



Gina Hall's sister concerned about documentary's depiction

(Editor's note: Today, we continue a three-part series on a planned documentary, which delves into the story of Gina Hall.)

Filming began last week on a new documentary that takes a look at the disappearance and murder of Radford University coed Gina Hall. While the movie is based on a book by Ron Peterson titled "Under the Trestle," the interviews taking place in Radford are shining new light on the crime.

Gina's sister, DLANA BODMER, is expressing concern and is critical not only of the documentary but also the book itself. That's why she penned her own literary piece, "The

Miraculous Journey—A Day in Heaven," where she looks at her sister's life and the journey she as a sibling has taken since then.

"A documentary's definition infers accuracy, truth, etc. To base a documentary on 'Under the Trestle,' a book that was not factually accurate, is concerning," Bodmer said.

Gina Hall was an 18-year-old college student when she disappeared on June 28, 1980. The details on Gina Hall's disappearance from a Blacksburg night stop continue to be at the heart of the discussion. Bodmer believes the way in which Gina disappeared is being described all wrong in the book and fears it will continue

in the documentary.

"The 1980 narrative that was used to secure the conviction worked. The Hall family will always be grateful for its success although, we always knew the foundational basis for that narrative did not portray Gina for who she really was or Gina's truth," Bodmer has said.

"We realized that that simplified narrative was necessary to put her killer away so he would not continue to kill others. We always knew the story composed by Gina's killer and corroborated by his best friend, did not happen as told," Bodmer said. "I saw my car in 1980. I saw the physical proof of a struggle in that car,

and I heard my sister's voice. Her truth. We knew. Gina did not go willingly with any man."

Stephen Epperly was charged with Hall's murder after forensic evidence linked her to his cabin. Additional evidence was found in her abandoned vehicle and on the bank of the river near where it was disposed of. Although Epperly was convicted despite the absence of Hall's body, he still denies responsibility. This was the first bodyless murder conviction in the state of Virginia.

The car in reference belonged to Bodmer, driven by Gina that night and then later

found under a railroad trestle on a stretch of road between Claytor Lake and Radford. Thus, the title of Peterson's book.

The location was along the same road that leads from a lake house where the college student allegedly went with Epperly, a man she had never met until that June night.

"I will always be her (Gina's) champion and speak for her since she cannot," Bodmer said.

The public knew only what they were told, according to Bodmer, including what was used in the trial narrative.

"Many of the other case

See [Gina Hall Documentary](#), page 4



Ms. Opal Lee.

PHOTO COURTESY OF S & B COMPANY.

"Grandmother of Juneteenth," Opal Lee, to join Virginia Tech community in conversation

"A Conversation with Ms. Opal Lee: the Grandmother of Juneteenth" will be held at 3 p.m. March 27 at Burruss Hall (800 Drillfield Drive) in Blacksburg and also will be livestreamed. This event is free and open to the public and will be part of Virginia Tech's 1872 Forward celebration weekend.

Lee, often described as the "grandmother of Juneteenth," is a retired teacher, counselor, and activist in the movement to make Juneteenth a feder-

ally recognized holiday. On June 17, 2021, President Biden signed Senate bill 475, making Juneteenth the 11th federal holiday. Lee has been nominated for the 2022 Nobel Peace Prize.

During Virginia Tech's event, Lee will share her wisdom about advocating for equality as an activist and a leader.

"We are excited to have Ms. Opal Lee at Virginia Tech, as this is an opportunity for our students and the community

to learn about women in leadership, civil rights, and the importance of advocating for inclusivity," said James Bridgeforth, assistant vice president for student affairs and ExperienceVT.

The event is sponsored by the Elizabeth A. "Betsy" Flanagan Women in Leadership and Philanthropy Endowed Lecture Fund, Virginia Tech Student Affairs, the I WILL Council, and VT Engage: The Center for Leadership and Service Learning.

Montgomery sheriff's parole board appointment rejected

Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin promised when elected he would change the state's parole board, which had come under heavy criticism for its actions or in most cases lack of.

This included appointing a whole new board makeup that included Montgomery County Sheriff Hank Partin.

Thursday, Democrat members of the Virginia General Assembly rejected all of the appointments including Partin. In a Facebook post, Partin said the move is political.

"I understand they are still disappointed that Governor Youngkin delivered on his promise to fire the McAulliffe-Northam parole board on day one.

"The vote out of the Senate (Thursday), along (Democrat)

party lines is exactly what Virginians are sick and tired of," Partin said. "They are tired of division simply due to one's political affiliation. Since my appointment to the parole board this January, I have not been contacted by a single democratic member of the state senate that voted against my confirmation."

The sheriff is hopeful Democrats on the Senate side will reverse the House decision.

Democrat leaders admitted Thursday's vote was partly in retaliation for House Republicans' earlier defeat of appointments to other boards.

Democrat Sen. Adam Ebbin said during an unusually heated debate that the House needed to be "taught a lesson." Republican senators expressed outrage.

Experience the power of live storytelling with The Moth



PHOTO COURTESY OF LAURA PARTAIN.

The Moth approach allows people all over the world and from all walks of life to share their stories on stage in front of a live audience, illuminating both the diversity and commonality of human experience.

Experience the power, intimacy, and community-building of stories when radio favorite The Moth brings a diverse group of thoughtful storytellers to share their own stories, each crafted and shaped by a unique collection of experiences, identities, and worldviews, to the Moss Arts Center on Tuesday, March 22, at 7:30 p.m.

"Hitting Home: The Moth in Blacksburg" will be held in the center's Anne and Ellen Fife Theatre, located within the Street and Davis Performance Hall at 190 Alumni Mall.

Moth Mainstage shows are renowned for the great range of human experiences they showcase. Different from a Moth StorySLAM, these are

curated events that feature five tellers who develop and shape their stories with Moth directors. Each show starts with a theme — "Hitting Home" is the theme chosen for this performance — and the storytellers explore it, often in unexpected ways. Because each story is true and every voice is authentic, the shows dance between documentary and theater, creating a unique, intimate, and often enlightening experience for the audience.

The Moth approach allows people all over the world and from all walks of life to share their stories on stage in front of a live audience, illuminating both the diversity and commonality of human experience.

See [The Moth](#), page 2

Former Radford principal embarks on new journey as Snowville Christian Church pastor

Jerry King, a lifelong Southwest Virginia educator of school divisions in the counties of Montgomery, Pulaski, Floyd, Carroll and most recently, Radford City, recently related how the experience of going from a school administrator to becoming a pastor was literally life-changing.

King called the transition "almost unexplainable" since the events happened in such a short period of time. His story began when he and his wife, Lucy, were enjoying a ride in the country and they saw a beautiful, rural church in Pulaski County they had never seen before, Snowville Christian Church, and spontaneously decided to visit and worship there the next Sunday.

The state superintendent (regional minister) of the denomination, the Rev. Bill

Dunning, heard from a pastoral friend that King was interested in filling in for pastors on Sundays when they were on vacation as Dunning had done for years, and he contacted King. Unaware that King had visited the church in Snowville the previous Sunday, Dunning said, "There are several churches in Southwest Virginia that would be interested in hiring you, but after reviewing your resume and biography, there is one specific church that's located just a few miles from Radford, where you live, that I would like to send your information to because I think you would be a great fit with them."

The church was Snowville Christian Church.

Out of hundreds of churches in Southwest Virginia, Dunning wanted to send the educator's informa-

tion to the very church King and his wife had 'randomly' visited the week before.

King then delivered the message in the church's worship service the following Sunday. He then received a call from the church board expressing an interest in his not just 'filling in' but a desire to interview and possibly hire him as the church's pastor. King then received unanimous approval from the congregation.

He retired from Radford City schools and 30 days later became the official pastor of the Snowville Christian Church.

"Most people can recall times in their life when something happened they couldn't really explain, but they knew it was more than just a coincidence," King

See [New Pastor](#), page 4

UPCOMING EVENTS

Through April 30

Free prom dresses

By appointment only at the Mead-owbrook Public Library, which has prom dresses of all sizes available for free to anyone in Montgomery County, Floyd County, and throughout the New River Valley. Call (540) 268-1964 to make an appointment to try on and choose a free prom dress.

Wednesday, March 16:

Art Club: Alma Thomas

At the Christiansburg Library; 2 p.m. Explore the art of Alma Thomas and create a piece inspired by her work. For ages 8 and up. Registration is required.

Library Board of Trustees meeting

At the Christiansburg Library; 7 p.m.

