



News Messenger

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Blacksburg

Christiansburg

Saturday, April 27, 2024

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Epperly case heads to parole board again

Marty Gordon
Contributing writer

The Virginia Parole Board took up the case this past week of Stephen Epperly, the man convicted in the 1980 death of Radford University student Gina Hall.

A final decision is not expected for months, but Hall family members were adamant in letters to the board to keep him in prison.

Epperly was convicted during a time when inmates were still eligible for parole and has now had nine hearings in front of the parole board.

This hearing was based on

what state officials are calling his "geriatric age status." Three years ago, then former Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam told the parole board to examine thousands of cases involving inmates over the age of 60. Epperly is now 71 and serving a life sentence at the Buckingham Correctional Center.

Hall's sister Dlane Bodmer said in a letter to the board that "Epperly has no remorse for his actions, and Epperly never revealed where he disposed of Gina's remains." Thus, his parole should be denied.

Hall disappeared June

28, 1980 from a Blacksburg nightspot, and evidence pointed to Epperly being the last person that saw her alive. He was convicted without a body.

Bodmer said every parole hearing always comes with much anxiety and concern at the prospects that a violent man could be paroled and the safety of her family, and others, jeopardized.

"Stephen Epperly should never be released," she said.

Pulaski County Commonwealth's Attorney Justin L. Griffith also sent a letter to the parole board in which he said, "When

the Virginia Parole Board announced the denial of his parole in July of 2021, I gave our community my word I would be ready to fight his next attempt at parole and that time has arrived. We will never forget Gina Hall and we are always conscious of what her family continues to endure."

Family members have continued to search for her remains and recently say they found what they think are dismembered parts of Hall and possible DNA samples from a site at Gatewood Reservoir.

See Epperly, page 6



Stephen Epperly prison photo

FILE PHOTO



The Kiwanis Club of Christiansburg's Annual Wilderness Trail Festival is popular event in downtown Christiansburg each fall.

Kiwanis Club requests two possible street configurations for 2024 Wilderness Trail Festival

Angelica Ramos
Contributing writer

CHRISTIANSBURG- The Kiwanis Club of Christiansburg proposed two potential street closure routes for their Wilderness Trail Festival during the Christiansburg Town Council meeting Tuesday April 20, 2024.

The Kiwanis Club's Wilderness Trail Festival will be held Sept. 21, 2024 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The proposal of two different closures is due to downtown construction

that may impede the previous site of the festival.

The first route proposed would be from Main Street (between Dunkley St and Pepper St.), Franklin Street (Between First and Commerce), Hickok St (From Commerce to First St.) and Marvin Jarels Circle. The second proposed route would be from Main Street (From 39 W. Main to Montague St.), Marvin Jarels Circle, Pepper Street (From Hill Street to Montgomery County Courthouse Pepper Street Parking

Lot) and parts of Roanoke Street (from Main St. to First St.). The proposed areas would be blocked to prohibit vehicular traffic during the time of the event and keep community attendees safe.

The Kiwanis Club hopes to use their first proposed route as they have in previous years and that has been approved by the council in previous years. The club asked for both routes to be approved in case they need to make

See Festival, page 6

Blacksburg Town Council supports MCPS's firearms storage statement

Angelica Ramos
Contributing writer

BLACKSBURG- Mayor Leslie Hager-Smith opened the Blacksburg Town Council meeting Tuesday April 20, 2024 with a quick update on the council's Gaza statement.

"We sent it to President Biden, U.S. Senators [Mark] Warner and [Tim] Kaine, [U.S. Congressman] Morgan Griffith and also [State Senator] Travis Hackworth and [Delegate] Chris Obenshain. So, we have heard back

from Warner, Kaine, Griffith and Obenshain's office. I just wanted to point that out, that we have taken that statement and elevated it to the next level of representation."

Moving forward with the agenda, Vice-Mayor Michael Sutphin addressed the Montgomery County Public School's statement concerning the secure storage of firearms. The statement explains 4.6 million American children live in homes with at least one loaded or

See Council, page 6

Christiansburg Town Council conducts several public hearings during April 23 meeting

Lori Graham
Contributing writer

CHRISTIANSBURG – Five public hearings were scheduled to be heard during the Christiansburg Town Council meeting on Tuesday, April 23; however, the property ground lease agreement with New River Valley Aquatics (NRVA), Inc., otherwise known as H20kies Aquatics has been rescheduled for May 14.

A conditional use permit request by property owners Howard M. Thorton, Jr. and Gayle W. Thorton, to permit a contractor storage yard for equipment at the locations of 520 and 540 Depot St. in Christiansburg was another public hearing item listed on the agenda. The 2.409-acre parcel is currently listed as Mixed Land Use in the downtown area of Christiansburg in accordance with the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan, the agenda at www.christiansburg.org reads.

A property located 3345 Roanoke St. of 1.595 acres and a property located at 3301 Roanoke St. of 5.955 acres, both owned by Johnny C. Martin and Amelia F. Martin, were also addressed in the public hearing portion of the meeting. The property owners and applicants are requesting a rezoning from (A) Agriculture to (B-3) General Business. Along with this request is a conditional use permit request to amend and expand a contractors' equipment storage yard that would be for the complete property at the 3301 Roanoke St. location and a portion of the 3345 Roanoke St. location.

"At a previous meeting, I read a citizen's comment from Steve Knowles who is a neighbor within the area of that property," Mayor Michael Barber said. "He expressed he has absolutely no qualms about this going. He said he's been a good neighbor, they're clean, they run a good business."

Steve Semones, Executive Vice President of Balzer and Associates, a civil engineering firm in Christiansburg, addressed the Council on both requests involving the Roanoke Street properties. Semones said that Martin is



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF TOWN OF CHRISTIANSBURG

currently operating his business on Roanoke Street but plans to expand to an additional 20,000 square foot building.

"A little over 18,000 of that would be garage space for his equipment and then about 1,600 square feet of that would be office," Semones said.

According to Semones, all proffers that were originally attached to the property in the original zoning would be applied to this property. This would include screening, stormwater management, and installing a public sidewalk.

One citizen concern was also mentioned by Semones as well, about the hours of operation and disturbance from trucks coming in and out of the property. The hours of operation will be from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

The last public hearing discussed during the council meeting was the 2024 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Action Plan. This program is funded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and has a primary goal to provide programs that meet with the needs of low-income and middle-income residents in the Town of Christiansburg, according to the www.christiansburg.org website. Christiansburg Town Council is scheduled to take action on this plan during their Tuesday, May 14 meeting.

One consent agenda item was voted on separately from the others listed. The item is the allocation of approved funds to the Montgomery Museum to be paid as part of the monthly bills in an amount of \$10,000. The vote was passed with an approval of 3-2, with Council members Kim Bowman and Johana Hicks voting nay, and Casey Jenkins abstaining from the vote due to his position as Director of the Museum.

"I'm going to vote no, not because I don't believe in the organization, I just, I don't think that we should use town resources to spend on the museum," Hicks said.

Christiansburg police chief updates town council on programs and crime data

Angelica Ramos
Contributing writer

CHRISTIANSBURG- On Tuesday, April 23, 2024, Police Chief David C. Ramsey presented updated information on Christiansburg Police Department programs, operations and current data to the Christiansburg Town Council.

Ramsey started his presentation with a new promotional video highlighting the Christiansburg Police Department and stating the department's mission statement, vision statement and core values.

"What it is we stand for at the police department and our mission at the police department is quite simple; we want to provide the best police service by



Police Chief David C. Ramsey

FILE PHOTO

employing a team of highly motivated and trained individuals that are empowered to be their best," Ramsey said. " We want them to strive to be the best at everything they do and we're going to do that through partnerships with the community to increase safety and public trust through the use of the latest law enforcement strategies and technology."

Ramsey thanked the council for the training budget offered to the department, because the Christiansburg Police Department prioritizes and pushes officers and staff to be as highly trained, informed and skilled as possible in order to better protect and serve the community.

See Ramsey, page 6

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, April 27:

Children's Consignment Sale

The spring children's consignment sale will be held 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Blacksburg Presbyterian Church, 701 Church St SE. (note different location). Families can get great deals on seasonal kids' clothes and shoes, toys, books, baby gear, sports equipment, maternity clothing and more. Many items are like-new (some even brand-new). Some items will be half-price between 12:30 and 1:30 p.m. but you will want to shop early for the best selection! Cash or checks only. No card or electronic payments. There is space for new consignors. For more information, email bumckidsale@aol.com.

Thursday, May 2:

American Legion meeting

The American Legion, Harvey Howe Carper Post 30 will meet at 6 p.m. at the VFW Post Home on 102 Watts St. in Radford. For further information, please call 540-250-2283 or 540-239-9864.

Sunday, May 5:

Blacksburg Community Strings concert

Blacksburg Community Strings presents their Spring 2024 Concert, 2 p.m. at the Warm Hearth Village Center, Blacksburg. The program includes Antonin Dvorak's Symphony No. 9 "From The New World" as well as Appalachian Morning by Robert Sheldon and Prairiesong by Carl Strommen. Come and hear music that reflects the land and cultures of America. Admission is free, donations are accepted and appreciated.

Monday, May 13:

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. Citizens are invited to attend and allowed to speak at each meeting. See the agenda at 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, May 14:

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.

Thursday, May 16:

Sons of Confederate Veterans meeting

The Sons of Confederate Veterans, Stuart Horse Artillery Camp 1784 will meet at 7 p.m. at Aly's Family Italian Restaurant, 3204 Riner Rd. Members of the United Daughters of the Confederacy are also invited to attend. Tiffany Lloyd will do a presentation on the Sam Davis Youth Camp. For further information, please call 540-320-4315 or 540-239-9864.

