

Tragic Shooting in Downey Street Apartment Last Friday

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On September 13th, at approximately 2:35 a.m. police responded to a shooting on Downey street. When they arrived they found one victim who was pronounced dead at the scene. **In an interview with James Johnson, a resident of the apartment where the shooting happened,** he said that his roommate was hosting a party and that he was in his room doing some work. He heard a bunch of yelling. He had turned the music on his earbud louder as he thought they were just partying harder. He said, **“I didn’t think much of it at the time until the police came.”**

Right when he was about to check out what happened he said, “they [the police] broke open my door and pushed me outside before I could really see anything and once we were outside they patted me down. Afterwards they passed out stuff for us to write down any information we knew and then kept us there for a while. The officer who broke my door apologized later and showed me a picture of what happened to it...”

Mr. Johnson was sent to a parking lot where he saw an ambulance coming and police tape around the apartments. That’s where he found his other roommates and asked what happened. James’ roommate apologized to him and



Radford City Police reported that the shooting occurred near the 1100 block of Downey Street Photo Credit: Brandon Whitaker

said they heard a loud bang and believed it was a door being slammed shut. However, they then saw the victim walk from the porch and stumbled inside onto the couch and fell on the floor when he started bleeding.

James Johnson said “I feel bad and a little traumatized (because) a girl close to him was in tears when I got out of the apartment and was begging the police to let her see him.”

Radford Police reported that a juvenile was taken into custody and was charged with Second Degree Murder, Possession of a Handgun by a Person under 18, and Use of a Firearm in the Commission of a Felony.

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TikTokers Turn Campus Landmarks into Bathrooms in Bizarre Nationwide Trend

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A new trend has been going around social media where college students are urinating or at least pretending to, on landmarks around their campuses. Many Virginia colleges such as Radford, Virginia Tech, and James Madion all have their own “pisser” accounts on social media.

The account named “the.ru.pisser” known on TikTok as RUPISS has hit many locations such as the McConnell Library, Cook Hall, and Moffett Lawn. Their first post at McConnell Library has around 97k views and the comments are a mix of students’ disgust, but also suggestions of where the creator should film next. Their most recent video was posted on September 9th, meaning they are still active and could strike again.

The trend has also reached local areas such as Roanoke, where “The Roanoke Pisser” on TikTok has recently posted a video on September 10th. While these videos may seem like harmless jokes, in Radford Virginia, public urination is prohibited under the city’s ordinances. Chapter 70, Section 70-41 of the Radford Code of Ordinances addresses urination or defecation in public places. Additionally, under Virginia state law, public urination can be charged as “indecent exposure” under § 18.2-387 of the Code of Virginia. This offense is classified as a Class 1 misdemeanor, which may result in a fine and/or imprisonment. It is not clear if the individuals in these videos are actually urinating, or using a prop such as a water bottle, or apple juice. The only question left is; “Where will RUPISS strike next?”



“RUPISS” suspect stands in front of the Cook Hall sign before fleeing. Photo Credit: @RU_Doakes on TikTok

Spotted Lanternflies: Southwest Virginia's Unwanted Visitors

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Over the past few years there has been a growing presence of spotted lanternflies all over the Eastern U.S. In fact, the population of the species has become so immense in certain areas of the U.S, **they have begun to be picked up by weather radar.** While these spotted bugs have now inhabited most of North America, the invasive species' recent habitation of Radford, VA is particularly concerning to students and community members alike due to the spotted insect's negative effects on our local environment.

The spotted lanternfly that we have come to know all too well is formally known as *Lycorma delicatula*, and is native to China and Vietnam. The bug ended up invading countries such as South Korea and Japan, then eventually made its way to the U.S. in 2016. Their presence in Virginia was confirmed in 2018 and has grown ever since. The insect is most attracted to the tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), which is abundant in eastern states like Virginia due to its own invasive nature. While this is the lanternfly's preferred host plant, **the insects also feed off many other trees that are plentiful in southwest Virginia, such as pine, oak, maple, and walnut. In addition to trees and plants, the lanternfly also damages crops such as grapes, soybean, and peaches.**

While lanternflies are not known to do any harm to people, such as biting or stinging, **they**



