

# News Messenger

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## Watson declines leave of absence request by Blacksburg council

**Heather Bell**  
editor@ourvalley.org

BLACKSBURG – The Blacksburg Town Council has requested Council Member Liam Watson take a leave of absence from the council following his arrest in July on felony election fraud and illegally voting.

In a written response to the request, which was made on behalf of the council by Vice Mayor Michael Sutphin, Watson said he will not be taking a leave of absence.

“Given the nature of the charges that you are facing, the council believes that it would be in everyone’s best interests if you took a leave of absence while these

charges are pending,” Sutphin said to Watson via email Aug. 7. “Council could take a formal action to approve the request and excuse your absences from meetings during that time. Town Charter § 3.10 (b) provides that the town council may excuse absences.

“I’d be happy to discuss this with you in person if you’d like; it would probably be a good idea to include a staff member in any such meeting,” he continues. “We also realize that you will likely want to discuss the implications of this with your legal counsel.”

Watson responded to Sutphin’s request Aug. 12.

“I am in your receipt of your suggestion that I take an approved leave of absence from my position

as Councilman on the Blacksburg Town Council,” Watson wrote. “After careful consideration, I decline to accept your offer. I will not take a leave of absence from my position as Councilman on the Blacksburg Town Council. I look forward to continuing my representation of the people of the Town of Blacksburg.”

Watson was indicted by a Montgomery County grand jury. The Virginia State Police began an investigation in March 2024 after an allegation was made regarding election fraud. The investigation was assisted by the United States Postal Inspection Service. Watson was arrested on three counts of felony election fraud and one felony count of illegally voting.

## State Board certifies five finalists for NRCC presidency

RICHMOND – The State Board for Community Colleges has certified five finalists for the position of president at New River Community College (NRCC) in Dublin, Virginia. The finalists came from a national search that attracted over 70 candidates.

The five finalists, in alphabetical order, are: Dr. Peter Anderson of Blacksburg, Virginia; Dr. Robert Brandon of Abingdon, Virginia; Dr. John Davis of Spotsylvania, Virginia; Dr. Melissa Frank-Alston of Evans, Georgia, and Dr. Ted Lewis of Bluefield, West Virginia.

“We were incredibly fortunate to have such



PHOTO COURTESY OF NRCC  
**Dr. Peter Anderson**



PHOTO COURTESY OF NRCC  
**Dr. Robert Brandon**



PHOTO COURTESY OF NRCC  
**Dr. John Davis**



PHOTO COURTESY OF NRCC  
**Dr. Melissa Frank-Alston**



PHOTO COURTESY OF NRCC  
**Dr. Ted Lewis**

an impressive group of finalists participate in the process,” said VCCS Chancellor David Doré. “I’ve no doubt the college’s next president will possess all of the attributes and abilities necessary for success at New River now

and well into the future.” “We are pleased to announce the finalists for President for New River Community College,” said Bill Cunningham, chair of the New River Community College Local Board. “I would

like to thank the search committee for their contribution to the process, and we look forward to hosting the finalists on campus and in our community.”

Dr. Peter Anderson is vice president for

instruction and student services at New River Community College (NRCC) in Dublin, Virginia. Before serving in that role, Anderson worked as dean of business and technologies at NRCC, and prior to

that, he worked as a grant administrator for the college.

Anderson earned an associate degree from NRCC; a bachelor’s degree from Virginia

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PHOTO COURTESY OF JULIA M. FALLON  
**Campers show off their hats for the camp’s etiquette hat tea party.**



PHOTO COURTESY OF JULIA M. FALLON  
**This group of young people, led by counselor Julia M. Fallon (at center) enjoys a photo shoot with an antique Model A car during the Blacksburg Parks and Recreation’s annual Fashion Design and Youth Modeling Camp.**

## Youth enjoy fashion and modeling camp

Blacksburg Parks and Recreation presented its annual Fashion Design and Youth Modeling Camp in July.

Counselor Julia M. Fallon led campers from the New River Valley in a weeklong day camp filled with fun and friendships. The camp culminated in an etiquette hat tea party and a runway fashion show. Campers learned auditioning skills,

fashion design and fashion history.

Campers included: Matthew Comaratta, Malene Esker, Stella Esker, Fiona Fraley, Iona Gillie, Eden Herschler, Lucy Jones, Gwen Lewis, Elizabeth Maready, Sofia Nieto, Gabriella Perez, Emma Santos, Cara Soccolich, Emily Strand and Jayna Williams.

Julia M. Fallon

## Student addresses school board about potential life-saving medicine

**Angelica Ramos**  
Contributing Writer

MONTGOMERY COUNTY- A Blacksburg High School senior addressed the Montgomery School Board about amending a policy to allow Narcan in schools to potentially save students’ lives.

Emma Larson approached the Montgomery County School Board during the public address portion of their Aug. 20, 2024 meeting to ask that they think of amending a policy about allowing medicines like Narcan in schools, which could potentially save lives.

“Last year,” Tess Larson said, “I tried to hold a training at my school in order to spread awareness about the dangers of opioids and how to treat an overdose with Narcan. For those who don’t know, Narcan is a medication that reverses the effects of an opioid overdose. It can make the difference between life or death. I was told students were not allowed to

carry Narcan on school grounds and that no trainings or even advertisements of trainings were allowed on campus.”

Larson explained they were told that the reason for this was that Narcan would be in violation of the medication policy.

According to the Virginia Department of Health, in 2022 (in the state of Virginia), there were 2,490 deaths due to overdose with eight out of 10 of those deaths being due to fentanyl, carfentanyl (or fentanyl analogs) and tramadol, which was lower than the 2021 overdose deaths. Narcan, or naloxone, is a nasal spray that reverses the effects of opioids in the human body and can often help restore breathing after an overdose within less than 10 minutes, according to many sources including the FDA. Narcan is most commonly associated with heroin overdoses but is helpful in other drug overdoses, especially with opioids.

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## School Board votes on policy revisions

**Angelica Ramos**  
Contributing Writer

MONTGOMERY COUNTY- The Montgomery County Public School Board voted to approve, and reject, some policy adjustments first presented to the board at its July 30 meeting.

Some of the Virginia School Boards Association policies that received adjustment were: Policy 1-6.8 Citizen Participation, Policy 6-3.16 Literacy Plan, Policy 7-1.3 Student Records, as well as 15 other policies.

Many of the board members felt as though some of the policy adjustments were not necessary to be added to school board policy or were unclear as to wording and potential implementation. Those three policies are 1-6.8, 7-1.3, and 6-3.16 (mentioned above). The board voted to approve all the other policy adjustments and adopt them.

Policy 1-6.8 was voted to be rejected from adoption with a unanimous vote for disapproval. Policy 1-6.8 adjustment regarded requiring students providing current student ID, upon request, before speaking at public address during board meetings to ensure they are Montgomery

County students.

Policy 7-1.3 was voted to be “tabled” or be withheld from being voted upon until further information and clarification are provided. Policy 7-1.3 regarded student records and how long MCPS will hold their records over time. Currently, student records are held indefinitely.

Policy 7-1.3 currently reads, “Parents and eligible students will be given the opportunity to inspect and review the student’s education record upon request. If a parent or eligible student disagrees with information contained in the student’s education record, the parent or eligible student may challenge that information through the process set forth below in the “Correction of Education Records” subsection.”

This raised many questions and concerns from the school board, so they will withhold from voting until they have more clarification on the policy’s wording and implications.

Policy 6-3.16 was also voted against being adopted. This policy adjusted the Literacy Plan policy for schools in Virginia.

All other policy adjustments proposed were voted for approval.

# UPCOMING EVENTS

**Saturday, Aug. 24 –  
Sunday, Aug. 25:**

## Theater production

Proclamation Theatre and New River Stage present “A Deadly Sunrise: The Tragedy of Lewis & McHenry,” a story about the infamous Lewis & McHenry duel, the people, the 1808 time period and the lasting impact on our region and state. This is a new work by local playwright Mark ‘Hiram’ Curtis. Go to proclamationtheatre.com for advance tickets and best seats. The performance location is Proclamation Theatre at Knights of Columbus Hall in Christiansburg. Showtimes listed on website.

