



vt mag



**New president named**

Timothy D. Sands, introduced in December as the 16th president of Virginia Tech, was drawn to the university's land-grant heritage, research strengths, forward momentum, and more. See the story on page 2.

# MASTERPIECE

THE MOSS ARTS CENTER COMES TO LIFE



# contents

## features

### Sands named 16th president

Introduced at a Dec. 6 press conference as Virginia Tech's next president, Timothy D. Sands was already well-versed in the university's strengths. Drawing from notes jotted onto a napkin, Sands spoke eloquently about the factors that drew him to Blacksburg. Currently the Purdue University executive vice president for academic affairs and provost, Sands will start on June 1.

PAGE 2

### Masterpiece: The Moss Arts Center comes to life

More than a decade in the making, the Moss Arts Center has opened its doors, dazzling patrons with its works of art and technology. Experience the building's first performances and exhibitions as we take you through the galleries, the Cube, the backstage area, and the intimate theatre, and learn what makes the center fit the spirit of Virginia Tech so well.

PAGE 18

### Stagecraft: The versatility of Virginia Tech's newest institute and venue

Can opera and video game aficionados coexist? The Institute for Creativity, Arts, and Technology provides emphatic confirmation that they can. An innovative research project has merged arts education, technology, and storytelling, yielding a one-of-a-kind opera, its virtual set and characters constructed inside the Minecraft video game complemented by the voices of Virginia Tech music students.

PAGE 32

## departments

President's Message	1	Alumni Association	38
Around the Drillfield	4	Book Notes	46
How Tech Ticks	12	Living Pylons	48
Professor Profiles	14	Class Notes	50
Corps of Cadets	36	Still Life	56

**At right:** Two Virginia Tech mainstays—fall foliage and cadets in uniform—brightened campus in late October. Photo by Logan Wallace.

**On the cover:** Capturing the university community's anticipation of the Moss Arts Center's opening, music major Christoper Cummins poses in the Ann and Ellen Fife Theatre in the Street and Davis Performance Hall. Photo by Jim Stroup. Inset photo of Timothy D. Sands by Logan Wallace.



## The Balance of Academics and Athletics

—and the cost to support them

by CHARLES W. STEGER '69



author declares, "Virginia Tech's program is in many respects an ideal—run about as well as can be imagined."

More recently, we were feted with the news that Virginia Tech had the highest Graduation Success Rate (GSR)—an NCAA measure based on graduation—of any public school in the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC), for all sports and for football. The men's basketball team ranked second among all ACC schools with a GSR 20 points above the Division 1 average.

I believe those factoids all point to a larger message: Your alma mater works hard to keep overall costs low while still reaching for the stars.

Clearly, the cost of higher education has risen in recent years as state support has plummeted. But our administration, and those before, always has kept a lid on nonacademic fees, known as the "comprehensive" fee. Today, the fee of \$1,752 remains the lowest in Virginia. Non-education fees comprise only about 15 percent of total mandatory costs here. (The athletic fee is included in the comprehensive fee.)

Only 2 percent of all Virginia Tech tuition and fees goes toward athletics. The state average is 12 percent, and one school devotes 24 percent to athletics. Yet, Virginia Tech students are guaranteed 25 percent of the seats in Lane Stadium and Cassell Coliseum. They find excellence and a seat.

And Frank Beamer is the winningest active coach in Division I's Football Bowl Subdivision.

Last fall, the Virginia General Assembly's audit arm, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC), released a report critical of nonacademic student fees. In particular, it highlighted high fees for intercollegiate athletics. However, Virginia Tech fared well in the report, with the lowest athletic fee in the state by a wide margin.

Virginia Tech students paid \$267 in the 2011-12 academic year (the fee is now \$273) versus an average of \$1,185 for all public colleges, the study noted. The highest was \$2,044.

Also, last fall Virginia Tech was featured in Gregg Easterbrook's book, "The King of Sports," as one of the few well-run football programs nationally, a program in which students graduate and the team wins. The

## president's message

Why? I believe it is because we know our priorities and we balance them appropriately.

Virginia Tech has long been known for offering a high-value education. Tuition and fees here rank in the middle of the pack as compared to peer universities. Total cost to attend is less at Tech than at 19 of 24 peer schools. We appear on Kiplinger's value list every year. In a recent study by Buzz Feed, we ranked in the top 10 nationally when comparing the starting salary of graduates to tuition.

And yes, we like to win on the field or the court. But I like to think there is something level-headed about our approach. Coach Beamer stresses time and again the value of education. All athletes, including those in football, graduate at rates on par with the student body. About two decades ago, we moved the responsibility for athletic advising from the coaches to the provost. Our students demonstrate excellence in competition and in the classroom.

Rankings, including those by Princeton Review, place Virginia Tech food services among the nation's best, and we are consistently in the top three. Yet, our food service (one of only two in the state run by the university and not a private contractor) is among the least expensive, with the third-lowest cost of Virginia's 15 public colleges and universities.

