

## **The Radford Squirrels**

- Jackson Mayfield, Patton City

The Eastern Gray Squirrels, *Sciurus carolinensis*, are friendly creatures us Virginians are all too familiar with. However, the gray squirrels around Boys State appear far too docile and tame around citizens compared to your average gray squirrel. These characteristics make the Radford squirrels very unique. I propose the name *Sciurus radfordensis* to ascribe a more apt name for these bizarre squirrels.

I was personally made aware of the squirrels when making my way out of Dalton dining hall during lunch time on Tuesday when I spotted some of my fellow Patton citizens standing awkwardly in the mulch between two large, oak trees. I approached them, and as I came closer I noticed the little creatures bouncing around my friends in an awfully playful manner. I asked them what was going on and they informed me of their attempt to befriend the squirrels. I laughed, not thinking much of it, and walked on to Preston Hall.

But, as the week scurried along, these friendly creatures kept making appearances on the bellowing oak trees that line Radford, and kept approaching other citizens and me. It then did not surprise me to see a video taken by an anonymous citizen who made *physical* contact with one of these Radford squirrels. It was an amazing sight to be able

to view this video. Aside from watching Bob Ross as a child and seeing him allow his domesticated red squirrels to climb across him, I have never seen any squirrel act in such a way. It is truly a beauty of Boys State and Radford to have these furry friends accompany us across the campus and provide some entertainment through this week.



*A screenshot from the anonymous citizen's video of them touching a Radford squirrel on the sidewalk*



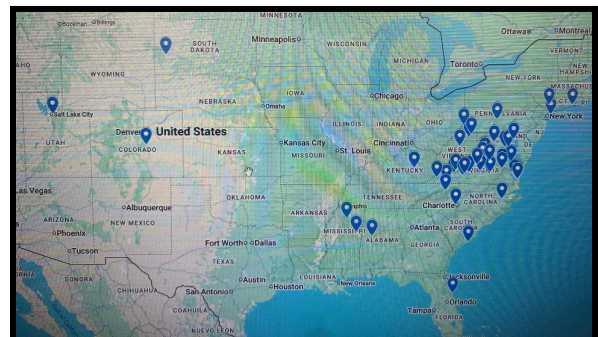
## College Day

On Friday from 3pm-5pm, delegates and parents will be able to tour universities from The University of Utah to the Citadel in Charleston.

- Belmont Abbey College (Belmont, NC)
- Berea College (Berea, KY)
- Bluefield State University (Bluefield, WV)
- Bridgewater College (Bridgewater, VA)
- Chowan University (Murfreesboro, NC)
- Christopher Newport University (Newport News, VA)
- Concord University (Mercer County, WV)
- East Carolina University (Greeneville, NC)
- Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (Daytona Beach, FL)
- Emory & Henry College (Emory, VA)
- Fairmont State University (Fairmont, WV)
- George Mason University (Fairfax, VA)
- George Washington University (Washington D.C.)
- Glenville State College (Glenville, WV)
- Hampden-Sydney College (Prince Edward County, VA)
- Hood College (Frederick, MD)
- James Madison University (Harrisonburg, VA)
- Johns Hopkins University (Baltimore, MD)
- Juniata College (Huntington, PA)
- Lees-McRae College (Banner Elk, NC)
- Liberty University (Lynchburg, VA)
- Longwood University (Farmville, VA)
- Mary Baldwin University (Staunton, VA)
- Old Dominion University (Richmond, VA)
- Roanoke College (Roanoke, VA)
- Radford University (Radford, VA)
- Randolph College (Lynchburg, VA)
- Randolph Macon College (Ashland, VA)
- Regent University (Virginia Beach, VA)
- Shenandoah University (Shenandoah, VA)
- South Dakota School of Mines & Technology (Rapid City, SD)
- The Citadel (Charleston, SC)
- University of Alabama (Tuscaloosa, AL)

Representatives will be able to answer questions about their universities and plenty of merch will be given out. Get ready for your future!

