



## Superintendent says “initial response favorable” to Christiansburg Middle School phone ban

**Lori Graham**  
Contributing writer

MCPS had a cell phone and other electronic device use policy already in place; however, students were permitted to use their personal electronics for academic purposes.

Now that policy has been stringently revised for CMS students.

Christiansburg Middle School students are no longer be permitted to use their phones from “bus room dismal to the last bell of the day” and they should be “off and away” according to

a letter addressed to CMS families from Principal Danny Knott.

Montgomery County Public Schools has been providing each student with a Chromebook for several years now, reducing the need for students to use their own personal devices for educational purposes.

“We already had a cell phone policy in place,” Superintendent Dr. Bernard Bragen said. “With a 1:1 device such as the Chromebook, that took away the need to use [cell phones] in the classroom.”

The superintendent also said, however,

cell phone use can be at the discretion of the teacher in meeting with educational purposes. When the cell phone policy was first enacted, it was a strict ban of use, but over time, the technology proved to hold real educational advantages in the classroom and the policy was relaxed.

Many recent issues have required another look at the policy.

The distraction of habitually checking a mobile device has been one issue in the classroom that impacts the ability

See Superintendent, page 3



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF MCPS



PHOTO COURTESY OF MCPS

MCPS Support Staff Employees of the Year 2023-24.

## MCPS recognizes work and dedication of students, staff during March board meeting

**Lori Graham**  
Contributing writer

Many special recognitions for county students and staff were announced during the Montgomery County Public Schools Board meeting Mar. 5, 2024.

During the MCPS Board meeting, a total of 23 Support Staff Employees of the Year nominees were recognized, with many appearing to receive a small token of appreciation from the county. One person from

each school or department was chosen who demonstrates their dedication in their field and as a person who goes above and beyond the normal call of duty.

Dr. Amanda Widner, Director of Human Resources, along with the President of the Christiansburg-Blacksburg Rotary Club Thomas Bell joined Assistant Director of Human Resources Dr. Thomas Brewster, in recognizing the nominees.

Millie McPherson, Purchasing Specialist for Montgomery County

Public Schools, was chosen as Support Staff Employee of the Year for 2024-25.

“On behalf of the Rotary Club, Mr. Bell will present a \$1,000 check to our school division employee of the year,” Brewster said. “This honor is a testament to outstanding contributions to Montgomery County Public Schools, a recognition she truly deserves.”

McPherson has been a dedicated

See MCPS, page 3

## Traditional bluegrass band Lonesome Heart to appear at Selah Springs with Shelton & Williams

**Lori Graham**  
Contributing writer

The traditional and contemporary bluegrass band Lonesome Heart has been doing some picking and singing throughout the New River Valley and beyond, and with a new single out and another on the horizon, band members say they are thrilled with their musical journey.

Lonesome Heart band is made up of Emily Handy on bass, Ethan Handy on banjo, dobro player Eric Handy, Scott Patrick on guitar, and lead singer Nikki Wright. They started playing their first gig one year ago in March 2023, and started touring southwest Virginia shortly thereafter. Recently, they have played in the local NRV at the Blue Hen Restaurant, Floyd Country Store and Wildwood Farms in Floyd and outside of the NRV in Jeffersonton, Virginia at Death Ridge Brewery, just to name a few of their events.

“We have some good players, some that are young and kind of up and coming but are doing great,” singer, songwriter, musician, recording agent, and marketing band member Scott Patrick said. “I’m really proud of everyone in this band, I am the old guy, and wasn’t sure if I was up to the task.”

“I’ve learned a lot of lessons over the years, so I give them the freedom of choosing what to play. That artistic freedom is pretty nice to have at a young age and will help them grow and improve as musicians.”

Their upcoming event at Selah Springs Performance and Event Center in Riner, Virginia, is one they are certainly looking forward to. They will be headlining with Shelton & Williams, made up of veteran singers and musicians Johnny Williams, Jeanette Williams, and Jay Shelton.

According to Shelton & Williams Band website www.sheltonandwilliams.com, “The band’s material is a variety of styles including original, classic country, gospel, blues, traditional and progressive bluegrass and Americana. All members are songwriters and seasoned vocalists.”

The event on April 6, kicking off Lonesome Heart’s 2024 season, will include a songwriting workshop from 3-5 p.m. that is included with the \$15 ticket price. Doors will open for the 7 p.m. show at 6 p.m. and there will be food available for purchase catered by Hethwood Market.

Scott Patrick records Lonesome Heart’s music at his own Blue Tin Roof Studios. Their single titled “River of Tears” is set for a soon release and has a toe-tapping rhythm rich with the metallic sounds of the banjo coupled with the



PHOTO COURTESY OF SCOTT PATRICK

Lonesome Heart band (left to right) Emily Handy, Scott Patrick, Eric Handy, Nikki Wright, and Ethan Handy.

warm, melodic vocals of lead singer Nikki Wright.

“She’s a great area musician that has played with a lot of bands. She is the one that brought the song to the band, it’s a Honi Deaton song, a real good song she did years ago. We have been performing it over the past year,” Patrick said. “It is a cover song; everything else we have released I have written, and this is our third release.”

Plans for another single titled “Stronger”, is also set to be released later this year, and was also written and mostly arranged by Scott Patrick. He said he brings the core progression to the band, and they bring it all together with their individual instruments.

Patrick said another release set to happen in the Spring of 2024 was co-written by him another songwriter and musician out of Tennessee, Jeff McClellan. “I’m Just a Man” has Carson Peters playing fiddle and Zach Alvis on mandolin.

Tickets for the April 6 event can be purchased in advance online at www.selahspringsfarm.com.

See Lonesome Heart, page 5

## Board of Visitors to consider 2024-25 tuition and fees at April 9 meeting

*Virtual public comment opportunity scheduled for March 26*

The Virginia Tech Board of Visitors will meet on Tuesday, April 9, at 1:15 p.m. in 2100 Torgersen Hall, 620 Drillfield Drive, Blacksburg, to consider tuition and mandatory fees for the 2024-25 academic year.

In advance of the April board meeting, Virginia Tech will provide a virtual public comment opportunity on Tuesday, March 26, at 11 a.m. The link to observe this event or to pre-register to speak will be posted to the Board of Visitors website. Several board members will participate virtually as university officials provide an overview of proposed tuition and fees ranges and to receive public comment consistent with guidelines posted to the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors website.

Tuition and fees support the university’s major strategic initiatives — Virginia Tech Global Distinction and Virginia Tech Advantage - and serve as the primary source of operating revenue for delivering programs to our students. Tuition and fees are set in the context of university cost drivers and available state funding. Over the last several years, the board has prioritized the affordability of a Virginia Tech degree while making targeted investments that enhance the value of a Virginia Tech education to both students and the commonwealth and continue to position the university as a leader in teaching, research, and innovation.

With a heightened focus on student affordability, the university launched Virginia Tech Advantage, which leverages state, philanthropic, and university resources to reduce unmet financial need and increase support for students’ basic needs, career preparation, and transformational learning experiences. In addition to Virginia Tech Advantage, the university continues to mitigate tuition increases through the strategic alignment of incremental state funding, cost containment strategies, administrative efficiencies, and internal reallocations to maximize available resources.

As a result of these continued efforts, the board has been able to limit the average in-state undergraduate tuition increase to just half the rate of inflation for the last five years. This was achieved while making a sustained commitment to advancing underserved and underrepresented student enrollment, increasing institutional support for student financial aid, and advancing critical initiatives that enhance Virginia Tech’s mission as a leading global land-grant institution.

For the 2024-25 fiscal year, the university administration is modeling increases in tuition and Educational and General (E&G) fees from zero to three percent, which is below the 4.9 percent increase included in the university’s six-year plan approved by the Board of Visitors last November. The university administration will also recommend increases between zero percent and four percent for mandatory non-E&G fees to support mandated cost increases including employee compensation and benefits, and sustaining and enhancing student services including the transit system and student health/counseling services.

Virginia Tech maintains the lowest mandatory non-E&G fees among public four-year institutions in the commonwealth.

March 26 public comment guidelines:

Following an overview of proposed tuition and fees ranges at the March 26 virtual event, there will be an opportunity for public comment. Those interested in participating in the virtual public comment event must pre-register at the Board of Visitors website on a first-come, first-served basis no later than Tuesday, March 19. Speakers

See Meeting, page 5

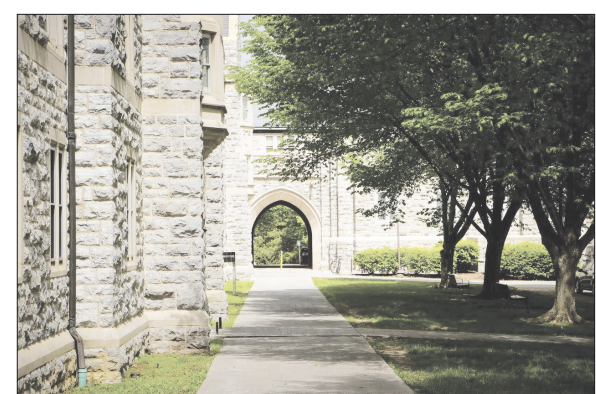


PHOTO BY RAY MEESE FOR VIRGINIA TECH

The arch of West Eggleston Hall on Virginia Tech's Blacksburg campus.





