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Supreme Court Rejects Same-Sex Marriage Appeal

By: LIZ VILLA
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The landmark Obergefell v. Hodges ruling in 2015, which legalized same-sex marriage in America was challenged in the Supreme Court on Monday November 10th.

Kim Davis, a former Kentucky court clerk introduced the appeal to overturn the same-sex marriage ruling, in addition to making an effort to win her own case; Davis, a conservative, was previously jailed for refusing to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples following the Supreme Court's 2015 ruling due to her religious beliefs. Davis was sued by a couple seeking marriage.

The Supreme Court elected not to hear the petition from Davis and the dam-

ages from her original case were upheld. She was ordered to pay the couple \$100,000 in damages, as well as \$260,000 for their attorney's fees.

Davis and her legal team continuously invoked the words of Clarence Thomas, a Supreme Court Justice who was present for and voted against the original same-sex legalization ruling in 2015. Thomas was the only one out of nine justices who agreed with Davis and called to erase the original ruling.

After the court's ruling last week, there has been discourse across social media and news sites; liberal activists are continually making statements like "this fight will never be over" and "stand together." In contrast, conservative individuals such as an anonymous X user, say

things such as, "same sex marriage is an abomination and I will always stand by that." Mat Staver, the head of the conservative legal group that represented Kim Davis said, "the day will come. The days of Obergefell are numbered." The discourse has been nonstop on this topic for decades; only time will tell how or if it ends.



Photo Credit: AP/Jacquelyn Martin

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Exit 109: Calling All Creators!

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Are you an artist? Writer? Creator of all sorts? Want to publish your works? Consider submitting to Exit 109! We are Radford University’s Literary and Creative Arts Magazine, and we love to present the opportunity to all students at Radford to submit their works.

We are seeking original works across different mediums such as visual arts, writing, or other creative works like fashion and so much more.



Our goal is to present and showcase the many talents of the creative individuals we have here in Radford. We wish to foster a greater appreciation of literature and art among our campus community. Submissions will be selected by the Editor in Chief and the team based on artistic merit and originality. Once accepted, works will be featured and credited in our magazine, which will then be published and released for free for students on campus towards the end of the spring semester.

The submission deadline is December 1st, and you can submit through RUIInvolved by searching Exit 109 and clicking on forms or using the following QR code.

For any questions or inquiries, feel free to email us at exit109@radford.edu or visit the Editor in Chief in her office at the Bonnie Room 229 on Wednesdays from 1pm to 4pm and Fridays from 11am to 1pm.



Beat the Winter Blues: Self-Care Tips For Seasonal Depression

By: RYLEE MEADOWS
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Seasonal depression is common during the fall and winter months, especially for college students. Since the days are becoming shorter and the weather is getting colder, this can lead to feelings of sadness, low energy, and sluggishness. For college students, missing home and being ready for break, feeling burnt out from classes, and feeling overwhelmed with extracurriculars or work, are normal feelings for a college student during these months. Practicing self-care is important during this time to feel motivated and stay on track, not only for school, but for mental health. Here are some tips for self-care to avoid these feelings and symptoms caused by seasonal depression.

Keep a Consistent Sleep Routine

The shorter days, especially with it getting dark so early in the day, can lead to being tired earlier than usual. Although it may seem difficult, going to bed and waking up at the same time each day creates a strong sleep schedule, improving mood and motivation.

Staying Connected

Seasonal depression can often lead to disconnection from friends or family, staying close to people in your life is important to avoid loneliness. Hanging out with friends, even if it's simple like watching a movie or going to eat, is essential.

Do the Things that Make You Happy

Being yourself and practicing your own self-care is essential so whether that is watching your favorite show, reading a good book,



Campus photo from January 2025 Photo Credit: Alexander Tso

playing a fun game, or eating a comfort meal: doing what makes you happy to take a break from "real life" is perfectly okay.