Thursday, March 17:

Talking about Books: "Maid"

At the Christiansburg Library; 11 a.m. Discussed this month is "Maid: Hard Work, Low Pay, and a Mother's Will to Survive" by Stephanie Land.

Art, Community, and Social Health featuring Michelle Ramos

At the Blacksburg Library; 4 p.m. The School of Performing Arts at Virginia Tech presents Art, Community, and Social Health, a series of talks/workshops by nationally recognized artists and thought leaders on the power and practice of art and culture as essential elements of healthy communities. Dr. Michelle Ramos serves on the boards of Dance/USA and the Performing Arts Alliance. A licensed attorney with a PhD in Cultural Psychology, she has significant organizing experience and has committed her career to serving communities and individuals adversely impacted by issues of race, gender, disability, class, socioeconomic, inequitable laws, and systemic oppression. The colloquium will be available in person and via Zoom.

Dungeons & Dragons - Level 5

At the Radford Public Library; 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. Adventure into the world of Dungeons & Dragons. Email duncan.hall@radfordva.gov, and the library staff will set up everything needed to be ready with a Level 5 hero to join the adventure. Hybrid virtual attendance options are available for those interested.

Radford Photo Club presents Adi Ben-Senior on Night Photography

At the Radford Public Library; 6 to 7 p.m. Adi Ben-Senior, international

award-winning photographer, will host a presentation on night photography at this month's meeting of the Radford Photo Club. Ben-Senior has been a professional photographer for 30 years, including taking photos for the Israeli Navy Forces and for the Hebrew nature journal, Teva Ha'dvarim. The presentation will be followed by an opportunity to take night photos, so participants should dress warmly and bring a camera, a tripod, a flash-light, and batteries.

Saturday, March 19:

Click Smarter: Properties of Light with Charlie Whitescarver

At the Radford Public Library; 11 a.m. to noon. Professional photographer Charlie Whitescarver of Whitescarver Photography, LLC will teach on cameras and the skills involved in photography. Properties of light and other tips will be the focus for this program.

Caturday

At the Christiansburg Library; noon to 1 p.m. Sign up at the front desk for a 15-minute slot to read to a cat from the Montgomery County Animal Care and Adoption Center to practice reading and to socialize shelter cats. All ages. Email shodges@mfrl.org for more information.

Teen DND

At the Blacksburg Library at 2 p.m. DND for Teens.

Sunday, March 20:

Unveiling ceremony: African American Memory and Storyboard Project

In downtown Christiansburg in the town square quadrant in front of the Christiansburg Post Office at 3 p.m.

Chess Club

At the Blacksburg Library at 3 p.m. Ages 8 and up are welcome to sharpen their chess skills. Supplies will be provided. All skill levels are welcome.

Monday, March 21:

Crafternoon Delight for adults only

Learn how to knit or crochet with library staff at the Radford Public Library from 1 to 2 p.m. Needles, crochet hooks and yarn will be available for tutorials and practice during this session of Crafternoon Delight. This group knits, crochets, embroiders, felts, and paints. Knowledgeable staff can help participants with their needlework craft. Projects will also be

available to learn how to put a blanket together for Project Linus with supplies provided.

Pokémon Club

At the Christiansburg Library at 4:30 p.m. Pokémon fans can bring their DS or Pokémon cards and get ready to battle, trade, and make new friends. All ages.

Tuesday, March 22:

Radford Chamber of Commerce seminar series

This is a seminar on Professional Networking, LinkedIn, and Building Career and Relationships; 9 to 10:30 a.m. at Long Way Brewing. Registration opens at 8:30 a.m. No cost for chamber members. \$10 for non-chamber members. Brought to you by the Radford Chamber of Commerce.

Chess Club for Teens & Pre-Teens

At the Radford Public Library; 6 to 7 p.m. Match chess skills with teen librarian Dave.

Wednesday, March 23:

Radford Army Ammunitions Plant community meeting

At the Christiansburg Public Library at 6 p.m. This community meeting will discuss modernization and environmental projects and compliance and corrective actions at the Radford Army Ammunition Plant. Staff members from the U.S. Army and BAE Systems will be on hand to engage with the public. Questions ahead of the meeting may be emailed to usarmy.radford.peo-eis.list.rfaap-public-affairs@mail.mil.

Monday, March 28:

Scams Against Older Adults with Better Business Bureau

At the Radford Public Library; 1 to 2 p.m. Presented by Riley Ginger, Community Outreach and Events Coordinator of the Better Business Bureau serving Western Virginia. Register to attend by emailing Elizabeth.Sensabaugh@radfordva.gov. Sandwiches will be provided via registration. Options include vegetarian or turkey 6" from Jimmy Johns. Participants can email their sandwich preference when they register to attend.

Saturday, April 2:

Blacksburg Leaf Compost Pick up

Loose and bagged leaves collected by the town are composted into leaf mulch. This mulch can be used as a

soil additive for composting, and is available to Blacksburg residents for pickup. This is an important service as composted leaf mulch keeps leaves out of the landfill. Leaves can take up valuable landfill space and produce harmful greenhouse gasses.

This year, the compost can be picked up on April 2, from 8 a.m. to noon. To arrange for pickup, residents must register and follow these guidelines: Leaf compost service is for Blacksburg residents only. Register for a 15-minute time slot. Do not arrive more than 10 minutes early. Remain parked in the upper lot until town staff provide directions to the compost zone. There the staff will load up the vehicle. The limit is two cubic yards per vehicle. Do not block access to the road leading to the compost zone. Once the vehicle is loaded, please exit promptly.

Tuesday, April 5:

50 Years in the Making: Celebrating old time, blues and bluegrass music

All concert ticket sales will benefit the Montgomery Museum of Art and History. The concert is presented by the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM). At the Moss Arts Center at Virginia Tech at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door. Children 12 and under are \$5. Seating is limited and tickets are now available online at <https://montgomerymuseum.org/events/50-years-in-the-making/>. Tickets can also be purchased in person at the Moss Arts Center box office during certain open hours. For more information, call the box office at 540-231-5300. A mask, photo ID, and proof of COVID19 vaccination or a negative test within 72 hours of the event are required for admittance.

Thursday, April 14:

River City Quilt Guild

The River City Quilt Guild meets the second Thursday of each month at 9:30 a.m. at Grove United Methodist Church, 1020 Tyler Avenue, Radford. All skill levels of quilters are welcome. For more information call Anna Handy, 540 320 7791.

Saturday, April 16:

Radford Easter Egg Hunt

At Bisset Park; 11 a.m. 2 p.m. Noon: ages 3-5; 12:25 p.m.:ages 6-8; 12:30 p.m. :ages 9-12; 12:45 p.m.: ages 3 and under. Bounce houses, fire trucks, police cars, food trucks, and photos with the Easter Bunny will be apart of the fun.

Walmart community grant through Warm Hearth Foundation benefits seniors

The Walmart Community Grants team and facility #1292 (Christiansburg) recently awarded a \$1,000 grant to the Warm Hearth Foundation for the Micah's Program at Warm Hearth Village (WHV). The foundation will use the funds to help fight food insecurity by providing food and meals to village seniors who meet federal low-income guidelines through Micah's Pantry. Micah's programs at Warm Hearth Village include a variety of opportunities like fresh produce, pre-

pared meals, gardens on campus to grow and tend, shelf-stable groceries, pet food, and personal care items.

Majdeddin Syed Issa and Ghalia Martini, two residents benefitting from the Micah Program, said they appreciate the foundation's help. "I like that the packages list the ingredients, and I love getting fresh vegetables. We share the items we don't need with neighbors who do," Martini said. "Majdeddin and I are both grateful for this program."



Karen Nelson, (center) Warm Hearth's associate director of development, is pictured with the Christiansburg Walmart's team leads Morgan Vaughn and Joy Miller.

The Moth

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rience.

The evening's host is Jon Goode, an Emmy-nominated author, poet, and playwright living in Atlanta. Goode has been a featured performer on HBO's "Def Poetry," TVOne's "Verses & Flow," and BET's "Lyric Café." He is the regular host of The Moth StorySLAM in Atlanta.

The featured storytellers include:

Hannah H. Smith Brennan

A sociologist and educator, Brennan's expertise and enthusiasm blend theory and practice in her work on families, childhood, play, and young people's empowerment. While working with an elder community midwife during her pregnancies, Brennan experienced such profound personal growth

that she expanded her professional focus to include women's health, bodies, and wisdoms.

Muneesh Jain

Jain's biggest passions in life are baseball and Broadway. Between the months of April and October, he can usually be found in one of the 30 major league ballparks across the country, watching a ballgame, talking to strangers, and eating ice cream out of a mini helmet. During the offseason, he's probably at a musical or a play. He is the co-host of "The Clubhouse Podcast," where he and his friend Anthony Rapp interview celebrities about why they love baseball.