**Saturday, Aug. 24:**

## Radford Community Fest 2024

East Main Street, Radford, 11 a.m. – 7 p.m. Solacoustix will start the music off from 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. Music Road Co Trio will perform 1:30 - 3 p.m., followed by The Floorboards 3:30 - 5 p.m. and then Florencia & The Feeling 5:30 - 7 p.m. Fluidity Performance Troupe will also be present with a variety of street performers and an aerialist show at the end of the evening. Numerous vendors, food trucks, a beer garden (hosted by Radford brewery Long Way Brewing) and a Kid’s Zone, which will include arts and crafts, bounce houses, and games.

## Heritage Day

Sponsored by the Montgomery Museum of Art & History. Immerse yourself in the rich history of Christiansburg, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., in downtown Christiansburg, 4 E Main St. and 300 South Pepper St. Step into the past with over 40 vendors showcasing crafts, artifacts, and more. Indulge your taste buds with a variety of delectable treats from food trucks while enjoying the delightful tunes of live music and dance throughout the day. Keep the little ones entertained with a hayride and specially curated activities just for them.

## Rotary Club of Blacksburg yard sale

The Annual August Yard Sale will be held 7 – 11 a.m. at the Blacksburg YMCA parking lot on North Main Street. Featured will be a wide range of items including household items, kitchen appliances, monitors, furniture, tools, bikes, and much more. Proceeds go to local projects as well as local scholarships for high school students offered each year by the Rotary Club.

## Blacksburg Farmers Market

At Market Square Park, 100 Draper Rd SW, Blacksburg; 8 a.m. - 2 p.m. The Blacksburg Farmers Market is a local, family-friendly gathering place in downtown Blacksburg featuring farmers of locally grown produce and meats, alongside artisans of baked

goods and handmade crafts. For more information, visit <http://blacksburgfarmersmarket.com>.

## Radford Farmer’s Market

Every Saturday through October; 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. on the grounds of Glencoe Mansion, 600 Unruh Dr. Visit weekly for an ever-changing supply of homemade goodies, crafts, plants, meats, produce, and more.

**Sunday, Aug. 25:**

## Vintage Market

At Market Square Park, 100 Draper Rd SW, Blacksburg; 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. The market is made up of a carefully chosen group of vendors selling a wide selection of quality vintage items, upcycled crafts, and occasional antiques. For more information, visit [blacksburgfarmersmarket.com/vintage-market/](http://blacksburgfarmersmarket.com/vintage-market/).

**Monday, Aug. 26:**

## 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](http://www.radfordva.gov).

## Montgomery County Board of Supervisors meeting

Public meetings are normally held 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, Aug. 27:**

## Blacksburg Town Council meeting

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

## Christiansburg Town Council meeting

Regular town council meetings are held on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month beginning at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers of Town Hall (100 E. Main St.). The public is welcome and encouraged

to attend, with a citizen hearing time reserved at each meeting for residents to bring any matter they desire before the entire council.

**Wednesday, Aug. 28:**

## Blacksburg Farmers Market

At Market Square Park, 100 Draper Rd SW, Blacksburg; 2 – 6 p.m. The Blacksburg Farmers Market is a local, family-friendly gathering place in downtown Blacksburg featuring farmers of locally grown produce and meats, alongside artisans of baked goods and handmade crafts. For more information, visit <http://blacksburgfarmersmarket.com>.

## Market Square Jam

Blacksburg’s Market Square Jam is an official Crooked Road affiliated venue that provides fun and entertainment on Wednesday evenings, June through September. The Jam takes place at Market Square Park from 7-9 p.m. For more information and a list of hosts, please visit [blacksburg.gov/marketsquarejam](http://blacksburg.gov/marketsquarejam).

## Disinformation in the Digital Age

“Disinformation in the Digital Age,” a free non-partisan public information program, will be held 7:30-8:30 p.m. at the Lyric Theatre, 135 College Ave. in Blacksburg. The program’s focus will include social media, generative AI, fact-checking, finding reliable sources and how all of this may impact elections. The program will conclude with a Q&A, and with tips for responding to disinformation.

**Saturday, Sept. 14:**

## Shred-A-Thon

The Town of Blacksburg will host a Shred-A-Thon 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. at the Blacksburg Community Center. This free event is a great opportunity to recycle unneeded household documents, records, etc. Please plan to bring documents in a box, tote, or paper bag and observe the limit of five containers per vehicle. Items that cannot be shredded include metal, three-ring binders, composition notebooks, hardback books, and non-paper materials. This is a drive-thru event only. Please remain in your vehicle during drop-off. For more information, contact the Town of Blacksburg Recycling office at 540.443.1212.

## Ongoing:

## Menagerie, exhibit at Fine Arts Center for the NRV

Fine Arts Center for the New River Valley presents Menagerie, celebrating the diverse talents of artists residing in the NRV. At the Fine Arts Center in Pulaski at 21 West Main St., Pulaski, through Oct. 5, 2024. Some artwork contains mature content and may not be suitable for children.

# Virginia Tech, Homestead Creamery launch two new flavors of Virginia Tech-inspired ice cream

Looking to beat the summer heat? Well, Virginia Tech has a scoop for you.

Hokie Nation has two new ways to stay cool this summer as the latest flavors to come out of Virginia Tech and Homestead Creamery’s cool ice cream collaboration roll out to grocery stores, restaurants, ice cream shops, and specialty stores across Virginia.

Evoking the creaminess of Homestead’s classic French custard-style ice cream, HokieBerry Trail consists of a base of premium vanilla swirled with tart Chicago maroon raspberry pomegranate and sprinkled with decadent dark chocolate crumbles. Hokie Sunset Swirl has a smooth vanilla ice cream base with vanilla cake crunch bites. A ripple of sun-kissed mango tangerine gives it a refreshing fruity bite and its signature burnt orange color.

As with Hokie Tracks — the first licensed ice cream to come out of Virginia Tech and Homestead’s creamy collaboration — these new flavors were developed by the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences’ Department of Food Science and Technology faculty members and alumni Joell Eifert ’88, M.S. ’14 and Brian Wiersema ’98 working in partnership with Homestead’s team.

“The success of Hokie Tracks exceeded our expectations, and now we’re really excited to share these two new flavors with the public,” Eifert said. “We worked really hard to make sure they embody Virginia Tech in every way.”

Team members’ first ice cream was so well liked that it caught them off guard, and according to Eifert, it didn’t sink in until the CEO of a popular regional grocery store chain reached out after tasting it to request to carry the legendary dessert in his stores.

“We’ve been developing these two new flavors for quite some time — they’ve become a passion project for Joell and I — and they each express something about us,” Wiersema said.

When the team set out to develop Hokie Tracks’ successor, its members came up with three ideas that guided the development of the ice creams’ flavor profile — they wanted refreshing

fruity flavors, classic Virginia Tech colors Chicago maroon and burnt orange to be represented and they wanted to create something that consumers couldn’t already buy.

“What says summer more than fresh fruit?” Eifert said. “We also wanted to lean into flavors that both showed off our colors and were something unusual that folks weren’t seeing in stores.”

This cold collaboration benefits more than just those who enjoy quality frozen treats. A portion of the proceeds from sales of all three flavors go to support food science education through the funding of scholarships, student product development teams, lab supplies, and more in the Department of Food Science and Technology — a program consistently recognized as one of the top food science institutions in the country for its focus on experiential learning and its nearly 100 percent career placement rate.

Eifert said the department will award its first student scholarships funded entirely by Hokie Tracks sales in summer 2025.

“I hope when people buy our ice cream they know that a portion of the proceeds does come back to the academic side and help our students be able to do things that maybe they wouldn’t normally be able to do,” Wiersema said. “Experiential learning and studying abroad gives them new perspectives and opportunities for discovery.”

