Bolstering college access

BY CHARLES W. STEGER ’69

As a college graduate, you likely don’t need to be convinced of the need for higher education in a modern economy. The majority of Virginians agree; in a recent poll, 75 percent of the commonwealth’s citizens supported the need for a college degree—an associate or a bachelor’s degree—to succeed in this high-tech world.

Yet there are troubles on the horizon. States generally have disinvested in higher education support during this decade, and they have accelerated such cuts because of the current state of the economy. Countries that once flooded our shores with their best and brightest are now investing in creating their own world-class universities. As China, India, and many other Asian countries expand higher education offerings and research capability in concert with loss of support here at home, America’s worldwide dominance of research universities and knowledge creation is at risk. Also, our nation is becoming ever more diverse, and we are seeing growth in demographic sectors in which college-going rates do not parallel those of the majority population.

With state disinvestment, college costs are increasingly borne by students, some of whom cannot afford those costs. The nation will be economically hamstrung if significant portions of its young are handicapped by under-education. Because of these concerns, I am pleased to see that Virginia’s business community is once again leading the way to tackle such issues with the launch of “Grow by Degrees,” a bipartisan initiative under the aegis of the Virginia Business Higher Education Council. The campaign seeks to boost Virginia’s economic recovery and long-term growth by making high-impact investments and supporting innovations in the state’s higher education system that will help secure our economic future and create real jobs.

The goals of the campaign are straightforward; it seeks to:

• award 70,000 more high-quality degrees over the next 10 years,
• target the new degrees to high-income, high-demand job sectors,
• create cost-efficient new ways to access college degrees,
• expand job-specific training at community colleges,
• increase public-private collaboration on university-based research,
• enhance economic development and workforce initiatives in each region, and
• make college affordable for low- and middle-income students and families.

There is clear evidence of the links between advanced education and a state or nation’s economic competitiveness and between knowledge creation—the very product of research universities—and job or company creation. The best jobs go to the best workers. And those workers gravitate to colleges or communities built on innovation or advanced research.

Today’s challenges in energy, health care, life sciences, and the environment can be met only with qualified human capital. This is America’s competitiveness edge. This is why we must find the will, both in Virginia and nationwide, to restore the loss of state funding and to maintain the affordability of college tuition. We must use the power of private philanthropy to support access to college and to invest in equipment and facilities for institutions of advanced learning.

Whether you are here in Virginia or elsewhere, get involved and speak out on behalf of higher education. Visit www.GrowByDegrees.org to learn more.
Supporting a sister

On Saturday, June 13, I and other Virginia Tech Delta Zeta alumnas gathered with our kids at Kylie Xiu Clifford’s Memorial Playground at Florida Elementary School in Herndon, Va., to raise money for and awareness of Sudden Infant Death (SID) Services of the Mid-Atlantic. We have started this tradition to reunite each year and to support SID Services of the Mid-Atlantic because my first daughter, Kylie, died of SID when she was 3 months and 19 days old. Pictured [above] are sisters who graduated from Virginia Tech from 1993 on.

Kathy Cung Clifford ’96
Herndon, Va.

Letter from the editor

It is with regret that I announce that this is my last issue as editor of Virginia Tech Magazine. I have proudly served as editor for the past eight years, during which time I have heard from many of you, and I have always enjoyed interacting with the readers of the magazine—you are a credit to your alma mater. Although I am not an alumna of Virginia Tech and I will be leaving Blacksburg, Virginia Tech will always be with me. Go Hokies!

Sherry Bithell

Editor’s note: To learn more about this cause, visit www.sidma.org.

A reminder to all Hokies

All Hokies enjoy wearing burnt orange and maroon, especially to sporting events. We even adorn our vehicles with a variety of Virginia Tech and Hokie stickers and magnetic signs and even with vanity plates. I personally have a “Hokie” and “A HOKIE!” Arizona license plates. I also wear a Virginia Tech or Hokies T-shirt at least 250 days a year.

I am writing to remind you that by showing our Hokie Pride, we are, in a sense, representing the university. So the next time you show your colors in public, remember the first-class university that helped to educate you. Be more courteous, going out of your way to help others, and most of all, smile and be proud that you are a Hokie!

Don Dalton ’60
Tucson, Ariz.

Budget kudos

Bravo on saving the magazine from budget cuts!

Col. Doug Anderson ’76
Hanscom AFB, Mass.

Clearing up cheering history

In the Vol. 29, No. 1 (Fall 2006) issue of Virginia Tech Magazine, there was an article about the university’s first female cheerleaders. I’ve attached a picture of the squad in 1952 [see photo below] that includes my wife, Mera Anna Chesnut Oxley (general home economics ’54) (front row, first on the left). It was my understanding that she was on the first squad with female cheerleaders. My wife passed away and I wanted to clarify this issue on her behalf. Go Hokies!

Glen Myron Oxley ’56
Moultrie, Ga.

George Makrinos (left) and John Foley (right) approaching Nijmegen, Netherlands. Makrinos (M.S. architecture ’04)—who last summer biked across 14 states in the U.S.—was joined by Foley (architecture ‘04) for a journey that began in Athens and traversed Albania, Italy, Austria, Germany, and the Netherlands to end in the United Kingdom. The two kept a daily blog of their experiences (www.bike-EU.blogspot.com).

Attention alumni: In mid-September, the university began changing the process for alumni to access their Virginia Tech e-mail accounts. Look for details at www.alumni.vt.edu/gateway/index.html.

Harry (’65) and Judy (’66) Binge (Warrenton, Va.) have been married 50 years. Their son, John ’93, and daughter-in-law, Robyn ’95, also graduated from Virginia Tech. After his Virginia Tech graduation, John served in the U.S. Air Force. He and his wife, Robyn, now operate a growing small business to support their daughter, Jacqueline, the couple’s only child.

Virginia Tech Delta Zeta alumnae

Sisters who graduated from Virginia Tech Delta Zeta are sisters who graduated with our kids at Kylie Xiu Clifford’s Memorial Playground at Florida Elementary School in Herndon, Va., to raise money for and awareness of Sudden Infant Death (SID) Services of the Mid-Atlantic. We have started this tradition to reunite each year and to support SID Services of the Mid-Atlantic because my first daughter, Kylie, died of SID when she was 3 months and 19 days old. Pictured [above] are sisters who graduated from Virginia Tech from 1993 on.

Laurie Prudente Clark (marketing management ’01) and her husband, Matthew Clark (mechanical engineering ’03), currently live in Germany, where Matthew, an F-16 pilot in the U.S. Air Force, is stationed at Spangdahlem Air Base. Laurie says that they travel frequently, and when they do, they take their HokieBird with them. Here It is, enjoying a wintry view of the Blue Mosque in Istanbul, Turkey. That’s one dedicated bird.

Dear Alumni Association family?

We’re looking for the Hokieist families of them all! If you and your siblings, parents, grandparents, aunts/uncles, and/or children attended Virginia Tech, we want to know. Send the names, degrees, and class years of all eligible family members by mail to Virginia Tech Magazine, 105 Media Building (10109), Blacksburg, VA 24061, or by e-mail to vtmag@vt.edu. Look for the results in a future issue.

How’s Hokie Pride?

Virginia Tech Magazine Fall 2009
Space Grant Consortium awarded nearly $300,000

The Virginia Space Grant Consortium has been awarded a $300,228 grant by the National Science Foundation’s Advanced Technological Education Program for the Geospatial Technician Education through Virginia’s Community Colleges project. John McGee, the state’s geospatial extension specialist for Virginia Cooperative Extension and an assistant professor in the College of Natural Resources, will work with the project team to create and maintain a geospatial technology Web portal for the community college system. The portal for the community college system. The portal will be shared statewide.

The award, announced in May 2009, will support the creation of a geospatial technology Web portal for the Virginia Community Colleges system. The portal will be shared statewide.

Denver Tech Carilion School of Medicine and Research Institute (VTCSI) is providing support for 11 research projects that partner researchers with clinicians to address medical challenges. The joint efforts include earlier cancer diagnosis; early autism diagnosis; preventing and treating infectious disease (including H1N1 flu and MRSA); obesity, and heart disease; neuroscience research related to falling risks; making medicines more bio-available; and development of a patient simulator for education of medical professionals and other technology to improve emergency-room care. Seed grants of $30,000 allow researchers to build upon their accomplishments and achieve important milestones in order to secure funding from federal agencies.

New College of Agriculture and Life Sciences dean appointed

Virginia Tech has named Alan Grant, professor and head of the Department of Animal Sciences at Purdue University, the new dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Grant started his position on Oct. 1. He succeeded L.T. Kok, who had been interim dean after the former dean, Sharon Quisenberry, left to become vice president of research and economic development at Iowa State University.

New Hall West provides living and office space

New Hall West has opened its doors, offering 32 students 176 new rooms, 32 new studios, and 15 new faculty offices. The building’s design also included the first floor as a public space for classes, student events, and faculty offices.

Visit Virginia Tech Magazine online at www.vtmagazine.vt.edu/fall09/ontheweb/html to learn more about:

Workshop empowers women in Mali

The workshop was attended by 50 women from 15 countries, including Mali, Senegal, and the United States. The women learned about the art of batik, a technique used to create intricate designs on fabric.

SpacePV receives grant to study space weather

SpacePV is a project led by the University of Idaho that is working to develop a new method for predicting space weather conditions. The project is funded by the National Science Foundation, and it will involve collaboration with other universities and organizations around the world.

New wheat variety honors dedicated seedman

A new wheat variety has been named after a dedicated seedman, the former dean, Sharon Quisenberry. The variety, called “Quisenberry,” is the result of more than 20 years of research and development by the Virginia Tech team.

Summer fellow’s research ranges from red wolves to nutrition

Thirteen Virginia Tech students concluded their 10-week Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) program in August. The students worked on projects that addressed a wide range of topics, from improving nutrition for persons living with HIV/AIDS in Kenya, gender differences in arterial stiffness, and the home range of red wolves in North Carolina, to building a patient simulator for emergency-room care.