Devan Sandiford

Sandiford spent his child-

hood and young adult years keeping his personal stories hidden. Feeling a voice within him longing to be heard, he moved to Brooklyn, New York, with his wife and their two sons, hoping to push himself out of his comfort zone and unlock the power in his voice. Sandiford is now a published writer, an award-winning storyteller, and the program manager of community engagement at The Moth. His stories have been featured in the Washington Post; "The Moth Radio Hour" and its podcast, "Speak Up Storytelling;" "Writing Class Radio;" and elsewhere. He is currently working on his debut memoir.

Horace Scruggs

A resident of Palmyra, Va.,

Scruggs has been teaching and conducting professionally since 1985. He has taught music to all grade levels from kindergarten through 12th grades, and worked professionally with school, community, and church choirs and ensembles. He holds degrees in music education from Longwood University and Shenandoah Conservatory and is an adjunct faculty member at Piedmont Virginia Community College (PVCC), teaching class piano and music appreciation, and conducting the PVCC Chorus.

Dame Wilburn

Host of "The Moth Podcast," "Dame's Eclectic Brain Podcast," as well as various live shows including "The Moth Mainstage," Wilburn's

storytelling began as a way of keeping cool in the summertime on her grandmother's porch in Macon, Ga. She has completed four residencies for storytellers: three at Serenbe in Palmetto, Ga., and one with AIRTrez in Almont, Mich. Wilburn has also presented at the University of Iowa and the University of California, Los Angeles.

Corbin Hayslett

He is the musician for the evening. A multi-instrumentalist and ninth-generation Virginian, Hayslett excels on clawhammer banjo, guitar, and fiddle, bringing a wealth of knowledge of old-time, bluegrass, and early country music to performances and to his position as general manager at the County Sales music shop in Floyd.

Clothesline Project to call attention to gender-related violence

The Clothesline Project is an effort to raise awareness of gender-based violence through the creation and display of shirts hung side by side on a clothesline on the Drillfield at Virginia Tech from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 29. The rain dates are April 5 and April 12. Participants who wish to create their own shirts for the project can do so by dropping by the Women's Center at Vir-

ginia Tech (206 Washington St., Blacksburg) anytime from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. from Monday, March 28, to Friday, April 1. All materials are supplied free of charge. Survivors of violence and families of the victims can bear witness to the shattering effect of violence and the impact it has on society through creating shirts emblazoned with direct messages and strong illustrations. Hanging side-by-

side and shoulder-to-shoulder as though the survivors were standing there themselves, the shirts will be color coded: white for those who have died from violence; yellow or beige for survivors who have been battered or assaulted; red, pink, or orange for those raped or sexually assaulted; blue or green for survivors of incest or child sexual abuse; purple or lavender for those attacked because of their sexual orien-

tion; and black for survivors disabled by violence. The Clothesline Project is held to educate the public about the scope of gender-based violence and the impact it has on individuals, their families and friends, and the community. The project encourages survivors to come forward to break the silence by creating shirts to share their stories. This local Clothesline Proj-

ect was initiated in 1994 by the Montgomery County chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW). Over 630 shirts made by New River Valley residents are currently on the line. Local sponsors include Montgomery County NOW, the United Feminist Movement, the Women's Center at Virginia Tech, and the Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley.

VT sports media and analytics students find promising partnership with local radio group

Sports media and analytics (SMA) students in the Virginia Tech School of Communication have no trouble finding experiential learning opportunities where they can develop their craft in professional settings outside the classroom. Over the course of Virginia Tech's basketball season, a number of students have gained experience as sports talk radio hosts with 105.3 the Bear, the flagship station of New River Radio Group, based in Radford. James Forrest, operations director for New River Radio Group, previously co-hosted the Hokies Basketball and the Bear Tip Off show over the past couple of years with DreZ, the program director. However, the duo decided some additional sports acumen could take the

station to the next level. "We're more rock DJ's and less sportscasters, so I thought, 'What if we can set up this arrangement with the SMA program?'" Forrest said. "It's co-beneficial to give the SMA students some real-world hosting experience while also giving us the chance to highlight the students we have in the area." The tip-off show takes place an hour before the start of each men's basketball game at Macado's in Blacksburg. A sports media and analytics student carries the pacing of each show as co-host and sets the scene for the game that is about to follow. One of the show's three segments is dedicated to the student sharing details about the opportunities and projects he

or she is involved in as a part of the sports media and analytics major. It gives listeners an appreciation for the exciting talent emanating right from their own backyard in the New River Valley. "This fantastic partnership with James and his crew gives our students on-air exposure in a live environment," said Bill Roth, a professor of practice in the School of Communication. "A critical learning experience for our students occurs in the real world outside the classroom. This partnership is another valuable example of that." And the students treat it as such. The selected SMA co-host for that day arrives an hour early, if not earlier, ready to lead the show. "I try not to assume what

they know and don't know going into one of these things, but they're just really impressive," Forrest said. "Not only the content and the broadcasting part, but they're impressive individuals. Everyone has been extremely prompt and very knowledgeable. That is what professional broadcasters do, and they are doing it." The Virginia Tech men's basketball regular season has ended, but JT (as Forrest goes by on air), DreZ, and Nick Brown, a sophomore in sports media and analytics, will continue to host the tip-off shows into and through the NCAA Tournament. "I've been so fortunate to work alongside New River Radio Group with high school football and now college basketball broadcasts," said

Brown, who also works as the play-by-play voice for Radford High School football. "These opportunities provide an amazing chance to aspiring broadcasters like myself to get real, live radio reps that you can't replicate anywhere else." Besides Brown, Jack Brizendine, Aidan Butler, Duke Durand, Carter Hill, Kyle Marchak, and Dan Steinbach were all involved with the Bear Tip Off shows over the course of the 2021-22 basketball season. "These kids have such a special program over there that they're involved with," Forrest said. "I think they know that, but they're also taking the opportunity and really seizing it. It's nice to see."

Written by Cory Van Dyke

Virginia Department of Transportation road watch

The following is a list of forecasted highway projects that may impact traffic traveling in the 12-county Salem Transportation District this week. Work schedules and construction project timelines are always subject to change and weather dependent. The Salem District covers Bedford, Botetourt, Carroll, Craig, Floyd, Franklin, Giles, Henry, Montgomery, Patrick, Pulaski and Roanoke counties.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

I-81 NORTHBOUND AT EXIT 105 NEW RIVER BRIDGE REPLACEMENT IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY - Lane and shoulder closures may be in place near exit 105. Lane closure may be in effect during the week from 8 p.m. to 7 a.m. Shoulder closures may be in effect at any time during the week. Slow rolls may be performed on I-81 in the north and southbound lanes from mile marker 104 to 106 from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. Speed limit is reduced to 60 miles per hour in the work zone. Shoulder closures will remain in place though the duration of the project. Project completion is estimated by late 2022.

LANE CLOSURES:

A left lane closure will be in place on I-81 northbound between mile marker 104-106 beginning at 8 p.m. on Saturday, March 26, through 7 a.m. on Sunday morning, March 27.

Right lane closures may be in place on I-81 northbound between mile markers 104-105 during nighttime hours, 7 p.m. to 5 a.m. the following morning.

SLOW ROLLS: Slow rolls may be utilized periodically on both the northbound and southbound lanes from mile marker 98-109 for structural steel deliveries and setting beams.

ROUTE 615 CULVERT REPLACEMENT - Beginning April 11, 2022, Route 615 (Pilot Road) will undergo a culvert re-

placement located at the intersection of Pilot Road and Old Pike Road, across from the Pilot Post Office. Single lane closures will be in place and will be maintained by utilizing temporary traffic signals. Lane closures on RTE 615 are expected to begin on 5/2/2022 and will be in place through August 2022. Expected completion is October 2022.

ROUTE 643 PAVING PROJECT

- A project is underway to resurface an unpaved portion of Route 643 (Yellow Sulfur Road). The work area begins .7 mile south of the intersection with Route 642 (Jennelle Road) and ends 1.7 miles north of the bridge over Route 460. Traffic impacts will include intermittent flagging operations between these intersections. This project has an estimated completion date of May 2022.

LANE CLOSURES:

Intermittent single lane closures utilizing flagging operations will be in place between the intersection of Teaberry Road and Jennelle Road.

UTILITY WORK ON ROUTE 460

- MMI will be installing fiber optic along Route 460 and Route 8 from the Giles County line to the Floyd County line. This work will be ongoing. Motorists should expect shoulders and/or lane closures for travel in both directions.

INTERSTATE 81 INTERSTATE 81 LANE WIDENING CONSTRUCTION EXIT 137 TO EXIT 141 - A \$179 million design-build project to widen both directions of I-81 between mile markers 136.6 and 141.8 from two to three lanes is set to begin. Starting in February and continuing into the early summer, work will be performed on the inside and outside shoulders along a five mile section of both northbound and southbound Interstate 81 in Roanoke County and the city of Salem. The shoulders will be built up before a barrier wall

can be installed for road crews to work behind. The barrier wall will be installed along the shoulders in the spring and summer. Two lanes of I-81 traffic in each direction will remain open during the project with periodic lane closures scheduled during nighttime hours or outside of peak travel times as needed. Drivers can expect the following lane closures and upcoming impacts on northbound and southbound I-81:

From mid-February to mid-April, daytime right shoulder closures between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., Monday through Thursday

From mid-March until mid-June, nighttime right lane and shoulder closures between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m., Sunday through Thursday

From mid-May to mid-June, alternating left and right lane and shoulder closures during nighttime hours between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m., Sunday through Thursday

The project also includes replacing six bridges, widening two bridges, installing approximately 2.6 miles of sound barrier walls along northbound I-81, improving the southbound exit 137 off-ramp intersection at Wildwood Road and adding interchange lighting at exits 137, 140 and 141 are also included in the project. Expected completion in early 2026.

I-81 TROUTVILLE REST AREA CLOSURE - The Troutville Rest Area located on southbound Interstate 81 near mile marker 158 in Botetourt County will be closed from late May 2022 until early September 2022. This project will extend the ramp into the rest area by 500 feet and the ramp out of the rest area by 2,100 feet. It will also include expanding the truck parking area at the facility by about 10-13 spaces. Visitors to the rest area may see some preliminary work, such as drainage improvements, as early as this spring. However, the major construction will begin after Memori-

al Day, and the rest area facility, ramps and parking lot will be closed to the public from late May until early September. Work is expected to be completed in early fall 2022.

INTERSTATE 81 BRIDGE HEIGHT RESTRICTIONS - Due to bridge painting, several height restrictions are in place along I-81 north and southbound. Maximum height allowed is 14'6" at the following bridges over I-81 at the mile marker locations of 135, 109 and 108 through March. Over-height vehicles will need to be rerouted. Message boards are in place.

INTERSTATE 81 LANE WIDENING CONSTRUCTION EXIT 141 TO EXIT 143 - A project to widen the lanes on I-81 in Roanoke in both north-

bound and southbound directions between Exit 141 to Exit 143 has been underway. All lanes now open and will remain open through winter with periodic lane closures at night as needed. The final surface paving and markings for northbound will resume with the next paving season in spring 2022. Drivers can expect rough pavement. Estimated completion date of the project is summer 2022.

I-81 PAVING OPERATIONS - Weather permitting, crews will patch potholes along southbound and northbound Interstate 81. Mobile right and left lane closures will be in place and moving along northbound and southbound lanes during nighttime hours, 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. the following morning. Drivers should watch for signs and expect possible delays.

I-81 BRIDGE DECK REPAIRS - Weather permitting, crews will repair bridge decks on Interstate 81. Between mile markers 147 to 162, right and left lane closures will be in place northbound and southbound during nighttime hours, 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. the following morning. Drivers should watch for signs and expect possible delays.



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OPINION

Home Country

Steve, the cowboy on the board of directors of the Mule Barn truck stop's philosophy counter and world dilemma think tank, swears on his coffee it happened.

"Tourist guy got off the train the other day when I was in the city picking up a friend," Steve said. "He asked me if I was a real cowboy, and I allowed I probably was because I wasn't smart enough to get a real job. So he asked if I minded if he asked me some questions."

Steve sipped his coffee. "I said, 'Shoo!' and the guy says he wondered why we wore these big ol' hats with the wide brims. So I explained to him they give us shade in summer and keep the rain and snow off our faces and told him we could give the horse a drink by putting water in them.

"Then he thanked me and asked why we wore chaps. So I explained how they protected our legs from cactus and thorns, you know.

"He asked about wild rags like this one," he said, touching the blue silk scarf around his neck. "I told him it filtered dust and we could tie our hats down with it in a high wind."

"Sounds reasonable," Doc said, "but I thought everybody knew that. Television and Westerns and all that."

"Well, yeah," Steve said. "Me, too. But I think this guy was from a city somewhere and didn't watch

TV or eat anything that ever had a pulse. Looked kinda puny. But he was real friendly.

"So then he asked me about saddle horns. Wanted to know if they honk. This guy was really green, you know? He wanted to know about ropes and spurs, all kinds of questions like that. I did my best to answer him, too. Finally he says, 'Tell me why you cowboys always wear tennis shoes.'

"So I told him we didn't want

anyone thinking we were truck drivers."

Even the truck drivers laughed at that one. Then they threw cracker packets at Steve.

By Slim Randles

Brought to you by the book "Packing the Backyard Horse," enabling you and your own Ol' Snort to have some camping fun in the back country, available on Amazon.com.

Virginia gas prices settle down

Average gasoline prices in Virginia were unchanged in the last week, averaging \$4.23/g Monday, March 14, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,081 stations in Virginia. Prices in Virginia are 86.9 cents per gallon higher than a month ago and stand \$1.48/g higher than a year ago.

Buddy price reports, the cheapest station in Virginia was priced at \$3.90/g Monday while the most expensive was \$5.29/g, a difference of \$1.39/g.

The national average price of gasoline was unchanged in the last week, averaging \$4.32/g Monday. The national average was up 83.6 cents

per gallon from a month ago and stood \$1.47/g higher than a year ago, according to GasBuddy data compiled from more than 11 million weekly price reports covering over 150,000 gas stations across the country.

"After a furious increase in the national average over the last two weeks, the top appears

to be in with average gas prices slowly starting to decline over the last few days," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysts at GasBuddy. "While the decrease could be short-lived, it is nonetheless a well-needed break from the large surge in gas prices we've experienced over the last few weeks. The situation

remains fluid, and escalations remain very possible, if not likely. For now, a \$4.50 per gallon national average is off the table, but it certainly could be a future possibility as long as there is conflict between Russia and Ukraine."

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.

Submit letters to the editor to editor@ourvalley.org

Gina Hall Documentary

from page 1

file facts such as Gina's being at a table, with friends, so not alone and dancing with a friend, so mathematically impossible in that timeline to have danced with both men as the story was told, and the ignored account of the two women who reported to the police that Gina had been being bothered, harassed, inside the Marriott. All ignored, just like the physical car evidence, specifically she ripped off the inside driver's door strap indicating that she had been abducted," Bodmer said.

"And now, decades later, a book comes out that recaps the same old story as if it was Gina's true story. It is not," Bodmer said. "It is only how a conviction was secured. It is not Gina's truth. And it is not only the people who lived the 1980 nightmare that want Gina's true story. It is now many, many people who do not like what they have read written about Gina. I receive messages all of the time from people new to this story telling me that as they read 'Under the Trestle,' something just does not add up."

Peterson said he plans to release a special movie edition of his book that will include updates and recent discoveries about the case.

Bodmer believes her sister deserves better.

"The book 'Under the Trestle' upon which this documentary will be based regurgitated the 1980 narrative including many stories, 'rumored information,' that evolved throughout the summer

without complete factual basis because the public was just not told everything that was in Gina's file like reports by neighbors of hearing gunshots at the lake house," Bodmer said. "Then the prosecution created the simplified narrative to secure a conviction, and it worked."

But the old, composed narrative is not Bodmer's biggest concern. Instead, she believes Peterson's book sensationalized the Marriott scene beyond anything that was ever even told in 1980 as if the scene were written with a movie script in mind.

"When I first read the book 'Under the Trestle' in March 2020 as Gina's sister, I was deeply saddened to see what had been written, knowing that this author knew about the women and the harassment of Gina, yet he still portrayed Gina as if her dancing stoked the fire of her killer's raw instincts," Bodmer said. "As if Gina's dancing caused this killer to be attracted to her, as if Gina was just another Epperly 'pick-up,' a girl in agreement to be a one night stand further sensationalizing the 1980 composed lies that Gina went willingly and happily with this man to a cabin to be with him. That is victim blaming.

"If this documentary, based on that book as they market it, portrays Gina as is written in that part of the story at the Marriott, then it should not be called a documentary," Bodmer said. "It should be in the fictional movie category."

