



# News Messenger

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Saturday, March 23, 2024

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## Local attorney, also a nurse, to vie for U.S. Congress Ninth District seat

FLOYD – A Floyd woman who is both an attorney and registered nurse has launched her campaign for U.S. Congress.

Karen G.H. Baker served her country for 30 years as a federal employee, and now is running for Congress in Virginia's 9th House District against Rep. Morgan Griffith (R).

"Voters throughout the sprawling Southwest Virginia district are circulating petitions to get her on the ballot as a challenger to the Republican who has held the seat since 2011," according to her campaign. The Ninth District includes the counties of Montgomery, Pulaski, Lee, Wise, Dickenson, Buchanan, Scott, Russell, Tazewell, Washington, Smyth, Bland, Giles,

Grayson, Wythe, Carroll, Craig, Floyd and Patrick, as well as portions of Alleghany, Roanoke and Henry. It also includes the cities of Radford, Bluefield, Bristol, Covington, Galax, Martinsville, Norton and Salem.

"Southwest Virginia literally fueled the industrial growth and electrification of America," Baker said. "We have earned an investment in well-paying 21st century jobs, a robust rural healthcare system, improved housing, great schools, and protection of our land, water, and air. I will fight for the fighting 9th because we deserve the nation's respect."

Baker worked as a trial lawyer in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and eventually as the agency's assistant general counsel

for systemic litigation. Later she served 17 years as an administrative law judge for the Social Security Administration. Since moving to Floyd County in 2014 she has continued her legal career by providing pro bono assistance to individuals seeking disability benefits.

Baker's late husband, Richard Kimm, was a 20-year Navy pilot who continued his aviation career with Eastern Airlines and other companies. At their farm in South Carolina, they raised horses and fostered rescue border collies.

With her husband's health declining, Baker entered nursing school at Greenville Technical

See Baker, page 2



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BAKER CAMPAIGN  
Karen G.H. Baker is launching a campaign for Congress in Virginia's 9th House District.

## Bull & Bones named winner of YMCA at Virginia Tech Try Y's Pi contest

The 4th annual YMCA at Virginia Tech Try Y's Pi contest was a huge success selling more tickets than ever and offering an amazingly delicious five pie sampler from four local restaurants and the Y Meals On Main Cooks.

The participating bakeries were Our Daily Bread, Blacksburg Bagels, Next Door Bake Shop, Bull & Bones, Christiansburg and Seth and Connor- the Y Mobile Kitchen Crew.

The pies were consumed and the votes were cast and we are pleased to announce the winning pie was created by Kayla from Bull and Bones, Christiansburg - a delightful Coconut and Strawberry Curd Pie. Congratulations Kayla!

"Kayla joined Bull & Bones in July of last year

and has been a fantastic addition to our team," said Bull and Bones manager Robbie Hockett. "Not only is she an excellent server and bartender, but it turns out she's a wonderful baker as well. She has a side business called Riddle's Cakes where she makes cakes for weddings, birthdays other special occasions, as well as many delicious holiday themed treats."

Kayla says she got the inspiration for her pie from one of her favorite bar drinks.

"The flavor combination came from being a bartender there at BnB," she said. "One of my favorite drinks I make is a coconut cocktail with strawberry syrup. Coconut Cream Pie has always

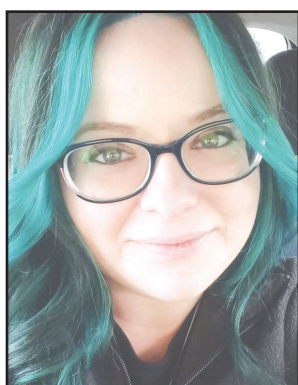


PHOTO COURTESY OF YMCA AT VIRGINIA TECH

**Kayla from Bull & Bones Christiansburg baked the winning pie for this year's YMCA at Virginia Tech Try Y's Pi contest.**

been a childhood favorite and I played around with multiple recipes before I settled on one that I loved.

See Contest, page 3



PHOTO COURTESY OF KIWANIS CLUB OF MONT. CO.  
Volunteers with the Kiwanis Club of Montgomery Co.-Blacksburg make some of the more than 600 quarts of Brunswick stew at a previous year's fundraiser.

## Prices Fork Brunswick Stew Fundraiser serves up a delicious dish from the Kiwanis Club

BLACKSBURG – Community members are in for a treat while providing necessary funding to support Prices Fork Elementary School, local youth charities and other Montgomery County programs.

The Kiwanis Club of Montgomery County is preparing to serve up their

locally-famous Brunswick Stew for the annual fundraiser, says Jerry Jones, the Long Range Planning Committee Chairperson for Montgomery County-Blacksburg Kiwanis Club.

"This is the club's signature project

See Stew, page 2



PHOTO BY JACK MICALLEF FOR VIRGINIA TECH  
Library student employee Kaleigh Miller gazes up at a 3D-printed skull of the Teleocrater rhadinus.

## University Libraries Prototyping Studio resurrects dinosaur cousin skeletons bone by bone

BLACKSBURG - Skeletons thought lost to history are being recreated one fragile fossil at a time in University Libraries' Prototyping Studio.

3D scanners and printers are constructing strikingly realistic replicas of the extinct Teleocrater rhadinus using ancient fossils from more than 240 million years ago. Funded through an Institute for Creativity, Arts, and Technology grant, University Libraries is showing how technology can illuminate the past and bring long-extinct organisms face to face with the present.

The team, led by Sterling Nesbitt and Michelle Stocker of the Department of Geosciences, had about 80 percent of the skeleton from the collections of five individuals from two fossil sites in Tanzania to use to

See Dinosaur, page 6

## 4th Annual Alleghany Springs Road clean-up set for April 6

Lori Graham  
Contributing writer

MONTGOMERY COUNTY – Alleghany Springs Road Clean-up in Shawsville is an early participant in Montgomery County's 41st annual Broomin and Bloomin event.

Organizer and long-time Shawsville resident, Billy Rakes, began organizing an early event to clean up the Alleghany Springs Road area four

years ago. "I always try to do it on the first Saturday, before the weeds and things start to grow," Rakes said. "The more the people that come out, and if everyone does a little, a lot gets done."

Alleghany Springs community members and others that want to give their time to the clean-up can come between 8 a.m. – 1 p.m. to Wyatt's Country Store on Alleghany Springs Road. Volunteers should come by the store and sign

in for the event where they are given trash bags and further instructions.

Rakes said that notification signs will be placed at both ends of the road, starting at the entrance of Kirk Hollow Road just past the Floyd Fitness Center and then also where Alleghany Springs meets the Floyd County line, warning drivers that groups will be working to clean up the trash in the community.

New this year, Rakes

said, Ballpark Signs in Christiansburg donated informational signs

that can be seen along Alleghany Springs Road and at Wyatts Country

Store announcing the  
See Clean-up, page 3



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF MONT. CO.  
Broomin & Bloomin began in 1983 and is a way for community members to volunteer their time to clean up the County in celebration of Earth Day on April 22

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## Saturday, Mar. 23:

### Skipper cannon firing

In celebration of the Virginia Tech Ring Dance, the Corps of Cadets cannon, Skipper, is scheduled to fire twice between 10 and 11 p.m. on the Drillfield.