**Christiansburg's  
 BEST St. Patrick's Day  
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**St. Patrick's Day  
 Saturday, March 16th  
 9am until 2am**

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**Music Road Co  
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MACADO'S BLACKSBURG  
 Saturday, 16 March 2023 | 7.00 PM  
 Sunday, 17 March 2023 | 4.00 PM

**ST. PATRICK'S DAY**

**MACADO'S**

▶▶▶▶



**Blacksburg**

**Call for more information (540) 953-2700**

**DJ Rob playing  
 Saturday, March 16th  
 from 7-10pm in Radford**

**Radford**

**Call for more information (540) 731-4879**



**MACADO'S**



# UPCOMING EVENTS

## Wednesday, Mar. 13:

### Hahn Horticulture Garden talk

How mushrooms can save the world! with Benjamin Harder. The world is spinning out of control but mushrooms are prepared! They eat our waste, clean our water, grow our food and create compounds to treat our diseases. The talk is at the Hahn Horticulture Garden, 200 Garden Lane, Blacksburg, at noon. You do not need to register for these talks, just show up and attend. Parking passes for these educational events will be provided by the HHG thanks to supplementary funding provided by the School of Plant and Environmental Design.

## Wednesday, Mar. 13 – Tuesday, Mar. 26:

### Blacksburg North Main Trail Closure

The trail along North Main Street between the intersection of Mountain Breeze Drive and Red Maple Drive will be periodically closed. A contractor will be working to remove and replace the existing curb ramps at each intersection to meet current ADA requirements. Work will begin at the Mountain Breeze Drive intersection at the southeast and southwest corners. Once completed, work would then move to Red Maple. The work is anticipated to take two- three days at each curb ramp, with a total expected duration of two weeks.

## Thursday, Mar. 14:

### Open House for Prices Fork Road and U.S. Route 460 Bypass Interchange Study

Town staff will host a public engagement open house, 4-6 p.m. at the Blacksburg Community Center. Community members are invited to review and discuss conceptual designs put forth by architectural and engineering firm, Whitman, Requardt & Associates (WRA). These conceptual designs illustrate prospective enhancements to the bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure at the Prices Fork Road and the U.S. Route 460 bypass interchange. If you are unable to attend the meeting, please visit Let's Talk Blacksburg for more information on this project.

## Friday, Mar. 15:

### Book Presentation

There will be a presentation at the Blacksburg Community Center about the book "The Ledge and The Abyss: Near Death, Rescue, & The Search for Meaning" by Dean and Rosaleen Waggenspack on Friday, March 15 at 2pm. The program is free but registration is required. To register, call Joy Herbert at 540-443-1142.

## Superintendent from page 1

of educators to maintain the sustained attention of students. Christiansburg Middle School Principal Danny Knotts, along with a committee, reviewed cell phone policies, along with the need to include smartwatches and other personal devices. The committee also took an in-depth look into research on the impact that personal technology is having on students' academics and their mental health. Other school systems that have taken this approach have seen positive effects as well in their student bodies. A training session for students, staff, and faculty preceded the start date of the new ban.

"So far, the response has been favorable," Bragen said.

Some parents are not so sure they like the idea though. A recent anonymous post on Facebook in the group Everything Christiansburg shared the wdbj7.com link covering the recent phone ban titled, "Christiansburg Middle School bans phone usage during school day". The responses from local Facebook members ranged from 100% agreement with the reenactment of the policy to parents who felt this was endangering their children and creating anxiety for parents when they could not be in contact with their children during the school day. Several parents cited fear of school shootings and also that their children feel generally safer with their phone on them.

"I try to stay off Facebook as much as I can, but if there is a downside from parents, I no longer have immediate access to my kid." I understand that," Bragen said.

Bragen said parents always have immediate access to their child through the office.

"When I was a kid, you had a bad day at school, someone picking on you, having an issue with a teacher, ...these issues never ends," Bragen said. "Some of us need to reflect on, do we need to have 100% access to our child at any time?"

Bragen said distractions with parent-child communication, whether it is good or bad information, is one part of it, but also the problem with social media interactions from their peers.

Additional disruptions are also created between student peers from ongoing electronic communications. These communications can become volatile at times, putting students at risk during the school day for bullying and harassment and

## MCPS from page 1

MCPS employee for almost 20 years in the purchasing warehouse department, Brewster said.

"Millie exemplifies dedication and efficiency in managing purchasing paperwork, assisting bookkeepers, collaborating with directors, principals, and vendors on purchasing matters and meticulously reconciling credit card statements each month. Renowned for her diligence, team spirit, and unfailing positive attitude, Millie has significantly contributed to the department's success, consistently going above and beyond to ensure smooth operations and stepping in during emergencies to prevent any disruptions," Brewster said.

In student recognitions, Harry Farmer, Music Director, along with Principal Dr. Robert Johnson, applauded the accomplishments of the Blacksburg Middle School Band, who competed in All District at Salem High School, with 41 BMS students qualifying.

"People talk about all the bad things that happen in our schools, and this is a wonderful example of the good things that sometimes we forget in all the different students we

will see here tonight," Board member Jamie Bonds said. "So, thank you guys. You look professional, you sounded professional, and more wonderful, great things yet to come to you."

Mark Husband, Director of Career & Technical Education and Business Partnerships at Montgomery County (VA) Public Schools highlighted the hard work and dedication of the Fall 2023 athletic state champions.

Auburn High School Women's Volleyball team was first introduced by Principal Dr. David Hurd. The team, under the guidance Coach Sherri Millirons, has won eight state championships out of the last eleven, Hurd said.

"While this is a normal occurrence for our volleyball team it is always special," Hurd said.

Principal Guylene Wood-Setzer introduced the Blacksburg High School Golf Team, led by Coach Rick Mattox, in recognition for their continued success winning three consecutive Class Four state championships.

"We are currently ranked number two in the country for high school teams," Mattox

## Saturday, Mar. 16:

### American Red Cross Blood Drive

Help Save a life by donating blood at the Waldron Wellness Center-Carilion Community Room at the Meadowbrook Library; 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. Schedule your appointment at [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org). Brunch will be provided for donors and they may select a used book to take home. Books compliments of Friends of the Library-Meadowbrook Chapter. Blood drive sponsored by Craighill Masonic Lodge and Meadowbrook Library.

## Monday, Mar. 18:

### Southwest Virginia Legal Aid Society meeting

The Board of Directors of Southwest Virginia Legal Aid Society will meet by conference call at 6:30 p.m. The public is welcome to participate in the call from the Marion Office of Southwest Virginia Legal Aid Society located at 227 West

Cherry St., Marion, VA 24354. For further information, contact: Joseph R. Carico, Executive Director (276) 783-8300.

## Wednesday, Mar. 20:

### Hahn Horticulture Garden talk

Tim Shively - Tree of Heaven: Picking up from Scott Salom's talk from last month, Tim will talk about his research and sustainable IPM tools and strategies for use on tree of heaven. The talk is at the Hahn Horticulture Garden, 200 Garden Lane, Blacksburg, at noon. You do not need to register for these talks, just show up and attend. Parking passes for these educational events will be provided by the HHG thanks to supplementary funding provided by the School of Plant and Environmental Design.

## Thursday, Mar. 21:

### Sons of Confederate Veterans meeting

The Sons of Confederate Veterans, Stuart Horse Artillery Camp 1784 will meet at 7 p.m. at American Pie Restaurant, 1041 Floyd Highway North. Members of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) are also invited to attend. Member Dana Jackson will speak on the "History of the Confederate Veterans Home in Richmond." If Floyd and Montgomery County Public Schools are closed on Thursday or Friday of this week due to weather, the meeting will be cancelled. For further information, please call 540-320-4315 or 540-239-9864.

## Monday, Mar. 25:

### Radford City Council meeting

interferes with their education.

Principal Knott relayed the cell phone ban information in the following letter to "CMS Family", which included the consequences for violations of the policy:

Dear CMS Family,

As a community of lifelong learners, the faculty of CMS are always looking to improve so that we can best educate our students. One area that we have looked at this year is the use of personal electronic devices, or simply put, cell phones. Early in the year, we put together a committee to review the current personal device policy to see where we could do better. As part of their work, the committee reviewed numerous articles that strongly suggest that the distractions personal technology brings to our students negatively impacts their academic performance and mental health. As we move forward with this updated policy, we invite you to look at the articles the committee reviewed that are available via this link.

Working with the entire staff, the committee discovered that the policy needed to be updated to include newer forms of technology, such as smartwatches and headphones, and to create a schoolwide standard for enforcement of the policy. Please review the new policy below. Staff will begin teaching students about the new policy and it will take effect on March 5, 2024 so that we may finish the year strong.

Schools that have taken a similar approach to our new policy are seeing positive outcomes to school climate and academic performance. We look forward to the growth and strides we will make at CMS in the days to come.

Updated Policy

Cell phones and other electronic devices - including smart watches and wired/wireless headphones - are non-school items that are disruptive to the learning environment. Students are not permitted to use or display such devices during the school day (from bus room dismissal to the last bell of the day). The expectation is that they are "off and away" in all areas of the building including, but not limited to, hallways, bathrooms, cafeteria, etc. Such devices will be considered to be "in use," and will be confiscated and turned into the office if they are on (silent

The Radford City Council will hold its regularly scheduled meeting at 7 p.m. in council chambers at the Radford Municipal Building, 10 Robertson St., Radford. See the agenda at [www.radfordva.gov](http://www.radfordva.gov).