The new pint container label designs for both flavors feature university trademarks, including the word “Hokie” and the Hokie ice cream marks, which represent the footprints of Virginia Tech’s beloved mascot, the HokieBird. The label for Hokie Sunset Swirl features a golden-orange sun setting over silhouetted mountains, reminiscent of the Appalachian sunset that both Virginia Tech’s Blacksburg campus and Homestead experience every night. HokieBerry Trail’s label features topography lines surrounding a dotted path, a reference to Blacksburg’s Huckleberry Trail that gave the ice cream its name. The new designs were



PHOTO BY LEE FRIESLAND FOR VIRGINIA TECH

**HokieBerry Trail and Hokie Sunset Swirl — the most recent flavors born out of Virginia Tech and Homestead Creamery’s tasty ice cream partnership — are rolling out now to grocery stores and specialty shops across Virginia.**

created by Shanin Glenn for Virginia Tech Communications and Marketing in collaboration with Homestead Creamery.

Virginia Tech’s partnership with Homestead Creamery was established in 2021 to bring innovative food science research to market using homegrown ingredients and Virginian know-how. Eifert had been working with the award-winning and locally beloved Homestead for over a decade in her role at Virginia Tech, so when the idea of creating a bespoke licensed ice cream for the Hokie Nation first arose, the conversation about who to partner with was a short one.

“We take a lot of pride in being known for making quality food products using local, wholesome ingredients, so collaborating with Joell, Brian, and Virginia Tech was an obvious decision,” said Walt Frazier, president of Homestead Creamery. “We’ve been so pleased with the response to Hokie Tracks, and we can’t wait to see how people feel about these two new flavors, which we spent a lot of time and care crafting to be

completely unique to Virginia Tech.”

According to Wiersema, the best part of developing any food product is finally seeing it in consumer hands and creating something for his alma mater made it all the more special.

“It makes all of us proud, and it should make all Hokies proud,” he said. “We’re a Virginia Tech department. I’m an alum. Homestead is full of our alumni. To work together as our own little family to bring this to the greater Virginia Tech family — from farm to spoon — that is really fun to see.”

Those who like their social engagements à la mode can join the university for Hokies, Scoops, and Brews, a launch celebration that will be held in McLean on Sept. 15 in collaboration with Homestead and Hardywood Park Craft Brewery. Registration is now open. Stay tuned to the Department of Food Science and Technology on Facebook, Instagram, X, Threads, and LinkedIn for upcoming events and announcements.

Virginia Tech

# 2024 Kentland Farm Field Day to highlight agricultural research and management practices

On Tuesday, Sept. 10, Virginia Cooperative Extension and the Virginia Tech College of Agriculture and Life Sciences will host the 2024 Kentland Farm Field Day. The event will highlight current research projects at Kentland Farm as well as focus on livestock and horticulture production. The morning will begin with wagon tours of Kentland Farm and a talk from Virginia Tech's Dr. Alex White on using smart money management practices during market highs to prepare for market lows.

This year's livestock track includes: Heifer Selection and Development -Join Dr. Vitor Mercadonte, Beef Extension Specialist, as he discusses heifer selection and development to increase performance in your herd. NRV Grazier Panel- Hear from producers from the

New River Valley on different ways they incorporate managed grazing on their operations. Drone Panel- Learn about the various applications in which drones can be utilized on your farm from industry professionals and researchers. The horticulture track (presented by Dr. Tom Kuhar, Dr. Steven Rideout, etc.) will include information on integrated pest management (conventional and organic), seasonal cover crops and soil organic matter, etc. Kentland exists to support the research, teaching, and Extension programs of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, which include many of Virginia's major agricultural crops and livestock species. Programs are conducted at the farm by many different colleges and departments of the university, including Engineering,

Science, Veterinary Science, and Liberal Arts and Human Sciences. The farm is rich in local history, and Virginia Tech has maintained that history through the manor house, enslaved people's cemetery, Native American sites, and other early farm buildings. Registration: \$20 - includes lunch and ice cream To register call Pulaski County Extension (540-980-7761). Virginia Cooperative Extension

## “Disinformation in the Digital Age” program set for Sept. 5

“Disinformation in the Digital Age,” a free non-partisan public information program, will be held Thursday, Sept. 5, 7:30-8:30 p.m. at the Lyric Theatre, 135 College Ave. in Blacksburg. The program's focus will include social media, generative AI, fact-checking, finding reliable sources and how all of this may impact elections. The program will conclude with a Q&A, and with tips for responding to disinformation.

Aaraj Vij and Jeremy Swack, the program speakers, hold seven years of experience in research and development in the mis/disinformation sector. As Co-directors of W&M DisinfoLab, Vij and Swack led the design and execution of multidisciplinary research on our information environment, including the impacts of social media and generative AI. They have spoken at events hosted by NATO Headquarters, the Global Research Institute, and the Data & Democracy National Security Conference. After years of researching mis/disinformation, Vij and Swack founded VerbaAI LLC to develop tools to strengthen our information environment.

The program is sponsored by Defending Democracies, a local non-partisan grassroots organization and VTEngage: The Center for Leadership and Service Learning at Virginia Tech. Defending Democracies



Pictured (left to right) Maureen Perry, John Perry, Ed St. Martin, Robert O'Keeffe, Cece St. Martin, Jane O'Keeffe, John Piercy, Diane Naff, Pam Knox, Pat Lazaroski, Sally Bohland, Jim Bohland, Fuzzy Jones, Barb Byron and Carol Jones.

## Villas at Peppers Ferry hold annual brunch

The Villas at Peppers Ferry held their annual “Hello & Goodbye Brunch” on Saturday, Aug. 17 at their clubhouse. The traditional brunch is held in honor of those

new neighbors that have moved in and those that moved away since the previous August. Neighbors bring a covered dish and share food and conversation. Several new residents

have shared the sentiment that they've never felt so welcomed into a neighborhood as they have at The Villas. Villas at Peppers Ferry

Marketplace ourvalley.org

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# Glencoe Sessions Fall Music Series underway Sept. 6

RADFORD — FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge and Glencoe Mansion are partnering on a new musical collaboration with rising bluegrass star Addie Levy called, "The Glencoe Sessions."

The series provides for an intimate listening experience with a diverse array of musical talent from the Blue Ridge region. "The Glencoe Sessions" will be held the first Friday of each month from September to December in the historic Glencoe Mansion. The concerts will run from 6 - 7:30 p.m.

FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge, established in 1988, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering vibrant communities in the Blue Ridge that celebrate the area's unique culture, natural beauty and quality of life. They do so by empowering volunteer groups, organizations and municipalities to coordinate special projects and events.

"Our mission is to celebrate the environmental beauty and cultural uniqueness of our beloved Blue Ridge," said FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge executive director Julie Whalen. "The Glencoe Sessions allows us to showcase our region's incredibly rich and diverse musical heritage. We look forward to sharing these artists' talents with those in attendance, and to Blue Ridge PBS audiences later this year."

Glencoe Mansion is the historic 1875 residence of Gen. Gabriel C. and Nannie Radford Wharton and is home to a dynamic community museum that preserves the history and culture of the region. Opened in 1998, the site provides a three-in-one museum experience with the Period Residence, History Exhibits and an Art Gallery. "The Glencoe Sessions" will be held in the beautifully restored period rooms where the audience can appreciate the history and beauty of the house while also enjoying music inspired by the history of the region.

This intimate concert series is a unique new take on the musical experience here in the Blue Ridge. These smaller venues allow both the performers and audience to have a deeper experience with the music.

"We're happy that Addie Levy brought the idea for this exciting concept to the museum, and we know it will be a wonderful and moving experience for participants," Museum Director Scott Gardner said.

Concerts include:  
September 6: Jim Lloyd—Musical eclectic, singer, old-time banjo great, public radio host, music teacher, bluegrass rhythm guitarist, storyteller, banjo museum curator, barber of Rural Retreat, Virginia, Jim Lloyd has established himself as a towering figure in Appalachian music today.