On-going:

Route 460 Business Corridor Bicycle, Pedestrian and Transit Study

The New River Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization is seeking input for the Route 460 Business Corridor Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Transit Study. The study will look at the segment of the corridor, from Industrial Park Road in Blacksburg to the Uptown Christiansburg Mall, for bicycle, pedestrian, and transit improvements. Materials are posted online at www.newrivervalleympo.org and will be available for comment until May 9 at 5 p.m.

Radford Noon Rotary Club's Field of Honor

Field of Honor will be installed on the grounds of Glencoe Mansion prior to Memorial Day until the Fourth of July. Radford Noon Rotary Club is looking for people to sponsor flags. Individual flags are \$50. Corporate Sponsorship: Bronze - \$250; Silver - \$500; Gold - \$1000; and Platinum - \$2500. To register, contact rotary.club.of.radford.noon@gmail.com.

'Launch' of new Christiansburg program aims to help current and potential business owners

CHRISTIANSBURG – A new program in Christiansburg will help residents grow their entrepreneurial dreams, and potentially award up to \$5,000 in startup grant funds.

Launch Christiansburg is the latest town program aimed at helping Christiansburg citizens bring their business idea to life. The effort includes a variety of resources to the meet the needs of current and potential business owners, including a 10-week educational course, free mini workshops, networking opportunities, Q&As with entrepreneurial experts and more.

The 10-week educational

course (CORE) will provide participants with information on how to complete a business canvas, local business resources, networking opportunities, expansion opportunities, access to our business mentor program and much more. The sessions will cover a variety of topics including marketing and message, legal and accounting considerations, and financial modeling, amongst others.

The course will allow starters and dreamers to shape and fine-tune their new business or expansion idea. It will also help navigate needed steps to bring their idea to fruition. At the end of the program, participants will

deliver a business pitch, where they could receive up to \$5,000 to help begin or grow their business.

"The Launch Christiansburg educational course is a life-changing opportunity for artists, creatives, entrepreneurs, and business owners to network and collaborate with like-minded individuals," said Amanda Hebert, the Launch Christiansburg coordinator and Small Business Solutions Manager for the Town of Christiansburg. "This program is intended to ultimately make a positive impact on the lives of our educational cohort and on Christiansburg's economy as

well."

Applications are now being accepted for the Launch Christiansburg 10-week educational CORE course. The course begins on Sept. 11, 2024, and the deadline to apply is July 15, 2024.

Leading up to Launch Christiansburg's 10-week CORE course, will be a variety of free mini workshops that will cover topics such as business finance, business marketing and getting started. Information on how to sign up for the free mini workshops, which begin May 22, can be provided by emailing Amanda Hebert at ahebert@christiansburg.org.

Programming for Launch Christiansburg will be provided by CO.STARTERS, a business development organization that works with communities across the country to empower entrepreneurs with the startup support and services to build thriving businesses. Curriculum for the 10-week educational CORE course will be presented through an in-person, cohort-style format at Christiansburg Town Hall.

For more information and to apply, visit Christiansburg.org/LaunchChristiansburg.

Town of Christiansburg

The YMCA at Virginia Tech's annual Y-TOSS is coming

Call for volunteers

The YMCA at Virginia Tech Y-TOSS program is a leading sustainability initiative on the Virginia Tech campus.

Annually, Y-TOSS gathers gently used dorm items during move-out week to repurpose them. These items are later sold at the YMCA Lancaster House sale during move-in week at the beginning of the next fall semester, conveniently located across from the Virginia Tech campus. To facilitate donations, Y-TOSS strategically places storage PODS near residence halls as collection points. Volunteers play a crucial role in organizing and promoting Y-TOSS to students and families during the move-out period, essential for the success of our initiative. The goal is to make it easier and more appealing to drop those items in the Y-TOSS POD instead of the dumpster.

From the last event, in 2023, YMCA helped divert 12 tons of waste out of the waste stream, including, for example, 1000 pounds of clothes, 100 pounds of food, and 40-plus pounds of linens. With about 50 volunteers who collected 150-plus community service hours, the event was successful in taking steps towards Virginia Tech's Climate Action Commitment of becoming a zero-waste campus by 2030.

Y-TOSS's operational period spans from May 3- 8, coinciding with finals week, which poses challenges in securing student volunteers due to their busy schedules. However, the success of the event relies heavily on a substantial amount of work and support. To address this, YMCA is actively engaging with local organizations and businesses to promote the event and recruit

volunteers. YMCA needs help recruiting more volunteers and spreading the word of the event.

Y-TOSS is a YMCA program led by Y Student Program Leaders Vivian Peregrino, Abby Touchstone, Sydney Kehl and Ellie Hepp. Volunteer shifts last for two hours. During the shift volunteers will be assigned to a specific POD and responsible for grouping donated items within the POD and keeping the area organized while also encouraging students and families to donate the items instead of trashing them. It's a great volunteer opportunity for individuals or groups to help with this huge sustainability initiative.

If you or a group you know of are interested in volunteering you can sign up here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/>.

YMCA at Virginia Tech



(From left) Award recipient Alicia Glynn, Alleghany Chapter Regent Debbie Haught and Award recipient Margot Thompson.

DAR honors members for community service

The Alleghany Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) has honored two individuals for their outstanding work with community service in our local area.

A luncheon was held on Saturday, April 20 at the Luther Memorial Lutheran Church in Blacksburg to present 2024 DAR Community Service Awards to Alicia Glynn and Margot Thompson.

Glynn volunteers with the Kiwanis Club of Christiansburg. Since moving to the New River Valley about seven years ago, Alicia chose to become involved with the Kiwanis because she loves children and all the Kiwanis Club does for them, along with caring about their members and families. Glynn does a lot with the yearly Wilderness Trail Festival, sponsored by the Kiwanis. She also does outreach to the ill and

injured members with phone calls and

cards.

Thompson has given many hours of work with "Room at the Table," a community outreach project sponsored by the Christiansburg Presbyterian Church to supply free weekly meals to those in need. Thompson serves as a team leader and this year she will be a co-organizer of Room at the Table's weekly meals and distribution. Margot also volunteers once a month at "For Your Table," a community food pantry. Additionally, Thompson volunteers with the Montgomery County Christmas Store and is a past board member of the Montgomery Museum of Art & History and a docent. She is vital in helping with the Heritage Day event sponsored by the museum.

Alleghany Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution

Gas prices up slightly in the last week

Average gasoline prices in Virginia have risen 2.2 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.52/g today, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,081 stations in Virginia. Prices in Virginia are 7.0 cents per gallon higher than a month ago and stand 3.7 cents per gallon higher than a year ago. The national average price of diesel has decreased 0.4 cents in the last week and stands at \$4.01 per gallon.

According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Virginia was priced at \$3.14/g yesterday while the most expensive was \$4.59/g, a difference of \$1.45/g. The lowest price in the state yesterday was \$3.14/g while the highest was \$4.59/g, a difference of \$1.45/g.

The national average price of gasoline has risen 4.3 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.64/g today. The national average is up 10.8 cents per

gallon from a month ago and stands 1.1 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:

- April 22, 2023: \$3.48/g (U.S. Average: \$3.66/g)
- April 22, 2022: \$3.96/g (U.S. Average: \$4.11/g)
- April 22, 2021: \$2.72/g (U.S. Average: \$2.88/g)
- April 22, 2020: \$1.72/g (U.S. Average: \$1.77/g)
- April 22, 2019: \$2.60/g (U.S. Average: \$2.85/g)
- April 22, 2018: \$2.57/g (U.S. Average: \$2.75/g)

April 22, 2017: \$2.23/g (U.S. Average: \$2.42/g)

April 22, 2016: \$1.94/g (U.S. Average: \$2.13/g)

April 22, 2015: \$2.29/g (U.S. Average: \$2.48/g)

April 22, 2014: \$3.50/g (U.S. Average: \$3.66/g)

Neighboring areas and their current gas prices:

Roanoke- \$3.39/g, down 2.0 cents per gallon from last week's \$3.41/g.

Richmond- \$3.53/g, down 1.7 cents per gallon from last week's \$3.55/g.

West Virginia- \$3.58/g, up 4.2 cents per gallon from last week's \$3.54/g.

"As the nationwide changeover to summer gasoline is now behind us, at least one of the three factors that had been actively causing prices to rise in the last couple of months is behind

us. However, it may take time for the largest pain point to be over: refinery maintenance. The next few weeks should see many refineries wrapping up their work and gasoline output should rise, putting downward pressure on gasoline prices soon," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy. "While Israel's retribution on Iran was somewhat surprising, it was also measured, with Iran virtually not even mentioning it publicly. As such, the price of oil has moved slightly lower, following the de-escalation that now appears to be taking place. I'm hopeful with reduced concern in the Middle East and an end to the seasonal factors pushing prices up that Americans will soon see relief."

GasBuddy

Joey Johnson named Silver Agent for Virginia Farm Bureau Insurance

CHRISTIANSBURG - Virginia Farm Bureau Insurance has named Joey Johnson a Silver Agent during its annual sales conference at Williamsburg Lodge and Conference Center, in Williamsburg, Va.

Farm Bureau 2023 Silver Agent. In his 16th year with Virginia Farm Bureau, Joey was recognized by his peers for outstanding sales and service to his members.

"Joey excels at ensuring his members in Montgomery understand and have the insurance

coverage they need," said Ray Leonard, VP of Sales. "We are fortunate to have Joey representing Virginia Farm Bureau Insurance and congratulate him on this achievement."

Virginia Farm Bureau Insurance



PHOTO BY DEVON JOHNSON FOR VIRGINIA TECH

Dandelions provide good spring forage for pollinators.

For Virginia, Less-Mow April is better than No Mow May, Virginia Cooperative Extension recommends

Each May, millions of people preserve the blooming dandelions and clover in their lawns by leaving their lawn mowers idle — a practice called No Mow May.

