



Fine Arts Center opens Blacksburg location

BLACKSBURG - For the past 46 years, the Fine Arts Center for the New River Valley has been a champion for art and the artists in the region.

Thanks to the help of Blacksburg entrepreneur, Jane Bonomo, and a committee of dedicated artists and art supporters, the Center will open a second location in Blacksburg Sept. 4.

"This has been a true community collaboration," said Dr. John Ross, President of the Board of Directors. "After being approached by Jane Bonomo with this opportunity, our board member Nikki Pynn has pulled together a dynamic group of local artists and others to help prepare the space and expand our reach to new audiences."

The Blacksburg location will feature two- and three-dimensional art for sale as well as classes for aspiring artists, both children and adults. With a mission to "foster an enjoyment, appreciation, and understanding of all forms of art, promote art education, and to encourage and support artists" in the New River Valley, the new location will continue to tap into the rich artistic heritage of the region and involve artists from nearby communities.

Leading the expansion is local artist and board member, Nikki Pynn.

"We aspire to be a gallery that is welcoming to many types and tastes and want this location to be a local hub for discovering what's happening

with the arts in the New River Valley," said Pynn. "That means the center will hold classes that will reach different interests, including beginning, more advanced skill building, and experiential opportunities for people who want to dig in and explore how to use different media."

"I approach the opening of this gallery from the perspective of a local artist," she continued. "The backbone of the FACNRV is support for local artists, discovering what is needed and what will help them move forward. The new location's success will take the community of artists and art supporters coming in and giving their impressions."

The Blacksburg location will be open

Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. There is ample free parking in the Bonomo Plaza and the facility is fully accessible. Classes are being formed and will be announced on the Center's website and social media.

For more information about the Fine Arts Center, exhibits, classes, or local, handmade gifts, visit the Center's website at FACNRV.org, email at info@FACNRV.org, or call 540-980-7363. The Center is located at 21 West Main Street in Pulaski and in Bonomo's Shopping Plaza at 860 University City Boulevard in Blacksburg.

Fine Arts Center for the New River Valley



PHOTO BY FELICIA SPENCER FOR VIRGINIA TECH

Carol Davis (at far left) has been leading service projects once a month since May for volunteers, many of whom are from the NRV Master Naturalists, to aid in restoring the ecology of the Town of Blacksburg's Heritage Park.

Restoration Ecology Working Group provides guidance for Town of Blacksburg

Sometimes, affecting change is challenging. Other times it can be a walk in the park – literally.

The Virginia Tech Restoration Ecology Working Group in the Global Change Center has been instrumental in helping the Town of Blacksburg restore Heritage Park to its native ecology.

Led by J. Leighton Reid, assistant

professor in the School of Plant and Environmental Sciences, this group of 11 faculty members spans five colleges and seven departments. Its members are focused on building relationships across specialties to provide equitable benefits and services to ecologically restore communities across the globe—and especially in their own backyards.

The Restoration Ecology Working Group, along with the Invasive Species Collaborative and the Virginia Tech StREAM Lab, provided key guidance when the town applied for a grant from the Virginia Environmental

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David Rotenizer to retire as Executive Director of the Regional Tourism Office



COURTESY PHOTO

David Rotenizer, Executive Director of the Blacksburg Regional Tourism Office, is retiring effective Aug. 31, 2024.

"David has provided important vision for our regional tourism initiative during his time as the Executive Director," said Angela Hill, Montgomery County Administrator. "We wish him all the best in his retirement."

Rotenizer has served in the tourism industry for 25 years, and in his most recent role since the fall of 2021.

"This is home. I was born in Radford, grew up in Blacksburg, and Montgomery County has always held a special place in my heart and soul," said Rotenizer.

"I began my public service career with Montgomery County and the two towns, and now 40 years later I end my public service with the same county and two towns – this has been a coming full circle career honor."

Chris Lawrence, Montgomery County Deputy County Administrator, will serve as Interim Executive Director and provide the guidance needed as next steps for the Blacksburg Regional Tourism Office are determined.

As Executive Director, Rotenizer launched a virtual visitor center with a digital experience platform, which can be viewed at <https://vc-gotomontva.com/>. In addition, from 2022-23, he facilitated community

participation in the Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 (AEP6), a national economic and social impact study of non-profit arts and culture organizations held every five years by Americans for the Arts. This was the first time it had ever been conducted in the New River Valley region. Most recently under Rotenizer's leadership, a commercial highlighting Montgomery County was created and aired during the Paris 2024 Olympics.

Rotenizer applied for and received five American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grants through the Virginia Tourism Corporation. Those funds were used to complete a destination optimization study; two international travel writer familiarization tours; the leading spread in the 2024 Virginia Travel Guide's Blue Ridge Highlands section; an outdoor recreation and sports tourism inventory; and a strategic rebranding and positioning study. Prior to joining Montgomery County, Rotenizer worked for Franklin County serving as Director of Tourism with the Office of Economic Development. Prior to Franklin County, Rotenizer worked for West Virginia State University as an extension agent in community development with a specialization in historic preservation and tourism development. He worked in partnership with the New River Gorge Regional Development Authority

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Governor announces Virginia students starting to recover from post-pandemic learning loss



PHOTO BY AUSTIN STEVENS, OFFICE OF GOVERNOR GLENN YOUNGKIN

Governor Glenn Youngkin delivers remarks on Virginia's annual assessment of student performance on August 20, 2024.

RICHMOND, VA - Showing the start of learning recovery from the extended pandemic school closures and the most significant learning loss of students' nationwide, Virginia students in Grades 3-8 showed some improvement in the Standards of Learning testing in Math and Reading in the 2023-2024 school year.