- University of Charleston (Charleston, SC)
- University of Lynchburg (Lynchburg, VA)
- University of Mississippi (Lafayette County, MS)
- University of Utah (Salt Lake City, UT)
- University of Virginia (Charlottesville, VA)
- University of Virginia at Wise (Wise, VA)
- U.S. Air Force Academy (Colorado Springs, CO)
- U.S. Coast Guard Academy (New London, CN)
- U.S. Merchant Marine Academy (Nassau County, NY)
- West Liberty University (West Liberty, VA)
- West Virginia University (Morgantown, WV)
- U.S. Military Academy at West Point (West Point, New York)
- Virginia Commonwealth University (Richmond, VA)
- Virginia Military Institute (Lexington, VA)
- Virginia State Police (VA)
- Virginia Tech (Blacksburg, VA)
- Virginia Tech Army ROTC (VT Corps of Cadets)
- Virginia Wesleyan University (Wesleyan, VA)
- Washington & Lee University (Lexington, Virginia)



## **Public Notice: Things you need to know for Friday**

*-Enoch Tan, Eisenhower City*

Hello citizens of Boys State! Today has a few scheduling differences compared to this past week so be prepared! I know it's a bit drab but make sure to keep these logistics in mind as we approach the finish line for graduation.

### **Chorus and Band:**

- Chorus should be assembled and ready at 8am backstage in Preston-Bondurant Hall for morning rehearsal. Folders are already backstage.
- Band will perform 3 different times tomorrow so stay hydrated and primed for playing.

### **Parent Visits:**

- Parents will be able to come for college day from 3-5pm and stay for dinner from 5-10pm but they must pay \$17 per person to eat at the dining hall (taxes included).
- Parents cannot enter your dorm room but can be on the first floor.

### **Scheduling:**

- Religious services have been moved to 8:30 am instead of 9am.

### **City Parties:**

- All citizens must be indoors by midnight.

This is our last night at Boys State 2025. Let's make it our best one yet!

## **Radford-Fairlawn Daily Bread**

*-Felix Garcia, Burke City*

Since its founding in 1992 by the Radford Ministerial Association, **Radford-Fairlawn daily Bread (RFDB)** has stood as a pillar of food support for the communities of Radford and Fairlawn, offering hot, home-cooked meals completely free of charge to anyone in need. Before COVID-19, RFDB had served around 20,000 meals per year. By 2021 and 2022, that number skyrocketed to over 35,000 - 40,000. RFDB's mission is made possible through donations and partnerships with organizations like Feeding Southwest Virginia, Radford University, Virginia Tech, local grocery stores, and agricultural volunteer teams.

### **Why is it important?**

In a region where food insecurity exceeds national averages, RFDB ensures access to healthy meals. During the pandemic, the organization never closed its doors, staying true to its mission to serve those most in need. Thanks to nearby universities, many students volunteer their time, creating an intergenerational network of solidarity and compassion.



*Karen Jones, spokesperson for the association at Boys State*

**Guest Speaker: Former Governor**  
**James Gilmore**

*-Rydell Wilkins, Washington City*



*James Gilmore, Official Portrait*

A Richmond born, lifelong Republican, and UVA alumni—James Gilmore was 68th Governor of the commonwealth of Virginia and a former ambassador of the US embassy. Gilmore's speech talked about how he got into politics and what inspired him to pursue his career. One day he's out campaigning for his friend, and the next he's running for Governor. Throughout his speech, he conveyed the message of being committed to what you're doing, as seen in his example on his approach to politics. Gilmore then discussed the Ukraine and Russia war, in which he said "Negotiation is overrated." This quote promotes his outlook on American patriotism and the threat from communist countries. In his speech, he personally talked about his intolerance for communist countries and the importance of American values. He stands on the defense of democracy and will defend it at any cost.