Don't Fall Behind

Becoming burnt out from school work is a completely normal feeling, especially during these cold winter months. It is significant to stay focused and motivated because once you fall behind, it may become difficult to catch back up, but remember, grades do not define you. Here are some ways to avoid becoming burnt out: take small breaks, don't try to cram everything together in one sitting, it's okay to take your time, study in natural lighting. Sunlight helps to boost energy and help with attention spans. Make To-Do lists: Making a list and going step by step helps to stay on track. Ask for help: There are many amazing resources on campus to help with academics and mental health.

Seasonal depression can make even the simplest tasks feel heavier, but small, consistent acts of self-care can create meaningful shifts. By listening to your body, honoring your needs, and building supportive habits, helps to navigate you through these winter months with steadiness and support.

A Controversial Collectible – Holiday “Bearista” Cup Mishap Brings Attention to Starbucks Employee Treatment

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Peppermint mochas and cranberry bars were not the only beloved themed items that were introduced at Starbucks this holiday season. Starbucks promoted limited edition collectible “Bearista cups,” glass cups shaped like bears. Their lids were made to look like toboggans with the Starbucks brand stamped across them. While it may seem like a reasonably small gesture from the company, to say that customers went wild trying to get one of these cups is an understatement.

Many customers stood outside the doors of hundreds of Starbucks locations in the cold on Thursday morning, hoping they would be early enough to get one of the collectible cups. **Unfortunately, to employees' dismay, the supply of cups was not enough to match the excitement that was created by Starbucks preceding the day they were made available. Many stores were shipped less than 20 cups, some only receiving one or two.** This resulted in many angry customers, who took it out on helpless workers who were not at fault.

Two larger issues reside behind the Starbucks Bearista cup: a consumerism frenzy, and a lack of consideration for employees. There is nothing especially unique about the cup other than the fact that it has the Starbucks logo on it. In fact, an exact replica without the logo can be found on sites like Amazon and Walmart for under \$30, reasonable for a designed, 20-ounce glass cup. Because of the mindset of many collectors who just have to have the limit-



Bearista Cup Photo Credit: Joshua Trujillo/Starbucks

ed-edition items, the Starbucks branded cup is going for hundreds of dollars on sites like eBay and Etsy. While limited-edition collectibles can be a fun, special hobby, there is a point where it goes too far. This mindset is harmful because it creates a competition to get whatever collectible item is trending, and people will spend disgusting amounts of money on it. Most of these items end up in the trash once the fads die out, creating unnecessary waste. Big corporations are the only ones that win, as they profit off people always feeling like they need the latest thing, they feed this behavior everyday through advertisements and promotions like the Bearista cup.

In addition to a consumerism problem, this is only the tip of the iceberg of the mistreatment of Starbucks workers. In recent years, they have spoken out about unfair labor practices, understaffing, and poor training. There have been many strikes and unionization attempts from Starbucks employees, but most end up going nowhere.

New Wave of Strange Fast Food Promotions

By: BRANDON WHITAKER
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It was around 2020 when McDonalds started selling Travis Scott meals and Grimace milkshakes and at that point they couldn't have imagined the can of worms they had opened. Fast food promotional campaigns have been around for decades but never like this. These marketing executives are seemingly throwing anything at the wall and hoping it sticks to generate buzz for their chain restaurants and here are some of the recent items making waves.

Taco Bell's Baja Blast Pie

This new Thanksgiving themed menu item debuted at Taco Bell on November 6th referred to as "the rarest dessert of the season" by Taco Bell. The concept for the pie was introduced during their "Live Más LIVE" event in 2024 and their website explained that the idea was gaining hype among fans, posting and making memes about it, so much so that they decided to actually release it one year later. The website also advertised that the pie is available nationwide for 19.99 for a limited time and orders are limited to one per customer.

Firehouse Subs "Gravy Extinguishers"

It's very common for people to experience a Turkey that is far too dry at Thanksgiving and Firehouse Subs has introduced a fix. The limited edition Gravy Extinguishers are, "the ultimate rescue tool for Thanksgiving Turkey Disasters" according to their website. The chain was founded by firefighters and continues to support first responders through donations. 100% of the proceeds for this promo-



Photo Credit: firehousesubs.com - tacobell.com

tion will be going to the Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation to benefit first responders. The extinguishers were made available on November 14th via firehousegravyrescue.com and sold out in just an hour.