This year's improvements followed the extensive work

done by many Virginia educators on Virginia's ALL In Virginia initiative initiated by Governor Youngkin to improve attendance, accelerate literacy, and prioritize learning in Virginia classrooms in grades 3-8.

Additionally, after intense focus from school divisions, parents, and community members as part of ALL In, Virginia's K-12 chronic absenteeism rate has decreased 16% since 2022-2023. 40,974

fewer students were chronically absent in 2023-2024 than in 2022-2023.

"Since day one, our commitment to Virginia's students has been a primary focus and last year, on a bipartisan basis, Virginia went ALL In to tackle core issues in K-12 education: attendance, literacy and learning loss," said Governor

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UPCOMING EVENTS

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.

Wednesday, Aug. 28 – Sunday, Sept. 8:

Blacksburg Aquatic Center closed

The Blacksburg Aquatic Center will be closed for annual maintenance. This closure will extend through Sunday, Sept. 8, and will reopen on Monday, Sept. 9.

Saturday, Aug. 31:

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, Sept. 1:

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/.

Thursday, Sept. 5:

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.

Maintaining brain health throughout aging

Everyday lifestyle choices that make a difference At Warm Hearth Village Center, Tall Oaks Hall, 2387 Warm Hearth Dr., Blacksburg, 2 p.m. Speaker: Ben Katz, an Associate Professor of Human Development and Family Science at Virginia Tech and a Faculty Affiliate of the Center for Gerontology. His research focuses on the neural underpinnings of executive function development throughout the lifespan, and how it might be modulated through experience and intervention, including lifestyle behaviors. Prior to his career in academia, he worked as a game designer in Austin and San Francisco.

American Legion meeting

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

Friday, Sept. 6:

The Glencoe Sessions

A FRIENDS of the Blue Ridge and Glencoe Mansion partnership with rising bluegrass star Addie Levy, held the first Friday of each month Sept. to Dec. in Glencoe Mansion, 6 - 7:30 p.m. Sept. 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 and a towering figure in Appalachian music. Tickets \$15 per person per session, or \$50 for all four sessions. To purchase tickets please visit blueridgejamboree.com or blueridgefriends.org. There will be beverages available for purchase.

Monday, Sept. 9:

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 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, Sept. 10:

Blacksburg Town Council meeting

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

Christiansburg Town Council meeting

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

Saturday, 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.

Thursday, Sept. 19:

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 (UDC) are also invited to attend. For further information, please call 540-320-4315 or 540-239-9864.

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.

NRCC to offer new short-term project management programs

Registration is now open for two new short-term project management programs at New River Community College, Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM) and Project Management Professional (PMP).

The CAPM credential provides the foundational knowledge and skills that project based roles demand. It shows that the individual is ready to take on ways of working that include predictive project management, agile principles and business analysis. In this course, students will learn to understand and apply project management frameworks; be able to describe what, why, and how of the project management process; and be provided with real project examples and templates.

The PMP certification is the profession's most globally recognized certification credential. The designation gives the individual a solid foundation of project management knowledge that can be readily applied in the workplace. In this course, students will learn to understand the project management framework, project plans, knowledge areas, process groups, activities and outputs, and responsibilities of a project manager according to the PMBOK®; identify the most accepted best practices and

approaches to project management; and reinforce real work applications of project management concepts through individual exercise, group activities, and practice tests. To apply for the PMP certification test, a student needs to have a bachelor's degree and 36 months of experience leading projects within the past eight years or associate degree or high school diploma and 60 months of experience leading projects within the past eight years.

Course schedules for the upcoming sessions are:

CAPM- 11 sessions
September 10 – November 19
Tuesdays, 6:00 p.m.-8:30 p.m.

Online, synchronous instruction

PMP- 10 sessions
Spring 2025 – more information to come

These courses are two of NRCC's FastForward programs, programs that provide affordable, short-term training through the Office of Workforce Development. Virginia residents may qualify for special pricing.

To register for either course, visit www.nr.edu/fastforward, call (540) 674-3613, or email WFDtraining@nr.edu.

New River Community College

AARP victim support group

Have you been affected by a scam? Know that you are not alone.

AARP Fraud Watch Network offers free emotional support sessions for people affected by fraud. Trained peer facilitators conduct hour-long small group online sessions. You can join by computer, tablet, or smartphone. Discussions are confidential. You are welcome to attend one session or several

– it's your choice.

Experiencing a scam can be devastating, but it doesn't have to define you. Sign up for a session at aarp.org/fraudsupport and take an important step toward emotional recovery.

Be a fraud fighter! If you can spot a scam, you can stop a scam.

AARP Virginia

Virginia, national gas prices continue to fall

Average gasoline prices in Virginia have fallen 6.6 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.21/g today, according to GasBuddy's survey of 4,081 stations in Virginia.

Prices in Virginia are 18.9 cents per gallon lower than a month ago and 40.9 cents per gallon lower than a year ago. The national average price of diesel has declined 3.2 cents in the last week and stands at \$3.67 per gallon, a multi-year low.

According to GasBuddy price reports, the cheapest station in Virginia was priced at \$2.81/g yesterday while the most expensive was \$3.99/g, a difference of \$1.18/g. The lowest price in the state yesterday was \$2.81/g while the highest was \$3.99/g, a difference of \$1.18/g.

The national average price of gasoline has fallen 6.2 cents per gallon in the last week, averaging \$3.30/g today. The national average is down 20.7 cents per gallon from a month ago and stands 49.2 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:

August 26, 2023: \$3.62/g (U.S. Average: \$3.80/g)

August 26, 2022: \$3.64/g (U.S. Average: \$3.84/g)

August 26, 2021: \$2.97/g (U.S. Average: \$3.14/g)

August 26, 2020: \$2.10/g (U.S. Average: \$2.23/g)

August 26, 2019: \$2.36/g (U.S.