"The idea is that you are leaving the early flowering dandelion and clover to provide some forage for the earliest pollinating insects," said Mike Goatley, Extension turf specialist and associate professor of crop and soil environmental sciences in Virginia Tech's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

"No Mow May has become widespread in the last few years, but May is really too late in Virginia. The clover and dandelion begin flowering in April, and that's when you're really getting the value in not mowing," said Goatley.

It is not just "no-mow" that can help insects, said Shawn Askew, Extension specialist in turfgrass weed science and associate professor in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Mowing less frequently also helps ensure pollinators have a supply of clover and dandelion. Cutting back clover and dandelion plants may even encourage the plants to produce more blooms.

According to Askew, think of it as "less-mow" April. He recommends these practices:

- Reduce mowing instead of not mowing.
- Raise the mower height to increase

bloom density.

Only mow part of the yard each time you mow so that food is always available somewhere on the property.

Are lawns really that important for pollinators?

According to Margaret Couvillon, assistant professor of entomology in Virginia Tech's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, laws are important for pollinators.

"Because those March and April flowering weeds — the dandelions and clover — are important early sources of food for flower-visiting insects, leaving them uncut in your yard will help feed hungry bees," said Couvillon.

Recent studies on urban bees suggest that in addition to specialized pollinator gardens, yards with spontaneous lawn flowers also support bees and are important part of the urban pollinator ecosystem. For example, a 2014 study documented 25 pollinator species visiting white clover and 21 species visiting common dandelion.

Leaving grass long also provides necessary habitat for insects.

"The longer you can delay the mow, the better. We know from studies in Europe that delaying that first cut by eight weeks can significantly increase the diversity and abundance of insects in an area in subsequent years because

See **Less-Mow**, page 6



PHOTO COURTESY OF WARM HEARTH VILLAGE

Warm Hearth Village (WHV) residents, employees, and family members

Warm Hearth Village walkers unite in remembrance

RADFORD - Thirty-five Warm Hearth Village (WHV) residents, employees, and family members walked 3.2 miles on the village campus in honor and remembrance of the 32 lost at Virginia Tech on April 16, 2007.

WHV residents John Hillison, former Virginia Tech Agricultural Education professor and department head and Dr. Richard Shepherd, a retired physician who specialized in emergency and family medicine, mapped 3.2 miles on the campus and recruited the walkers.

Many at Warm Hearth have direct connections to

Virginia Tech and those who were involved that day. Hillison participated in the first Virginia Tech Run for Remembrance in 2008 and has been there every year since. The WHV version always starts with a group photo followed by solemn words to remember the day, those who were lost, the first responders and those who were healed. The walk is not only to remember but to help us heal after all this time. "This year as I walked, I shared my experience with another walker who was a student at the time. It's the first time I've done that and I realized just how much we

all still have to process," Hillison said.

"This is our first time being part of the walk at Warm Hearth as we're new to the community," said resident Ken Winans. "It was special to see the way residents here come together in support of the greater community. Warm Hearth is great that way and we feel lucky to be a part of a community that cares."

Warm Hearth Village

ourvalley.org

Legals - Montgomery County

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, By the Board of Supervisors of the County of Montgomery, Virginia

that the Board hereby schedules a public hearing on Monday, May 13, 2024 at 7:15 p.m., or as soon thereafter, at the Montgomery County Government Center, 2nd Floor, Board Room, 755 Roanoke Street, Christiansburg, Virginia in order to receive comments on the following:

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE D-2 AND D-4 PRECINCT BOUNDARIES BY MOVING 2065, 2097 AND 2265

Legals - Montgomery County

BLOCK OF LAUREL RIDGE MILL ROAD IN THE RINER AREA OF THE COUNTY OF MONTGOMERY, VIRGINIA FROM THE D-2 PRECINCT TO THE D-4 PRECINCT IN ORDER TO ELIMINATE THE SENATE DISTRICT SPLIT IN THE D-2 PRECINCT

A copy of the full text of the Ordinance is on file in the Office of the County Administrator and is available 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday for public inspection or copying.

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Angela M. Hill
County Administrator

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OBITUARIES

Cooper, Carlie Lee

Cooper, Carlie Lee, 81, of Josh Price (Laura), Matt Cooper (Tayler), Michael Cooper (Jessica) and Amie Crowder (Lee); great-grandchildren, Austin, Chase, Callie, Quinn, Layton, Rylee and Braxton; brothers, Paul Cook, Curtis Cook and Ricky Cook, and several nieces and nephews.



Cooper, Carlie Lee, 81, of Josh Price (Laura), Matt Cooper (Tayler), Michael Cooper (Jessica) and Amie Crowder (Lee); great-grandchildren, Austin, Chase, Callie, Quinn, Layton, Rylee and Braxton; brothers, Paul Cook, Curtis Cook and Ricky Cook, and several nieces and nephews.

She was born in Montgomery Co., on Oct. 23, 1942, to the late Guy S. and Lessie Reed Cook. She was also preceded in death by her brother, Roger Bruce Cook, and her maternal grandmother, Susan Reed.

Funeral services will be held Sunday, April 28, 2024, at 2 p.m. in the McCoy Funeral Home Chapel with the Rev. John Hopkins officiating. Interment will follow in the Hale Cemetery. The family will receive friends at McCoy Funeral Home from 1-2 p.m., before the service.

Cooper, Carlie Lee

Elbert Arvil Keith, 76, of Pilot, died Wednesday, April 24, 2024, at his home.

He was born in Floyd County March 12, 1948, to the late Lemon Arvil and Bertha Sowers

Keith. He was also preceded in death by his brothers, J.C., Franklin, Ray, Johnny, and Joe Keith. He is survived by his son and daughter-in-law, Billy and Tammie Keith; daughter, Shelia

Keith; grandchildren, Ashley Odell, and Sarah Keith; great-grandchildren, Bryson, Mackynzi, Bella, Hudson, and Koltyn; and sisters and brother-in-law, Vera Mae Hodge, and Jewel and Randolph Vaden.

Funeral services will be

conducted Saturday, April 27, 2024, at 1 p.m. in the McCoy Funeral Home Chapel with the Rev. Steve and Mary Lou Akers officiating. Interment will follow in Sunset Cemetery. The family will receive friends from 12 - 1 p.m. before the service.

Price, Frank Eugene

Frank Eugene "Gene" Price, of Heather Price, Mary Price, Patrick Price and Ean Greene (Summer); three great-grandchildren, Levi Davis, Rylan Bond and Aubrey Davis; as well as numerous cousins, nieces and nephews.



Gene was born Oct. 21, 1935 to Guy Lewis Price and Anna Mae Slusser Price. He was preceded in death by his wife of 65 years, Carolyn Grubb Price; father Guy Lewis Price; mother Anna Mae Slusser Price; and brothers Jack Price and Glen Price.

He is survived by his daughters, Marie Greene and husband Joe and Sharon Davis and husband Steven; son Guy Price; sisters-in-law Janice Price (Jack) and Barbara Price (Glen); six grandchildren, Crystal Bond (Jerry), Quentin Davis (Samantha),

Gene and Memorial for Carolyn was held at McCoy Funeral Home in Blacksburg Thursday April 25, 2024. A graveside service was held at the Veterans Cemetery in Dublin on April 26, 2024, officiated by Rev. Neal Turner.

The viewing for Gene and Memorial for Carolyn was held at McCoy Funeral Home in Blacksburg Thursday April 25, 2024. A graveside service was held at the Veterans Cemetery in Dublin on April 26, 2024, officiated by Rev. Neal Turner.

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.

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Kennedy, Lois Virginia Hall

Lois Virginia Hall Kennedy was taken home by her Lord and Savior April 22, 2024.

She was preceded in death by her husband of 70 years Lester W. Kennedy Jr., parents George and Mary Hall, brothers Richard, Donald, Tommie, and Larry, and one sister Doris.

She leaves behind five children Judy, Lester (Susie), Richard (Jeni), Danny (Valarie), Joyce (Ron); 16 grandchildren, 19 great grandchildren; and 4 great great grandchildren.

Lois was born June 30, 1927 to George and Mary Hall in Roanoke. They were not a rich family, but they had enough to get by. When the Depression hit Roanoke, the family lost their new home and lost their money in a bank closure. In order to find work, Lois and the family moved to Pennsylvania and New Jersey. By 1940 they would finally move back to the Clearbrook area in Roanoke County. Her father would take up a leadership role in the Clearbrook Grace Brethren Church, where Lois would play the piano. After graduating from Andrew Lewis High School Lois, worked to help support the family and continued to help her father grow the church in Clearbrook and began setting up the formation of a church in Willis, Va. In the summer of 1949 the church needed a temporary pastor and on one Sunday morning Lois and Lester met walking through the same set of doors in the church. By August both left to go to Winona Lake, Ind. to attend Grace College. They were engaged on Christmas Eve 1949 and were married at the Clearbrook Brethren Church on June 16, 1950. They would both go on to graduate



from Grace in 1952 and would begin their lives as missionaries to the Central African Republic.

They were first sent to France for language study, and it is there that they welcomed their first child, Judy. Lois had a keen knack for languages and learned how to fluently speak both French and the native language Sango. By the summer of 1953 they began their service to the salvation of others in Africa. Lois helped lead bible studies and organized prayer groups with local women of Mbaiki. Two of her children, Lester III and Richard, would also be born in Africa. By 1960, their first mission trip ended and they returned to the U.S. where Lester would be the preacher of the Grace Brethren Church in Limestone, Tenn. During their three-year stay in Tennessee they would welcome two more children, Danny and Joyce.