University to compete in 2009 Solar Decathlon

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has announced that Virginia Tech will be one of 20 university teams selected to compete in its fourth Solar Decathlon, held on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., in the fall of 2009. The interdisciplinary Virginia Tech Solar Decathlon team was led by faculty and students in the College of Architecture and Urban Studies with participation from the College of Engineering and others. The teams, which have been selected from universities in the U.S., Canada, and Germany, will each receive $100,000 from DOE to uniquely design, build, and operate a fully solar-powered home.

Each home will utilize energy-efficient technology and demonstrate that homes powered entirely by the sun do not have to sacrifice modern comforts and aesthetics. To learn more about the project, go to www.lumenhaus.com.

Virginia Tech is one of only two American universities invited to participate in the international solar decathlon in Madrid, Spain, in June 2010.
bachelor’s degrees but without higher degrees on the basis of their average starting level salary (having a bachelor’s degree and two years of work experience) and mid-career earnings (15 years of work experience). The University of California at Berkeley topped the list, and the University of Virginia claimed the 10th spot. PayScale Inc. provides global online compensation data to employers and individuals.

Studies reveal dangers of texting while driving

Several studies conducted by the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute provide a clear picture of driver distraction and cell-phone use under real-world driving conditions. The studies revealed that drivers of light vehicles who are dialing a cell phone are 2.8 times more likely to crash or have a near-crash event as those who are not distracted. Drivers of heavy vehicles and trucks are 5.9 times more likely to have a crash or near-crash when dialing a cell phone and are 23.3 times more likely to do so when texting while driving. According to the study, talking or listening while driving posed less risk for light vehicles than dialing or texting and made no notable difference for trucks.

Tech programs rank high in survey

Virginia Tech remains 7th among the 100 best universities in the U.S. News & World Report’s survey of undergraduate programs, "America’s Best Colleges 2010," released Aug. 21. It is the third year in a row that the university has held the spot. The university also retains its spot among the top 30 public universities in the nation, one of three institutions in Virginia to do so. The College of Engineering held its spot in the top 20 engineering schools at No. 14, while the Pamplin College of Business ranks No. 42 among the top 50 business schools.

Doug Nelson receives third NSF faculty advisor award

Doug Nelson, a professor of mechanical engineering, was awarded the 2009 National Science Foundation (NSF) Outstanding Long-term Faculty Advisor Award for the EcoCAR Challenge competition and a $10,000 cash prize. EcoCAR is a design competition sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy in which engineering students from across the country participate in the development of green vehicles. The NSF Outstanding Faculty Advisor Award honors Nelson for best promoting the goals, objectives, and activities of the competition.

Virginia Tech a top 10 school for graduate earning potential

A PayScale College Salary Report has ranked Virginia Tech in the nation’s top 10 state-supported colleges and universities for the potential starting and mid-career salaries of its graduates. Virginia Tech garnered the ninth spot in the report, which ranked graduates with

Vehicle could help blind to live more independently

A student team in the College of Engineering is providing the blind with an opportunity many never thought possible: the chance to drive. A retrofitted four-wheeled dirt buggy developed by the Blind Driver Challenge team from Tech’s Robotics and Mechanisms Laboratory uses laser range-finders, an instant voice command interface, and a host of other innovative technologies to guide blind drivers in steering, braking, and accelerating. Although the project is in the early testing stage, the National Federation of the Blind considers the vehicle a major breakthrough for visually impaired citizens to live independently. The 2009-10 student team is planning major changes to the technology, including replacing the dirt buggy vehicle with a fully electric car like those used by traffic officers in downtown city centers. The all-electric vehicle would not only reduce the vibration that can cause problems to the laser sensor, but it also will provide clean electric power for the computing units.

Scholarships will support nontraditional bioscience students

The National Science Foundation has awarded Virginia Tech $506,373 for a five-year program, Broadening Opportunities for Nontraditional Graduate Students in Biomedical Sciences. The growth in biotechnology and its impact on agriculture has created a need for a highly trained workforce of graduate-level scientists. The Scholarships in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics program at Virginia Tech will address the need by enhancing the stipends of students recruited by the entomology and biochemistry departments in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. In all, 44 scholarships of $10,000 each will be provided.
How (and why) Virginia Tech is creating a sustainable campus

BY DENISE YOUNG

The hues of autumn might be spreading across campus, but a growing number of Virginia Tech community members have green on their minds. According to Sustainability Program Manager Denny Cochrane, it all started in 2006, when students and community members have green on their minds. campus, but a growing number of Virginia Tech community members have green on their minds. campus, but a growing number of Virginia Tech community members have green on their minds.

For Angie De Soto, who has been a major voice in Tech’s sustainability movement for more recycling and more environmental awareness on campus and has become campus policy, with the board of visitors and the University Council approving the Virginia Tech Climate Action Commitment (VTCAC) Resolution and the accompanying Sustainability Plan. And campus leaders—from the Student Government Association (SGA) and the student group the Environmental Coalition, including De Soto, encouraging the president to sign the American College and University Presidents’ Climate Commitment. On April 25, 2008, Steger charged the newly formed Energy and Sustainability Committee to develop a climate commitment and sustainability plan tailored specifically to the needs of Virginia Tech and for the University Council to review and act on it by the end of the 2008 spring semester. The University Council recommended approval of the VTCAC Resolution on April 22, 2009, which was Earth Day, and the board of visitors approved it on June 1, 2009.

“Climate change is the defining issue of our generation. It’s up to us to figure out how to live more sustainably for the future of our children,” says De Soto, who has been a major voice in Tech’s sustainability movement for more recycling and more environmental awareness on campus and has become campus policy, with the board of visitors and the University Council approving the Virginia Tech Climate Action Commitment (VTCAC) Resolution and the accompanying Sustainability Plan. And campus leaders—from the Student Government Association (SGA) and the student group the Environmental Coalition, including De Soto, encouraging the president to sign the American College and University Presidents’ Climate Commitment. On April 25, 2008, Steger charged the newly formed Energy and Sustainability Committee to develop a climate commitment and sustainability plan tailored specifically to the needs of Virginia Tech and for the University Council to review and act on it by the end of the 2008 spring semester. The University Council recommended approval of the VTCAC Resolution on April 22, 2009, which was Earth Day, and the board of visitors approved it on June 1, 2009.

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“The VTCAC Resolution is our sustainability compass. These 14 specific initiatives are unique to Tech,” says Cochrane. “They were developed after we analyzed where we are, what we should be doing, and how we will get there.”

If we’re specific to our campus and our community, we’ll be more likely to meet these goals,” adds De Soto.

TAKING ACTION

To Cochrane, sustainability means using the resources required to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to have sufficient resources to meet their own needs. For Angie De Soto, a senior environmental planning major who is also set to take the post of campus sustainability planner after she graduates in December, matters related to sustainability also have strong resonance.

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Taking action to lessen the university’s carbon footprint.

At a December 2007 meeting with President Charles W. Steger, four leaders of the student group the Environmental Coalition, including De Soto, encouraged the president to sign the American College and University Presidents’ Climate Commitment. On April 25, 2008, Steger charged the newly formed Energy and Sustainability Committee to develop a climate commitment and sustainability plan tailored specifically to the needs of Virginia Tech and for the University Council to review and act on it by the end of the 2008 spring semester. The University Council recommended approval of the VTCAC Resolution on April 22, 2009, which was Earth Day, and the board of visitors approved it on June 1, 2009.

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Small Change Adds Up

Promoting sustainability comes down to little things that make a big impact, such as:

• Dining services going tray-less and reducing food waste because students take less food at a time;

• The Southgate Center composting the discarded portions of fruits and vegetables, creating a more complete circle between the food people eat and the soil from which that food grows;

• Adding motion-sensing lights to 146 classrooms to detect when no one is in the room;

• Upgrading the steam utility distribution system and Central Steam Plant to reduce heat and energy losses.

Yet those involved in the sustainability movement on campus know that improvements like these are adding up to save not only energy and other resources, but money as well.

“Sustainability is broader than just the environment,” says Cochrane. “It involves economics and social responsibility.” For example, at the conclusion of the 2008 fall semester, and in accordance with the Campus Energy and Water Policy 5505, the university set all thermostats to 68 degrees. This initiative alone saved the university more than $200,000 between the end of the fall 2008 semester and January 2009.

Dining and Housing Services Director Rick Johnson has seen firsthand that small changes can go a long way. For example, when the Southgate Center began composting in January 2009, the center reduced landfill waste by 2.5 tons of food each week. Johnson says they hope to extend the program this year to all dining facilities on campus.

In addition, the Farms and Fields project in Owens Food Court provides students with local, organic, and natural food selections. “We hope that when the project is fully developed, all products served there are local, but right now, the industry is pretty young, so local

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Virginia Tech’s fall 2008 Campus Tree Tour and tree-planting ceremony were honored with a 2009 Governor’s Environmental Excellence “Bronze” Award. The award was presented to Virginia Tech for “its demonstrated commitment to the stewardship of Virginia’s natural resources through its Tree Campus U.S.A. 2008 initiative.” Pictured are, from left to right: Virginia’s Secretary of Natural Resources L. Preston Bryant Jr., Virginia Tech’s Sustainability Program Manager Donny Cochrane, Virginia Tech’s Associate Vice President for Facilities Services Mike Coleman, Virginia’s Director of Environmental Quality David Paylor, and Virginia’s Director of Conservation and Recreation Joe Maronec.

Renovations to Ambler-Johnston (AJ) will meet the requirements to make the building the first LEED Silver-certified residence hall on campus. AJ will meet such standards as abatement of asbestos and lead paint, preserving open space equal to the footprint of the building adjacent to the site, water-use reduction (low-flow faucets and showers), reuse of main building structure, use of recycled material, and use of low volatile organic compound materials.
Building a better tomorrow

“There’s no such thing as ‘green architecture,’” says Mike Brady (architecture ’04), a LEED*-certified architect for Clark Nexsen, an international architecture and engineering firm. “There is good design and bad design, and ‘green architecture’ is just one aspect of good design.”

It is important to incorporate sustainable aspects into building design, notes Brady, due simply to the facts: building waste can represent as much as 30 percent of total landfill waste, and buildings consume one-third of all energy produced. “Sustainability and resource management are global problems, and the architecture profession is just as accountable as anyone else for doing the right thing.”