Average: \$2.58/g)

August 26, 2018: \$2.61/g (U.S.

Average: \$2.83/g)

August 26, 2017: \$2.17/g (U.S.

Average: \$2.36/g)

August 26, 2016: \$2.01/g (U.S.

Average: \$2.21/g)

August 26, 2015: \$2.27/g (U.S.

Average: \$2.56/g)

August 26, 2014: \$3.19/g (U.S.

Average: \$3.43/g)

Neighboring areas and their current gas prices:

Roanoke- \$3.17/g, down 4.9 cents

per gallon from last week's \$3.22/g.

Richmond- \$3.21/g, down 8.1 cents

per gallon from last week's \$3.29/g.

West Virginia- \$3.24/g, down

7.4 cents per gallon from last week's

\$3.32/g.

"It seems fitting that, in the run-up to Labor Day, the national average has fallen for four straight weeks to its lowest point since February, giving Americans one last chance to hit the road with gas prices being less of a factor," said Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy. "GasBuddy is now tracking eight states where average gas prices are already below the \$3 per gallon mark, along with nearly 20% of gas stations in the country selling gasoline at \$2.99 or lower. These numbers will continue to look better every week as we move into fall. GasBuddy's Labor Day travel forecast, to be released tomorrow, will provide more good news about the millions of dollars Americans who are road-tripping will save compared to last year."

GasBuddy

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OBITUARIES

Everhart, June Henegar

June Henegar Everhart, 78, passed away Wednesday, Aug. 21, 2024.

She was preceded in death by her loving husband, James Ernest Everhart, Sr.; parents, Thurman Kenneth and Myrtle Novella Henegar; and her siblings, William Henegar, Peggy Houck, Nelda Tate, Larry Henegar and Rita Henegar.

Survivors include her children and their spouses, Anne Elizabeth Helms (Robbie), and James Ernest Everhart, Jr. (April); grandchildren and their spouses, Carissa Ashley Helms (Svenja Williams), James Ernest Everhart, III (Misha You), and Devon Robert Everhart (Samantha); great-grandchildren, Greyson Everhart and Magnolia Everhart; siblings and their spouses, Robert Henegar (Faye), Brenda Duty (Carl), Randall Henegar (Jeanne), David Henegar (Debbe), Richard Henegar, Katherine



Lawson (Glenn), Tammy Rowe (Dewey), Charles Henegar (Shearin), and Anthony Henegar (Nancy); honorary brothers, Gary Harris and Ray Powell; and many other relatives and close friends.

June was a loving wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. She was a devoted daughter to her parents and a loving sister to all 14 of her siblings and their families. June was even-tempered, trustworthy and soft spoken. She was a great cook and was known for her fried chicken and potato salad which were loved by all of her

immediate and extended family members. June leaves behind a true love for her family and God has received another angel in Heaven. Jim and June are now reunited in Heaven where their true love will continue forevermore.

The family received friends Tuesday, Aug. 27, 2024, at the Mullins Funeral Home in Radford. Funeral services followed with Pastor Don Shelor officiating. A graveside service will be held on Wednesday morning, Aug. 28, at 10 a.m. at the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Dublin.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to either the VFW Post 776, 913 Second Street, Radford, VA, 24141, or the Carilion Clinic Foundation Hospice, P.O. Box 12187, Roanoke, VA, 24023.

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

Price, Louise Eakin

Louise Eakin Price, 86, of Blacksburg, passed away peacefully Aug. 23, 2024.

Louise Price was born in Salem in 1938. Louise was preceded in death by her husband, Allen Price; her parents, Trigg and Irene Eakin; her brother, David Eakin; her sister, Alice Eakin; and grandchild, Christopher Thomas. She is survived by her son, Dale Price and (Donna); daughter, Diane Thomas (Gary); brother, Tony Eakin; granddaughters Heather, Gretchen, Kelsey and Jacqueline; and four great grandchildren.

Louise graduated from Fort Lewis High School in 1956. Allen and Louise



were married 63 years before Allen's passing in 2020. She earned an RN degree from Roanoke Memorial Hospital. She worked 35-plus years at Virginia Tech in the Agronomy Department doing laboratory work in tobacco and soils. She loved taking her

granddaughter, Heather, to school and tending to her flowers and plants in and outside of the house. Her favorite TV shows were "Price is Right" and the "Young and the Restless." After retirement, she participated in many senior trips and traveling across the U.S.

Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m., Thursday, Aug. 29, 2024 at McCoy Funeral Home in Blacksburg. Family will receive friends and family prior to the service. Burial will follow at Westview Cemetery in Blacksburg. In lieu of flowers, Mountain View Humane Society, Christiansburg, VA,

Governor

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Glenn Youngkin. "Virginia's students and parents were facing the worst pandemic learning loss in the nation from Virginia being 46th in reopening in-classroom learning, an 'honesty gap' between what the data told us and true student proficiency, and a systematic reduction of expectations by previous administrations on Virginia's historically high academic standards. It's clear our ALL In Virginia strategy is working, the signs are appearing and Virginia's students and parents are benefiting from our collective efforts."

"We still have a long way to go to ensure every student is prepared and ready for life," said Secretary of Education Aimee Rogstad Guidera. "Today's promising data shows that when we have high expectations for our students, teachers and schools, they meet them when using proven approaches and tools. We know what works. Every school in the Commonwealth must know and understand each student's academic

progress and mastery and provide tailored supports and teaching that will put every student on track to succeed in life."

