**Oh the weather outside is frightful…. Winter storm 2012**

By: Kathleen Miles

Radford, VA -- Although it was an almost forgotten thought, the weather finally came around for this winter season on Sunday, February 19th and frightful it was.

Local schools and Universities did not think they would be using any snow days this year with the weather being so mild. In the past month, it has not been rare to see a student walking to class in shorts or a t-shirt, and often times no jacket. Sports have been played on the green grass on the quads, making one believe that the season was in fact spring.

Despite the wacky weather in the previous weeks of February this year consisting of sunny days and temperatures in the high 50s and 60s, the New River Valley met its storm of the season when blistering cold and snowfall ripped through the counties this past weekend.

“I didn’t think we were ever going to get a good snow this season,” said Radford senior Cara Crowe, “With the weather we’ve been having I thought we were just going to sail into spring, that is definitely not the case.”

The weather in this area has been significantly odd compared to past couple years considering Friday, February 18th, the day before the storm, came in at a high of 61 degrees and sunny. Hours later, the snow started to fall and did not stop.

Montgomery County’s total snowfall came to 9.6 inches, making it the second highest total in Virginia, following Alleghany County at 9.6 inches. The local area that was hit the hardest during the storm was Wytheville by far with 8.8 inches. Surrounding counties including Pulaski, Carroll, Giles, and Roanoke were also hit badly resulting in power outages and school closings for the entirety of the day. Appalachian Power reported that at least 66,000 customers were without power as of Sunday night in Virginia and West Virginia.

One of the biggest problems that Montgomery County faced was the issue of school closing, considering it has two major universities, Radford and Virginia Tech, with many commuters making up the student population. Many accidents were reported on I-81 Sunday night headed towards the Universities including one involving a tractor trailer located on mile marker 108, only a mile from the Radford University exit. Another accident on I-81 North left a man dead near mile marker 317 due to the icy road conditions.

Students waited all night Sunday, after playing in the snow of course, to see if classes were to be held Monday morning. There hopes were diminished early Monday however when news broke that there would be only a three hour delay.

“I thought that we would for sure have the day off,” said Radford student Greg Brown, “I barely made it down my snow and ice covered stairs this morning.”

Although there were many complaints from the students, it ended up being the right choice to have classes as I-81 was dry by 11am from the sun that shined over the county. While students got ready to go to classes, snow shovels and boots got their use as people prepared for the day.

“I guess we got to look at some cool snowmen while walking to class..,” said Radford Student April Penman.