## Monday, Mar. 25:

### Radford City Council meeting

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.

## Wednesday, Mar. 27:

### Hahn Horticulture Garden talk

What is a policy anyway and how do they shape the invasive species landscape? with Todd Schenk & David Haak. 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.

## 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.

### Red Cross blood drive

At St. Thomas Episcopal Church, 103 E. Main St., Christiansburg; 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.  
Appointments: <https://www.redcrossblood.org>.

### Blacksburg leaf compost giveaway

Loose and bagged leaves collected by the town are composted into leaf mulch, which can be used as a soil additive for composting. 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 gases. This year, leaf mulch compost will be available for pickup at Glade Road Growing 8 a.m.-12 p.m. To arrange pickup, residents must register and follow these guidelines: Register for a 30-minute time slot starting at 8 a.m. Limit two cubic yards per truck or trailer, loaded by town staff. The process of loading leaves may cause scratches or dents to trucks or trailers as well as possible suspension damage due to the weight.

By participating in this program, those accepting loads of mulch assume the risk inherent with loading leaves into their vehicles.

## On-going:

### Radford Noon Rotary Club's Field of Honor

The Field of Honor will be installed on the grounds of Glencoe Mansion, Museum and Gallery prior to Memorial Day and will be displayed until the Fourth of July. The Radford Noon Rotary Club is looking for people to sponsor flags. Individual flags are \$50. Corporate Sponsorship is: Bronze - \$250; Silver - \$500; Gold - \$1000; and Platinum - \$2500. Money raised through the project will benefit scholarships to Radford High School students attending Radford University, and other Rotary initiatives. All flags are made in the USA. For further questions, and to register, contact rotary.club.of.radford.noon@gmail.com.

### 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://vapassengerailauthority.org/nrvproject/>.

## Doctor at L5 Pain Clinic sentenced to 18 months in prison, ordered to pay over \$200,000

A doctor from North Carolina, who was assigned to several pain clinics in Virginia but was rarely physically on-site at any of them, was sentenced this week to 18 months in prison for conspiring with others to use a Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) registration number issued to another person, and also ordered to pay \$205,000 in fines and forfeiture.

Wendell Lewis Randall, 71, of Millers Creek, N.C., pled guilty in Nov. 2023 to conspiring to use, in the course of dispensing and distributing controlled substances, a DEA registration number issued to another person. DEA registration numbers are unique identifiers issued to medical providers in order to track who issues drug prescriptions and to ensure only qualified providers prescribe controlled substances.

According to court documents, between 2017 and 2020, Randall—a medical doctor who operated his own practice in North Carolina—was affiliated with L5 Medical Holdings, an LLC which was doing business as Pain Care Center, a line of pain clinics operating

in Woodlawn, Lynchburg, Madison Heights, Blacksburg, and Christiansburg.

Randall was nominally assigned to the Woodlawn clinic, but he was only occasionally ever on-site. He was also absent from the Christiansburg and Madison Heights clinics, but Randall allowed other, unqualified medical providers to use his DEA registration number to prescribe Suboxone (buprenorphine) in his name, even though he had never actually seen the patients who received the drugs.

Court documents, including text messages, show L5 paid Randall in exchange for being able to use his DEA registration number. Randall acknowledged in these messages that he was not seeing patients at L5's clinics and that he was aware his arrangement with L5 was illegal.

Court documents also revealed Randall's colleagues repeatedly warned him that his prescribing practices for Schedule II opioids were improper. Randall received over \$300,000 in

See Doctor, page 4

## Stew from page 1

which began 17 years ago," said Jones. "Signature projects are recurring, have significant impact on youth, and involve many volunteers. Brunswick stew is a joint effort with Price's Fork Elementary school teachers, staff and parents, and most Kiwanis Club members and spouses. We make over 600 quarts of stew and usually sell out early Saturday morning."

Chartered in 1946, the organization meets weekly on Thursdays noon- 1 p.m. at Warm Hearth Village Center in Blacksburg.

The club supports many youth programs throughout the county,

including "supply[ing] parents of newborn and young children with ID kits, purchasing books for preschool children at 10 schools, purchasing gifts for 40-45 Christmas angels (estimated cost over \$4,000), donating to Scouting BSA, Boys & Girls Club, and Boys/Girls State, assisting with Special Olympics area basketball tournament, contributing to Montgomery County Social Services child abuse and foster care, the Salvation Army and volunteering as Bell Ringers, the Montgomery County Christmas Store, Women's Resource Center, and Sleep in Heavenly Peace beds."

Anyone wishing to volunteer time to the Kiwanis Club in supporting County youth and other programs can contact Jerry Jones at Kiwanis Club of Montgomery C o . - B l a c k s b u r g [kiwanismontgomeryva@gmail.com](mailto:kiwanismontgomeryva@gmail.com), Jerry Jones, PR Chair (540) 320-9296 [gmjones@vt.edu](mailto:gmjones@vt.edu).

Pre-orders for the Brunswick stew are encouraged and can made via phone (540-981-5834) or by email at [pfesstew@gmail.com](mailto:pfesstew@gmail.com). There will also be a drive-through option to pick up orders.

- Kiwanis Club of Montgomery County

## Baker from page 1

College, became a registered nurse in 2011, and was able to help care for him. Kimm died in 2014 with Lewy body dementia.

Baker says health "will be a key focus" in her campaign.

"We need improved rural healthcare," she said, "with emphasis on homegrown, community care, support for RN's to become nurse practitioners, comprehensive women's healthcare, and a plan to let our seniors age in their homes."

Baker says she also sees a need in the district for jobs and for skills training, so young people needn't leave the area to find work.

"Any comprehensive plan for job creation also requires a plan to provide broadband for all, more housing, and equity for our public schools," she said.

There's more about her campaign at <https://bakerforva9th.com>.

Staff report

## ONLINE AUCTION

Ends Thursday, April 11th at 3 PM  
Income Producing Homes for Sale Near Radford University  
Fairfax St., Radford, VA 24141

**Bid Now at [VAAuctionPro.com](http://VAAuctionPro.com)**

 <p><b>OFFERING #1</b></p>	 <p><b>OFFERING #2</b></p>
 <p><b>OFFERING #3</b></p>	 <p><b>OFFERING #4</b></p>
 <p><b>OFFERING #5</b></p>	

Offering #1 - 1201 Fairfax St., Radford, VA 24141  
 Offering #2 - 1205 Fairfax St., Radford, VA 24141  
 Offering #3 - 1207 Fairfax St., Radford, VA 24141  
 Offering #4 - 1211 Fairfax St., Radford, VA 24141  
 Offering #5: 1217 Fairfax St., Radford, VA 24141

Looking to expand your real estate portfolio with high-income properties? We have an unmissable opportunity for you! Presenting 5 homes that are currently used for student housing which are in the vibrant city of Radford, VA. They are just a short walk away from Radford University. These properties are perfectly situated for consistent rental demand and substantial returns on investment. Don't let this chance slip away!

