

ally grateful to have played at Radford and to represent Radford in Puerto Rico. That's something I'm really grateful for."

Casarez said that the reaction when she says that she went to Radford is often that of surprise, but Perez and she wear their love for their alma

mater on their sleeves. While having two players from a school the size of Radford on one professional team may surprise some, it probably shouldn't. Radford women's soccer has a strong history of success under coach Sohrobi and a history that Casarez and Perez put their mark on.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRIS ROY

VT engineering professor Chris Roy recently qualified for and competed in the Ironman 70.3 World Championship in St. George, Utah.

Triathlons keep engineering professor at the top of his game

In a healthy dialogue or debate in class, students might have a fighting chance. Otherwise, if those same students want to go head-to-head with Chris Roy, they had better do the legwork and come prepared. It also may help to have a bit of endurance and stamina.

In the classroom, Roy, a professor in the Kevin T. Crofton Department of Aerospace and Ocean Engineering, tackles complex problems in computational fluid dynamics. He teaches courses in aero/hydrodynamics, verification and validation in scientific computing, and turbulence modeling and simulation.

Outside the classroom, Roy spends his free time training for and competing in triathlons. In 2021 alone, he has competed in 12 of these endurance races. His most recent accomplishment was qualifying for and competing at the Ironman 70.3 (also known as the half-Ironman) World Championship.

As he moved into the world of academia, Roy found swimming to be the outlet he needed to take a break from the long hours of research and mental strain that come with computational work. "I find it to be a huge help in stress relief," he said. "Swimming and later on, biking, were a way to help turn off my mind and focus on something else for a change."

In the past decade, Roy incorporated running into his fitness regime, and he tackled his first triathlon in 2013. From there, he was hooked.

Shortly after Roy qualified for the world championship race in 2019, the global COVID-19 pandemic hit. All races, competitions, and events where athletes might gather and draw crowds of spectators were halted.

Despite the disappointment, Roy continued with his training. As a substitute for the formal races that were continually being postponed or canceled, Roy created his own triathlons in the New River Valley for himself and a handful of local triathletes. As official events began to open up again in 2021, he overloaded his schedule, sometimes participating in both a sprint race and an Olympic-distance race in the same weekend.

After his qualified entry was deferred and Edmonton was canceled twice, he participated in the Carilion Clinic Ironman 70.3 Virginia's Blue Ridge triathlon in Roanoke.

There he qualified in his age group for the Ironman 70.3 World Championship in St. George, Utah.

St. George, a city in southwestern Utah known for its iconic Red Rocks, hosted the 2021 Ironman 70.3 World Championship in September. "Two weeks before the race, the daily highs reached 108 degrees, and I thought, 'what have I gotten myself into?'" Roy said. "On the race day, a rare storm came through, and it ended up being much cooler than anticipated."

Roy competes in the 50-54 age group, among athletes from around the world. First up: the 1.2 mile swim. The one-loop open water swim took place in the Sand Hollow Reservoir at Sand Hollow State Park near Hurricane, Utah. With the swim leg being one of his strongest, Roy had the third-fastest time of the 268 athletes in his age group.

Straight out of the water, the athletes immediately transitioned to the cycling portion of the race. During this leg of Roy's race, the aforementioned storm unleashed high winds, rain, hail, and lightning. "About 28 miles into the bike, I was riding 20-25 miles per hour while battling a 30-mile-per-hour crosswind," Roy said. "I had to lean over to brace myself against the wind, white knuckling it and hoping not to crash."

During the cycling portion of the race, Roy finished 25th in his age group.

For the final 13.1 miles, athletes tackled the two-loop course on foot. Roy said that the running portion of the race is the weakest of his three disciplines. During this leg in St. George, he suffered from quad and hamstring cramps, all the while enduring a run on a course with two miles of 15 percent grade downhill.

In this last leg of the race, Roy finished 168th among the runners, giving him an overall finish of 44th place in the 50-54 age group.

After his recovery from the Ironman, Roy continues to train, track his results, and make improvements. His next goal is to perform well at the 2022 Toyota Age Group National Championships held in Milwaukee in August, where he hopes to again qualify for Team USA and compete in the Olympic Distance World Championship in 2023.

-- Jama Green, Virginia Tech

VT student-athlete committee supports adopt-a-family

Virginia Tech Athletics' Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) is partnering with the Boys and Girls Club of Southwest Virginia for its Adopt-A-Family initiative.

This year, SAAC is hoping to raise \$5,000 to buy gifts for 160 children at Christiansburg Middle School, Shawsville Middle School, and Eastern Montgomery Elementary School. Donations can be made via Venmo @SAAC-adopt-a-family or via cash or check made out to VT Student-Athlete Advisory Committee and mailed

to Cameron Spera at 620 Lane Stadium West Side, Blacksburg, VA 24061.

SAAC is a leadership group consisting of student-athletes encompassing all sports at Virginia Tech. The committee provides insight into the student-athlete experience and offers input on the rules, regulations, and policies that affect student-athletes' lives. SAAC serves as a conduit of communication among student-athletes, coaches, and athletic administrators in an effort to improve the student-athlete experience.

In 2019, SAAC raised

\$4,000 to buy gifts for kids at Christiansburg and Shawsville middle schools. SAAC members then wrapped and delivered the gifts to the schools and interacted with the children at their annual holiday parties.

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