In 1966, Lois and the family would return to the mission field in Africa for three more years. When they returned, the family ministered at the First Brethren Church in Buena Vista, Va. Lois played the piano and was an important member of the church and supported her husband throughout their 16 years of service to the church there. In 1987, Lois and Lester would change churches for the final time when they moved to Fairlawn to minister at the Grace Brethren Church. Lois would go on to play the piano at the church for almost 30 years and Lester would serve as the preacher of the church until his death Nov. 17, 2020. On April 22, 2024, Lois was greeted by her

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CROSSWORD

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- CLUES ACROSS**
- Easy as 1-2-3
 - Goat and camel hair fabric
 - Women undergarment
 - British bathrooms
 - Assemblages of parts into one entity
 - Semitic fertility god
 - Dull & uninteresting
 - Yemen capital
 - Stare impertinently
 - Banished persons
 - Heart failure & energy supplement
 - Reduction in force
 - Women's movement
 - Polynesian wrapped skirt
 - Double-reed instruments
 - Own (Scottish)
 - Summer window dressings
 - Many not ands
 - Paddle
 - Being a single unit
 - Silly behavior
 - Insecticide
 - A blank area
 - Reduces stress
 - Morning moisture
 - Tear away roughly
 - Elevated
 - Cristobalite
 - Baseball's Ruth
 - Indian monetary unit
 - Contest of speed
 - Having a slanted direction
 - Gross receipts
 - A river in NE Spain
 - The brain and spinal cord (abbr.)
 - Dyneq Inc. on NYSE
 - Japanese monetary unit
- CLUES DOWN**
- Vestment worn by priests
 - The trunk of a tree
 - Transmission line cable
 - Freshwater duck genus
 - Bulk storage container
 - Oil obtained from flowers
 - Shopping containers
 - Abnormal breathing
 - Brew
 - Bake eggs in their shells
 - Serviceable
 - A person in the navy
 - A child's slight injury
 - Fain
 - Supports trestletree
 - Parian Chronicle discovery site
 - Greek famous for fables
 - Faical afterpiece
 - Dispatches by mail
 - Hall of Fame (abbr.)
 - Aah
 - Unnaturally pale
 - Before
 - Fixed in one's purpose
 - Madames
 - Frosts
 - City drains
 - Baseball playoff
 - Cruise
 - Steeple
 - Precipitation
 - Ancient Greek rhetorician
 - A unit of two
 - Viewed
 - Taxis
 - 4840 square yards
 - London radio station
 - Perform work regularly
 - Longest geological time

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Obits

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savior for whom she loved and was reunited with her husband in eternal Glory.

Lois lived an incredible and almost unbelievable life and she used it to help others find salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. She loved all of her family and prayed for them every night. If there is one thing Lois would want everyone to know it is that there is nothing the Lord cannot help you with and if you pray and accept Him then anything is possible.

The family received friends Friday, April 26, 2024, at the Mullins Funeral Home in Radford. Funeral services

followed with Pastor Lester Kennedy III officiating. Interment followed in Sunrise Burial Park in Radford.

In lieu of flowers, please consider contributions to Fairlawn Grace Brethren Church Memorial Fund (in Lois's name), 6893 State Rd 1204, Fairlawn, VA 24141.

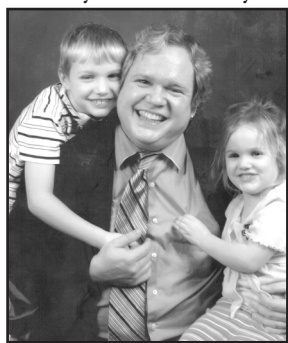
"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight." Proverbs 3:5-6

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

Kirby, Michael Steven

Michael Steven Kirby, 59, of Floyd, passed into the arms of Jesus on April 20, 2024, at his home. His children were by his side.

He was a graduate of Floyd County High School and Radford University, where he majored in classical guitar performance. He was preceded in death by his father, Raymond Kirby; his grandparents Earnest and Juanita Cregger Kirby of Roanoke and Emmitt



and Mary Shupe Craghead of Roanoke; step grandmothers, Dorothy Farmer Kirby of Radford and Louise Wertz Craghead of Roanoke; aunt, Mary Anne Collins and a cousin, Mary McNeely.

He is survived by his children, Elijah Kirby, of Blacksburg and Caroline Kirby, of Blacksburg and Savannah, Ga; mother, Adelene Kirby, of Floyd; the mother of his children,

Katy Mitchell, of Blacksburg; uncle, Rodney Kirby, Georgia; numerous cousins, and his dogs, Joey and Julie.

Mike's first priority in life was his children. He took great joy in being with Eli and Caroline and succeeded in being the best dad anyone could ever have had. They were his reason for living. He was very protective of his mother and was a good son.

Mike was known as much for his kindness and ready smile as for his music. He was able to brighten even the gloomiest of situations and make everything that he did fun.

Mike got his first guitar at age 10, stood in front of a mirror playing it for hours and dreaming of becoming a rock star. He played throughout his life with bands such as Yams from Outer Space, Axis, Lather, Train Wreck, and Awesomesauce. He was a founding member of each of these bands. The "Yams" toured the east coast in a rickety old school bus that broke down more than it ran. Mike played with such notable musicians as Dave Matthews, Slash from Guns N' Roses, and Artimus Pyle of Lynyrd Skynyrd. He and his band released three CD albums containing original songs that they wrote.

Mike was a fan of KISS and delighted in taking his kids to see them in 2020.

He fulfilled a lifelong dream by seeing Paul McCarthy perform. He aspired to play guitar as well as Eddie Van Halen, and who is to say that he didn't?

He was baptized at the age of 17 at Haven's Chapel Methodist Church, Floyd. He played in a praise band in Atlanta, Ga., and led two praise bands in churches in the New River Valley. He had a lifelong and very private relationship with God.

Mike taught music in the New River Valley for 30 years. He loved to share his gift and love of music with others.

A Celebration of Life was held at Gardner Funeral Home on Thursday April 25, 2024, led by Scott Dickens of Richmond. The Celebration was followed by a graveside service in Jacksonville Cemetery, Floyd. The family received friends one hour prior to the Celebration of Life.

All former band mates of Mike's were invited to serve as honorary pallbearers. The family wishes to thank the Floyd County Rescue Squad, Skyline Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, Good Samaritan Hospice, and Gardner Funeral Home. Online condolences may be made at gardnerfuneralhomefloyd.com. The family is being served by Gardner Funeral Home.

See Obit, page 6

ANGLICAN CATHOLIC

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

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

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

BAPTIST

First Baptist Church on 3rd Ave., 215 Third Ave at the corner with Downey St. We nurture meaningful connections to God and others through worship, spiritual growth, and community ministry. We celebrate the dignity and worth of all persons, created in the image of God. Sunday Bible Study Groups - 9:45, Sunday Worship - 11:00. Website: fbcradford.org 540-639-4419. Worship is in-person and live-streamed on Facebook and on our YouTube channel: First Baptist Church Radford.

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

CHURCH OF CHRIST

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

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

CHURCH OF GOD

New Hope Church of God, 1404 Mud Pike Rd., C'Burg. Rev. T. Michael Bond, pastor, 731-3178. Sun. School 10 a.m., Worship 10:50 a.m., 6 p.m. Thurs., 7:00 p.m.

West Radford Church of God, 1824 West Main Street, Radford, VA 24141, Sunday School- 10:00A.M. Morning Worship- 11:00A.M., Children's Church 11:00A.M. Sunday Evening - 6:00P.M., Wednesday Night - 7:00P.M., Pastor Danny Newman, Church Office - 540-639-6562 or 804- 921-0828.

CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

Christiansburg Church of the Brethren, 310 South Franklin Street. Pastor: Hal Sonafrank, 1-336-583-4822. Morning Worship 11 a.m.; Bible Study 10:00 a.m. Wednesdays. Website: www.christiansburgcob.org. A loving family, fueled by the Holy Spirit, grounded in God's Word, and delivering Jesus forgiveness and love to all people. Come as you are... you are welcomed!

(DOC - DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

Snowville Christian Church, 5436 Lead Mine Rd., Hiwassee, VA 24347, Pastor: Jerry King, Website: www.SnowvilleChristianChurch.com (and Facebook), Office: 540-633-3761, Email: office@SnowvilleChristianChurch.com, Sunday Worship Service: 11:00 a.m., Sunday School: 10:00 a.m., Thursday Bible Study: 6:00 p.m., We are: "Inspiring hope, helping people grow their faith, and sharing God's love with others!"

ECKANKAR

Eckankar, the Path of Spiritual Freedom, is a simple teaching that focuses on the Light and Sound of God to help people find more love in their life. The Roanoke Eckankar Center is located at 1420 3rd St. SW, Roanoke, VA 24016. A spiritual event is held on the 2nd Sunday of each month at 10:30 a.m. Since contracting COVID-19 may still be possible, please take the health steps that are best for you. It is appreciated that by attending you are taking responsibility for your own health. Visit www.eck-va.org, www.meetup.com/Roanoke-Spiritual-Experiences * Group* or call 540-353-5365 for other Eckankar programs and for more information about how the teachings of Eckankar can lead you to spiritual freedom.

EPISCOPAL

Grace Episcopal Church, 210 Fourth Street Radford. Welcoming and accepting, we have been a part of the Radford community for more than 130 years. ALL ARE WELCOME. Grace offers an 8:00am Contemplative

Montgomery County WORSHIP DIRECTORY

GOD'S COVENANT

Read Genesis 9:1 through 11:32

A covenant is a promise or contract between two parties. However, a biblical covenant involved much more. It was a permanent arrangement designed to promote friendship and understanding between God and man. After the flood, God made a covenant with Noah and every living thing.

I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth (Genesis 9:13).

This covenant had three parts. Never again would a flood devastate the earth. Season would follow season as long as the earth remained. Then God gave the rainbow to show that He could be trusted to keep His part of the covenant.