**Terms:** 10% Buyer's Premium will be added to final high bid to arrive at contract price. Earnest Money Deposit of \$10,000 per offering is required on day of sale. Close on or before May 28th, 2024. Subject to seller confirmation. Property sold as is, where is with any and all faults. Buyer is expected to complete their own due diligence before placing a bid. Auction starts ending at 3 PM on April 11th, 2024. Please note that during the last two minutes of bidding, if a new bid is placed, the clock is automatically extended an additional two minutes. Be sure to register to bid early to ensure you receive notifications regarding any changes to the Auction, Bidder Packet and/or Pre-Auction offers received. Download Bidder Information Pack for complete terms and conditions, purchase contract and maps at [VAAuctionPro.com](http://VAAuctionPro.com).

**CONTACT – Auctioneer Matt Gallimore at 540-239-2585 or email [Gallimore.Matt@gmail.com](mailto:Gallimore.Matt@gmail.com) or Realtor Dari Cupp at 540-250-1839. Auction is in cooperation with Realtor Stephanie Carfagna with Long & Foster; contact Stephanie at 540-230-9357 or email [stephanie.carfagna@gmail.com](mailto:stephanie.carfagna@gmail.com)**

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**Blue Ridge Land & Auction Co., Inc.**

# Blacksburg considers small lot residential zoning district ordinance

The Town of Blacksburg is considering a Zoning Ordinance amendment to address the need for additional single-family residential development.

This amendment aims to provide a framework for small lot residential development to fill a market need for smaller homes and the “missing middle” housing market. The proposed Small Lot Residential (SLR) Zoning District would be designed to create small, walkable neighborhoods with a denser development pattern than the current R-4 zoning allows, while requiring high-quality design.



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF THE TOWN OF BLACKSBURG

To learn more about the proposed ordinance amendment and to submit questions and comments visit Let's Talk Blacksburg.

A public meeting will be held Wednesday, Mar. 27 at 5:30 p.m. at the Blacksburg Motor Company. Town staff will present an overview

of the zoning ordinance amendment for small lot development. Following the presentation, questions and comments from the public are welcome.

Town of Blacksburg



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF CROOKED ROAD

## The Crooked Road celebrates 20 years of heritage music in Southwest Virginia

The Crooked Road is proud to celebrate two decades of contributing to the creative economy in Southwest Virginia. The Crooked Road was designated as Virginia's Heritage Music Trail by the General Assembly in 2004.

The Crooked Road is a roughly 330-mile driving trail that follows U.S. Route 58 to connect 10 major venues and more than 50 affiliate venues throughout Southwest Virginia that feature and celebrate the region's traditional musical heritage. The organization offers marketing, live music,

and educational programs to 19 counties and four cities in the Southwest Virginia footprint.

The Crooked Road's marketing and musician promotion supports Southwest Virginia communities as an economic driver, promoting domestic and international travel to the region. In 2022, visitor spending across the region topped \$1.3 billion.

"I am so proud of The Crooked Road's

See Crooked, page 4

## Clean-up

from page 1

event. "That was awesome too, once he found out that we are volunteering to pick up trash," Rakes said.

In the past, they have collected 55-65 bags on average and hope to cover even more area this year.

"It's a way for anyone to give something back to the community. If you can't do anything financially, at least you can give something back in this way," Rakes said.

Rakes would love to see more groups and individuals come out to clean up not only the Alleghany Springs area, but their own communities as well in connection to the Broomin & Bloomin event. He encourages anyone to organize a group, whether it is friends, family, church groups or other organizations, to preserve the beauty of our communities.

If someone is not sure how to get started, and can't participate in the April events, you may contact Billy Rakes at bhrakes2058@gmail.com, and he would be happy to provide tips and ideas on how to get a group organized.

"I want to say kudos to the volunteers

that come out. The people are what makes this thing happen," Rakes said.

William Long, Sustainability Manager with Montgomery County is also a great resource, Rakes said. The Alleghany Springs group gives prior notification to Long and then crews pick up the trash bags and weigh them as part of the total collection for Broomin & Bloomin.

"The event started way back in 1983, this will be the 41st year," Bill Long said. "Kind of help clean up the County a little bit."

Broomin & Bloomin will officially happen on Saturday, April 20 this year.

"We traditionally try to do it around Earth Day, which is on April 22," Long said. The event this year will be from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., rain or shine. If that Saturday will be rainy, some groups go out early on Friday."

Even if you don't have a road in mind, they can help with that. The clean-up crews go out to parks, along creeks and roads, but wherever they choose to work, safety is always important.

"We have a lot of people come forward

with already a place in mind and also have people that are open to going wherever and we help them find a place. We work with them to find a place for all parties involved. We do bright neon t-shirts for visibility and get them to them early. We do trash bags and provide the clothes as well. Every year we have some goodies to give folks as well as a thank you for them taking their time out of their day as well

to pick up litter," Long said.

In 2023, thanks to the many participating volunteers donating their time to the county-wide event, volunteers collected 1.3 tons of trash, according to the www.montva.com website.

Registration for participants can be found on the Montgomery County website and has a deadline of April 12 for the 2024 event.

## NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING COUNTY OF MONTGOMERY, VIRGINIA FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025 TAX LEVIES AND BUDGET

Pursuant to Section 58.1-3007 of the Code of Virginia, notice is hereby given that a public hearing be scheduled for 6:30 P.M. April 4, 2024 on the proposed intention to address the below listed local tax levies for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 upon which matter citizens will have the opportunity to be heard. Said hearing will be held at the Montgomery County Government Center Board Room, 755 Roanoke Street, Christiansburg, Virginia.

FURTHER, notice is given of the Board's intention to propose the following tax levies for Fiscal Year 2024-2025:

- Real Estate Property tax levy increased from \$0.70 to \$0.75 per \$100 of assessed value.
- Personal Property tax levy remains at \$2.55 per \$100 of assessed value.
- Machinery & Tools tax levy remains at \$1.82 per \$100 of assessed value.
- Mobile Homes tax levy increased from \$0.70 to \$0.75 per \$100 of assessed value.
- Aircraft tax levy remains at \$1.23 per \$100 of assessed value.

Notice is also given that the Board of Supervisors of Montgomery County scheduled a public hearing for 6:45 P.M. or as soon thereafter, April 4, 2024 on the **Advertised Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Budget** in the amount of \$254,607,161. Said hearing will be held at the Montgomery County Government Center Board Room, 755 Roanoke Street, Christiansburg, Virginia.

BY THE ORDER OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ANGELA M. HILL, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

## Contest

from page 1

The eight pies for the contest took about six hours to make. I made the crust first and let it chill over night before I baked it. The coconut cream and strawberry curd are both cooked over the stove and once everything is cooled I put the pies together."

The Coconut & Strawberry Curd Pie from Bull & Bones joins the past winning pies Apple Crumb Pie from Bollo's in 2021, a Kenafa Pistachio Cream Pie from

Halwa in 2022, and a Mango Coconut Key Lime Pie from Next Door Bake Shop in 2023 in the Y Pi "Hall of Fame."