October 4: Pythagoras—Forged in the heart of Johnson City, Tennessee, Pythagoras pushes the boundaries of bluegrass and acoustic music. Pythagoras' members include Grant Dresnok (guitar & lead vocals), Gracie Grossman (fiddle), Joe Henson (Mandolin), and Lexi Wagnitz (upright bass). If you like the hard-driving bluegrass, groovy fiddle tunes, jam bands, and a lot of original material, you'll love Pythagoras' sound.

November 1: Justin Golden—With roots in the Mississippi Delta, Chicago, and the Piedmont of Virginia, Richmond-based guitarist and songwriter Justin Golden's origins are deeply vested in the blues. In addition to his work as a recording and performing artist, Golden maintains a busy teaching schedule and works with the non-profit The Rhapsody Project to provide community enrichment through anti-racist cultural heritage programs.

December 6: Domino—In the heart of Nashville, the trio of Cole Ritter, Luca Chiappara, and Addie Levy weaves a stellar blend of Bluegrass, Jazz, and Swing. Their music, polished through years of exploration, brings a magic to the stage. All three members are nationally touring musicians, working for multiple artists and touring under their own names.

Tickets are \$15 per person per session, or \$50 for tickets to all four sessions. For more information or to purchase tickets please visit blueridgejamboree.com or blueridgefriends.org. There will be beverages available for purchase.

Glencoe Mansion



PHOTOS COURTESY OF GLENCOE MANSION

The first of The Glencoe Sessions will be a performance by Jim Lloyd.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF GLENCOE MANSION

Domino



PHOTOS COURTESY OF GLENCOE MANSION

Justin Golden



PHOTOS COURTESY OF GLENCOE MANSION

Pythagoras

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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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## CROSSWORD PUZZLE

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2. \_\_\_\_, denotes past  
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7. Extents  
8. Chinese surname  
9. NYC subway "residents"  
10. Essential oil used as perfume  
11. A way to treat injuries (abbr.)  
12. Session  
13. Units of land areas  
15. Goes over once more  
18. Where wrestlers work  
21. Italian islanders  
24. Avenue  
26. \_\_\_\_, Adams, U.S. President  
27. Rest with legs bent  
30. Type of flour  
32. The Golden State (abbr.)  
35. More (Spanish)

37. Stinging, winged insect  
38. The use of irony to mock  
39. Arsenals  
42. Pouch  
43. 22nd letter of the Greek alphabet  
46. Violent seizure of property  
47. Restrict  
49. Something comparable to another  
50. Punishment device made from stems  
52. Soul and calypso songs  
54. Formerly OSS  
55. Athabaskan language  
57. \_\_ bene: observe carefully  
59. Six (Spanish)  
62. Read-only memory  
63. Chinese philosophical principle  
66. American conglomerate  
68. Tin

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# OBITUARIES

## Epperley, Micheal Thomas

Micheal Thomas Epperley, 75, of Blacksburg, passed away peacefully Aug. 19, 2024, in the presence of his family and friends at the home he built with his own hands.

He was born March 8, 1949, to the late Luther Thomas and Mary Ruth Epperley. He never traveled far from them as he built his house next door to his parents where he resided his entire life. Though his body was frail and tired, his spirit was full of grateful appreciation to draw another determined breath every second he was graced on earth. He lived on his own terms and was happy to leave when the Lord called him into His eternal care. Up until the end his determined and positive outlook along with his keen sense of humor remained with him.

Mike was a successful business owner, one of the best heavy equipment operators around and an avid outdoorsman. He owned and operated Epperley Excavating and Landscaping for over 40 years. The first 30 years of the business was a family affair as he partnered with his father, Luther. Luther ran the backhoe and Mike ran the track

loader and they were a team. After the passing of his father, Mike took over sole ownership and continued what he and his father began many years before. Often people would reference that his office was at the Deli Mart on Main Street. His beige color Chevrolet work truck would be parked in the lot and when you drove by most knew they should stop by because there had to be a great deal of laughs for everyone around. He spent many early mornings and rainy days socializing with other contractors and anyone else that would love to have conversation. He frequently said that he always received jobs from the customers that came by so in essence maybe it was his office after all. Prior to owning and operating his own business he was employed by Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University in the Biochemistry Department.

Mike volunteer coached youth basketball and baseball at Blacksburg Parks and Recreation for over 20 years. He mentored and touched the lives of many young athletes as they came through the program. He was competitive but above all else



he was fair. He volunteered and donated countless hours for the youth of Blacksburg and made positive impacts on the many that he coached. In 20-plus years of volunteer coaching, he only received one technical foul and that was given by his oldest son when Mike was coaching his youngest son. That was an interesting weekend to say the least! Mike's greatest accomplishments was being a father to his two sons and a Poppy to his two grandsons and his new 15-month-old granddaughter. He cherished their sporting events, family gatherings, fishing, hunting trips and watching his granddaughter walk for the first time. Those

were the days that made him the happiest and he will leave memories for everyone involved that will last a lifetime.

Besides his parents he was preceded in death by two siblings, Edna Faye Sowers and Donna Mae Price and his nephew, Ricky Vaden. Left to cherish his memory is his loving wife of 53 years, Charlotte Epperley; his oldest son, Brad Epperley and wife Amy; his youngest son, Brandon Epperley and wife Alisha; his three precious grandchildren, Cole Epperley, Parker Epperley and Azalea Ruth Epperley and his special canine companion Zoey; special aunt and uncle, Kenneth and Shelvee Epperley. Mike had a very fun-loving relationship with his brothers-in-law Jimmy Fisher, Ricky Eppling, Monte Eppling, Jeff Williams and his sisters-in-law Merinda Williams and Susan Sowers along with his many wonderful cousins, nieces and nephews that he loved very much. Our family would like to give a special and loving thank you to his niece Jennifer Vaden for her countless hours helping Mike and the family during his times of struggle.

The family would also like to thank Dr. Isaac Spence and his nurse Kim; Dr. Frank Biscardi and his staff; Good Samaritan Hospice staff with special thanks to Brittany, Connie and Lottie. The family will be touched forever from the memories that Mike and our family have made with special friends Bernard and Ellen Linkous, Calvin Dove, Janice Hodge, Dr. Lucian and Marj Robinson, Donnie and Sharon Cox, Dr. Richard and Laurie Shepherd, the Fenton Family, Norma Spichek and many other friends that Mike had met through business, sports and family friends.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Blacksburg Christian Church, 240 Watson Ave., Blacksburg, VA 24060 and Gateway Baptist Church, 2196 Harding Rd, Blacksburg, VA 24060.

Funeral services were conducted Friday, Aug. 23, 2024 at 11 a.m. in the McCoy Funeral Home Chapel with the Rev. Gary McCoy officiating. Interment followed in the Roselawn Memorial Gardens, Christiansburg.

### 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.sttfc.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!"

### 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 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

# Montgomery County WORSHIP DIRECTORY

## Cities of Refuge

Read Joshua 18:1 through 20:9

Once the Children of Israel entered the Promised Land, it had to be divided amongst the tribes. Joshua asked for a survey to be done, and with that information he carefully assigned each tribe their portion.

Chapter 20 addresses an interesting issue that reflects God's passion for justice. The "eye for an eye" principle was in vogue in those days, and God wanted justice for those who killed someone accidentally.

"Tell the Israelites to designate the cities of refuge, as I instructed you through Moses, so that anyone who kills a person accidentally and unintentionally may flee there and find protection

from the avenger of blood." (Joshua 20:2-3).

What a great picture of Jesus and His compassion for us. Our sins can be accidental or unintentional, but sadly we sometimes disobey on purpose. Yet in either case, Jesus invites us to come to Him, confessing our sin. He promises to forgive us and cleanse us (1 John 1:9). He provides us the ultimate refuge from our mistakes.

Prayer for Today: Lord, when my thoughts, words, or actions are not pleasing to You, I will run to You because I know You are my "city of refuge."

Quicklook: Joshua 20:1-9

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

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](mailto: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](https://www.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](http://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@stmclc.us](mailto:hope@stmclc.us); Website [www.st-michael-lutheran-church.org](http://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](http://www.centralmethodistchurch.com).