"These results show that Virginia students are beginning to recover from the post-pandemic learning loss they suffered after 2020 and 2021. But the results also show that we must continue to focus every day on helping them catch up to pre-pandemic levels and move ahead," said Superintendent of Public Instruction Lisa Coons. "I'm proud of the way so many of our teachers and educators committed themselves to the ALL In high-intensity tutoring, and these results show that we are starting to make a real difference. With many more school divisions putting these proven measures in place this school year, we have more resources available to students than ever before, including the Virginia Literacy Act being implemented this year."

Virginia Department of Education

Restoration

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Endowment, said Carol Davis, sustainability manager for the Town of Blacksburg. Awarded in May, the \$230,000 grant will fund restoration of 17 acres of Heritage Park.

"Specifically, Leighton Reid has been a key informal advisor to the town as we have conceptualized approaches to conservation, restoration, and stewardship of our public lands – and not just at Heritage Park," Davis said.

On Aug. 13, the town passed an ordinance to accept the terms of the grant and appropriate the money, and on one Monday morning each month since and for the next year they hold a service project in leading volunteers in assisting with the restoration project.

To cultivate such relationships, the working group held an Ecological and Biocultural Restoration Summit this spring, which was supported by the Global Change Center and the Institute for Society, Culture, and Environment. During the summit, Reid led not only faculty, administrators, and graduate and undergraduate students but also regional partners in discussing how to make large-scale restoration projects more socially equitable and how to build up student training programs.

"I feel that the Ecological and Biocultural Restoration Summit was extremely beneficial because it gave a wide variety of perspectives on restoration concepts, ideas, and projects," said Dean Crane, director of Blacksburg Parks and Recreation. "The collaborative relationship that the town has with the Restoration Ecology Working Group is a wonderful resource to the town: before, during, and after a project. They have a tremendous amount of expertise and resources that can assist in making town projects even better."

For ecological restoration to be successful, every aspect of an ecosystem must be addressed: the plant, soil, water, animal, insect, and human factors. This

interconnectedness also must be present among the practitioners and researchers working across disciplines to make it happen. And their interconnections and relationships don't end at the edge of Virginia Tech's campus – they branch out as though from a firmly rooted tree.

"We've got a faculty core that extends across campus, and then each of us has our own network that extends to restoration that's happening all over the world," said Reid, who is also an affiliated faculty with the Fralin Life Sciences Institute. "I'm working with a group in Ecuador, one in Madagascar, a few in Virginia, and I know that everyone in the group could name that many different organizations that they're affiliated with too."

To branch out beyond Blacksburg and build relationships globally, the group is focusing on education. One important accomplishment has been the creation of a College of Agriculture and Life Sciences major in ecological restoration, which is the first one in the country to be formally aligned and certified by the Society for Ecological Restoration, a conservation network that boasts of more than 5,000 members in more than 100 countries.

"It's a pretty big international organization," Reid said. "Our students graduate with all the knowledge requirements and training of a certified ecological restoration practitioner-in-training."

The group is also hoping to extend its reach into graduate education.

"We have people who are working in all these relevant disciplines for this social ecological problem, so we have started setting our sights on some bigger training grants," Reid said.

Looking ahead, Reid emphasizes the importance of bringing more expertise in biocultural restoration and

Radford artist Z.L. Feng to be featured at Blue Ridge PBS's Artistic Encounters

ROANOKE— Radford artist Z.L. Feng will be Blue Ridge PBS's featured artist for Artistic Encounters – Meet the Artist.

The series highlights artists and invites the community to meet the individuals while seeing their works with an opportunity to acquire pieces during a reception and following exhibit held at Blue Ridge PBS. The art will remain on display for several weeks.

Growing up in Shanghai, Feng painted and experimented with different mediums, including pastel, oil, and egg tempera, before choosing his favorite, watercolor. He finds inspiration for his lovely landscapes in the countryside of the New River Valley. Those familiar with Feng's art are also captivated by his portraits of the people of Tibet, Native Americans of New Mexico, Southern farmers, and others. His artwork can be found in numerous private and corporate collections, including Walt Disney, the U.S. Gulfstream Aerospace Center, and Orlando International Airport as well as the permanent



GRAPHIC COURTESY OF BLUE RIDGE PBS

collections of the Springfield Art Museum in Springfield, Missouri, and the Radford University Art Museum. Additionally, his work resides in private and corporate collections in Singapore and China.

Music for the reception is provided by violinists from The Petrock Duo. Both reception and exhibit are completely free of charge. However, as a non-profit, donations are highly appreciated. Donation proceeds go to funding the local station operations and

make it possible for Blue Ridge PBS to continue to provide the community with entertaining, educational, and inspirational content.

Blue Ridge PBS is located behind Virginia Western Community College at the end of McNeil Drive. The reception will take place tomorrow, Thursday, Aug. 29 4 - 7 p.m. and the pieces will remain on display weekdays, Sept. 3 - 13, 1 - 4 p.m. Visit BlueRidgePBS.org for details.

Blue Ridge PBS

Rotenizer

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and represented Raleigh County and the City of Beckley. He served as the first Director of Tourism for both the Carroll County Office of Tourism and the Martinsville-Henry County Economic Development Corporation.

Rotenizer was appointed by Governor Terry McAuliffe to the Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation. He assisted with the introduction of Virginia Tourism Corporation's Virginia is for Moonshine Lovers sub-brand; co-chaired the regional collaboration of eight counties and three cities in the establishment the Southern Virginia Tourism Region; and was involved in the launching of the Virginia Mountains Tourism Region. He helped in the development of two state-certified visitor centers and associated VDOT TODS signage and developed a certificate for certified visitor centers. He supported the creation of the Blue Ridge Plateau Marketing Area Steering Committee. Finally, he assisted in the development of The Crooked Road: Virginia's Heritage Music Trail, 'Round the Mountain: Southwest Virginia Artisan Network and participated in special outreach projects such as the International Bluegrass Music Association's annual "World of Bluegrass" conference and festival, and the Jamestown 2007 Commemoration.