Congratulations Kayla and Bull & Bones and thank you to all who purchased tickets and participated in this fundraising event for the YMCA at Virginia Tech Food Insecurity Programs.

YMCA at Virginia Tech

# Marketplace

ourvalley.org

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### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING OF THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 15.2-2204 & 15.2-2285 of the Code of Virginia of 1950, as amended, the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors hereby gives notice of a public hearing to be held on March 25, 2023 at 7:15 p.m. in the County Government Center, 755 Roanoke St., Christiansburg, Virginia, in order to hear citizen comments regarding the Board of Supervisors' intention to act on the following Special Use Permit request:

A request by Sara Jones for a Special Use Permit (SUP) to allow a dog grooming business as a Home Business. The property is located at the intersection of Shilo Way (State Route 1106) and Mount Tabor Road (State Route 624). The property is further identified as 1723 Mount Tabor Road, Tax Map 028-1 45,46,49 (Parcel ID: 007792), 2.292 acres,

zoned Agricultural (A-1) in the Mount Tabor Magisterial District. The property currently lies in an area designated as Residential Transition in the 2025 Comprehensive Plan.

Copies of the proposed plans, applications, ordinances or amendments may be examined at the Department of Planning and GIS Services, County Government Center, 755 Roanoke St., Suite 2A, Christiansburg, Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. or at <http://www.montgomerycountyva.gov/pendingapplications>.

### Notice of Public Hearing Town of Blacksburg Planning Commission Tuesday, April 2, 2024

Notice is hereby given that the Planning Commission of the Town of Blacksburg will conduct a public hearing on Tuesday, April 2, 2024 during its meeting beginning at 6:30 PM in the Roger E. Hedgepeth Council Chamber, 300 South Main St. Blacksburg, VA on the following item:

PLAT-23-20-Glade Spring Crossing Major Subdivision Preliminary Plat Review for 176 lots on 45 acres at 1006 Glade Road (Tax Map Nos. 225-(A)-3,4 & 224-(A)-57) for Glade Spring Crossing, LLC (owner). This is the preliminary plat approval process for the Glade Spring Crossing major subdivision of 176 units on 45 acres at 1006 Glade Road. A rezoning request was approved for the property in May 2023 (RZN 22-0004/ORD 2007) that rezoned the property from RR-1 Rural Residential 1 to PR Planned Residential. As part of this process, the applicant has requested two variances to the Town of Blacksburg Subdivision Ordinance standards: Section 5-503 (e) Bikeways to permit landings of no greater than 5% grade, rather than 2% on the emergency access connection from Glade Spring Drive and Village Way South; and Section 5-901 Public Utility Easements to permit construction of a retaining wall on lots 169-175 within a public utility easements (PUE).

Persons affected by or interested in this major subdivision plat review may appear and present their views. After the hearing, the Planning Commission will take action. Copies of

the request and all related items may be found online at [www.blacksburg.gov/public](http://www.blacksburg.gov/public) hearings or reviewed in person at the Blacksburg Planning and Building Department, 400 South Main Street, Blacksburg, Virginia. You may also call the office at (540) 443-1300 for more information. Individuals with disabilities who require special assistance to attend and participate in the public hearing on the above should contact the Planning & Building Department at (540) 443-1300, or (540)-443-1000-TDD.

**HAVE SOMETHING TO SELL?**

**To place your ad, call 389-9355**

### LEGAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING OF THE TOWN OF CHRISTIANSBURG PLANNING COMMISSION

The Town of Christiansburg Planning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on Monday, April 1, 2024, at 7:00 PM in the Council Chambers of the Christiansburg Town Hall, 100 E. Main Street, Christiansburg, Virginia 24073, pursuant to Sections 15.2-2204 and 15.2-2285 of the Code of Virginia, as amended. The purpose of the public hearing is to receive public comments concerning: A. Conditional Use Permit request by Howard M. Thornton, Jr. and Gayle W. Thornton, Property Owners, and PCKK Partners, LLC, Applicant, to allow for a Contractors Equipment Storage Yard on property located at 520 and 540 Depot St. NE, identified as Tax Parcel 497- (A)-40; (Parcel ID 007903), and consisting of approximately 2.409 acres. The property is designated as Downtown/Mixed Use on the Future Land Use Map of

the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan. B. Rezoning request by Johnny C. Martin, Jr. and Amelia F. Martin, Property Owners and Applicants, to rezone property identified as all of Tax Parcel 502-(9)-6, (Parcel ID 007453), and consisting of approximately 1.595 acres located at 3345 Roanoke Street; and an approximate 5.955 acre portion of property located at 3301 Roanoke Street, identified as a portion of Tax Parcel 502-(9)-5C, (Parcel ID 090517) from Agricultural District (A) to General Business District (B-3). The property is designated as Residential on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan. C. Conditional Use Permit request by Johnny C. Martin, Jr. and Amelia F. Martin, Property Owners and Applicants, to allow for an existing Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for the expansion of a Contractors Equipment Storage Yard on property located at 3345 Roanoke Street and a portion of property located at 3301 Roanoke Street, identified as all of Tax Parcel 502-(9)-6, (Parcel ID 007453), consisting of approximately 1.595 acres, and a portion of Tax Parcel 502-(9)-5C, (Parcel ID 090517) consisting of approximately 5.955 acres. The property is

designated as Residential on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan. A copy of the applications, the Town's Zoning Map, Zoning Ordinance, and Future Land Use Map may be viewed in the Planning Department Office, 100 E. Main Street, Christiansburg, VA 24073, during normal office hours of 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Contact Retta Jackson, Planning Director, at (540) 382-6128, ext. 1120 or by email at [rjackson@christiansburg.org](mailto:rjackson@christiansburg.org) with any questions or if you require reasonable accommodations.

**BAG**

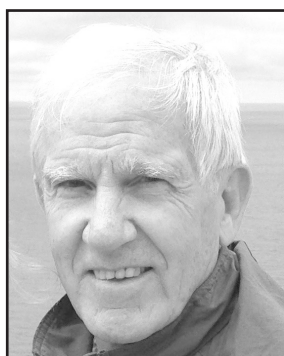
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# OBITUARIES

## Dresser, Dr. David

Dr. David Dresser, 85, went to be with the Lord Mar. 14, 2024, in Knoxville, Tenn. He was born Nov. 4, 1938, in Baltimore, Md., to James Leland and Elizabeth Jenkins Dresser and was a long-time resident of Ovid, N.Y. David was educated at the Gilman school in Baltimore and attended Cornell University for his undergraduate studies where he was an All-American lacrosse player and member of Cornell's Hall of Fame. He participated in the ROTC program and served as a pilot in the Vietnam war. He later pursued his Ph.D. in Higher Education at Syracuse University. He spent the majority of his career as "Dean Dresser" serving students at Eisenhower college and later at Ithaca College. David was known for his service to others and leadership in community affairs. He was school board president, town supervisor, and member of numerous boards. He was instrumental



in establishing the STEPS program to provide transportation for needy citizens and volunteered with the Red Cross and United Way. David was devoted to his family and cherished spending time with his loved ones. He especially valued family reunions at his home on Cayuga lake. These were filled with spirited tennis matches, sailing, swings on the hammock, and abundant ice cream treats. David modeled the important values of hard work, generosity, and integrity to his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. David was preceded in death by his wife Judy, and his siblings Herbert Dresser (Robin) and Lisa Stewart. He is survived by his children; Lynn Schmitt (Steve), Lee Dresser (Laurie), Cindy Woodford (Craig), stepdaughter Sarah Myer, and his siblings; Ellie Duram (Mike), Anne Kocur (Frank) and brother-in-law, Michael Stewart, along

with 10 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren. He will remain forever in the hearts of his family, friends, and colleagues. A celebration of life is planned for Aug. 10 at the Ovid Federated Church in Ovid, N.Y., where David worshipped and served for many years. May God's love and faithfulness to David always be remembered. Donations in his memory may be made to the Red Cross.