Photo Credit: @sakern via inaturalist.com

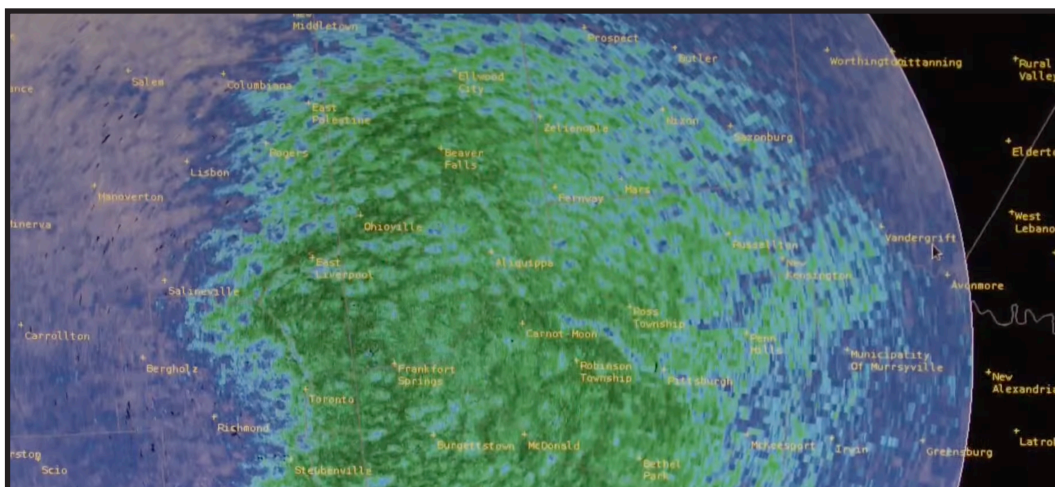
cause immense damage to the environments they invade by sucking large amounts of sap from trees, which causes them to wilt faster. They also exert honeydew onto the plants and crops they inhabit, which promotes rapid growth of mold. The damage done to plants, trees, and crops is not insignificant, seeing as they are crucial parts of our ecosystem.

There have been many efforts across the eastern U.S to eradicate or contain the large population of lanternflies but **eliminating them has unfortunately become nearly impossible.**

There is no way to fully remove this invasive species from the Virginia region as they have become too well established not only here, but in all of North America, there are measures that can be taken to prevent further spread on a community level. These insects are known to be "hitchhikers," meaning they commonly get from place to place by travelling on cars, buses, or

trains. Checking vehicles for lanternflies, as well as stepping on existing ones and managing infestations on personal properties can all be effective ways to prevent them from migrating or reproducing further.

Radar on a CBS broadcast shows abundance of bugs, primarily lanternflies
Photo Credit: CBS News Pittsburgh



Political Activist Charlie Kirk Killed During Event in Utah

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American political activist and media personality Charlie Kirk was fatally shot on Wednesday, September 10th, around 12:30 PM. A shot was fired around 20 minutes after he had started his internet-famous 'Prove Me Wrong' event, which was being held at Utah Valley University in Orem, Utah. Prior to the tragedy, Kirk was debating the topic of mass shootings with UVU undergraduate student Hunter Kozak. Kozak asked the question,

“Do you know how many mass shooters there have been in America over the last 10 years?”,

Kirk’s reply before being shot was,

“Counting or not counting gang violence?”

Charlie Kirk was taken to the nearest hospital in critical condition and was later pronounced dead at the age of 31.

Utah Valley University was the first stop on Kirk’s ‘The American Comeback’ tour. He had upcoming plans to visit Virginia Tech’s campus later this month to debate with students, along with guest host Megyn Kelly, another Conservative icon. A vigil was hosted by the College Republicans at Virginia Tech and VT’s Turning Point USA chapter, to honor Charlie Kirk’s memory.

Utah Valley University stated that they plan to reopen on Wednesday and are offering extensive resources for students to help



Charlie Kirk speaking at a previous event Photo Credit: Mark Peterson/Redux Pictures

cope with the traumatic event. Around 3,000 students were at this event, with very little security measures in place. Students have expressed concerns regarding campus security and how they handled the tragic event.

Just hours after the fatal shooting of Kirk, some House Republicans and MAGA figures were quick to condemn the ‘radical left’ and Democrats for the political act of violence. Shortly after news of Kirk’s shooting broke, Representative Nancy Mace told reporters, “Democrats own what happened today.” Later that evening, President Trump posted to Truth Social, blaming the “radical left”. This extremely divisive rhetoric causes a divide between the right and left, especially given that there was no knowledge of the shooter’s political ideology at the time of the shooting.

Radford Student Gains Forensic Anthropology Experience in Ireland

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“Dead men tell no tales”. This is the name of a forensic anthropology program offered at the Irish Heritage Field School where **Radford student Emily Dunford spent a week gaining hands-on experience in forensic fieldwork.** Despite the ironic program title, Dunford’s studies revealed that the dead have plenty to say to those trained to listen.

The field school is located in Birr, the heart of the Irish midlands. Surrounded by heritage sites and medieval landscapes, students can expect an immersive cultural experience led by forensics experts. Dunford spent time looking at real 13th century human remains, completing mock burial excavations, and learning about different identification techniques.

She also had her eyes opened to the differences in how forensic anthropology is taught and conducted in different coun-



Emily Dunford poses in front of a field in Ireland.

tries. While American forensic anthropology focuses more on very recent remains, Ireland is more concerned with ancient burial sites and remains. **“I had a very American perspective on forensic anthropology”**, Dunford reflected. **“It’s not something you can put into this little box, it’s much broader and differs from country to country.”**



Between broadening her studies through fieldwork and handling some cultural shifts, Dunford says she “went in blind, but that’s the way to do it”. A first time experience in a foreign country can prove to be overwhelming, but the interactive practice and perspective she gained made this journey one to remember.