### Montgomery County Board of Supervisors meeting

Public meetings are the second and fourth Monday of each month at the Montgomery County Government Center, 755 Roanoke St. in Christiansburg. Closed sessions begin at 6 p.m. if needed. Open sessions begin at 7:15 p.m. Citizens are invited to attend and allowed to speak at each meeting. All regular meetings of the Board of Supervisors are rebroadcast on Montgomery County Comcast and Shentel Channels 190 daily.

## Tuesday, Mar. 26:

### Blacksburg Town Council meeting

The council meets in regular session the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month at 6:30 p.m. in the Roger E. Hedgepeth Chambers of the Blacksburg Municipal Building, 300 S. Main St. These meetings are open to the public and televised live on WTOB Channel 2.

### Christiansburg Town Council meeting

Regular Town Council meetings are held on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month beginning at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers of Town Hall (100 E. Main St.). The public is welcome and encouraged to attend, with a citizen hearing time reserved at each meeting for residents to bring any matter they desire before the entire council.

## Saturday, Mar. 30:

### Easter Egg Hunt

Come join Pilot Community Center for its first annual Easter Egg Hunt; 2 – 3 p.m.! Kids 10 years old and under are invited to search for candy and prize-filled eggs. There will be refreshments for parents and kids of all ages. So come and join in the fun! This event will be held weather permitting. If there is rain or snow, the event will be cancelled and cannot be rescheduled. For more information: Call Brenda Eanes at 540-382-0857.

## On-going:

### NRV Virginia Passenger Rail Survey

The Virginia Passenger Rail Authority is conducting a survey seeking input on planning, designing, and constructing rail infrastructure improvements to extend passenger rail service to the New River Valley. To participate in the survey, please visit <https://form.jotform.com/240044027996054>. For more information on the New River Valley passenger rail expansion, please visit the Virginia Passenger Rail Authority's website at <https://vapassengerrailauthority.org/nrvproject/>.

or audible), sending or receiving a call or text message, including swiping or tapping smart watches, or being used to take, display, or send photos/videos, etc. Again, the expectation is, "off and away." Students may have such items in their possession for use after school hours, during bus rides to and from school, and during athletic events. Students may use personal electronic devices during instructional time only for academic purposes and under the direction and supervision of the classroom teacher.

If electronic devices are visible, are swiped, tapped, or ring/buzz during the school day they will be confiscated and include the following consequences:

First offense - Devices confiscated and sent to the office till the end of the day. Students may pick up devices at the end of the day.

Second offense - Devices confiscated and sent to the office till the end of the day. Parents responsible for picking up the devices.

Third offense - Same as the second offense.

Fourth (and additional) offense - Same as the second offense but includes Saturday school detention.

Parents who need to contact students during the school day should contact the main office 540-394-2180. Students who need to contact parents during the school day must go to the counseling office.

Cell phone use on field trips and during special events is at the discretion of the teacher and

administration. Students are not permitted to use their personal cell phones to take pictures or videos of anyone, and they may not post any pictures or videos during school hours, which includes school bus transportation to and from school.

Sincerely,  
Danny Knott

Principal

Bragen said the School Board would continue the policy review for Montgomery County at their planned retreat.

The CMS Student/Family Handbook 2023-24 can be found on the [www.mcps.gov](http://www.mcps.gov) website, and by selecting Christiansburg Middle School's webpage. The cell phone policy is listed on page 21 of the handbook.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MCPS

**MCPS Support Staff Employee of the Year for 2024-25 is Millie McPherson (center), with (left) Deputy Superintendent Dr. Annie Whittaker, and (right) Superintendent Dr. Bernard Bragen.**

Akers - Eastern Montgomery High School.

The second cohort of graduates from the Alternative Model for Professional Studies (AMPS) were also congratulated on completion of the program. These individuals have completed the required 30-month professional studies program to meet the requirements for a provisional teaching license: Evan Gray, Emily Gruver, and Cameron Harris-Gilliam.

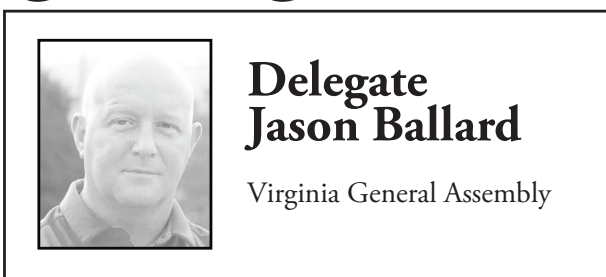


# OPINION

## Navigating budget negotiations in Richmond

The 2024 Virginia General Assembly Legislative Session is winding down, although at the time of this article's writing, the state budget continues to be debated amongst budget conferees. Six members of the House and six members of the Senate act as budget conferees during a process that seeks to reconcile differences between the House budget (HB 29/30) and the Senate budget (SB 29/30). There are differences – both large and small – between the House and Senate versions of Virginia's spending plan, the highest-profile issue being Governor Youngkin's plan to move the Washington Wizards NBA team and the Washington Capitals NHL team to Alexandria. This proposal is currently included in the House budget, but not in that of the Senate. This is one of many differences that will have to be resolved by budget conferees before the budget makes its way to Governor Youngkin for his consideration. Should the budget pass on time, we will return to Richmond in April to debate and vote on the Governor's recommendations or vetoes on the budget and any other piece of legislation passed this session.

I am hopeful that by next week there will be more to share as to the funding priorities that were included in the final budget product. As mentioned in my last column, Democrats in the House and Senate are in the driver's seat and any protracted budget standoff would be an embarrassing development since they



**Delegate Jason Ballard**

Virginia General Assembly

control the process and the General Assembly. At stake – and of regional significance – is my budget request of \$1 million to enhance rural maternal healthcare so expectant mothers do not have to travel to Roanoke for vital healthcare and can instead receive care closer to home.

On a slightly unrelated topic, I thoroughly enjoyed the visits I received from 42nd District constituents during this legislative session. It fills me with pride that although Richmond is four hours away from home, citizens of all political persuasions took the time to engage with me in the democratic process. It was always a highlight of my day getting to spend time with those of you who made the trip to Richmond!

To sum up the 2024 legislative session, it will likely be remembered as one where pragmatic solutions to real problems were eschewed for items on the political

left's wish list. Instead of focusing on tax breaks for Virginians, Democrats prioritized the legalization of recreational marijuana. Instead of focusing on legislation that would make our communities safer, Democrats passed legislation that would reduce penalties for those who possess dangerous controlled substances. And instead of loosening restrictive green energy policies that will make life more expensive and electricity less reliable, Democrats struck down Republican proposals to roll back unrealistic electric vehicle mandates. Fortunately for Virginia, Governor Youngkin will be a reliable backstop against many of these Democratic party overreaches and I expect his veto pen to be busy. I look forward to keeping you updated in the coming weeks as to the budget's progress and any other pertinent information from the 2024 session's closing hours.

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

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

March is nationally known as Multiple Sclerosis Education and Awareness Month and thanks to the Multiple Sclerosis Alliance of Virginia (MSAV), it is also declared as such by the State of Virginia, as well as numerous localities across the state spanning from Charlottesville to Bristol. The MSAV is a truly unique, patient, and volunteer run organization that provides unparalleled support, guidance, and assistance with navigating a life with the daunting symptoms MS presents.

The MSAV operates out of the only MS Center in Southwest Virginia, the Roanoke Valley Multiple Sclerosis Center. We serve as a gateway to hope to patients who visit the clinic and our members across the state. Our programming includes monthly support

groups, annual respite retreats, educational conferences, advocacy work, Cinderella's Closet and more. We welcome everyone and encourage our members to bring their families. Our most recent event, an MS Education and Awareness conference in Radford, March 8 -10 presented keynote MS specialists, breakout sessions, aquatic therapy, panel speakers, pajama contest, impromptu dance parties, our beloved saran wrap ball game and more.

The MSAV members find it imperative to build public awareness about the disease for many reasons. Namely, to destigmatize the debilitating diagnosis by pairing a face with the disease and saying, hey, look, I am surviving and thriving despite my limitations due to MS. In addition, if the public is more educated and aware of

symptoms and daily challenges of MS, it will naturally lead the way to more compassion towards others. Take it from me, life with MS is challenging and many of us battle with depression and anxiety. The MSAV is a lifeline and provides vital connection and a safe place with people who 'get it.' I implore you to do your homework on MS, as there is a plethora of information available via quick google search. While you're at it, why not send your loved one or that person you haven't been in touch in a while who has MS a nudge and let them know you are aware it is MS awareness month and you are thinking of them.

*In Solidarity,  
Ashley Collier*

## News Messenger

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## Virginia average gas prices on the rise

Average gasoline prices in Virginia have risen 3.2 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.24/g today, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,081 stations in Virginia. Prices in Virginia are 12.3 cents per gallon higher than a month ago and stand 0.5 cents per gallon lower than a year ago. The national average price of diesel has fallen 1.3 cents in the last week and stands at \$4.02 per gallon.

According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Virginia was priced at \$2.85/g yesterday while the most expensive was \$3.99/g, a difference of \$1.14/g. The lowest price in the state yesterday was \$2.85/g while the highest was \$3.99/g, a difference of \$1.14/g.

The national average price of gasoline has risen 6.2 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.40/g today. The national average is up 23.0 cents per gallon from a month ago and stands 4.5 cents per gallon lower 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.

Historical gasoline prices in Virginia and the national average going back ten years:

March 11, 2023: \$3.24/g (U.S. Average: \$3.44/g)

March 11, 2022: \$4.26/g (U.S. Average: \$4.33/g)

March 11, 2021: \$2.73/g (U.S. Average: \$2.84/g)

March 11, 2020: \$2.14/g (U.S. Average: \$2.31/g)

March 11, 2019: \$2.31/g (U.S. Average: \$2.49/g)

March 11, 2018: \$2.34/g (U.S. Average: \$2.51/g)

March 11, 2017: \$2.09/g (U.S. Average: \$2.30/g)

March 11, 2016: \$1.69/g (U.S. Average: \$1.89/g)

March 11, 2015: \$2.29/g (U.S. Average: \$2.45/g)

March 11, 2014: \$3.27/g (U.S. Average: \$3.49/g)

Neighboring areas and their current gas prices:

Roanoke- \$3.17/g, down 3.1 cents per gallon from last week's \$3.20/g.

Richmond- \$3.23/g, down 0.3 cents per gallon from last week's

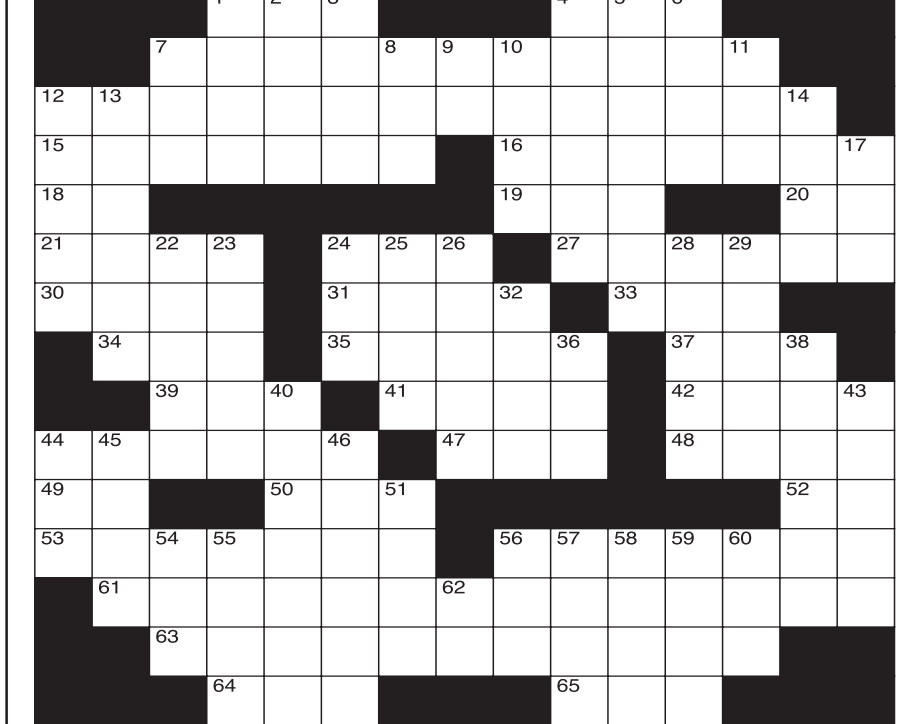
\$3.23/g.

West Virginia- \$3.26/g, down 1.5 cents per gallon from last week's \$3.27/g.

"The national average price of gasoline has seen a continued but measured rise compared to last week, but the pace of increases has slowed slightly in the last few days. With government data showing a rise in refinery utilization last week, there may be some good news on the horizon for drivers," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy. "Much of the seasonal rise that happens this time of year is a culmination of refinery maintenance, the switch to summer gasoline, and rising demand. If refineries continue to boost output of products like gasoline, diesel, and jet fuel, it could mean earlier-than-expected relief. However, the changeover is still in process, so while we'll likely see the continuation of upward pressure on prices, improvement in output could slow that pressure down some."

*GasBuddy*

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE



- |  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <p><b>CLUES ACROSS</b></p> <p>1. Helps little firms</p> <p>4. Political action committee</p> <p>7. Allowed</p> <p>12. Olivia Colman played one</p> <p>15. Open</p> <p>16. He had a notable lamp</p> <p>18. Promotional material</p> <p>19. Domesticated animal</p> <p>20. Larry and Curly's buddy</p> <p>21. The best ever</p> <p>24. TV network</p> <p>27. Checked for</p> <p>30. Dry or withered</p> <p>31. Expression of annoyance</p> <p>33. Dash</p> <p>34. Fifth note of a major scale</p> | <p>35. A secret clique</p> <p>37. Partner to cheese</p> <p>39. ___ school: where to learn healing</p> <p>41. City in ancient Syria</p> <p>42. Gasteyer and de Armas are two</p> <p>44. Established practice</p> <p>47. Thanksgiving side dish</p> <p>48. District in Peru</p> <p>49. It's becoming more prevalent</p> <p>50. State in India</p> <p>52. Measure of illumination</p> <p>53. Raised platform</p> <p>56. Japanese warrior</p> <p>61. R.L. Stevenson novel</p> <p>63. Transitory</p> <p>64. Advanced degree</p> <p>65. Fiddler crabs</p> | <p><b>CLUES DOWN</b></p> <p>1. Prevent from seeing</p> <p>2. Czech city</p> <p>3. ___ and Andy, TV show</p> <p>4. A young pig</p> <p>5. Removed surgically</p> <p>6. Covered with</p> <p>7. Chest muscle (slang)</p> <p>8. Nigerian City</p> <p>9. Midway between south and east</p> <p>10. A way to shut</p> <p>11. Stop playing</p> <p>12. Marshy places</p> <p>13. Takes apart</p> <p>14. Ten cents</p> <p>17. A gesture of assent</p> <p>22. Scent</p> <p>23. Teletypewriter</p> <p>24. General's assistant (abbr.)</p> <p>25. Hillside</p> <p>26. Taxi driver</p> <p>28. Semitic Sun god</p> | <p>29. Town in India</p> <p>32. Traditional rhythmic pattern</p> <p>36. Fugitives are on the ___</p> <p>38. Type of dance</p> <p>40. Two letters, one sound</p> <p>43. Having a strong, pleasant taste</p> <p>44. Golf score</p> <p>45. Mayhem</p> <p>46. Drenched</p> <p>51. River in northeastern Asia</p> <p>54. Drug to treat anxiety (abbr.)</p> <p>55. Part-time employee</p> <p>56. A very large body of water</p> <p>57. Aboriginal people of Japan</p> <p>58. Millisecond</p> <p>59. Forearm bone</p> <p>60. Subway dweller</p> <p>62. Royal Mail</p> |
|--|---|---|--|

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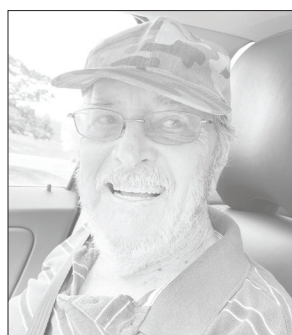
# OBITUARIES

## Mabry, James Otis

James Otis Mabry, 90, of Dublin, passed away Saturday, Mar. 9, 2024.

He retired from Inland Motors. He was preceded in death by his parents, Clarence and Agnes Mabry; brothers, Larry Douglas Mabry and Clarence "Tommy" Mabry; sisters, Annie Mary McPeak, Louise Switzer, Virginia Epperly and Margie Cronk; and grandson, Michael Mabry, Jr.

Survivors include his children, Michael Mabry (Kathy), Barbara Gilmer (Roger), Brenda Cox (Sammy), and Deborah



Mabry; grandchildren, Michelle Fithian, Samantha Martin, Cynthia Moore, Angie Fortner, Mitchell Gilmer, Bruce Mabry, Jeanlena Pauley, Kevin Pauley, and Amanda Brooks; 23

great grandchildren; 13 great-great grandchildren; sister, Mildred Jones; and many other relatives and friends.

The family will receive friends from 12 – 1:30 p.m. on Friday, March 15, 2024, at the Mullins Funeral Home in Radford. Funeral services will begin at 1:30 p.m. with Pastor Adam Fithian officiating. Entombment will follow in Roselawn Memorial Gardens Mausoleum.

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

## Bland, Marie Dillon

Marie Dillon Bland, 100, of Wake Forest, N.C. passed away peacefully Mar. 10, 2024. She was born Dec. 21, 1923, to Hampton Hobert Dillon and Margie Ruth Albert Dillon.

She was preceded in death by her parents, husband James Walter Bland, Jr., sister Margaret Jewel Dillon Croy and brothers Elmer Austin Dillon, William Eugene Dillon and Esley Neil Dillon. Survivors include her daughter Donna Bland Burrows (Mike) of Wake Forest, N.C., son James Dillon Bland (Barbara) of Pawleys Island, S.C., sister-in-law June Hollandsworth of



Fairlawn, Va. along with five grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.

Marie was the best mother ever, and amazing caregiver to her husband Jim during his later years and a doting grandmother to her grandchildren and great

grandchildren. She was a devoted, active member of the Blacksburg Christian Church and Belmont Christian Church as well as a charter member of the Blacksburg Women's Club.

Visitation and services will be held at the McCoy Funeral Home Mar. 14, 2024. Visitation will be 1-2 p.m. and services will be 2-3 p.m., presided by James Terry, followed by interment at the West View Cemetery.

The family requests that in lieu of flowers, donations be made to the Blacksburg Volunteer Rescue Squad and the Montgomery County Christmas Store.

## Terry, David Eugene

David Eugene Terry, 63, went to be with the Lord Mar. 7, 2024.

David was a proud Marine serving overseas for three years from 1979 – 1981.

He is preceded in death by his infant son David Ryan Terry; father James Terry; sister Angie Lynch; mother and father-in-law Louise and Bill Hamblin; as well as his beloved dog of 14 years, Tanner.

He is survived by his son Steve and wife Lynn;



grandchildren Brooklyn, Victoria, Liliana, Liam; a special niece Marti

Hamblin "Loulou" and her son Kamron; sisters-in-law donna and JD Duncan and Peggy Wickline; along with many nieces and nephews, aunts, uncles, and loved friends.

Services were held Tuesday, Mar. 12, 2024, at the McCoy Funeral Home Chapel with the Brother Jerry Shepherd and Jube Burke officiating. A visitation preceded the service.

## Parish, Nancy Ann Linkous

Nancy Ann Linkous Parish, 86, of Mount Airy, N.C. passed from this life Feb. 28, 2024.

Nancy was born and raised in Montgomery Co., Va. She was the daughter of the late Arnold R. Linkous and Oveda Linkous. She was also preceded in death by her brother, Arnold "Sonny" R. Linkous. She preceded her husband Robert K. Parish in death by one day. Robert K. Parish, originally from Galax, Va., passed away Feb. 29, 2024.

Family left to cherish her memories are sons

Randy Parish and his wife Amanda, and Andy Parish; granddaughter, Katie Parish Pierson and her husband Jim; sister Rita L. Callahan and her husband Eddie; sister-in-law Susan Linkous; nieces DeAnne C. Webb and husband John, and Farrah Linkous; nephews Todd Callahan and his wife Pam, Darrell Linkous, and his wife Stephanie; two step grandsons Daniel and Eli Harbaugh; and step great granddaughter Avery Pierson.

Nancy and her husband were graduates

of Kentucky Christian University and spent their 64 years together spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ. They served congregations in Indiana, Wisconsin, Ohio, and North Carolina.

They have gone home together to meet the Lord. Dual services to celebrate their lives and ministry were held Saturday, Mar. 9, 2024 with visitation preceding the service at Moody Funeral Home, Dobson, N.C. Burial followed at the Double Creek Church of Christ, Dobson, N.C.

## Morris, Tamela Jean Carden

Tamela Jean Carden Morris, 63, passed away Sunday, Mar. 10, 2024, at her home in Christiansburg with her family by her side.

She was a former caregiver at Heritage Hall. She was preceded in death by her parents, Dave Carden and Esther Ruth Weiss; and granddaughter, Anya.

Survivors include her children, Michelle Taylor (Kevin) of Christiansburg, Michael Rader (Sara) of Radford, and Crystal Joyce (Michael); 22



grandchildren and 12 great grandchildren; lifetime companion, Danny; special caregivers, Jon-Michael, Kaelyn, and Lea; canine companion,

Oreo; and many other relatives and friends.

The family will receive friends from 10 until 11 a.m. on Saturday, March 16, 2024, at the Mullins Funeral Home in Radford. Memorial services will begin at 11 a.m. with Elder Larry Carter officiating. Services will also be streamed on the Mullins Funeral Home Facebook page.

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

## PETS OF THE WEEK

These pets and many others are available for adoption at the Montgomery County Animal Care and Adoption Center, 480 Cinnabar Rd., Christiansburg. Phone: (540) 382-5795.

*Simon says, "Give me rubs!" "Stop giving me rubs." Ah ha! Didn't say, "Simon says," so keep the rubs coming! Simon is a people cat and will take attention wherever he can get it. He is a playful and loving boy ready to find a forever home. If you are ready for a round of "Simon Says," come by the Animal Care and Adoption Center to meet him.*



*Simpson is a gentle, sweet puppy. He is good on a leash, knows some commands, and he is ready to learn more. He can be skittish at first, but he gets over it quickly. Simpson would do best in a home with older children with whom he can share his energy. Come meet sweet Simpson at the Animal Care and Adoption Center.*

## Meeting

from page 1

will be asked to specify their affiliation with the university (current student, parent, alumnus, faculty or staff, member of the public).

The public comment period will be held for 30 minutes with the option to increase the time up to a total of 60 minutes if there is sufficient demand. If time remains during the half-hour public comment period after the pre-registered speakers offer their comments, additional speakers may be offered the opportunity to speak during the remaining time. Those who wish to speak but did not pre-register may submit a request via email to [vppg@vt.edu](mailto:vppg@vt.edu) between 11 and 11:45 a.m. March 26.

In addition, there will be dedicated time slots for a representative from the Undergraduate Student Senate and from the Graduate and Professional Student Senate to provide a statement on behalf of their respective constituencies. This does not preclude individual students from registering to speak during the public comment period or from providing written comments.

Each speaker will be limited to three minutes and must restrict their comments

to tuition and fees only. Speakers wishing to have their comments entered in the public record must submit a typed copy via email to [bov@vt.edu](mailto:bov@vt.edu) by March 26.

If you are an individual with a disability and desire an accommodation, please send an email to [vppg@vt.edu](mailto:vppg@vt.edu) or call 540-231-6232 during regular business hours at least 10 days prior to the event.

The March 26 virtual budget workshop and public comment session also will be livestreamed for those who wish to observe, without offering comment. The link will be provided at the Board of Visitors website. However, those wishing to make comments must register in accordance with the instructions above.

In lieu of oral comments, written comments may be entered online at the Board of Visitors website or mailed to: Kim O'Rourke, Secretary to the Board of Visitors Virginia Tech (MC 0125), 800 Drillfield Dr., Blacksburg, VA 24061.

Written comments must be received by Monday, April 1.

Virginia Tech

## Lonesome Heart

from page 1

PHOTO COURTESY OF SCOTT PATRICK

Shelton & Williams and Lonesome Heart will be performing at Selah Springs in Riner on April 6, 2024.

## Volunteer Montgomery offers scholarship for students seeking human services, medical careers

Lori Graham

Contributing writer

Volunteer Montgomery is seeking two outstanding seniors in Montgomery County planning to seek an education in the field of Human Services or a Human Medical career to be the recipients of scholarship money equaling \$1,000 for each student.

The cutoff date for submitted applications is April 12, 2024, by 5 p.m., after which two \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded to selected outstanding students in the Montgomery County school system.

According to information shared by Volunteer Montgomery's Coordinator Mandy Hayes, students should apply if they are planning to pursue higher education studies in one of the following areas of studies or of similar pursuits: Art Therapy, Behavioral Sciences, Child Development, Child and Family Studies/Services, Cognitive Sciences, Counseling (Mental Health, Vocational, Pastoral, etc.), Early Childhood Development Gerontology, Health and Human Services, Health Administration, Human Development, Human Services, Marriage and Family Therapy, Music Therapy, Nursing, Pharmacy, Psychiatric Rehabilitation, Psychology, Public Health, Rehabilitation Counseling, School Counseling, Social Work, Sociology, Special Education, Speech Therapy, Therapeutic Recreation, Urban Studies, and Vocational Rehabilitation.

All applications must include a current official transcript, a minimum of two letters of reference, and a typed letter addressing current volunteer activities, goals, and plans for a career in the Human Services or Human Medical fields, according to the application which can be found at [www.montva.com](http://www.montva.com). In addition to the website, additional information can be accessed through the student's guidance



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF VOLUNTEER MONTGOMERY

counselors or by contacting Volunteer Montgomery at [volunteermontgomery@montgomerycountyva.gov](mailto:volunteermontgomery@montgomerycountyva.gov).

ACCE students may also apply for this scholarship, and if a student is chosen who is participating in this program, an alternate form of payment will be provided.

Applications must be submitted no later than 5 p.m. on April 12 by mail or email to [volunteermontgomery@montgomerycountyva.gov](mailto:volunteermontgomery@montgomerycountyva.gov), and marked ATTN: SCHOLARSHIP FUND. Applications timestamped after the 5 p.m. deadline will not be considered for the scholarship. The Advisory Council will make the final decision on awards.

Volunteer Montgomery is funded by Montgomery County government, according to their Facebook page.



# Marketplace

THE FINECASTLE HERALD | The Vinton Messenger | THE NEW CASTLE RECORD | SALEM TIMES REGISTER | News Messenger | RADFORD News Journal

### Yard Sales - Vinton

**Cornerstone Antiques Going out of Business YARD SALE**

Selling contents of utility building back of antique shop

Saturday, March 16 & Possibly Sunday March 17

Rain date following weekend

123 West Lee Avenue Vinton VA

Across from the Farmers Market

### Employment

**Intuitive Surgical Operations, Inc.**

seeks a Quality Engineer (QE-SS) in Blacksburg, VA to coordinate quality initiatives in product quality, data quality & process quality.

Telecommuting permitted w/i the area of intended emp. Reqs MS+2. \$78,400-\$106,000/yr.

Email resumes to Hien.Nguyen@intusurg.com. Must ref job title & code in subj line.

### miscellaneous

**Happy Jack**

When veterinary care is unavailable or unaffordable, ask for Happy Jack animal health care products for horses, dogs, & cats.