**An Honest Review of Radford's**  
**Cafeteria**

*-Nathan Heineman, Patton City*

Food is a crucial part of any camp's experience. It is what fuels us, and is often one of the most discussed aspects, whether one likes it or not. Many people specifically have taken note of Boys State's offerings, as it gives a glimpse into the expected quality of that which college provides. It is here that I offer my opinion, both in specifics and in whole.

To begin with, the physicality of the location: it is split strangely, with the right portion taking the majority of both the floor space and provided food. While there is a Wendy's stall located on the left side, it is not in operation. Even if it was, that would not balance out both the dessert bar, extra food bars, and greater drink machines on the right side. Main bars on both sides include a variety of food that cover all the necessary groups and can accommodate dietary restrictions. Overall, the food served has been good with a few notable exceptions. Personal highlights include the fluffy biscuits with sausage gravy, the ground-beef tacos, and the fried pork sausage. There was some mediocre food served, and I particularly hated the slimy scrambled eggs, but overall it was good. A focus was the dessert bar, which served a wide variety, often with more options than the main course. This included an ice cream machine that I witnessed citizens use an exorbitant amount of times. I would rate it higher than

the standard school cafeteria and that of most fast-food restaurants.

### **Moot Court: Justice in Simulation.**

*-Felix Garcia, Burke City*

One of the most intense activities at Boys State, the Moot Court, turned delegates into prosecutors, defense attorneys, judges, and jury members in a simulated trial centered on the fictional possession and distribution of a drug mixture of marijuana and cocaine.



*Patton City participants in the Moot Court*

Participants used real legal cases, followed courtroom procedures, and built arguments based on provided evidence and a legal study guide. With a guest attorney serving as judge, teams examined witnesses, raised objections, and passionately defended their sides.



*Burke City participants in the Moot Court*

More than just an activity, Moot court offered a deep lesson in law, critical thinking, and the power of words in the pursuit of justice. For many, it was their first

true encounter with the legal system and, maybe, the beginning of a future career.

### **Will AI Take Over?**

*- Javier Garcia, Bradley City*

Collin Lee, an alumni of Virginia Boys State, gave an informative presentation on the evolution and uses of artificial intelligence. Starting off with the domains of how artificial intelligence comes to be, Collin spoke on how AI learns. He made note of three main steps to the process: pre-training, instruction fine-tuning, and reinforcement learning from human feedback. He then said how one of the biggest elements of software such as ChatGPT is a Large Language Model (LLM). In continuation, he spoke on methods of using this device for assistance in campaigning.

On a more specific note, he listed some software that we should be using due to their efficient utility and specific tasks. He first noted that if you are looking for video generation, there is an AI called Veo. For audio generation, he said a very useful tool would be an AI named Eleven Labs. Finally, he said that one of the most useful AI tools out there is a platform called Google NotebookLM, in order to make study guides, notecards, or a 2-way podcast.

In an interview with Collin Lee, he provided a lot of significant information about current dilemmas that arose from the presentation. I presented the question, “What is the biggest misconception about AI today?” and he replied by saying, “While AI will take a lot

of jobs, it will open up a lot of opportunities because of that.” Another counselor contributed his own opinion on this query as well. He said, “Everybody will have a base pay just for being a citizen or being present in whatever locality or area, with a basic allowance or subsidy because of the overall wealth generated from the area. And in the end, the skills you have, whether mental, don’t know how to prompt with AI, you’ll never be successful. Get really good at prompting in AI, and you’ll be successful.”

Following that question, I asked, “Should schools start teaching students about AI? If so, what age?” He said, with no hesitation, that students should be introduced to AI “whenever they start using computers.” My

## **Weather Report**

*-Camden Fowler, Burke City & Javier Garcia (thought of using word “ethereal”), Bradley City*

Once again, rain was the enemy of Boys State. A sudden burst of rain cancelled the flag lowering ceremony, reminiscent of the first day here at Boys State. However, there was a silver lining. From the gloomy clouds



physical, or intellectual, will determine your additional income. This is an interesting concept, but still better than the Communist concept.”

