

The Fountain is Free! Radford Alumni Push For Change

By: BRANDON WHITAKER
bmwhitaker@radford.edu

What was once a hub for student camaraderie and togetherness became sequestered behind a fence. The fountain at the center of campus that is, and this was something that Radford alumni could not live with. In December of 2016 a “Free the Fountain” Facebook group was created for these alumni to reminisce and express displeasure with what has happened to the fountain. Nine long years of waiting finally paid off. **On Friday during their homecoming, the Highlander alumnus finally got to meet up and pull apart the fence and resuscitate a forgotten campus tradition.** During the event there were even a slew of students, alumni and administrators that took a dip in the newly freed fountain. Matt Donlon, creator and admin of the free the fountain Facebook group wrote in a post following the ceremony, “...The fence has been removed and let freedom ring. Thank you guys for your support and I know we made a difference getting rid of that fence which limited our freedom of expression and joy...” President Bret Danilowicz also commented on the traditions surrounding the fountain during the event, “There used to be a lot of traditions around



The Highlander gazes at the fountain before the fence is removed Photo Credit: Brandon Whitaker

the fountain but once the fence went up, all the traditions went away. So I’m starting to learn about what some of the traditions were and I certainly hope they come back. A lot of fraternities and sororities and various clubs had traditions here, and to me it’s a gathering place and I look forward to seeing how it really invigorates engagement on campus.”



Photo of Radford Students around the fountain in the 80’s via the Tartan archives

Staff Photo by Donnie Worley

Contents

www.rutartan.com

01 The Fountain is Free! Radford Alumni Push for Change

02 A Decade of Donations: 10th Annual Radford Gives Back

03 Heated Debate Transpires in Virginia Governor’s Race

04 Recovery is Possible: The Ozone Layer is Healing

05-06 Legendary Radford Alumni and Author Visits Campus

07 Sora AI: Ethical Challenges with AI Advancement

08 Highlander Highlights: Women’s Soccer and Volleyball Continue Win Streaks, Men’s Soccer Ties Exciting Match Against Nationally Ranked Gardner-Webb

A Decade of Donations: 10th Annual Radford Gives Back

By: COOPER LUCAS
cdlucas@radford.edu

The 10th annual Radford Gives Back event was held on October 8th by Radford University in collaboration with the Bobcat Backpacks program. The student body, faculty, and staff volunteers came together to donate and collect food items to give to Bobcat Backpacks, a non-profit organization that provides meals to children in need in Radford city.

For about 40 minutes over 300 student volunteers gathered at the MAC court located on the first floor of the Student Recreation and Wellness center and collected food items from stations around the gym and placed them in plastic bags. Once they completed the cycle around the gym and their bags were filled with food, the volunteers placed the bags in the center of the court and made a “RU” with the bags.



Photo Credit: Brandon Whitaker

President Bret Danilowicz was asked how it feels to hold this event for a decade now, he said “To me, this is wonderful for the community because there is a lot of food insecurity, so for those children and their families to know that they’ve got food in the evenings, that makes a big difference...I am also really proud of the students from Radford University because for many of them this is one of the first service activities they’ve done, so imagine how good it feels to help these families both in gathering these donations and packing it up for them. It’s a great start for our students to learn about philanthropy and service and what it means for the community.”

Heated Debate Transpires in Virginia Governor's Race

By: RYLEE LYONS
rslyons1@radford.edu

The Virginia governor's race has recently gained attention from most Virginians, and it has also become a political interest for citizens all over the country as well. It has become the most important and recognized current gubernatorial election in the U.S. Democratic nominee, Abigail Spanberger, faced Republican nominee Winsome Earle-Sears in a heated debate on Thursday, October 9th, and was perceived to be a pivotal moment in the election. Both candidates took firm stances on controversial issues, including trans issues in school, abortion access, and recent controversy surrounding Democratic attorney general nominee Jay Jones. **Abigail Spanberger (D) is a former U.S Representative of Virginia's 7th congressional district, as well as a former CIA officer.** She is focusing her campaign on issues such as affordability, strong public education, public safety, and accessible healthcare and reproductive freedom for Virginians. She has been recognized as one of the most bipartisan members of congress and has held bipartisanship as one of her core values throughout the race. **Winsome Earle-Sears (R) is the current lieutenant Governor of Virginia, elected in 2021 alongside Governor Glenn Youngkin.** She has based her campaign on issues such as lowering taxes and increasing freedom, curriculum changes, & parental involvement within public education. Some of the key takeaways from the Thursday night debate include the candidates' stances being made clear on issues like abortion rights, environmental policy, and public education. Discourse has been focused more on their denouncements of comments made by members of their own parties. However, much of the discourse following the debate has stemmed from the nominees' denouncements of comments made by members of their own parties. Spanberger was asked by Earle-Sears