The rainbow speaks of God's grace and mercy. But His grace didn't stop with the rainbow. God wanted to have a relationship with us in spite of our unworthiness, so He sent us a Mediator—Jesus—who, by His death, opened up a new and better covenant, one that removed our sin and cleansed our conscience (Luke 22:20).

Prayer for Today: Lord, with Your help I will keep my part of the covenant—to love and honor You. Amen

Quicklook: Genesis 9:8-17

If your church is not listed and if you are interested, call Wendi Craig at 276-340-2445 or email at advertise@mainstreetnewspapers.com

Eucharist and a 10:30am Eucharist with organ music and a choir, with refreshments served afterwards. The 10:30am service is also available on YouTube for those unable to leave their house. Find us on Facebook and www.graceradford.org.

St Thomas Episcopal Church, 103 East Main Street, Christiansburg VA, 24073. Worship and communion at 10:00 a.m., each Sunday, followed by hospitality coffee and Adult Sunday Adult Seminar. Our service is also streamed. Contact for more info: mystthomasoffice@yahoo.com. http://www.stthomaschristiansburg.dioswva.org

LUTHERAN

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

Our Saviour Lutheran Church ELCA, 1845 Cambria St NE, Christiansburg. Celebrate Word and Sacrament as we worship with varied liturgy, hymns and music. Join our inclusive community in person or online Sundays at 10:00 am (youtube.com/@OSLCCburg), followed by refreshments and fellowship. Ministries include Bible study, choir, food ministry, and crafters. Little Free Pantry and Library available 24-7 by the parking lot. Parent's Morning Out offers faith-based activities and play for children 16 month - 5 years select weekdays. Wheelchair accessible. Learn how you may contribute to our ministries at www.oslc-cburg.org. 540-382-2223.

St. Michael Lutheran Church, 2308 Merrimac Road, Blacksburg, VA 24060. Worship service each Sunday at 10 AM, Sunday School 9 AM. We are a community of God's people where

we gather for worship, learning and service. Visitors and new members are always WELCOME! Google comments: "Wonderful, welcoming congregation." A place where all are truly welcome." You'll love our minister, The Rev. Dr. Wes Jamison, who engages us in God's word. St. Michael started and administers Micah's Caring Initiative which includes Micah's Backpack, Soup for Seniors, Garden, Closet, and Mini Pantry, with tremendous community impact. Partnering with Rainbow Riders and Total Action for Progress, we opened the first Early Childhood Head Start in our community (6 weeks to age 3). We sponsor an awesome Scouting program of Scouts Boy & Girl Troop, Venture Scouts for older youth, and a Cub Pack for girls & boys kindergarten - 5th grade, amongst many other programs. Directions: From Price's Fork Road, turn onto Merrimac Road. St. Michael is ~quarter mile on the left. For more information: Phone 540.951.8951; Email hope@stmcl.us; Website www.st-michael-lutheran-church.org

MULTI-CULTURAL NON-DENOMINATIONAL

Central Church, 803 Wadsworth Street, Radford. 639-3529. 8:30 a.m. Sunday Services: 8:30am; 9:45am Sunday School; and 11:00a.m. Child care is provided. www.centralmethodistchurch.com.

Christian Growth Center, 1450 Electic Way, Christiansburg, VA 24073 (beside Hubbell Lighting). Sunday Worship: 9:30am Prayer, 10:00am Service *Nursery Available. Lead Pastor: Todd Hallinan. Founding Pastor: Rob Sowell. Mission: Sow, Grow, & Go Sow Faith! Grow in Righteousness! Go into all the world in the authority of the believer! 540-382-2908.

PENTECOSTAL HOLINESS

Compassion Church, 1820 Second Street, Radford, 639-6287, Our music is passionate, our worship is real, and Pastor

Chandler Jones brings relevant messages for everyone at any place on their journey, Sunday Worship Experience at 9:30 AM & 11:00 AM, Wednesday Family Night at 7 PM, Children Ministry provided for all services. Our vision is to see all Saved. Freed. Restored. Fulfilled. Find us on facebook and Instagram

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

Piedmont Pentecostal Holiness Church, 5007 Jewell Dr., Shawsville Va. Sunday morning service 11am. Pastor Tim Clyburn. 8 miles from Shawsville Rt 460, on Alleghany Spring Rd.

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

UNITED METHODIST

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

St. Paul United Methodist Church, 220 West Main Street, Christiansburg. Rev. Mike Derflinger (540) 382-2410. Sunday Worship at 10a.m. with Children's Church at the same time, Sunday School at 9 a.m. Worship is in-person and Live-streamed on our YouTube Channel: StPaulUMCChristiansburgVA. All are welcome. Website: www.stpaulvaumc.org

WESLEYAN

Christ Wesleyan Church, 525 Harkrader Street, Christiansburg. Public Worship service at 11:00 AM. Sunday School for adults - 10:00 AM. Pastor: Gale Janofski 540-510-0952. The building is totally handicapped accessible. Website: christwesleyanchurch.org

Lyme disease in dogs: What dog owners should know

RADFORD- As Lyme disease cases rise in the U.S., humans are not the only ones at risk.

Veterinarians with the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine say dogs are increasingly vulnerable to this tick-borne illness.

“Black-legged ticks, also called deer ticks, are most common carriers of *Borrelia burgdorferi* and can be found in the northeastern and north-central parts of the U.S. The western black-legged tick is found on the Pacific Coast,” says Jenny Marin, a clinical assistant

professor at the Veterinary Teaching Hospital.

While Lyme disease was traditionally thought to be limited primarily to the northeastern U.S., Marin says positive cases of canine Lyme disease have now been reported across 39 states reporting high and moderate prevalence. Veterinarians say dogs tend to be bitten by infected ticks in the early spring and late fall when adult ticks are most active, but animals and humans can contract Lyme disease any time of year.

Symptoms of Lyme disease in dogs

can vary and may not appear for months after infection. Those may symptoms include: fever, joint pain or swelling, swollen lymph nodes, lethargy, and appetite loss

Increased thirst and urination

If left untreated, veterinarians say the disease can damage the kidneys, nervous system, and heart and cause chronic joint pain. Kidney damage from Lyme disease is typically fatal, and damage to the nervous system can lead to seizure disorders. Heart damage due to Lyme disease is rare.

To diagnose Lyme disease, your dog’s veterinarian will examine its

clinical signs, exposure to black-legged ticks, and test results. Dogs produce antibodies 4-6 weeks after infection, which can be detected through testing. Lyme disease is treated with antibiotics for typically a month.

Like so many diseases, the best treatment is prevention. Your veterinarian might suggest vaccinating your dog against Lyme disease or prescribing preventive products, depending on its needs and exposure to ticks.

Virginia Tech

Obit from page 5

Rollins, Larry Darnelle

On Thursday, Dec. 21, 2023, Larry Darnelle Rollins (aka “Buzz”), age 67 of Radford, Va., transitioned to his final resting place.

Larry was born May 9, 1956 in Radford to Bobby “Pannie” Nelson Rollins and Archie Rollins, Jr.

Larry attended Radford High School, where he played football, and assisted the Bobcats in winning the State AAA Championships. During this time, he lovingly earned the nickname “Buzz.”

Larry enjoyed fishing, hunting, spending time with his dog Sasha, but most of all, Larry loved his family. He always had a joke or comment to make us laugh.

He was last employed at Radford University.

Larry was preceded in death by his loving mother, Bobby (Pannie) Nelson Rollins Flynn of (Radford); stepfather, Roy Edward Flynn (Pulaski); maternal grandparents, William McKinley

Nelson, and Annie Virginia Nelson (Radford); paternal grandparents, Archie Rollins Sr. and Esther Lena (Casey) Rollins; and step grandmother, Isabelle Day Rollins (all of New River); his grandson, Devin Hairston; and multiple aunts, uncles, and other relatives.

Larry leaves to cherish his memory and love, his wife, Brenda Porterfield Rollins, of Radford; his father, Archie Rollins, Jr. and stepmother, Cara Miata Rollins, both of Radford; his children, son, Lowell Jermaine (Jay) Walson of Radford and daughter, Tasha Akers, of Christiansburg; his sisters, Paula Rollins Moore (James) of Accokeek, Md., Tena Rollins Fisher, Anita Dawn Woodson (James), Rosalind Gale Nelson, all of Radford, Natalie Rollins



Carter (Vincent) of Alexandria, Va., and Dana Austin of Charlotte, N.C.; his brothers, Bobby Nelson, Greg Rollins and Steve Rollins, all of Radford; and his special niece, Stacie Nelson of Radford; his grandchildren, Shauna Walson of Georgia, Shametrius (Anthony) Raymond of Missouri, Hanna Walson of Radford, Jeremiah Walson of Nevada,

Danika Akers of Blacksburg and Corey Hairston of Montgomery, Va.; his nieces, Barbara Ruiz, Portsmouth, Va., Brittany Joyce Cleveland Smith, Staunton, Va., Jessica Astoy (Yusif) Alexandria, Va., Kayla Distefano (Rick) Springfield, Va., and Veronica Nelson, Radford; his nephews, Christopher C. Adams, Arenas, N.Y., Shawn A. Woodson, Florence, Ala., Justin Carter, Raleigh, N.C.; his aunts, Audrey Lee (Sherman), New

River, Virginia Clark (Calvin) Upper Marlboro, Md., Connie Kincannon (John), Columbus, Ohio; and his beloved dog, Sasha.

He also leaves a host of great grandchildren, stepchildren, and other relatives; and his special friends, Georgina Walson, Cindy Akers Rollins, Charles (Chuckie) Day, David Stewart, David Morton, and Odell Palmer.