## Holland, Lisa Dare

Lisa Dare Holland, of Christiansburg, a caregiver for many in their time of need to her reward in Heaven Tuesday, Mar. 19, 2024. Lisa was born in Rocky Mount, Va. and was preceded in death by her parents, Silas and Sylvia Holland, and a brother, Mark Holland. Lisa was a Special Education teacher at Christiansburg High School. She also worked at Radford University's TTAC program and was currently employed with VCU in their RRTC-Center for Transition Innovations Department. She was always an advocate for children and young adults with special needs. This was her life's work. Lisa had a kind heart and every person she met became her friend. She was



celebrated her life with family and friends. She was active in her church, and was very much involved in several community non-profits for which she had a passion. Among those was the Montgomery County Christmas Store. Lisa loved to travel and always made the most of every trip, but her greatest love was for her family and friends. Lisa is survived by her sister, Peggy Smith (Ronnie); brother, Keith Holland (Ellen); niece, Heather Trail (Jeremy); nephew, Matt Holland; two great nieces, Presley and Makenna Trail; and one great nephew, Luke Corn. Also left to

See Obituaries, page 5

## Crooked from page 1

### News Messenger

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The News Messenger is a newspaper of, by and for the people of Montgomery County. We encourage letters from our readers on topics of general interest to the community and responses to our articles and columns. Letters must be signed and have a telephone number where you can be reached for verification. All letters will be verified before publication. We reserve the right to deny publication of any letter and edit letters for length, content and style.

The News Messenger (USPS 016-490) is published twice a week for \$46 a year in Montgomery County, \$55 elsewhere in Virginia, and \$59 out of state by Virginia Media Inc., P.O. Box 429, Lewisburg, WV 24901. Periodical postage paid at Christiansburg, VA. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to NEWS MESSENGER 1633 W. Main St., Salem, VA 24153.

work to foster community and economic development around Southwest Virginia's cultural music scene. We've shown the world that we can build a new economy while not sacrificing our heritage and identity," said Tyler Hughes, executive director of The Crooked Road. "As an old-time musician and Southwest Virginia native, I know firsthand the impact this organization's support has on venues, artists, and communities. The tribute to the musical legacy has been acknowledged and promoted statewide and nationally after Governor Glenn Youngkin's proclamation of the 'Year of Country Music' in the Commonwealth. In addition to the organization's major milestone celebrations, several major venues are celebrating anniversaries

of their own. The Carter Family Fold, which pays tribute to 'the first family of country music' turns 50 in 2024. The Floyd Country Store is celebrating 40 years of their Friday Night Jamboree, which combines Appalachian traditions of dance and old-time music. The Ralph Stanley Museum, located in Dickenson County, will commemorate 20 years honoring the legendary bluegrass musician. Finally, the Birthplace of Country Music Museum in Bristol observes 10 years of operation in 2024. "The Crooked Road has been doing incredible work for the past 20 years to strengthen Southwest Virginia communities and deepen connections to the music and dance traditions. We are so grateful to have spent these years getting

to know the people and traditions of our Southwest Virginia communities," said Dylan Locke, co-owner of the Floyd Country Store and the current chairman of The Crooked Road Board of Directors. The Crooked Road will partner with several accomplished music venues throughout the region to commemorate the anniversary year. Some of the dates include: April 27: Appalachia Rising, The Carter Family Fold; May 25: Gathering in the Gap, Big Stone Gap; June 15: The Crooked Road's 20th Anniversary Celebration, Country Cabin II; July 12: Celebrating 20 Years of The Crooked Road, Moss Arts Center; Aug. 2: The Crooked Road's 20th Anniversary

Celebration, Rex Theatre; Aug. 3: The Carter Family Fold Festival, The Carter Family Fold; Sept. 13-15: Rhythm & Roots Reunion Festival, Bristol. The Crooked Road staff and leadership, while in the middle of celebration, look forward to continuing the vision of making Southwest Virginia a world-class tourism destination through musical experiences at iconic and legendary venues throughout the region beyond this anniversary year. For more information, details on The Crooked Road's 20th anniversary celebration can be located at <https://thecrookedroadva.com>.

The Crooked Road

## Doctor from page 2

exchange for renting out his DEA credentials and for his supposed supervision of nurses who, in truth, Randall failed to supervise. Randall is the third defendant sentenced in connection with L5's operation of pain clinics in western Virginia. Charles Wilson Adams, Jr., is currently serving a two-year prison sentence, and former nurse practitioner Debra Kay Shaffer was sentenced to a term of imprisonment and a fine. Three other defendants—L5 owner Greg Barnes, former doctor Duane Dixon, and L5 itself—have pled guilty and are awaiting sentencing.

A seventh defendant has pled not guilty to drug conspiracy, health care fraud, wire fraud, and false statement charges and is awaiting trial. United States Attorney Christopher R. Kavanaugh, Special Agent in Charge Jared Forget of the DEA's Washington Division, Special Agent in Charge Maureen Dixon of HHS-OIG's Philadelphia Region, Colonel Gary Settle, Superintendent of the Virginia State Police, and Virginia Attorney General Jason Miyares made the announcement. The Drug Enforcement Administration, the U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services – Office of the Inspector General, the Virginia State Police, and the Virginia Attorney General's Office - Medicaid Fraud Control Unit investigated the case. Assistant U.S. Attorneys S. Cagle Juhan, Jason M. Scheff, and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Janine M. Myatt, Assistant Attorney General with the Virginia Attorney General's Office, prosecuted the case. Office of the Virginia Attorney General