to comment on the recent controversial text messages made by Jay Jones. Earle-Sears brought up the issue, saying she wondered **"why she won't say it is not okay and that he must leave the race?"** She pressed her opponent to answer, resulting in one of the more pivotal moments of the debate: **"Abigail, you have nothing to say?"** She didn't, until later on in the debate she said, **"The comments that Jay Jones made are absolutely abhorrent. I denounced them when I learned of them, and I will denounce them every opportunity I get."**

Spanberger did not solidify a response on whether or not she still endorses Jones, but under Virginia law, it would be difficult for Jones to drop out of the race at this point without Democrats having to surrender the election entirely. Earle-Sears was no stranger to controversial moments in the debate either. She made a comment about same-sex marriage, saying that she opposed workplace protections that surround members of the LGBTQ+ community. When Spanberger pressed on this issue, saying that her opponent thinks it is okay for people to be fired from their job for being openly gay, Earle-Sears replied, "That's not discrimination."

While this high-stakes governor's race has been considered relatively close, Spanberger seems to be holding a clear lead in most polls. Many credit strong opinions on the nominees to the pivotal moments during the debate, meaning high voter turnout is expected from Virginians on election day (Tuesday, November 4th). Regardless of the outcome of this election, history is being made as Virginia will elect its first female governor.

Visit the QR code for voting
resources
via Highlanders Vote



Recovery is Possible: The Ozone Layer is Healing

By: AMANDA FARLOW
alfarlow@radford.edu

The ozone layer, a thin shield in Earth's stratosphere, acts as sunscreen and protects us from harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation. It's located just about 9 to 18 miles above our Earth's surface and absorbs radiation to protect us from getting skin cancer, eye cataracts, and keeps our crops safe. A team of British scientists from the British Antarctica Survey discovered a hole in the ozone layer was first discovered over Antarctica in the early 1980s.

Their research showed that the ozone layers dropped by nearly 40% in the springtime compared to previous decades' levels. This was originally thought to simply be an equipment error but eventually deducted to be a hole in the ozone layer, mostly caused by human-made chemicals called chlorofluorocarbons, or CFCs for short, which break down ozone molecules. Extreme cold temperatures in Antarctica form polar stratospheric clouds that also break down ozone molecules – at a much faster rate.

However, after decades of steady decline, **scientists found that if current policies stay in place, the ozone layer is set to return to 1980 levels within the next few decades.** This may seem far off in the future, but it isn't too long. For us in the Northern Hemisphere, recovery could be complete by the 2030s. For the Southern Hemisphere, by the 2050s. And for the polar regions, which suffer from the most severe depletion, it may take until around 2066.

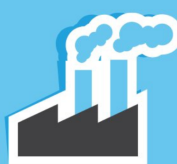
The Montreal Protocol is solely to thank for the recovery of the ozone layer, as it created a step-by-step plan to reduce and eventually completely wipe-out the production and use of ozone-depleting substances. It was created in



Edit by Brandon Whitaker

September of 1987 in Montreal, Canada. Its main goal was to phase out the production and use of chemicals that damage the ozone layer, such as CFCs. Every member of the United Nations signed on, which made it the first treaty in UN history with universal ratification. It's one of the most successful international agreements in history, and it's the reason the ozone layer is healing today. When countries work together on global issues, recovery is possible.

HOW CAN WE PROTECT THE OZONE LAYER?



Avoid the consumption of dangerous gases



Minimise the use of cars



Buy local products



Do not use harmful cleaning products

Legendary Radford Alumni Author Visits Campus to Tell Her Story

By: BRANDON WHITAKER
bmwhitaker@radford.edu

“Radford changed my life” she says to a room full of students and faculty in McConnell library. She says this while holding her acceptance letter from over 60 years ago, with tears nearly falling down her cheek. Her name is **Dr. Emma Violand-Sánchez**.