**Christian Growth Center**, 1850 Electic Way, Christiansburg, VA 24073 (beside Hubbell Lighting). Sunday Worship: 9:30am Prayer, 10:00am Service \*Nursery Available. Lead Pastor: Todd Hallinan. Founding Pastor: Rob Sowell. Mission: Sow, Grow, & Go Sow Faith! Grow in Righteousness! Go into all the world in the authority of the believer! 540-382-2908.

### PENTECOSTAL HOLINESS

**Pentecost 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](mailto: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](http://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](http://christwesleyanchurch.org)

# OBITUARIES

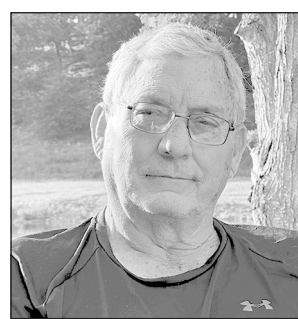
## Johnston, Ralph David

Ralph David Johnston, 74, of Dublin, passed away Tuesday, Aug. 20, 2024, at Pulaski Hospital after seven months of illness.

He was born on Jan. 3, 1950, in Princeton, West Virginia. Ralph was a resident of Dublin for the past 47 years. Ralph was preceded in death by his father, Ralph Johnston; his mother and stepfather, Myrtle and Louie Mullens; and his granddaughter, Olivia Grace Covey.

He is survived by his loving wife of 55 years, Patricia "Pat" Johnston; daughters, Jennifer Johnston, Cheryl Morales (Michael), and Rhonda Nottingham (Antonio); grandchildren, Amanda Covey, Cara Ann Covey, Christopher (Breanna) Covey, Jacob Andrew Covey, Marcus Lee Johnston, and Bryant Andrew Nottingham; great-granddaughters, Emma Grace, Sara Beth, Jade Arianna, Neveah Brooke, and Macie Grace; sister and brother-in-law, Helen Compton (Tommy); nephews, David, Jeff and Neil Compton; and many other relatives and friends.

He retired from the U.S. Navy, serving on the aircraft carrier USS America while stationed at NAS Cecil Field in Jacksonville, Florida, and as an electronic instructor on NAS in Memphis, Tennessee. Ralph finished flight ground



school while he was in the Navy and obtained his commercial and instructional IFR license after relocating to Dublin. He began working at the New River Valley Airport as a manager and flight instructor until accepting a job with Xerox Corporation where he retired after 32 years.

Ralph and Pat loved traveling and had visited 47 states and Canada.

Ralph's first pride and joy was watching his grandchildren play sports and he never missed a game until he became sick. He was so looking forward to watching his grandson, Bryant, play football.

We would like to thank the staff at Highland Ridge Rehab, Pulaski Community Hospital, Carilion New River Valley Medical Center, and Lewis Gale Hospital in Salem for all of the wonderful doctors and nurses we have come in contact with.

The family will receive friends 11 a.m.- 1 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 28, 2024, at the Mullins Funeral Home in Radford. Funeral services will begin at 1 p.m. with Mike Hudson officiating. Burial with full military honors will follow in Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Dublin.

The Johnston family is in the care of Mullins Funeral Home in Radford.



IMAGE COURTESY OF PEXELS VIA VIRGINIA TECH

## The best times to water your vegetable garden, explained by an agriculture expert

August has seen record heat, but that won't stop knowledgeable home gardeners who know that now is the best time to plant fall crops: beets, carrots, kale, cauliflower, peas, lettuce, spinach, cilantro, and more.

"Fall gardening is a great time to think about irrigation and possibly upgrading your system," said Shawn Jadrnicek, Virginia Cooperative Extension agent whose work has focused on farming in a variety of climates and landscapes. "Fall transplants need to be planted when it's still hot in August or earlier to allow them enough time to mature before days shorten and temperatures are cooler. Tender, cool season transplants need plenty of water to get them going and keep them happy."

Jadrnicek answered questions about when it's best to water your garden, regardless of the time of year.

### Q: What's the best time to water a home garden?

"When to water depends on how you are watering. If you're using a sprinkler or other type of watering system that will get the leaves wet, the best time to water is when the dew is already on the leaves. Typically, that happens overnight, starting about 11 p.m., and then dries up when the sun emerges around 8 a.m. Watering in the middle of the night is, ideally finishing before 5 a.m."

### Q: What are the risks if the leaves stay too wet?

"Fungal diseases need moisture to grow, so if you water when the dew is starting to dry on the leaves or right before the dew forms, then you are extending the timeframe the leaves stay wet and this can lead to more fungal problems."

### Q: Is the middle of the night the only time to use a sprinkler system?

"Overhead watering in the middle of the day can also be good because the plants will be dry before and after the watering event. However, you must be careful with hot water in the hose burning the plants. Keep in mind, too,

that more water will evaporate during the daytime so you will lose more to evaporation. A common myth is that water will magnify the sunlight causing damage to the leaves, but this is false and probably a result of hot water coming from an idle hose sitting in the sun. Watering during the middle of the day can help cool plants and is a good technique to extend the growing season of cool weather loving plants like lettuce into the middle of summer."

### Q: How about if you have a drip irrigation system?

"If you're using a drip irrigation system, the leaves won't get wet and you can water anytime — but the best time with drip is when the plants most need the water, which will be when the sun is shining. With drip irrigation, you want to keep the soil around the plants close to saturation and you don't want to push water past the root zone. Typically, this will involve more frequent watering for a shorter amount of time."

### Q: What time period settings are best for drip irrigation?

"I would water once or twice a day for a longer period of time with loam soils and up to 10 times a day for a shorter period of time with sandy soils. Either way, it's best to use some type of automated irrigation system to make sure you're giving your vegetables the correct amount of water at the best time."

### Q: What if there are limits on water capacity?

"If you're on a municipal water system or have limited capacity on your well, consider watering when demand is lower. Typically, municipal systems and homes have a high demand for water in the morning when people are taking showers and baths, and irrigating during this time could reduce water pressure."

Virginia Cooperative Extension has compiled detailed information about the ideal times and places for home gardeners to plant and grow a variety of vegetables.

Virginia Tech



PHOTO BY ANGELICA RAMOS

Fuller Center Bicycle Adventure cyclist trim trees at Bob Herrick's home.

## Fuller Center Bicycle Adventure serves the community

Angelica Ramos  
Contributing Writer

MONTGOMERY CO- The Fuller Center Bicycle Adventure rode through Montgomery County recently on their way to Washington D.C. and stopped to help our community members in need.

The Fuller Center Bicycle Adventure raises money for people around the nation in need. In Blacksburg and Christiansburg, there are many people in need of help, so the Fuller Center Bicycle Adventure along with the local Sequoia Housing Partnership, a Fuller Center partner, spent a day helping our community by putting in wheelchair ramps, renovating kitchens and helping our community clean and organize their homes.

The cyclists were excited to lend a helping hand in our community. From trimming trees, to sweeping floors, to pulling out kitchen cabinets to replace them with new ones, the cyclists were focused on helping Montgomery County residents have pride of place and comfort in their homes. In one home they were working in, they were replacing flooring and adding in new kitchen cabinets and the cyclists and Sequoia Partnership staff worked together to problem solve and glue down the floor, communicating with each other the entire time about

how this will provide the family with ease of mind and pride of place for a long time. In Bob Herrick's home, the Fuller Center cyclists helped Mr. Herrick trim trees and weed whack to help give him ease of life with an injury he has sustained. He explained that the help was much appreciated as it is currently hard for him to do those things on his own.

The Fuller Center Bicycle Adventure was only in Montgomery County for a few days, but made sure the community was served. The Sequoia Housing Partnership, being new Blacksburg and being focused on creating pathways to homeownership, finished the work in the community when the cyclists rode out. For example, the kitchen renovation still needed countertops after the Fuller Center laid down the flooring and replaced cabinets. The Sequoia Housing Partnership came in the next day and finished up the kitchen project for the family living in the home.

As the Bicycle Adventure rode out, the community felt grateful for their service and hard work that will leave a lasting impact on those they helped.