The second question that I asked was, “What’s one thing that you wish more people understood about how AI works?” He instantly replied with, “Prompting. If you

last question was if there were any fields or industries where you think AI is underused?” After some thinking, he came to the conclusion that the government should improve on using AI tools more due to AI tools’ exponential growth in development.

came a miraculous double rainbow. Additionally, the sunset as the citizens of Boys State exited the talent show was ethereal. The sun shone upon the clouds and illuminated them with a warm yellow glow. As we’re nearing the end of our Boys State journey, it seems that Mother Nature is paving the way for a dramatic sendoff.



## **Striking Speeches**

*-Rydell Wilkins, Washington City*

The speech of the night was that of Anon Joseph. It personally related with the audience, which deeply motivated them to drive Joseph to victory as the Attorney General of Boys State. In his speech, he vowed to keep our streets safe from drugs, and keep gun violence out of schools. He paired this focus on policy with a confident and poised composure on stage. After concluding his speech with a convicting call to action, Joseph received a standing ovation from the entire crowd. Another notable speech was that given by Lieutenant Gov. Zachary Johnson. Johnson spoke from the heart without a prewritten speech, which highlighted some memorable moments with his city. He also discussed the presence he holds in his community, as well as his proposal for a designated nap time. Last but certainly not least, was the gubernatorial candidate James “Jay” Fuller. His speech focused on both his three planks that he plans to base his governance on and a heartfelt discussion on the role of honesty in government. Fuller was a confident and straightforward speaker, which helped guide him to victory. Congratulations to all winners!



## **Leaders of Boys State**

*-Camden Fowler, Burke City*

After a wait that felt like an eternity, the time to hear the three that would sit at the top of the Boys State hierarchy finally arrived. The roles were announced to be Anon Joseph (F) as Attorney General, Zachary Johnson (N) as Lieutenant Governor, and James “Jay” Fuller (N) as Governor. In a joint session of the House of Delegates and Senate, accompanied by the guest citizens of Boys State, the ceremony to officially appoint these people began. With showings from the choir, band, and color guard, the performance was nothing short of spectacular. The governor then gave a speech and declared his cabinet. The pinnacle of Boys State has been reached and now is the time to see how these leaders will govern until Saturday at 11 AM.

## **Approaching the 250th Anniversary of the Declaration**

*-W. Joel Simpson*

Next year, we commemorate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. If you go to see the Declaration of Independence today in our National Archives, you will see a yellowed torn piece of parchment with the dull, faded ink that is the backbone of our freedom. Yet, despite the decrepit state of the 249 year old document, you are sure to see a line. A line containing people from all 50 states and numerous countries around the world who have come to see a declaration of the rights all people deserve; a declaration written by ordinary men with extraordinary intentions. People come to see the Declaration because it represents a rebirth, marking an end to a harsh and repressive ideology; the beginning of the promise of freedom for all.

In a speech to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Declaration, President Calvin Coolidge spoke on the Declaration's role as a manifesto against oppressive government, certainly continuing the intentions of our founders. When the Declaration was written, Europe was still mired in the age of absolutism, where autocracies were common across the Old World. Though tolerant societies existed, that tolerance often distracted from the lack of citizens' representation in government and fundamental rights. Coolidge argued that one purpose of the Declaration is to provide a strong set of morals and the basic

principles of government. These principles marked the end of the people's tolerance of their lack of participation in government.

While Coolidge's speech argued the finality of the words of the Declaration, within his speech there lies a second, unspoken argument that Coolidge articulated with just as much conviction. Not only did the Declaration signal the end of autocracy in America, but it also signaled the beginning of the pursuit of freedom and justice around the world. By issuing a warning against autocracy, the founding fathers hoped to, as Coolidge said in his autobiography, "drive out evil...by the constructive method of filling it with good." When it was signed, the Declaration made America the first in a long line of autocratic dominoes to fall. Though reform was neither immediate nor without sacrifice, and the fight for unalienable rights continues in America and abroad; we see in places like Ukraine the enduring willingness of people to risk their lives for the hope of a freer, better nation

As long as the world is lit by the fire of freedom and democratic principles, there will always be those who follow the flame. . So while today the Declaration of Independence is physically worn and faded, and continues to yellow and fade, the queue to witness that eternal message of freedom forever be there.