Dr. Sánchez came back to campus during homecoming and held an event on Friday for her new book titled *Dreams and Shadows: An Immigrant's Journey*. Dr. Sánchez was born in Cochabamba Bolivia, after her parents unfortunately split it was just her, her mother and her five sisters. She had an aunt living in Washington D.C. that proposed to her mother the idea that the three oldest children could come live in the United States.

“My oldest sister went to Detroit with an uncle, and I came to Fairfax Virginia with my sister Susie...Imagine the time when my mother made the decision in our living room. We were having dinner, and she said to us “three of you will go to the United States.” It wasn’t like we were consulted (beforehand)”

Dr. Sánchez was overwhelmed by the beauty of the U.S. when she arrived in 1961, and entering high school she was overwhelmed by the size of the school but a feeling of loneliness soon crept in.

“My experience as a new immigrant facing high school with limited English proficiency and no friends and being far away from home opened painful wounds that did not heal. The wound of being different. The wound of feeling silenced, of being unable to make myself understood. Of not being able to show others how smart I was. The



Dr. Emma Violand Sanchez with Latino Student Alliance President Jorge Rufino Photo Credit: Brandon Whitaker

wound of knowing that all I’d learned and absorbed at home about my culture and the ways of my country didn’t matter.”

To make matters worse Virginia high schools at that time didn’t have any classes for English as a second language. Dr. Sanchez struggled with self-doubt; the language barrier was one she didn’t think she could overcome at the time. She thought “why do I have to take French if I don’t speak English? How about I take a Spanish class?” This was the move that changed everything for Dr. Sánchez,

“Suddenly I felt smart...I could talk to the students, I was myself, and it gave me a boost, I have always said and I tell many of you that are bilingual. Your native language is your superpower...”

She used this superpower to show people that she was truly intelligent and gifted. She was able to take her college board achievement test in Spanish and scored an 800, a score that she believed had impressed Radford and surely surprised her guidance-counselors,