H&H Outdoors 254- 2420

### Legals - Botetourt County

#### ABC NOTICE

15 PEAKS LLC, trading as 15 PEAKS, 5053 GLADE CREEK RD. ROANOKE VA 24012.

The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) AUTHORITY for a FARM WINERY license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages.

MEGAN SEIBEL, MANAGER

NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at [www.abc.virginia.gov](http://www.abc.virginia.gov) or 800-552-3200.



### STATEWIDE ADS

#### AUCTIONS

ATTN. AUCTIONEERS: Advertise your upcoming auctions statewide and in other states. Affordable Print and Digital Solutions reaching your target audiences. Call this paper or Landon Clark at Virginia Press Services 804-521-7576, [landonc@vpa.net](mailto:landonc@vpa.net)

#### HOME IMPROVEMENT

Vinyl Replacement Windows Installed! Starting at \$350 Call 804-739-8207 for More Details! Ronnie Jenkins II, Siding, Roofing and Gutters! FREE Estimates! Call 804-739-8207 for More Details! American Made Products!

Prepare for power outages today with a Generac Home Standby Generator. Act now to receive a FREE 7-Year warranty with qualifying purchase. Call 1-844-947-1479 today to schedule a free quote. It's not just a generator. It's a power move.

Replace your roof with the best looking and longest lasting material steel from Erie Metal Roofs! Three styles and multiple colors available. Guaranteed to last a lifetime! Limited Time Offer up to 50% off installation + Additional 10% off install (for military, health workers & 1st responders.) Call Erie Metal Roofs: 1-844-902-4611

Eliminate gutter cleaning forever! LeafFilter, the most advanced debris-blocking gutter protection. Schedule a FREE LeafFilter estimate today. 20% off Intro

### Legals - Botetourt County

#### ABC NOTICE

Sunset Grille at Ashley Plantation Inc. trading as Sunset Grille and Catering, 2414 Country Club Rd., Troutville, VA. 24175-3920

The above establishment is applying to the VIRGINIA ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL (ABC) AUTHORITY for a Retail On and Office Premise Wine, Beer, and Mixed Beverage license to sell or manufacture alcoholic beverages.

Donald Sutliff, Owner

NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of two required newspaper legal notices. Objections should be registered at [www.abc.virginia.gov](http://www.abc.virginia.gov) or 800-552-3200.

### Legals - City of Radford

#### TRUSTEES SALE

**PARCEL OF LAND LOCATED IN: West Ward of the City of Radford, Virginia Containing 0.2479 acres, more or less**

Commonly Known as: 1002 West Main Street, Radford, Virginia

IN EXECUTION OF A CERTAIN DEED OF TRUST OF RECORD IN THE CLERKS OFFICE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT OF RADFORD CITY, VIRGINIA, AS INSTRUMENT NO. 201100838, DATED AUGUST 29, 2011, WHEREAS, BY DEED OF BARGAIN AND SALE AND ASSUMPTION DATED SEPTEMBER 1, 2016, RECORDED IN THE AFORESAID CLERK'S OFFICE AS INSTRUMENT NO: 201600804 THE DEED OF TRUST WAS ASSUMED BY MARK BROOKNER. DEFAULT HAVING BEEN MADE IN THE PAYMENT OF THE DEBT THEREIN SECURED AND BEING REQUIRED TO DO SO BY THE NOTEHOLDER, THE UNDERSIGNED SUBSTITUTE TRUSTEE, AFTER GIVING FOURTEEN (14) DAYS DUE NOTICE TO THE OWNERS OF THE REAL ESTATE OF THE DATE, TIME, PLACE AND TERMS OF SALE, WILL OFFER FOR SALE AT PUBLIC AUCTION, IN FRONT OF THE RADFORD CITY COURTHOUSE LOCATED AT 619 SECOND STREET, RADFORD, VIRGINIA, ON THE 29th DAY OF MARCH, 2024, AT 10:00

### Legals - City of Radford

#### A.M., THE REAL ESTATE WITH IMPROVEMENTS THEREON KNOWN AND DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

All that certain tracts or parcels of land, with the improvements thereon and the appurtenances thereunto belonging, situate, lying and being in the City of Radford, Virginia, and described as follows: BEING all of Lots 28 and 29, part of Lots 27, 30, 34, 35, Section 1, Plan C, Radford Land and Improvement Company Lots, containing 0.2479 acres (10,800 sq. ft.), as designated and described on a plat of survey entitled, Physical Survey Lots 28, 29 and Part of Lots 27, 30, 34, 35 Section 1, Plan C Radford Land and Improvement Co. West Ward City of Radford, Virginia for Ronald R. Sowers", dated August 23, 2011, Job No. 565811, by James Conrad Groseclose, II, Land Surveyor, Mathews and Henegar Inc., professional engineers and land surveyors, a copy of which is attached hereto and made a part hereof and reference is hereby made to said plat of survey for a more accurate description of the property herein conveyed.

Tax Map Number: 13-(5)-SEC 1-27A-28-29-30A-34A+

Account Number: 020000684.

Commonly Known As: 1002 West Main Street, Radford, Virginia

SALE WILL BE MADE SUBJECT TO ALL

### Legals - City of Radford

#### EXISTING EASEMENTS AND RESTRICTIVE COVENANTS AS THE SAME MAY LAWFULLY AFFECT THE REAL ESTATE.

TERMS OF SALE: CASH, SETTLEMENT WITHIN FIFTEEN (15) DAYS OF SALE. A BIDDERS DEPOSIT OF TEN PERCENT (10%) MAY BE REQUIRED.

PLACE OF SALE: FRONT OF RADFORD CITY COURTHOUSE, AT 619 SECOND STREET, RADFORD, VIRGINIA

DATE OF SALE: MARCH 29, 2024  
TIME OF SALE: 10:00 A.M.

Daniel D. Hamrick, PC  
Substitute Trustee

By: Daniel D. Hamrick, Agent  
For Daniel D. Hamrick, PC

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Daniel D. Hamrick, Agent Daniel D. Hamrick, P.C. 104 South Franklin Street Christiansburg, VA 24073 (540) 382-0131

### Legals - City of Salem

#### Notice is hereby given

to all interested persons that the Council of the City of Salem, at its regular meeting on Monday, March 25, 2024, at 6:30 p.m., in the Council Chambers, City Hall, 114 North Broad Street, in the City of Salem, Virginia, will hold a public

### Legals - City of Salem

#### hearing, pursuant to Sections 15.2-2204 and 15.2-2285 of the Code of Virginia, as amended, to consider approval of the following requests relative to the CODE OF THE CITY OF SALEM, VIRGINIA:

1. Consider the request of E3MAG LLC, property owner, for rezoning the property located at 744 Electric Road (Tax Map # 155 - 2 - 2.2) from HBD Highway Business District to HM Heavy Manufacturing District.
2. Consider the request of Pinkesh R. Patel and Sonal P. Patel, property owners, for rezoning the property located at 1200 block Thompson Memorial Drive (Tax Map # 20 - 2 - 4) from RSF Residential Single-Family District to HBD Highway Business District.

If approved, Salem City Council intends to adopt the ordinance(s) associated with the above item(s) on first reading, with a second reading of those ordinance(s) at a subsequent meeting.

Copies of the proposed plans, ordinances or amendments may be examined in the Office of Community Development, 21 South Bruffey Street, Salem, Virginia.

At said hearing, parties in interest and citizens shall have an opportunity to be heard relative to the said requests.

THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SALEM, VIRGINIA

### Legals - City of Salem

BY: H. Robert Light  
Clerk of Council

#### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Notice is hereby given to all interested persons that the Board of Zoning Appeals of the City of Salem, Virginia will hold a public hearing, in accordance with the provisions of Sections 15.2-2204 and 15.2-2309 of the 1950 Code of Virginia, as amended, on March 27, 2024, at 4:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 114North Broad Street, in the City of Salem, Virginia, to consider the following applications.

The request of Carol Grimes, property owner, for a variance from Section 106-202.3(B)(1) of the City of Salem Zoning Ordinance pertaining to site development regulations, for the property located at 2933 Phillips Brook Lane, Tax Map # 290-1-3.9. The petitioner is requesting a 4 foot rear yard setback variance to allow the construction of a 12 x 16 sunroom addition. Section 106-202.3(B)(1) states that the rear yard setback for the principal structure in the RSF Residential Single Family zoning district is 25 feet.

At this hearing, all parties in interest will be given an opportunity to be heard, present evidence, and show cause why such requests should or should not be granted. For additional information, contact the Office of the Zoning Administrator, 21 South Bruffey Street, Salem,

### Legals - City of Salem

Virginia (Phone 3753032). THE BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS OF THE CITY OF SALEM: Mary Ellen H. Wines, CZA, CFM Planning & Zoning Administrator

#### BY: H. Robert Light Clerk of Council

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At this hearing, all parties in interest will be given an opportunity to be heard, present evidence, and show cause why such requests should or should not be granted. For additional information, contact the Office of the Zoning Administrator, 21 South Bruffey Street, Salem,

Virginia (Phone 3753032). THE BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS OF THE CITY OF SALEM: Mary Ellen H. Wines, CZA, CFM Planning & Zoning Administrator

BY: H. Robert Light Clerk of Council

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At this hearing, all parties in interest will be given an opportunity to be heard, present evidence, and show cause why such requests should or should not be granted. For additional information, contact the Office of the Zoning Administrator, 21 South Bruffey Street, Salem,

Virginia (Phone 3753032). THE BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS OF THE CITY OF SALEM: Mary Ellen H. Wines, CZA, CFM Planning & Zoning Administrator

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# MONTGOMERY SPORTS

## Auburn falls in state championship game

**Marty Gordon**  
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

Auburn High School's boys' basketball team returned to the state Class 1 championship game for the third time in the last five years.