A graveside memorial service will be at the Sunrise Burial Park in Fairlawn on May 9, 2024, at 1 p.m. In the event of inclement weather, the graveside memorial service will be held in Highland Memory Gardens Mausoleum, 5555 Lee Highway, Dublin, VA 24084.

Following the memorial service a “Celebration of Life” will be at the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge, 100 Pulaski St., Radford.

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

Less-Mow from page 3

early emerging insects can mate and lay eggs before their habitat is destroyed.”

Be careful when you mow long grass According to Goatley, avoiding the lawnmower in spring when grass is just starting to grow might have benefits for your turf as well. Leaving the grass a little longer during this time can help the plant direct energy to establishing a strong root system.

When you’re ready to mow again, just be sure not to cut tall grass down to very short all in one mowing, a practice known as “scalping” your lawn. Removing more than one-third of the length of the grass in one mowing is very damaging to the plant.

“If you have let your grass get pretty long, you might be tempted to take it all the way down with your mower on the shortest setting, for example taking the grass from 6 inches down to 2 inches,” said Goatley. “This is exactly the opposite of what you want to do right before the heat of summer begins to stress your lawn.”

Instead, remove height gradually by setting your mower to consecutively lower settings over several days. Follow the rule of thirds: never remove more than one-third of the length at a time.

Goatley cautions Virginians with warm-season lawns — for example, bermudagrass or zoysiagrass — to be

especially careful if participating in Less-Mow April.

“Warm season grass can really get away from you,” said Goatley. “If you let your warm season lawn get to 5 or 6 inches, it’s going to be hard to even get the mower through it when you’re ready to mow.”

In addition to avoiding the lawnmower in spring, gardeners can also help pollinators by choosing landscape plants with wildlife benefits. For more information on habitat gardening, check the Virginia Cooperative Extension publication “For the For the Birds, Butterflies, and Hummingbirds: Creating Inviting Habitats.”

“If you choose ornamental plants wisely, you’ll be able to attract an abundant, diverse population of insect pollinators,” said Couvillon.

For help with your lawn, contact your local Extension Master Gardeners. Extension Master Gardeners are trained volunteer educators who bring the resources of Virginia’s land-grant universities to the people of the commonwealth. Visit the Extension Master Gardener Program website for more information or to become an Extension Master Gardener.

Tom Soladay for Virginia Tech

Ramsey from page 1

“Our vision is equally simple, we want to make the town safer and more secure,” Ramsey said. “We want to do it by using the best law enforcement techniques available and have innovative community outreach programs.”

The Christiansburg Police Department currently employs 61 sworn staff, six civilian staff and one part-time staff member equalling a total amount of 68 department employees. Ramsey explained to the council and community members that these

staff members are split into two divisions: the Operations Division and the Support Services Division. These divisions hold position distinctions such as: Patrol Lieutenant, Patrol Sergeant, Detective Lieutenant, Crime Prevention Lieutenant and more.

Regarding the data for FY 2024 thus far, there have been 1,193 criminal cases or arrests for Christiansburg Police Department.

“That doesn’t always mean

physical arrests,” Ramsey said. “That’s 1,193 charges...a lot of assault and battery, a lot of shoplifting, larceny, forgery and fraud. Thankfully, we don’t have a lot of violent street crime. We’re blessed to live in a community that has low crime levels, but I think the efficacy and type of officers we have working the street are part of that.”

So far in FY 2024, there have been 1,590 traffic citations and 33,327 received calls for

Communication Services.

“We’re working on pulling this out each quarter...that includes business checks and school security checks when we walk through schools during the day, when an officer goes to a closed business in the middle of the night and walks around to make sure it’s secure. That’s in there too,” Ramsey explained.

Ramsey said Christiansburg Police Department takes pride in not only serving the community, but being active in

the community as well. Officers participate in community events such as: Special Olympics, Coffee with a Cop, Child Abuse Prevention Month (the month of April), parades and are present at events like the After Prom Event, which happened this past Saturday, April 20, 2024. Ramsey said the police department hosts Citizen’s Police academies, including a teen academy, as an opportunity to focus on building relationships in the community.

Festival from page 1

a change during their event planning.

Council Member Timothy Wilson moved to approve the request. Council member Samuel Bishop seconded that motion. When the floor was open for questions, Council members Johana Hicks and Casey Jenkins had concerns for the proposed routes in terms

of flow of traffic for downtown businesses.

“In reference to the possibility of a direct effect on my business in downtown Christiansburg, I want to abstain from this vote, but I will most likely, because I will probably be most likely the one business that may be affected by the closure of these main

streets, I would like to, out of town council, have a conversation with you guys to possibly be able to work on something that can possibly be a working something with that business so we won’t affect it,” said Hicks. “This is just as a citizen and as an owner that I am speaking about this.”

Jenkins also abstained

from voting on this issue.

Council member Kim Bowman had concerns about protecting the businesses downtown from potential loss of business due to lack of vehicular traffic during the event.

“Is there a way to protect the businesses?” Bowman asked. “We’re working to bring business

to downtown. I think at the same time, we’re doing some things that are harmful for downtown business. Is there a way that we could guarantee that these businesses are not going to have loss due to events that are regularly going downtown?”

The Kiwanis Club of Christiansburg members reassured that they have

spoken to and worked with business owners downtown before and are happy to discuss with business owners about alternate ways to promote and run their businesses while these events are happening.

The council voted to move forward with the approval of both routes with a vote four to two.

Council from page 1

unlocked firearm. Therefore, approximately 350 children under the age of 18 accidentally harm themselves or someone else.

“Whereas, evidence strongly suggests that secure firearm storage is an essential component to any effective strategy to keep

schools and students safe;” Vice-Mayor Sutphin read, “Research shows that secure firearm storage practices are associated with up to an 85 percent reduction in the risk of self-inflicted and unintentional firearm injuries among children and teens. The U.S. Secret Service National

Threat Assessment Center emphasizes the importance of appropriate storage of firearms since 76 percent of school shooters use firearms acquired from the homes of parents or close relatives. Across the country, lawmakers, community members, and local leaders are

working together to implement public awareness campaigns, such as the Be SMART program that is being introduced in the Montgomery County Public Schools (“MCPS”) this month, which encourages secure gun storage practices and highlights the public safety risks of

unsecured guns.”

The Blacksburg Town Council moved for approval of the Consent Agenda, therefore approving and adopting Montgomery County’s statement concerning secure storage of firearms with a vote six to zero in favor of approval.

Epperly from page 1

The details of this most recent development were in Bodmer’s letter to the board. According to Bodmer, the DNA analysis report can be obtained from the Virginia State Police Investigator who was present for the Gatewood excavation, who also processed and secured the Rapid

DNA test from that which was excavated and submitted the swab sample through ANDE RAPID DNA to be tested.

The sample will now be sent to the state’s laboratory for further testing, in hopes of profiling the DNA further.

The recent finding comes a year

after apparent bones were discovered at another site in Pulaski County. Bodmer is convinced they belong to her sister.

“We will still continue this process until one of the items unearthed proves to have enough non-deteriorated DNA to match Gina’s profile,” she said.

Epperly’s age has started to take a toll on him, and he recently had hip surgery. It is because of that age he is eligible to receive a hearing every year from now on. Bodmer has requested a three-year deferral for the next parole hearing, despite Epperly’s age.

MONTGOMERY SPORTS

Hoover coming home to state as Hokie assistant

Marty Gordon
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Roanoke native Jen Hoover is coming home after serving as assistant coach for the past two years at Kentucky, the very school where former Virginia Tech Coach Kenny Brooks has landed. New Virginia Tech women's basketball head coach Megan Duffy named Hoover as an assistant coach of the program Monday. Hoover is the all-time winningest coach at her alma mater, Wake Forest, where she led the program for 10 years.

"Coach Hoover brings a wealth of knowledge to our program, including deep experience as a head coach and player in the ACC," Duffy said. "From our first conversation, I knew Jen would be a great fit, she has the energy needed to continue the winning tradition of Hokie basketball and can develop top talent at an elite level. She knows what it takes to lead and connect with female athletes in this evolving era of women's college basketball. She's an excellent addition to an already strong staff."

In her tenure at Wake Forest, which spanned from 2012-22, Hoover

led the Demon Deacons to four postseason appearances, including an NCAA Tournament berth in 2020-21.

Before her time in Winston-Salem, Hoover spent one year as the head coach at High Point in 2011-12. During that season, the Panthers earned a 20-13 record, including a 13-5 mark in the Big South. The 20 wins tied for the most in a single season since High Point moved to Division I in 1999. Hoover was named the 2012 Spalding Maggie Dixon Division I Rookie Coach of the Year after the season.

"I am both thrilled and grateful to join Coach Duffy and the entire Virginia Tech family," Hoover said. "Not only is she a proven winner with a knack for player development, but her character and integrity shine through in everything she does. Returning to the ACC and coming home to coach at Virginia Tech is an incredible honor! I'm eager to get to work building strong relationships with our student-athletes, collaborating with our staff, and immersing myself in the unwavering

passion of Hokie Nation."

Hoover's assistant coaching career began in 1994 and included stints at California, Virginia, Memphis, James Madison, East Carolina, VCU and Missouri-Kansas City.

In three seasons as an assistant coach at California, from 2008-11, she helped the Golden Bears to a combined 69-36 record, their first-ever NCAA Tournament Sweet 16 in 2009 and a WNIT Championship in 2010. She also helped bring in back-to-back, top-10 recruiting classes at California, including the No. 1 class in 2009. While at Cal, Hoover helped coach Kentucky alumna and current coaching video coordinator DeNesha Stallworth, among All-

Americans such as Ashley Walker and Devanei Hampton.