"There's something about seeing people," Justin Summers, Sequoia Housing partnership Chairman said, "from all across the country, dedicating themselves to a project that's beautiful and that's motivating and encouraging."



PHOTO BY ANGELICA RAMOS

Fuller Center Bicycle Adventure Cyclists renovate a kitchen with Sequoia Housing Partnership Board Member, Leah Boblitt

## Celebrity endorsements expand candidates' reach, expert explains how

Actresses Kerry Washington and Mindy Kaling, hosts of the Democratic National Convention, have made their support for Vice President Kamala Harris clear.

Rapper Megan Thee Stallion performed at the rally that launched Harris' campaign for president, and Lil Jon made a surprise DNC appearance Tuesday. On the Republican side, singers Kid Rock and Jason Aldean and wrestler Hulk Hogan have endorsed former President Donald Trump.

"Celebrity endorsements are one category of endorsements that evidence and history suggest work to get votes and donations," said Virginia Tech communication professor Megan Duncan, discussing what advantages the support of celebrities can provide. "Celebrity endorsements are of course common in advertising merchandise, and they can be a useful tool for politicians' campaigns, too."

"Celebrity endorsements work best on getting people who are disengaged from the political process to pay attention, effectively widening the audience," said Duncan. "They're most effective at getting people enthusiastic about voting for a candidate rather than talking specific policies — with the exception of people who have a personal connection that increases their expertise in an area."

"They're also quite effective at getting people to donate to political campaigns and causes, although generally they are more effective on younger rather than older voters," Duncan said.

"A strategic celebrity endorsement



PHOTO COURTESY OF VIRGINIA TECH

Megan Duncan

would be one that connects to an audience that would generally agree with the campaign's policies but isn't likely to show up at the polls without some encouragement," Duncan said. "For those audiences, a celebrity can be a reason to get excited for a candidate and a motivation to get involved. Our connection with celebrities is usually an emotional one rather than a policy one — and a celebrity can help transfer that emotion to a political campaign."

Virginia Tech

# MONTGOMERY SPORTS

## RU programs to face ACC, SEC foes

**Marty Gordon**

NRVsports@ourvalley.org

The Radford University women's basketball program has announced four ACC non-conference contests for this upcoming season.

The women will also play in the first of their kind women's game at Greenbriar Resort in Lewisburg, West Virginia and face cross the New River-foe, Virginia Tech during the month of December.

The men are also set to play a couple of Atlantic Coast Conference and Southeastern Conference teams.

After an exhibition at home against Ferrum Oct. 30, the Lady Highlanders will kick off their 40th season competing at the Division I level on the road at Duke on Nov. 4. Later that week, Radford's home opener will come against Hampton on Nov. 7.

Radford will stick to the home front to close out the first week of the season by hosting Western Carolina Nov. 10, a return trip from the Highlanders visit to the Catamounts last season. Back on the road, Radford will face its second ACC opponent of the season when they visit Commonwealth foe Virginia Nov. 13.

The meeting is the first between the two squads since 2018 when the Highlanders went into Charlottesville and came out victorious 57-44.

Radford's next match-up is an intriguing one as the program will face Navy at the Greenbrier Resort Nov. 17 marking the first-ever Division I women's basketball game within the storied resort's halls. Game time and ticket information for the meeting is coming soon.

The Highlanders make their third straight game away from home when they visit another in-state foe Norfolk State Nov. 20. The Spartans are one of three teams on the Highlanders' schedule that competed in last season's NCAA Tournament.

Back at home, Radford will play host to Eastern Kentucky Nov. 23. The Highlanders and Colonels (a 2024 WBIT participant) are meeting for the first time since 2004. Radford will then move back to road competition as they play their first of four straight away games with a visit to Baltimore, Md. to face Loyola (Md.) Dec. 4. The meeting between these two squads will be the first

since 1998.

Radford's third of four ACC opponents comes in their next meeting when the team visits Clemson, led by first-year head coach Shawn Poppe, on Dec. 8. The road trip continues with a visit to ETSU Dec. 13 as the Highlanders will make their first visit to Johnson City, Tenn. before returning in March to compete in the Big South Tournament.

Radford's fourth and final ACC opponent of the non-conference slate will be right here in the New River Valley as the team takes on Virginia Tech, led by another first-year head coach in Megan Duffy, on Dec. 15.

To close out the non-conference slate and preparation for Big South play, Radford is back in Dedmon for two games that also finish the calendar year. On Dec. 20, the Highlanders will host UVA Wise. Coming back from a brief break, Radford is right back at it to host Bluefield University Dec. 29.

After an exhibition against Bridgewater Oct. 24, the Radford men will kick off their 40th season at the Division I level on the road at Pittsburgh Nov. 4. Later that week, the Highlanders return to the Dedmon Center for their home opener against William & Mary Nov. 8.

The Highlanders stick to Dedmon for their next matchup which will come against Old Dominion Nov. 12. This will mark just the third-ever meeting between the two programs, and the Monarch's first-ever visit to the Dedmon Center.

Back on the road, Radford makes a

quick trip to face Evansville Nov. 16, the first meeting between the two programs since 1996. After that, Radford is back home to face Southern Virginia on Nov. 18.

From there, the Highlanders will be road warriors with their next five opponents coming away from the New River Valley. The trip begins with a visit to Clemson Nov. 21 before the Highlanders will head to Daytona Beach, Fla. to compete in the Sunshine Slam on Nov. 25 and 26 with opponents to be determined.

The Highlanders will head north to open December as the team visits St. Francis (PA) Dec. 1. The matchup marks the first time the programs will have ever met. The last stop of the road trip comes on Dec. 5 as the Highlanders visit N.C. Central, marking the third straight season the two squads have squared up.

Back at home, the Highlanders will take on Bucknell Dec. 8 for a return meeting with the Bison who the Highlanders defeated in Lewisburg, Pa. last season.

Radford's next two road games will be in the mountains out west as the team visits Utah on Dec. 14 and Colorado State on Dec. 17. These two meetings will be the first time Radford has faced either program.

Radford's final home non-conference game will be Dec. 20 when the program hosts Virginia-Lynchburg. Closing out 2024 and the non-conference schedule, Radford makes one more trip to a power foe facing South Carolina on Dec. 22.



*Marty Gordon*  
**FROM THE SIDELINES**

## Remembering the wife of great coach

The wives of sports coaches aren't usually recognized for their contributions to their husband's teams, but they can be very influential in the lives of both the coach and their players.

In addition, they are typically the one picking up the slack when coaches are busy on the field, diamond or court. That includes running the household and coordinating many activities. Most of the time, it is the wife that does everything the coach doesn't have the time to do.

Those women are the glue that holds everything together.

Our community lost one of those outstanding people this past week when Joann Lineburg passed away.

She grew up in Marion and graduated from Marion Senior High School in 1956 where she played basketball, was a cheerleader, according to her memorial, and an outstanding student. She attended Radford College to pursue her passion for teaching and was a member of the Alpha Sigma Alpha Sorority, graduated in 1960 and earned her Master's degree in 1972. She began her teaching career at William Byrd High School in 1960 where she met her husband, Norm. A love story developed that brought them to Radford where they never left.

The two married on July 30, 1965 and enjoyed 59 years of marriage. Joann taught physical education for 38 years in Roanoke County, Henry County, at Radford University, and Radford City. Joann was a decorated teacher gaining recognition at the local, state, and national level.

Norm coached in six different decades and has coached in more football games (454) than any other coach in Virginia. He recorded two state football titles at Radford, and it was his wife that was



FILE PHOTO

**Joann Lineburg (left) was there when her husband, Norm (right), was named the state's coach of the year not once but three times.**

there for it all.

Joann was the mother of four boys Robert, Mark, Paul and Wayne. All of the boys played football for their father.

I will never forget the first time I met Mrs. Lineburg. She had a big smile and gave me a hug when she introduced herself. The Radford "power couple" made an impact on me and my life, convincing me to live in the city for five-plus years. I left several times over the next few years, but she was always the same friendly, smiling person every time I saw her. Matter of fact, it was the couple who convinced me I needed to move back to the New River Valley.