Continued on p.6

By: BRANDON WHITAKER
bmwhitaker@radford.edu

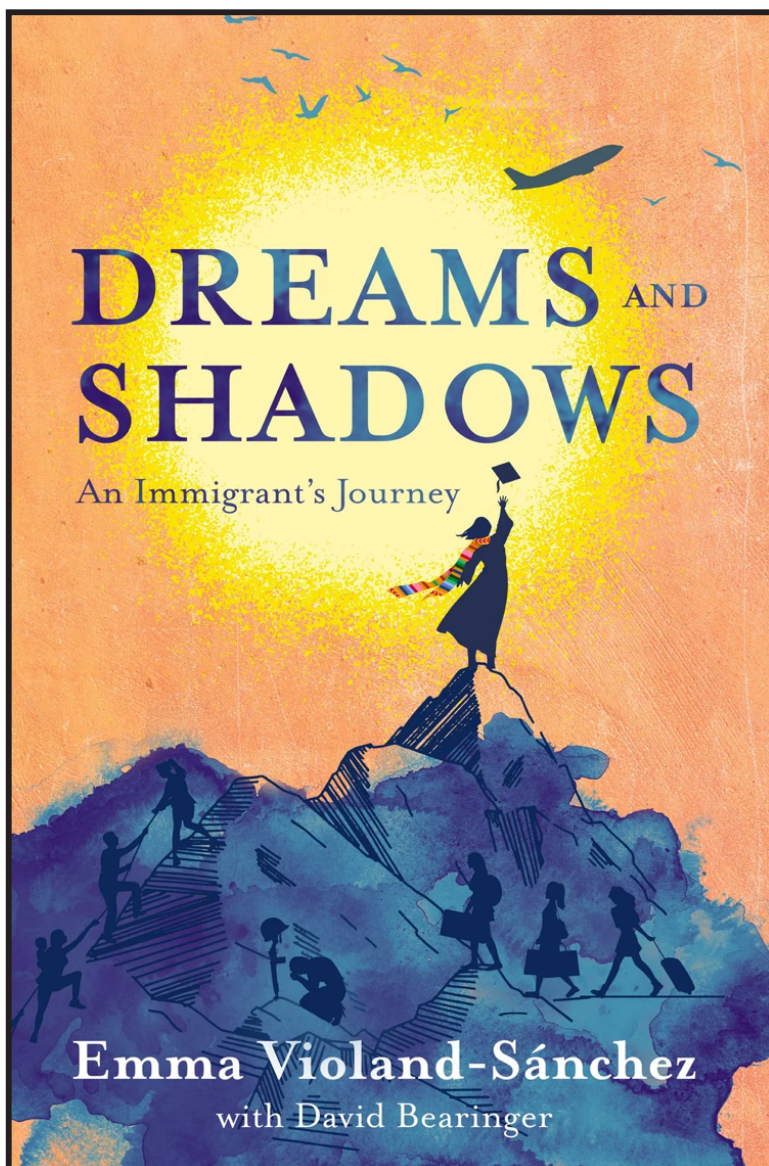
Continued from p.5

“My SAT’s, they didn’t show my potential, and even my guidance counselor changed her face when she saw my score in Spanish because she realized that I was smart. Because before, all those tests they gave me, they didn’t indicate my intelligence.”

The same counselor that enrolled Sánchez in Spanish class told her that she needed to go to college and that she would. Her counselor took her to college night where she got to meet a representative from Radford. In May of 1962 she received her acceptance letter which indicated that all her expenses, out of state tuition, room and board etc. would be fully covered by the university.

Dr. Sánchez would eventually go on to graduate from Radford with a B.S. in 1966 and M.S. in 1968. She was more than happy to be back at McConnell library where she held her first job as a student. When asked to give a message to students who are still navigating their own journey’s whether they are immigrants, first generation or just don’t feel they belong she said, “We are all searching for belonging and the important thing is its incumbent for all of us to form relationships and get to know each other. More than anything, for me and all the students in Radford, education is transformational not only as you grow more knowledgeable but also for your friendships, your family, it really transforms your life.”

To read more about the life of Dr. Sánchez and find more information about her book *Dreams and Shadows*, visit www.emmaviolandsanchez.com.



Sora AI: Ethical Challenges with AI Advancement

By: KATHERINE CLARKE
keclarke1@radford.edu

In an age where AI-generated video quality is improving at a staggering rate, how can we trust the content we're seeing? The recent release of Sora AI has already raised several ethical questions regarding the spread of misinformation.

Sora is an app-based AI software produced by the same developers as OpenAI that allows users to turn simple text prompts into short-form AI generated videos. The rollout of the app has been gradual, but access is expanding. Currently the app is invite only, with invite codes being shared on Reddit and Discord threads. Despite user restrictions, Sora has rapidly become the most downloaded app in the Apple App Store and has already reached over 1 million downloads in the past week. Sora has received a lot of attention due to the hyper-realistic nature of the videos it produces. It is no question that AI video quality has been rapidly improving. With Sora, the world is seeing more physically accurate video generation that users are describing as "night and day" when comparing it to similar AI tools.

While this recent advancement in AI is undeniably impressive, it has raised concerns about misinformation, copyright, and consent. While the app has safeguards in place to block any potentially sensitive material being posted, it is not foolproof. Sora generated content is automatically watermarked with their logo, but users have already found ways around this by cropping or editing. The addition of the company's watermark on these videos is intended to help identify AI generated content, but the reliability of this feature isn't completely solid. Users have also managed to find ways to tweak algorithms and prompts, allowing them to work around pro-