Before her time at California, Hoover was an associate head coach at Memphis in 2007-08 and an assistant coach with the Tigers in 2002-03. Between those two stops at Memphis, she spent four years as an assistant coach, including two years as a recruiting coordinator, under Hall of Farmer Debbie Ryan at Virginia from 2003-07. There, she helped produce a pair of top-15 recruiting classes in 2005 and 2006 and guided the program to a couple of 20-win seasons, an NCAA Tournament appearance and two WNIT berths. She also helped Virginia ink junior college All-American Aisha Mohammed

and McDonald's All-American and 2006-07 ACC Rookie of the Year Monica Wright.

Hoover started her coaching career at the University of Missouri-Kansas City from 1994-96, before becoming an assistant coach at Virginia Commonwealth for two seasons in 1996-98. She then spent two seasons at East Carolina from 1998-00, before moving on to James Madison in 2000-2002, where she helped the Dukes to the WNIT Final Four.

Hoover has an impressive reputation for developing forwards at the highest level, in part because of her own playing career. A post player herself, she starred for Wake Forest from 1987-91. She was a three-time All-ACC selection and is still second

PHOTO COURTESY OF VT ATHLETICS



on the school's career charts for points (1,728) and rebounds (1,006). Hoover led the Demon Deacons to their first NCAA Tournament appearance in 1988, and the next year, she helped the South Team win a bronze medal at the Olympic Festival in Oklahoma City, Okla., in 1989. Hoover was later inducted into the Wake Forest Sports Hall of Fame in 2007.

Following her collegiate career in Winston-Salem, she played professionally overseas for the Solna IF Basketball Team in Stockholm, Sweden, from 1991-92. She then played with Athletes in Action on the USA Fall Exhibition Tour in 1993, followed by the Australian Spring Tour the following year, before beginning her career in coaching.



PHOTO COURTESY OF VIRGINIA TECHNIQUES

Blacksburg High School freshman Jenna Kidd is excelling on the gymnastics mat.

Local gymnast qualifies for Eastern Nationals

Virginia Techniques Gymnastics gymnast Jenna Kidd has qualified to the USAG Level 9 Eastern National Championships.

Kidd, 15, is a freshman at Blacksburg High School and trains five days a week at Virginia Techniques. She is coached by owner and team director Cheryl Johnson, head coach Amanda James, and optionals coach Tad Piscatelli.

Kidd earned her spot in this prestigious championship meet after a strong all-around performance at the recent USAG Region 7 Regional Championship meet, held at the Nittany Valley Sports Center in State College, Pa. April 11-14.

At regionals, Kidd claimed the uneven bar event title with an impressive 9.5. She placed third on the floor exercise with a score of 9.625. Her all-around score was a 37.325, placing her fifth in the Junior 8 age division and securing her a spot in USAG Eastern National Championships.

Kidd is also the Virginia USAG Level 9 silver medalist on the uneven bars, floor exercise and all-around.

The USAG Gymnastics Women's Program is comprised of eight regions throughout the nation, representing all 50 states. Region 7 Gymnastics is the governing body of USAG Gymnastics representing Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia. The top seven all-around finishers and one alternate from each age group at Regionals qualify to represent Region 7 at the Eastern National Championships.

"We are proud of Jenna for qualifying to compete at this prestigious event," said Cheryl Johnson, owner, and head coach of Virginia Techniques Gymnastics. "Jenna has had a wonderful season. Her hard work, dedication, and perseverance

See Kidd, page 8

Weekly reports: Christiansburg softball moves to 10-1 on the season

The Christiansburg High softball team put together a solid performance earlier this week in a 10-4 win over Abingdon. Kyrstin Lowe started the event off with one of her three hits on the night followed by a walk for Kady Camper.

Makaylee Hughes would blast in the first points of the night with a two-run shot in the first. Camper and Womack each had a pair of hits on the night, and Sophia Russell also had one for a team total of nine.

Womack drove in two runs and Camper four on the night adding another "yard" ball to her collection over center field that soared 60 feet past their deep 230' fence... definitely going out of most baseball fields.

Camper picked up another win and added seven more strikeouts to season total.

Auburn boys, girls shutout Fort

The Auburn baseball and soccer teams both picked up shutouts this week. The Lady Eagles (9-2) and boys' squad (6-2-1), each blanked Ft. Chiswell 4-0 on the night.

Sophomore Grace Harris scored two goals,

while the girls picked up single ones from Katie Light and Rowan Price.

Kennedy Marshall and Senior Josie Agee Helms split duties and the shut out in goal.

On the boys' side of the field, Auburn had individual goals from JT Anderson, Ethan Board, Jared Bradley and Ethan Rosenbaum.

Senior Coahan Gordon pitches the shutout in goal for the Eagles.

Auburn baseball rolls over Bland

Jared Lavergne, Talan Mower and Mitchell Hale combined to throw a five inning perfect game with 12 combined strikeouts as Auburn defeated Bland 22-0 earlier this week. Lavergne, Matthew Altizer and Zac McGlothlin, each had three hits with McGlothlin having five RBI's and Graham Alley adding four RBI's. Auburn is 12-1, 7-0 in the MED.

Radford takes Galax in softball

The Radford Bobcats beat the Maroon Tide 14 to 10 on Wednesday, avenging an earlier loss to

Galax. Radford amassed 19 total hits in the game to include Addie Saunders' 100th career hit. Olivia Radford led the Bobcats going three for four with four RBIs. Kat Price, Ella Cox, and Quinn Burton all had three hits in the win, and Ariel Sutphin and Addie Saunders had two hits during the game. Raeleigh Mills, Abie Slate and Kira Rollins also had hits in a game that saw every Radford player record a hit.

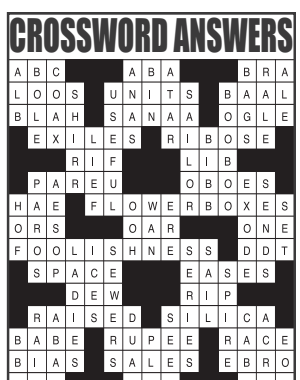
Quinn Burton earned the win on the mound going all seven innings and striking out eight.

Blacksburg girls shutout Pulaski

The Blacksburg HS Girls Soccer team defeated Pulaski 7-0 on the road Tuesday night. Erin Bishop led the way with four goals. Also scoring was Kallan Malabad, Amalia Moore, and Paige Miller. Miller, Bishop, and Ginny Crawford combined for Blacksburg's 10th shutout of the season. Blacksburg is 10-0-2, 6-0-2 on the season. Pulaski drops to 0-10, 0-8.

Staff report

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



MONTGOMERY SPORTS

RU Athletics hold annual RUBY awards

The Radford University athletics department came together to celebrate the accomplishments of its student-athletes at the annual RUBY's awards banquet on Monday night.

In the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee's 12th year organizing the event, the evening inside Preston Hall was all about honoring programs and individuals who have made contributions to the Highlanders' great success during the 2023-24 campaign in the classroom, in competition and in the community.

Strength & Conditioning Award - Olivia Hunter, Lacrosse and William Flanagan, Baseball

"This year's female strength & conditioning award goes to someone that is a strong leader for her team on the field and in the weight room. With a tremendous amount of success at her position since she's been here, a squat max of 335, a bench press max of 175, and a power clean max of 160, this year's female strength & conditioning award goes to Olivia Hunter." -Sam Pyles

"This year's male strength & conditioning award goes to someone who possesses a tremendous amount of strength, confidence, and leadership in the weight room. He has led his team since the day he began his career at Radford, and has been an extension of our staff during the most vigorous strength, speed, and conditioning sessions. With a back squat max of 465lb and a deadlift max of 500lbs, this year's Male strength & Conditioning award goes to Will Flanagan." -Jen Norton

Transfer of the Year - Olivia Flanagan, Volleyball and Chandler Turner, Men's Basketball

Flanagan made her presence known on the court this year by leading the Highlanders in kills and points with 140 kills and 170.0 points across 66 sets in 19 matches. Finished the season with a .160 hitting percentage on 387 total attacks and contributed 35.0 blocks, 31 digs, 11 service aces and three assists. She would record two career highs during a monster performance to secure the win over Presbyterian and would lead her to receiving the Big South Player of the Week honor the first time the program has received the award since Samantha Reitz garnered the award on Oct. 18, 2021.

Turner used his final year of eligibility with the Highlanders as he signed in May to join the team for his graduate season. The powerful forward played in 31 of 33 games this season, averaging 9.8 points, 5.6 rebounds, 1.1 assists and .6 steals per game. He shined in Radford's triple overtime game against Winthrop, earning a single game-career high of 33 points and 12 rebounds for his first double-double of the 2023-24 season. Turner also earned academic accolades being named to Big South's

Men's Basketball All-Academic team.

Scholar Athlete of the Year - Emily Brandow, Women's Tennis and Nick McCumsey, Men's Cross Country

Battling on the top flights every season, Brandow began her career in 2021 clinching a 4-3 semifinals victory in the Big South Tournament to push Radford to the Championship for the second time ever. Since then, she has accumulated 32 singles wins and 32 doubles wins which both rank within the top-15 in program history while earning a 3.97 GPA in Biology. Brandow also most recently won the Big South's all-academic award in back-to-back seasons.

A scholar off the course and a fantastic runner on it, this year's male scholar-athlete of the year Nick McCumsey carries a 3.94 GPA as a Sociology major. McCumsey earned his 6k personal best right out of the gate during the first meet of the 2023 season. Additionally, he came in 34 place at the 2023 Big South Cross Country Championships.

Coach of the Year - Ben Sohrabi, Women's Soccer

Women's Soccer Head Coach Ben Sohrabi earned this year's inaugural Coach of the Year award after another historic season in his 28th year at the helm of the program. At the conclusion of the 2023 Fall season, Sohrabi was named Big South Coach of the Year, the sixth overall in women's soccer's history. Sohrabi led the Highlanders to their sixth regular season championship in program history last Fall posting a 10-5-2 overall and 6-1-1 Big South record.