# CROSSWORD

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- CLUES ACROSS**
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  - Depletes gradually
  - Metric foot used in poetry
  - Brand of clear wrap
  - Gabriel was one
  - Famous for his window's & glass
  - H. Potter's best friend
  - Tennessee's flower
  - Narrow inlet
  - Puts it on the chopping block
  - Fed
  - Hall of Fame DJ Rick
  - Most loathsome
  - Farewell (Spanish)
  - Plant germination vessel
  - Am. Heart Assoc.
  - Sock repair
  - Gather fabric in rows
  - Muscat is the capital
  - Goat and camel hair fabric
  - Raised meeting platform
  - Oral polio vaccine developer
  - Yield to another's wish
  - A country's entry permit
  - Hero of Spain El \_\_\_
  - Partner of pepper
  - Famous grandma artist
  - Freedom from difficulty
  - Supervises flying
  - In spite of
  - Insatiable
  - Source of chocolate
  - Sulk
  - CCC
  - Amounts of time
  - Popular Mexican dish
  - Fe
  - Obstruct
  - Fixes firmly in
  - Indian frocks
  - Music, ballet and literature
  - What part of (abbr.)
  - More deceitful
  - Informal term for data
  - Chinese gelatin
  - Repair fabric
  - Nellie \_\_\_ journalist
  - Single Lens Reflex
  - Away from one's home
  - Mined minerals
  - Longest division of geological time
  - Affirm positively
  - Paul Adrien \_\_\_ Br. physicist
  - Ballroom dance
  - Tai (alt. sp.)
  - Dental group
  - Aba \_\_\_ Honeymoon
  - Female sibling
  - Today host Curry
  - Deriving pleasure from cruelty
  - Went quickly (archaic)
  - Kiln for drying hops
  - Misrepresentation
  - Absence of sound
  - Many blood vessels
  - Satisfies to excess
  - Glandular fever
  - Capital city of Shiga, Japan
  - Hit sharply
  - This (Spanish)
  - Payroll tax
  - Freshwater duck genus
  - In the past
  - A small drink of liquor
  - Own (Scottish)
  - Daughters of the Am. Revolution

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# MONTGOMERY SPORTS

## Clemson joins FSU in suit against ACC

**Marty Gordon**  
NRVsports@mainstreetnewspapers.com

The life of the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) continues to take twist and turns. This week, Clemson joined Florida State in a lawsuit against the conference on its exit fees.

In its lawsuit, Clemson seeks confirmation of the plain language found in the Grant of Rights agreements and the related media agreements between the ACC and ESPN – that these agreements, when read together, plainly state that Clemson controls its media rights for games played if it is no longer a member of the ACC. Clemson also seeks a ruling regarding the unenforceability of the severe penalty the ACC is seeking to impose upon exiting members and confirmation that it does not owe a fiduciary duty to the conference as alleged by the ACC.

In the filing, Clemson said the ACC's position regarding the Grant of Rights, the exit penalty, and obligations owed by members to the conference, as detailed in its public statements and other court filings, leaves Clemson with no choice but to move forward with this lawsuit.

Late last year, FSU also seemed to question the Grant of Rights and what could happen if it decided to leave the conference.

Earlier in the year, reports were leaked that as many as seven schools, including Virginia Tech, had held meetings to discuss an exit plan from the ACC. But no one admitted the discussions had taken place until FSU dropped the news of the first suit.

The schools say the current ACC-ESPN television deal puts the league at a disadvantage in comparison to others like the Southeastern and Big Ten conferences.

The Atlantic Coast Conference issued the following statement:

"The ACC remains confident that its agreements with all its members will be affirmed by the courts. Clemson, along with all ACC members, voluntarily signed and re-signed the 2013 and 2016 Grant of Rights, which is binding through 2036. In addition, Clemson agreed to the process and procedures for withdrawal. The Conference's legal counsel will vigorously enforce the agreement and bylaws in the best interest of the ACC's current and incoming members," said the statement signed by ACC Board of Directors chair Jim Ryan and conference commissioner Jim Phillips.

Clemson says the ACC does not, in fact, control its broadcasting rights if the university leaves the conference as it, apparently and cannot enforce a \$140 million exit fee if/when Clemson leaves the conference.

A new deal with the SEC shows each school will individual payouts of nearly \$23 million more than in the past years. ACC schools will receive about \$7 million to \$10 million less annually than those in the SEC and Big Ten.

The question is whether those two other conferences would be willing to accept FSU and/or Clemson as they would see their percentage of the bank roll decrease.

Questions to Virginia Tech have gone unanswered on whether they are considering anything close to the two other schools.

Despite the lawsuit, the ACC points out Clemson has not given notice that it is exiting the ACC and remains a member of the conference. Florida State has not also made any announcement on a plan to leave the conference. But it could be evident and looming on the horizon.

## CHS, BHS seeking new athletic directors

**Marty Gordon**  
NRVsports@mainstreetnewspapers.com

Two of the area high schools will need athletic directors this coming fall.

Peter Lyell at Blacksburg and Tim Cromer at Christiansburg are both leaving.

Cromer was named head football coach this past month at Floyd County High School. He will leave his Christiansburg post at the end of the school year. A search committee has been conducting interviews for his replacement over the past two weeks. An announcement of the new A.D. is pending.

He took over as athletic director in 2017.

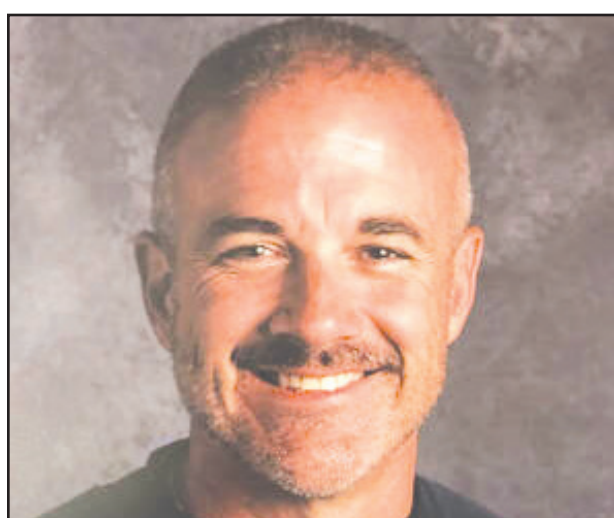
Meanwhile, Lyell, who has spent the past 10 years at Blacksburg, has stepped down effective at the end of this school year.

The Montgomery County school board has begun advertising the Blacksburg position with hopes of conducting interviews before the end of the school year.

Blacksburg is also seeking an assistant football coach, while both Christiansburg and Eastern Montgomery both need new volleyball coaches.



Tim Cromer



Peter Lyell

FILE PHOTOS

Lisa Dalton stepped away from the Christiansburg program at the end of this past season. Haley Duncan has done the same after three years at the helm at Eastern Montgomery. Christiansburg is also in need of a varsity competition and sideline cheer coach.



PHOTO COURTESY OF VT ATHLETICS

Virginia Tech center Kitley has earned another first team recognition thanks to the Sporting News.

## Kitley named first-team by Sporting News

Virginia Tech center Elizabeth Kitley was named a Sporting News first team All-American the publication announced Tuesday morning.

Kitley was named the ACC's Player of the Year for the third consecutive season earlier this month, becoming the third woman in ACC history to win the award in three consecutive seasons, joining Alana Beard (Duke) and Alyssa Thomas (Maryland).

The Summerfield, North Carolina native ranks second in the conference in scoring (22.79), second in field goal percentage (55.6%), first in rebounds (11.38), second in blocks (2.07), first in double-doubles (19) and first in 30-point games with eight.