I became the play-by-play guy for the Bobcats on the radio and covered them for over 15 years at the newspaper. There was never a time that Norm and his wife were not open to seeing me and greeting me. They always asked about my family and how I was doing.

She made an impact on my life to where it is today.

Lineburg was a wife of a coach and mother to not only her sons, but also every kid that came through the Radford High School football program.

She will be missed and remembered by all of us that had the opportunity to meet her, especially this small town sportswriter.

## Auburn player commits to Limestone

**Marty Gordon**

NRVsports@ourvalley.org

Auburn High School pitcher Joshua Givens has announced plans to attend Limestone University.

This past spring, he had seven wins on the mound in 48.2 innings pitched with 98 strikeouts and set a school record with a 0.30 earned run average. Givens was named first team pitcher for the Mt. Empire District and Region 1C, along with second team in Class 1. In addition, he was named all-state pitcher for the first team in Prep Baseball Report's DC/Virginia region and was named a 2024 Cy Young high school award winner.

"I chose Limestone because of the coaches," Givens said. "Coach Padgett (Assistant Recruiting Coach) recruited me with urgency and made me feel like I was a big value add for their program. When I went on my visit to Limestone University, I met Coach Harker (Head Coach) and Coach Corn (Assistant Pitching Coach) and they made a big effort to show me how much they wanted me on their team."

Limestone University, formerly Limestone College, is a private Christian university in Gaffney, South Carolina, with an enrollment of 1,551 undergraduate students.

Limestone plays sports in the South Atlantic Conference (SAC). The baseball team finished 23-26 this past spring with a South Atlantic Conference record of 14-16. Brett Harker is the fourth head coach in the program's history.

A fifth-round pick of the Philadelphia Phillies in the 2005 Major League Baseball Draft, Harker spent four years as the head coach of the NCAA Division I Furman University before the program was cut following the 2020 season. During the 2021 campaign, he volunteered as the pitching coach at his alma mater, Hillcrest High School.

"They shared the way they would train me as a pitcher and what tools we would have to work on my development.

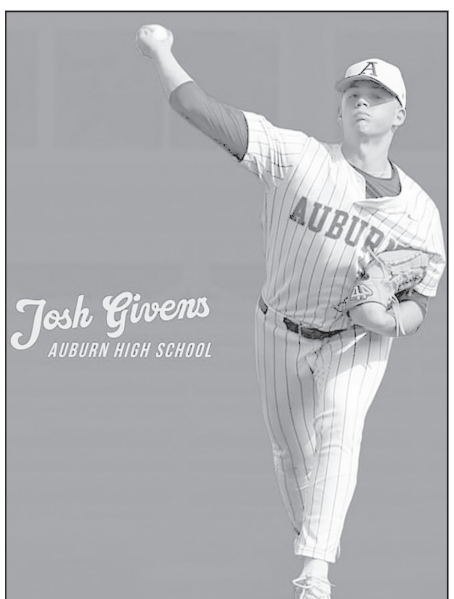


PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSHUA GIVENS

**Joshua Givens of Auburn High School will continue his baseball career at the next level at Limestone University.**

Coach Harker is an awesome coach, who has an impressive resume and is willing to put in the work with his athletes. The plan and vision that they shared made me fired up to be a Limestone Saint and I can't wait to get to work," he said.

Givens also plays varsity golf team and finished 22nd at last year's 1A VHSL State Golf Tournament and throws the shot put on the Track & Field team, finishing sixth at last year's indoor state meet and eighth at the outdoor meet.

Givens help lead Auburn to a state championship this past year and hopes to do that again this spring.

At Limestone, Givens hopes to make an immediate impact at on the mound, throwing strikes and winning games with my new team.

"I want to be drafted to the MLB out of college. My ultimate goal is to continue to pitch and play baseball for as long as God continues to bless me with this gift," he said.

Givens plans to major in Finance and Accounting for my undergrad degree.

## Outdoor Report Local hunter honored by VDWR

**Marty Gordon**

NRVsports@ourvalley.org

A Virginia Tech staffer has been honored as the top female turkey hunter in the Commonwealth by the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources.

Hope Lewis is only the second recipient for the award, recognizing a female hunter. She was recognized this past month at the Virginia Outdoor Sportsman's Show.

The bird was killed in

Snowville on May 5. The spurs were an inch and a half long with a beard of 10.5 inches. Under the Virginia scoring system, the 18-pound turkey rallied in at 67.9/16.

"I was so honored to receive this award," Lewis said. "Getting into turkey hunting has been challenging. I have learned just how hard it is to kill an eastern gobbler. I try to encourage all women to start hunting. I have been around hunting my

whole life so it's second nature to me, but we need more women in the hunting community. I am so thankful that there is a women's division at the Sportsman's Show. I hope that we can continue to grow it."

She works in the Mechanical Engineering department at Virginia Tech and recently got her real estate license so life stays pretty busy, especially during hunting season.

"I have been taught to hunt by some of the finest men I know, they have been patient with me and they always include me," she said. "First off, I want to thank the Lord for giving me the ability to be able to do this sport. The early mornings and long walks get tiring but with His grace, I continue to be able to put one foot in front of the other and do what I am so passionate about. Secondly, I would like to

thank all of the men who have made an impact in my hunting career: Todd Lewis (my father), Ethan Hinton, Jeff Hinton, and Al Smith. Thank you all so much for your support, your advice, your stories, and your never-ending love to help me achieve all that I have."

Lewis said she only started turkey hunting in the spring of 2023 and credits the guidance and knowledge that she has about turkey hunting

to her boyfriend, Ethan Hinton.

See HUNTER, Page 8

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

S	E	R	I	E	S	S	C	R	A	P	S				
A	N	D	O	R	R	A	C	H	A	T	T	E	R		
R	I	S	E	N	A	R	T	M	O	U	T	H	M	E	
C	A	S	E	N	R	A	P	S	A	B	E	R			
E	L	I	S	S	A	T	E	S	R	O	S	E			
S	S	C	S	A	P	S	I	C	U	T	A				
I	M	A	M	T	A	B	L	E	D						
S	A	L	A	L						L	E	E	R	S	
A	R	I	S	E	S					K	I	E	V		
R	M	A	P	A	R	S	H	F	A	A	R				
C	O	N	S	A	C	T	I	S	R	A	N				
A	R	S	O	N	P	I	A	S	A	D	A	T			
S	I	C	O	R	I	A	N	D	E	R	L	A			
M	E	G	A	T	O	N	C	A	J	I	S	S	O	N	
S	E	S	A	M	E					H	O	S	I	N	G

# MONTGOMERY SPORTS

## Outdoor report Blue catfish, wanted breaded or fried

In a world where invasive species spell trouble in ecosystems across the world, one fish swims against the current, becoming both a problem and a tasty opportunity.

But beneath the bay's surface lies an invader.

The invasive blue catfish, a voracious predator, jeopardizes the bay's delicate balance and the livelihoods of those who depend on it. Introduced with good intentions decades ago to upstream fresh water, it has adapted and crept into the bay in pursuit of prey.

These blue giants grow into relentless hunters, feeding in the water column on prized species such as striped bass, blue crab and herring. They recently shifted their diet to prey also on saltwater clams and oysters — the same species that people love to eat and fishers depend on for their livelihoods.

The blue catfish — which can reach mammoth sizes of up to 65 inches and over 100 pounds — are native to the Mississippi River and Louisiana drainage systems, including rivers such as the Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee, and Arkansas. Lacking natural predators in Virginia and around the bay, the population has exploded, threatening ecosystems and livelihoods alike.

Michael Schwarz, director of the Virginia Seafood Agricultural Research and Extension Center (AREC), shared just how staggering the presence and impact of blue catfish are in the bay.

“Current estimates for blue catfish in the Chesapeake Bay currently range from 700 million pounds to as high as one billion pounds,” Schwarz said. “Even at the lower 700 million-pound estimate, blue catfish are capable of consuming up to an estimated 60 million pounds of seafood from the Chesapeake Bay every day, competing with watermen for the delicious blue crabs, clams, oysters, rockfish and the like we all treasure.”