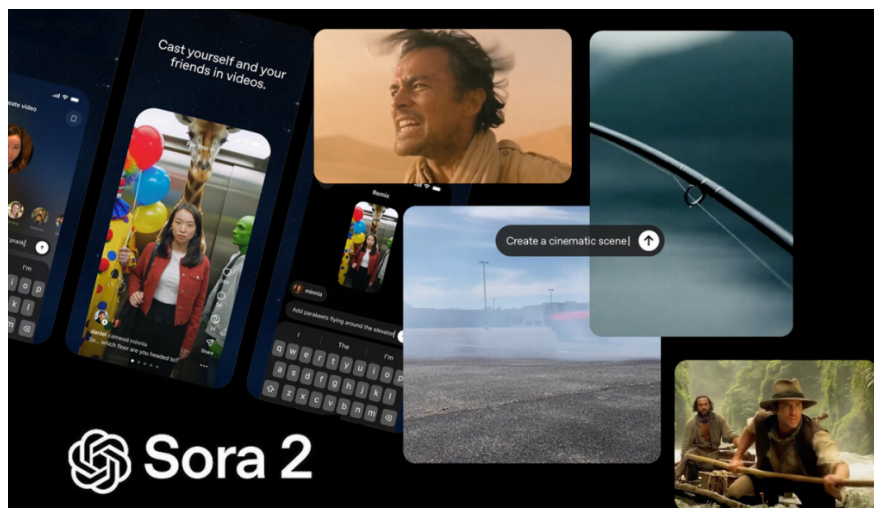


Photo Credit: cined.com

TECTIVE filters. Given these complications and the highly accurate content, Sora has sparked great concern when it comes to the spreading of misinformation. We are now living in a reality where videos can no longer be considered as objective proof. Fake car accident footage threatens insurance fraud, and is an example of how Sora content can undermine video credibility. As for copyright, Sora has an "opt-out" policy where copyrighted material is free to be used unless the owners explicitly opt out. This has become a huge problem related to fake celebrity endorsements and accounts.

While there are many aspects of Sora that the public has found distressing, there is always room for improvement. Like any new technology, AI is always undergoing changes and developments. This means that the problems that have been pointed out with Sora are already being targeted by the developers, and safety measures are being improved as users identify risks.

At the end of the day, Sora and the issues that come with it are an inevitable part of the constant evolution of AI. Responsible innovation of these technologies will prove whether or not society can balance technological modernization and ethical safety.

Highlander Highlights: Women's Soccer and Volleyball Continue Win Streaks, Men's Soccer Ties Exciting Match Against Nationally Ranked Gardner-Webb

By: BRANDON WHITAKER

Men's Soccer

Highlanders Tie vs #23 Ranked Gardner Webb, Goalkeeper Ben Miller Stars with 8 Saves

Saturday's matchup between Radford and Gardner Webb wasn't your average weekend of Highlander soccer. The Bulldogs came into this match ranked #23 in the nation, 3-0 in conference play and coming off a win vs #6 West Virginia just a month ago. In the first half the Highlanders could only muster one shot to Gardner Webb's 6 however goalkeeper **Ben Miller** was able to deflect both of the Bulldogs shots on goal. The second half saw more stagnant offense from the High's, again with only one shot, but their defense held on throughout. The Bulldogs attempted 11 more shots in the second half with six of them on goal but Miller maintained the shutout with six more saves. With the final score 0-0 the Highlanders are now fourth in the Big South Conference standings and will host #7 ranked High Point on October 18th at 2 p.m.

Women's Soccer

The Highlanders Have Been A Big Problem for The Big South, Remaining Un-defeated in Conference Play

On Saturday the Highlanders went on the road to face UNC Asheville with their undefeated conference record on the line. The Highlanders outshot Asheville 17-6 with the go ahead goal coming from junior midfielder and resident of Asheville North Carolina, **Katie Purnell** in the 76th minute. Goalkeeper **Lexi Radvanyi** had two saves and secured her 3rd shutout in conference play in the 1-0 win



Goalkeeper Ben Miller vs. Gardner Webb
Photo Credit: @rsimmonsphotographer on Instagram

Volleyball

Win Streak Hits Three Following Wins vs. Charleston Southern and Presbyterian

The Highlanders just won their recent doubleheader at home against Presbyterian 3-0, and Charleston Southern, 3-1. Following a highly contested first set the lady high's found themselves down 17-20 to Presbyterian in set 2. Leading the rally was sophomore **Lea Gage**, notching two service ace's and a assist to **Rylee Sloss** to take back the lead. After the Blue Hose tied the set at 22, Gage stepped up again, assisting on the final three kills that won the set. In their game against Charleston Southern on Saturday, the Bucs came back down 20-24 for six unanswered kills and a decisive win in set one. The Highlanders would rally to win the next three sets for a 3-1 victory at home. Gage had 23 assists in the match and a total of 41 assists this past weekend.