She won ACC Player of the Week six times, the most of any athlete, including a stretch of four consecutive weeks in February. The six POW honors ties Beard for the most in any single season in conference history.

With her Player of the Year Award comes a fourth first team All-ACC nod, just the second player in conference history to accomplish the feat (Duke's Elizabeth Williams). Kitley was also recognized as an All-Defensive Team member for the third consecutive season.

Nationally, Kitley ranks third in field goals. She is sixth in points per game and eight in rebounds per game and double-doubles.

She has claimed the top spot in several categories in the Virginia Tech annals this season including: starts, minutes played, double figure games, 30-point games and rebounds, which is also an ACC watermark.

In terms of single-season achievements, the 2023-24 season has

seen Kitley produce the highest scoring average in program history, score the most field goals and come within six points of the record for single season scoring.

Additionally, she was named the Kay Yow Scholar Athlete of the Year for the third time this season.

Elizabeth Kitley was named a second team All-American the USBWA announced Tuesday afternoon. Point guard Georgia Moore was placed on the third team.

Moore was sixth in the conference in scoring (18.71), second in 3's per game (2.79), second in assist to turnover ratio (2.10) and led the ACC in assists (7.29) earning her first team All-ACC honors for the second consecutive season.

The Australia native owns two 30-point games, 14 20-point games and recorded nine double-doubles, a figure that was fifth in the conference. She was the only athlete to record more than five 10-assist games in the ACC.

Her 39-point performance on the final day of the regular season, was the highest scoring single-game output in conference play this season.

Moore, who was named one of five finalists for the Nancy Lieberman Award, is third nationally in assists per game and also ranks in the top 20 of 3-point shooters.

The senior became the program's all-time leader in assists this season and has also climbed to second in 3's and fourth in scoring. This season, she has produced the third-highest single-season total of assists and the seventh-most 3's.

Virginia Tech Athletics

## OUTDOOR REPORT

The Virginia Birding Classic is a statewide birding competition in which teams of birders search the public lands of Virginia every spring for as many species as they can find in 24 hours.

All registration proceeds will benefit the Virginia Wildlife Grant Program, which awards annual grants to non-profit programs focused on connecting youth to the outdoors.

Registration closes April 1, 2024. Don't delay—register now!

How does it work?

Pick a team name and register online: Your team of a least three or up to six people register online through GoOutdoorsVirginia.com by April 1, 2024. Registration includes a swag bag and free access to available Wildlife Management Areas, State Forests, and Natural Area Preserves on the day your team has chosen to go birding for the competition. Virginia DWR customers with an active license and/or permit will receive a discount on their registration. Youth under 16 years old can register for free but must be accompanied by a registered adult.

Pick when your team goes birding: Your team chooses a consecutive 24-hour period between April 15 and May 15 to go birding on federal, state, county, and municipal parks in the Commonwealth to identify as many species of birds as possible.

Share your team's results: Your team

submits one official team eBird trip report for their tournament day to Virginia eBird. Final eBird trip reports must be submitted to the official Virginia Birding Classic eBird account by 11:59 p.m. on May 17, 2024.

The Virginia Birding Classic Grand Prize goes to the team that finishes their 24-hours of birding with the most species. This year, we are excited to announce that the Grand Prize will consist of the following:

Each member of the winning team will get to choose from a list of DWR Wildlife Experiences that only we can offer. The list may include opportunities such as:

accompanying our biologists as they band and survey raptors, waterfowl, woodpeckers, or seabirds; visiting important habitat conservation areas that are not open to the public; viewing wildlife on a tour with knowledgeable members of our staff; and other exciting experiences only DWR can offer.

Each team will also get the opportunity to choose a library in the Commonwealth to be the recipient of three Birding Backpacks that will be available for checkout by members of the community! Each backpack will include: a pair of adult binoculars, a pair of children's binoculars, a field guide to birds of eastern North America, a kids field guide to backyard

See Outdoor, page 8

Send community news and photos to community news @ourvalley.org

# MONTGOMERY SPORTS

## Virtuous cycle for women's March Madness

As March Madness tips off this week, the men's NCAA Tournament is not the only game in town drawing big interest, ratings, and betting.

Jadrian Wooten, a Virginia Tech collegiate associate professor in the Department of Economics, explains how investment and interest in women's basketball has created a "virtuous cycle" spurring growth in one another to help close the gender equity gap.

"If there's an increase in financial support, that can be reinvested in improving the sport's quality," says Wooten. "As quality increases, so does viewership, which attracts more advertising and sponsorship. It creates a self-reinforcing loop, where each element of success builds on and magnifies the others, leading to a brighter future for women's college basketball."

In recent years, the women's Tournament has made major strides to close the gap, with last year's national championship

game averaging 9.92 million viewers and topping out at 12.6 million (the men's final averaged 14.69 million). That led to a new television deal with ESPN this year, with a substantial increase in rights fees.

"This deal not only reflects the growing marketability of the sport, but also actively contributes to its future growth," says Wooten. "Schools can reinvest these funds into the sport, improving everything from facilities to recruitment and marketing efforts, directly benefiting the athletes and enhancing the competitive landscape. ... More visibility not only draws in more fans, but also elevates the profile of the sport, making it more attractive to potential sponsors and advertisers."

Stars like Angel Reese, with 2.7 million Instagram followers, and Caitlin Clark, with 1.1 million, have built their popularity by staying in school for several years, unlike many of the most prominent men's players, and are



PHOTO COURTESY OF VT ATHLETICS

**For the second straight season, all-session tickets for the first and second round of the Women's NCAA Tournament in Blacksburg have sold out.**

commanding seven-figure name, image, and likeness deals.

"Social media exposure can be an important force in driving attention toward college basketball," says Wooten. "Social media allows athletes to engage directly with fans, creating personal connections that traditional media can't replicate. This boosts visibility and creates a fan base willing to support players, teams, and associated brands."

The rise in interest in the women's game has also been reflected in huge booms in sports betting, up 14 times from last year's regular season on DraftKings.

"This is another strong indicator of rising interest and exposure. Betting activity often reflects engagement levels," says Wooten. "As more people bet on women's basketball, it naturally attracts even more attention. This isn't just from bettors themselves but also from

sports media outlets and platforms that cover betting trends and game analyses. This increased visibility draws new fans to the sport, which makes women's basketball a more attractive platform for advertisers. Advertisers are more inclined to invest when they know that the audience is more engaged."

Wooten is a collegiate associate professor with the Virginia Tech Department of Economics and is

the author of "Parks and Recreation and Economics." Read more about Wooten's takeaway on the economic impact of the Canadian wildfire crisis and climate change in his Monday Morning Economist newsletter. Wooten has been featured in USA Today, Inside Higher Ed, WJLA ABC 7 Washington, D.C., and NBC News, among scores of other media outlets.

Virginia Tech

## Hokies wrestling takes on big KC this weekend

Virginia Tech wrestling takes to Kansas City, Missouri for the 2024 NCAA Wrestling Championships, Thursday, Mar. 21 – Saturday, Mar. 23 live on ESPNU and ESPN.