In 2020 and 2022, the trip included bringing a title back to Riner.

This year, they led by many as 11 points in the second half before Lancaster put together a late run to pull out the 65-59 win. Lancaster also won last year's state championship.

The key was the Lancaster defense, which forced 21 turnovers. The lead changed hands six times in the final three minutes before Lancaster pulled away.

Nick Millirons led Auburn with 28 points. The team finished 22-9 overall, while putting together a 14-0 mark in the Mt. Empire District.

The Eagles dominated the Mt. Empire District basketball team announced on Friday. Nick Millirons was first-team all-district and first-team all-region C. In addition, he was named the player of the year for both the MED and Region C.

Millirons was joined on the all-district team by

teammates, Coahan Gordon and Drew Royal, who were also first-team all-region C.

Bruce Gill was named to the second team for MED, while Landon Mars and Brady Hale were named to the district honorable mention squad.

Auburn Coach Terry Millirons was named the coach of the year for the MED and region.

Also, Eastern Montgomery's Cam Sutphin was named to the second team all-Region C.

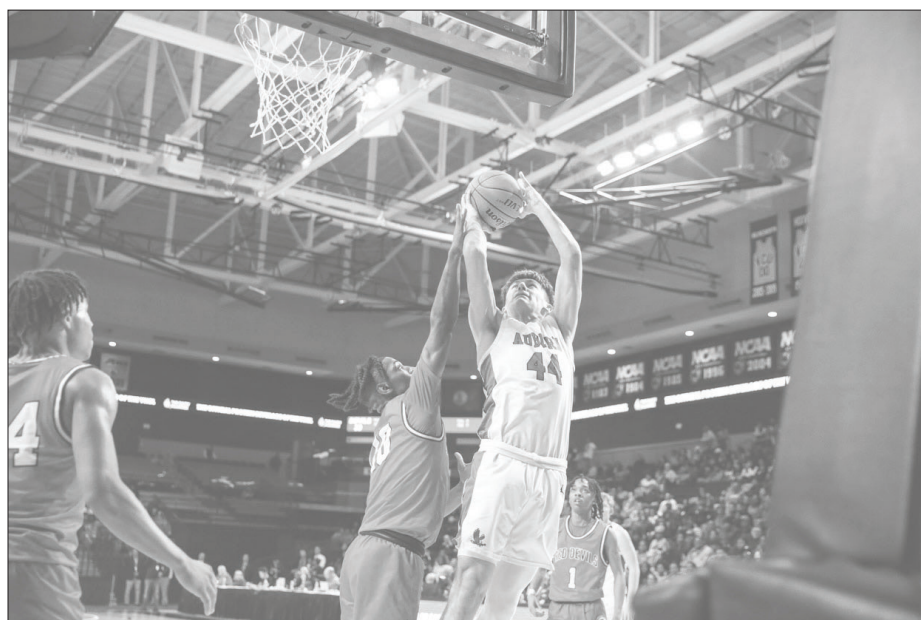
Millirons, the player, was named to the Class 1 state first team. Gordon was named to the second team.



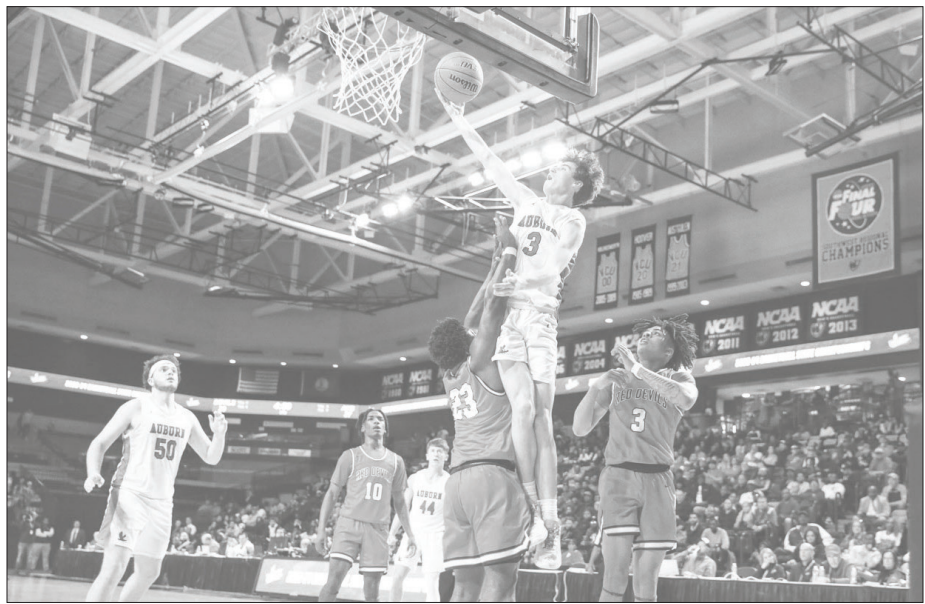
Nick Millirons tries to drive around the defender in Friday's state championship game in Richmond. He would finish with a game high 28 points as Auburn fell to Lancaster.



Head Coach Terry Millirons led Auburn to their third time in the state championship game in the past five years. With the loss, Auburn finished 22-9 this season.



Auburn's Coahan Gordon drops a bucket during his team's appearance on Friday in the state title game.



Drew Royal drives baseline and goes up for the layup in Auburn's state championship loss against Lancaster.

PHOTOS BY ASHLEY AKERS

## College football needs its own commissioner

College football is controlling the message for all other sports.

Yes, football does generate the money to fund all of the other programs at schools like Virginia Tech, but what is going on at the present time is not what we expected. Matter of fact, the "mega" conferences that will be setting the agenda is setting the stage to ruin the college football landscape as we know it.

But there is a solution that no one has discussed, which could solve all of the problems. Today, we will lay it out so everyone can understand. The problem is that the people in charge will not even consider it.

First, there has to be a person in charge of college football. The NCAA has no control over the gridiron and athletic directors need to admit it. Be honest here and agree to appoint or hire a person in charge of nothing but college football.



**From the Sidelines**  
Marty Gordon

The prime example is how the National Football League is set up with a commissioner. Under such a plan, there could finally be someone who can make decisions.

Secondly, there must be an agreement for "football-only" conferences. This would allow for the increase in football money, while allowing conferences to remain "geographic" in all other sports. Virginia Tech does not

need to play Stanford in tennis and soccer. The ACC could remain intact.

Thirdly, all of the conferences must have division separation for all sports. The ACC had it right but changed it in the past few years. The Atlantic and Coastal Division simply made sense and do now again.

If something is not done, college football as we know it is done, and the environment like at Lane Stadium will no longer matter.

The price of a ticket will definitely have to increase, and the question is whether it will ever be as popular as it is now.

Save college football! College football fans matter despite the fact athletic directors around the country no longer believe it. Fans are important. Don't forget who is paying that price at the gate.

## Outdoor report: Spring gobbler season almost here

Last year was a banner year for spring turkey harvest numbers. Could this year match that mark?

In 2023, Old Dominion turkey hunters tallied a record 24,447 birds, easily eclipsing the 20,580 mark set in 2015. Mike Dye, Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) upland game bird biologist, offers this year's forecast.

"I'm not anticipating a stellar year like the 2023 season," he said. "But there will be patches of good action. Several areas of the state are showing positive trends including the Shenandoah Valley and much of the eastern part of the state. Areas like the Northern Neck and the Northern Neck and the Southeastern counties, such as Southampton, Surry, and Sussex counties, will probably be a bright spot."

A major reason for the outstanding harvest last year was the above average poult per hen (PPH) ratio of 2.7 in 2021. Two-year-old toms typically make up the majority of any season's harvest, and the 2021 PPH was certainly a major factor in hunters doing so well the season before. The toms from that year class will be 3 years old this spring, and Dye confirms that a larger than normal contingent of that age group will be making the woods ring then.

However, a distinct downside of the forecast is that the PPH ratios in 2022 and 2023 were 1.9 and 1.8, respectively, below

average ratios.

"Last spring, the Southwestern Mountain area took a bad hit because there was a lot of rain in May, which is bad for brooding," said Dye. "Early on, broods aren't able to thermoregulate, so cold and rainy conditions can be bad for recruitment. However, the drought in the Shenandoah Valley and Northern Piedmont helped boost broods in those areas, which should improve bird numbers in future years."

Additionally, continues the biologist, the Northern Mountain domains have endured "hit and miss" reproduction in recent years. Many of these counties host large expanses of national forest and DWR Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs). Counties with stable weather and where public lands have experienced controlled burns, timber thinning, and other timber management projects that let sunlight hit the forest floor will likely supply better action than those locales that have not enjoyed the benefits of habitat improvements.

This season will mark the third year of the last three weeks of the season offering all-day hunting. Dye relates that the extra time afield hasn't made a significant effect on the overall harvest. Only 7.2 of the total harvest occurred during those afternoon hours in 2023.