Bill George (architecture ’90), also a LEED-certified architect with the firm, began his foray into sustainable building practices in 2000, when he designed an Army barracks complex at Camp Ederle in Vicenza, Italy, the first LEED-certified building for the Army and the first LEED Silver certification in Europe for the federal government.

“The ever-increasing pace of development in the world throws many natural and manmade systems out of balance, and the focus on sustainable design is necessary to address this imbalance,” says George.

He notes that a growing awareness of the planet’s fragility has come from a rather unexpected source. “Ironically, the pioneering of space travel, in itself a very non-sustainable activity, has enlightened the world like nothing else of how limited our planet’s resources are, how interrelated we are to each other, and how manmade development is having a global impact on the planet.”

According to Robert T. Gunn (architecture ’72), also with Clark Nexsen, “The trend toward green has expanded from a handful of proponents to a major component of the last presidential campaign and cap-and-trade legislation...”

GREEN ROOF INSTALLATION

Green roof installation between Seitz and Fralin Halls

LEED silver-certified building

Virginia Tech Magazine Fall 2009 13
in Congress. The trend is in every major aspect of commercial and retail sales. It is quickly going from a trend to a given. For Gunn, sustainability must begin at the foundation and work its way up. “The most important aspect is designing it from the beginning to be green. Thinking that you can conventionally design a building and then sprinkle some green on it at the end is where most clients go wrong.”

“Green architecture is important to me personally—we have traded two gas guzzlers for two Priuses—and plan to have expansions and renovations to our house LEED certified. It is important personally as well globally because it is the right thing to do on every level,” says Gunn, who adds that his years at Tech prepared him for the work he does now.

Mike Brady also credits his experiences in the architecture program at Tech with preparing him for his career as a LEED-certified architect. “The Virginia Tech architecture program does its best to instill the sensibilities of good design into its graduates, giving them the opportunity and responsibility of incorporating that into their professional lives.”

“At Tech I was taught to look at things in a new and fresh way; this creativity helps in all aspects of design, including green architecture,” says Rebecca Brady (architecture ’07), who is also LEED certified and an intern with Clark Nexsen. She adds that in order to think green, people need only to reflect on three Rs—reduce, reuse, recycle—and put these concepts into practice.

Janelle Robbins serves as the staff scientist for the Waterkeeper Alliance, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the world’s water resources.

“For Janelle Hope Robbins (M.S. biological systems engineering ’08), educating oneself that people from the Ganges to the Gulf of Mexico have access to safe, unpolluted drinking water is just another part of her role for the Waterkeeper Alliance. Across the globe, members of the alliance are working to stem water pollution, protecting waterways in kayaks or research vessels, advocating for stronger enforcement of environmental laws in the courtroom, rallying community support in town meetings, or educating young people in the classroom. Robbins serves as staff scientist for the organization, providing scientific and engineering support to Waterkeeper organizations worldwide.

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For Robbins, pursuing a career in sustainability came easily, as it fulfilled her passion for the environment—she even dressed as a recycling bin one year for Halloween.

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During her studies, she developed a growing awareness that many nongovernmental organizations are underserved by individuals with hard technical skills like engineering. “You have to understand the facts and be able to analyze the data because strong, effective environmental advocacy is based on fact and good science, not spin. From there, it was easy for me to see the way to apply my passion to my career,” says Robbins.

The worldwide water situation is grim, she notes. More than 3.6 million people die each year from water-related diseases. “84 percent of those deaths are children under the age of 15. Ninety-eight percent of those deaths occur in developing nations—in the U.S., people often take for granted that most cases they can turn on the tap and get clean and safe water,” says Robbins.

However, she adds, even in the U.S., drinking-water supplies are also in danger, from coal mining and combustion waste, endocrine-disrupting compounds from wastewater discharges, and numerous contaminants from industry. “When your water has been contaminated, that pollutes has stolen your right to clean water. Unless we all take a more active role in our communities, the situation will get worse before it gets better.”

Robbins, fighting for water resources is just one aspect of a larger picture, ensuring that the planet remains a life-sustaining, healthy place for people to live. “Protecting our natural resources is a necessity, not a luxury, and we all have a part to play in that—whether it’s in the little choices we make at the grocery store or the bigger choices like where you live and how you commute to work.”

Robbins’ advice for those looking to go green is simple: just make small lifestyle changes, such as using a reusable water bottle or coffee mug or using canvas shopping bags instead of disposable plastic. “I think there’s a huge misconception that in order to be sustainable or an environmentalist you have to be comfortable, but that’s just not true—many changes make you more comfortable,” says Robbins, whose sustainable lifestyle includes membership in a community-sponsored agriculture program, growing her own vegetables, raising her own chickens, using rain-water barrels to collect water for her plants, and weekly jaunts to the local farmer’s market.

“Water is a precious resource. For Janelle Hope Robbins (M.S. biological systems engineering ’08), educating oneself that people from the Ganges to the Gulf of Mexico have access to safe, unpolluted drinking water is just another part of her role for the Waterkeeper Alliance. Across the globe, members of the alliance are working to stem water pollution, protecting waterways in kayaks or research vessels, advocating for stronger enforcement of environmental laws in the courtroom, rallying community support in town meetings, or educating young people in the classroom. Robbins serves as staff scientist for the organization, providing scientific and engineering support to Waterkeeper organizations worldwide. She also coordinates the group’s anti-pollution campaigns (www.wkla.org) and co-ordinates the storm-water campaigns, in addition to serving as the Gulf of Mexico regional coordinator by providing strategic planning, capacity building, and other services to Waterkeepers in that region. “The fight for clean water is a fight for one of the most basic and essential human rights,” she says.

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Whether protecting water resources, designing sustainably from the ground up, or providing solar storage for those living off the grid, these 1-Hokies and many others are helping to craft a greener future, one step at a time.

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Earlier this year, Virginia Tech sponsored an Alumni Attitude Study to learn more about what you think of the university’s alumni programs, communications efforts, and reputation. Keep reading to learn what you think about us—or at least what we think you do.

Appreciative alumni


The enthusiasm of Tech alumni was reflected in other questions as well. For example, when comparing Virginia Tech alumni against those of other schools, Hokies show appreciably higher rates for the frequency with which they read their alumni magazine and alumni e-mail, visit the university website, visit campus, get in touch with other alumni, and attend university sporting events. (For a better breakdown, see the graph on page 17.)

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Tech alumni also had positive memories of their experiences as students, ranking as “good” or “excellent” the university’s performance in supporting academics, providing career skills and training, giving exposure to new experiences, and sharing traditions and values.

In your relationship with the university, please describe how often you do or have done the following.

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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Never</th>
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<td>Volunteer to work on campus or at events</td>
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When asked to rate their decision to attend the university, 80 percent of alumni said that it was a ‘great decision,’ 18 percent said that it was a ‘good decision,’ 2 percent said it was a ‘fair decision,’ and no one said that it was a ‘bad decision.’ In contrast, the Virginia Tech comparables (other similar universities) rated lower: 68 percent said ‘great,’ 28 percent said ‘good,’ 3 percent said ‘fair,’ and 1 percent said ‘bad.’

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Communications and contact

The survey also provides valuable information about the way that alumni prefer to hear from their alma mater. The response to the question “How would you most like to be contacted by the university?” was overwhelmingly in favor of e-mail; more than 80 percent chose this option over the second-favored choice, mail, which was about 14 percent.

Another question targeted use of an e-mail publication, the VT NetLetter (see box above): “Which of the following best describes how you use the NetLetter?” Forty-five percent of respondents browse it, 22 percent “occasionally read it,” 13 percent read all of it, and 1 percent “automatically delete it.” (Nineteen percent marked “don’t know, never got it.”) For a breakdown of generational use of the VT NetLetter, see the chart below.

Finally, alumni were asked, “How important are the following to you in the Virginia Tech Magazine, and how well do we do at reporting it?” With two exceptions—“caliber of academic programs” and “campus news”—performance outranked importance.

What do you (really) think?

Because this is simply a small cross-section of the greater alumni base, we have a question for you: Are these results accurate? In other words, do you agree or disagree with some of the findings? If so, we want to hear about it—your opinion is of utmost importance to the university. Virginia Tech prides itself on the achievements and contributions of the Hokie Nation. Keep up the good work, and stay in touch.

To contribute your feedback on the survey, you can mail a letter to Virginia Tech Magazine, 105 Media Building (0109), Blacksburg, VA 24061; or send an e-mail to vtmag@vt.edu. The magazine staff welcomes any and all communications.
Welcome to the world of Hokie ice hockey.

“We have to pay for our hockey. You have to commit a lot of time to it,” says Joe Woermer. “We don’t get any benefits out of it other than our enjoyment.”

Officially, the team is one of 29 university club teams that play sports that range from clay target shooting to women’s lacrosse. It is a member of the Atlantic Coast Conference Hockey League (ACCHL), a Division II league in the American College Hockey Association (ACHA), and follows NCAA guidelines concerning eligibility requirements, grade point average, and the number of years a student can play.

While ice hockey at a Southwest Virginia college might seem a little out of place, Tech has had a team of some sort since 1984 and has been in the ACCHL since 1995, playing against Virginia,
North Carolina, North Carolina State, Duke, and Georgetown. Other ACC colleges have teams but play in different leagues to reduce travel expenses.

Spradlin played hockey in Vinton, Va., as a youth, went north for junior hockey, and then journeyed to Radford. He was coaching youth leagues when he learned seven years ago that Tech needed a hockey coach. Then, the team had 12 jerseys for 15 players, the annual budget was $8,000 (team dues alone bring in $45,000 now), and players practiced once a week—at 11:15 p.m.

“We’ve come a long way since then,” says Spradlin, who works during the day for his family’s floor covering and retail business.

Myers, who is from Botetourt County, Va., and works for Norfolk Southern, has never even played hockey, “but I’ve had a passion for the game for many years,” he says. After attending a few Tech games, he offered to help out and ended up working in marketing and operations. Both coaches say they spend at least as much time on hockey as they do on their paying jobs.

Woermer played hockey at the Gunnery, a Connecticut boarding school. He visited universities that, first, boasted a superior engineering program and, second, fielded a competitive ice hockey team. He chose Tech for both.

Woermer’s story is typical of most of the players on Tech’s team: academics and then hockey. Because just a few dozen universities offer ice hockey scholarships, “there’s a ton of talented hockey players who want to play somewhere,” Spradlin says. “Our hockey program is now starting to compete with some of the northern programs.”

Since Spradlin took over, improvements in playing conditions and on the ice have been steady. Seven years ago, 20 to 25 players tried out for the team. Now, tryouts draw about 60 hopefuls. Practice time at the Roanoke Civic Center is 8:15 p.m. “The civic center really saved the program” after the Ice Station in Roanoke closed down, Spradlin says.

What about team travel? Last year, Winston Samuels (M.S. APSC ’80, Ph.D. ’83), the father of player Joel Samuels and president and chief executive officer of Maxx Performance Inc., an entrepreneurial scientific company that manufactures microencapsulated food ingredients and food delivery systems, volunteered to cover charter buses for the season.

“He wanted to make sure the team was safe in our travels,” says Spradlin. The entire team was able to ride to games and tournaments together. “Plus, it impresses the other teams,” Spradlin says.

The team’s 2008-09 season was one of firsts. The Hokies won their first-ever game against a Division I ACHA team (Maryland) and their first ever against a regionally ranked team (Temple, which was No. 6), and they came close to a regional top 10 spot (the top 10 go to the regional tournament), ranking 11th at one point.

“Everyone was excited to win the ACC tournament for the first time. It was a great achievement,” Woermer says. “We hope this will help us turn the corner. We’ve got a bunch of good guys this year.”

Spradlin and Myers have their own dream: an ice rink on campus, which is a requirement to move up to Division I. Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va., has its own rink, and it now has four hockey teams.

“We’re already getting the talent to take this program as high as the university wants,” Spradlin says. “We love the game, we love the university, and we love our guys.”
An international dimension:

The Center for European Studies and Architecture

Since opening in 1994, the three-story, pale yellow house, called Villa Maderni, has served as the base for the university’s Center for European Studies and Architecture (CESA). Managed by the Office of International Research, Education, and Development, the center offers university-wide study abroad programs.

CESA programs span a range of topics, from preparing future faculty for global perspectives to courses on biologically inspired materials. Colleges and departments design their own courses and programs, and professors gear their syllabi to the strategically located setting in the Italian-speaking Ticino region of Switzerland. Thus, students spread beyond Riva San Vitale, Switzerland, in the late 1980s and helped President Charles Steger, then dean of architecture and urban studies, convince university officials to purchase it, expanded opportunities for Virginia Tech students to acquire that dimension.

The late Olivio Ferrari, Alumni Distinguished Professor at Virginia Tech, often talked about the need for students to have “the international dimension.” When he and his wife, Lucy, a language and culture instructor, came across an impressive 250-year-old villa in Riva San Vitale, Switzerland, in the late 1980s and helped President Charles Steger, then dean of architecture and urban studies, convince university officials to purchase it, they expanded opportunities for Virginia Tech students to acquire that dimension.

“An international dimension: The Center for European Studies and Architecture”

BY CLARA B. COX ’84 MA

In a small, ancient, picturesque Swiss town and the region surrounding it, Virginia Tech students learn how to interact with—and appreciate—cultures quite different from their own.

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During the summer of 1972, Steven House (architecture ‘75) explored Europe’s great cities while photographing and drawing historic buildings as part of a College of Architecture and Urban Studies (CAUS) study abroad program based in Salzburg, Austria.

He found the experience to be so valuable that after he graduated and married fellow architecture student Cathi Bowden House (architecture ’77), they saved half their income for 18 months to travel throughout Europe for a year. The Houses spent much of that time on the Greek island of Santorini. Steven says their experience “really crystallized our philosophy of architecture.” Cathi notes, “My soul as the architect that I have become was born there.”

More than three decades after that formative journey, Steven and Cathi run House + House, a successful architectural firm headquartered in San Francisco, while spending about a third of the year living and working in Mexico.

In 1989, Architecture magazine featured House + House in its issue on emerging talent. Since then, the firm has received more than 50 design awards, and its work has been featured in numerous national and international publications. A new book, Houses in the Sun: light movement embrace, which documents the last 10 years of the firm’s work, was recently published.

Yet even at this stage of their career, Steven and Cathi still make it a point to travel abroad regularly so that they can continue to learn from other cultures and incorporate those experiences into their own projects. The Houses have also made it a point to ensure that future generations of architects can broaden their horizons through travel, and in 1998, they endowed the Steven & Cathi House Traveling Scholarship to help pay for student trips abroad.

“Vou learn about all these buildings through your classes,” says Marisa Brown (architecture ’10), who traveled in Europe last year on a House scholarship, “but to actually be there and see them, I think you get a sense of what makes them so well known.”

One of Steven’s classmates on the Austria trip in 1972 was Reynolds Metals Professor and CAUS Dean Jack Davis. Due to globalization, Davis says, education abroad is even more valuable now than it was back when he and Steven traveled, but the cost can be prohibitive. “It’s only through gifts like those of the Houses, which help students and lower those costs, that many students can study abroad,” Davis says.

Paying to study abroad is one thing, but students also need a place to visit and an itinerary, and the Houses are eager to provide that as well. Two years ago they hosted a dozen students for a three-week intensive program in San Miguel de Allende, a recently declared UNESCO World Heritage Site in central Mexico, where the Houses have lived part time and worked during the past 16 years.

Along with touring the city, which was founded in the 16th century, the students sketched, built models, visited construction sites, and worked on design challenges the Houses created. The couple is currently working to establish a regular study abroad program to bring students to San Miguel de Allende from Virginia Tech and other universities. A groundbreaking ceremony recently took place for a new studio building to house the study abroad program.

The Houses have helped their alma mater in many other ways as both donors and volunteers. They are members of the university’s Legacy Society, having given generously to the university through their estate plan, and their lifetime giving puts them in the Ut Prosim Society, a select group of the university’s most generous supporters.

The Houses serve on the Bay Area Regional Committee for the current $1 billion Campaign for Virginia Tech: Invent the Future and chaired their region’s committee in the university’s previous campaign, which ended in 1998. They have also served on the CAUS Advisory Council and in 1999 were presented their college’s Award for Outstanding Professional Accomplishment in Architecture.

Cathi says she and her husband feel that it’s important to give back to Virginia Tech because “the longer we practice...
architecture, the more we realize the true value of the education that we received," Steven adds. "We would not be where we are today had it not been for the architectural education that we received at Virginia Tech." Another benefit of staying involved with the university, Cathi says, is that it puts them in contact with talented graduates, some of whom wind up working at their firm. Virginia Tech’s architecture programs are among the nation’s highest rated, and House + House have a reputation for being helpful.

While the Houses do have an aesthetic, which has been called "handcrafted modernism," their designs emerge from an intensive research process. They always begin with an extensive questionnaire to help their clients find an inner voice for elements that are important but are often lost in the complex process of creating a home.

The Houses collect leaves, bark, rocks, and grasses from the site where a home will be built and use them to determine color schemes and appropriate materials. Their goal is to create a home that perfectly suits both its owner and the surrounding landscape. Though it’s been many years since they graduated and the field of architecture has changed a great deal, the Houses say they are confident that their alma mater has maintained the special character of its architecture program, which encourages students to think independently. That character was evident, Cathi said, when she and her husband hosted the students in Mexico.

“We gave the students an assignment to design two homes in the historic center on a vacant lot, but the students, in their interactions with neighborhood children, decided it would be more appropriate to design a community center. Seeing them take the initiative to change the program was very gratifying.”

Albert Raboteau is a writer for University Development.

Parents’ generosity makes a big difference on campus

Walk into Litton-Reaves Hall during the day and it’s a safe bet you’ll see students studying in the first-floor lounge. After hours, one of the three dozen student groups in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) is likely to be using the space. Thanks to the Hokie Parents Fund, it is a very nice space indeed.

In fiscal year 2008, an extensive renovation of the lounge was one of more than a dozen projects paid for with money from the Hokie Parents Fund, a special giving program for parents of current and former students. Thanks to thousands of Hokie parents who give to the fund, the university is able to provide hundreds of thousands of dollars each year to initiatives that help students.

In fiscal year 2009, for example, more than $400,000 from the fund was earmarked for projects that include furnishings and displays for a planned visitor center, new furniture for library study rooms, and additional signs to remind drivers to be alert for students walking on campus.

For 31 years, the Hokie Parents Fund has been an important resource that helps us to improve campus life and the overall quality of education for all students here at Virginia Tech," says Elizabeth "Betsy" Flanagan, vice president for development and university relations. "It’s played a large role in funding projects throughout campus and has helped tens of thousands of students get more out of their time here.”

Molly Stedfast enjoys the Litton-Reaves lounge funded by parents.

Molly Stedfast is one such student. The senior biochemistry major is president of the CALS Student Leadership Council, an umbrella organization for the college’s various student groups. Stedfast says that she and other students were delighted when they first saw the much-improved lounge.

“When you walk in, it just looks a lot nicer than it used to,” Stedfast says. “It’s a pretty relaxing environment that just brings everyone’s stress level down, which for a college student is very important.”

The renovation did far more than make the lounge look better, however. The room now has numerous electrical outlets to allow students to work on their laptops. The furniture can be easily moved to accommodate club meetings.

Overall, the space just works better for all those students who rely on it.

And, as Stedfast points out, that includes “pretty much everybody in the college.”

Parents fund helps all across campus

Mary and Kerry Donnelly are among the many Virginia Tech parents who recently gave to the Hokie Parents Fund. “We felt like by supporting the fund we were supporting all aspects of our daughter’s education,” Mary says. And she’s right; money from the Hokie Parents Fund is used for a host of projects to benefit students. In recent years, the fund has supported Family Day, the Hokie Parents newsletter, Common Book programs that have allowed new students to share learning experiences, and many other important initiatives. Visit www.campaign.vt.edu/parents to learn more.

Both this room and the courtyard in the photo of the Houses on page 26 are part of their home, which they designed, in San Miguel de Allende.
Leadership in the corps of cadets

In the ‘60s and ‘70s, the way cadets attained leadership positions in the corps of cadets was a bit of a mystery; one day, there was an announcement about the regimental commander for the upcoming year and then another about battalion/group/company commanders, O.T. Crowther, (political science ‘70) 3rd Battalion commander in the class of 1970, recalls being tapped by that year’s regimental commander, Cadet John Janney (mechanical engineering ‘70), who also chose company commanders with input from the outgoing senior class and incoming battalion and/or group command- ers with the commandant giving approval authority.

Things are different today. All junior and senior class leaders undergo a rigorous application and selection process, much like a promotion board in today’s military.

The process for the cadets, and our track record shows that the right people are chosen—those who are professional and have a high school record, for example. Leadership is a life-changing experience. In the spring 2009 semester, he moved up to regimental sergeant major, the ranking member of the junior class, where he found that every day presented a new challenge and learning experience.

For his senior year, Steger wanted to give back to the corps of cadets and to lead the regiment in the right direction, so he interviewed for the position of regimental commander. He notes that sitting down in front of the regimental commander for the first time was nerve-wracking. Yet a few weeks later, the commandant, Maj. General Jerry Allen, asked him to serve as regimental commandant for the fall 2009 semester.

As regimental commander, Steger says that one of his major goals is to improve retention. “If we do a better job of giving cadets a reason to stay with the corps and to see the many wonderful benefits of being a cadet, we will be a much stronger organization, and we will be able to produce leaders of an even higher caliber.” He has plenty of opportunity to lead this fall—the 2009-10 regiment is the largest in the past 40 years.

Steger is representative of the caliber of the young leaders the corps is producing, and he has established his post-graduation goals. He plans to earn a commission in the U.S. Army and hopes to branch into infantry and follow that up with Ranger School. From there, Steger would like to have the honor of serving as a special forces team leader and, when his Army career ends, to settle down in a rural community and teach and coach at a high school. Based on his record thus far, he will achieve any goal he sets for himself, Ut Prosim.

Col. Rock Roszak ‘71, USAF (Ret.), is the alumni director for the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets.

BY ROCK ROSZAK ’71

John Steger

Commentary

This past year was a successful one for the Alumni Association. Nearly 27,000 alumni and their guests participated in alumni events throughout the year, both on and off-campus. Given the slowing economy, we were delighted by that level of participation, which was reflected in other areas. More scholarship funds were raised and awarded by alumni chapters than any year in our history. Our chapters also enthusiastically supported community service projects to engage alumni in contributing their time to worthy causes. Additionally, increasing numbers of recent graduates are becoming engaged in chapter and campus constituency group events.

On the following pages, we illustrate how our volunteer alumni and Alumni Association programs are having an impact. We have more than 207,000 alumni living around the globe, and their successes—professionally, philanthropically, and as community servants and leaders—continue to elevate the name and reputation of Virginia Tech. Just as important, our alumni display a sense of spirit and loyalty that ranks among the best in the world of higher education. Alumni Association programs support students, celebrate faculty excellence, serve the broad base of alumni, engage leadership potential, and embrace community.

These five areas are critical to fulfilling our organization- al mission. We look upon alumni as an extension of the core values of the university. Each group of graduates builds upon the successes of those who preceded them. And all alumni feel immense pride toward and owner- ship of this special place.

There are important ways alumni can “pay it for- ward” to help other alumni in this weaker economy. The Alumni Association is placing emphasis on networking among alumni to strengthen prospects for finding and filling employment opportunities. The Hokie Nation Net- work (HNN) is a secure online resource for all alumni—plus current students, faculty and staff—to list jobs and post resumes. Like other social networks, such as Facebook and LinkedIn, HNN is free and easy to use; its advantage is that it is exclusively for Hokies. We hope it will become the go-to site to match alumni who have openings to fill with skilled alumni who are seeking job opportunities.

Our Hokie Nation is resilient. We have been through challenging times and now face a changing global economy. However, we know how to pull together and help each other in difficult times. That is part of being a Hokie—we help those in need. And we will continue serving and nurturing an expanding Hokie Nation.

Vice President for Alumni Relations

Alumni Association News
SUPPORTING STUDENTS

Student Programs build on traditions
Student Programs complement the mission of Alumni Relations by helping instill a sense of loyalty and pride in students who will soon become members of the Alumni Association. In addition, the Student Alumni Associates (SAA) and the class system are two active and respected programs that foster traditions designed to create a bond between students and the university. Last year, SAA recruited 43 new members, one of the largest groups in many years. The Class of 2010 had record attendance at Ring Dance in the spring, and class leaders continued to encourage class spirit and affinity with Virginia Tech. During the spring semester, the Alumni Association offered a speaker series to address issues that seniors would face after graduation.

Alumni chapters connect with students
Chapters and clubs foster strong student-alumni relationships through programs that bolster their lifelong loyalty to Virginia Tech. Many alumni chapters hosted annual student send-off events for current and incoming students and stayed in touch with their students throughout the year by inviting them to tailgates, providing care packages during exam time, and inviting them to other events, such as holiday parties. Alumni chapters also provided assistance in recruiting students.

Chapters raising scholarships
Alumni chapters raise thousands of dollars to help students from their respective areas. Scholarships not only provide financial assistance to outstanding students, but they also lead to local exposure for the chapter and university within communities. In 2008-09, 57 alumni chapters awarded 156 freshman scholarships totaling $175,550. In addition, the association created an endowment, now totaling more than $1.5 million, that provides annual scholarship support for students.

CELEBRATING FACULTY

Honoring the best
The association recognizes Virginia Tech’s top teachers with its Faculty Excellence Awards for teaching, advising, outreach, Extension service, research, and international outreach, research, and education. A total of 19 faculty members were honored in 2008-09 with stipends of $2,000 each. An endowment was created by the association in 1972 to provide support for the first named professorships. The Alumni Distinguished Professorship appointments, which provide annual salary supplements, currently support 10 outstanding professors.

Faculty featured in alumni programming
The university has many dynamic and entertaining professors who regularly visit alumni chapters. Last year, Tech faculty members provided presentations that demonstrated the breadth of innovative teaching and research underway at Virginia Tech. In addition, faculty members and university administrators were featured at reunions, constituency events, and other special occasions.

ENGAGING LEADERSHIP

Alumni advocacy events
The legislative advocacy group supporting higher education and state General Fund appropriations for Virginia Tech provides vocal backing on issues of importance to Virginia Tech and higher education and cultivates support among elected officials. During advocacy events, the group hosted a breakfast for alumni members of the General Assembly. The 11th annual Hokie Day at the General Assembly, which included a visit to the state capitol by alumni chapter and student representatives, was also a success.

Alumni Board of Directors
Twice a year, members of the Alumni Board of Directors convene to review Alumni Association programs, evaluate progress toward accomplishing the association’s annual goals, make plans for strong financial and administrative management, and develop future initiatives and programs that support the goals of the university. The 30 board members, who were elected by Alumni Association members, have been active with the university in some capacity, such as serving as alumni chapter officers, student leaders, and/or representatives of academic colleges, constituencies, and multicultural interests.
Alumni tours
The Alumni Association sponsors group travel opportunities—often at substantial savings over the price of private tours—to exciting places worldwide. In 2008-09, 16 tours gave 109 Hokies the chance to visit places far and near, including a group of recent graduates who traveled on the 25-day Essential Europe tour.

Alumni awards
Since 1972, the Alumni Association has honored almost 100 alumni with the prestigious Alumni Distinguished Service Award. Additionally, students from each college received the Outstanding Senior Award and, for the first time, the Distinguished Graduate Alumni Achievement Award. One hundred fifty alumni were also honored for their outstanding volunteerism.

Chapter Officers Leadership Forum
The annual Chapter Officers Leadership Forum provides an opportunity for alumni chapter volunteers to return to campus for special workshops, updates on the Alumni Association and the university, and general information sharing. Approximately 140 participants from 46 alumni chapter areas attended the 2008 forum, which focused on networking and engaging alumni of all ages. Chapter officer training was held in January with 17 chapter volunteers, who concentrated on reaching out to different alumni populations, particularly young and multicultural alumni. Participants also shared and generated ideas on chapter programming and community service opportunities. Teleconferences were scheduled throughout the year. Some had specific topics and others were open forums.

Reunions and homecomings
In fall 2008, the Alumni Association enjoyed a successful reunion season, with more than 2,400 alumni attending six class reunion weekends, seven college homecomings, a corps of cadets reunion, and a Graduate School homecoming. Young alumni and multicultural reunions were held in Charlotte, N.C., in conjunction with the Virginia Tech-East Carolina football game. The annual Old Guard Reunion, held in the spring, was attended by 190 members of the classes of 1935 through 1958. An additional 900 alumni and friends attended other special reunions throughout the year including the Virginia Tech Rescue Squad, Female Tightsies, Omicron Delta Kappa, Greek organizations, and a reunion for former basketball players.

Special alumni programs
Nearly 600 alumni and friends attended educational and entertaining programs last year, including Summer Around the Drillfield, the Valentines Weekend Escape to Italy, the Civil War Weekend, the Savior the Flavor wine event, and A Day in the Life of College Admissions.

Staying connected
Alumni can stay connected with each other and their alma mater through such resources as the Alumni Association online directory and the 2006 print directory. Several thousand alumni were early registrants in the new Hokie Nation Network. This free and private social/professional network is intended to help Hokies share information, learn about employment opportunities, and simply stay connected in a setting similar to Facebook and LinkedIn. The new network launched in April exclusively for Hokie alumni, students, and faculty and staff members.

EMBRACING THE COMMUNITY
Service at home and abroad
The Alumni Association introduced the Hokie Nation Serves initiative to inspire in all Hokies a commitment to service, especially during the month of April. The Hokie Nation bond fosters both a sense of spirit and a desire to live the university’s motto, Ut Prosim (That I May Serve). In the spring, 19 alumni, faculty and staff members, and students participated in a service trip to Punta Cana in the Dominican Republic (co-sponsored with the College of Architecture and Urban Studies) to construct a playground for an elementary school.

Alumni Association section of the Virginia Tech Magazine
Beginning in fall 2008, the Alumni Association, formerly published by the Alumni Association, was merged into the Virginia Tech Magazine to provide a more comprehensive Alumni Association section in each issue. Published four times a year, the magazine reflects the interests and intellectual vigor of the university and its alumni. The Alumni Association section of the magazine allows the association to communicate more frequently with alumni about its programs and services; to highlight alumni chapter activities, reunions, upcoming alumni programs, and other special events; and to introduce new Alumni Association initiatives.

Outstanding volunteerism
Through their enthusiastic participation in Hokie Nation Serves and VT-ENGAGE, thousands of Hokies contributed their talent and time to deserving causes. Alumni chapters and clubs also made a difference in their communities by engaging in service projects. The Shenandoah Alumni Chapter, for example, constructed an 8,000-square-foot memorial garden for the victims of the April 16 tragedy. The area park and recreation department donated space for the garden, which was completed with donated landscaping materials and dedicated in April 2009. Hokies in Cincinnati joined other local volunteers in March to pre-build walls for Habitat for Humanity, completing 132 walls for three houses. Fourteen chapters conducted blood drives throughout the spring, collecting a total of 615 pints. One of those was the Richmond Alumni Association Chapter, which has an ongoing competition with University of Virginia alumni to see who collects the most pints of blood through blood drives. The two alumni groups also participate in Hokies vs. Hoos, which plays upon the rivalry between the two universities to benefit Habitat for Humanity and the Central Virginia Food Bank. Both schools work closely to promote service in the spirit of competition and, of course, to claim bragging rights.

Alumni Association Annual Report 2008-09
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Virginia Tech’s talent and service extend around the world and are embodied in the achievements of loyal alumni, faculty and staff members, and students. Each year, a few of these individuals are recognized with special awards or citations by the university and the Alumni Association. During the past year, the following individuals were identified and recognized for their special service to society, their professional achievements, or their exemplary performance as members of the university community. Congratulations to all who were nominated or selected for their achievements and service. We encourage future nominations of others who may be deserving of special recognition.

William H. Ruffner Medal
Eugene V. Fife (business administration ’62)
Retired general partner of Goldman Sachs & Co., currently heads Vawter Capital LLC

University Distinguished Achievement Award
Henry A. Long (business administration ’59)
Founder of Long and Foster, currently head of the Henry A. Long Co.

Alumni Distinguished Service awards
Marni E. Byrum (political science ’76)
Attorney
Patricia Caldwell (mathematics ’71)
Co-founder of Gordian Group LLC
John B. Higginbotham (civil and environmental engineering ’77)
CEO of Integral Systems Inc.

Outstanding Recent Alumni awards
Graduates of the past 10 years representing the academic colleges

John S. Radcliffe ’95, ’97, ’00
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
Lee Bratton-Hager ’86
College of Architecture and Urban Studies
Nicholas D’Angelo ’00
Pamplin College of Business
Kelley E. Jessee ’02
College of Engineering
Caitlin A. McHale ’06
College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences
Sean K. Wohlman ’04
Sylhille A. Kanzendorf ’02
College of Natural Resources
John F. Berry ’00
Kevin M. Rosso ’98
College of Science
Tanya LeRoith ’99
Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine

Alumni Award for Outreach Excellence
Nikki Giovanni, University Distinguished Professor of English

Alumni Award for Team Outreach Excellence

CENTER FOR WATERSHED STUDIES
Brian Hefham, associate professor of biological systems engineering and director, Center for Watershed Studies
Kevin Brannan, former research associate
Theo Dilliha, professor of biological systems engineering
Conrad Heatwole, associate professor of biological systems engineering
Sang Min Kim, former postdoctoral associate
Karen Kline, research scientist
Said Moshtaghi, H.E. and Elizabeth F. Alphin Professor and head of the Department of Biological Systems Engineering
Mary Leigh Wolfe, professor of biological systems engineering
Gene Yang, senior research scientist
Rebecca Zechioski, former research associate

Alumni Award in Excellence in Teaching
Amy Nelson, associate professor of history
Ann Stevens, associate professor of biological sciences

Alumni Award in Excellence in Undergraduate Academic Advising
Wayne Moore, associate professor of political science

Alumni Award in Excellence in Graduate Academic Advising
Hanif Sherali, University Distinguished Professor and W. Thomas Rice Chair of Industrial and Systems Engineering

William E. Wine awards
Carol Bailey, associate professor of sociology
Jaime De La Ree Lopez, associate professor of electrical and computer engineering
John Simonetti, associate professor of physics

Alumni Award for Excellence in International Education
Jan Helge Bahn, associate professor of mechanical engineering

Alumni Award for Excellence in International Outreach
M. David Alexander, professor and department unit chair for the School of Education

Alumni Award for Excellence in International Research
Sue Tolins, professor of plant pathology, physiology, and weed science

Alumni Award for Excellence in Extension
David Moore, unit coordinator and Extension agent, Middlesex Cooperative Extension Service
Tony Wolf, professor of horticulture and director of the Alan H. Smith Jr. Agriculture Research and Extension Center

Alumni Award for Excellence in Research
Roger Ekirch, professor of history
Brett Tyler, professor at the Virginia Bioinformatics Institute

Graduate student awards
Linsey Barker, industrial and systems engineering (Teaching Award)
Sunny Crawley, biological sciences (Teaching Award)
Christina Newman, crop and soil environmental science (Service Award)

Outstanding Academic College Senior
Class of 2009 graduates recognized by the Alumni Association

Meagan Meyers
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
Amrita Raja
College of Architecture and Urban Studies
B. Stuart Vyule
Pamplin College of Business
Alek Duerksen
College of Engineering
Kathleen Cooperstein
College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences
Ritchie Vaughan
College of Natural Resources
Kevin Finelli
College of Science
Lindsay Turnbull
Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine

Awards
Virginia Tech alumni can be found working and living around the world. The university fosters an international presence by sponsoring formal educational programs for its students. Two study abroad destinations, Riva San Vitale in Switzerland and Punta Cana in the Dominican Republic, provide opportunities for students to participate in full semesters or shorter, concentrated courses, all taught by Virginia Tech faculty. Students from Cairo, Egypt, and Mumbai, India, also participate in Virginia Tech graduate programs.

Alumni tours for 2010
Each year the Virginia Tech Alumni Association puts together a calendar of exceptional alumni tours to several destinations around the world. Many tours are value-priced, with ground expenses and most meals included. One recent traveler observed, “The Alumni Association’s AHI tour to the Tuscany region of Italy was expertly organized with a comfortable hotel, daily excursions, delicious meals, several speakers on art, culture, and politics of the region, and an opportunity to meet local residents. It was a turn-key traveler experience.”

Our well-designed vacation packages encompass active itineraries for the young and young-at-heart, including luxury, classic, and educational trips that everyone will enjoy. Every detail is arranged, from hotels to sightseeing. Join us in 2010 for a Hokie travel experience to remember for years to come.

Cruise the Panama Canal Feb. 3-14 ($2,895*)
Experience gorgeous views of tropical paradise, including Antigua and the calm waters of Costa Rica. Admire the verdant rain forests and impressive architecture of St. Lucia and the white beaches of the British Virgin Islands. Explore the sun-soaked islands of the Caribbean Sea before traversing the incredible Panama Canal.

Cruise the scenic Yangtze River aboard the Viking Century Sky and marvel at the Three Gorges. See such legendary wonders as Beijing’s Imperial Palaces, the Great Wall, Xi’an’s Terra Cotta Warriors, and the Bund in Shanghai. Experience Chinese culture and watch a traditional Peking Opera performance and a show by the Shanghai Acrobatic Theater.

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Legends of the Nile Feb. 16–27 ($3,995*)
See the best of the ancient land of the pharaohs on this magical tour of Egypt that includes a 4-night Nile cruise and trips to the Great Pyramids at Giza, the hidden hieroglyphic tombs in the Valleys of the Kings and Queens, the Temple of Ramses II, and the capital city of Cairo.

Treasures of Morocco April 2–11 ($2,950*)
Embark on an exciting tour of a vibrant culture shaped by the influence of Phoenicians, Romans, Spaniards, and French. Enjoy the sites of the famous city of Casablanca, the capital city of Rabat, and the cultural capital of Fez. Dine at a Marrakech restaurant and learn about the traditions of Moroccan cuisine.

The Masters April 7–9 ($2,585*)
Come experience golf’s most historic event, the Masters Tournament in Augusta, Ga., with a group of Hokies. This comprehensive tour includes admission for two days to the Masters, a special Masters viewing social, two night’s deluxe hotel accommodations, and much more.

Providence: Aix-en-Provence June 1–9 ($2,895*)
Providence is where the sun-drenched French beaches and undulating hills tie the Mediterranean to the Alps. Enjoy the historic Aix-en-Provence and a private tour of Chateau d’Armanon, and be a guest at a special wine and olive oil tasting. Take in the majestic sites as the Roman Empire comes alive during a visit to the historic monuments of Arles and Pont du Gard.

Saxony: Cortona June 23–July 1 ($2,395*)
In her book Under the Tuscan Sun, Frances Mayes captures the charm and romance of Italian living. Experience her idyllic world firsthand on this travel program that combines guided sightseeing tours with total immersion in community life. Walk the cobbled streets of Etruscan Cortona and discover the art, architecture, cuisine, and culture of one of Italy’s most beloved regions.

Canadian Maritimes July 14–23 ($3,195*)
Immerse yourself in the culture and history of the Canadian Maritimes as you visit Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island. Enjoy the rugged coastal scenery, beautiful lighthouses, charming fishing villages, and a whale-watching cruise on the Bay of Fundy.

Scotland: Oban and Stirling Aug. 15–23 ($2,695*)
From deep glacial lakes to rugged, heather-covered Highland hills, Scotland’s landscape sets a scenic stage. Travel through the cities of Edinburgh, Oban, and Stirling, and explore Scotland’s most famous lakes and castles, including the mysterious Loch Ness. Attend a folkloric performance that showcases traditional Scottish music and dance. Visit St. Andrews, internationally renowned as the home of golf. Experience the famed Tartan Military Festival in Edinburgh, which is held only once a year.

Germany’s Legendary Holiday Market Cruise Nov. 26 - Dec. 4 (from $2,195*)
Recapture the magic of the holidays, and step into scenes that glitter with fairy-tale charm in Germany. The smell of warm glühwein, roasted chestnuts, and spicy gingerbread will fill the air and tickle your senses as you shop in the best of Germany’s famed Christkindlmärkte. Marvel at picture postcard towns, stately castles, medieval villages, and awe-inspiring churches. Enjoy first-class accommodations as you discover the charming towns along the rivers. All excursions are included.

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Scotland: Oban and Stirling Aug. 15–23 ($2,695*)
From deep glacial lakes to rugged, heather-covered Highland hills, Scotland’s landscape sets a scenic stage. Travel through the cities of Edinburgh, Oban, and Stirling, and explore Scotland’s most famous lakes and castles, including the mysterious Loch Ness. Attend a folkloric performance that showcases traditional Scottish music and dance. Visit St. Andrews, internationally renowned as the home of golf. Experience the famed Tartan Military Festival in Edinburgh, which is held only once a year.

Germany’s Legendary Holiday Market Cruise Nov. 26 - Dec. 4 (from $2,195*)
Recapture the magic of the holidays, and step into scenes that glitter with fairy-tale charm in Germany. The smell of warm glühwein, roasted chestnuts, and spicy gingerbread will fill the air and tickle your senses as you shop in the best of Germany’s famed Christkindlmärkte. Marvel at picture postcard towns, stately castles, medieval villages, and awe-inspiring churches. Enjoy first-class accommodations as you discover the charming towns along the rivers. All excursions are included.

+Prices may vary per person and are based on double occupancy. Airfare and V.A.T. tax are not included, unless otherwise noted. Special airfare available from most major cities.

Dates and prices are subject to change. If you have questions, please contact Gwen Harrington, Alumni Travel Coordinator, at 540/231-6285 or by e-mail at alumnitravel@vt.edu. Visit us online for complete details at www.alumni.vt.edu/travel.
Virginia Tech and the Alumni Association Board of Directors encourage all members of the Hokie Nation to commit to service. The VT-ENGAGE initiative was launched to encourage students, faculty and staff members, alumni, friends, and other members of the university community to commit to performing service hours specifically to honor the university. The Hokie Nation bonded anew after April 2007, more than any other time in our history. This bond created a sense of spirit and a momentum of living the university’s motto Ut Prosim (That I May Serve).

Virginia Tech Alumni Association
• www.alumni.vt.edu/hokienationserves
• VirginiaTech forlife
The Alumni Association plans to print its next official Alumni Directory in 2010. Watch for mail and e-mail communications from the Alumni Association to confirm your listing.

VirginiaTech forlife is more than our motto. It is the university’s commitment to keep you engaged all of your life.

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Help us keep in touch by making sure that we have your current and best e-mail and mailing addresses. To ensure that we have it, review and update your record online today.

Make your e-mail address a VT one! @vt.edu
Alumni have the opportunity to have a “vt.edu” address and e-mail account. To create your free account, go to www.alumni.vt.edu/gateway/started or call the Alumni Center Staff at 540-231-6285. Make @vt.edu your permanent e-mail address or link to it with a current e-mail address. This will ensure you always stay connected to the university electronically.

Online social network for Hokies only! Hokie Nation Network
Register in the new, free online social and professional network, exclusively for Hokies at www.alumni.vt.edu/hnn. HNN is great for career and job networking; linking to Hokie alumni, students, faculty, and staff; and advertising items or tickets for sale.

Virginia Tech Alumni Memorial Garden
Stephens City, Va., a community service project by the Shenandoah Chapter

Service projects popular with our chapters include:
- VirginiaTech forlife
- Blood Drives
- Adopt-A-Highway cleanups
- Marathon aid stations
- Special Olympics
- Habitat for Humanity
- Memorial gardens
- Relay For Life
- Book drives
- HokieBird Fights Hunger
- Food drives
- Festivals
- Public broadcasting
- Telethons

The Alumni Association plans to print its next official Alumni Directory in 2010. Watch for mail and e-mail communications from the Alumni Association to confirm your listing.

Do we have your correct e-mail? www.alumni.vt.edu/gateway
Help us keep in touch by making sure that we have your current and best e-mail and mailing addresses. To ensure that we have it, review and update your record online today.

Make your e-mail address a VT one! @vt.edu
Alumni have the opportunity to have a “vt.edu” address and e-mail account. To create your free account, go to www.alumni.vt.edu/gateway/started or call the Alumni Center Staff at 540-231-6285. Make @vt.edu your permanent e-mail address or link to it with a current e-mail address. This will ensure you always stay connected to the university electronically.

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Virginia Tech Alumni Association
www.alumni.vt.edu
Virginia Tech Alumni Association Chapter Awards

Outstanding Chapter Awards

- Alleghany Highlands
- Amherst-Nelson
- Annapolis
- Atlanta
- Austin
- Baltimore
- Central Florida
- Central Pennsylvania
- Central Virginia
- Charleston
- Charlotte
- Chattanooga
- Cincinnati
- Coastal Carolina
- Columbia
- Danville
- Denver
- East Tennessee
- Emporia/Roanoke Rapids
- First State
- Franklin County/Smith Mountain Lake
- Fredericksburg
- Grand Strand/Myrtle Beach
- Jacksonville
- Knoxville
- Loudoun County
- Middle Tennessee
- Minnesota
- National Capital Region
- NC Triad
- New River Valley
- New York City
- Palmetto
- Pittsburgh
- Prince William
- Research Triangle
- Richmond
- Roanoke Valley
- Rockbridge
- San Antonio
- Shenandoah
- South Florida
- Southwest Virginia
- Tampa Bay
- Tidewater
- Williamsburg

Superlative Awards

- Event/Activity
  - Shenandoah: Virginia Tech Memorial Garden
  - Community Service
  - Atlanta Blood Drive, Shenandoah Blood Drive
  - Fundraising Event/Activity
  - New York City: Maroon Effect 2009
  - Golf
    - Charlotte 10th Annual VTAA Golf Classic
  - Website
  - Charlotte

- Outstanding Volunteer
  - Dorothy Long (Grand Strand/Myrtle Beach)
  - Outstanding Volunteer
  - Lauren Lakidawala (Pittsburgh)

Special Category Awards

- Most Improved Chapter
  - Amherst-Nelson
- Outstanding New Chapter
  - Columbia
- Outstanding Chapter Officer
  - Randy Rose (Alleghany Highlands)
  - Outstanding Chapter Officer
  - Bruce Wilson (Shenandoah)

Hall of Fame

- Outstanding Volunteer
  - David Stanley (New River Valley & Charlotte)

Achievement Awards

- Chicago
  - Hilton Head
  - Houston
  - Iowa
  - Las Vegas
  - Los Angeles
  - Northeast Ohio
- Orange County
  - Pinehurst
  - San Diego
  - Savannah
  - Seattle
  - Tri Cities

The Iowa Chapter welcomes students back after the flood of 2008 at the University of Iowa.

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Now is the Time for Your Hokie-Hideaway
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 (0109), Blacksburg, VA 24061. For more information about Book Notes policies, go to www.vt.edu/bookreview.html.

Books by faculty and staff

In To Test or Not to Test: A Guide to Genetic Screening and Risk, Doris Teichler Zallen, professor of science and technology studies, explores the pros and cons of genetic tests used to determine a person’s risk of disease and arms readers with questions they should consider before deciding whether to pursue genetic screening.

The publisher is Rutgers University Press (100 Joyce Kilmer Ave., Piscataway, NJ 08854-8099); http://rutgerspress.rutgers.edu/index.html.

Books by alumni

From Adam's Apple to Xmas: An Essential Vocabulary Guide for the Politically Incorrect, by H.D. Curet (mechanical engineering ’62, M.S. nuclear science ’63), traces the origins of various words and phrases to the Bible and offers politically correct substitutes.


In To Hell in a Handbasket, Beth Groundwater’s (M.S. software engineering ‘83) character Claire Hanover, a gift-basket designer, is thrown into yet another murder mystery during a vacation in Breckenridge, Colo., when a young woman is killed on the ski slopes.

The publisher is Five Star Publishing, an imprint of Gale, Cengage Learning (295 Kennedy Memorial Dr., Waterville, ME 04903); www.gale.cengage.com/firestar.

Chimerical, by Brian O’Beirne (psychology ’99), is a children’s book that takes the young reader on a journey of redemption and reconciliation as the main character, Dil, grapples with overcoming his past, a struggle in which heaven and earth meet.

The publisher is Tate Publishing (127 E. Trade Center Ter., Mustang, OK 73064); www.tatepublishing.com.

52, M.S. ’53, an architect with more than 50 years of experience, tells how he came to practice a human-centered style of architecture, which contributes to the well-being of the people who use the spaces he creates, and why such practices in design are important.


In Our Hearts: Women and War, Richard M. War- drop III (biology ’94), provides an in-depth look at combined internal medicine/pediatric residencies, surveying topics taught in these residencies.


From the Shenandoah to the Kanawha: The Story of Col. John Smith, His Descendants, and Their Ances- tors, by Chris Smith (chemical engineering ’81), chronicles the story of the migration of the author’s ancestors to Virginia in the 18th century, including their struggles during both the French and Indian War and American Revolution.

alumni, we want to hear what you’ve been doing. although we cannot publish every story or obituary, we can post on-line photographs of weddings, babies, and death notices to Alumni Notes. Please mail obituaries, retirement, and death notices to alumni notes. Virginia Tech alumni association, blacksburg, VA 24061; send them via e-mail to alumni@vt.edu; or submit them online at www.vt.edu/classnotes.html.

50’s

31 stone barner (JR) was inducted into the Academy of Engineering Excellence at Virginia Tech (1978 Mission Dr. Naples, FL 33140). 1959

32 W. David Fletcher (ANSC) received the Outstanding Alumni Award for his contributions to the veterinary profession on the 25th anniversary of his veterinary school graduation from the University of Nottingham. 1959

33 J.R. Bellenger (ME) was inducted into the Academy of Engineering Excellence at Virginia Tech (2731 Wylie Pl, Roanoke, VA 24015).

34 philip N. Bergstresser (PSYC) has been honored with the 2009 Commission on Secrecy Medal. 1959

35 John t. jay (ME) is a registered professional engineer. 1959

36 roland A. Wolfe (Business) was inducted into the Academy of Engineering Excellence at Virginia Tech (157 Roadside Ct, Martinsville, VA 24112). 1959

37 T. Baylor (PCL) is a partner in a book, Entrepreneurship in Action 1436 Edgill Wood Dr, Manassas, VA 20110). 1959

38 Robert D. Mitchell (PCL) was inducted into National Academy of Engineering. 1959

39 Donna woodman dunay (ABE) was named an American Academy Fellow (302 Washington St, West Dover, VT 05353). 1959

40 Linda V. Przyr (ARC) is director of community development of the Women’s Issues Division, Council on Economic Opportunities (72 Driftwood Pl, Salamanco, VA 23151). 1959

41 Jimmie G. Anderson (PCL) was inducted into the Academy of Engineering Excellence at Virginia Tech (1984 Lancaster Dr, Blacksburg, VA 24031). 1959

42 Daniel L. Zier (PCL) is the director of the Department of Transportation (11121 Ravenswood Way, Indianapolis, IN 46227). 1959

43 Satish V. Kulkarni (PCL) was inducted into the Academy of Engineering Excellence at Virginia Tech (9000 Building, Blacksburg, VA 24060). 1959

44 roger F. Jones (James) is a fellow of the Virginia Medical Association (5212 Woodgrove Hwy, Leesburg, VA 20176). 1959

45 James F. Kilty (LAS) has authored a book, Harpurs Ferry, A Crossroads in Time 1175 Seaview Nw Way, Reston, VA 20193. 1959

46 Matthew J. McGlinn (KRT) is the director of the Molecular Diagnostic Laboratory at the University of Maryland School of Medicine (13450 Annapolis Rd., Crownsville, MD 21032). 1959

47 But B. wayne (EM) was named a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (500 Fifth Ave, New York, NY 10110). 1959

48 Dana L. Gress (EM) earned the 2009 M.D. degree from the University of Virginia (1129 South Broad St, Richmond, VA 23219). 1959

49 Elaine crudele cicchi (BIOC) is a fellow of the American Academy of Ophthalmology (1325 North Stree, Arlington, VA 22209). 1959

50 J. Robert (M) is a fellow of the National Academy of Sciences (1129 South Broad St, Richmond, VA 23219). 1959

51 Donald A. Gage (IE) was inducted into the Academy of Engineering Excellence at Virginia Tech (1984 Lancaster Dr, Blacksburg, VA 24031). 1959

52 Arlen R. Read (COM) received her Ph.D. in second language acquisition from the University of Virginia (4432 Rosser Road, Arvind, VA 22115). 1959

53 Michelle Thomas McNiff (EDSU) received her masters in early childhood education from the University of Virginia (9924 Coach Rd, Vienna, VA 22181). 1959

54 David L. Reeder (CVM) is a clinical assistant professor of equine medicine and surgery at the Virginia Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine (2015 M. Taber Lane, Charlestown, MD 21914). 2015

55 richt Rudi (EDC) has been named the Virginia Cooperative Extension Professor in Community Vitality by the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service. 18047 Pearlman Rd., Blacksburg, VA 24061. 1959

56 Roy M. Goodman (ACET) is managing vice president for systems, services and enterprise projects from Virginia Tech (1300 2nd Stree, Arlington, VA 20201). 1959
Jane Vance (M.A. English ’81) was born a painter. Her earliest memories bring her back to the age of one, of her life from which she has vivid recollections.

“To paint, for me, is like an obligation. I know it’s right,” she says. “I cannot make paintings without fruit or a flower; they’re cross-cultural stories.” Says Vance, whose work is meant to serve as a bridge between her native home in the Appalachian mountains and the bright, bold hues and motifs of Tibetan art in the Himalayas.

Vance, who has visited Nepal eight times, finds herself in a unique position as a Western woman situated at a crossroads between her homeland and the Nepalese culture that inspires her. This is best seen in the documentary she recently helped create: A Gift for The Village, which chronicles the journey of one of her paintings from its creation, which received the blessings of the Dalai Lama, to its travels to its final home in a tiny village in what Vance calls “the wild west of Nepal.” The film follows the story of a painting that became more than just a gift; for one man and his family but rather one for an entire community.

The project spans almost a decade’s worth of work for Vance and the other members of the team, including co-producers and videographers Jenna Swan and Tom Landon. In 2001, Nepalese spiritual leader Anmi Thapa Ngwang stayed with Vance while teaching the半个月 at Virginia Tech. Vance decided to paint Ngwang’s portrait as a Tibetan lineage painting, which places a significant individual in a cultural genealogy.

“You have to understand the history of the great teachers in Tibetan Buddhism and the symbols and motifs of the culture,” says Vance, “to paint these paintings.”

Of the documentary and the countless hours of teamwork that went into its creation, Vance notes, “I am a painter, but that’s almost nothing compared to the privilege of collaboration. I was born with the ability to make bold hues and motifs of the culture, to paint these paintings.”

Jane Vance tickets to Nepal and to view a selection from the documentary A Gift for The Village, visit www.retmage.com/vt/a/2009/09/shorts.htm, or for more information about the documentary, visit www: www.agiftformethelvillage.blogspot.com.
Attention ‘99 grads: In January 2000, the Schifft Health Center will be destroying the medical records of all ’99 graduates. If you would like a copy of your medical record, you must request one before Dec. 1, 2009.
In Memoriam: Robert B. Pamplin Sr.

By SOKHAN HO

"In addition to my education, I received the friendships from Virginia Tech that meant more to me in my life and in my business world than anything else," Robert B. Pamplin (business administration ’33) once said. "They are honest, disciplined, and humble. My charge to all of you is that we continue to stress these values." The former chairman and CEO of Georgia-Pacific Corp., died June 24 at age 97 after a long illness.

Pamplin was widely respected for his business acumen and leadership and his support of higher education, including the Pamplin College of Business, which was named in honor of his son, Robert B. Pamplin Jr. The Pamplins have given more than $35 million in personal, corporate and foundation funds to Virginia Tech, including more than $25 million to the Pamplin College. The college was named in their honor in 1986 in recognition of a $10 million gift received from the building housing the college was named in honor of Pamplin Sr. in 1969.

"Mr. Pamplin and his family have played a singular role in helping us grow and develop into a nationally recognized business school," says Pamplin College Dean Richard E. Sorensen. "Their extraordinary support has helped us recruit and retain outstanding students and faculty members, expand and develop our academic programs, and undertake new construction and renovation.

The Pamplins have generously supported other university programs, including a scholarship fund for outstanding students from throughout Virginia. Pamplin’s long list of university honors and awards includes the Alumni Distinguished Service Award in 1973 and the William H. Ruffner Medal in 1981. He also served on the board of visitors from 1971 to 1979. A native of Dinwiddie County, Va., and a longtime Oregon resident, Pamplin started work after graduating from Virginia Tech at a small lumber company that later became Georgia-Pacific. After a 43-year career with the company, which he helped shape into a leading manufacturer of paper, building products, and chemicals, Pamplin retired and went on to build his own multimillion dollar business in textiles and concrete and asphalt manufacturing. The R.B. Pamplin Corp., a Portland holding and investment company that he formed with his son, today includes farms, radio stations, and newspapers among its subsidiaries.

During an interview for a Pamplin College publication, Pamplin Jr., a business administration student in the Class of 1964, said, ‘One of the greatest successes is when you bring a lot of happiness, love, and hope to people who haven’t had that, and give them the resources to improve themselves.’

Seokhan B. Ho is the communications manager for the Pamplin College of Business.
Paul N. Derring:  
Light from darkness  
BY CLARA B. COX M.A. '84

"Out of his shadow has come sunshine for others, for he has influenced and inspired thousands of students."

William W. Tuck, Sight & Insight

As a college student, Paul Neyron Derring, for whom Virginia Tech's Derring Hall is named, worked on publication staffs, took part in student government, won medals for oratory, and participated in sports. He was president of the Philomathean Society and the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) before graduating as class valedictorian. He was also blind.

Derring was born in Surry County, Va., in 1894. Following the 1907 shooting that took his sight, he studied at the Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind. After graduating, he enrolled in the College of William and Mary, earning a bachelor's degree in 1917.

In 1918, he secured a job as associate student Army Training Corps secretary, part of the National War Work Program of the YMCA, at Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute (popularly called VPI—today's Virginia Tech). Before the year ended, he was appointed general secretary. In that position, Derring counseled thousands of students and provided religious instruction and services in rural Sunday schools. He helped cadets find jobs and established a housing bureau. His work, Temple said, "permeated life at VPI."

In 1921, Derring married Katherine Cook, and the couple later had two daughters. He took a leave of absence 1922-1923 to earn a master's degree in philosophy at Vanderbilt University. Derring relied on sounds to recognize people and places and on his memory to recall names and more unaided from one location to another. Ellison A. Smyth (Class of 1925) wrote in The Bugle's Echo that "the bike Dad rode was so old it had a characteristic squeak which Paul always recognized."

Off campus, Derring spent 30 years on the State Commission for the Visually Handicapped. He also led a fundraising effort to construct a new church, helped raise money for a new Wesley Foundation Student Center, and served on the Blacksburg Town Council. His reputation spread, and in 1944, the Richmond Times-Dispatch listed him as one of 12 most distinguished Virginians.

In 1957, Derring resigned his job to become coordinator of religious affairs. He retired in 1964 after more than 45 years at Virginia Tech. The board of visitors named him director emeritus of religious affairs. He died in 1973. His funeral was held in Blacksburg, and he was buried in Westview Cemetery.

More than two decades later, Alfred "Alf" Knobler (ceramic engineering '38), who had enjoyed discussions with Derring, said of him, "Good people never die. You remember them forever."
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