In addition to tourism, Rotenizer's background is comprised of community development and historic preservation, including ethnography and archaeology. From 2009-2013, he served as site manager for the Grave Creek Mound Archaeological Complex, a historic site, museum and collections management facility under the auspices of the West Virginia Division of Culture & History. Rotenizer served as an AmeriCorps VISTA in the economic capacity building with the Carroll County Office of Economic & Educational Development, as well as a Preserve WV

AmeriCorps supervisor through the National Coal Heritage Area and the Preservation Alliance of West Virginia.

Earlier in his career, he served as the Director of Environmental Conservation in Montgomery County from 1984-1988 assisting with the development and launch of the annual Broomin' & Bloomin' and Renew the New environmental campaigns, as well as development of a Montgomery County recycling program which included glass, aluminum and used motor oil. He also promoted Operation Waste Watch, a K-12 environmental curriculum and was sponsor of the Riner Archaeology & Ecology Club.

Rotenizer is a current board member of the West Piedmont Planning District Commission; Blue Ridge Parkway Association; The Blue Ridge – New River Valley Chapter of the Virginia Restaurant, Lodging & Travel Association; The Crooked Road: Virginia's Heritage Music Trail; and advisory board of the Greater SWVA Digital Collaborative.

Rotenizer is a graduate of Radford University with a bachelor's degree in general studies and a concentration in Appalachian heritage resources. He also has completed coursework in anthropology and Appalachian studies at the University of Kentucky and general studies from New River Community College. Rotenizer is a certified Tourism Marketing Professional through completion of Southeast Tourism Society's Marketing College. Lastly, he is a proud Blacksburg High School alum.

To learn more about the Blacksburg Christiansburg Montgomery County Regional Tourism Office, visit <https://gotomontva.com/>.

Montgomery County

in particular, in the experiences of local and Indigenous communities doing restoration. To achieve this, the group has recently been awarded a Destination Area 2.0 grant.

For more information about the Heritage Park restoration project, see the Town of Blacksburg website.

Lindsey Haugh for Virginia Tech

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Noon to Five O'clock

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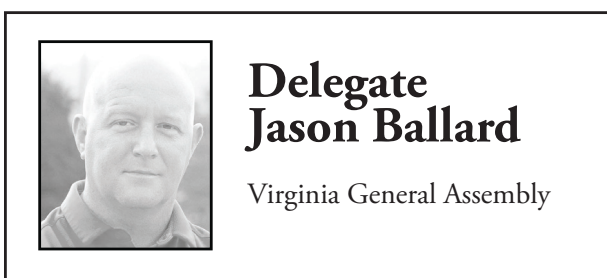
OPINION

Virginia initiative to reduce recidivism underway

Last week, Governor Youngkin issued Executive Order 36, which formalizes Virginia Republican efforts to reduce criminal recidivism in the Commonwealth. The “Stand Tall—Stand Strong—Succeed Together” initiative is a first in the nation proactive, dynamic, data-driven and comprehensive across-government approach to support reentry success and prevent offenders from re-offending.

More than half of persons currently in our prisons and jails have recidivated, meaning they have previously been incarcerated. Every reentry into the prison system means another person has been a victim of crime, and it also means another wasted opportunity for a Virginian to reach their full potential. An effective reentry approach is a critical component of the Commonwealth’s public safety strategy.

“Stand Tall” was formalized this week but has been getting results since April 2023. We have worked hard to help over 3,000 returning citizens gain employment, and 5,500 more have appropriate supervision levels. Overall, the number of those in our criminal justice system who recidivate is down by 600 people, which is the first decline in 12 years. Under the main recidivism metric adopted by most states – re-incarceration rates



Delegate Jason Ballard

Virginia General Assembly

of returning citizens within three years of reentry – Virginia’s appears to be the second lowest in the nation. But this metric does not capture people who reoffend after three years or people who are re-incarcerated in jails or for lower level felony and misdemeanor convictions.

The program is centered on the creation of a first in the nation, dynamic, proactive approach to supporting reentry success by measuring and acting on six key reentry success metrics: gainful employment, stable housing, healthcare insurance coverage, appropriate supervision levels, and necessary mental health/substance abuse treatment. In just under a year and a half, under Republican leadership, “Stand Tall” has achieved significant improvements in probation

outcomes through strategic utilization of statewide resources without any increases in funding.

Make no mistake, violent offenders deserve to pay for their crimes to ensure justice for those they have victimized. House Republicans will continue to make victims’ rights a priority and will champion legislation that makes our communities safer. For those who have “done their time” and have been truly rehabilitated, it is important that the Commonwealth provide a pathway for reentry so that they may contribute to society with dignity. This will be key to preventing offenders from reoffending, which should be a main goal of our criminal justice system. I look forward to continuing my work within the House of Delegates to ensure that the Commonwealth continues to strike that balance.

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

Why aren't we talking about vaping?

One of the most troubling problems I have encountered as a new school board member is vaping. It does not get much press or shape many political policies, but it consumes countless hours of teacher and administrator time in our schools and is a serious public health concern.

Vaping is marketed as a viable alternative to smoking. This may be true for existing adult smokers (heavy emphasis on the word may). It is certainly not true for the middle schoolers our teachers find huddled together in a bathroom stall sharing a vape pen and who have never smoked traditional cigarettes.