Amidst this challenge lies a unique opportunity — and a delicious one.

Schwarz believes culinary innovation and environmental conservation could

provide an unexpected recipe to help control this invasive species. He and his team of researchers and Virginia Cooperative Extension specialists are working with other research institutions, government agencies, and private industry stakeholders to overcome hurdles to establish processing capacity to support the burgeoning market.

Through the Eat More Fish program, the Virginia Seafood AREC also educates consumers on how seafood lovers can help manage the growing blue catfish population from the dinner table.

Registration is now open for Eat More Fish: The Blue Catfish Edition, a free Extension program. This three-session webinar series will feature seafood industry professionals, researchers, food safety specialists, and experienced cooks who will share their tips and perspectives on blue catfish. Registering provides access to live webinar sessions on Sept. 11, 18, and 25 as well as program recordings and resources to safely and deliciously prepare blue catfish at home.

“Given their diet, wild Chesapeake Bay blue catfish maintain a superior fillet quality and flavor, which has been grabbing the attention of regional fish mongers and chefs,” Schwarz said. “Its diet also supports a rich nutritional profile, particularly high in healthy fatty acids such as DHA/EPA, and omega-3s.”

Schwarz is seeing more chefs, restaurants, and seafood lovers embrace the attributes and nutritional profile of blue catfish. With mild, white, flaky meat, wild Chesapeake Bay blue catfish offers endless possibilities for delicious dishes — a taste distinct from the muddy flavor often associated with its namesake.

Wanted breaded or fried, blue catfish delights diners and chefs alike. But it's not just about taste.

Harvested sustainably by local fishers, blue catfish can provide ample seafood supply while supporting local economies. Stringent inspection protocols ensure food safety so consumers can expect a quality product from water to table.

Chef Winslow “Win” Goodier is



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

**Blue catfish can grow up to 65 inches and over 100 pounds, and because of the lack of natural predators in the Chesapeake Bay, their population has increased unchecked.**

always trying to source and use local ingredients, especially when they're of good quality.

“Unlike some fish species that can overpower dishes with their strong flavors, wild Chesapeake Bay blue catfish stands out for its versatility, affordability, and its mild, white flesh that harmonizes well with other flavors,” said Goodier, executive chef and culinary director of Nuttall's Store in Gloucester. “As an added perk, promoting and cooking with it can help curb its negative impact on the bay.”

In Goodier's experience, the response to

this ingredient has been overwhelmingly positive with increasing consumer interest. Both Goodier and Schwarz encourage people to inquire about blue catfish at markets and restaurants to help signal rising interest and demand.

“At a recent cooking demonstration I did featuring blue catfish, attendees were surprised by its pleasant flavor in contrast to the expected muddy taste often associated with some species of catfish. Many expressed interest in enjoying it again in the future,” Goodier said.

Keri Rouse and Max Esterhuizen for Virginia Tech

**SOUTH**  
MEN'S AND WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY  
**PRESEASON POLLS**

MEN'S POLL	WOMEN'S POLL
1. Charleston Sou. (8)	1. High Point (8)
2. UNC Asheville (1)	2. Charleston Sou. (1)
3. High Point	3. Radford
4. Radford	4. UNC Asheville
5. USC Upstate	5. Longwood
6. Longwood	6. Winthrop
7. Winthrop	6. USC Upstate
8. Gardner-Webb	8. Gardner-Webb
9. Presbyterian	9. Presbyterian

PHOTO COURTESY OF RU ATHLETICS

## Highs picked in top four of preseason poll

The Big South Conference announced Wednesday morning Radford's women's cross country program was selected to finish third and the men's cross country program was selected fourth in the preseason poll voted by the conference's coaches.

The women's cross country team, led by Sam Bradley in his sixth season, was predicted to finish third, their third straight season being chosen to finish among the top-three members of the Big South and fifth straight season being chosen to finish in the top-half of the conference.

The women were picked just behind second-place Charleston Southern with 63 points earning two votes for second, five votes for third and two votes for fourth. Behind Radford was UNC

Asheville with 56 points and Longwood in fifth with 41 points.

The men's cross country team, also led by head coach Bradley, was predicted to place fourth, their fourth straight season being picked to finish within the top-half of the conference.

The men were picked just behind third-place High Point earning 54 points with a majority over their votes coming at fourth. Behind them in fifth was USC Upstate with 41 points and Longwood in sixth with 34 points.

The cross country season begins Aug. 30 and culminates Nov. 1 at the Big South Championships which will be hosted this season by Charleston Southern.

Radford University Athletics



PHOTO COURTESY OF VDWR

**Hope Lewis was recently recognized by the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources for her outstanding snag of a turkey. She is one of two females receiving the award over the past two years.**

## Hunter from page 7

“It has quickly become my favorite animal to hunt. The day I killed this gobbler, we had hunted all morning and walked ridge after ridge, trying to get on a gobbler.”

Lewis saw the gobbler standing in the field, but it was going to be a steep, long hike to get to him and it was already noon.

“I told Ethan I was too tired to go after him and I was ready for lunch, we had already hunted over six hours that day. He told me that I better catch a second wind because we were going. I am so glad he convinced me not to give up or

I would have never killed this turkey,” she said.

Lewis pretty much hunts anything and, as a young girl, she began with whitetail deer and doves.

Over the years, she has started hunting turkeys, waterfowl and elk, and has been to Wyoming, tagging a nice mule deer. In fall of 2023, she also traveled to New Mexico for her first elk hunt.

The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources hopes the award encourages more women to take a trek to the woods and take up hunting.

## Medicine from page 1

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, almost 108,000 people died in 2022 due to drug overdose, that includes all drugs, not specifically opioids. Texas State University reported that from 2019 to 2021, 2,231 adolescents (ages 10-19) died due to drug overdose.

“If students,” Larson said, “find someone who's overdosed, they don't

have time to go get Narcan from the nurse. They must have immediate access to it.”

Toward the end of the meeting, the Montgomery County School Board made comments discussing potentially amending the policy currently in place or writing a new policy regarding life-saving medicines like Narcan.

## NRCC from page 1

Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia a master's degree in educational leadership from Radford University in Radford, Virginia, and a doctorate from Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia.

Dr. Robert Brandon currently serves as vice president of academic and student services at Southwest Virginia Community College in Richlands, Virginia. Prior to that, he served as dean of humanities, social sciences, and education at Cleveland State Community College in Cleveland, Tennessee.

Brandon earned a bachelor's degree from Virginia Intermont College in Bristol, Virginia; a master's degree from East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, Tennessee; and a doctorate from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Dr. John Davis is vice president of administrative services at Germanna Community College in Locust Grove, Virginia, a position he has held since 2017. Prior to that, he worked as the college's executive director of organizational planning and assessment.

Davis earned an associate degree from Gulf Coast Community College in Panama City, Florida; a bachelor's and master's degree from Florida State University in Tallahassee, Florida; and a doctorate from College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. Dr. Melissa Frank-Alston currently serves as provost, executive vice

president for Academic Affairs at Augusta Technical College where she has worked for the last 19 years. Prior to that, she served as assistant dean for academic programs & student affairs at the Medical College of Georgia. Frank-Alston earned a bachelor's degree from Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, Louisiana; a master's degree from Western Illinois University in Macomb, Illinois; and a doctorate from Pennsylvania State University in University Park in Pennsylvania.

Dr. Ted Lewis currently serves as the founding president of Bluefield State University-Beckley, West Virginia, a position he has held since 2023. His previous experience includes working as provost and vice president of academic and student affairs for the university.

Lewis earned a bachelor's degree from Texas Wesleyan University in Fort Worth, Texas; a master's degree from the University of North Texas in Denton, Texas; and a doctorate from the University of Texas at Austin in Austin, Texas.

The five finalists seek to become NRCC's seventh president, succeeding Dr. Pat Huber, who has served as New River's president since 2017. Dr. Huber has served in faculty and leadership positions at NRCC for more than 35 years. The presidential finalists will soon visit the college to meet with faculty, staff, students, and community members.

New River Community College