Last season marked the 16th time Sohrabi has led a Highlander team to 10 or more wins. Radford as a team ranked top-two in shots, shots on goal, points, goals and assists in the Big South. Sohrabi's five conference coach of the year awards are now two more than the next closest coach in Big South history.

SENIOR LEADERSHIP AWARD - Tori Boyd, Softball and Noah Haddad, Men's Soccer

This award recognizes a senior student-athlete who has excelled in academics and athletics, has made significant contributions to the community by demonstrating leadership and a commitment to service. This award recognizes an individual who promotes the university and athletics departments' missions, goals, and values through their actions; demonstrates exceptional leadership ability; and fosters a positive and motivating environment for their team. Boyd, from the softball program, and Haddad, from the men's soccer program, met every requirement and then some to earn this year's award.

Alliance of Athletes Award - Baseball

The Alliance of Athletes Award was first awarded last year under the title "Highlanders for Highlanders". Team support is vital to the success of any

athletics program. Radford Student-Athletes consistently support each other's programs by displaying spirit during competition and this award recognizes a team who has exhibited what being a Highlander is all about, by showing up and cheering on each of our programs. This year's recipient of the award is the baseball program.

The Ruby Cup - Women's Soccer

The RUBY CUP recognizes a team that achieved over a 3.0 GPA, displays team spirit at competitions, and is active in the community throughout the year. Not only is this team high achieving on the field of play, but also consistently shows support to other programs by displaying spirit during competition and are very giving of their time and service to the community.

The women's soccer program not only pushed themselves to a successful season on the pitch last Fall, but pushed off the field to an incredible team GPA while also supporting their local community at multiple charity events. The women's soccer program was also a common sight at Radford home and away events throughout the academic season.

Academic Excellence Team Award - Softball

The Academic Excellence Award is another new award to the Ruby's this year. This award is to recognize the team who embodies what it means to be a student-athlete. This year's recipient of the award is the Highlanders' softball program.

Support Staff of the Year - Abby Federici, Jennifer Norton, and Allison McCoy

The Support Staff of the Year Award is new to the RUBY's this year. This award is to acknowledge the staff who work behind the scenes to support our student athletes' successes on and off the field. It was voted on by our student-athletes to recognize three individuals who have had a positive impact on their time here at Radford. This year's award winners were athletics trainer Abby Federici, associate athletics director for sports performance Jennifer Norton and associate athletics director for student-athlete support services Allison McCoy.

Comeback Athlete of the Year - Jillian Silverstone, Women's Soccer and Scott Rouse, Baseball

In October of 2022, Silverstone fell during a tackle and tore her shoulder labrum. She was taped up, won her first Big South Championship, and was eventually named to the all-tournament team. During the spring of 2023, Silverstone worked harder than anyone to get her shoulder stronger and get back on the soccer field. Then, in preseason 2023, she took another fall on that same shoulder right after getting cleared to return to full soccer participation. As the 2023 season continued, Silverstone

continued to work on her shoulder and helped guide the team to back-to-back Big South women's soccer championships.

Last season, Rouse was struck with a line drive and suffered a subdural hematoma which is when blood pools between the brain and its outermost covering and can be life threatening. Despite the injury, Rouse earned the academic achievement of being on the Dean's list for each of the last two semesters. His return to the field is only possible by encouraging CT scans, protective equipment and by playing specific sports like baseball.

Freshman of the Year - Eileen Albers, Women's Soccer and Tom Saporta, Men's Tennis

Albers was named Freshman of the year after an incredible debut campaign with women's soccer last Fall. At the season's end of year postseason awards, Albers became the sixth Highlander to ever earn Freshman of the Year in program history and the second in the last three seasons to do so. The Melsungen, Germany native was electric leading the team in goals (6) and points (15). Her six goals ranked third-most overall in the conference and most among Big South freshman.

Saporta was named Freshman of the Year after bursting onto the scene with the men's tennis program this Spring. The newcomer played on court two singles and split time on court two and three doubles facing tough competition all season. Despite that, Saporta was able to claim victories over opponents from schools such as ETSU, BYU, and Campbell. His total singles victories also led the men's tennis program overall.

Athlete of the Year - Chloe Wellings, Women's Cross Country/Track and Field and Cameron Pittman, Baseball

Riding her high from last season's Big South podium finishes, Wellings wasn't done yet as she has broken nearly all her own personal bests during the 2024 season. At the 2023 Big South Cross Country Championships, she earned fifth place in the 5k to run her personal best and placing second in Radford's record book. Wellings took over the top spot in the record book to earn a school record of the 3k. At the Big South Indoor Track and Field Championships, she proved her speed taking not gold in not one, but two events.

A true lead off hitter and the definition of consistency are just a few ways to describe Pittman. He averages a .348 batting average, the highest of all Highlanders and 6th highest in the Big South. Pittman so far has 25 runs, 21 RBI, a career high slugging percentage of .485 and stolen bases. He also leads the Highlanders in hits and has two home runs on the season as well.

Radford University Athletics

Columbia head coach now assistant at Va. Tech

Virginia Tech wrestling's head coach Tony Robie announced the addition of Zach Tanelli as Associate Head Coach of the program on Monday, April 22, 2024.

Tanelli comes to Blacksburg after eight seasons in New York City as the head wrestling coach at Columbia University. No stranger to the mats, Tanelli brings 15 years of coaching experience on top of an All-American finish, three trips to the NCAA Wrestling Championships, a finalist at the Big Ten Wrestling Championships, and a Ken Kraft Midlands Championships title as a student-athlete for the University of Wisconsin.

"We could not be more excited to have Zach and his family join the Virginia Tech Wrestling Family," Robie mentioned.

"You can't overstate how great of a job Zach did building a winning culture at Columbia. Getting another coach on staff that has the experience and skill set to excel in every aspect of this job is what we were looking for. Zach undoubtedly checks all those boxes. He also brings incredible wrestling knowledge that will help our entire roster, especially our lower weights, accomplish their goals. Zach was the first and person we pursued and are grateful that he and his family want to call Blacksburg home. We can't wait to get to work and continue our pursuit of greatness."

At the helm for the Lions from 2016-2024, Tanelli made a monumental impact on the program, setting school records in Division I and EIWA conference dual meet wins in a season, highest team placement at the EIWA Championships, team points at the EIWA Championships, and individual NCAA Championships qualifiers

in a season.

"My family and I want to thank Coach Robie, Coach Frayer, Coach Haight, and all at Virginia Tech Athletics for giving us the opportunity to join their program. This is a very special place and I'm humbled to be viewed as someone who can add value to their established culture. I'm excited to get to work and see the impact I can make," said Tanelli.

The 2023-24 campaign was a banner year for Tanelli at Columbia. They crowned their first All-American since 2013, and only their sixth in program history, in Lennox Wolak (174-pounds). Additionally, Tanelli coached both Wolak and Aaron Ayzerov (184-pounds) to EIWA Championship titles, the first time the program has seen multiple tournament champions since 1935. During his tenure, Tanelli was responsible for five of Columbia's nine total EIWA Champions in over a 75-year period. With just eight top-5

team finishes at the EIWA Championships all-time, Columbia Wrestling ended the season in the top-5 at the EIWA Championships in each of Tanelli's final three years in NYC. The team also recorded their highest dual meet victory ever over No. 15 Northern Iowa. Academically, the Lions were recognized as a Top-30 NCAA Scholar All-American Team six times during his time leading the program, highlighting 18 individual Academic All-Americans.

"My eight seasons as Head Coach at Columbia were incredibly fulfilling. My student-athletes and coaching staff are the things I am most proud of - we created something unique that I believe embodied the grit and tenacity of New York City. I have tremendous gratitude for Columbia Wrestling, the men I coached and the families that gave me the privilege of training their sons and daughters. They are built on solid foundation, and I am confident they will finish the work we

started."

Before his time at Columbia, Tanelli spent two years as an assistant coach at Purdue University from 2014-2016 where he would help send a total of 11 student-athletes to the NCAA Championships. He guided Purdue to its first Midlands tournament championship since 1963 in Chad Welch (165) and helped see the team to a 10-win season in 2014-15. Tanelli was instrumental on the recruiting trail for the Boilermakers with a FloWrestling-ranked sixth best recruiting class of 2016.

Prior to his time at Purdue, Tanelli climbed his way through the coaching ranks, serving as interim head coach and head assistant coach at Hofstra University to begin his coaching career. Tanelli's impact was immediate across the board for Hofstra, particularly with the lightweights. The former Badger coached four All-Americans and helped guide 12 individual conference champions for

the Pride during his five-year stint in Hempstead.

A three-time NCAA qualifier, Tanelli earned a fourth-place podium finish to earn All-America honors in 2009. He completed his senior year with a 31-6 record, including an undefeated 7-0 record against Big Ten opponents during the dual season. Tanelli was ranked No. 1 in the country for the second half of the 2008-2009 season after winning the 141-pound Midlands Championship, before a runner-up finish at the 2009 Big Ten Championships.

A native of Millburn, New Jersey, Tanelli earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology from Wisconsin in 2009 and his master's degree in Higher Educational Leadership and Policy Studies from Hofstra in 2012. Tanelli and his wife, Emily, along with their three children, Leo, Scottie, and Madison will now call Blacksburg home.

Virginia Tech Athletics

Kidd from page 7

have paid off, and we could not be more excited for her to have this opportunity to compete and showcase her skills amongst the best of the best at this level."

Kidd will compete at the USAG Development

Program 2024 Eastern National Championship May 4 at the Myrtle Beach Sports Center in Myrtle Beach, SC. VA Techniques has had five other gymnasts qualify to Eastern Nationals over the last eight years.

Virginia Techniques