Vape devices can contain much higher concentrations of nicotine than a pack of cigarettes, as there are no regulations on nicotine levels in the United States. Early exposure to nicotine hastens nicotine addiction, which intensifies depression, anxiety, stress, and disrupts the brain circuits that control attention and the ability to learn. Children who



Laura Purcell

Montgomery County School Board, District F

vape also develop pneumonitis, which is a chronic, incurable inflammation that reduces lung function.

With high concentrations of nicotine in vape cartridges, a curious young person may become addicted before they even realize it. It is unclear what combination of other chemicals are present in vaping devices, as they are poorly regulated, and ingredients vary from brand to brand.

Public schools have few resources to manage this problem besides discipline. School administrators have desk drawers overflowing with confiscated plastic vape devices. Parents are called, and students then suspended and potentially expelled.

Most of the discipline cases around vaping I have encountered as a school board member (which usually means the student is at risk for expulsion) do not just involve nicotine, but THC, an FDA-approved medical compound of cannabis not meant for recreational use.

In Virginia, no one under 21 (unless they are enlisted

military) can purchase vapes, but this law is not well enforced. Vape shops are completely unregulated, which is why in some communities, like mine, stores are literally across the street from one another. Gaudy flags and tacky LED lights do not violate state signage regulations. And everything is easy to buy on the internet.

The closest business to Kipps Elementary School is a vape shop, which is located less than 500 feet from school grounds. The closest place to an elementary school where children can spend their money is a vape shop.

Vapes present a difficult and multi-layered problem. What can YOU do to help? Ask elected officials, especially those in Richmond and Washington, to take stronger steps to regulate this industry, create stricter penalties for underage sales, require licenses to sell these products, and limit advertising—to name just a few. Support educational efforts to prevent vaping as well as ways to quit. At home, talk to your children about the potential dangers and health effects.

Within the next few weeks, the Montgomery County School Board will hear a presentation from public health and education experts about how vaping affects children in our community. I hope everyone will take the time to watch, ask questions, and work together toward better solutions.

This piece reflects my personal opinion. I do not speak for Montgomery County Public Schools or the Montgomery County School Board.

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AARP Virginia teams up with Mercy Chefs for virtual cooking workshops in September

Dinner in a SNAP! begins Sept. 4

RICHMOND - To highlight the problem of food insecurity, AARP Virginia has teamed up with Portsmouth-based non-profit Mercy Chefs to offer a series of online healthy cooking demonstrations throughout September.

All of the ingredients used in the recipes can be purchased with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

September is Hunger Action Month and the Dinner in a SNAP! online series will be presented from 5- 5:45 p.m. each Wednesday in September on Zoom. Participants must register to receive the Zoom link. The sessions will demonstrate how to cook healthy meals on a budget, with all ingredients eligible

to be purchased using SNAP benefits (previously known as food stamps).

Participants will explore delicious and easy weeknight recipes, budget-friendly meals for a family of four totaling with grocery checklists to make shopping a breeze and step-by-step tutorials. All recipes are created to feed a family of four for less than \$10.

Mercy Chefs is a disaster relief kitchen based in Portsmouth, Va. Chef Gary and Ann LeBlanc founded Mercy Chefs in 2006 after witnessing the devastation Hurricane Katrina left on Gary LeBlanc’s hometown of New Orleans. Since 2007 Mercy Chefs have worked in disaster zones across the country and around the world serving people right in their own backyard, serving over 25 million meals.

Registrants will receive an email prior to each session with a link to the ingredient list. The schedule of workshops and registration links include:

Sept. 4 – Shepherd’s Pie with Peas and Carrots <https://events.aarp.org/DIS0904>

Sept. 11 – Braised Beef Goulash with Macaroni and Corn <https://events.aarp.org/DIS0911>

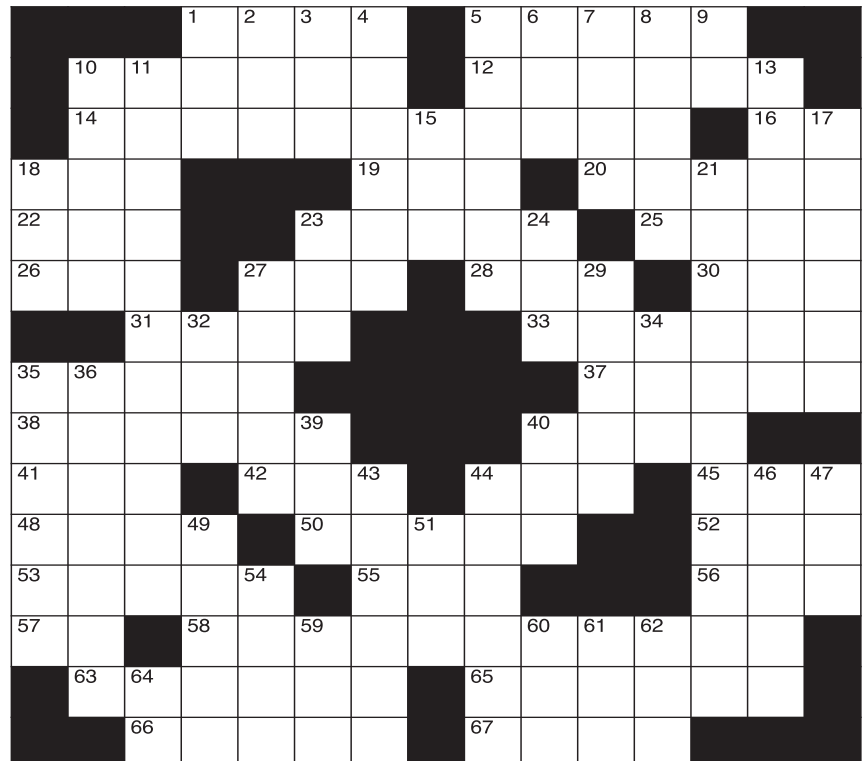
Sept. 18 – Potato Chip Encrusted Chicken Legs with Ranch Potatoes and Green Beans <https://events.aarp.org/DIS0918>

Sept. 25 – Sautéed Snapper with Lemon Rice and Cole Slaw <https://events.aarp.org/DIS0925>

Check out all of AARP Virginia’s healthy living activities at <https://aarp.cvent.com/VAHealthyLiving>.