The Hokies are one of seven teams to send a full lineup – one of three to send all starters in back-to-back championships – and field three top-ten seeds along with four All-Americans, a national champion, and a battle-tested squad ready to make a statement at the season finale.

Tech boasts four wrestlers with a total of eight All-American honors led by national champion Mekhi Lewis, two-time All-Americans Bryce Andonian and Sam Latona, and 2023 All-American Caleb Henson.

At 133-pounds, the veteran Sam Latona takes the mat for this fourth postseason appearance. A staple in the Hokies' lineup, the two-time All-American will once again look to do his best wrestling when it matters most and become Tech's sixth three-time All-American. Still with another year of eligibility, the Alabaster, AL native enters as the 12-seed with sights set on climbing the podium.

Caleb Henson took the country by storm as a freshman phenom last season en route to ACC Champion, a fifth-place All-American finish, and ACC Freshman of the Year honors and has continued to look the part in orange and maroon. The Cartersville, GA product has put together a strong year two campaign to the tune of 25-2 record and the number four seed when action begins in the T-Mobile Center. The sophomore sensation looks to

navigate 149-pound bracket and wrestle for a title come Saturday night.

At 157-pounds, the nation's most exciting wrestler, Bryce Andonian, competes in his final NCAA Championship after five years donning the orange and maroon. The two-time All-American hailing from Kirtland, OH looks to end his highlight-filled career on top of the podium after third-place (2022, 149-pounds) and seventh-place (2023, 157-pounds) in his previous championship trips. A five-time NCAA Qualifier, four-time ACC finalist, Andonian takes the mat in Kansas City as the 12-seed in a loaded weight class that features 10 All-Americans.

More history made by the most accomplished wrestler in program history as Mekhi Lewis became just the second-ever Hokie to claim the top seed as he enters his fifth and final NCAA Championship.

The first national champion and two-time finalist in program history will look to become the first four-time NCAA All-American in program history in his career curtain call. Lewis holds a 15-0 record with Entering as the No. 1 seed, Lewis will have to navigate his side of the bracket that features 2021 national champion Shane Griffith (Stanford, now at Michigan) and Lewis' rival, three-time national champion Carter Starocci (Penn State) as the Hokie looks to end his legendary career the way he started: on top.

Making their NCAA Championship debuts this weekend are Cooper Flynn and Thomas Stewart, Jr. at 125-pounds and 184-pounds, respectively.

Flynn takes the mat after entering the lineup in late January for the Hokies after an injury sidelined returning All-American Eddie Ventresca. Flynn made the most of his opportunity in a highly volatile weight class that saw multiple top-five rankings change throughout

the season. Flynn has inserted his name into podium contention with three wins over top-five opponents since entering the lineup and an ACC finals appearance. The redshirt sophomore from Seymour, TN begins his first NCAA competition as the 11 seed in Kansas City.

Stewart enters the season finale as the seven seed at 184-pounds after a stellar backend of the season after starting at 197-pounds. Stewart won the starting job for the Hokies in a crowded room that saw both Sam Fisher and Dakota Howard ranked at points during the season. The Triangle, VA native holds a 10-1 record including three-top ten wins on the season with adding an ACC title to his resume. The redshirt freshman looks to continue his blazing run in his debut season in the Tech lineup.

A quadruplet of Hokies return to the championships hoping to improve on their previous trips. Tom Crook will take to his second NCAA championship as the No. 20 seed at 141-pounds. The sophomore from Tampa compiled a 18-7 record in his second season for the Hokies including a top-five win and multiple top-20 wins to boost his resume.

Connor Brady makes his fourth championship appearance for the Hokies, claiming the 18-seed at 165-pounds. The two-time ACC finalist from Powell, OH looks to have a breakthrough performance in what could be his last season.

Tech will see the two upper weights as both the No. 26 seed in two-time qualifier Andy Smith and three-time NCAA qualifier Hunter Catka at 197-pounds and 285-pounds, respectively.

Virginia Tech Athletics

### THE NRV MPO SEEKS PUBLIC INPUT FOR TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

The New River Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is developing its 2024-25 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The UPWP provides an annual schedule of activities, lists planning tasks and studies, and identifies funding sources. A draft plan is available for review at the offices of the Towns of Blacksburg and Christiansburg, the City of Radford, and the Montgomery and Pulaski County offices. It is also available on the MPO website:



www.nrvmpo.org

Deadline for written comments: 5:00 PM April 17, 2024

Oral comments will also be taken at the MPO Policy Board meeting at 2:00 PM on May 2, 2024 at the Montgomery County Government Center.

Comments can also address transit projects for which Federal operating and capital assistance will be sought under 49 USC Section 5303, as well as other transportation modes.

The NRV MPO ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact Dan Brugh at: brughjd@montgomerycountya.gov or 540-394-2145, TTY/TTD 711.

## 'Throwing Shade VA' program offers incentives for planting native trees

Thanks to a new statewide initiative, Virginians can help improve the state's ecosystems, meet a variety of landscaping goals, and save money.

Virginia Department of Forestry has teamed up with retail nurseries across the state to launch the "Throwing Shade VA" program this spring. Now through May 1, or while supplies last, shoppers at participating nurseries can access customer discounts of \$25 on eligible native trees and shrubs valued at \$50 or more. Nurseries are reimbursed for discounts with allocated state water quality improvement funds.

"We wanted folks to get a discount for taking the initiative to plant native," explained Molly O'Liddy, DOF urban

and community forestry partnership coordinator, who is managing the program.

By lowering the cost for purchasing native species, DOF officials hope to spread awareness of their environmental benefits and expand biodiversity in the state.

"The overall goal is to get more trees and shrubs in the Virginia landscape, which, in turn, provides so many benefits for water and air quality, wildlife and pollinators," remarked Delaney Long, DOF urban and community forestry project coordinator, who is helping manage the program.

Trees improve water quality by filtering out pollutants, storing harmful greenhouse gases and reducing erosion. Native trees and shrubs

that evolved in Virginia's ecosystems also are more adapted to their natural environment than ornamental species, and more likely to thrive. They also provide essential food and habitat for wildlife.

"Whether it's meeting aesthetic goals, attracting more wildlife or providing shade, you're bound to find something that will fill your need just by learning more about Virginia's native species," Long said.

She added that expert staff at participating nurseries can help identify the right species and growing conditions for meeting specific landscaping goals.

"It's always good to ask a lot of questions to make sure you're planting the right tree in the right place," Long noted.

Customers can receive a \$25 discount on their

purchase at a participating nursery by selecting a native tree or shrub with a "Throwing Shade VA" tag, scanning the QR code on the tag to record where the tree will be planted, and showing the cashier that the information on the QR code was collected.

Information collected from the QR codes will help track water quality improvement goals and allocate funding for additional planting projects across Virginia.

Project officials hope to continue the program and open applications to interested nurseries this fall for next spring.

For a list of participating nurseries and more information, visit bit.ly/49TH7GW.

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birds, bird coloring sheets and crayons, one field journal to record sightings, maps and guides to area birding locations, and helpful tips

and apps to make the most of their birding adventures.

This is an excellent way to give back by giving the community the

gift of birding.

Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources