

VirginiaTech

magazine

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Savoring #1

Bells of Burruss | Elder care

America’s global economic stature at risk

BY CHARLES W. STEGER '69

- China has replaced the Unites States as the world’s No. 1 high-technology exporter.
- U.S. consumers spend more on potato chips than the government spends on energy research and development.
- In the United States, twice as much money is spent on litigation as on research—far more than is spent by any nation on the planet.
- Among students in industrialized nations, U.S. students rank 20th in high school completion and 16th in college completion.
- Chinese researchers have moved from 14th to 2nd place in the number of published research articles (behind U.S. researchers).

In 2005, a distinguished panel of national leaders warned in a report prepared for the National Academies, “Rising Above the Gathering Storm,” that the United States risked losing its leadership position as the world’s strongest economy. In the wake of the fanfare generated by the report, Congress quickly passed legislation to address the report’s recommendations. Unfortunately, little funding was provided, and not much progress was made. Now, five years later, the National Academies have issued a revised report, “Rising Above the Gathering Storm, Revisited,” which concludes that our nation is facing a “Category 5 storm.”

The new report reiterates its earlier recommendations—which bear repeating—but warns that the hill that must be climbed is immensely larger. Indeed, the Gathering Storm committee concludes that “the United States appears to be on a course that will lead to a declining, not growing, standard of living for our children and grandchildren.” The academies and the Gathering Storm’s business and policy leaders have determined that the United States must improve its national economic competitiveness.

Their recommendations, then as now, call for the following actions:

- I. Significantly improving K-12 science and mathematics education.
- II. Doubling real federal investment in basic research in mathematics, physical sciences, and engineering.
- III. Encouraging more U.S. citizens to pursue careers in mathematics, science, and engineering.

IV. Rebuilding the competitive ecosystem by introducing reforms in the nation’s tax, patent, immigration, and litigation policies.

For Virginia Tech, items II and III touch especially close to home. Moreover, the updated report finds that the two highest-priority actions today are to a) ensure that teachers in every classroom are qualified to teach the subject they teach, and b) double the federal investment in research.

For years, we have known that our nation cannot compete based on low-cost labor or easy access to capital. As Professor Jeremy Siegel of the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School asserts, “Economic growth is based on advances in productivity, and productivity is based on discovery and innovation.” In turn, discovery and innovation are the very products of American research universities.

As a result, we believe that governments have important roles: the federal government in sponsoring basic research, and state governments in bolstering education in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines. In my last column, we addressed Gov. Bob McDonnell’s efforts to increase degree production for STEM disciplines, now dubbed “Top Jobs 21.” In addition, we must do a better job of producing graduates of any sort. According to the Gathering Storm report, “Twenty years ago the U.S. was first among industrialized nations in [its] share of population with a high school diploma and first with a college degree. Today, we are ninth in high school diplomas and seventh in college degrees worldwide.”

The federal government must be the primary and leading sponsor of the nation’s basic research. With immense pressure from stakeholders and the markets, firms are unable to invest in research and development, which is inherently risky and generally offers only long-term returns. We have seen many American jobs shipped overseas. Our national competitiveness remains dependent on the innovation and creation of quality jobs—jobs whose names don’t even exist today.

Some will say, “We can’t spend now. Our nation is broke.” But I say we cannot avoid these investments in America’s future. Our nation has immense wealth. We should be willing to make the assessments and investments when they clearly will improve the nation’s economic competitiveness.

Contents

Spring 2011 | Vol. 33, No. 3

14 | How Tech Ticks: Hear ye, the bells of Burruss

There’s a twist behind the chiming of the Burruss Hall carillon. Follow *Virginia Tech Magazine* to the source of the sound.

16 | Mike Ellerbrock: Natural Renaissance Man

From environmentalism and capitalism to religion and science, Professor of Agricultural and Applied Economics Mike Ellerbrock, an award-winning instructor and researcher, expertly guides students on a search for common ground between incongruous topics.

18 | Equipped for excellence: Corporate Research Center thrives at Virginia Tech

Named the Outstanding Research Park by the Association of University Research Parks in 2010, Virginia Tech’s Corporate Research Center is more than just office space. The service-oriented center, currently comprised of 27 buildings on 120 acres, offers tenants a tight-knit community and numerous resources, creating a model for success.

22 | Ear to the ground, eye on the sky

Navigating a landscape that encompasses projects as widely varied as nanotechnology and the preservation of military lands, the College of Natural Resources and Environment confronts the challenges of protecting our world in surprising ways.

24 | Preparing for the golden years

Poised at the forefront of a life issue of growing concern, staff at Virginia Tech’s Center for Gerontology examine and provide insight into the challenges and decisions faced by caregivers and care-receivers alike.

28 | No frills to five-star: The best campus dining in the country

Circa 1900, campus food was a mess, literally and figuratively. In the 1960s, pecan pie à la cockroach sparked protests. Now featuring such dishes as whole Maine lobster and London broil, dining at Virginia Tech is indisputably first-class.

40 | Biotech pioneer

Well before “translational research” became essential to economies worldwide, Charles Hamner (animal husbandry ’56) was helping to translate university research into consumer products. His work bridging industry, academia, and economics in North Carolina has made the alumnus nothing short of a biotechnology pioneer.

47 | Alumni Association News

- page 47: Commentary
- page 48: Reunions and homecomings
- page 50: Hokies praise alumni tours
- page 52: Drillfield Series
- page 54: 135th-anniversary celebration
- page 54: Alumni Distinguished Professors named



On the cover: Students know it, and even the flatware knows it: Virginia Tech has the best campus dining in the country. The photo—and the heating, bending, and removal of assorted fork prongs—is by Jim Stroup.

14



18

28

Letters to the Editor	2
Around the Drillfield	3
Philanthropy	36
Corps of Cadets	45
Book Notes	56
Class Notes	58

Virginia Tech Magazine
Spring 2011, Vol. 33, No. 3

Editor
Jesse Tuel
Assistant Editor
Denise Young
Art Director
Glen Duncan
Graphic Designers
Robin Dowdy
Tiffany Pruden
David Stanley '95
Tim Wilson
Graduate Assistant
Chad O'Kane M.A. '11
Intern
Hillary May '12
Contributors
Lynn Davis, Jean Elliott,
Dave Hunt, Steven Mackay,
Col. Rock Roszak '71,
Albert Raboteau,
Michael Sutphin '06
Copy Editors
Juliet Crichton, Richard Lovegrove
Webmaster
Juliet Crichton
Photographers
Michael Kiernan, Kelsey Kradel,
John McCormick, Jim Stroup
Business Manager
Paula Vaught
Advertising Coordinator
Horace Cross '08, M.S. '10
Alumni Notes
Shirley Fleet
Associate Vice President
for University Relations
Larry Hincker '72, M.B.A. '94
Director of Marketing
and Publications
Melissa Richards
Vice President for Alumni Relations
Tom Tillar '69

Address changes and circulation inquiries should be mailed to the Virginia Tech Alumni Association, Holtzman Alumni Center (0102), Blacksburg, VA 24061, or send via e-mail to alumnidata@vt.edu. Alumni notes should be mailed to Alumni Notes, Virginia Tech Alumni Association, Holtzman Alumni Center (0102), Blacksburg, VA 24061, or sent via e-mail to fleets@vt.edu. Virginia Tech Magazine is produced by the Office of University Relations, with support from Alumni Relations. The Virginia Tech Foundation underwrites most production costs.

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James I. Robertson Jr.: Mr. Civil War

I read the whole article on [James I.] Robertson Jr. with a tear in my eye. I took his Civil War course in the winter quarter of 1969. At that time there was a tradition that graduating seniors could be excused from final exams in the spring quarter. Since I was finishing in the winter, I asked Robertson if I could be excused from the final exam. He was gracious as always and posted my grade as a “B,” which is one of the most cherished of my grades at Tech.

Years later I asked a common acquaintance who was close to Robertson to verify my grandfather’s war record, which I had not been able to do. As a boy I was told that my grandfather—my father’s father and my namesake—had fought for the Confederacy and had been a prisoner of war at Fort Delaware.

After some research of his vast computerized records, Robertson advised me that he had no record of my grandfather having served for the Confederacy. I was disappointed, and for many years I believed Robertson had to be wrong. That was until recently, when I noted on a 1910 U. S. Census form that my grandfather reported he was not a Confederate veteran. Robertson was indeed correct, and my “B” grade in 1969 probably reflected my wish to believe something that was not true.

George Latham '69
Rockville, Va.

I took [Robertson’s] Civil War classes 25 years ago, and I still remember them among my favorite classes at Tech. He is a brilliant scholar.

Barbara Reed '88
Centreville, Va.
via Facebook

A great article honoring a great professor! [Robertson’s] Civil War class was the best outside my major and was worth the wait to get in.

Louis Watts '71
Richmond, Va.
via Facebook

[Robertson] truly is a giant among men. Several years ago, I had the opportunity to attend a Civil War musical program on campus. He was just as captivating then as he had been when I was 20.

I laughed when I read the article. When he published the book on Stonewall Jackson, I went to a book-signing and had him autograph my new purchase. When I got home and began reading, I realized the contents of my copy had been placed in the cover backwards/upside-down. However, I would not return it because Robertson had signed it. I just turned it upside down and looked like an idiot as I read.

He made it worthwhile to trek over six inches of wind-rippled ice on the Drillfield. Great man, great article.

Margee Floyd McCord '80
Rhoadsville, Va.
via Facebook

I love watching the History Channel and saying, “That was my professor!” Everyone around me always gapes when I say that. Congratulations on a well-earned retirement.

Becky Ring '95
Purcellville, Va.
via Facebook

Editor’s note

In an editor’s note in the winter 2010-11 edition, the affiliation agreement between the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM) and Virginia Tech was described as providing VCOM students access to Tech facilities and student services. VCOM has had a special relationship with Virginia Tech since the osteopathic college’s inception. The agreement also includes provisions for VCOM faculty to work jointly with Tech faculty on research and have access to Tech labs, among other programs of mutual interest. All VCOM research dollars are part of the Virginia Tech research total.

Correction

In the Births and Adoptions section of Class Notes in the summer 2010 edition, the last name of Natalie Saunders DeShazo '03 was incorrect.



Solitude

Oldest building on campus undergoes careful restoration

Solitude, the oldest structure still standing on campus, underwent restoration from July 2010 to January 2011. The building houses the Appalachian Studies Program. The renovation project was largely funded by a gift from the Mary Morton Foundation of Richmond, Va. Visit www.vtmagazine.vt.edu to find a photo gallery of the newly renovated space and to read more about Solitude’s unique history.

University asks account holders to change passwords

Virginia Tech is asking some 120,000 alumni, faculty, staff, and current students to change passwords for university e-mail addresses and accounts by July 1. Provisions of the directive from the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors aim to help protect users, encourage good computing habits, and add another way users can protect against hackers’ attacks. The decision was based in part on a recent trend in successful password-guessing by hackers and the arrival of sophisticated password-guessing software. All university account pass-

words, including those linked to university e-mail, Hokies accounts, PID, and Banner, must be changed prior to July 1. In the future, passwords will also have to be changed a minimum of once per year. Visit www.vt.edu/password for additional information.

Meanwhile, beware of phishing attempts. Do not respond to e-mails asking for usernames and passwords. Virginia Tech will never ask for this information.

Civil War sesquicentennial to draw history enthusiasts to campus

On May 21, Cassell Coliseum will be alive with

fans—fans of the Civil War, that is. The one-day event, Military Strategy in the American Civil War, features noted historians, such as Tech’s James I. Robertson Jr. and William C. Davis, in a signature conference sponsored by the Virginia Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War Commission. Highlights will include discussions of Virginia and the Eastern and Western theaters, elements of the war that affected strategy and tactics, and a lunchtime performance by the Stonewall Brigade Band. Robertson, one of the nation’s foremost experts on the war, has his own history with the war’s commemoration. In 1961, he was tapped by then-President John F. Kennedy to serve as the executive director of the U.S. Civil War Centennial Commission. For more information about the May 21 conference, visit www.virginiacivilwar.org.



John Tyson

Professor recognized for work in mathematical biology

John Tyson, University Distinguished Professor of Biological Sciences in the Col-

lege of Science, was awarded the Arthur T. Winfree Prize by the Society for Mathematical Biology. The award is given to an individual who has exemplified the close connection between theory and experiment or whose body of theoretical work has led to significant new biological understanding affecting observation and experiments. Tyson was cited “for his key contributions and mathematical biology pertaining to the mechanism and function of bistability and oscillations in biological systems.”

Alternative transportation programs earn gold award

For the second year in a row, Virginia Tech’s alternative transportation programs received a gold award in the Best Workplaces for Commuters Race to Excellence. The Race to Excellence is designed to encourage sustainable transportation innovation and recognize organizations that have taken exemplary steps to offer transportation alternatives for their employees, thereby reducing air pollution, traffic congestion, and fuel consumption.

Veterinary medicine college creates new space for instruction and research

Two major improvements to the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine’s main building—a new research facility and an instructional space—will add

more than 46,000 square feet to the college. Ground was broken on the Infectious Disease Research Facility last September; the \$10.5 million, 16,000-square-foot research facility will include laboratories and support space to accelerate translational medicine research. Last fall, the board of visitors approved designs for the Veterinary Medicine Instruction Addition, which will also serve as a new main entrance to the college.



Tech earns high rankings for value among top universities

Virginia Tech ranked among the top 50 “best value” public universities for 2011, according to *The Princeton Review*, which teamed with *USA Today* to compile “*The Princeton Review* Best Value Colleges for 2011.” The list,

which features 100 schools, includes 50 public and 50 private colleges and universities. Of the 50 schools chosen in each category, the top 10 are ranked one to 10, and the remaining 40 are listed in alphabetical order and unranked. The selection criteria covered more than 30 factors in three areas: academics, cost of attendance, and financial aid.

Meanwhile, according to *Kiplinger's Personal Finance* magazine’s “100: Best Values in Public Colleges” list, Tech was ranked 24th among 100 institutions “that combine outstanding economic value with a first-class education.” Since 2006, the annual survey has ranked Virginia Tech’s value in the top 25 among public universities.

Researcher receives award to study depression and substance abuse

Pearl Chiu, assistant professor with the Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute, has received a \$1.13 million National Institute of Mental Health BRAINS (Biobehavioral Research Award for Innovative New Scientists) award to study depression and substance abuse. She will use functional magnetic resonance imaging to study

why depression and substance abuse occur together so often and to quantify the conditions as disorders on a continuum of motivation difficulties. The award seeks to assist researchers in launching a clinical, translational, or basic research program with the potential to transform the understanding, diagnosis, treatment, or prevention of mental disorders.



Gary Downey

Professor receives commonwealth’s highest faculty honor

Gary Downey, Alumni Distinguished Professor of Science and Technology in Society in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, was honored with the Virginia Outstanding Faculty Award, the commonwealth’s highest recognition for faculty members. Known internationally as a founding leader of the interdisciplinary field of

engineering studies, Downey was honored for excellence in teaching, research, and public service. Also an affiliated professor in engineering education, women’s and gender studies, and sociology, Downey emerged as the highest-rated nominee out of 106 faculty members from a dozen higher education institutions across Virginia. The award program is administered by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) and funded by a grant from the Dominion Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Dominion energy company.

Architecture, design programs outpace peers

Virginia Tech’s undergraduate programs in architecture and landscape architecture, both in the College of Architecture and Urban Studies’ School of Architecture + Design, ranked fourth and third, respectively, in the America’s Best Architecture & Design Schools study conducted by the journal *DesignIntelligence*. The school’s programs in interior design and industrial design also ranked in the study’s top 10 in their respective fields. Virginia Tech’s graduate landscape architecture program, offered both in Blacksburg

and in the National Capital Region, was ranked No. 4 in North America.

Tech and science museum join forces

Virginia Tech and the Science Museum of Western Virginia have entered a partnership to expand and enhance community-based science education. The partnership formally establishes the university and the museum as educational outreach partners to promote and increase science literacy throughout the region. Tech faculty and students will collaborate with staff from the downtown Roanoke museum to reinvent the facility as a living laboratory for informal science education. The collaboration will include the development of programs and events that stimulate curiosity and encourage exploration.

Veterinary medicine college announces formation of regenerative medicine center

The Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine has entered into a research agreement with the Wake Forest Institute for Regenerative Medicine at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center in Winston-

Salem, N.C., by signing a memorandum of understanding to form the Virginia Tech/Wake Forest Center for Veterinary Regenerative Medicine. Through the new center, the veterinary college and the institute for regenerative medicine, both leaders in their fields, will engage in ongoing collaborations in translational

research in regenerative medicine. The agreement facilitates the application of regenerative treatments to both human and animal patients. As part of the collaboration, clients at the Veterinary Teaching Hospital may have the option to enter their pets into clinical trials, allowing them access to technology unavailable elsewhere.



University sustainability efforts achieve “A” ratings in 6 of 9 categories

Virginia Tech received an overall rating of B+ in the Sustainable Endowments Institute’s College Sustainability Report Card 2011. A participant since 2008, the university has seen its overall grade improve each year. Tech received an “A” rating in six of nine categories (administration, climate change and energy, green building, student involvement, transportation, and investment priorities). In addition, three categories (climate change and energy, green building, and endowment transparency) improved one full letter grade from the 2010 report. Six categories (administration, food and recycling, student involvement, transportation, investment priorities, and shareholder engagement) received the same grade as in last year’s survey.



Warren K. Bickel

Center director contributes to drug-dependence research

Warren K. Bickel, director of the Center for Substance Abuse at the Virginia Tech Carilion Research Institute, is the 2011 recipient of the American Psychological Association Don Hake Translational Research Award. The award honors individuals whose work spans basic and applied research. Bickel was recognized for his contributions to understanding drug dependence and treatment, impulsivity, and behavioral economics and for disseminating that work to a wide audience.



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Studying brain, eye injuries in military personnel

Granola software named to *Time's* Top 20 Green Tech list

Research partnership forged with University of Nottingham

Rehabilitated golden eagle released into the wild

Oldest fossils tell story of ancient oceans

Technology pinpoints differences between cancer, noncancer patients

Office of Recovery and Support personnel perform with valor

BY ALBERT RABOTEAU

The shootings at Virginia Tech on April 16, 2007, prompted many extraordinary gestures of support. Then-President George W. Bush flew in for a convocation at Cassell Coliseum. The New York Yankees donated \$1 million and played the Hokies in an exhibition game at English Field. Hundreds of volunteers traveled many miles to help on campus when classes resumed.

But one of the most intensive and demanding efforts to help those affected by the tragedy occurred out of public sight. In July 2007, the university created the Office of Recovery and Support to address the needs of students who were injured, their families, and the 32 families who lost loved ones.

"We often said it was the best-worst job any of us had ever had," said Scott Johnson (Ph.D. family and child development '91), a licensed marriage and family therapist and director of the university's marriage and family therapy Ph.D. program. Johnson served as the office's associate director for much of its existence and was a primary Virginia Tech contact for many families of those who were killed. "There was no question what we were trying

to do was important. It just was very difficult work."

Now that all of the students served by the office have completed their degrees, the office has closed, and its responsibilities have been assumed by Alumni Relations. In addition, a federal grant that supported recovery and support efforts expired in February.

"I think we have moved from victim care and victim support to family relations," said Associate Vice President for Alumni Relations Debbie Day (communication '84, M.S.E.D. adult and continuing education '93), who accepted the additional duty of directing the Office of Recovery and Support in July 2008. "We plan to keep in touch with all those students and families who want to [hear from us], and we will continue to coordinate April 16 commemoration events for the families."

"These are people who were asked to provide an extraordinary service to Virginia Tech and who stepped up to do an excellent job under incredibly difficult circumstances," said university President Charles W. Steger. "I cannot stress enough how important their sensitive, dedicated, and largely unpublicized work has been to our institution."

Seeking an appropriate tone

At the core of the Office of Recovery and Support's mission was giving personalized attention to the injured students and 32 families, but its work soon grew to include other projects, including helping to handle thousands of items that well-wishing people from around the world sent to campus and coordinating Day of Remembrance events.

"We knew we wouldn't be able to help these families in any way unless we could create the right sense of acknowledging their loved ones and the enormous loss they felt," said Jay Poole (agriculture education '78), a former vice president of corporate communications for Altria, who volunteered to help the university manage the enormous media response immediately following the shootings and was later asked by Steger to head the Office of Recovery and Support.

Poole already possessed significant experience handling sensitive communications projects. He also brought an ability to empathize with the victims' families in a way many others might not have, due to the death of

his own son, Tom, following a bicycle accident in 1999. Because of his personal history, his connection to Virginia Tech, and the difficult nature of his job at the university, Poole said his year in the office was "the hardest thing I have ever done."

Megan Armbruster Franklin, the office's recovery coordinator and injured student liaison, said she kept this sense of empathy in mind as she led meetings in preparation for the Day of Remembrance events in 2008, 2009, and 2010.

"We tried to propose a plan for events that focused on our families and would also feel appropriate to everybody else," said Franklin, who now works for the Office of Academic Assessment. "So we were being very sensitive in how we planned things to make sure we were being comforting and providing support."

As they reached out to families, Johnson and his colleagues were careful to respect boundaries, and carefully worked to try and build relationships, said Marilyn Hutchins, a licensed professional counselor who worked with both students and families for the office.

A 100 percent graduation rate

Twenty-six students suffered nonfatal physical injuries in connection with the tragedy. These ranged from multiple gunshot wounds to a sprained ankle one student suffered while fleeing Norris Hall. Seven of those students graduated in May 2007, before the office was formed. Caring for the 19 who returned in August that year was a major priority, handled largely by Franklin.

"One of the things that I was watching, monitoring, was if they got back into their involvement with the community," Franklin said. "Whether

it was through service projects or through clubs, orchestra, or research, I wanted to see them reengaged."

One promising early sign for her, Franklin said, was that all of the students chose to return to Blacksburg for the fall 2007 term. "To me they were reengaging just by coming back," she said. "I think that says a lot about what the climate was like here prior to the tragedy."

One regular gathering for the students was a monthly dinner at Poole's home, which continued even after he had left the office. The fact that all of the injured students not only returned, but also com-

pleted their degrees, is a point of pride for Poole and others who worked with him.