Arby's Steak Nuggets

The sanest promotion on this list is the steak nuggets recently released by Arby's. The nuggets come in three variations. Five or nine count meals, a steak nugget sandwich, and a steak nugget bowl with macaroni and cheese. The nuggets have had mixed reviews among critics on social media. One Reddit user, revolio commented on a review saying, "I can definitely appreciate a fast food chain trying something new. I feel like everything the last 10 years has been a copy and paste. Good or bad this is a step in the right direction and I'm going to try it for this reason alone."

Opinion: Tariffs Negative Effects on Global Trade

By: *NICOLAS LEON GUZMAN*
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The recent trade friction caused by Trump's tariff has caused many countries to be taken aback. One of America's biggest trading partners, China, has been displeased. China buys 12 million tons of soy beans every year. However, they have recently begun buying these products from other countries in Latin America. In place of the United States they have bought soybeans from Argentina and Brazil. Argentina will also be receiving \$40 billion in support from the Trump administration. Even though China and the United States have agreed on a trade war truce, farmers will still feel pain as China has agreed to buy only 12 million metric tons of U.S. soybeans this year, less than half of what the country has historically purchased. This is part of a larger trend of China moving away from trade with the United States and expanding their influence to other parts of the globe.

China has begun to stretch their influence in Latin America by investing in infrastructure such as building ports, railways, telecommunication, and cloud computing. This is different from the American way as China is planning and guiding the way to real solutions. For example, the Mexican government collaborated with China Communications Construction Company to build the Maya Train. The Maya Train covers five states and is 950 miles long; it has led to easier travel for tourists and locals traveling in southern states. China and Mexico have become very friendly with one another as Chinese companies are building manufacturing plants in Mexico, with significant investments in automotive sectors, electronics sectors, and energy sectors.

American allies, South Korea and Japan, have felt destabilized with the dramatic change



Photo Edit by Brandon Whitaker Original Photo via
cropwatch.unl.edu

in US trade policy. They began negotiations with the US to avoid tariffs and preserve the relationship they've had with the US since the 50s, but find Trump's demand for investment could strain their countries economy. Xi Jinping has viewed this as an opportunity to push for a China-Japan-South Korea trade pact amid the straining relationships. Though this may be more difficult as all three of these countries have disdain for one another for the atrocities committed over the centuries. China has watched the US government shoot itself in the foot repeatedly, which has allowed them to simply cozy up to other nations disturbed by US trade policy. This a 180 from the pre-pandemic strategy they had, and will allow them to spread their influence across the globe.



Tren Maya graphic Photo Credit: donchingoncancun.com

System Overload: A New Disturbing AI Development

By: AMANDA FARLOW
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Artificial Intelligence is slowly infiltrating every aspect of our lives. It's become integrated into your social media feeds, through Meta AI. It's made its way into your online shopping sprees, through Amazon's AI-powered chatbot 'Rufus', engineered to help you find whatever your heart desires. It's somehow even made its way into our news feeds. Donald Trump has repeatedly posted AI-generated videos, mostly used to mock others. It begs the question: 'if everyone is using it, why is it so bad?'

In short, Artificial Intelligence is killing the environment. Using services such as ChatGPT or SoraAI requires incredible amounts of energy consumption in order to train and run their data models. This overconsumption leads to increased greenhouse gases being emitted and further contributes to climate change. AI data centers consume large amounts of water to cool the computer systems to prevent them from overheating. This can potentially lead to water scarcity.