## **Boys State Showcase**

*-Rydell Wilkins, Washington City*

Last night was the annual Boys State Talent Show. Boys from various cities took to the stage to perform for the citizens of Boys State. The acts did an outstanding job of showcasing their talent with the citizens. The showcase had acts ranging from pianists to singers to rappers to actors. The crowd went wild, they sang along, and watched in excitement. All the acts really got the crowd on their feet all the way from songs like “Tequila” to songs like “Take Me Home, Country Roads.” The showcase had two incredible, vibrant hosts who gave the crowd the best entertainment between acts. Summersal Skitter James Horne (F), said “This is my first time doing a solo act, usually when performing in front of a crowd I have been with a group.” Then pianist Cooper White (N) said, “I’m a little nervous. I usually don’t get to perform in front of this many people, I practiced long enough that it is going to be a good show.” And actor Chistopher Albert said, “I think it’s unique, it’s going to be fun. I think people are going to enjoy it.” Three of the amazing performers voice their opinions. The show was obviously a huge success but what is a show without the hosts? That’s right we also interviewed the two hosts on their opinion on miccasting. Pablo (N) & Thomas (F), the two hosts, had a great time announcing tonight. They said, “It was incredible the crowd was so energetic, so happy it was incredible. All the acts were phenomenal from what I saw and what I heard.”



## **Crime Runs Rampant in MacArthur City**

- *Cabot Fisher, MacArthur*

In a shocking turn of events, the city of MacArthur was faced with two criminal trials last night: the first, a defendant accused of throwing a bottle out of his car and causing a crash. The trial got off to a rocky start, with the defense first claiming the defendant had not thrown any bottle, before accidentally admitting in cross-examination that the defendant had in fact thrown a bottle. From there, the defense pivoted to claiming the bottle was plastic, and not enough to have caused a crash. A witness claimed the bottle was glass, but the defence lawyer defused his testimony by pointing out how all his claims about the scene could have been caused by a plastic bottle. The defence's sole and final witness was called, a grumpy old man some claimed to resemble a potential gubernatorial candidate. He seemed annoyed by the defence lawyer, had difficulty hearing the questions, and when asked what he witnessed claimed he "doesn't witness much". Further explaining that comment, he said while his wife used to look like "Sydney Sweeney, now she looks like The Rock". The prosecution asked him if he took any meds, and the witness said "a shopping list", and when asked if they affect his memory, the witness replied "do those braces impact the way you speak". He then claimed he had a family member who drove a "one of them sissy liberal...gray toyota SUVs". The judge ruled not-guilty, and the trial concluded.

The second trial began shortly: to describe it as ridiculous would be an understatement.

The defendant was accused of stealing multiple beds, and putting them in various locations, such as closets or under other beds. The prosecution initially made a fatal error, which caused the judge to dismiss the case, however in the interest of fun, the defense team allowed the prosecution to correct the mistake. The prosecution called multiple witnesses, who all stated with varying degrees of reliability that they suspected the defendant, but had no actual way to prove it. The evidence provided by the prosecution was spotty as well, however the defense made an extremely fatal error. Their entire case hung on the claim that the defendant was too weak to carry a bed and get it through a doorway by himself, something the defendant agreed too. However, when a mattress was provided, the defendant lifted it without much difficulty, and got it through the doorway in an efficient manner. A member of the defense team shouted "Why did you give it your full effort!" In the face of that blunder, the jury found him guilty on all counts, despite the fact that it was pretty obvious in the opinion of this reporter that the prosecution and witnesses had arranged the entire thing. Yay, justice!