The Hall family shared their concerns with the filmmaker and the author in 2020. Bodmer does not and never will support the retelling of the same old story. She believes people deserve the truth.

"We do not see how Gina will be honored or accurately portrayed if the film is based on the book 'Under the Trestle,' or any of the 1980 narrative without expanding upon the true facts of what really transpired," she said.

"This is not Gina's story. It is wrong to continue to use her killer's story corroborated by lies as if it is the true story of Gina Hall as they proclaim."

Bodmer had originally planned to pen a second book with more details into that horrific night, but now is changing its format to be more of a case narrative study book that will provide facts for those who continue to listen to the narrative as it was in 1980 based only on what the public was allowed to know.

"It will be an educational tool to see how a case narrative came to be composed as it was in 1980. These true crime folks can also delve in as deep as they want and find the answers to what really transpired," Bodmer said.

Her plans call for the second book to be released over the Internet and will be available in the near future.

Work on the documentary will continue later this month, and its director hopes to release it later this year.

New Pastor

from page 1

said. Referring to a term used in the book, "When God Winks," King said, "I really like the term that relates to situations like this as a Godwink, which basically is a way our Creator gives encouragement and assures us that we are on the right path. Some of them are small, daily occurrences and some, like this situation, can literally change your life.

"The opportunity to be the pastor and servant-leader with the group of caring, loving people at Snowville Christian Church has been one of the biggest blessings of my life," King said. "Just amazing folks that have opened their arms and heart to my wife and me, and words can't begin to express our gratitude and love for them."

When asked to share what King has been like as their pastor, some of the phrases and statements members of the congregation used include, "His messages are inspiring and Bible-based, and he makes them relevant to our lives," and, "Jerry is very enthusiastic and energetic when he shares from the Word," and, "He truly loves and cares for people" and, "It's just a miracle - or Godwink, as Jerry describes it - that he and our church were drawn together."

Amanda Harbor said that after a large number of her family members attended and heard King speak for the first time at the Christmas Eve Service and then returned home, she enjoyed hearing them share how much they enjoyed his message, how he was so inspiring. She listened to all the compliments for a while, then smiled and said, "Yes, we have a pastor that rocks!"

And church member Dave Bryant said, "I invite people to visit our church and hear Jerry. He has a God-

given talent for sharing the Word in an enthusiastic and easy-to-understand way that teaches, challenges, encourages, and inspires us."

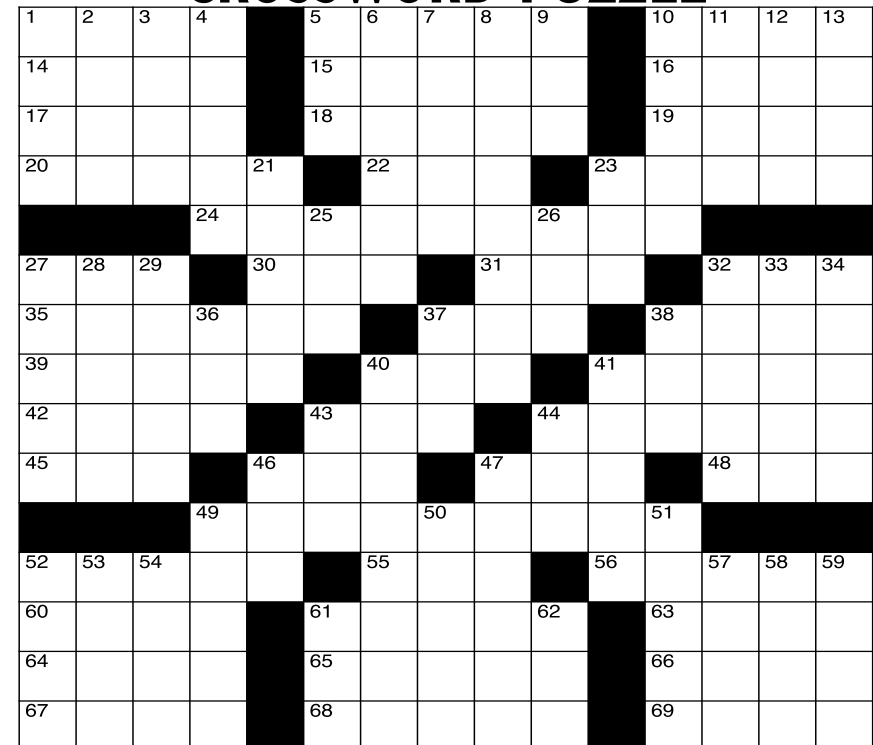
King said he was very appreciative of the leadership opportunities and experiences he has been given 'on the mission field of public education' in several Southwest Virginia school districts, most recently with the 'awesome, dedicated educators in Radford City schools.'

He added that he understands a church is not about the pastor or the building, but the people are actually the church. In other words, 'Don't just GO to church - BE the church.'" At the same time, he feels Snowville Christian Church has the best of both worlds. The church facility itself is a beautiful, historical building that was built in the 1860's with a very 'worshipful' sanctuary. And that physical setting and the loving people who make up the church are what make it so unique and special.

King said, "I love what we are about, as stated on our church website: We are here to 'inspire hope, help grow your faith, and share God's love with others.' People are experiencing more stress and challenges in their lives today than ever before," the Snowville pastor said. "And when they attend church, they need to hear the encouraging, positive, Good News of God's love, forgiveness, and hope for a more abundant and fulfilling life. And we invite everyone to come and experience it with us."

When someone commented that this amazing, life-changing event in King's life and the church started with a scenic ride in the country, King smiled and quickly added, "Yes, and a huge Godwink!"

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



- CLUES ACROSS
1. Type of footwear
5. Studies a lot all at once
10. Adventure story
14. Hured thousand
15. Former U.S. Vice President
16. Ruler
17. Indian city
18. Similar
19. Ship as cargo
20. Volcanic craters
22. Boxing's "GOAT"
23. Bullfighting maneuvers
24. London soccer team
27. Score perfectly
30. No (Scottish)
31. SoCal hoops team (abbr.)
32. Woman (French)
35. Unwanted attic "decor"
37. Peter Griffin's daughter
38. Broad, shallow crater
39. Large instruments
40. Low bank or reef
41. ___ and Venzetti
42. Oil group
43. Father
44. Aggressive men
45. Pairs well with green
46. Travelers need it
47. Digital audiotape
48. Midway between northeast and east
49. Chemistry descriptor
52. S. China seaport
55. Sound unit
56. Heavy cavalry sword
60. Thick piece of something
61. Spa town in Austria
63. Boyfriend
64. Norse personification of old age
65. Type of box
66. Tie together
67. Fiber from the coconut
68. Chicago mayor
69. Old English letters
CLUES DOWN
1. Type of sauce
2. Pattern of notes
3. Plant with long seedpods
4. Map out
5. Numbers cruncher
6. Make a mental connection
7. Italian tenor
8. N. America's highest mountain peak
9. Witness
10. Arabic given name
11. Music awards
12. "The Immoralist" author
13. Area units
21. Units of loudness
23. Political action committee
25. Bar bill
26. Witch
27. A theatrical performer
28. 2-door car
29. ___ and flowed
32. Papier-___, art medium
33. City in Georgia
34. Irregular
36. College sports conference
37. Angry
38. Partner to cheese
40. S. American mammal
41. Self-immolation by fire rituals
43. Split pulses
44. Disfigure
46. Cow noise
47. Erase
49. Chadic language
50. Reward for doing well
51. Paid TV
52. Millisecond
53. Other
54. Colombian city
57. Necklace part
58. Every one of two or more people
59. Regrets
61. They come after "A"
62. Horse noise

Virginia Tech Rescue Squad recognized among top collegiate squads in the country

The Virginia Tech Rescue Squad was recently awarded gold recognition from the National Collegiate EMS Foundation EMS Ready Campus program, one of only three collegiate rescue squads in the U.S. to earn this distinction during the 29th annual National Collegiate EMS Foundation Conference in Pittsburgh.

EMS Ready Campus consists of three tiers of achievement — bronze, silver, and gold. Each tier builds upon a squad's previous emergency medical services and management efforts. Previously, Virginia Tech Rescue Squad held silver tier recognition since 2018.

Five squad members were also recognized for delivering life-saving CPR on the Blacksburg campus.

The squad also received the 2022 Community Engagement Program of the Year Award which recognizes efforts by university emergency medical services groups for creative, effective, and innovative programs that bolster community engagement. The Virginia Tech Rescue Squad was one of three collegiate rescue squads in the U.S. to win the Community Engagement Program of the Year award.

The squad's many en-



Members of the Virginia Tech Rescue Squad pose with their awards at the 2022 National Collegiate EMS Foundation Conference. Photo courtesy of the Virginia Tech Rescue Squad.

agement initiatives include management of the AED program on the Blacksburg campus, CPR and first aid classes, participation in university and regional public training exercises, emergency medical services support at Virginia Tech Athletics

events, and many more. The Virginia Tech Rescue Squad also partners with local organizations like the COVID-19 Crushers, Virginia Tech Panhellenic Council, and the Agape Center NRV around public health awareness campaigns, and

collaborates closely with fire, rescue, and police departments across the region to deliver services and community relations initiatives.

"The Virginia Tech Rescue Squad is proud to receive the highest recognition from the National

Collegiate EMS Foundation and numerous other honors. The conference is a great opportunity for our squad to represent Virginia Tech on a national platform and to gather with many like-minded individuals from over 50 collegiate rescue squads

from across the country," said Virginia Tech Rescue Squad Administrative Captain Lauren Yarnall, a senior majoring in Human Nutrition, Foods, and Exercise within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

By Alexa Briehl

Chontadela's marimba-driven funk gives voice to Afro-Colombian stories and struggles

Celebrating and sharing its culture and community through music, Colombian band Chontadela will have the audience grooving in the aisles when it brings an exuberant, high-spirited party to the Moss Arts Center on Thursday, March 24, at 7:30 p.m.

The performance will be held in the center's Anne and Ellen Fife Theatre, located within the Street and Davis Performance Hall at 190 Alum-

ni Mall.

Chontadela fuses two words: "chonta," the wood that the marimba is made of, and "delia," psychedelic sounds. A seven-piece band from Bogotá, Colombia, Chontadela is centered on the Pacific coast's Afro-Colombian culture, identity, and history, including the iconic "marimba de chonta," a percussion instrument that not only creates beautiful, melodious notes, but serves as a

symbol of Afro-Colombian identity.

As a collective of academic and traditional musicians with broad musical knowledge and interests, Chontadela has been making its mark since 2015. Its roots lay in a community-based arts organization working to preserve Pacific Coast culture in urban Bogotá. Chontadela's outspoken, marimba-driven funk gives voice to its communities' his-

stories, stories, struggles, and concerns.

"The capacity to enjoy, to have a good time, is not separate from what is happening to you, your country, your community," says Chontadela's bassist, Diego Agudelo Gómez. "Stand up, talk about the issues, dance."

Chontadela's Blacksburg performance is the first in a five-week U.S. debut tour that includes stops in Lexington, Kentucky; New Orleans; Albuquerque and Santa Fe, New Mexico; New York City; Washington, D.C.; and Lewisburg, Pennsylvania.

The band is one of five ensembles from Colombia and Perú touring the U.S. this spring as part of Center Stage, a public diplomacy program that has introduced and toured performing artists from abroad in the United States since 2012. To date, 29 groups from Algeria, Egypt, Haiti, Indonesia, Morocco, Pakistan, Tanzania, Ukraine, and Vietnam have made month-long tours from coast to coast.

Hosted by colleges and universities, festivals, music clubs, and cultural centers, Center Stage ensembles reach large cities and small towns. They engage with communities onstage, offstage, and online through performances, workshops, and

discussions, artist-to-artist exchanges, master classes, and community gatherings, and return home to share these experiences with peers and fans.

Members of Chontadela will connect with Virginia Tech students both in and outside of the classroom during their visit. They will meet with undergraduate students in the political science course Global Latin American to discuss current affairs in the ensemble's native Colombia, and speak with students in a Spanish program course about their artistic and cultural influences. Chontadela's percussionists will coach

Virginia Tech music students in the School of Performing Arts Percussion Ensemble, and students in the Creativity and Innovation District living-learning programs will gather with the group for a night of acoustic music, storytelling, and conversation.

Tickets for the performance are \$25 for general admission and \$10 for Virginia Tech students and youth 18 and under. Tickets can be purchased online; at the Moss Arts Center's box office, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday; or by calling 540-231-5300 during box office hours.



Chontadela performs onstage.

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RU professor combines passions at Radford, plans Women's History Month 2022

After 11 years at Radford University, Anja Whittington cannot imagine working anywhere else. With the various fields of study offered at the university, Whittington has the resources and support to pursue action in both of her passions: the great outdoors and women's studies.

Soon after her job interview with the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, Whittington knew Radford University would be her new home.

"I fell in love with the natural environment at Radford University," Whittington said.

However, the atmosphere at Radford University was not all that caught her eye. Whittington knew that the programs offered were too good to pass up.

"The fact that I can combine my two passions of outdoor recreation and women's studies and work at a mid-size school that offers both types of programs is an anomaly," she said. "We are lucky to have both disciplines at Radford University."

In addition to her work with recreation, parks and tourism, Whittington is also the director of the women's and gender studies program, a role she proudly took on in 2021. In that position, she plays a key role in the celebration of Women's History Month, held nationally

every March. It's an event that she looks forward to each year, and for this year's celebrations, Whittington has organized all the upcoming March events, including a few special ones.

The first event kicking off Women's History Month was an interactive panel presentation titled "Highly Marketable but Not Respected," on Tuesday, March 1, at 5 p.m. The discussion shared the perspectives of black educators and the difficulties they have faced in their field. The event was offered both in person at Peters Hall's Teaching Resource Center and on Zoom.

"Period Pals" is another panel presentation to be hosted by the Women's Studies Club in Heth Hall 22 or on Zoom Thursday, March 17, at 3 p.m. The panel will discuss its community service project and have a larger conversation about menstruation acceptance.

Radford's Women's History Month will culminate in a celebration on Tuesday, March 31, in the Hemphill Hall atrium with support from the provost's office. This celebration will acknowledge lifetime achievement award winners Mary Ferrari, professor emerita of history, and Moira Baker, retired professor of English, as well as graduating students from the women's



Radford University professor Anja Whittington has two great passions in her life, the great outdoors and women's studies.

and gender studies program. Additionally, a donation will be made to the local Women's Resource Center.

Whittington hopes these events will promote change, connection among others and the acknowledgment of women's issues in society.

This year marks the 21st anniversary of the Radford's women's and gender studies program, which offers an interdisciplinary minor to students.

"This minor prepares stu-

dents on social justice issues and prepares them to articulate systemic challenges that individuals face," Whittington said. "Due to its interdisciplinary focus, students can apply this knowledge to their future careers and their everyday lives."

Whittington is enthusiastic about all the opportunities she has been able to participate in and create for others since her arrival 11 years ago.

"Radford University has

given me the opportunity to work in two subject areas that are of significant importance to me: Gender Studies and Outdoor Recreation," Whittington said. "Serving in the role of the director of women's and gender studies in addition to my position as a professor has challenged me and given me the opportunity to learn, grow and work with various departments across campus. We have phenomenal resources at Radford."

OBITUARIES

Helms, Alleta Jo Olinger

Alleta Jo Olinger Helms, 89, of Christiansburg, passed away on Dec. 29, 2021, at her home with family and friends.

She was a woman of faith, a good wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and a great-great-grandmother, five generations in all.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Hobart Harless Helms; her mother, Adele Olinger Ballard; her father, Howard Olinger; and her stepfather, Randall Ballard.

Surviving are her children, Barry and Francine Helms and Wanda and Gary Proco; sisters Shirley O.



Aiken and Sarah B. Keagles; a brother, Randall Ballard; five grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild, Paige Proco; and two special nieces.

The family extends thanks to exceptional caregivers Janet Carr-Hunt, Marie Bentley, Regina Naff, Rhonda Perdue, and Cindy,

and Angie.

A memorial service will be scheduled at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks for donations to be made in her memory to Belmont Christian Church, 1500 Peppers Ferry Road, Christiansburg, VA 24073.

Gilmore, Juanita Pearl Kincaid

Juanita Pearl Kincaid Gilmore, 96, of Radford, died Wednesday, March 9, 2022, at Commonwealth Senior Living in Radford.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Alva Wesley "Pete" Gilmore, and her sisters, Christine Wirt, Elouise Kitts, and Loretta Harris.

Juanita was born in Covington, Va., to the late Gaye Louise Ross Kincaid and Buster Kincaid and was the oldest of eight children. Her family moved to the Belmont Community in Christiansburg in the early 1940's.

She and Pete married June 12, 1943, and moved to Radford to start their family and careers. Juanita and Pete both worked at Burlington Industries until their retirement.

Juanita was a longtime member of Radford Wesleyan Methodist church on Clement Street and was an active member of the Business and Professional Women's club of Radford.

She is survived by three sons and daughters-in-law, Thomas Wesley Gilm-



ore and wife Diane of Radford, David Wright Gilmore and wife Nancy of Concord, N. C., and Ronald Wayne Gilmore and wife Mary Susanna "Sweetsie" of Radford; brothers Johnny Kincaid and Bobby Kincaid; sisters Jannie Trussell, Hazel Slusher, and Betty Hensdill; 10 grandchildren and 21 great-grandchildren, and many other relatives and friends.

The family would like to thank Commonwealth Senior Living and Hospice for their love and care.

The family received friends on Saturday, March 12, 2022, at the Mullins Funeral Home in Radford. Funeral services followed with Pastor Gale Janofski officiating. Interment followed in Sunrise Burial Park in Radford.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to Christ Wesleyan Church, 525 Harkrader St., Christiansburg, VA 24073.

The Gilmore family is in the care of Mullins Funeral Home & Crematory in Radford. www.mullinsfuneralhome.com.

Linkous, Curtis Hubert

On Saturday, March 12, 2022, Curtis Hubert Linkous, 90, awoke as he always did, giving thanks for another day. At 11:45 a.m. he was happy to leave this world when the Lord called him into his eternal care with loved ones by his side.

Curtis was born May 16, 1931, to Fred and Cannie Linkous. He raced a 1936 Ford Coupe with the number "B29" at Victory Stadium in Roanoke. Curtis served in the National Guard in the 29th Infantry Division based out of Fort Belvoir, Va.

He worked in the Merrimac Coal Mines and then became a painter at the Radford Army Ammunition Plant. After an early retirement, he spent a lot of time going to Virginia Tech Hokie football games and playing golf with his cherished friends.

One of the most important things in Curtis's life was his walk with the Lord. He was a member of Merrimac Pentecostal Holiness Church and served as a deacon and the Sunday school Superintendent for many years.

Curtis was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Robertine Kippus Linkous ("Bobbie"); a still-born daughter, a son Mason Lee Linkous II; his father, Fred, his mother Cannie, a brother, Mason,

and a sister, Rachel.

He is survived by his son and daughter-in-law, Chester and Debbie Linkous of Christiansburg; granddaughters and spouses Ginger and Tim Cromer of Christiansburg, Dottie and Todd Burris of Salem, and Jennifer and Greg Priddy of Greensboro, N.C.; great-grandchildren Cassidy, Kaylyn (Adam Simones) and Caleb Cromer; Laci, Marley, and Garrison Burris; and Logan, Parker, and Tyler Priddy; and his sisters and spouses Claremont and Bob Yates and Maxine and June Cook.

Curtis dearly loved his nieces, Dana Sutphin, Kay Allen, Joy Palmer, and Michelle Wooddell, like they were his very own; and three honorary granddaughters, April Clark, Holly Gray, and Taylor Wooddell. Curtis is also survived by many extended family members, his church family, and dear friends.

The family received friends on Tuesday, March 15, 2022, at McCoy Funeral Home in Blacksburg and the funeral followed, conducted by the Rev. Richard Hall, and the Rev. Clayton Kippus with special speaker Kim Dix. Burial was at Roselawn Memorial Gardens. Pallbearers were Tim Cromer, Todd Burris, Mark Moore, Sheryl Sutphin, Tim Allen, and Larry Wooddell.

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MONTGOMERY SPORTS

Virginia Tech dominates in winning ACC tourney



Storm Murphy celebrates with his Hokie teammates after they claimed the ACC championship by winning the conference tournament this past weekend in Brooklyn.



Hunter Cattoor called winning the ACC tournament a "dream" as he looked to the confetti falling from the ceiling. He scored 31 points in the final game against Duke.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF VT ATHLETICS

Virginia Tech arrived at the summit of its ACC Tournament climb Saturday night inside the Barclays with an 82-67 defeat of top-seeded Duke in the tournament finals.

Hunter Cattoor picked a fortuitous time to have the best game of his career. The junior sharpshooter scored 31 points, hitting seven of nine shots from beyond the arc.

Virginia Tech led for over 30 minutes of the championship game, mirroring the domination that it showed throughout much of the tournament. In the course of the game, the Hokies repeated the elite shooting per-

formance that had carried them to the finals.

Cattoor and Keve Aluma, who had 19 points, were a handful for the Blue Devil defense.

Elite 3-point shooting aside, the Hokies reached the championship contest by bringing intensity to all aspects of its game, specifically defense. Throughout the game, the Hokies matched the outsized Duke front court on the boards, pulling down 37 rebounds to Duke's 36. The Hokies generated 10 turnovers and turned them into 14 points.

On Thursday and Friday,

Virginia Tech took the floor against higher-seeded opposition in Notre Dame and North Carolina, but the experienced Hokie squad weathered all that the Fighting Irish and the Tar Heels threw at them.

The Hokies' run was a reflection of the squad that made it. In a team that featured the same starting lineup all season – a lineup composed of four players that weren't even committed to play high-major college hoops – consistency won games.

Saturday night, both teams began by shooting lights out, heading into the first media timeout a combined 11-15

from the floor with the Hokies leading 14-12. But after that, Virginia Tech went five minutes and 49 seconds without scoring until Hunter Cattoor drove for a layup. Cattoor shot 5 for 7 from the field in the first half, accumulating 17 points.

Tech's lead grew to as many as seven points before finishing the first half with a 42-39 lead.

The Hokies came out firing again in the second half, specifically Cattoor, who scored nine of Tech's first 13 points in the half. The teams traded baskets once Virginia Tech assumed an eight-point lead with fouls becoming more commonplace as

the half went on.

Cattoor continued to provide points while Justyn Mutts and Keve Aluma made plays on both ends of the floor. Nahiem Alleyne and Storm Murphy were poised under pressure and contributed as Tech pulled away in the last half for the 82-67 win.

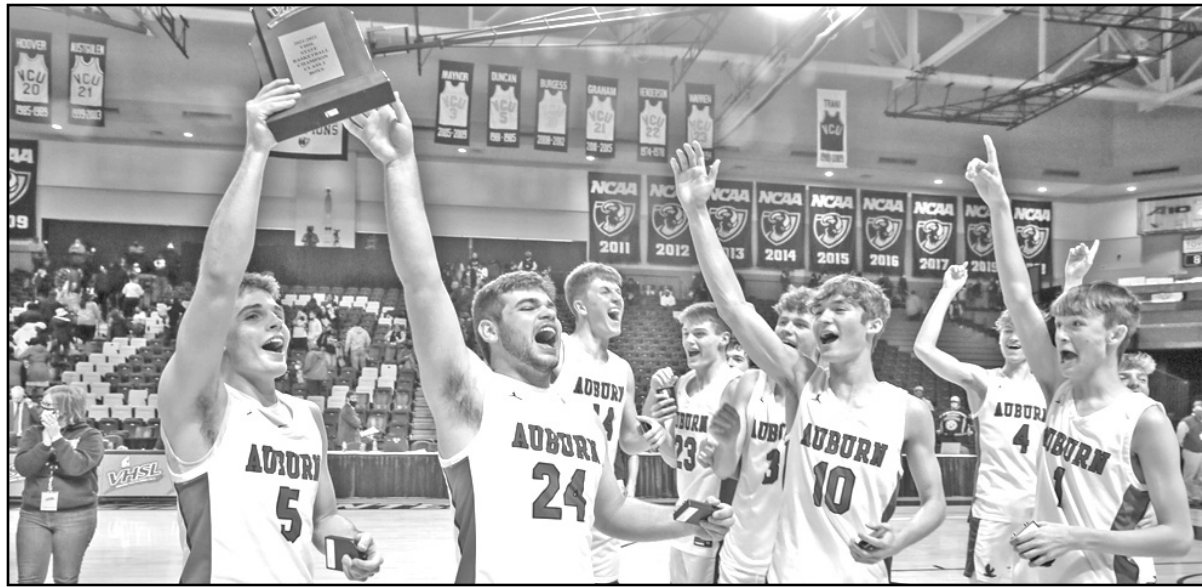
The win marked Tech's first ACC Tournament championship and the program's first tournament crown since winning the Metro trophy in 1979.

Cattoor's 11 field goals and seven 3-pointers were both single-game records for Tech players in the ACC Tournament.

Auburn boys win state championship



The Auburn Eagles are the 1A state champions. Pictured (from left) are athletic trainer Maggie Burton, assistant coach Mike Royal, Bryce DeHart, head coach Terry Millirons, Bryce Gill, Chase Sutphin, Andrew Tickle, Michael Wilson, Tyler Sparrer, Coahan Gordon, Ethan Millirons, Samuel Dunca, Jaxon Warren, Nike Millirons, and assistant coaches Jamie Warren, Randy Gordon and Ben Kratz.



The Eagles celebrate the state championship at the buzzer of Saturday's game at the Seagal Center in Richmond.



Auburn senior Ethan Millirons gets knocked down but keeps control of the ball in the Eagles' win. He finished with eight points in the contest.

PHOTOS BY ASHLEY AKERS

Hokies climb out of the darkness



From the Sidelines
Marty Gordon

Virginia Tech basketball coach Mike Young admits his team was in a dark place after going 2-6 in the team's early Atlantic Coast Conference schedule. But just like the song "Enter Sandman" would be in reverse, the team rose out of the darkness to become this year's tournament champ, punching their ticket for the NCAA dance.

The "shock in awe" Young-style rolled through two of the conference's and country's top teams in North Carolina and Duke. The Hokies were at a height disadvantage in almost every game, but a swarming defense and a rim-attacking offense changed all of that.

The Hokies have done it. Virginia Tech capped off a thrilling run in Brooklyn with an 82-67 win over top-seeded Duke to claim the 2022 ACC Tournament Championship. Young's squad engineered a historic turnaround to clinch an automatic bid to the Big Dance that will go down as one of the most impressive runs in league history.

Young said after cutting the nets on Saturday that this was a special thing for Blacksburg, for Southwest Virginia, for the state of Virginia. "They'll always remember this, this team," the head coach said.

Television analyst and former Louisville star Luke Hancock said at the start of the season that Virginia Tech was

a team that could make a run for the conference crown. Well, they did, and Hancock might look like a genius right about now.

Keve Aluma and Justin Mutts played key roles in getting this team to where they were Saturday night. But the biggest MVP was Hunter Cattoor, who lit it up from behind the arc. His defense also played a key role in helping the team to the championship belt. He was a rock star.

This team deserves the title and so much more. Young and his staff have stepped up to the plate and done a great job.

They did not gain much respect despite all this success. So they will have carry the term "underdog" into the Big Dance.

Now the Hokies will wait for the next chapter and the Final 64 tournament. Tech was named a No.-11 seed in the East Region Sunday evening and will face No. 6 Texas in Milwaukee on Friday.

The women's basketball team is also headed to the NCAA championships. The Hokies (23-9, 13-5) will be the No. 5 seed in the Spokane region, playing 12th-seeded Florida Gulf Coast (29-2, 15-1 ASUN) on Friday, March 18, in College Park, Md.

Good luck to both squads as Virginia Tech has become known as a "basketball school."

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CHS soccer standout Jordin Harris to play at SC State

Jordin Harris, a stand-out soccer player at Christiansburg High School, has announced plans to continue her playing career in the fall at South Carolina State.

She currently is the captain of the girls' team at CHS and was All-Region Second-Team for the 2021 season. Harris has also played on seven travel teams and a variety of clubs in large showcase tournaments.

Harris said she chose SC State for two reasons: the culture and the ability to make a difference.

"SCSU's soccer program is facing a journey of rebuilding, and I saw this as a perfect opportunity to be a part of a larger story to pave the way for other girls that will come to this school to play soccer," she said. "In addition, I will be able to make a name for myself and be a part of something huge. Secondly, the school is classified as a historically black college or university, so I will be a part of a culturally rich environment. I will be surrounded by those who share similar physical traits as me and will be

able to embrace that side of me even further and louder.

South Carolina State University is a public, land-grant university in Orangeburg, S.C., with a current enrollment of 2,695. In athletics, the school is a charter member of the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC).

Harris was the Most Valuable Player as an eighth grader on the high school junior varsity squad and became captain and a four-year letter winner in high school. With her club, Valley AFC 03 Girls Green, she won the Virginia State Cup title in 2021. The SC State staff feels Harris will provide depth to the Bulldogs attack.

Academically, this May, she will receive both her associate degree and an advanced diploma through a dual enrollment program in high school.

Second-year SC State coach Patrick Horne has rebuilt the women's program with a young, talented, and enthusiastic recruiting class of 10 new signees and one transfer.

The new-look women's soccer team will field 17 players with various geographic backgrounds during the 2022 season after finishing 2-11 this past year.

Harris said her goal for the field is to help boost the college's program and get people excited about the South Carolina State women's soccer program.

"I hope to work with my team as seamlessly as possible and have a successful season," Harris said. "Additionally, I hope to use my best traits such as my speed and field vision to push the attack on the field and help the team's goal as a whole. Lastly, I genuinely hope to just become a better player through the whole process and to learn so much more about the game while experiencing it at a different level."

Harris expects to play in the attacking midfield or on the right side of the field. "In both positions I have the ability to make aggressive attacking plays up the field," she said.

Harris plans on majoring in political science at SC State.



FILE PHOTO
Christiansburg's Jordin Harris controls the ball during last week's soccer jamboree at Blacksburg High School.

Hokies claim national titles at indoor track and field championships

Virginia Tech's track and field teams earned two NCAA titles and 14

All-American honors and finished in sixth place on the women's side for

the highest indoor placement in the history of the women's program at this

past weekend's NCAA national championships.

Lindsey Butler clinched Tech's second national championship of the weekend Saturday night, finishing first in the women's 800m final with a facility-record time of 2:01.37. Butler, who ran the fastest NCAA 800m of the indoor season at the ACC Championships, set a new Birmingham Cross-Plex record with her title-winning run. The junior from Corning, N.Y., earned the Hokies' first national 800m title, indoors or outdoors, and clinched 10 more crucial team points for Tech.

Following Rachel Baxter's national championship in the pole vault Friday night, the first in Hokie history, Butler's win gave the Hokies their 19th individual NCAA title in program history. Her title also marked the first in Assistant Coach Bob Phillips storied career. Phillips has guided the VT pole vaulters to 53 All-American honors and 38 ACC titles, more than any other school in the conference, and now has a national title to show for his successful 37 years as the coach of Tech's pole vault group.

With her record-setting run, Butler earned the fourth All-American honor of her career. Her NCAA title marked the third championship she has won this season, after she defended her 800m ACC title and anchored the Hokies' distance medley relay to the win at this year's ACC Championships.

Butler's and Baxter's

national championships meant that the past weekend was the first time in Virginia Tech history that the Hokies have won multiple titles at the same NCAA Indoor Championships and was only the third time in school history that Tech had claimed multiple titles at the same national meet. In 2011 the Hokies swept the hammer throw outdoors as Dorotea Habazin and Alexander Ziegler won the women's and men's competitions, and in 2010 Queen Harrison became the first woman in NCAA history to win the 100m hurdles and 400m hurdles at the same outdoor championships.

Also during Saturday's competition, Antonio Lopez Segura recorded the highest finish by a Hokie in the men's 3,000m at nationals, crossing the line in sixth place with a time of 8:00.70 for first team All-American honors.

The ACC champion in the triple jump, Victoria Gorlova took home an eighth-place finish and first-team All-American honors for the Hokies with her best mark on the day at 13.41m.

Two more All-American honors are heading back to Blacksburg with Jake Spotswood and Chauncey Chambers will bring two more All-American honors back to Blacksburg after Saturday's events. Spotswood wrapped up his championship with the second day of the heptathlon, tying his season best of 5.16m in the pole vault before running the 1,000m to finish

in 11th place overall in the competition. Chambers claimed the first All-American recognition of his career, finishing 15th in the men's triple jump with his best leap of 15.13m.

Joining Baxter on the pole vault podium in Birmingham was Julia Fixsen, who earned bronze in the competition with her clearance of 4.46m. Fixsen's instant impact as a Hokie has been invaluable since she joined Tech from Georgia as the junior improved eight spots on her 11th-place finish from 2021 and earned first team All-American honors.

Earlier in the day, three Hokies posted strong results in the women's and men's weight throws. Rebecca Mammel finished seventh in the women's competition, earning first team All-America and two team points with her heave of 22.73m. The 2022 ACC champion picked up her second straight All-American honor in the weight throw, finishing eighth in 2021. Sara Killinen and Alexios Prodanas both earned second team All-American honors in the event with Killinen finishing 15th and Prodanas 16th to claim national awards.

Closing out the night for the Hokies was the distance medley relay squad of Hannah Ballowe, Star Price, Grace Boone, and Leigha Torino. In a loaded field of dominant DMR squads, the Hokies finished 10th as all four women earned second team All-American honors.

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