"They were collectively bright enough to realize that in some ways they symbolized the recovery [of the university]," Poole said of the students. "That was a burden. Nobody openly discussed this, but they were under enormous pressure to come back to school and succeed. Most of it was internal and self-imposed, but that's how they felt about it."

Providing chances to come together

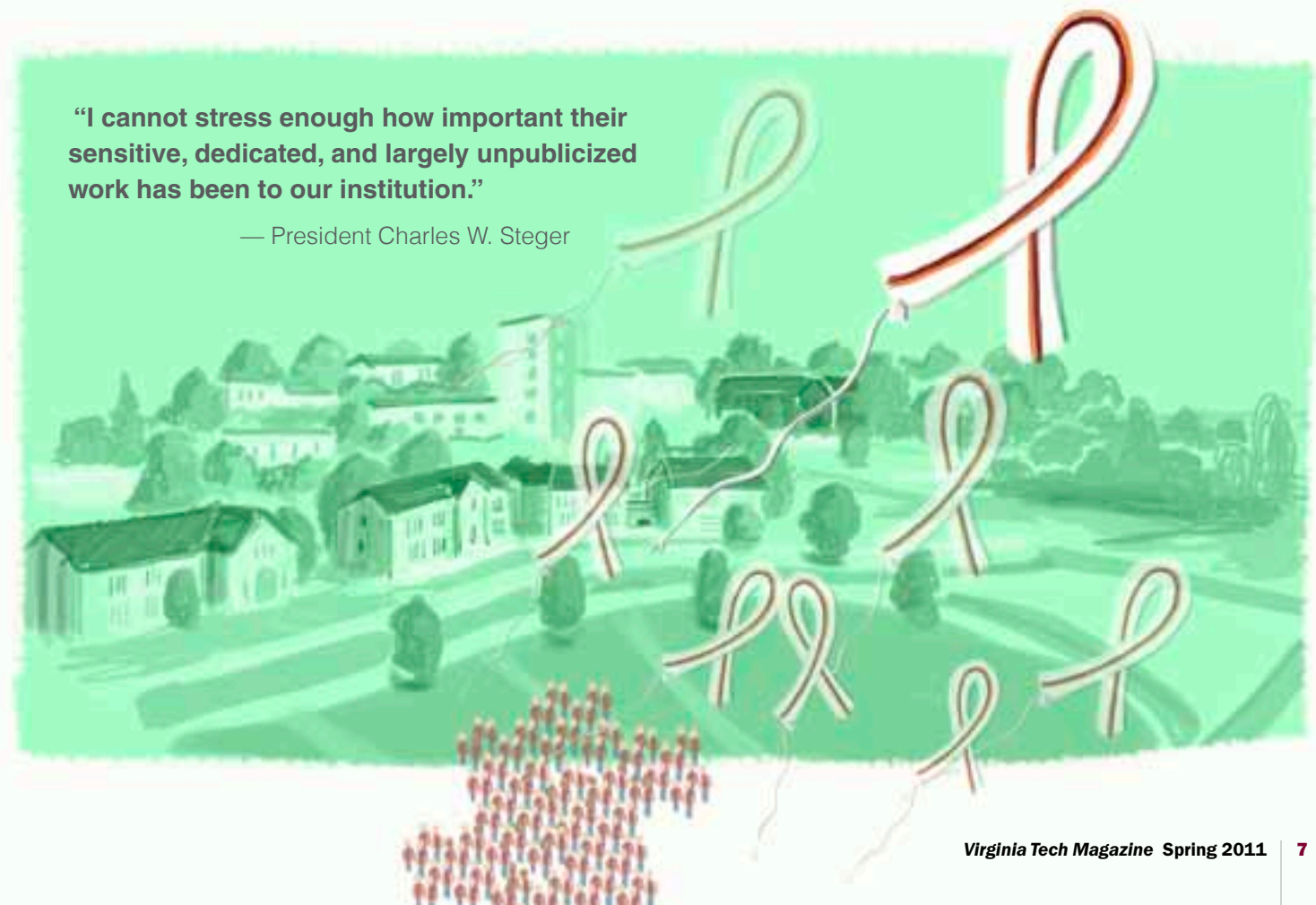
When asked to describe some of the office's efforts that

seemed particularly successful, Day cited two programs that made it possible for people who were especially affected by the tragedy to get together.

The first was a series of 32 "friends of" meetings held in Squires Student Center during 2008. Each meeting was an opportunity for people who had known one of the victims to come forward, share memories, and console each other. The second was the April 16 Victims Support Program, a three-day conference held in October 2009 in Landsdowne, Va. More than 80 people, including siblings and grandparents of some victims, attended. The

"I cannot stress enough how important their sensitive, dedicated, and largely unpublicized work has been to our institution."

— President Charles W. Steger



weekend-long event included presentations from several people who had lost children to violence.

"I just felt like if we could give them a weekend that wasn't centered on the anniversary [of the shootings] or a football game ... and could provide them an opportunity to hear from some people who had kind of walked in their shoes, that it would be a good thing," said Anna Beth Benningfield, a licensed psychologist and marriage and family therapist who organized the event. "And I think it was a good thing."

Benningfield was a visiting faculty member at Virginia Tech from 2001-04 and had consulted for the university afterward while maintaining a private practice in Dallas. Provost Mark McNamee recruited her to serve as a liaison to the families of the faculty members who were killed, and she was technically one of his employees, though she worked out of the Office of Recovery and Support from 2007-10.

When interviewed, Benningfield was about to retire from private practice after 30 years as a therapist. She described her experience in the Office of Recovery and Support as a "capstone" to her career.

"I think we made a difference," she said. "We were able to do some good for some people. Maybe not as much as we would have liked to do,

but I think that we offered some much-needed support and help to the injured students and their families and then to those who had lost loved ones. I think they felt like we weren't just doing a job—we really did care about them. And we did. We do."

Benningfield, Franklin, Hutchins, Johnson, and Poole all say they will never forget their experiences in the office. They take comfort in knowing the responsibilities they shouldered are now being handled by Day and an assistant director, Kelly Griffin (biological sciences '07), who, like Day, has been involved in the university's recovery and support efforts since 2008.

To read an expanded version of the story and learn about all the office's personnel, go to www.vtmagazine.vt.edu.



Tech receives third Tree Campus USA recognition

For the third consecutive year, Virginia Tech has earned Tree Campus USA recognition from the Arbor Day Foundation for the university's

dedication to campus forestry management and environmental stewardship. Virginia Tech is the only institution of higher education in the commonwealth to be recognized. An Arbor Day Foundation program supported by a grant from Toyota, Tree Campus USA honors colleges and universities and their leaders for promoting healthy management of their campus forests and for engaging the community in environmental stewardship.

College of Engineering rises in Best Graduate Schools survey

The College of Engineering continues to climb higher among the nation's 25 best engineering schools for graduate studies, according to U.S. News and World Report's America's Best Graduate Schools 2012 survey, released in March. The latest annual survey ranks the College of Engineering in 24th place, one place ahead of its 2011 ranking and its highest since 2002, when the college was ranked 23rd. Six individual engineering graduate programs at Virginia Tech rank among the top 15 in their fields, according to the survey.

Tech to lead training program in Southern Sudan

Virginia Tech received \$1.47 million from the U.S. Agency for International

Development to establish university-level programs to train the next generation of agriculturalists in post-conflict Southern Sudan. The university's Office of International Research, Education, and Development is working with the University of Juba, the Catholic University of Sudan, and Virginia State University to execute the five-year program, which began in March. Southern Sudan is headed toward becoming the world's newest nation after a referendum earlier this year produced a vote to secede that passed overwhelmingly.

Higher education conference continues growth

Hosted by Virginia Tech's Center for Instructional Development and Educational Research, the third annual Conference on Higher Education Pedagogy on Feb. 3-4 explored excellence in scholarly teaching and the best pedagogical practices in higher education. More than 600 faculty, students, and administrators from 122 institutions worldwide attended the conference, the quality and reputation of which continues to grow. As one faculty attendee noted, "[Virginia Tech is] a model for other institutions interested in expanding their reach in the area of teaching and learning." For more information, visit www.cider.vt.edu/conference.



Romesh C. Batra

Engineer earns Virginia Outstanding Scientist Award

Romesh C. Batra, professor of engineering science and mechanics, received the 2011 Virginia Outstanding Scientist Award. Batra has led teams of students in the improved design of different types of armors, such as bulletproof vests, tank walls, and shields to protect vehicles against improvised explosive device blasts. He has also characterized carbon nanotubes for designing lighter and more-efficient fuel planes and studied micro-electro-mechanical systems that open up air bags in a car crash upon impact, as well as smart materials that monitor their own vibrations for safer car rides. The award program is administered by the Science Museum of Virginia.

The madness of March

For the ups and downs of pure drama, look no further than a sports season. Their curiosity piqued when the Hokies were left out of the NCAA men's basketball tournament in 2010, two statisticians in the College of Science quantified biases that play a role in selecting at-large teams for the tournament. Analyzing data as far back as the 1993-94 season, assistant professors Leanna House and Scotland Leman found that in addition to the standard Ratings Percentage Index used by the 10-member selection committee, biases such as a team's marquee name and the strength of its schedule are also factors.

Meanwhile, postseason prospects were looking up when fans stormed the Cassell Coliseum court on Feb. 26. The Hokies had just stunned then-No. 1 Duke University, 64-60, chalking up one of the biggest wins in program history in front of a national audience and ESPN's "College GameDay" crew. But the good vibes didn't last. The Hokies dropped their last two regular-season games and, despite winning two games in the ACC tournament, missed out on a bid to the NCAA tournament.

To read more about the study, and to see a video of the ESPN crew in Blacksburg, go to www.vtmagazine.vt.edu.



After knocking off then-No. 1 Duke University on Feb. 26, Hokie hoopsters were surrounded by jubilant fans.

Blind driver makes history at Daytona

BY STEVEN MACKAY

A team of graduate and undergraduate students from the Virginia Tech College of Engineering helped make history Jan. 29 at Daytona International Speedway.

As part of the ongoing Blind Driver Challenge, a blind man drove a 2010 Ford Escape Hybrid SUV on the famed course during the three-day Rolex 24 race extravaganza. At a top speed of 27 mph, he steered through obstacles that included stationary barrels and cardboard boxes thrown randomly from the back of a van. He then passed the moving van. Assisting the driver was high-tech hardware developed by Hokies.

The driver—Mark Riccobono, an executive with the National Federation of the Blind (NFB)—navigated the course perfectly, capping years of research by teams of College of Engineering students led by Dennis Hong, director of Virginia Tech's Robotics and Mechanisms Laboratory (RoMeLa) and associate professor of mechanical engineering.

"As Mark arrived safely at the finish line, hugging his wife with tears in his eyes, I couldn't help but also cry," Hong said. "I asked Mark if he could give me a ride back to my hotel. He is blind, but I knew he could see the big smile on my face."

In 2004, the NFB, a nonprofit advocacy group based in Baltimore, put forth the Blind Driver Challenge: Create non-visual interface technology that one day could allow a blind person to drive an automobile. Virginia Tech was the only university and research institution to answer the call. Work began in 2006, and within three years, undergraduate engineering students had built a prototype buggy, which debuted at the NFB's Youth Slam summer camp in July 2009. The debut made international news, but this success was merely the beginning.

From there, work began on second-generation Blind Driver vehicles, highway-ready cars that could conceivably be used on the open road. To meet the goal, Virginia Tech enlisted the help of TORC Technologies, a company founded by College of Engineering alumni and based at the university's Corporate Research Center. TORC had an essential ingredient: ByWire XGV technology, which provides reliable and safe electronic control of the vehicle and remote braking, among other modifications.

Engineering students designed the non-visual interface

devices used to operate the vehicle. The hardware includes wire-enhanced vibrating gloves called DriveGrips and a vibrating seat cushion called SpeedStrip. Both interfaces vibrate cues that indicate directions to accelerate, halt, or turn. The vehicles can "see" obstacles and the road ahead using strategically placed laser-range finders and cameras.

On the eve of Rolex 24, Riccobono test-drove the SUV with his wife—who is also blind—in the passenger seat, and his two children in the back. "This really hit home for me as my goal is to use engineering to help people overcome life's toughest challenges," said Paul D'Angio (Ph.D. mechanical engineering '12).

The next day, Jan. 29, Riccobono drove the track. "People asked me what [I was] going to say, and I had some things in mind," Riccobono said afterward. "But for me the moment spoke for itself. There were no words that would fit."

Advocates at NFB acknowledge that the technology likely will be ready before insurers, highway regulators, and everyday motorists are open to the concept. Even so, the devices used in the SUVs—as well as other technologies developed by students during the Blind Driver Challenge—likely have other applications for the blind outside of driving, such as in home appliances, computers, and other everyday objects. In addition, the laser-range finders and technologies on the SUVs could be adapted to all vehicles. Consider the benefits of a laser-based collision warning alarm on a fog-covered mountain road.

"Humans do not adapt easily to what they think is impossible unless, of course, you are brought up to embrace technology, as some of us in the blind community have been," said Chelsea Cook (physics '14), who is blind and has driven one of the Blind Driver vehicles. **"The ability to control a vehicle independently is amazing, but I'm just as curious to see the spin-offs and applications in other fields until society is ready for us to hit the road."**

Steven Mackay is the communications coordinator for the College of Engineering.

For a video on the Blind Driver Challenge, go to www.vtmagazine.vt.edu.

STEVEN MACKAY



Leaving the famed starting line behind, Mark Riccobono traversed the Daytona International Speedway. His trek totaled 1.5 miles, and took less than 10 minutes to finish. Riccobono is executive director of the National Federation of the Blind's Jernigan Institute.



Becca FitzGerald '13

JEAN ELLIOTT

WARM HEARTS

Ventures to Malawi enlighten all

BY JEAN ELLIOTT

Malawi is not your typical study-abroad location, and the experience is sure to leave deep impressions. Led on an annual summer trip by Professor Patricia Kelly in the School of Education, Virginia Tech students teach in the Malawi schools for one month. Despite advance preparation with readings and discussions on hunger and poverty, nothing compares to meeting the children of this southern African nation on their own turf.

Chants of “azungu, azungu” (white people) filled the air as streams of children raced out to greet the bus of summer 2010 visitors. Most children wore worn-out versions of a school uniform. Some wore shoes. Many crowded in and mugged for photos. In the crammed classrooms, more than 100 children sat side-by-side on concrete floors. There were no desks in the lower primary classes; tattered textbooks were shared. One

child died of measles during the monthlong visit, while malaria sidelined teachers and children alike.

Younger children who speak the native language of Chichewe must be able to pass national tests in English by standard [grade] eight or they cannot continue with school. The Virginia Tech students, who were majoring in human development, psychology, or education, concentrated on language skills, but also taught classes in health, math, social studies, and science.

Daunting? Definitely. Rewarding? Absolutely. Known as the “Warm Heart of Africa,” Malawi has deservedly earned a reputation for its compassionate population.

“One clear way that this trip changed me was experiencing the Malawians’ true joy,” said Becca FitzGerald (human development ’13). “Their joy does not come from the latest iPhone or newest car. They do not find

their happiness in possessions, but rather in people, relationships, and family.”

Tech students encountered faces of poverty and hunger, yet they also discovered a culture with a genuine zest for music, dancing, and community. “We quickly learned that the younger children focused by engaging in song,” said FitzGerald. “In Africa, they do not waste time getting all the kids to focus.” “They sing a song to bring the kids in. Singing is contagious, and once the teacher and a few kids from the front start singing, the kids in the back start singing, and pretty soon the whole class is focused on the teacher. It was an amazingly simple yet effective technique.”

“No other experience has taught me more than this trip,” said Lauren Scheid (psychology ’11). “I now think about how each of us is born into culture and how these cultures form our everyday lives. This experience has molded me into a better person, not because of what I did for them, but what their culture, the relationships I formed, and their genuine happiness did for me.”

On the weekends, the group traveled to various destinations, learning about

sustainable gardening, local history, and culture. The group also visited Liwonde National Park for a wildlife safari and climbed Mount Mulanje, a majestic and fabled peak in the Old Rift.

“Although I’ve been to Malawi more than two dozen times, each summer when I see the country and its people through the eyes of my students, everything becomes new and fresh for me,” said Kelly. “No matter how much we give, we receive so much more through a heightened worldview and an increased appreciation of what we have.”

Jean Elliott is the communications manager for the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences.

To see Elliott’s blog and more stories and pictures from Malawi, go to www.vtmagazine.vt.edu.



Jewish center planned for Tech students

BY HILLARY MAY '12

The second night of Hannukah 2010 proved to be the coldest. Jewish students huddled outside Squires Student Center, trying to keep menorahs lit through Blacksburg wind and falling snow. For more than an hour, they sang holiday songs through chattering teeth, spun dreidels on the ice with shivering hands, and managed to keep their candles lit.

Why brave the weather? Candles aren’t allowed indoors on campus, so no other option was available.

That will change soon. Virginia Tech’s Jewish students—estimated to be about 4 percent of the student population—are awaiting the completion of the Malcolm Rosenberg Hillel Center for Jewish Life.

Hillel, an international Jewish campus organization, is the students’ home away from

home. More than just a campus synagogue, Hillel helps students to be a part of a cultural community on campus through recreational, educational, and service opportunities. Hillel has everything from outdoor programs and sporting events to weekly Shabbat services and a free trip to Israel. “Hillel helps Jewish students find each other and be a community,” said Jake Aberman (electrical engineering ’14).

In memory of her late husband, Diane Rosenberg recently donated a challenge gift of \$1 million to Hillel for the new building. Though neither of the Rosenbergs attended the university, they wanted to do something about the needs of the Jewish community at Tech, encouraging the students to “dream large.” The center will be located on Toms Creek Road, right across from campus, and will offer a much-needed space.

Stephanie Mahoney (interior design ’14), a transfer student from a school where the Jewish community was not as engaged as Tech’s, said Hillel helped her get involved and feel welcome in Blacksburg.

Aberman, a freshman, agreed: “Especially for me, coming to a school where you only knew one or two people, Hillel is a great way to make friends and [attend services] and know you have something in common.”

Mahoney thinks that the new building will draw more Jewish students to Tech. “Having a building shows that the Jewish community is taken seriously,” she said. “It also will give Jewish students a permanent place to go.”

Hillel’s new center is exciting news for Sigma Alpha Epsilon Pi sorority and Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternity, Jewish-interest organizations on campus. Both groups have members on Hillel’s executive

board and make a strong showing at events. Andy Greisinger (finance ’12), the president of Alpha Epsilon Pi, stressed the connection between Hillel and Jewish-interest Greek organizations. “We helped at the ground-breaking for the new Hillel building. [We] always show a great attendance at Shabbat and Hillel events,” he said.

Sue Kurtz, executive director of Hillel at Virginia Tech, emphasized how much this new center will mean to the organization. “It will be a welcoming place for everyone, and a place [that] will give the students an opportunity to be together in celebration of their culture and customs,” she said. “It will give Hillel a focal point.”

Hillel anticipates moving into the new center in spring 2012.

Hillary May (English ’12) is an intern with Virginia Tech Magazine.



Malcolm Rosenberg Hillel Center for Jewish Life at Virginia Tech

COURTESY OF HILLEL AT VIRGINIA TECH

Hear ye, the bells of Burruss

BY DENISE YOUNG

PHOTOS BY KELSEY KRADEL



Seven times a day on weekdays and five times on Saturdays and Sundays, the Burruss Hall carillon covers the Drillfield with the chiming of bells.

Source of the sound

If you're picturing a bell tower straight out of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, you're in for a surprise. In a small closet adjacent to the light box for the building's 3,003-seat auditorium, you won't find physical bells at all. The ringing comes from an electronic carillon, donated by the Class of 1958 in 1997 at a cost of \$39,911.

Two boxes house the electronic system, which connects to eight speakers on the roof, each with a 2-foot diameter. At 120 decibels, the volume is roughly equivalent to a loud rock concert. In order to house enough bells to produce the same amount and quality of sound, the entire third floor would be needed to house them, said Kim Briele, associate director of operations engineering at Virginia Tech.

Then and now

Although Burruss Hall was built in 1936, the original carillon wasn't added until 1957, using money leftover from the construction of the War Memorial Chapel. In fact, the original "bell" wasn't a bell at all; it used paper rolls, akin to those used by a player piano.

Most of the time, Briele doesn't have to touch the system. It's entirely automatic, playing random selections from a pool of more than 200 songs by a diverse medley of artists, ranging from Bach to the Beatles.

A personal touch

On occasions such as Founders Day or memorial events, Blacksburg native and piano teacher Sharon Knight will play the keyboard. She even has some Tech-specific sheet music, such as "Moonlight and VPI," a song composed in 1942 for the Ring Dance.

Upon request, the bells can be played at a specific time, such as for the recessional of a wedding at the chapel. "Some people take a horse-drawn carriage ride around the Drillfield and have the bells played," said Briele.

Visit www.vtmagazine.vt.edu for an audio slideshow of the carillon. ➔



**"[Growing up I] could hear the bells from my house and was always fascinated by them."
— Sharon Knight**

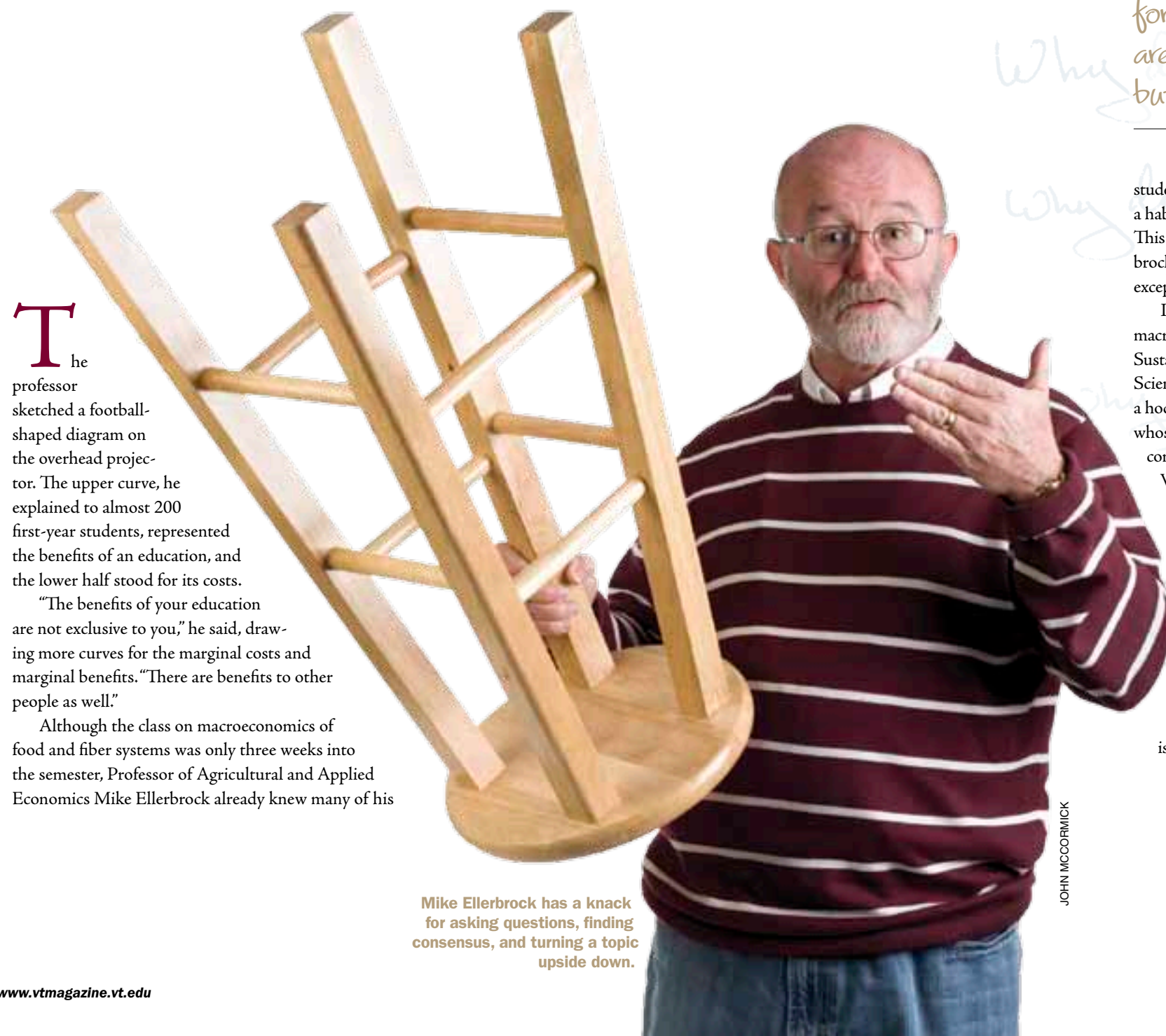


To download music from the Burruss Hall carillon, install a QR code reader on your smartphone and capture the image in the viewfinder.

Mike Ellerbrock

Natural Renaissance Man

BY MICHAEL SUTPHIN '06



Mike Ellerbrock has a knack for asking questions, finding consensus, and turning a topic upside down.

JOHN MCCORMICK

"Every student has the capacity for wisdom, and we as teachers are not here to instill [wisdom], but to draw it out."

students by name. Early in his teaching career, he had formed a habit of asking the names of students who posed questions. This sort of individual attention and concern helped Ellerbrock earn Virginia Tech's 2010 William E. Wine Award for exceptional teaching and the ability to inspire students.

In addition to introductory courses on micro- and macroeconomics, Ellerbrock teaches Environment and Sustainable Development Economics, and Religion and Science. To an outsider, this range of courses might seem like a hodgepodge of teaching interests—but not to Ellerbrock, whose academic pursuits and service to the university and community have made him a sort of Renaissance Man at Virginia Tech.

"The Greeks had a concept of 'oikos,' or 'care for the household.' From this, we get our notions of economics, ecology, and ecumenism," said Ellerbrock, who, drawing from the ancient Greek idea of the planet as a three-legged stool, recognizes a parallel to modern dialogue on economic, environmental, and social sustainability. "For our planet to be managed in a sustainable manner, somehow we have to make a living, somehow we have to take out the trash, and somehow we have to all get along. If one of these three is not in place, then the whole system does not work."

- continued on page 42

Mike Ellerbrock

- Professor of agricultural and applied economics in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and 4-H economics education specialist for Virginia Cooperative Extension
- President of the Faculty Senate for the 2010-11 academic year
- Teaches courses on introductory economics, environmental and sustainable development economics, and religion and science
- Provides economics education curricula for Virginia K-12 teachers through the Center for Economics Education
- Serves as the only agricultural economist on the faculty of the Foundation for Teaching Economics, an organization that has offered summer training for high school teachers from Bulgaria, Hungary, Puerto Rico, Romania, and Slovakia for the past five years
- One of 32 faculty members who sailed last spring with the University of Virginia's Semester at Sea and taught 650 students from around the country, making stops in Mexico, Hawaii, Japan, China, Vietnam, India, Mauritius, South Africa, Ghana, and Brazil
- Ph.D. in applied economics and master's degree in recreation and parks administration from Clemson University; bachelor's degree in recreation and parks from Texas A&M University

Recognition

- William E. Wine Award, 2010
- Student Alumni Associates Students' Choice Award, 2004 and 2008
- U.S. Department of Agriculture National Award for Teaching Excellence, 2002
- Sporn Award for Excellence in Teaching Introductory Subjects, 1998
- Outstanding Teaching Award from the Southern Agricultural Economics Association, 1997

EQUIPPED FOR EXCELLENCE

CORPORATE RESEARCH CENTER THRIVES AT VIRGINIA TECH

BY CHAD O'KANE M.A. '11

On a blustery Tuesday afternoon in January, the Wikiteria Market and Café at the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center (CRC) was abuzz. A line of people stretched to the door, and nary an open table could be found. At first glance, the café appeared to be just another busy lunch spot located inside an office park. Upon closer inspection, this is no ordinary corporate cafeteria. All around, the relationships that result in business deals were being nurtured. The scene was a microcosm of the research park itself: an enclave where leaders of high-tech companies network and share best practices.

Successful enough to earn the 2010 Outstanding Research Park award from the Association of University Research Parks, the CRC is now embarking on an expansion to double its square footage. Chances are park administrators will fill that space using the same model of service that has brought the CRC this far.

MORE THAN A RESEARCH PARK

According to Joe Meredith (aerospace engineering '69, Ph.D. industrial and systems engineering '97), president of the CRC for the past 18 years, most research parks function merely as real estate entities, encouraging little contact between the park's leadership and its tenants. The CRC at Virginia Tech, however, is unlike most research parks. "What differentiates our park is our strategy to focus on being a partner of the companies and providing services in hopes that [the companies will] be more successful," Meredith said.

Such services run the gamut, offering assistance to technology companies in a variety of capacities. The business assistance program, managed by the Pamplin College of Business, utilizes outstanding business students to aid tenants in numerous functions, including market research, business planning, and competitive-market assessments. Several presidents' councils—monthly meetings of eight to 10 company leaders—help to foster self-discovery and professional growth among the companies in the park.

The financial assistance program takes advantage of the CRC's relationship with Virginia Tech alumni who manage financial entities to help companies obtain funding, particularly helpful for nascent companies in the early stages of development, when financing can be a big hurdle. "By far the hardest money to get [is money] early in the process," Meredith explained. "The first dollar is just hard."

ALREADY HOME TO 140-PLUS COMPANIES EMPLOYING 2,200 PEOPLE, THE CRC IS UNDERGOING AN EXPANSION THAT WILL DOUBLE ITS SQUARE FOOTAGE.



Andrew Cohill (computer science '76, M.I.S. '81, Ph.D. environmental design and planning '93), president and CEO of Design Nine

"Design Nine has benefitted significantly from the CRC. We get Class A office space with amenities like cleaning service, maintenance, and utilities bundled at a predictable and affordable cost. The CRC also has excellent Internet access and a high-quality videoconferencing system. Finally, we have the ability to add office space as needed and take advantage of flexible lease arrangements as our business changes and grows. As a firm with a national reach and a client base in eight states, we need the look and feel that the CRC brings to Design Nine."



Jennifer Bishop (mathematics '01, M.S. '03), software engineer, SAIC

"SAIC's three-year history at the Corporate Research Center has resulted in innovative business opportunities with local small businesses and the university. Having Tech students work and research with us here in the office is a key benefit, resulting in a stream of strong job candidates. The recent opening of the VCOM II research facility at the CRC, which supports education and research in national security issues, also creates a tremendous opportunity for future growth."

JIM STROUP



“THE PARK ENCOURAGES AN ENTREPRENEURIAL ENVIRONMENT AROUND THE UNIVERSITY AND IMPACTS THE REGIONAL COMMUNITY AND ECONOMY BY EXPANDING [THE AVAILABILITY OF] QUALITY JOBS, WHICH DRIVES ENHANCED RETAIL OFFERINGS WITHIN THE REGION,” SAID RAY SMOOT.



Matt Mulherin (civil engineering '81), president, Newport News Shipbuilding (formerly Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding)

“Our company has always had a close relationship with Virginia Tech. Many of our employees and their children are graduates, as am I. It’s a valued partnership. Having a presence at the Corporate Research Center provides us a unique opportunity to collaborate with the research companies in the park and also with the university.”

DESPITE ITS RAPID GROWTH, THE CRC CONTINUES TO BE A TIGHT-KNIT COMMUNITY AND A RESEARCH PARK THAT, FOR ALL ITS CHANGES, STILL FEELS LIKE HOME.



JOHN MCCORMICK

The CRC also manages an incubation program, VT KnowledgeWorks, designed to accelerate business growth in the pre-launch and enterprise stages. According to director Jim Flowers, at the core of the incubation program is risk-reduction. “We don’t create opportunities for businesses,” said Flowers, who helped to create VT KnowledgeWorks in 2004. “But we’re in a position to provide access to information that will reduce the risk associated with those opportunities.”

Michael Fleming (mechanical engineering '02, M.S. '03), president of TORC, a robotics company that recently graduated from VT KnowledgeWorks, credits the program for his company’s early success. “Early counseling and advice on business issues that technologists and engineers tend to neglect were crucial,” Fleming said. “It takes a lot more than good technology to be successful.”

VT KnowledgeWorks, currently serving 65 companies in various stages of development, takes an ad hoc approach to each member, maintaining the flexibility to change and adapt to the needs of its clients. “The world is changing so fast. ... We’re constantly reinventing the program and the service offerings to keep up with the changing environment,” Flowers said.

In a sense, VT KnowledgeWorks acts as a testing ground for the larger CRC. Flowers explained, “Research parks need to have stability, whereas we can test things out and revamp.”

SYMBIOSIS

While companies at the CRC clearly benefit from proximity to campus and access to research faculty and students, Tech and the surrounding community also benefit from the park’s presence. A wholly owned subsidiary of the Virginia Tech Foundation, the CRC annually remits \$500,000, which helps to fund university priorities. Moreover, the CRC provides employment opportunities to spouses of Tech faculty and staff, said Ray Smoot (English '69, M.S. education administration '71), the foundation’s CEO. “[The CRC] attracts sharp people to come to the area and be a part of the university,” he said. “This [attraction] in turn expands things like the arts and other cultural endeavors.”

The CRC also boosts the local economy. “The park encourages an entrepreneurial environment around the university, and impacts the regional community and economy by expanding [the availability of] quality jobs, which drives enhanced retail offerings within the region,” Smoot said. “And the tax revenues resulting from the research park help support public schools and other public services in Blacksburg and Montgomery County.”

A TRUE SENSE OF COMMUNITY

In 1993, after 22 years in the shipbuilding business, Meredith was finally able to realize his goal of returning with his family to Blacksburg.

His commitment to the park and its expansion has always been based on one clear mission: He wants to afford others the same chance to come to the New River Valley. “I think anybody who wants to live in this community should be able to find a high-quality job,” Meredith said.

Meredith believes the CRC is more than a place to work; he sees it as a community in and of itself. This mentality is cultivated through social events, an intramural sports league, an on-site fitness center, a café, and a variety of other programs aimed at bringing people together.

“All of these events and programs are, at their heart, designed for people in the park to meet each other, share best practices, and provide services for one another,” he explained. “This place truly is a community.”

This notion of community was clearly evident that afternoon at the café, where the conversations weren’t about the weather. At one table, two engineers from different firms were discussing business logistics, while at another table, an information-technology professional was soliciting advice from a web developer at a rival company. Such sharing of knowledge is just another day at the office at the Virginia Tech CRC.

Despite its rapid growth, the CRC continues to be a tight-knit community and a research park that, for all its changes, still feels like home. ■

Chad O’Kane (M.A. communication '11) is a graduate assistant with Virginia Tech Magazine.

Ear to the ground, eye on the sky

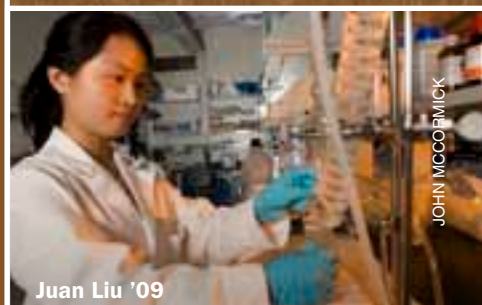
BY LYNN MATTHEWS DAVIS



Kevin Edgar

JOHN MCCORMICK

It's difficult to imagine cutting a meter stick into one billion pieces. But that's the size of a nanometer, and CNRE scientists are working at this small scale with some big goals in mind.



Juan Liu '09

JOHN MCCORMICK

can do much better than almost any other material, petroleum-based or otherwise," explained biomaterials Professor Kevin

Edgar, who also directs Virginia Tech's Bio-Based Materials Center in the Institute for Critical Technology and Applied Science. His research group has made recent progress in developing polysaccharide derivatives to attack disease-causing organisms like the tuberculosis bacterium and HIV.

It's difficult to imagine cutting a meter stick into one billion pieces. But that's the size of a nanometer, and CNRE scientists are working at this small scale with some big goals in mind. Edgar and his fellow researchers have figured out how to make tiny particles that can explosively enhance the solubility of tuberculosis medications in water while easily containing multiple drugs. These multi-drug particles can help patients by lowering the dose required and thus reducing cost and side effects.

Maren Roman, another biomaterials scientist, is studying

Beverly Boyko



CNRE has established partnerships and research programs in more than 30 countries.



Lemurs in Madagascar

the use of wood-derived nanoparticles for cancer drugs. Her lab has developed a chemical strategy to aim cellulose nanocrystals at malignant tumor cells, allowing the selective delivery of anticancer drugs to cancerous tissue while bypassing the healthy cells.

In addition to enhanced drug delivery, dozens of military projects are under way in the college's four departments, its Conservation Management Institute (CMI), and other centers. CMI works to conserve natural resources around the world by providing research and development services to agencies and organizations and has led Department of Defense-funded (DOD) projects at military sites across the country.

For example, DOD is funding a cooperative research effort at the Fort Pickett Maneuver Training Center near Blackstone, Va., to proactively address declining populations of the Atlantic pigtoe mussel before it is listed as endangered. In another Fort Pickett project, CMI biologists are studying the patterns of training disturbances, such as heavy vehicles and fire, to help natural-resource military personnel manage lands.

Even archaeology is in play at Fort Pickett, where CMI's Beverly Boyko is a curator for the Virginia National Guard's archaeological and historical collections, documenting the guard's history back to its inception in 1607 and preserving other artifacts as old as 10,000 B.C.

Many of the college's projects have a broad scope and a global scale. CNRE has established partnerships and research programs in more than 30 countries. Wildlife Assistant Professor Sarah Karpanty has led projects in Madagascar since her undergraduate days, examining wildlife and endangered-species management and forest restoration. More than 80 percent of the island's living things are found nowhere else on Earth, a tapestry of biodiversity threatened by slash-and-burn agriculture, mining, and logging.

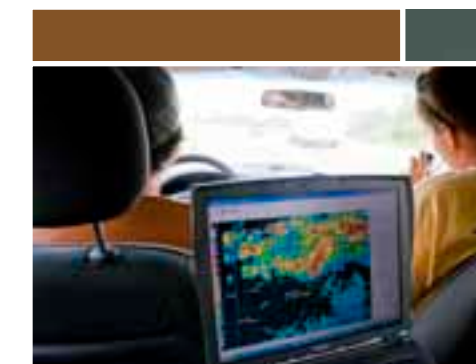
While many CNRE scientists look toward the earth for answers, others are now turning an eye toward the sky. Phone calls from interested students have been coming in from across the nation as word spreads that CNRE's geography department will start offering an undergraduate program in meteorology this fall. "The wealth of concern about the changing environment around us is evident to all members of society almost daily," said department head Bill Carstensen, ticking off a host of societal issues affected by changing climate patterns.

To address these issues, CNRE is responding with an academic program that blends meteorology and geospatial science. Meteorology studies the atmosphere while geospatial science largely studies the land and water surfaces. The program

will provide students with technical life skills and will develop the science and knowledge needed to resolve the environmental challenges of the future.

"There is so much more to the College of Natural Resources and Environment than meets the eye," said CNRE Dean Paul Winistorfer. "Our root is local, but our reach today is global in the important work we must do to steward our natural resources and the environment. We are taking a fresh look at all we do to make sure we are positioned to be of maximum value to society and our resources." □

Lynn Matthews Davis is the director of communications for the College of Natural Resources and Environment.



JIM STROUP

Phone calls from interested students have been coming in from across the nation as word spreads that CNRE's geography department will start offering an undergraduate program in meteorology this fall.



Virginia Tech stormchasers on the Great Plains in 2009



ILLUSTRATIONS BY GABRIELA VALDESPINO '12

Preparing for the golden years

BY DENISE YOUNG

Aging has become an issue of national concern as life expectancies increase, boosting the number of people who tap into resources such as Social Security and Medicare and who require access to health care services. According to www.AgingStats.gov, the baby boomers—born between 1946 and 1964—will start turning 65 in 2011, and the number of older people will increase dramatically in the coming decades. The senior population is projected to be twice as large in 2030 as in 2000, growing from 35 million to 71.5 million and representing nearly 20 percent of the U.S. population.

Virginia Tech's Center for Gerontology stands at the forefront of aging issues; its research helps improve the quality of care and life for people in middle and old age. Research on family relationships, health aspects of aging, and services for older adults offers community members helpful information about a number of challenging situations. Center staff weighed in and shared their expert advice on an issue of growing concern for many people.

Don't delay difficult conversations.

"I encourage people to be active participants in the planning process, which means [they should] start making plans for old age earlier in life," said Karen Roberto, director of the center. "Make your wishes known and think about what's most feasible for you and your family members."

Carlene Arthur, administrative assistant at the center, has firsthand experience with decisions about care arrangements. She and her husband, Doug, have helped Doug's mother, Dorothy Arthur, make plans for her own health care. Last June, Dorothy moved to Warm Hearth Village in Blacksburg so that she could be closer to her son and his wife.

"I think [moving to Blacksburg] was the best thing in the world," said Dorothy. She previously had resided in an assisted-living facility in Littleton, Colo., near one of her other sons. Before that, Dorothy had lived in an apartment in Colorado—until three years ago, when arthritis began to affect her knees. "I knew at the time that being in the apartment alone was more than I could handle."

Rosemary Blieszner, associate director at the Center for Gerontology, notes that it's helpful to make an honest assessment of one's circumstances. "People need to be open to new options and possibilities. Sometimes people insist that they're going to keep everything the way it has been. ... Being open to accepting help might keep [someone's] quality of life better longer."

Allow time for everyone to adjust.

Carlene's mother, Mildred Thompson, who has Alzheimer's disease, also lives at Warm Hearth. Carlene acknowledges that transitions to a care facility can be difficult for family members. "The first six months are pretty distressing. You have to realize that staff [members] are very devoted but have a lot of people to care for. You have to realize that [your loved one] will be well

cared for, even if you disagree on some things."

Carlene tries to make the new residences of her mother and mother-in-law as homelike as possible by bringing in seasonal decorations for their rooms and organizing family gatherings, such as potluck dinners, at the facility's library, which serves as a multipurpose room and can be reserved by families. "It's very important for caregivers to make sure they take time for themselves," she added, stressing that they need to find a balance between looking after others and living their own lives.



Dorothy Arthur and her daughter-in-law, Carlene Arthur

Utilize available resources.

Local Area Agencies on Aging offer a number of resources and can connect older people with helpful services ranging from Meals on Wheels to transportation to and from shopping centers and doctors' offices.

An active care-management model is ideal, involving people in decisions about what help they need and who will provide it. Volunteer programs, such as Friendly Visitors, and government-sponsored or private-pay services, such as homemaker and home-health programs, can offer assistance for those who don't

have family help or whose family members live far away. "[The concept] sounds wonderful," cautioned Roberto, "but people willing and professionally trained to do that kind of work are often difficult to find."

One concern, Blieszner noted, is that the availability of resources varies from urban to rural areas. Many services—particularly those involving transportation—are scarce in rural regions. "People in rural areas are the most vulnerable to not getting needed help."

Make arrangements today for care that might be needed in the future.

Both Roberto and Blieszner recommended considering long-term care insurance that provides for various levels of care in a private home, adult daycare, assisted-living facility, or nursing home, depending on the person's needs.

"The longer you wait to purchase [this insurance], the more expensive it will be," said Blieszner. "Long-term care insurance can provide coverage for services either in one's own home or in community facilities. Having this resource could enable the person to retain a sense of control and decision-making over care options besides relying solely on family and friends."

Along with several of her sons, Dorothy paid into a long-term care insurance policy for more than a decade. "It's an excellent way to know that when you get old, you'll have the money to take care of [yourself]. Unfortunately, there are an awful lot of people who aren't able to [afford the premiums]."

The high cost of long-term care insurance makes its purchase difficult for some people. Blieszner, however, noted that there are other options, such as making a deposit to reserve a place at a facility offering different levels of care. "Making plans before care is needed preserves choices and [implies] to ... children and others that 'It's not your responsibility to work this out for me,'" Blieszner said.

Leave your legacy.

A significant way forward-thinking people can prepare for the future is to engage in estate planning now. The earlier an individual starts thinking about these goals, the more likely he or she is to achieve them, experts say. "Making an estate plan is your opportunity to leave a legacy with your children or with the causes that you care about," said Steve Clark, director of Virginia Tech's Office of Gift Planning. "It's a good time to consider what you want your estate to say about you. Once you've done that, there are a wealth of resources to help you make arrangements. Attorneys are the most important. Accountants and certified financial planners can also help. Many charities have resources for donors who want to discover ways to make gifts that make the most sense for their circumstances."

Confront stereotypes of aging.

"We can't make any kind of one-size-fits-all advice," Blieszner said. "We can't just assume that because people have reached a certain age, they'll need a certain level of care." She advocates that the diversity of the older population be recognized.

In addition, many people find their interests shifting from their 60s to 70s and 80s. "If you're going to live into your 90s or more, but say you're finished doing things at 65, that leaves a lot of open-ended time. I think people realize that they're going to need to pursue hobbies and other interests to fill their time," said Blieszner. One former elementary school teacher, for instance,

continued to serve younger generations by hosting tours for students on field trips to a local utility company. She enjoyed this work because it still involved teaching, but with fewer demands and responsibilities, Blieszner said.

Immediately after retirement—Dorothy's husband was a military officer, and she worked from home as a seamstress—the couple traveled around the country, visiting friends they'd made through the military. In fact, she drove until age 82. Now 89, she recommends that "people keep busy."

Though her mobility is limited now and she uses a wheelchair, Dorothy still finds meaningful activities to fill her day. "I'm a TV nut," she admitted. "I like 'Law and Order' and game shows and 'Days of Our Lives.'" She continues to do crossword puzzles and writes letters to friends.

"Life is a journey, and people's needs and expectations change over the course of that journey," said Roberto. Advanced planning and knowledge of available resources can help both those giving and those receiving care to weather the journey and can perhaps make the inevitable bumps in the road less jarring. ▣

Albert Raboteau, a writer for University Development, contributed to this story.

Links to additional resources are available on the Web version of this article at www.vtmagazine.vt.edu. For more about the Center of Gerontology's work and research, visit www.gerontology.vt.edu. ➤



Pooja Miskin '13 in D2 in Dietrick Dining Center

No frills to five-star

The best
campus dining
in the country

BY JULIET CRICHTON

A mess of a tradition

In light of Virginia Tech Dining Services' award-winning food, outstanding customer service, innovative programming, and first-rate facilities, younger Hokie alumni may have trouble believing that complaints about campus dining were once as commonplace as cadet formations on the Drillfield.

According to school histories written by Col. Henry D. Temple (industrial engineering '34) and by Professor Emeritus Duncan Lyle Kinnear, campus dining first suffered the slings and arrows of disgruntled students when Virginia Tech was but a greenhorn land-grant college charged with feeding an ever-hungry corps of cadets. For decades, campus meals were—literally and figuratively—a mess.



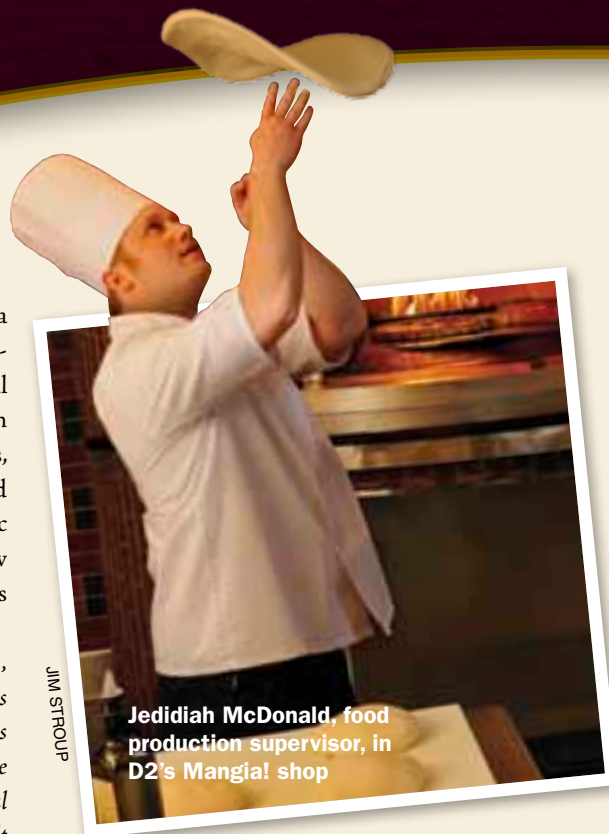
A *Collegiate Times* cartoon from October 1985 (above) and, from the 1967 *Bugle* (below), a photograph of a demonstration anchored by a student nattily clad in a cockroach costume and carried around on a stretcher, show just how far Virginia Tech food has progressed.



In an oral history transcribed for a 1970 issue of *Context*, alumnus W. Purviance Tams Jr. (B.S., M.S. mechanical engineering 1902) recounts a spartan existence on the tiny Blacksburg campus, then named Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute (popularly known as VPI, now Virginia Tech). The dining, it seems, was distinctly foul:

Our mess charge was \$9 per month, which comes to 10 cents per meal. That was just about what it was worth. The meat was usually "growley," consisting of a stew made of ground bones and meat. The mechanical engineering section had designed and built a small 4-by-6-inch vertical steam engine that operated the grinder. In the fall, at the beginning of school, the mess superintendent laid in a supply of turkeys. Cold storage was then in its infancy; by November, the turkeys were blue at all the joints. Turkey was served on Sunday; the remains and scraps were ground up and served as "growley" for the rest of the week. ... Once at breakfast we had eggs, which provoked "cheep, cheep" all over the mess hall in pretense that the eggs had hatched out. (The entire transcript of Tams' and other alumni's reminiscences are available online at <http://spec.lib.vt.edu/arc/125th/students/sturem.htm>.)

More than a half-century and a slew of gripes later, students likely anticipated improved dining in the wake of the board of visitors' 1964 decision to make corps participation voluntary. Logically, it followed that more civilian students might translate to less mess. Instead, in keeping with the tenor of the times, a 1967 protest and single-meal boycott of the three campus dining facilities put Hokie distaste on display for all of posterity.



JIM STRoup

Jeddiah McDonald, food production supervisor, in D2's Mangia! shop

Organized by a student group that included Ray Smoot (English '69, M.S. education administration '71), now CEO of the Virginia Tech Foundation, the demonstration was anchored by a student nattily clad in a cockroach costume and carried around on a stretcher. Not that these goings-on require explanation, but the protest bemoaned reports of cockroaches in one of the dining facilities, particularly in one extra-juicy slice of pecan pie. To the students' delight, the boycott and protest received extensive attention in the local media—and earned a photograph in the annual *Bugle* of a student toting a cardboard skeleton with a sign proclaiming, "Another satisfied? but dead Owens victim."

Despite the demonstration, dining on campus seems to have remained generally unsavory though not necessarily substandard. As Kinnear notes in his 1972 history, *The First 100 Years*, "any alumnus can testify that grumbling about the food and the way it is prepared has never been a monopoly belonging to any one class or period in Tech's history. In fact, it is a matter of record that every administration in VPI's first century had to face this problem at one time or another."

Going forward, the university's second-century administrators must surely have chewed on that predicament for a while.

Pie in the sky

By most accounts, efforts to recast campus dining began in earnest in 1988, when a committee was formed to study Dining Services. That same year, the university welcomed a new president, James McComas, and a new vice president for student affairs, Tom Goodale.

Because dining was a unit in Business Affairs, operations were geared purely toward keeping costs low, explained Vice President for Student Affairs Edward Spencer, who, at that time, was director of Housing and Residence Life. Students joked endlessly about the "elementary-school-style cafeteria," he recalled.

The following year, Dining Services was moved under the administrative umbrella of the Division of Student Affairs, and Spencer was named director of Residential and Dining Programs. Both McComas and Goodale were "very interested in student quality of life," said Spencer, "and McComas asked me to turn

the program around into something we can be proud of."

And so changes began to occur. In 1990, Paul Fairbrook, a retired dean of the Culinary Institute of America, was brought in as interim director of Culinary Services, a new title within the unit. "He was well loved and provided a spark for the program," Spencer said. "He would personally give [food-preparation] tips to chefs and walk around with a thermometer in his pocket to check the temperature of the soup to make sure it was warm enough. Although he stayed for only eight or so months, he placed high emphasis on quality and doing things right."

Fairbrook was followed by John Engstrom, whose three-year term was successful enough that Spencer still labels him "a marketing genius." During these transitions, the seedlings of a new dining culture had clearly begun to take root at Tech.

A sampling of Dining Services' recent accolades, honors, and awards

2010

No. 2, Best Campus Food, *The Princeton Review*, "Best 366 Colleges: 2011 Edition"

No. 3, Top 10 Best College Eats, Parents & Colleges, an online resource for parents of college-bound students

Second place, Most Innovative Nutrition Program: "Nutrition from the Ground Up," D2, National Association of College & University Food Services (NACUFS)

2009

No. 1, Best Campus Food, *The Princeton Review*, "Best 371 Colleges: 2010 Edition"

Ivy Award (among the most prestigious awards honoring the industry's best foodservice operations and restaurants, voted on by peers), *Restaurants & Institutions* magazine

2008

No. 3, Best Campus Food, *The Princeton Review*, "Best 366 Colleges: 2009 Edition"

Gold Loyal E. Horton Award, "Medieval Feast & Faire," Personal Touch Catering, NACUFS

2007

No. 1, Best Campus Food, *The Princeton Review*, "Best 366 Colleges: 2008 Edition"



Salad days

The transformation of Dining Services into its current status as a nationally respected and highly decorated operation was guided by the sure hand of Rick Johnson, who was hired by Spencer in 1993 to serve as director of Dining Services and was later named director of Housing and Dining Services. In February, after 17 years at the university, Johnson departed for Duke University, where he was named assistant vice president of housing and dining.

At Tech, Johnson brought a student-centered approach to campus dining, and his careful attention to quality, execution, industry trends, and student requests shepherded Dining Services to the very top. "Part of the pursuit of being best in class or best in the United States was the willingness to dream big and take risks," he said. "I'm proud that we had the vision, and we pursued it."

On Johnson's watch, Dining Services became a genuine powerhouse, not only benchmarked by more than 50 colleges and businesses nationwide but also ranked No. 1 for "Best Campus Food" in both the 2008 and the 2010 editions of

The Princeton Review. The rankings are especially gratifying because they are calculated from polls completed by students. Not surprisingly, current Hokies routinely report high overall satisfaction with the university's dining and consistently praise the variety of delicious and healthy food available on campus.

Johnson, who was directly involved in the evolution and growth of the six campus dining facilities that house 11 dining operations, "made our students his priority, ensuring top-quality services for them," said Spencer. "Rather than being content

with the industry standard, he consistently took an innovative approach, pushing the envelope and creating excellence."

"Part of the pursuit of being best in class or best in the United States was the willingness to dream big and take risks," said Rick Johnson. "I'm proud that we had the vision, and we pursued it."

In a nod to the unit's collaborative mettle, Johnson explained he was "most proud that a group of dedicated managers and staff was able to begin work in 1993 to transform a large, somewhat middle-of-the-road dining program into the nation's No. 1 dining program, a cutting-edge enterprise against which peers nationwide benchmark their programs."

Keeping Dining Services on course these days is Senior Associate Director of Dining Ted Faulkner, who has been at Virginia Tech for 13 years, the past eight as associate director. Like Johnson, Faulkner believes that "one of the main keys to sustaining success is allowing Virginia Tech students a voice in what they'd like to see in their dining centers."

To that end, Dining Services sponsors a student advisory committee that meets monthly to generate ideas and works closely with the Student Government Association. In addition to encouraging students to fill out comment cards both on paper and online, the unit sponsors an annual forum called Table Talk Live, during which a manager occupies a special table in each dining center, allowing students to offer their feedback in person. Once the suggestions have been compiled, the most viable are implemented and posted online for review. (Go to www.studentprograms.vt.edu/dining/table_talk_live.php to see the latest.)



Executive chef Mark Bratton at West End Market

Because of these forums, Dining Services has made changes to its menus, improved its facilities, and modified hours of operation to tailor their services to students' needs. The grandest result of student recommendations to date, however, is Turner Place, Dining Services' newest venue, for which ground was broken in February. Scheduled to open in fall 2012 behind McBryde Hall on the north, or academic, side of campus, the 800-seat facility was designed specifically to complement the existing dining centers on the south side of campus near the residence halls.

Just as frequently, the unit looks within its own ranks for inspiration—and for the inside line on the student mindset. "At any given time, Dining Services employs 900 students," noted Faulkner, "so they are both our employment base and our spokespersons. They're living the life, so to speak, as students, and we welcome feedback directly from them as employees."

Besides being responsive to students' requests and suggestions, the movers and shakers in Dining Services collectively point to the power of looking at market trends. This bold spirit, intrinsic to the university's climate of innovation and service, ensures that Tech students are eating the very best food in the very best venues.

"In order to implement cutting-edge policies and practices, we frequently step back and note what's popular in the restaurant industry and evaluate the hot trends," Faulkner said. "The trick is to take these trends and develop a means to deliver them at a university serving thousands daily."

Based on the breadth and scope of its successes during the past two decades, Dining Services has more than mastered the process.

Dining Services' show-stopping numbers

In a given week*:

- 182,000 meals served
- 10,080 scoops of ice cream served at Deets Place
- 21,460 eggs used in all dining operations
- 5,700 pounds of French fries served in all dining operations
- 4,730 hamburgers served in all dining operations
- 3,600 pounds of flour used at on-campus bakeshop for creating pizza dough, bread, and desserts
- 3,400 servings of General Tso chicken sold each week at Owens Food Court
- 3,300 pounds of waffle fries served at Chic-fil-A in Hokie Grill
- 3,200 servings of mac 'n cheese sold at Owens Food Court
- 2,750 spicy chicken sandwiches sold at Owens Food Court
- 2,546 slices of bacon served in all dining operations
- 2,450 pounds of potatoes used for West End Market's scrumptious garlic mashed potatoes
- 1,700 pounds of London broil used at West End Market

* Numbers furnished by Virginia Tech Dining Services Administrative Dietitian Jenny Lindsey and Owens Food Court Executive Chef John Scherer

Tons of fresh fruits and vegetables pass through Southgate Food Processing Center—Dining Services' warehouse, pre-preparation site, and bakery—before approximately two dozen deliveries are made across campus daily.

Annual production and pre-preparation**:

- Potatoes – 170,000 lbs.
- Tomatoes – 110,000 lbs.
- Yellow onions – 56,000 lbs.
- Broccoli – 55,000 lbs.
- Green peppers – 33,000 lbs.
- Cucumbers – 26,000 lbs.
- Carrots – 25,000 lbs.
- Cantaloupe – 24,000 lbs.
- Honeydew melons – 21,000 lbs.
- Red onions – 15,000 lbs.

** Numbers furnished by Manager Anthony Purcell



West End Market

Sustainability and fine dining

By decreasing food-processing needs, supporting organic and local growers, serving more whole grains and more locally grown and organic foods, and eliminating trans fats, Dining Services is doing its part to keep Hokies—and the planet—healthy.

- In February, the Sustainable Endowments Institute released its annual Green Report Card and assigned Virginia Tech an overall grade of B+. Receiving an A in six of the nine categories, the university notched a B in the Food and Recycling category: "Dining Services sources food from 25 local farms as well as the on-campus College of Agriculture and Life Sciences' farm and the dining facilities' own garden. More than half of eggs served on campus are local and organic; some seafood is sustainably harvested; and fair and direct trade coffee is purchased. More than 200 tons of pre- and post-consumer food scraps are composted. Virginia Tech achieved a 36.5 percent recycling rate of its waste stream in 2009, three years ahead of its goal."

Read the entire report online at www.greenreportcard.org.

- The Farms and Fields Project, which opened in Owens Food Court in January 2008, is dedicated to establishing partnerships with local farmers and providing farm-fresh, local, organic, and sustainable food on campus. Such food affords new recipes with seasonal, fresh ingredients, along with premium products, such as grass-fed beef. Now nearly two acres, the Dining Services Garden at Kentland Farm harvests organic, sustainable herbs and vegetables used in the project and across campus. Learn more about the project and view its

menus at <http://farmsandfields.wordpress.com/>.

- In an effort to reduce food waste at D2 and Shultz dining centers, both all-you-care-to-eat venues eliminated trays in 2008. A pilot study held earlier in that year had revealed that over the course of one week, trayless dining resulted in 38 percent less food waste—the equivalent of 1,546 pounds of food. Without trays, students are forced to select foods more carefully and are less likely to take foods that will not be eaten. Secondly, less water, soap, and energy were used on cleaning trays and plates and processing uneaten food. According to a 2008 study conducted on 25 campuses by food services provider Aramark, trayless dining typically results in 25 to 30 percent less wasted food.

- Since early 2009, Virginia Tech's Southgate Food Processing Center has saved all compostable pre-consumer waste, including chopped vegetables, peelings, and cores, in 48-gallon containers. At week's end, staff members from Poplar Manor Enterprises (PME) empty and clean the full containers. The collected food waste is then transported to the PME facility in Riner, Va., where the waste is converted to compost. As a result of this partnership with PME, the center has reduced the amount of food waste sent weekly to the local landfill by as much as 2.5 tons.

Following the program's expansion to include post-consumer waste, composting is also undertaken at Owens Food Court, all of the Dietrick venues, and the Graduate Life Center. After renovations, West End Market will begin to compost, as will the new dining center, Turner Place, that will open in 2012.



KELSEY KRADEL



The Dining Services Garden at Kentland Farm.



Cream of the crop

If numbers are any indication, Tech's dining centers serve up skillfully prepared, scrumptious fare—from grab-and-go to made-to-order, homespun to fancy, American to international—that never breaks the bank.

With approximately 1,500 employees supporting operations, Dining Services is the single largest employer on campus. Annually, some 6.2 million meals are served, generating sales of \$43.5 million. Last year, more than 18,000 students purchased debit-style dining plans for use at any of the dining centers. "Major" plans range in price from \$1,318 to \$1,523 per semester, while "minor" plans are priced at \$201 or \$700.

Most tellingly, more than half of the students who held dining plans in fall 2010 did not live on campus. "We are always very proud when we sell more dining plans to off-campus students than to on-campus students," said Dining Services' Assistant Director of Communications and Marketing Katie Gehrt (psychology '97, graphic design '02). "Campus residents are required to purchase meal plans, but they are optional for everyone else. We view this as a sign that we are doing a good job when so many students would choose a dining plan that's not required."

If, on the other hand, variety is any indication, Hokies are eating high on the hog.

The six dining facilities on campus—Dietrick Dining Center, Owens Dining Center, Shultz Dining Center, Squires Food Court, Vet Med Café, and West End Market—feature an array of restaurants, including both in-house specialty shops and well-known brand outlets,

such as Au Bon Pain and Chick-fil-A, which typically sit atop the sales-volume charts in the college market.

Not only do students praise the extensive food options, which include vegan, vegetarian, and kosher offerings, they are able to enjoy their meals in a number of different settings, each with its own ambiance. Indeed, diners can easily forget they're on a college campus in such locations as the Fighting Gobbler Sports Lounge or JP's Chop House, the crown jewel of West End Market, where more than 7,600 students are fed each day. However it's sliced or diced, dining on campus is worlds away from the "one line, one choice" venues that many alumni remember.

Just how good is the food, then?

The proof is in the pudding—and the whole Maine lobster and the London broil and the garlic mashed potatoes and the crème brûlée. Campus food at Virginia Tech is the best in the country. □

Richard Lovegrove and Hillary May (English '12) contributed to this article.

To learn more about Dining Services—and to plan a meal when you visit campus—visit www.dining.vt.edu.



KELSEY KRADEL

West End Market



JIM STROUP

D2

Annual donors answer the call

BY ALBERT RABOTEAU

Last year, Melissa Burgess got a call from an undergraduate working in the Office of Annual Giving's student calling center.

Though it was the first time she had received such a call, Burgess (political science '08) knew just what to expect because, as a student, she had worked as a caller, a supervisor, and eventually a shift manager at the center.

"It was really nice to be able to not only hear [someone doing] what I had done over several years, but then decide that now was the time for me to give back to the school," said Burgess, who is still in Blacksburg working toward her master's in sociology. "I did give to my department, and I will continue to do so each year."

Donors who answer the calls to give—whether by phone, e-mail, or direct mail—are a vital source of support for programs

and initiatives across campus. The university's Annual Giving program raised \$3.07 million in gifts last fiscal year, funds that benefit about 20 different colleges or programs.

More than half of that money was raised through the student calling center, which employs nearly 80 students, including Monica Black (mechanical engineering '13).

"When I first started working here, I didn't expect people to be as receptive as they have been," Black said. "Most people are happy to hear from Virginia Tech because they usually had a good experience here."

"Alumni give because they value what the university has done for them, and they understand that their participation helps guarantee those same benefits for the next generation of Hokies," Director of Annual Giving Randy Holden said.



PHOTOS BY KELSEY KRADEL

Melissa Burgess (political science '08), who made fundraising calls for Virginia Tech while an undergraduate, donated to the university as an alumna after getting such a call.

Students who work in the call center: 78

Donors who said "yes" when asked to give by a student caller last year: 14,727



Christian Nulty '11

People who have made annual gifts at least two years running: 10,534

Given or pledged last year in response to calls: \$1.64 million



Minha Husain '12



Shift manager Danielle Harris '11 (left) and caller Ishita Haque '11

"But those gifts, no matter the size, do more than make a difference to students and faculty on campus. They also have a very positive impact on our national reputation."

Tech's reputation gets a boost when a graduate makes a gift, in any amount, because he or she adds to the alumni donation rate, which factors into high-profile university rankings. Many alumni make a point of giving annual gifts to show that they remain passionate about their alma mater and to remember the important role it played in their lives.

One such alumnus is Donald Stewart (mechanical engineering '43), of Winchester, Va., who has given one or more gifts every year since the Carter administration. He often contributes to athletics, the College of Engineering, and the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets.

Looking back on his education, Stewart said he is "amazed at how much I got out of it" but is also impressed at how much larger and more prominent his alma mater is today, thanks in part to alumni support.

"Fortunately, there are enough people out there who feel the same way about the university as I do, and it's really made an impact on the growth of the university as a whole," Stewart said.

During their many conversations with people like Stewart, student callers see their job not only as raising money but as building and maintaining relationships, said Danielle Harris (African studies, international studies, Spanish '11), who works as a shift manager at the call center.

"Even if they've moved away or they haven't come back to visit in maybe 10 or 15 years, they still feel connected to the university [while] they're talking with students," Harris said. "It gives them an opportunity to ... talk about Virginia Tech in a meaningful way and also to express, possibly, their love for Virginia Tech through financial giving." □

Albert Raboteau is a writer for University Development.

"Annual gifts, no matter the size, do more than make a difference to students and faculty on campus. They also have a very positive impact on our national reputation."

Championing Hokies on and off the field

BY ALBERT RABOTEAU

Dan Maguire (management science '94) describes himself as a "huge fan" of the Hokies. Since graduating, he has bought football season tickets and makes a point of bringing his children to games each year.

"It's great to take them to campus and show them where I went to college," said Maguire, of Great Falls, Va. "I get a lot of enjoyment from that, but I also know that the school as a whole benefits greatly from having successful athletic programs."

For Maguire and thousands of alumni like him, following the Hokies means more than checking the Bowl Championship Series standings; it also means paying attention to their school's academic rankings and the reputation of its graduates.

Maguire's interest in the university's overall success led him to serve as a volunteer for The Campaign for Virginia Tech: Invent the Future and to broaden his commitment of financial support. Along with his business partner J.P. Foley (management science '92), he recently created an endowment within the Division of Student Affairs to support Leadership Tech, an undergraduate leadership training program. Maguire and Foley operate a management and information technology consulting firm, Dominion Business Solutions Inc.

Their aim in underwriting Leader-

ship Tech is to help students graduate with the type of interpersonal skills that will allow them to continuously advance in the workplace, said Foley, who is also a generous donor to athletics and a campaign volunteer.

Nancy Harris Brittle (mathematics '72) is a former Hokie cheerleader who has maintained her enthusiasm for supporting Virginia Tech's sports teams. She has extended that fervor to nonathletic endeavors, such as the Women in Leadership and Philanthropy (WLP) initiative. WLP spotlights women who contribute to the university through service and leadership, brings students and mentors together, and sponsors guest lectures. Brittle, also the director of the alumni career resources program, has contributed to both athletic and nonathletic programs, and helps with athletic fundraising as a volunteer Hokie representative.

In many cases, people who give to university athletics later broaden their support to nonathletic programs. For nonalumnus

Buddy Wilton, of Islamorada, Fla., the reverse was true.

Through his involvement in Virginia's real estate industry, he became a supporter of the residential-property management program within the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences. While promoting that program, he realized a box in Lane Stadium could help him engage potential donors, so he secured one. "Sports get people excited about Virginia Tech," he said. "If they're excited, I can talk to them about development." □

Albert Raboteau is a writer for University Development.

Visit www.vt.edu/All-Americans to find out how to create your own personalized Hokie trading card, as well as to meet other donors who support both athletic and nonathletic programs at Virginia Tech.



J.P. Foley '92 and Dan Maguire '94

For thousands of alumni, following the Hokies means more than checking the Bowl Championship Series standings; it also means paying attention to academic rankings and the reputation of graduates.



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VirginiaTech
Invent the Future



Biotech pioneer

BY DENISE YOUNG

For Charles Hamner (animal husbandry '56), economic development and academic research go hand in hand. In a career that spans three decades, Hamner and his deft touch for growth have guided the state of North Carolina toward a thriving biotech industry.

Since the 1980s, Hamner has played a key role in making North Carolina a hotbed for biotechnologies, which has fueled major economic growth in the state. "For the past 15 years, we've been forming new companies and creating new technologies and creating jobs. We've created [more than] 50,000 jobs over the last 10 years in North Carolina," said Hamner of his work and the partnerships he has helped to create. As president and CEO of the North Carolina Biotechnology Center and as namesake and chair of the board for The Hamner Institutes for Health Sciences, Hamner has worked to unite universities, state government, and industry to build a stronger biotech sector.

Common thread

The push to establish North Carolina as a leader in the biotech industry heated up in 1981, when the state general assembly created the North Carolina Biotechnology Center. Joining the organization in 1988, Hamner sought to convince state leaders biotechnology was important to the future. No small undertaking, his campaign had several carefully planned components, all with one goal.

The center began by setting up an eminent scholar program, helping state universities to hire the world's best life-sciences professionals. "You have to have innovative, leading-edge, first-class research personnel. Then they make discoveries and create technologies," said Hamner.

For the next step, Hamner convinced state leaders to provide funds for universities to begin major new discovery programs. The investment would be money well spent, Hamner promised, because those universities and top-notch researchers would go out and secure grant money from such places as the National Institutes of Health. His plan worked. The center

gave \$70 million to the universities; the professors won a total of \$850 million in funding.

Hamner's plan had a far-reaching vision, encompassing early-education programs about life-sciences careers for students in middle and high school and a public-awareness campaign explaining to taxpayers why biotechnology funding would stimulate job growth and enhance the quality of life for people across the state. The center also lent money to startup companies to create business plans so they could then seek support from venture capitalists.

The process sounds complex and risky, but Hamner had the foresight to sow the seeds for the short- and long-term growth of North Carolina's biotechnology industry. "The way it worked is exactly how we planned it," said Hamner.

As both a high school and undergraduate student, Bill Huckle, now an associate professor of biomedical science at the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine, did lab research with Hamner. Huckle said that Hamner played a large role in building a stronger industry from the framework already in place. "That work was under way long before he got [to North Carolina]—Research Triangle Park started in the late '50s and by the '80s had already attracted major pharmaceutical companies to set up shop—but certainly he was instrumental in making it possible for startup companies to prosper there."

Hamner said leveraging biotechnology for economic growth boils down to one thing: translational research, or taking research from

the theoretical stage to a fully developed product or technology that can enhance people's lives. "It's kind of popular now for universities to talk about translating their research and discoveries into some kind of product, but 20 years ago, people didn't understand that that's what needed to be done," recalled Hamner.

The pioneer of biotech understands the model well. So well, in fact, that Hamner has been awarded three honorary doctoral degrees, including one from the University of Ulster in North Ireland, which recognized his work recruiting pharmaceutical companies to establish manufacturing facilities in the region.

"I think Virginia Tech is fortunate to count [Hamner] as an alumnus," said Huckle. "He was also instrumental in building the case for the state of Virginia to have a veterinary school and to locate [it in Blacksburg]. He's been an advocate for Virginia Tech beyond being an illustrious alumnus." Huckle also noted Hamner's "sterling" career at the University of Virginia, where he served as a professor and later as associate vice president for health affairs at the university's medical center.

Despite his retirement in 2002, Hamner emerged in 2006 to help lead The Hamner Institutes for Health Sciences, an organization established in 1975 as the Chemical Institute for Industrial Toxicology and renamed in his honor. There, he has guided the institute's shift from chemical research to product development with an emphasis on safety assessments of potential products. The organization has worked on technologies that range from

Hamner said leveraging biotechnology for economic growth boils down to one thing: translational research, or taking research from the theoretical stage to a fully developed product or technology that can enhance people's lives.



chemical additives to vaccines and treatments for infectious and metabolic diseases in animals and humans.

Country roads

The biotech industry's apex may seem a far cry from Hamner's rural roots in Schuyler, Va., famed birthplace of the Waltons. In fact, Hamner's connection to the series goes beyond a shared hometown. His cousin, Earl Hamner Jr., created "The Waltons."

"The way they laid that out on TV was exactly the way we were born and raised. Earl Jr. wrote it about his family, not mine, but I was raised right down the road, so we all came from the same environment," recalled Hamner.

Hamner's farm-country upbringing, in fact, is what led to his decision to study animal sciences. When Hamner interviewed at Virginia Tech, the interviewer asked him what he wanted to study. "I said, 'I don't have any idea.' The man said, 'Since you were born and raised on a farm, why don't you major in animal husbandry?'" Once Hamner arrived at Tech, he took advantage of the university's offerings, discovering his own inclination toward math, chemistry, and biology.

"Virginia Tech was a wonderful experience. My professors recognized that I came out of a rural educational setting and

that I needed a huge amount of help. They were all patient and kind and worked with me very, very hard in my first two years until I caught up with people from urban schools," said Hamner. His Virginia Tech professors taught him the fundamentals he needed to excel in higher education, and the lessons paid off. He went to school for 10 more years, earning from the University of Georgia a master's in organic chemistry, a Ph.D. in biochemistry, and a doctorate in veterinary medicine.

Those academic roots still play a role in Hamner's life today, in the form of a 1-acre vegetable garden where he grows 26 vegetable varieties interspersed with the bright hues of roses, dahlias, zinnias, and marigolds. He reflects fondly on his time at Virginia Tech and the professors who nurtured his budding talents.

"If I hadn't [received] the kind and helpful instruction from my basic teachers my first two years at Virginia Tech, I wouldn't have had the background I needed to move on through the higher education system," said Hamner. The investment Virginia Tech made in the young student paved the way for a decades-long career that continues well into retirement, as Hamner still tends a perennially blossoming biotechnology industry in North Carolina. □



Professor profile, continued from page 17

In his sustainable development course, Ellerbrock teaches his students about the costs and benefits of specific environmental policies, international agreements on environmental issues, and economic incentives to improve air and water quality. He also teaches students that capitalism does not have to be in conflict with conservation and preservation.

Ellerbrock's ability to find common ground where others see competition led him to establish the Virginia Natural Resources Leadership Institute, a partnership among various agencies designed to reconcile disputes between local communities and the Virginia Department of Transportation, to develop more environmentally friendly practices for loggers, to improve poultry nutrient management techniques, and to partner Tangier Island watermen with the Virginia Institute of Marine Science and the Virginia Marine Resources Commission.

Ellerbrock, an ordained deacon at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Blacksburg and St. Jude's in Christiansburg, understands that his conflict-resolution skills are also important in other arenas. His newest course, Religion and Science, offers what he called "a safe space where I am teaching—not preaching—about the relationship between theology and science."

The course incorporates his typical Socratic teaching style. "The word 'education' derives from the Latin 'educare' or 'to draw out,'" he explained. "My goal as an instructor is not just to put facts and figures in my students' heads. Every student has the capacity for wisdom, and we as teachers are not here to instill [wisdom], but to draw it out."

Revisiting age-old debates between religion and science in a class with students from diverse backgrounds presents a number of challenges, but Ellerbrock has plenty of experience dealing with potential complications. As a chaplain for the Virginia Tech football team from 1996 to 2006, he counseled students from diverse faith traditions. He also conducts at least 10 weddings for Catholic students every year.

Although Ellerbrock's career has taken him around the world, he always returns to Virginia Tech, his home for the past 18 years. "I enjoy working for Virginia Tech and living in Blacksburg, and I hope to continue to do what I do for years to come," he said.

Much more than marginal, the benefits of Ellerbrock's presence are far-reaching, indeed. □

Michael Sutphin (communication '06) is a public relations specialist for the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

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Corps of Cadets

A general's vision

BY ROCK ROSZAK '71

JOHN MCCORMICK

In June, when Maj. Gen. Jerry Allen, U.S. Air Force (retired), steps down as the longest-serving commandant in the history of the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets, the university community will pay tribute to a man who has achieved a remarkable vision for the corps.

Allen first learned about the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets while attending the Air Force Academy. During his time as the academy's cadet wing commander, he paid a visit to the corps' annual leadership conference. He was so impressed that he invited Tech cadets to visit the academy later that year.

Allen arrived on campus as commandant in 1999, just as the corps had peaked after a growth surge and was at its largest since 1985. After evaluating the regimental system, he began to articulate his vision of the corps: to graduate leaders of exemplary character with a commitment to service and the highest standards of honor and integrity. From that time on, the corps grew steadily and strengthened its leader development program.

The corps serves as a laboratory for learning and practicing leadership, and Allen's legacy will be the high quality of the leader development program. Allen reaffirmed the transition away from the "old corps" training environment, a shift that had been initiated by his predecessor, Maj. Gen. Stan Musser. To further prepare graduates for a complex world, Allen sharpened the training program's focus on leadership.

During his tenure, the concentration in leadership became a full-fledged academic minor in leadership studies. The weekly leadership laboratory achieved certification and now offers college credit to cadets. The corps formalized the Cadet Leader program, training freshmen, sophomores, and juniors to prepare them for leadership opportunities in their next year as cadets. The program was recently expanded to include a capstone course that provides an additional level of preparation for seniors. The academic emphasis has paid off: Average cadet GPAs have risen steadily, from 2.60 in fall 1999 to 2.93 in fall 2010.

The results of this focus on leadership have been astounding. The university's

Undergraduate Student Leader of the Year has been a cadet for seven consecutive years; the three ROTC programs routinely lead the nation in training scores, commissioning numbers, and scholarships awarded; and cadets' dedication to service was rewarded with the 2009 Governor's Award for Volunteerism and Community Service. The increase in quality has driven membership upward. The regiment is now its largest since 1969, with expectations for its size to grow even more next year.

Allen doesn't dwell on the fact that his vision has been realized. He would say that he is inspired by the dedication cadets show and by the accomplishments of alumni, particularly those who willingly go into harm's way to serve the nation and protect its freedoms. Even so, the strength of today's corps is largely due to its long-time commandant. The university community, cadets, and corps alumni wish him and his wife, Joan, the very best in the next chapter of their lives. □

Col. Rock Roszak '71, U.S. Air Force (retired), is the alumni director for the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets.

Visitor and Undergraduate Admissions Center at VirginiaTech

Opening
July 2011



riggs ward

exhibits
retail
interiors

Commentary

The campus is bustling with the kind of activity that seems to gain momentum each spring. As winter melted away, more students emerged to enjoy the outdoor venues of the campus that most of you remember, but are now expanded with more facilities, park-like areas, and intramural playing fields. As the university grows, the Drillfield remains the true center of the campus. Students navigate campus efficiently by walking or by riding the Blacksburg Transit buses, their bikes, or their skateboards.

For alumni and friends, the nexus of activity is often the Holtzman Alumni Center and The Inn at Virginia Tech and Skelton Conference Center. After more than five



JOHN MCCORMICK

years of operation, the building has been visited by several hundred thousand people. It has become a hub for alumni gatherings, conferences, banquets, weddings, and festivals. The hotel draws many compliments for its comfortable, modern rooms decorated in tasteful Hokie colors. The fine-dining restaurant, Preston's, and its lounge, the Continental Divide, are popular gathering places for hotel guests,

campus visitors, and local residents. The alumni center wing offers many features for visitors to enjoy, including an extensive museum collection, alumni library, and art gallery exhibits.

The Benchmark Hospitality organization is the new operator of the inn and conference center. Their staff, in conjunction with our dedicated alumni relations team, extends true Virginia Tech hospitality to all who visit the facility. There are room specials during certain periods of the year, and golf packages for the signature Pete Dye River Course, a course operated by the Virginia Tech Foundation.

Whatever lures you back to Blacksburg, whether it's a reunion, college homecoming, or Drillfield Series seminar, you should put the alumni and conference

center on your radar. Being on campus is invigorating and brings back fond memories for alumni who traveled this road earlier in life. See the incredible growth around the campus, which has preserved its unique Hokie Stone traditional and contemporary architecture. Check out the inn and its specials at www.innatvirginiatech.com, or call 540/231-8000. Come stay with us, and we promise to make your stay memorable.

Tan Tiller '69

Vice President for Alumni Relations



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE HOLTZMAN ALUMNI CENTER

Reunions and homecomings

Share the Hokie Spirit with other alumni this fall

Class reunions from the 25th to the 50th anniversaries are held at five-year intervals. Each reunion includes a Friday evening meal and plenty of time for reminiscing. Saturdays typically feature a morning brunch and then pre-game festivities. Seeing the Hokies play in Lane Stadium is a treat for all reunion participants. Special seating at Tech's sold-out stadium is arranged for the reunion registrants.

The exception to the typical Friday/Saturday reunion agenda is for a Thursday evening game, when the banquet follows on Friday. Rooms are set aside at The Inn at Virginia Tech for reservation by reunion registrants. A special game-day reunion is also held for several classes of young alumni. Register early at www.alumni.vt.edu to guarantee game tickets and accommodations.



KELSEY KRADEL

REUNIONS

Sept. 3 - Virginia Tech vs. Appalachian State
Class of '86, 25th reunion
Young alumni reunion for Classes of '91-'93 and '00-'02

Sept. 17 - Virginia Tech vs. Arkansas State
Class of '81, 30th reunion

Oct. 1 - Virginia Tech vs. Clemson
Class of '71, 40th reunion

Oct. 8 - Virginia Tech vs. Miami
Class of '76, 35th reunion

Oct. 22 - Virginia Tech vs. Boston College
Class of '61, 50th reunion (traditional parade)

Nov. 17 - Virginia Tech vs. UNC (night game)
Class of '66, 45th reunion

The Class of 1969 celebrating its 40th reunion

JOHN MCCORMICK



Reunions and homecomings

Multiple homecomings are hosted throughout the football season to coincide with home games. Eight college programs are spread across the home schedule, along with other special homecomings for graduate alumni, corps of cadets alumni, and multicultural alumni. Homecomings are open to all alumni of the constituent groups, regardless of graduation year. In each case, there is a game-day gathering, a guarantee of good food, and the opportunity to reunite with friends, faculty, and staff. Lodging and game tickets are available to registrants of homecomings on a first-come, first-served basis, so it's best to register early at www.alumni.vt.edu.

HOMECOMINGS

Sept. 17 - Virginia Tech vs. Arkansas State
Graduate degree alumni
Corps of cadets alumni
College of Natural Resources and Environment alumni
Marching Virginians alumni

Oct. 1 - Virginia Tech vs. Clemson
College of Architecture and Urban Studies alumni
College of Science alumni
Multicultural alumni

Oct. 8 - Virginia Tech vs. Miami
Pamplin College of Business alumni
College of Engineering alumni
Cheerleader alumni

Oct. 22 - Virginia Tech vs. Boston College
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences alumni
Highly-Tighty alumni
Student Affairs reunion: Residential Learning Community, Virginia Tech Union, Homecoming King and Queen alumni

Nov. 17 - Virginia Tech vs. UNC (night game)
College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences alumni
Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine alumni



JIM STROUP

Fans tailgating before the Georgia Tech game

Hokies praise alumni tours

Virginia Tech Alumni Association tours are the way to go

For nearly 40 years, the Virginia Tech Alumni Association has sponsored group-travel opportunities around the globe. The association works with reputable tour providers that arrange for transportation, local excursions, and, often, meals. Alumni travelers say that they appreciate the convenience of these turnkey programs, and that the real bonus is meeting fellow alumni and sharing memories.

Alumni tours span all of the continents, even Antarctica. Trips include ocean and river cruises, land tours, and Alumni Campus Abroad educational tours, and excursions to U.S. cities, national parks, the Masters, and the Kentucky Derby. Some travelers have been loyal repeat participants for a decade or more.

During the Mediterranean Inspiration cruise in October 2010, alumni were captivated as they cruised on the deluxe 684-passenger Oceania Cruise Nautica. “We enjoyed the cruise tremendously, especially meeting so many marvelous friends,” said Ken Hinson

(industrial engineering '69), who traveled with his wife, Walli. “Cruising is always better with fellow Hokies.” The group sailed along Italy’s treasured west coast, stopping in some of its most famous ports and visiting the shores of Monaco, Greece, Montenegro, and Croatia. Some alumni opted to visit Michelangelo’s magnificent David in Florence, Monte Carlo’s famous casino, the medieval city of Dubrovnik, and Corfu’s lovely old Venetian quarter.

Virginia Brown took the Canada Rockies Rail tour in May 2009.



She praised the program. “It was billed as a ‘once-in-a-lifetime trip,’ and that was exactly what it was.” Brown’s group visited the towns of Jasper, Lake Louise, and Banff, and traveled the Icefields Parkway among glacial peaks, imposing cliffs, and snow-capped mountain ranges.

In 2009, the Alumni Association started offering tours to Augusta National for the Masters, said to be golf’s best battle on golf’s greatest stage. Tech alumni were part of the “roar of the crowd” that makes the Masters one of the supreme sporting events in the world. Patrick (history '74) and Gene O’Leary experienced a fun-filled two days. Said Patrick, “Gene and I really enjoyed this trip. It was great to be at the Masters.”

In her book *Under the Tuscan Sun*, Frances Mayes captures the charm and romance of Italian living. Tech alumni experienced this idyllic world firsthand in June 2010 on their travels to Cortona in Tuscany. The tour combined guided sightseeing with a total immersion in community life. Alumni walked the cobbled streets of Etruscan Cortona and discovered the art, architecture, cuisine, and culture of one of Italy’s most-beloved regions. “I would definitely travel with the Virginia Tech Alumni Association again,” said Leslie Skinker (elementary education '82). “This tour was well organized and we made many new friends.”

“Cruising is always better with fellow Hokies.”



A Caribbean cruise, November 2010



2011 Alumni Association travel tours

www.alumni.vt.edu/travel

Baltic Treasures: Copenhagen to Stockholm

June 10-21 | \$3,699* (air included)**

Sail away on Oceania Cruises’ newest ship, Marina, to a selection of the loveliest sights Northern Europe has to offer.



Amalfi: The Divine Coast of Italy

June 15-23 | \$2,795*

Delight in the scenic grandeur of the Amalfi Coast, with its varied architecture and amazing vertical landscape. Hosted by Pamplin College of Business Dean Richard Sorensen.

Vikings, Kings, and Castles: England, Scotland, Norway, Ireland, the Isle of Man, and Wales

July 14-29 | \$5,299* (air included)**

Uncover the cultural and historical riches of Northern Europe while cruising on the grand and regal Oceania Cruises’ Marina.

Grand Journey Around the World

Sept. 3-28 | \$29,995*

Embark on a true once-in-a-lifetime experience, and see some of the world’s greatest sights. Begin your discovery in Japan, where you’ll visit Kyoto, Nara, and Tokyo, before heading off toward China, Dubai, Jerusalem, Germany, and more.

Chicago: An Insider’s Perspective

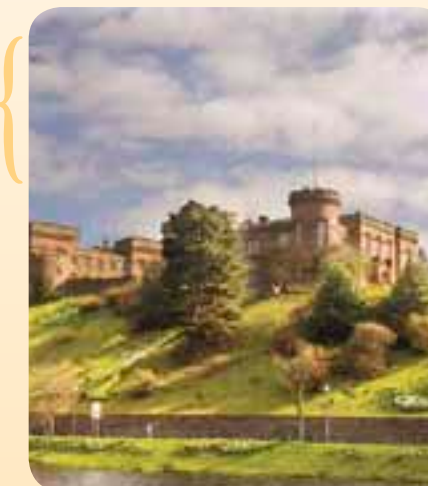
Sept. 6-11 | \$1,995*

From the impressive exhibits at world-renowned museums to the history at Jackson Park and the dazzling modern architecture at Millennium Park, Chicago has something for everyone. Hosted by Jack Davis, dean of the College of Architecture and Urban Studies.

Grand Danube Passage Cruise: Amadeus Elegant

Sept. 13-27 | Starting from \$3,895*

Described by Napoleon as the “king of Europe’s rivers,” the Danube is steeped in beauty, legend, and lore. Begin your discovery of the river’s breathtaking countryside in charming Passau, Germany.



France: Paris and the Villages and Vineyards

Oct. 6-16 | \$3,295*

Discover the picturesque vineyards and charming towns of Champagne and Burgundy on a special tour that combines the history and charm of these regions with the sophistication of the nation’s capital.



Treasures of East Africa

Oct. 21-Nov. 3 | \$5,495*

Once synonymous with the travels of big-game hunters in search of adventure, the word “safari” is Swahili for “journey.” The adventure is still there as visitors to Tanzania and Kenya seek out lions, leopards, elephants, and more.

Mexican Riviera Cruise: Symphony

Nov. 27-Dec. 4 | Starting from \$3,795* (air included)**

Board the six-star Crystal Symphony for a cruise adventure through the spectacular Mexican Riviera.

* Dates and prices are subject to change. Pricing is per person based on double occupancy without air, except as noted. ** Free air is available from select North American gateway cities.



Drillfield Series for alumni



MICHAEL KIERNAN

The Martin Observatory at the Miles C. Horton Sr. Center

The Drillfield Series continues this summer with weekends devoted to the topics of sustainability and the arts and concludes in August with Blacksburg's 21st annual Steppin' Out summer festival. Make plans now to attend these programs and take advantage of the specially discounted accommodations available at The Inn at Virginia Tech.

Sustainability in Gardening, Crops, Urban Forestry, Livestock, and Food Safety

June 16-19, 2011

Adults: \$149 | Children ages 6-12: \$99 | Children 5 and under: free

Highlights

- Hahn Horticulture Garden
Sessions will cover topics for small- and large-scale growers alike.
- Kentland Farm
Explore Dining Services' garden plots and ongoing research, including pest and weed control and soil quality.
- Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine
Tour the college, and hear presentations on disease prevention, livestock care, and more.
- The Catawba Sustainability Center
Tours showcase research and demonstration plots.

Off-Off-Broadway: A Behind-the-Scenes Look at Theatre Arts

July 1-3, 2011

Adults: \$99 | Children ages 6-12: \$60 | Children 5 and under: free

Highlights

- A Behind-the-Scenes Look at Theatre Productions
Learn about sets, makeup, and other details that make a show happen. Includes a question-and-answer session with the play's cast.
- The Future of the Arts at Virginia Tech
Hear from Sue Ott Rowlands, dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences.
- Reception and Performance of "The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)."
Enjoy hors d'oeuvres and wine, and browse the art collection in the Perspective Gallery; then watch a talented cast bring this theatre production to life.

JIM STROUP



Steppin' Out at Summer Around the Drillfield

Aug. 4-7, 2011

Adults: \$160 | Children ages 6-12: \$110 | Children 5 and under: free

Highlights

- Blackburg's Steppin' Out Festival
The annual festival showcases offerings from 185 artists and craftspeople and includes three stages of live performances.
- Popcorn, Pizza, and a Movie: "Dirty Dancing"
Enjoy the movie before heading off later in the weekend to scenic Mountain Lake, where "Dirty Dancing" was filmed. The movie is rated PG-13.
- Campus Tours
Tour the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine, the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine, and the Department of Recreational Sports.
- Miles C. Horton & Martin Observatory
Explore observational astrophysics with physics Professor John Simonetti.
- Mountain Lake
Eat lunch, hike, take a tour, and enjoy a dinner featuring a "Dirty Dancing" performance by the Sapphire Dance Group.

*Topics, times, and locations are subject to change. Please visit www.alumni.vt.edu/drillfieldseries for updated information.

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Alumni Association celebrates 135 years

On Nov. 6, 2010, the Alumni Association celebrated its 1875 founding with a 135th anniversary celebration gala dinner, which was held in conjunction with the fall board of directors meeting. Former board members were invited back to campus and inducted into the association's new recognition society, the Gateway Society. This year also marked the fifth anniversary of the Holtzman Alumni Center, as well as The Inn at Virginia Tech and Skelton Conference Center.

Those in attendance heard remarks from President Charles W. Steger; Tom Tillar, vice president for alumni relations; John Dooley, vice president for outreach and international affairs; and Curry Roberts, Alumni Association president. A reenactor offered a "surprise visit" from Addison Caldwell, Tech's first student in 1872 who later became the first Alumni Association secretary. The evening concluded with a musical performance by Nancy Glisson Lucy, a former board member and 1993 Miss Virginia.



Two Alumni Distinguished Professors named

The Alumni Distinguished Professor program was established and endowed in the early 1970s to recognize and reward exceptional teaching and scholarship. There are currently 10 Alumni Distinguished Professors, and the Alumni Association is pleased to introduce the two newest appointees.

Thomas M. Gardner, English

A professor since 1982, Tom Gardner consistently earns rave reviews from his students, including those who describe him as the best professor they've ever had and his class as the one they learned the most from at Virginia Tech. A playwright who has also published five books, Gardner helps students examine world issues through poetry. "He teaches students to read and think about poetry as they never have before," said Carolyn Rude, professor and chair of the Department of English.



John R. Seiler, forestry

John Seiler, a professor known for his passionate teaching, is an internationally recognized dendrology researcher. Since earning his doctorate at Virginia Tech in 1984 and beginning to teach, he has earned teaching awards at the university, state, national, and international levels. A previous graduate student said of Seiler, "His energy and enthusiasm for his job, his coworkers, and his students are contagious and uplifting and serve as a model that I strive for in my professional career."



IMPACT.

Virginia Tech fuels brainpower, passion, and creativity in the classroom. But we're also fueling performance on the raceway and efficiency on the highway. Working with the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research and Old Dominion University, we launched the Virginia Institute for Performance Engineering and Research (VIPER), a national center for performance testing, engineering, and research services. By way of facilities at Virginia International Raceway and NASA Langley, VIPER benefits military, motorsports, and automotive-industry clients alike. To learn more about how we're collaborating to create positive change throughout the commonwealth and across the country, visit www.vt.edu/impact.

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Virginia Tech Magazine is pleased to note books by alumni, faculty, and staff or books about Virginia Tech. To submit a book, please mail it to Book Notes, Virginia Tech Magazine, 105 Media Building, Blacksburg, VA 24061. You can also e-mail a high-resolution image of the book cover, along with your name, the name of the publisher, and a brief description of the book, to vtmag@vt.edu. For more information about Book Notes policies, please go to www.vtmagazine.vt.edu/bookreview.html.

Books by faculty

In *Gaia in Turmoil: Climate Change, Biodepletion, and Earth Ethics in an Age of Crisis*, edited by **Eileen Crist**, an associate professor of science and technology, and **Bruce Rinker** (forestry and wildlife resources '79), the science of Gaian theory is explored in the light of increasing concerns about climate change and biodiversity destruction. The publisher is MIT Press (55 Hayward St., Cambridge, MA 02142); <http://mitpress.mit.edu>.



In *Wittgenstein in Exile*, by **James Klagge**, professor and chair of the Department of Philosophy, the author offers a new lens through which to view the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein, suggesting the 20th-century philosopher is



best understood when viewed as an exile from an earlier era. The publisher is MIT Press (55 Hayward St., Cambridge, MA 02142); <http://mitpress.mit.edu>.

In *A Digital Catalogue of the Pre-1500 Manuscripts and Incunables of the Canterbury Tales*, by **Dan Mosser**, a professor in the Department of English, descriptions all surviving pre-1500 manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales* and of individual copies of the incunable editions are accompanied by images and a full account of the manuscript's contents and background. The publisher is Scholarly Digital Editions (45a Spencer St., Jewellery Quarter, Birmingham B18 6JT, UK); www.sde-editions.com.



Books by alumni

Union, WV, by **Michael Abraham** (mechanical engineering '76), is about cantankerous Wayne Derek Quarles and his story of loss, healing, and redemption in contemporary Appalachia. The publisher is Pileated Press (1102 S. Second St., Stillwater, MN 55082); www.pileatedpress.com.



Through the Lens of a Child, by **Miller B. Jones Sr.** (political science '69), is a memoir about finding peace even through the trauma of lymphoma. The book



is self-published through CreateSpace; www.createpace.com.

Melungeons: Out of the Dungeon, by **Terry W. Mullins** (Ed.D. '96), is an illustrated history of the mysterious origins of the Melungeon people of southwestern Virginia and northeastern Tennessee. The publisher is Quarrier Press (1125 Central Ave., Charleston, WV 25302); www.wvbookco.com.



Whispers of Faith, by **Ross M. Orr Jr.** (biological science '49), is a collection of inspirational poetry and reflections dedicated to the author's wife. The book is self-published through Nogtime Creations and Gallery (405 High St., Bethlehem, PA 18018).

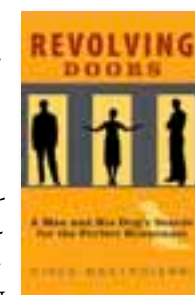


Whispers at Sunrise, by **Ross M. Orr Jr.** (biological science '49) and **Sandra Jane Orr**, is a collection of inspirational poetry and reflections on nature and life. The book is self-published through Nogtime Creations and Gallery (405 High St., Bethlehem, PA 18018).



Revolving Doors: A Man and His Dog's Search for the Perfect Housemate, by **Vince Mastroianni** (mechanical engineering '78), is a humorous, inspirational

look at living with many different roommates, each of whom is chosen to help care for the author's dog. This book is self-published through AuthorHouse (1663 Liberty Dr., Bloomington, IN 47403); www.authorhouse.com.



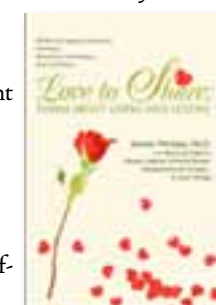
Southern Gifts, by **Yetta Muse Patterson** (liberal arts and sciences '86), is a novel about a small-town woman whose attempt at big-city life turns sour, leaving her to find refuge in God, her family, and home. The book is self-published through Pleasant Word (P.O. Box 428, Enumclaw, WA 98022); www.pleasantwordbooks.com.



Circular Journey: An Online Encounter, by **Karen Phillips** (human development '76, Ph.D. '91), follows Deck and Kate, a couple who met online, as they build a relationship at a distance and examine many of life's lessons. The book is self-published through WordClay; www.wordclay.com.



Love to Share, by **Karen Phillips** (human development '76, Ph.D. '91), is a collection of poems about living, loving, and human connection. The book is self-published through

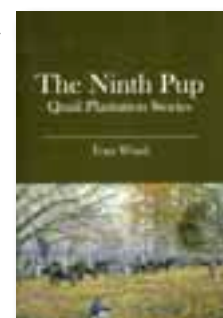


iUniverse (1663 Liberty Dr., Bloomington, IN 47403); www.iuniverse.com.

Bloodreal, by "Crazy" **Carl Robinson** (M.A. English '94), is a collection of short stories that recounts outrageous antics from the narrator's youth in a stream-of-consciousness style. The publisher is Sisyphus Press (P.O. Box 10495, State College, PA 16805).



The Ninth Pup: Quail Plantation Stories, by **Thomas Word** (business administration '59), draws a portrait of Deep South quail plantations where, for a century and a quarter, the very rich have relished hunting and fishing. The book is self-published through BookSurge; www.booksurge.com.

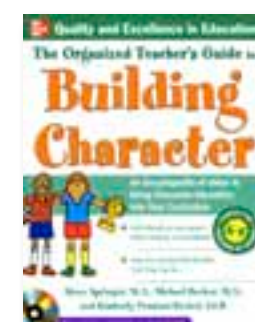


Understanding the Railway Labor Act, by **Frank N. Wilner** (economics '75), is a comprehensive assessment of the Railway Labor Act. The publisher is Simmons-Boardman Books (1809 Capitol Ave., Omaha, NE 68102); www.transalert.com.



The Organized Teacher's Guide to Building Character, by **Michael Becker**, **Kimberly Persiani-Becker**, and **Steve Springer** (animal science '88), is a guide to help educators weave character education into lesson plans. The publisher is

McGraw-Hill Companies (Two Penn Plaza, 23rd Floor, New York, NY 10121); www.mhprofessional.com.



Special interest

Learning Football with the Hokie Bird, by **Sarah Marshall**, is an interactive children's book that joins Joe and Emma for a game-day lesson with the beloved HokieBird. The publisher is Game Day Publications (9073 Winter Spring Dr., Mechanicsville, VA 23116); www.gamedaypublications.com.



Written by **Candy Reedy** and illustrated by **Jane Blevins**, *What's a Hokie?* is an inspiring answer to the common question, describing the character traits that make Hokies special. The publisher is College Art (108 Pine Cone Pointe, Galax, VA 24333); www.janeblevin-sart.com.



Correction: In the winter 2010-11 edition's Book Notes, Benjamin Cassutto (D.V.M. '89) should have been listed as the contributing editor of *The Last Jew of Rotterdam*. Also, Benjamin's father, Ernest, is not an alumnus. Benjamin revised his father's autobiography based on conversations with his parents and other family Holocaust survivors.

Alumni, we want to hear what you’ve been doing. Although we cannot print stories or obituaries, we can post online photographs of weddings, babies, and spirited alumni. Mail photos to *Virginia Tech Magazine*, 105A Media Building, Blacksburg, VA 24061, or e-mail them to vtmag@vt.edu. Please mail career, retirement, wedding, birth, and death notices to Alumni Notes, Virginia Tech Alumni Association, Holtzman Alumni Center, Blacksburg, VA 24061; send them via e-mail to fleets@vt.edu; or submit them online at www.vtmagazine.vt.edu/submit.classnotes.html.



JIM STROUP

’50s

’55

Morton W. Lester (BAD ’57), Martinsville, Va., was inducted into the Vintage Aircraft Association Hall of Fame.

’58

John H. Wood (AGRN), Alexandria, Va., is a substitute teacher with the Alexandria City Public Schools.

’60s

’62

Kitty Gardner Dickerson (CTRA, CTRA ’63), Columbia, Mo., retired as a faculty member from the University of Missouri.

’63

Richard L. Easterday (BION ’67), Martinsville, N.J., received an Outstanding Alumni Award from North Central College.

’65

James W. Moyer Jr. (STAT), Phoenix, Ariz., has authored a book titled *A Time to Vote* and is completing a second book, *A Time to Stand, The Sleeping Church*.

’66

William E. Cox (CE, CE ’68, CE ’76), Blacksburg, Va., was conferred the professor emeritus title by the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors.

Robert E. Little Jr. (PHIL ’67), Fairfax Station, Va., is partner with the firm of Cohen Seglias Pallas Greenhall & Furman PC in Philadelphia.

’67

David L. Leach Jr. (GEOL ’68), Lakewood, Colo., received the Penrose Gold Medal for 2010 from the Society of Economic Geologists in recognition of a full career in the earth sciences field.

’68

Bennet G. Cassell (DASC, DASC ’72), Blacksburg, Va., was conferred the professor emeritus title by the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors.

Marion R. Reynolds Jr. (STAT), Blacksburg, Va., was conferred the professor emeritus title by the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors.

’70s

’70

Kurt Bachman (AGE ’71, AGE ’72), Ankeny, Ind., retired from John Deere Co. after 32 years of service with a perfect attendance record.

Richard G. Oderwald (FW), Blacksburg, Va., was conferred the professor emeritus title by the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors.

’71

Donald E. Mullins (ENT ’72), Blacksburg, Va., was conferred the professor emeritus title by the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors.

’72

Patrick M. Phipps (PLPP ’73), Suffolk, Va., was conferred the professor emeritus title by the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors.

’73

Michael J. Welch (BIOL), Richmond, Va., is the director of the Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Food Programs for the Virginia Department of Health.

’74

John G. Kines Jr. (URBA), Disputanta, Va., received recognition for 35 years of service with Prince George County by the International City/County Management Association.

’75

G. Newell McMurtry (BIOL), Suffolk, Va., has authored his first science-fiction book, *Commodore Farmer*.

Edward G. Tiedemann Jr. (EE), Concord, Mass., is the 2010 recipient of Virginia Tech’s College of Engineering Distinguished Service Award.

’76

Clarence D. Wninger Jr. (IAED), Gate City, Va., retired from Eastman Chemical on Jan. 1.

William D. Wray (CHE), Kingwood, Texas, received a Science and Technology Award from Bayer MaterialScience for his role in the development of a novel process to produce a sorbitol-based polyether.

’77

James M. Orband (HORT, HORT ’95), Yorktown, Va., was conferred the senior Extension agent emeritus title by the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors.

’78

William F. Hinson Jr. (ME), Blacksburg, Va., was named the university building official at Virginia Tech.

Thomas B. O’Hanlan (ETE), Liberty, S.C., was awarded the Allan J. McDonald Award from the Society for International Business Fellows.

Robert N. Rector Jr. (BIOL), Roanoke, Va., received the James G. Duntion Distinguished Service Award from the Virginia Health Care Association.

Glenda Moorefield Snyder (HNF, EDCT ’04), Buchanan, Va., was conferred the senior Extension agent emerita title by the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors.

Claire Fisher Stock (ELED), Great Falls, Va., is vice president of marketing communications and public relations for L-3 Stratix.

’80s

’80

Bart M. Feinbaum (PSCI), Farmington Hills, Mich., is the principal counsel of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan.

O. Hayden Griffin Jr. (ESM), Greenville, N.C., was conferred the professor emeritus title by the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors.

Kurt R. Sturn (ACCT), Annapolis, Md., is a tax principal with Resnick Group.

’81

James E. Blacken Jr. (BIOC), Laguna Hills, Calif., is president of the Greater Los Angeles chapter of Minorities in Technology Sales.

Philip M. Fravel (AGED ’82, EDVT ’97, EDCT ’04), Clemson, S.C., received the 2010 Teaching Award of Excellence in the College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Life Sciences at Clemson University.

W. Jerrold Samford (GEOL), Richmond, Va., is chair of the Council of Fellows of ASFE/The Geoprofessional Business Association.

’82

Dolphus E. Henry III (EDRE), Harrisburg, Pa., is vice president for enrollment at Maryville College in Tennessee.

Rodney P. Leech (AGED), Monterey, Va., received the Distinguished Service Award from the National Association of County Agricultural Agents.

’83

Patricia Brown Hyer (EDRE), Blacksburg, Va., was conferred the associate provost emerita title by the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors.

Mary Kathryn Burkey Owens (ENGL), Midlothian, Va., earned the peer review rating of AV preeminent.

’84

Raymond J. Pages (EE ’85), Olney, Md., received NASA’s Robert H. Goddard Award for Outstanding Management.

’84

John R. Seiler (FOR), Christiansburg, Va., was honored by the College of Natural Resources and Environment at Virginia Tech and was named an Alumni Distinguished Professor.

Kathryn A. Simmons (VM), Herndon, Va., is a Congressional Fellow for the American Veterinary Medical Association and is working in the office of Sen. Olympia Snowe.

’86

Stephen A. Bloch (MATH), Richmond Hill, N.Y., authored a textbook, *Picturing Programs: An Introduction to Computer Programming*.

Thomas R. Lantzy (FW), of Fayetteville, Ga., was selected as the Hokie Hero for the Virginia Tech vs. Duke University game.

’87

Todd T. Krebs (MKTG), Manassas, Va., received the Northwestern Mutual Forum Award for his outstanding year of performance, serving the needs of clients throughout the region.

’88

Mary Burr Davie (FIN), Fairfax Station, Va., is the assistant commissioner for Integrated Technology Services.

Steve F. Ewankowich Jr. (ME), Raleigh, N.C., is OEM sales manager with Sigma Electric Manufacturing Corporation.

Gina Rudd French (MGT, BAD ’92), Roanoke, Va., is assistant MBA director at the Pamplin College of Business at Virginia Tech.

Robert G. Lavender (CSA, CSA ’93), Mountain View, Calif., was the recipient of the

2010 Distinguished Alumnus Award from the College of Engineering’s computer science department.

James R. McKenna (AGRN), Blacksburg, Va., was conferred the professor emeritus title by the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors.

Phillip M. Millett (MKTG), Crestwood, Ky., was selected as the Hokie Hero for the Orange Bowl.

’89

William D. Hume (LASC, CE ’92), Manassas, Va., is principal of his own firm, 2MH Consulting Engineers.

Lisa Burnette Lipscomb (PSYC), Raleigh, N.C., is vice president and chief people officer of SciMetrika.

Cheryl Bradley Smith (MKTG), New Bern, N.C., is the eastern regional manager for North Carolina State University Industrial Extension Services and founder/director of the Pathway to College.

William D. Waidelich (EDVT, EDVT ’95), Zionsville, Ind., recently returned from a USAID-funded Farmer-to-Farmer volunteer assignment in Belarus, where he worked with the Belarusian State Agricultural Academy in redesigning its curriculum and teaching students about international trade and agriculture.

’90s

’91

Robert B. Myers (MSCI), East Amherst, N.Y., led the HealthNow team to win the 2010 Informatica Innovation of the Year award in the category of driving operational excellence by outsourcing noncore functions, modernizing the business, or reducing IT costs.

’92

Jay M. Atkinson (BAD), Alexandria, Va., is president of AIR Network LLC.

Dale W. Sisson Jr. (ME, SYSE ’03), King George, Va., is head of the Electromagnetic and Sensor Systems Department at the Naval Surface Warfare Center.

’93

Jeffrey D. Moffatt (AGEC), Hanover, Pa., is the juvenile and standing master for the circuit court of Carroll County, Md.

Wendy K. Williamson (HRIM), Sea Bright, N.J., has authored a book titled *I’m Not Crazy Just Bipolar*.

Bruce W. Zoecklein (HORT, FST ’95), Blacksburg, Va., was conferred the professor emeritus title by the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors.

’94

Evan A. Marshall (COMM), Reston, Va., is director of the film “Late Rounders,” to be released soon, about football players making the transition from college to the professional game.

Daniel W. Phillips III (SOC, SOC ’97), Russell Springs, Ky., is the chair of the Social Sciences Division at Lindsey Wilson College.

Edward P. Yim (ARCH), Furlong, Pa., joined Stevens & Lee law firm as an associate for the energy, communications, and public utilities group.

’95

Peter D. Brown (ID), Salem, Va., is associate principal for AECOM Technology Corporation.

Lotta A. Crabtree (PSCI, PHIL ’95), Durham, N.C., is director of contracting and legal compliance for the North Carolina State Health Plan.

Barry I. Matherly (URPL), Huntersville, N.C., is the executive director of the Lincoln Economic Development Association.

Shane Morton (HIST), Rayland, Ohio, was selected as the Hokie Hero for the Virginia Tech vs. University of North Carolina game.

Leon A. Scales (PAPA, PAPA ’97), Roanoke, Va., received Virginia’s Disability Determination Service Award for establishing an Extended Service Team in Roanoke, Va.

Karen Eckstein Tyll (CEEN), East Northport, N.Y., is a senior engineer for J.R. Holzmacher PE LLC.

Kerry Brennan Wathen (LASC), Pinehurst, N.C., received a joint degree in law and social work from the University of South Carolina.

’96

Nathan R. Butler (ARCH), Orlando, Fla., received the Presidential Award from the Florida Association of the American Institute of Architects.

Daniel H. Dougherty (PSCI),

Educators transforming the high school experience

BY CHAD O’KANE M.A. ’11

Research has shown that transitioning from the nurturing environment of middle school to high school can be one of the most difficult times in a young person’s life. Three educators—Salem (Va.) City Schools



MIKE STEVENS, CITY OF SALEM

Ray Moore, Alan Seibert, and Scott Habeeb

Superintendent Alan Seibert (secondary education ’91, Ed.D. educational leadership and policy studies ’00), Salem High School Assistant Principal Scott Habeeb (B.A., M.A.Ed. curriculum and instruction ’97), and English teacher Ray Moore (English ’71)—have deemed this the “freshman problem.”

Prior to Seibert’s appointment as superintendent, the trio worked together as educational consultants, co-authoring a book entitled *The Ninth Grade Opportunity: Transforming Schools from the Bottom Up*. The book is meant to provide schools throughout the United States a model for giving ninth-graders the skills necessary for moving from middle school to the more academically rigorous environment of high school, without sacrificing expectations.

“Ninth-grade decisions have a long-term impact,” Habeeb said. “Kids that age are not mature enough to grasp the magnitude of those decisions.” Moore echoed that sentiment. “[Ninth-graders] are often not making the best decisions,” he said. “But by this age, those decisions really do count.”

While the three men share a philosophy about education, a difficult challenge for the authors was to unite three distinct voices in one book. “One of the biggest challenges was attaining a common voice,” Seibert said. “But we all have our area of expertise, and we’re profoundly student-centered, so the book came together around that notion.”

Each credits his Virginia Tech roots as a bond that drew them together. “It didn’t hurt that we’re all Hokies,” Seibert said. “It gave us plenty to talk about.”

As superintendent, Seibert has divested himself from the consulting team yet remains committed to ensuring that teachers and their students have the resources necessary to negotiate the rocky transition into high school. Habeeb and Moore continue their consulting work and have plans for a follow-up book about inspiring and connecting with students.

Chad O’Kane (M.A. communication ’11) is a graduate assistant with Virginia Tech Magazine.

Bettendorf, Ind., is the business development manager at John Deere in Moline, Ill.

Trenda C. Leavitt (LAR), Bedford, Va., received her landscape-architect licensure from the Commonwealth of Virginia.

John R. Lehrer II (MGT), Lorton, Va., is a lawyer with Baker Hostetler and practices in transactional tax matters and tax controversy.

Robert J. Petrie (ARCH), Marcellus, N.Y., is displaying

his art in an exhibition at Colgate University.

Donna Jefferies Wells (EDAC), Fredericksburg, Va., was conferred the district director emerita title by the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors.

Fighting Gravity—and winning

BY CHAD O’KANE M.A. ’11

Fighting Gravity, the homegrown performance group that utilizes blacklights to perform gravity-defying illusions, has come a long way since a YouTube video of their initial performance on campus for Anchor Splash—a 2009 philanthropy event for sorority Delta Gamma—went viral and attracted considerable attention online. The 13 Tech students and alumni who comprise the group have been on a roller coaster ride, including a third-place finish on NBC’s “America’s Got Talent,” a successful nationwide tour, and a 2010 performance on “Dick Clark’s New Year’s Rockin’ Eve with Ryan Seacrest” show.

In February, the group returned to campus to perform. Watching them rehearse, one could see that the members—who were fraternity brothers at Tech—share a unique bond. In a true collaborative effort, each member offered input or griped at another member for missing a cue. Despite a lack of formal training, the members strive for perfection. “We think about this 24 hours a day, seven days a week,” said Brett Sposa. “Because we’re not professional dancers or choreographers, we have to work that much harder than everyone else.”

After signing with the professional management group Octagon, the student members took leaves of absence from school, determined to make a career out of Fighting Gravity. “We don’t care if it’s a headline show in Vegas or a show on Broadway,” said Caleb Sharp. “We just want to create the biggest entertainment group in the world ... period.”

While ambitious and focused, the performers are also realists. They understand the difficulty of attaining success in the entertainment industry and appreciate the value of a college education. “We plan to continue to plug away, finding fresh ways to make the show better,” said Sposa. “We’ll re-evaluate at the end of the summer, and if we don’t think [the show] is going in the direction we want it to go, school will always be there. The worst thing that can happen is we’ll have all of these wonderful experiences and then return to a school we love.”

Chad O’Kane (M.A. communication ’11) is a graduate assistant with Virginia Tech Magazine.

Go to www.vtmagazine.vt.edu to see Fighting Gravity videos.



KELSEY KRADEL

Fighting Gravity posed in Burruss Hall this spring.

’97

Peter Macedo (EDCI ’98), Blacksburg, Va., is director for the Office of Distance Learning and Summer Sessions at Virginia Tech.

David M. Moore (DASC ’77, HORT), Deltaville, Va., received the Distinguished Service Award from the National Association of County Agricultural Agents.

Robert S. Notte (CE), Cornelius, N.C., is associate vice president and branch manager for the Dewberry office in Charlotte, N.C.

Vonda M. Patterson (CSA), Chesapeake, Va., is a lead information systems engineer for MITRE Corporation and was named a Technology Rising Star.

’99

Melanie Williams Barrow (HORT, EDCT ’01), Ridgeway, Va., received an achievement award from the National Association of County Agricultural Agents.

Norman B. Hodges IV (ISE ’00), El Paso, Texas, received the Maj. Gen. James Wright Distinguished Master Logistician Award from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College and received a master of science in adult and continuing education from Kansas State University.

’00s

’00

Laurie Thompson Keatts (ME), Hickory, N.C., earned her master’s in social work from Appalachian State University.

David H. Luer (GEOL), Den-ville, N.J., is the QA deputy director for Hampton-Clarke Veritech Lab.

Laurie McNeill (CE), Phoenix, Ariz., was named Utah’s top college educator by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education.

Maurizio Porfiri (EM, EM ’06), Brooklyn, N.Y., was named by *Popular Science* to its 2010 Brilliant 10 List honoring top scientists younger than 40.

A. Melissa Smarr (HIDM, PAPA ’10), Fairfax, Va., is a code specialist III with Fairfax County government’s Department of Public Works and Environmental Services.

’01

Lindsey Angus Haugh (ART), Christiansburg, Va., is the public relations assistant for the College of Engineering at Virginia Tech.

Scottie L. Jerrell (CSES), Duffield, Va., received an achievement award from the National Association of County Agricultural Agents.

Gary L. Simmons Jr. (CSES), Crewe, Va. is mayor of the Town of Crewe.

’02

Craig E. Mills (CE), Dayton, Ohio, was selected as the Hokie Hero for the Virginia Tech ACC championship game.

’03

Eric M. Latham (COMM ’03), Bristol, Va., has secured a federal grant for medical research for Innovative Technologies, where he is COO.

’04

Gregory B. Baker (HIST), Martinsville, Va., was selected as the Hokie Hero for the Virginia Tech vs. University of Miami game.

Timothy J. Owens (PSCI), Chester, Va., was selected as the Hokie Hero for the Virginia Tech vs. North Carolina State University game.

Daniel R. Richardson (ISE ’05), Summerville, S.C., was selected as a Hokie Hero for the Virginia Tech vs. Central Michigan University game.

’05

Joshua T. Childress (PSYC, HIST), Monterey, Calif., earned his master of art in history from Virginia Commonwealth University.

Heather Gilbert Childress (ENGL), Monterey, Calif., earned her master of art in media and public affairs from George Washington University.

’06

Nicole G. Hall (ARCH), Roanoke, Va., is a registered architect in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Belinda Bennett McFeeters (ELPS), Walkertown, N.C., is co-editor of a book entitled *Leading Across Differences: Cases and Perspectives*, written to help leaders deal with social identity-based conflict.

Christina W. Royal (SOC), APO, AP, was selected as the Hokie Hero for the Virginia Tech vs. Wake Forest University game.

’07

Andrew J. McKinley (ARCH), Hickory, N.C., is a designer/technician for Guernsey Tingle Architects.

Staci F. Rijal (WSCl), Blacksburg, Va., was placed in the prestigious Knauss Fellowship program by the Virginia Sea Grant.

’08

Michael S. Rihani (BIT), Reston, Va., is co-founder and chief strategy officer of Koofers Inc.

Nicholas T. Williams (IDST), Poquoson, Va., was selected as Hokie Hero for the Virginia Tech vs. Georgia Tech game.

’09

Kimberly S. Brown (ELPS), Christiansburg, Va., is director of academic advising in the Division of Undergraduate Education.

Margaret A. Duckson (BIOL, SPAN), Staley, N.C., received the Janet L. Cam-erson Scholarship.

Rachel Lark (ARCH), Blacksburg, Va., has published her first book, *Capacity for Delight*.

Manas N. Tungare (CSA), Mountain View, Calif., was the first engineer to work on Google Instant during its earliest developmental stage.

Matthew T. VanArsdale (HIST), Clarksville, Tenn., was selected as the Hokie Hero for the Virginia Tech vs. University of Virginia game.

’10s

’10

Elizabeth A. Klinefelter (COMM), Stephens City, Va., is the public relations account coordinator for Access Advertising & Public Relations.

Shirley A. Reppert (CE), Blacksburg, Va., is a civil associate for Michael Baker Corporation.

Matthew M. Schuler (PHIL), of Sanford, Fla., received the William Preston Society Gold Watch Thesis Award.

Weddings

’96 Suzanne Updike and Ryan Welch, Huntly, Va., 10/2/10.

’98 Melessa Harvey Suder and **’98 Brannon Suder**, Charlotte Court House, Va., 7/24/10.

’98 Cherie Brown and **’98 Calvin B. Teel**, Chesapeake, Va., 5/29/10.

’99 Jason B. Buckland and Emily Moring, Greensboro, N.C., 7/24/10.

’99 Jennifer Clock Pettway and William A. Pettway, Chesapeake, Va., 8/6/10.

’99 Janine Babulski Webb and Mathew Webb, Raleigh, N.C., 10/9/10.

’00 Jen M. La and **’00 Stacy B. Lee**, Centreville, Va., 10/3/10.

’00 Michael M. Semmens and **’03 Jill Henry Semmens**, Honolulu, Hawaii, 6/12/10.

’02 Cindy Bucy Bennett and Stacy Bennett, Riner, Va., 8/14/10.

’02 Brent R. Laurenz and Jessica Bearden, Raleigh, N.C., 10/16/10.

’02 Jenna Cancro Lyons and Scott Lyons, East Brunswick, N.J., 9/18/10.

’02 Ashby Moran Marcus and **’04 Christopher B. Marcus**, Arlington, Va., 7/31/10.

’03 Mark Newlan and **’04 Emily B. Hedgpeth**, Kensington, Md., 9/11/10.

’04 Karen Amores and **’04 Alexander S. Beck**, Alexandria, Va., 8/16/10.

’04 Yan Byalik and **’04 Krista Tygrett**, Newport News, Va., 11/13/10.

’04 David M. Marston and Shiloh Rich, Frisco, Texas, 10/9/10.

’04 Katie Streeff McIlwee and **’05 Jason E. McIlwee**, Charlottesville, Va., 9/18/10.

’04 Courtney Danto Merrell and **’05 Ryan Merrell**, Fairfax, Va., 9/5/10.

’04 Terri Granger O’Brien and Scott O’Brien, Clifton, Va., 6/12/10.

’04 Lauren Ellis Rice and Thomas B. Rice, Aldie, Va., 9/24/10.

’05 Stephen J. Cacciola and **’05 Jennifer A. DiCristina**, Christiansburg, Va., 10/2/10.

’05 Ian H. Campbell and **’06 Courtney Todd**, Springfield, Va., 11/20/10.

’05 Joshua T. Childress and **’05 Heather E. Gilbert**, Monterey, Calif., 6/12/10.

’05 Ashley Rainger Duncan and Robert E. Duncan, Falls Church, Va., 10/10/10.

’05 Megan Lattus Galata and Fred J. Galata, Herndon, Va., 8/21/10.

’05 Mark A. Gondek and **’05 Megan Heath**, Sterling, Va., 10/23/10.

’05 Sonal Patel-Dame and H. Paul Dame, Southampton, N.J., 7/23/10.

’06 David S. Londrey and Stacy Adams, Syria, Va., 11/6/10.

’06 Kristin Fenton Phillips and **’06 M. Bryant Phillips**, Henrico, Va., 10/16/10.

’06 Johnny R. Wen and **’08 Joanna Lynne Romanynshyn**, New York, N.Y., 6/12/10.

’07 Katherine Schafer Brown and **’09 David A. Brown**, Chesapeake, Va., 10/2/10.

’07 Ashley Givens Rasnake and **’09 Javan W. Rasnake**, Mount Pleasant, S.C., 7/10/10.

’07 Catherine Morin Torgersen and **’07 Brian E. Torgersen**, Falls Church, Va., 9/25/10.

’08 David P. Allen and Erica L. Bruni, Elkton, Md., 7/7/10.

’08 Lauren Lee Murphy and Michael Murphy, Bethel Park, Pa., 5/1/10.

’08 Justin L. Thomas and Stacey Chapman, California, Md., 11/13/10.

’09 Bryan J. Abbamonte and **’09 Claire McGill**, Odenton, Md. 6/12/10.

Births and adoptions

’82 James E. Steffen, Lee’s Summit, Mo., a daughter, 9/18/10.

’90 Tara Cochran Vance, Pilot, Va., a son, 6/10/10.

’91 Eric J. Stuart, Alexandria, Va., a daughter, 9/7/10.

’92 Robert T. Hicks, Arlington, Va., a daughter, 3/18/10.

’93 Erika Petersen Noyes, Fairfax, Va., a daughter, 7/8/10.

’94 Denise Nevins Graham, West Chester, Pa., a son, 5/24/10.

’94 Jason M. Mennard, Winchester, Va., a daughter, 6/12/10.

’95 Nima Sharifi, Dallas, Texas, twin boys, 4/14/10.

’95 Cynthia Ram Sweitzer and **’96 Timothy J. Sweitzer**, Virginia Beach, Va., a son, 5/15/10.

’95 Karen Eckstein Tyll and **’95 Jason S. Tyll**, East Northport, N.Y., a son, 12/25/09.

’95 Stacy Grimes Wajciechowski and **’98 Christopher A. Wajciechowski**, Ashland, Va., a son, 3/20/10.

’95 Kerry Brennan Wathen, Pinehurst, N.C., son and daughter, 3/10.

’95 Robine Humphrey Whetham, Norfolk, Va., a son, 7/9/10.

’96 Camille Chapman Cunningham, Charlotte, N.C., a daughter, 9/11/10.

’96 Mark V. Harney, Orlando, Fla., a son, 11/26/10.

’97 Jonathan D. Battaile, Olmsted Falls, Ohio, a daughter, 6/10/10.

’97 Danielle Jaeger Cook, Bellingham, Wash., a son, 1/20/10.

’97 Bibi Ghoushbeigui Dietrich and **’98 Jason A. Dietrich**, Mission Viejo, Calif., a son.

’97 Nickolaos Kappatos and **’97 Kara L. Manton**, Reston, Va., a daughter, 8/9/10.

’97 John E. Nuckols and **’99 Kelly Minett Nuckols**, Centreville, Va., a son, 8/6/10.

’97 Diane Shannon Sleeman, Maplewood, Minn., a daughter, 8/4/10.

’99 Norman B. Hodges IV, El Paso, Texas, a son, 9/23/10.

’99 Suzanne Upton McGee, Charlotte, N.C., a daughter, 11/10/10.

’99 Gregory J. Simer, Pasadena, Md., a daughter, 12/30/09.

’99 Monica Perkins Wright, Rock Hill, S.C., a son, 11/22/10.

’00 Kristina Jimmo Easter and **’00 Michael E. Easter**, Jetersville, Va., a daughter, 9/7/10.

’00 Laurie Thompson Keatts, Hickory, N.C., a daughter, 7/16/10.

’00 Melissa Walborn O’Connor and **’00 Michael J. O’Connor**, Simpsonville, S.C., a son, 5/19/10.

’00 Michael C. Wurst, Annapolis, Md., a son, 10/19/10.

’01 Erin Coe Fristoe and **’01 John K. Fristoe Jr.**, Woodbridge, Va., a son, 7/6/10.

’01 David M. O’Brien Jr. and **’01 Jill Brew O’Brien**, Madison, Ala., a daughter, 10/13/10.

’01 Peter J. Rappoccio, Acton, Mass., a son, 10/16/10.

’01 Nicholas L. Robinson, Chester, Va., twin boys, 4/6/10.

’01 Michael D. Witt and **’01 Talayah Williams Witt**, Stafford, Va., a son, 7/19/10.

’01 Cheryl Anderso Zaron and **’02 Michael P. Zaron**, Ellicott City, Md., a son, 5/19/10.

’02 Adam F. Campbell and **’03 Katherine Smith Campbell**, Haymarket, Va., a son, 11/7/10.

’02 John H. Cuthbertson Jr. and **’03 Meghan Keifer Cuthbertson**, Hoboken, N.J., a son, 7/13/10.

’02 Brian W. Minor and **’04 Elizabeth Babey Minor**, Richmond, Va., a daughter, 9/24/10.

’02 Meredith Hazelett Papa, Glen Allen, Va., a daughter, 4/21/10.

’02 Daniel A. Rabin and **’03 Sarah Wilder Rabin**, Glen Allen, Va., a daughter, 10/25/10.

’02 Susanna Bailey Reedy, Ashburn, Va., a son, 1/24/10.

'02 Brian S. Scheulen, Chester Gap, Va., a daughter, 9/14/10.

'03 Carolyn Gerhardt Jenks and **'03 Christopher M. Jenks**, Corpus Christi, Texas, a daughter, 3/31/10.

'03 Sarah Ammons Milans and **'03 Seth A. Milans**, Herndon, Va., a son, 8/23/10.

'03 Taryl Lytle Millison, Alexandria, Va., a son, 7/2/10.

'03 Lilian Davalos Mills, Dumfries, Va., a daughter, 10/10/10.

'04 Jason H. Fears and **'05 Pamela Ball Fears**, Lexington, Ky., a daughter, 6/22/10.

'04 Adam P. Grindstaff and **'04 Kathryn Harman Grindstaff**, Christiansburg, Va., a daughter, 8/5/10.

'04 Erinn Bull Koonce and **'04 Steven B. Koonce**, Durham, N.C., a daughter, 7/13/10.

'04 Nicholas J. Pascale and **'05 Tara Zebrowski Pascale**, Baton Rouge, La., a son, 10/6/10.

'04 Ellen Baum Rembold and **'04 Matthew J. Rembold**, Quinton, Va., a son, 6/5/10.

'04 Lindsey Roach Simmons, Raleigh, N.C., a son, 12/22/09.

'05 Kathryn Hall McGee, Radcliff, Ky., a daughter, 6/9/10.

Deaths

'32 Arthur L. Pond Jr., 9/1/10 (4617 Wythe Ave., Richmond, VA 23226).

'33 Leo L. Tylec, 9/16/10 (Apt. 9, 1986 Commonwealth Ave., Brighton, MA 02135).

'34 James R. Simpson, 10/21/10 (7721 Weber Ct., Annandale, VA 22003).

'37 James B. Fray, 12/7/10 (P.O. Box 204, Rustburg, VA 24588).

'38 Milton W. Brockmeyer, 12/8/10 (199 Northwood Dr., Pulaski, VA 24301).

'39 Norval A. Boone, 12/9/10 (411 Bedford Ave., Bedford, VA 24523).

'39 John F. Hokanson,

12/8/10 (680 E. 100 S., Apt. G2, Salt Lake City, UT 84102).

'39 Norvin C. Lancaster, 9/28/10 (50 Pine Leaf Cir., Meadow Valley, CA 95956).

'39 Arthur W. Olschefski, 9/24/10 (8113 Canterbury Dr., Orange, TX 77632).

'40 George D. Eastes, 9/23/10 (300 Park Rd., Portsmouth, VA 23707).

'40 Walter P. Glover, 10/20/10 (318 Brooks St. S.E., Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548).

'41 Harold S. Atwood, 9/23/10 (4521 Duke Dr., Portsmouth, VA 23703).

'41 Robert E. Hord Jr., 12/13/10 (302 Albemarle Ave., Richmond, VA 23226).

'42 Vernie M. Graves Jr., 12/18/10 (935 Capitol Landing Rd., Williamsburg, VA 23185).

'43 Robert O. Swain, 10/6/10 (107 Marjorie Ln., West Columbia, SC 29169).

'44 H. Vance Crawford Jr., 5/8/10 (16 Turtle Rock Ct., New Paltz, NY 12561).

'44 Walter C. Erwin Jr., 10/7/10 (3701 Otter Pl., Lynchburg, VA 24503).

'44 Lester E. Force, 5/24/10 (6311 Whispering Oaks Dr. W., Jacksonville, FL 32277).

'44 John D. Godsey, 10/12/10 (Apt. 406, 333 Russell Ave., Gaithersburg, MD 20877).

'45 Walter N. Bond, 9/25/10 (300 Kildaire Woods Dr., Apt. 107, Cary, NC 27511).

'45 Eda Hylton Meeks, 12/20/10 (3116 Gracefield Rd., Silver Spring, MD 20904).

'45 Wallace R. Simmons, 11/22/10 (4901 Cool Spring Dr., Chester, VA 23831).

'45 James L. Smith Jr., 12/18/10 (3100 Shore Dr., Apt. 302, Virginia Beach, VA 23451).

'46 Irvin M. Eskin, 7/25/10 (2900 N. Leisure World Blvd., Apt. 210, Silver Spring, MD 20906).

'46 E.M. Jacob, 10/15/10 (Apt. 209, 144 S. Main St., West Hartford, CT 06107).

'46 William C. Kelly, 12/25/10 (Box 181, Chilhowie, VA 24319).

'46 Nancy Hopkins Mahone, 12/21/10 (3656

Peakwood Dr. S.W., Roanoke, VA 24014).

'46 Thomas E. Pittman Jr., 9/15/10 (7300 Forest Rd., Westport Health Care, Richmond, VA 23226).

'47 Arthur R. Marshall, 8/26/10 (11403 Landsdowne Dr., Houston, TX 77035).

'47 Richard C. Myers, 6/14/10 (1012 Wildwood Downs Cir., Columbia, SC 29223).

'47 Morris Schechter, 8/6/10 (7 Robin Rd., Spring Valley, NY 10977).

'48 Eugene L. Butt, 11/28/10 (121 Schenley Ave., Bluefield, VA 24605).

'49 C. Burton Gerhardt, 9/28/10 (P.O. Box 3011, Lynchburg, VA 24503).

'49 John W. McCluer, 11/30/10 (808 Kentwood Dr., Blacksburg, VA 24060).

'49 Anthony Previte, 2/21/10 (13 Alexander Ave., Hicksville, NY 11801).

'50 Clyde E. Bryant, 12/8/10 (44 Haughton Ln., Newport News, VA 23606).

'50 Robert C. Davis, 12/8/10 (2568 Regency Dr. E., Tucker, GA 30084).

'50 Charles D. Ford Jr., 9/11/10 (5301 E. 19th St., Tucson, AZ 85711).

'50 George E. Fore, 12/4/10 (4801 Coleman Rd., Richmond, VA 23230).

'50 Robert W. Harvey, 12/2/10 (5200 Irvine Blvd., Apt. 181, Irvine, CA 92620).

'50 M. Franklin Hudgins, 9/15/10 (Apt. 702, 1 Colley Ave., Norfolk, VA 23510).

'50 Albert P. Jensen, 9/27/10 (1080 Meadowview Dr., Bedford, VA 24523).

'50 Guy F. Linkous Jr., 12/17/10 (5339 Hines Rd., Frederick, MD 21704).

'50 Robert L. McDanel, 9/21/10 (1900 Lauderdale Dr., Apt. E-116, Richmond, VA 23238).

'50 James L. McDonald, 12/20/10 (2070 Walnut Springs Rd., Blacksburg, VA 24060).

'50 R. Edward Nance, 9/15/10 (9309 Arrowdel Rd., Richmond, VA 23229).

'50 Erving H. Rand Jr., 9/10/10 (335 Creekview Dr., Hampstead, NC 28443).

'50 William H. Schwarz, 12/19/10 (412 Grinstead Rd., Severna Park, MD 21146).

'50 F.E. Weisensale Sr., 12/5/10 (7098 Bradford Cottage Ct., Mechanicsville, VA 23111).

'51 Paul C. Shelor, 9/7/10 (P.O. Box 192, Dublin, VA 24084).

'51 William D. Siapno, 11/18/10 (P.O. Box 918, Boulder, CO 80306).

'51 William P. Smith Jr., 11/3/10 (102 River Point Rd., Signal Mountain, TN 37377).

'51 E.H. Terpening, 3/24/10 (114 S. Juliana St., Bedford, PA 15522).

'51 William M. Trippeer, 11/22/10 (201 Marsha Cove Ln. N., Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082).

'51 James E. Tuck, 8/31/10 (614 Rose Way, Salado, TX 76571).

'52 George C. Barnes III, 9/25/10 (3245 Dorsett Ln., York, PA 17402).

'52 Harlan B. Caldwell, 9/23/10 (635 Charles St., Christiansburg, VA 24073).

'52 B.J. Holland, 10/4/10 (600 Morison Ave., King-sport, TN 37660).

'52 Shuler J. Johnston, 11/3/10 (4802 Florist Rd. N.W., Roanoke, VA 24012).

'52 Robert S. Mohler, 6/15/10 (5243 N. Shoreland Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53217).

'52 Samuel R. Pritchard Jr., 11/3/10 (P.O. Box 20072, 3154 Cedar Ridge Rd., Roanoke, VA 24018).

'52 William F. Rhudy Jr., 10/7/10 (113 Williams St., Galax, VA 24333).

'53 J. Glen Baker, 9/7/10 (4601 Coventry Rd., Richmond, VA 23221).

'53 Arthur R. Daniel Jr., 4/30/10 (5128 Bogue Sound Dr., Emerald Isle, NC 28594).

'53 John W. Paepflow, 8/25/10 (134 Sandy Cove Dr., No. 78, Henrico, NC 27842).

'54 Luther Broaddus III, 10/14/10 (Box 105, Mag-dalena, NM 87825).

'54 Frank A. Fiorini III, 9/30/10 (14613 Valencia Dr., Louisville, KY 40245).

'54 Fletcher S. McCutcheon, 10/3/10 (127 N.W. Turn, Shenandoah, VA 22849).

'54 Virginia Van Note Smith, 9/5/10 (Apt. 107, 2244 Walke St., Virginia Beach, VA 23451).

'55 Lloyd R. Cowne Jr., 12/17/10 (2199 Carriage Ln., Spring Hill, FL 34606).

'55 Joseph E. Mabe, 10/12/10 (312 W. Bank St., Bridgewater, VA 22812).

'55 Jere A. Moffitt, 12/21/10 (1297 Lakeshore Cir., Gainesville, GA 30501).

'55 Samuel H. Nixon Jr., 10/24/10 (940 Oak Dr., Christiansburg, VA 24073).

'55 R. Bruce Thomas, 9/3/10 (5215 Grandon Dr., Hilliard, OH 43026).

'55 Thomas A. Waddill, 9/21/10 (6201 Jones Farm Rd., Wake Forest, NC 27587).

'56 Ronald E. Meade, 11/5/10 (3257 Mocking-bird Ln., Birmingham, AL 35226).

'56 W. Ernest Norcross, 1/1/2011 (234 S. Walnut Bend, Cordova, TN 38018).

'57 Ralph H. Barksdale, 7/31/10 (505 Gails Way, Merritt Island, FL 32953).

'57 John W. Clarke, 12/1/10 (401 Walnut Rd., Salem, VA 24153).

'57 John M. Roberts, 9/25/10 (3499 Clint Dr., Trenton, OH 45067).

'58 Paul M. UMBERGER, 7/28/10 (8802 Greenford Dr., Henrico, VA 23294).

'59 Joseph W. Baker, 11/18/10 (558 Beech Dr., Newport News, VA 23601).

'59 Bruce Dunn, 9/19/10 (2 Brooksbank Ct., Fredericksburg, VA 22405).

'59 Claude I. Lewis, 9/23/10 (3001 Shady Lawn Dr., Greensboro, NC 27408).

'59 Winfield W. Richardson, 10/9/10 (253 W. Beidler Rd., King Of Prussia, PA 19406).

'60 Robert G. Foster, 11/23/10 (P.O. Box 1270, Blue Hill, ME 04614).

'60 C.D. Hrovatic, 12/3/10 (806 Fincastle Dr., Bluefield, VA 24605).

'60 S.C. Oliver III, 9/20/10 (404 Meadow Ln., Franklin, VA 23851).

'60 Hallock P. Snell Jr., 9/2/10 (1110 Fetchett Rd., Brownstown, VA 22610).

'61 John H. Jester, 9/21/10 (416 Saddle Ridge Rd., Fayetteville, NC 28311).

'61 Charles S. Noell, 10/20/10 (2732 Montvale Rd. S.W., Roanoke, VA 24015).

'61 John H. Pillis III, 8/28/10 (10893 97th St., Unit 3, Largo, FL 33773).

'61 Sidney C. Robertson, 5/6/2009 (118 E. Clement St., Baltimore, MD 21230).

'61 James G. Ware Jr., 2/11/10 (105 Creek Cir., Seaford, VA 23696).

'62 Robert L. Campbell, 12/15/2009 (1393 Lake Ave. S.E., Largo, FL 33771).

'63 Samuel M. Estill, 8/30/10 (2 Wakefield Ave., Fredericksburg, VA 22405).

'63 S. Herbert Omasta, 5/10/10 (277 Meadow Top Ln., Ellijay, GA 30540).

'63 Henry Vranian Jr., 10/26/10 (72 W. Square Dr., Henrico, VA 23238).

'65 Wayne C. Hare, 9/2/10 (Hulera El Centenario Sa, Apartado Postal 53-1000, Mexico 1f Df Mexico, Mexico).

'65 Kenneth W. Kells Sr., 10/23/10 (7 Conklin Ave., Ivoryton, CT 06442).

'65 George N. Mars, 12/9/10 (P.O. Box 1710, Easton, MD 21601).

'65 W.S. O'Neal III, 9/17/10 (6468 Blackwater Rd., Virginia Beach, VA 23457).

'65 Charles E. Williams, 11/22/10 (86th Eng Combat Apo, San Francisco, CA 96289).

'66 Joseph A. Billiams, 5/11/10 (1162 St. Georges Ave., Avenel, NJ 07001).

'66 J. Lawrence Dunagan, 12/1/10 (1510 Twisted Oak Dr., Reston, VA 20194).

'66 Gary E. Legner, 9/27/10 (701 Wilder Dr., Charlottesville, VA 22901).

'66 Thomas O. Sitz, 9/28/10 (606 Kelsey Ln., Blacksburg, VA 24060).

'67 John D. Hurt, 11/12/10 (3275 Laurel Dr., Blacksburg, VA 24060).

'68 Arthur B. Gruver, 8/29/10 (2822 Hitchcock Rd., White Hall, MD 21161).

'68 Ross H. Mitchell II, 5/3/10 (59010 26th Ave., Bangor, MI 49013).

'70 Nancy K. Bird, 10/12/10 (12026 Marella Ln., Greenwood, DE 19950).

'70 David N. Neel, 9/4/10 (7312 Hwy. 21 W., Madisonville, TX 77864).

'70 William T. Smith, 10/9/10 (c/o Robert H. Smith II, 1130 West Ave., Richmond, VA 23220).

'71 John W. Dickens, 10/1/10 (1153 Westmoreland Dr., Harrisonburg, VA 22801).

'71 Norman Daniel Frank II, 2/7/10 (818 Fairway Dr., Mission, TX 78572).

'71 Carl P. Jensen, 7/23/10 (8288 Lakeside Dr., Riverside, CA 92509).

'72 Michael L. Jackson, 11/28/10 (Rt. 1, Box 1152, 200 11th St. N.E., Norton, VA 24273).

'72 Joe L. Smith III, 10/20/10 (13807 David Crockett Hwy., Huntland, TN 37345).

'73 Thomas Speziale, 12/15/10 (1440 Elizabeth Dr., Apt. 3, Idaho Falls, ID 83404).

'74 Robert L. Drepperd, 10/12/10 (5772 E. Timber Ridge Rd., Mount Crawford, VA 22841).

'74 Robert W. Edsall Jr., 10/10/10 (112 Allegheny Ave., Cheswick, PA 15024).

'74 Peter H. Marshall, 8/28/10 (2607 Oakledge Ct., Vienna, VA 22181).

'74 Jack M. Thaler, 8/1/10 (901 High Point Ridge Rd., Franklin, TN 37069).

'75 Louis N. Alls, 10/8/10 (P.O. Box 219, Cloverdale, VA 24077-0219).

'75 Billy E. Friend, 12/14/10 (4841 Alum Spring Rd., Pulaski, VA 24301).

'75 Anne K. Martz, 10/5/10 (8423 Bayfield Dr., Richmond, VA 23235).

'77 Sarah Dinsmore Hall, 12/1/10 (512 Poplar St., Boonville, MO 65233).

'77 Allan W. Jones, 4/13/10 (247 Vincent Rd., Paoli, PA 19301).

'77 David H. Richmond, 5/24/10 (1827 Farmington Dr., Franklin, TN 37069).

Helicopter pilot cools her jets in Blacksburg

BY HILLARY MAY '12

U.S. Army Aviation is not a common career choice for women, but Brande Goracke Reeves (environmental resources management '01) is used to taking the path less traveled. At Virginia Tech, she was one of only 23 Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets (VTCC) members in the College of Natural Resources and Environment (CNRE) and a female in the traditionally male-dominated corps. So it is little surprise to those who know her that she was one of a small number of women to ever pilot the AH-64 Apache, the Army's only attack helicopter.

Described as a “star cadet” by former Virginia Tech Army ROTC commander Denny Cochrane, Reeves graduated with a commission to the Army and an appointment to flight school. She served two tours in Iraq, unperturbed by being a woman in a man’s world. “Flying the Apache was like driving a Porsche,” Reeves said. “It’s an awesome experience. [The Apache] is lightning-quick in its responses.”

Reeves recognizes that her time at Virginia Tech—a blend of the corps and CNRE—was crucial to her success. “Much of what I learned in natural resources could be applied to military operations and was a big help to me in the Army and my aviation career,” she said. Of her time in the corps, she also knows that cadets learn dependability and earn a well-deserved reputation for it. “When [cadets are given] something to do, they will take care of it.”

Now residing in Blacksburg, Reeves is purposefully slowing down from a “fast and furious career” to start a family. She’s also serving on the VTCC board of directors, where her goals for the corps include increasing enrollment and continuing to recruit more women.

She’s just the right person for the job. After all, this is a woman who knows a thing or two about reaching new heights.

Hillary May (*English* '12) is an intern with Virginia Tech Magazine.

Lynn Matthews Davis, director of communications for the College of Natural Resources and Environment, contributed to this article.



Brande Goracke Reeves, pictured with Tony Reed, served two tours in Iraq.

RICH REID

'78 Clara Baumann Bland-ing, 9/5/10 (339 Quarterdeck Alley, Annapolis, MD 21401).

'78 John L. Moore, 4/24/10 (316 Berkley Pl., Staunton, VA 24401).

'78 Steven R. Shimp, 11/16/10 (318 Curtis Dr., Pennsville, NJ 08070).

'79 Helen M. Scheirbeck, 12/19/10 (8906 Rusty Anchor Rd., Unit 17, Ocean City, MD 21842).

'79 James M. Tierney, 10/30/10 (2497 Fraser Ct., Woodbridge, VA 22191).

'80 Janet Hanchett Hoffstot, 11/22/10 (19301 Golfview Dr., Big Rapids, MI 49307).

'81 Bruce A. Flora, 12/8/10 (23387 Virgil H. Goode Hwy., Boones Mill, VA 24065).

'83 Patricia Cuffia Rankin, 8/30/10 (P.O. Box 213, Catawba, VA 24070).

'83 Karen L. Zielezienski, 8/22/10 (11700 S.W. 22nd Ct., Davie, FL 33325).

'85 Karen A. Stoevener, 10/10/10 (4103 Gentry Park Dr., Blacksburg, VA 24060).

'86 Donovan W. Cook, 6/16/10 (1939 Wayne

Ave., Topeka, KS 66604).

'87 Sidney E. Crumwell Jr., 9/17/10 (918 Hanson Dr., Johnson City, TN 37601).

'88 Anthony E. Disilvestre, 9/4/10 (3492 Heritage Valley Ct., San Jose, CA 95148).

'88 Nancy J. Inghram, 12/13/10 (82 University Trailer Ct., Blacksburg, VA 24060).

'88 Connie Amos Thurston, 1/2/2011 (601 Doyle St., Salem, VA 24153).

'89 David R. Orvos, 12/28/10 (357 Huff Creek Tr., Amherst, VA 24521).

'89 James L. Ruffa, 12/5/10 (130 Hampton Dr., Colonial Heights, VA 23834).

'92 Darlene F. DeVera, 9/15/10 (Apt. 402, 1225 Taylor St., San Francisco, CA 94108).

'92 Kris R. Green, 10/5/10 (46 Scarsdale Dr., Camp Hill, PA 17011).

'94 William N. Collie, 10/15/10 (310 Woodland Ct., Wise, VA 24293).

'95 Luella Myers Banks, 12/30/10 (4404 Cordell Dr., Roanoke, VA 24018).

'96 Kathleen Ludwig Pierce, 11/4/10 (P.O. Box 4, Fort Defiance, VA 24437).

'96 Shirley Quartes Whorley, 12/26/10 (553 Quail Ridge Dr., Fincastle, VA 24090).

'97 Courtney B. Riordan, 12/22/10 (5505 Fireside Ct., Fairfax, VA 22032).

'98 Robert C. Shickle, 12/18/10 (305 Branner Ave., Winchester, VA 22601).

'99 Tamar M. Friedner, 9/12/10 (38 Sunset Dr., Milford, MA 01757).

'99 Kathleen M. Kisner, 9/17/10 (302 Saucon View Dr., Bethlehem, PA 18015).

'00 Robert L. Hurley Jr., 5/13/10 (207 Cary St., Apt. G, Williamsburg, VA 23185).

'01 Anna Asher Lester, 11/15/10 (5914 Shining Oak Ln., Charlotte, NC 28269).

'04 Amy Kane Slusher, 12/23/10 (6400 Wellstone Ct., Greensboro, NC 27410).

'06 Elizabeth Hurt Yoensky, 10/15/10 (1278 Clifden Green, Charlottesville, VA 22901).

Student Deaths

'11 Elias P. Lehman, 11/22/10 (248 Northview Dr., Dayton, VA 22821).

'13 Samuel J. Wendler (54 Messina Ct., Shrewsbury, PA 17361).

Faculty Obits

Richard Allen Arndt, professor emeritus of physics in the College of Science, died April 10, 2010, in Blacksburg, Va. Arndt was a gifted and dedicated nuclear theorist and phenomenologist. A professor at Tech for more than thirty years, Arndt was also a fellow of the American Physical Society and an adjunct member of the faculty at George Washington University. His more than 50 research papers, four of which had been cited more than 100 times, provided research to help create the Scattering Analysis Interactive Dial-In network of analysis and database codes.

Milka Tcherneva Bliznakov, professor emerita of architecture in the College of Architecture and Urban Studies and a trailblazer for women in architecture,

died Nov. 4, 2010. In 1974, Bliznakov joined the faculty at Virginia Tech, where she established a solid reputation as one of the most respected scholars of her generation and was a recognized authority on Russian constructivism and the avant-garde movement. Frustrated by the lack of primary research materials on women in architecture, Bliznakov founded the International Archive of Women in Architecture, which documents the history of women's contributions to the built environment.

Charles Parry, professor emeritus of mathematics in the College of Science, died Dec. 25, 2010. Parry was best known for his passion for teaching mathematics and as a relentless Appalachian Trail volunteer. A member of the Virginia Tech community since 1971, Parry established a research program in number theory and published 37 papers. He delivered invited lectures in Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, and the United States. He participated in the design of mathematics courses for computer science majors and was greatly admired and respected among his colleagues.

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The future is calling.



Meet Monica Black (mechanical engineering '13), who is not only working toward her degree, but to advance Virginia Tech. Last fiscal year, more than 14,000 alumni or friends of the university said "yes" when asked to donate by a student caller like her. Combined, they gave more than \$1.6 million.

Whether it's a first gift by a recent graduate or a substantial contribution from a longtime donor, every one of the thousands of donations we receive each year is important. That's because each gift, regardless of its size, represents a true commitment to help Virginia Tech fulfill its mission and maintain its reputation.

When making an annual gift, you can choose to support any college, department, or program you wish. And you don't have to wait for a call from Monica or her colleagues to make a difference. Visit www.givingto.vt.edu to donate online or learn more about the impact gifts make at Virginia Tech.

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September

Sept. 3 - Virginia Tech vs. Appalachian State University
Class of '86, 25th reunion
Young alumni reunion for Classes of '91-'93 and '00-'02

Sept. 17 - Virginia Tech vs. Arkansas State University
Class of '81, 30th reunion
Graduate alumni homecoming
Corps of cadets homecoming
College of Natural Resources and Environment homecoming
Marching Virginians homecoming

October

Oct. 1 - Virginia Tech vs. Clemson University
Class of '71, 40th reunion
College of Architecture and Urban Studies homecoming
College of Science homecoming
Multicultural alumni homecoming

Oct. 8 - Virginia Tech vs. University of Miami
Class of '76, 35th reunion
Pamplin College of Business homecoming
College of Engineering homecoming
Cheerleader alumni homecoming

Oct. 22 - Virginia Tech vs. Boston College
Class of '61, 50th reunion (traditional parade)
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences homecoming
Highly-Tighty homecoming
Student Affairs homecoming: Residential Learning Community,
Virginia Tech Union, Homecoming King and Queen alumni

November

Nov. 17 - Virginia Tech vs. University of North Carolina (Thursday)
Class of '66, 45th reunion
College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences homecoming
Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine homecoming