Burial Site in Birr Ireland Photo Credit:
Emily Dunford

ICE Can Now Racially Profile in LA: Here's What You Need to Know

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U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents have been cleared to administer unprecedented racial profiling in Los Angeles. With a 6-3 ruling by the Supreme Court's conservative majority in the case *Noem v. Vasquez-Perdomo*, a judge's restraining order was lifted, which previously forbade ICE from questioning or detaining people based on their race, job, or language.

This means that ICE agents can now forcefully detain individuals anywhere in the LA area simply for appearing LatinX, speaking Spanish, or having an accent. These agents are said to patrol in areas with high numbers of blue-collar workers, as this is a trade that is stereotypically performed by people of LatinX origin. Immigrant advocates around the US are fuming due to this new ruling. Many are especially upset because this decision was the result of a "shadow docket" ruling, a strategy meant for urgent applications, as it bypasses the normal processes of extensive briefing and oral arguments.

Robert Reich, a Democratic professor and former US Secretary of Labor, shares his outrage on X. "[Shadow dockets] allow justices to effectively make rulings in secret without explain-



Demonstrators gather in response to the controversial Supreme Court Ruling
Photo Credit: David Butow/Los Angeles Times

ing their decisions," Reich wrote. "Is it any wonder why so many do not trust the Roberts court?"

One of the U.S.'s leading advocacy groups for Latin American workers, The Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA) issued a formal statement on the court's new ruling.

"The Court has endorsed the deployment of discriminatory enforcement that looks less like justice and more like systemic repression," LCLAA said.

These are just two out of hundreds of statements made by organizations and individuals who support the LatinX community in the LA area and around the US. Many are wondering what the Supreme Court's next steps are on this matter and continue to fear for the rights and wellbeing of the Latin American community in LA and across the nation.

Virginia Tech Football Coach Fired Following Winless Start to the Season

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This past Saturday the Virginia Tech Football team was dominated in their game against Old Dominion, 26-45. After dropping their first two games to SEC opponents, South Carolina and Vanderbilt, losing against the Monarchs and dropping their record to 0-3 was the last straw for the Virginia Tech Athletic Department. Head Football Coach Brent Pry was fired that following Sunday.

This is the first time since 1987 that the Hokies have gone winless through the teams' first three games. At the time of printing Virginia Tech also has the only football team in the ACC without a win. Pry was hired in 2022,



Former Head Coach Brent Pry stands with his players Photo Credit: Rob Kinnan/USA TODAY Sports

this was his first time working as head coach after spending six years with Penn State as their defensive coordinator. Since he was hired Pry amassed a record of 16-24 with two bowl game appearances, winning one in 2023.

Offensive Coordinator Phillip Montgomery will be the Hokie's Interim Head Coach. Montgomery boasts 32 years of coaching experience including stops at Auburn Baylor Houston and Tulsa.

Virginia Tech Football posted a farewell message from Pry on X and Pry reflected on his time in Blacksburg,

“Blacksburg will always hold a special place in our hearts. We leave with wonderful memories and lifelong friendships, and we will forever be cheering for the Hokies.”

- Brent Pry via HokiesFB on X



Virginia Tech Interim Head Coach Phillip Montgomery when he was with Auburn University Photo Credit: Austin Perryman

Highlander Highlights: Men's Soccer Ties Against ETSU, Highlander Volleyball Team Dominates Tennessee Tech

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Men's Soccer

Two tune up games did not go as planned for the Radford Men's Soccer team last week after a tie vs ETSU and a loss vs Queens College. Both soccer programs traveled to Johnson City Tennessee to face the Buccaneers with the men's team playing on Wednesday September 10th. The Bucs took control early, scoring their first goal in just 14 minutes. The same buccaneer that scored would find the back of the net again in the 31st minute, and the Highlanders were down 0-2 at half. Sophomore Defender Carter McClain started the comeback effort with a goal in the 53rd minute. Hiromasa Iwai notched his second goal of the season in the 70th minute, tying the game at 2-2. Unfortunately, the Highlanders' comeback



Michael Rodomski #28, Hiromasa Iwai #10 and Christian Robertson #27 celebrate in a previous game against Liberty
 Photo Credit: @rsimmonsphotographer

effort would only result in a tie. After their 0-1 loss to Queens College, the men's soccer team will head into conference play with a record of 1-3-2.



Sierra Moore #26 celebrates with Lea Gage #22 Alana Kolb #16 and Wiktoria Jakubik #3 Photo Credit: Brandon Whitaker

Volleyball

Last week our Highlander Volleyball team traveled to Cookeville Tennessee for the Golden Eagle Invitational hosted by Tennessee Tech. The Highlanders dominated the Eagles on Friday, winning 3-0. After winning their first set 25-18, the Highlanders found themselves down 2-7 to the Eagles after giving up six unanswered kills. The Highlanders would retaliate with a 6-0 run of their own and go on to take the second and third sets to complete the sweep. Unfortunately the Highlanders would get swept later that day by Samford University. **The Radford Volleyball team will start conference play on September 26th at home against High Point University, at 6 p.m.**