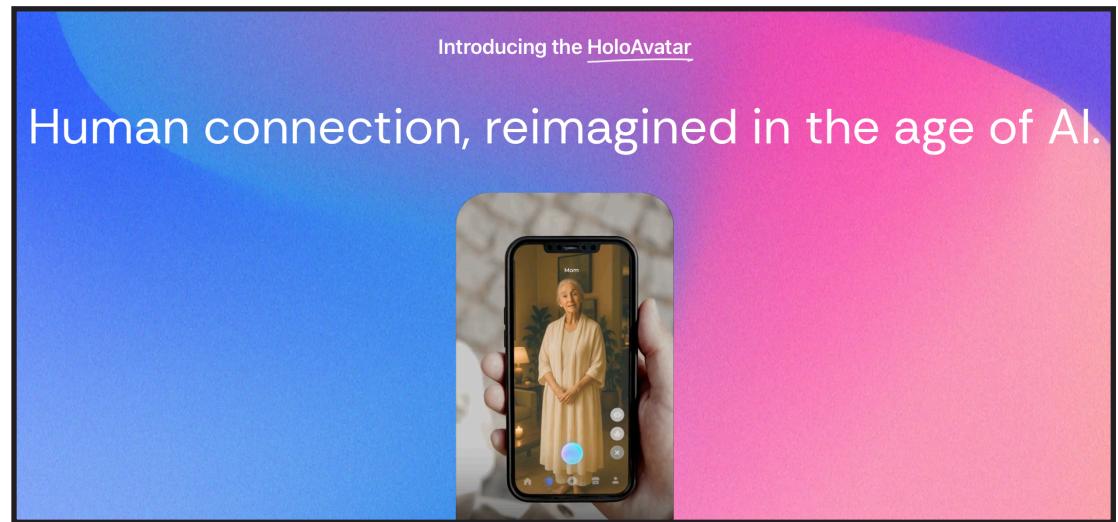
Former Disney Channel 'Austin & Ally' star Calum Worthy posted an advertisement to X on November 11th, with the caption "**What if the loved ones we've lost could be part of our future?**". The short informational clip included a timeline of a boy named Charlie, showing him grow as he continued to communicate with his grandma through 2wai, although she had passed before he was born. X users were quick to shut this idea down. One response read 'if this releases, it'll cause thousands of cases like psychosis and/or sui-



Post from Calum Worthy via X

cides.' **Other users compared it to the dystopian TV show, Black Mirror.**

Giving people a false expectation that they are able to reconnect with their dead loved ones is extremely harmful. Creating a platform like this has the potential to disrupt the natural process of grief and cause a lot of pain. AI is not capable of feeling human emotion; it can only imitate what it is taught. You cannot raise the dead. While some may see this as a second chance to say goodbye, Worthy is capitalizing off grief and vulnerability. Eventually, users will see through the unsustainable illusion that was drawn up for the advertisement, and it will create a lot of disappointment for people who are already struggling to cope. This is just another example of AI being used for unnatural dystopian things.



Still frame of a video on the 2wai.ai website

Highlander Highlights: Women's Basketball Head Coach Mike McGuire Makes Highlander History with 194th Win

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Women's Basketball Coach McGuire Officially Winningest Coach In Radford History Following Win vs. Loyola

November 11th was Education Day at the Dedmon Center and the stands were packed with school children for a game against Loyola Maryland. The crowd of 2700 helped propel the Highlanders to a 59-50 victory. The High's had 42 bench points led by 23 from Angelina Nice and 16 from Cate Carlson. On Sunday the team traveled to Charlottesville to take on the University of Virginia. The Cavaliers were the aggressors all game beating Radford in free throw attempts (20-4) rebounds (48-19) and points in the paint (36-24) en route to a 77-46 victory. A record of 2-3 is certainly nothing to write home about but each loss came from an ACC opponent, providing valuable experience for the team. The team has a two game homestand coming up, hosting Furman on Wednesday and Niagra University on Saturday.



Men's Basketball Three Game Road Trip Leads to Three Game Skid

The men's basketball team took a trip to face #18 North Carolina last week, losing 74-89. The first half was a back and forth game, the game was within seven until there was 2:49 remaining in the half. UNC then went on a 13-5 run, taking a 13 point lead at half and never looking back. Then the Highlanders traveled to West Virginia for the Greenbrier tip off facing Wright State first. The quick turnaround game proved to be too much for the High's. They were down 27-35 at halftime and allowed 57 points in the second half, losing 59-92. In the second game of the tournament they faced Cleveland State. The Highlanders led at halftime 49-36 and then once again allowed 50+ points in the second half. The Highlanders are travelling to take on another power five opponent, the University of South Carolina on November 18th, and will finally be back home on November 21st taking on UNC Wilmington at 7:00 PM.