See Spring, page 9

## Hokies, Seminoles to clash Wednesday at noon



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF VIRGINIA TECH

The bracket for the 2024 ACC Men's Basketball Tournament was announced Saturday night by the league office upon conclusion of regular-season action. Virginia Tech will be the No. 8 seed and begin its postseason run Wednesday at noon in the second round against No. 9 seed Florida State.

The tournament began Tuesday, Mar. 12 and runs through Saturday, Mar. 16 at Capital One Arena in Washington, D.C. The 71st edition of the tournament will be played for the third time in the nation's capital. Tech's second-round game vs. the Seminoles will be televised by ESPN or ESPN2.

VT and FSU split the season series

with each side winning at home. In the most recent matchup on Feb. 13 in Blacksburg, Hunter Cattoor and Sean Pedulla combined for 39 points in an 83-75 Tech victory over the Seminoles. A physical game from start to finish, the teams combined to shoot 61 free throws with the Hokies going 28 of 32 from the line.

Top-seeded North Carolina will be awaiting the winner of Tech/Florida State in Thursday's quarterfinals at noon on ESPN or ESPN2.

All 14 tournament games will be nationally televised on ESPN, ESPN2, ESPNU or ACC Network. In addition, all games will be available for streaming via ACCNX.

The full 2024 ACC Men's Basketball Tournament schedule:

- Wednesday, Mar. 13
- Second Round
- Noon – No. 8 Virginia Tech vs. No. 9 Florida State (ESPN/ESPN2)
- 2:30 p.m. – No. 5 Wake Forest vs. Notre Dame-Georgia Tech winner (ESPN)
- 7 p.m. – No. 7 Syracuse vs. NC State-Louisville winner (ESPN2)
- 9:30 p.m. – No. 6 Clemson vs.

See Hokies, page 9



# Spring from page 8

“Personally, I hunt a lot of public land, and typically my best hours to hunt have been between 10 and noon, when many hunters have left the woods,” Dye said. “There has been only a slight increase in the number of hunters heading afield in the afternoon.”

Dye says that he also has noted that the number of hunters mentoring individuals during the Youth and Apprentice Spring Turkey Hunting Weekend (which this year will be April 6 and 7) has remained fairly stable.

“We are not seeing significant increases in youth and apprentice hunters,” Dye said. “We would definitely like to see more people mentoring to make sure we can stabilize our turkey-hunter numbers.”

The spring turkey season begins on April 13 and hunters can be afield from one-half hour before sunrise until noon until April 28. All-day hunting runs from April 29 to the end of the season, May 18.

*Bruce Ingram, Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources*

# Hokies from page 8

Boston College-Miami winner (ESPN/ESPNU)  
Thursday, Mar. 14  
Quarterfinals  
Noon – No. 1 North Carolina vs. Wednesday Noon winner (ESPN/ESPN2)  
2:30 p.m. – No. 4 Pitt vs. Wednesday 2:30 p.m. winner (ESPN/ESPN2)  
7 p.m. – No. 2 Duke vs. Wednesday 7 p.m. winner (ESPN/ESPN2)  
9:30 p.m. – No. 3 Virginia vs. Wednesday 9:30 p.m. winner (ESPN/

ESPN2)  
Friday, Mar. 15  
Semifinals  
7 p.m. – Thursday afternoon winners (ESPN/ESPN2)  
9:30 p.m. – Thursday evening winners (ESPN/ESPN2)  
Saturday, March 16  
Championship  
8:30 p.m. – Semifinal winners (ESPN)  
*Virginia Tech Athletics*

# Sports notes: National ranking for local athletes

**Marty Gordon**

*NRVsports@ourvalley.org*

The Radford University baseball team leads the country in stolen bases. So far this season, Corbin Gratham leads the Highlanders with 11 stolen bags.

In another interesting national ranking, Christiansburg native and current Kentucky gymnast Raena Worley is in the top-three of several categories: #2 in the bars, #2 in the floor and #3 all-around.

### Six Hokie all-Americans

The 2024 NCAA Indoor Track and Field Championships concluded on Saturday at the TRACK at new balance with Virginia Tech tallying six First-Team All-American honors.

Sophomore Judson Lincoln IV finished third in the men's 400m clocking in a time of 45.57.

In the men's 800m, sophomore Nick Plant crossed the finish line fourth with a time of 1:47.75. Plant received First-Team All-American honors finishing within the top-eight of the individual event. Senior Lindsey Butler finished seventh in the women's 800m clocking in a season-best time of 2:02.39.

Victoria Gorlova earned First Team All-American accolades in

the triple jump with a personal-best mark of 44' 9.50" (13.65m) in the fifth round, finishing fourth.

### Coaching hire at Tech

Virginia Tech football coach Brent Pry continues to bolster his recruiting staff, announcing Gunter Brewer as Director of High School Relations. Brewer will work alongside James Johnson in his new role after serving as the wide receivers coach and passing game coordinator for the University of Maryland football program the past two seasons.

With more than three decades in coaching, Brewer has cultivated and maintained relationships across the Hokies' recruiting footprint throughout his career. His countless high school connections will help the Hokies attract the very best to play for Tech. Brewer has extensive experience in the ACC, SEC, Big 12, Big 10 and the NFL, coaching some of the best wide receivers to play the game including a pair of Biletnikoff Award winners in Randy Moss and Justin Blackmon, and Biletnikoff finalist Dez Bryant. He has coached in 19 bowl games and the 1996 FCS national championship game.

Last season under the direction of Brewer, Maryland receivers led the Big 10 in receiving yards. Prior to his time in College Park,

he was the wide receivers coach at Louisville from 2019-21 and served as the wide receivers coach for the Philadelphia Eagles in 2018.

Brewer was the Co-Offensive Coordinator/Wide Receivers Coach at North Carolina from 2012-17, where he helped UNC earn the program's first-ever appearance in the ACC Championship Game in 2015.

### Drones, ESPN list

Returning your starting quarterback in college is typically a coveted thing, and the Hokies are proud to claim that as they enter the 2024 season.

Last week, ESPN released its 10 most interesting quarterbacks heading into the fall and Virginia Tech's Kyrion Drones was ranked No. 2.

Staff writer Bill Connelly wrote about Drones' ability of making the offense move the ball more effectively as the season went on, showcasing his versatility with his arms and legs down the stretch.

He broke down expected points added (EPA) and how that number increased significantly with Drones under center, while mentioning how the Hokies are first in returning production in FBS—a good sign for things to come.

# Four teams to play at Greenbrier Tip-Off

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The Greenbrier Resort in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, is adding a November Tip-Off basketball event for several college basketball teams.

An announcement this week pinpointed three of the four teams, Wisconsin, Pitt and the University of Central Florida, who will play November 22-24. A fourth team will be announced after this year's season.

The event will be held in a unique ballroom, which used to be a banquet hall.

In 2023, Intersport and The Greenbrier entered into a long-term partnership to bring major college basketball to the mountain resort destination. Radford and Marshall met in a standalone contest at the resort on Nov. 10 in front of a sold-out crowd of more than 1,000 fans at Colonial Hall at the famed resort.

The Greenbrier was founded in 1778 and has been home over the past 10 years to a

Professional Golf Tournament and several boxing events.

“The Radford-Marshall game hosted at The Greenbrier earlier this season was a fantastic success for all involved,” said Jill Justice, D.O., President of The Greenbrier. “We can't wait to take that to a new level with The Greenbrier Tip-Off. We are excited about welcoming new teams and new fan bases to learn about what has made The Greenbrier 'America's Resort' for nearly 250 years. It will be an unforgettable experience.”

About the Teams of The Greenbrier Tip-Off:

Wisconsin Badgers

Head coach Greg Gard is concluding his ninth season at the helm for the Badgers.

Gard has led the Badgers to a pair of Big Ten regular-season titles since 2020.

This year, Wisconsin has appeared as high as No. 6 in the national polls and eyes a top-four finish in the Big Ten, guaranteeing a double-bye in the league tournament.

Winners of the 2023 Fort Myers Tip-

Off, the Badgers eye a second straight non-conference tournament title and third in four seasons.

All-time, Wisconsin has won 20 Big Ten regular-season titles, three conference tournament crowns and has made 26 NCAA Tournament appearances.

UCF Knights

Johnny Dawkins is completing his eighth season as the head coach of the Knights, who has won 60 percent of his games with the program, second-highest in UCF history.

UCF is completing its first season as one of the newest members of the Big 12 Conference, having made its mark with signature wins over ranked conference rivals Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas Tech.

The team will be looking for its third straight early season tournament championship, having won championships in Jacksonville (2023) and the Bahamas (2022).

The Knights have made the postseason three times in Dawkins' tenure, including an appearance in the NCAA Tournament

Round of 32 in 2019.

All-time the program has made nine postseason appearances as a Division I program, including five NCAA berths.

Pitt Panthers

Pitt is wrapping up its sixth season under the direction of head coach Jeff Capel, and eyes postseason play for the second straight season, marking the first time in nearly a decade the team played in the postseason in consecutive years.

The Panthers are looking to secure consecutive 20-win seasons for the first time since 2012-13 and 2013-14.

After starting just 1-5 in ACC play this season, Pitt has won 9 of its last 12 games, peaking at the right time heading toward the postseason.

In their history, the Panthers have appeared in 27 NCAA Tournaments and a combined 15 conference championships – 11 regular-season and four tournament titles.

Ticket information will be released at a later date.

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