AARP Virginia

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



- CLUES ACROSS**
- 1. Currency of Guinea
 - 5. Avert something bad
 - 10. Sounds
 - 12. Immediate dangers
 - 14. Legendary Tar Heels coach
 - 16. Californium
 - 18. Work standards government dept. (abbr.)
 - 19. Coastal Scottish town
 - 20. Triangular lower back bones
 - 22. Trouble
 - 23. A way to smile
 - 25. Something that is not what it seems
 - 26. Of she
 - 27. Temporary living quarters
 - 28. Bag-like structure in a plant or animal
 - 30. Indicates near
 - 31. Spiritual leader
 - 33. Soup dish
 - 35. Philippine island
 - 37. No longer fashionable
 - 38. Peaks
 - 40. Alabama football team
 - 41. ___ King Cole
 - 42. Digital audiotape
 - 44. Open trough
 - 45. The woman
 - 48. Cools down
 - 50. Turkic language
 - 52. Body part
 - 53. Pulse steadily
 - 55. Embedded computer hardware company
 - 56. Indicates shape
 - 57. Thou (plural)
 - 58. Odd and remarkable
 - 63. An evening party
 - 65. National capital of Zambia
 - 66. Tantalizes
 - 67. Dark brown or black
- CLUES DOWN**
- 1. Not naturally outgoing
 - 2. Exclamation of pain
 - 3. Polynesian garland of flowers
 - 4. Surrounded by water
 - 5. Church towers
 - 6. Hot beverage
 - 7. Body parts
 - 8. Travel documents
 - 9. Railway
 - 10. Gradually wear away
 - 11. Measuring instrument
 - 13. Minor dust-ups
 - 15. Strongly alkaline solution
 - 17. Extreme scarcity of food
 - 18. Dashi
 - 21. Philly culinary specialty
 - 23. Popular lager ___ Adams
 - 24. Snitch
 - 27. Trimmed
 - 29. Greek god of desire
 - 32. Take to the limit
 - 34. Cool!
 - 35. Sound mental health
 - 36. Native American group
 - 39. Test for high schoolers
 - 40. Rocky peak
 - 43. Preferences
 - 44. Bother
 - 46. Call attention to (slang)
 - 47. Snake-like fish
 - 49. Bulgarian capital
 - 51. Don't know when yet
 - 54. Italian Seaport
 - 59. Brooklyn hoopster
 - 60. Where to bathe
 - 61. Equal, prefix
 - 62. Beverage container
 - 64. Denotes openness

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MONTGOMERY SPORTS

Area high school teams ready to open season

Marty Gordon
NRVsports@ourvalley.org

High school football officially jumpstarts this Friday night with several individual headlines.

The Christiansburg-Floyd contest will have extra attention as former Christiansburg athletic director and football coach Tim Cromer now roams the Floyd sidelines.

Under Cromer's leadership at Christiansburg High School, the team secured several notable achievements, including the State Runner-Up title in Division 4 in 2011 and multiple Region

Championships in 2009, 2010, and 2011. Despite facing tough competition, they also attained Region Runner-Up titles in 2004, 2006, and 2012. The team's consistent presence in the VHSL Playoffs from 2003 to 2014, along with an overall record of 98-75.

The contest will also be the first for new Christiansburg head coach Matt Heron, who had spent the past five years as an assistant at the school.

Blacksburg will face a Giles team, which has lost its past glimmer with several state and regional titles. Also, Blacksburg will try to jumpstart their season with a win after only picking up

two total in the past two years.

Radford faces a familiar foe in Geroge Wythe. The Bobcats hold a 52-30 record against the former New River District opponents and have won five straight include last year's 42-7 win.

Eastern Montgomery will host Holston from deep southwest Virginia. Holston has won seven straight meetings from the Mustangs including a 48-8 from last year.

Storylines:

Can Radford put together a winning season after winning the state championship just a year ago?

Will Blacksburg find a way to win

more than two games?

Is Eastern Montgomery finally one of the top three teams in Pioneer District?

Christiansburg has a new head coach and can he lead the team to more than eight wins this season?

Predictions for the season:

Christiansburg 6-4
Blacksburg 6-4
Eastern Montgomery 5-5
Radford 8-2

Predictions for Friday night:

Christiansburg 27, Floyd 24
Blacksburg 29, Giles 20
Radford 38, George Wythe 14
Eastern Montgomery 30, Holston 14.

Christiansburg downs Giles in benefit game



Matt Annis (left) runs in a second TD for Christiansburg after receiving a pass from QB Izaiah Cotto.



Tristan Sutphin (left) and Josiah Ratley (right) team up to tackle a Giles ball carrier in Friday's benefit game against Giles County. Christiansburg would come away with a 34-28 win in front of the home crowd.



Sean McMurray heads for the endzone. McMurray was halted at the pylon but scored on the next play.



Donovan Richardson (right) knocks the ball loose from Giles' running back resulting in a turnover of possession.

PHOTOS BY KYMN DAVIDSON-HAMLEY

Blacksburg falls to Glenvar



After breaking a Glenvar tackle, Blacksburg running back Jaxon Keys carries the ball deep into Highlander territory to set up a Bruin touchdown Friday night. Glenvar visited Blacksburg for a preseason benefit game on Friday night and won 28-14 in a game split between starters (first half) and JV and backups (second half).



Blacksburg's Nathaniel Means scores on a short touchdown reception from QB Sam Szefc against Glenvar during a preseason benefit game.



Blacksburg's Lamont Hurdle collected two interceptions against Glenvar Friday night.



Blacksburg sophomore QB Sam Szefc throws a sideline pass during a preseason game against Glenvar.

PHOTOS BY JON FLEMING

Hokies add another basketball transfer

Virginia Tech head men's basketball coach Mike Young announced Friday the addition of Eastern Michigan transfer Connor Serven to the Hokies' 2024-25 roster.

Serven has two years of eligibility remaining. With the arrival of Serven, Tech will have 15 players set to don the maroon and orange for the upcoming season.

A 6-foot-8 forward, Serven arrives in Blacksburg after one season at Eastern Michigan, where he averaged 3.3 points and 3.1 rebounds in 31 games played. Serven dialed up a career-high 15 points on five of 10 shooting vs. Kent State on Jan. 6, 2024. He notched three double-figure scoring games for the Eagles in 2023-24, while shooting 43.5% from the floor.

Serven is a two-time transfer who began his college career at Illinois. He played three seasons for the

Fighting Illini, appearing in 18 games while logging three points and seven rebounds. Serven was a member of three NCAA tournament teams, including two squads that advanced to the NCAA second round in both 2022 and 2023.

Illinois tied for the 2021-22 Big Ten regular season championship and captured the 2021 Big Ten tournament title as the No. 3 seed during Serven's time in Champaign. The Priarie City, Ill., native was an Academic All-Big Ten selection in 2022.

"We are excited about adding Connor to our program as he brings experience, wisdom and a versatile game," said Young. "He is a hard-playing dude who has a high level of skill and smarts – our type of guy. We are eager to get Connor here and continue to develop him."

Virginia Tech Athletics

TriWizard TriMile raises funds for Literacy Volunteers



PHOTO COURTESY OF LITERACY VOLUNTEERS OF THE NRV

Racers at Saturday's TriWizard TriMile race, a fundraiser for Literacy Volunteers of the New River Valley.

The TriWizard TriMile race, a fundraiser for Literacy Volunteers of the New River Valley, was held Saturday, Aug. 24, 2024 in Bisset Park, Radford.

The Top 40 finishers include:

- First place: Anderson Norton, 16:48.53; 2) Josoah Gifaldi; 3) Daniel Kolasa; 4) Jacob Cox; 5) Rob Colley; 6) Lily Hyatt; 7) Frank Finch; 8) Taylor Johnson; 9) Mason Hayes; 10) William Laxton; 11) Juan Carlos Medina; 12) Anika Whittier; 13) Joseph Sheets; 14) Ray Hartley; 15) Eli Whittier; 16) Jody Pall; 17) Jason Pall; 18) Peggy Clark; 19)

- Geovanny Guillen; 20) Jeff Meadows; 21) Jason Simmons; 22) Maxwell Montagna; 23) Hollace Oakes; 24) Kim Kitts; 25) Justin Buehler; 26) Emmi Williamson; 27) Sally Walker; 28) Charlie Pall; 29) Russell Williamson; 30) Brett Petty; 31) Noam Hersch; 32) Colin Riffe; 33) Ian Woolwine; 34) Randy Burrier; 35) Leonie Jacobs; 36) Virginia Worrell; 37) Amber Williamson; 38) Colton Tucker; 39) Edward Arb; 40) Jackson Caldwell.

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Duo wins Auburn Hills Golf Course club championship



Eddie Woolwine teamed up with Larry Gerald to win the Auburn Hills Golf Club Championship held recently.



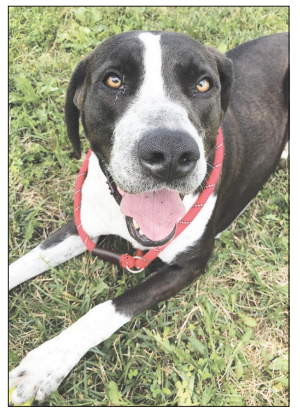
PHOTOS COURTESY OF AUBURN HILLS GOLF COURSE

Larry Gerald teamed up with Eddie Woolwine for the club championship.

PETS OF THE WEEK

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

Ralph is a big cuddle bug! He's a lovable boy who enjoys meeting humans over the age of 12. He is selective with other dogs. Ralph is also house trained. Stop by the Animal Care and Adoption Center to meet this pausome dog.



Bruce is a friendly, goofy pup. He likes meeting people and getting attention. He also loves putting his nose to the ground and sniffing the world around him.



CROSSWORD ANSWERS

S	Y	L	I	S	T	A	V	E				
E	C	H	O	E	S	P	E	R	I	L	S	
R	O	Y	W	I	L	L	I	A	M	S	C	F
D	O	L	A	Y	R	S	A	C	R	A		
A	D	O	S	N	E	E	R	S	H	A	M	
H	E	R	P	A	D	S	A	C	E	P	I	
I	M	A	M	T	U	R	E	E	N			
S	A	M	A	R		P	A	S	S	E		
A	P	E	X	E	S		T	I	D	E		
N	A	T	D	A	T	H	O	D	S	H	E	
I	C	E	S	T	A	T	A	R		T	O	E
T	H	R	O	B	S	B	S		E	L	L	
Y	E	F	A	N	T	A	S	T	I	C	A	L
S	O	I	R	E	E	L	U	S	A	K	A	
B	A	I	T	S		E	B	O	N			