Excellence costs money. But it need not come at an exorbitant price. Virginia Tech ranks among the nation's top 25 public universities. Our graduates get good-paying jobs. Our teams perform and compete well. As I write this, women's soccer is in the nation's top 10. A balanced mindset, a focus on costs, and knowing what really matters all comprise the Virginia Tech way. □

### VIRGINIA TECH MAGAZINE

Winter 2013-14, Vol. 36, No. 2

EDITOR  
**Jesse Tuel**  
ASSISTANT EDITOR  
**Denise Young**  
ART DIRECTOR  
**Robin Dowdy**  
GRAPHIC DESIGNERS  
**Sarah Cisneros, Tiffany Pruden**

CONTRIBUTORS  
**Susan Bland M.A. '10, Carrie Cox, Shirley Fleet, Gwen Harrington '07, Dave Hunt, Charlie Jewell, Albert Raboteau, Philip Shucet '71, Tom Tillar '69, Steven White '92**

COPY EDITORS  
**Juliet Crichton, Richard Lovegrove**

GRADUATE ASSISTANTS AND INTERNS  
**Alex Baruch, Rachel Cline**  
PHOTOGRAPHERS  
**Michael Kiernan, Amanda Loman, Jim Stroup, Logan Wallace**

WEBMASTER  
**Juliet Crichton**

BUSINESS MANAGER  
**Paula Vaught**

CREATIVE SERVICES MANAGER  
**Ed Lemire**

ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT FOR MARKETING AND PUBLICATIONS  
**Melissa Richards**

ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT FOR UNIVERSITY RELATIONS  
**Larry Hincker '72, M.B.A. '94**

### CONTACTS

**Story ideas and letters to the editor:** Email: vtmag@vt.edu. Mail: Virginia Tech Magazine (0109); Media Building, 205C, Virginia Tech; 101 Draper Rd. NW; Blacksburg, VA 24061.

**Address changes:** Email: alumndata@vt.edu. Phone: 540-231-6285 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

**Class Notes:** Email: fleets@vt.edu. Mail: Class Notes, Alumni Association; Holtzman Alumni Center (0102), Virginia Tech; 901 Prices Fork Rd.; Blacksburg, VA 24061. **Advertising:** Jeanne Coates '88; coates@primeconsultingva.com, 757-715-9676.

Virginia Tech does not discriminate against employees, students, or applicants on the basis of age, color, disability, gender, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, veteran status, or any other basis protected by law. Anyone having questions concerning discrimination or accessibility should contact the Office of Equity and Access.

VT/1213/100K/RD/VTM2013-0148



# Timothy D. Sands named Virginia Tech's 16th president

by JESSE TUEL  
photos by LOGAN WALLACE




Timothy D. Sands, soon to be the university's 16th president, said he was pleased to see that the search committee's members were all aligned to the same purpose.

**T**imothy D. Sands, currently the executive vice president for academic affairs and provost at Purdue University, will be Virginia Tech's 16th president. Introduced at a Dec. 6 press conference, Sands succeeds President Charles W. Steger, who will step down when Sands takes office on June 1.

"Dr. Sands impressed many from the start and garnered even more support after our personal interviews," said Mike Quillen (civil engineering '70, M.S. '71), rector of the Board of Visitors (BOV). "He has stellar academic credentials and administrative experience from some of the nation's outstanding land-grant and public research universities. We were particularly impressed with Tim's sense of the modern research university's role in advancing American society and its economy."

Sands, 55, the Basil S. Turner Professor of Engineering in Purdue's School of Materials Engineering and School of Electrical and Computer Engineering, served as Purdue's acting president in fall 2012. As Purdue's chief academic officer, Sands led efforts to elevate student success that enhanced retention and graduate rates, initiated a move toward year-round utilization of facilities, led development of the university's first comprehensive assessment of all degree-granting programs, and launched an online teaching and learning platform that emphasizes interactive, computation- and simulation-rich learning environments.



**An introduction:**

To watch Sands' Dec. 6 press conference or to read more about the incoming president, go to [www.vtmag.vt.edu](http://www.vtmag.vt.edu).

"I'd like to thank the Board of Visitors for the trust that they've placed in me," Sands said at the press conference. "I certainly understand the magnitude of the job before me and the great work that's been done to get us to this point. President Steger and the Board of Visitors have done a wonderful job moving this university forward over the last decade and a half or so. My main goal is to maintain that momentum and build on it."

Sands said he was drawn to Virginia Tech for its land-grant heritage, the value of its education, the impact of its research, its embodiment of *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve), and its forward direction.

First, Sands noted that the 1862 Morrill Act, which established the model for the nation's land-grant institutions, was designed to prepare citizens to be active, informed participants in democracy and to teach students to perform research and engage the community so as to advance economic prosperity. Considering society's needs, on the local to the global stage, Sands said, "Virginia Tech is the kind of institution that you would create today for the 21st century. And I don't say that lightly. There's a little bit of happenstance there; there's a little bit of good luck; there's a little bit of planning—I'd say a lot of planning—and a lot of careful stewardship over many generations."

Second, Sands was impressed with the value of a Virginia Tech education—and not just the price or quality. Surveys routinely rank the university highly, particularly when asking if alumni would choose the school again or recommend it to a family member or friend. "Students are treated with respect and they're cared for and they have a good experience. That's the kind of place I want to go to," Sands said.

Third, Sands was attracted to the university's research, and he has the background to judge it astutely. Holding a bachelor's

degree in engineering physics and a master's degree and Ph.D. in materials science and engineering, all from the University of California, Berkeley, Sands began his professional career in 1984 at Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory and then spent nine years as a member of the technical staff and as a research group director with Bell Communications Research, Inc. (Bellcore) in Red Bank, N.J. He returned to Berkeley in 1993 as a professor in the Department of Materials Science and Engineering and joined Purdue in 2002, later becoming director of the university's Birck Nanotechnology Center, an interdisciplinary center encompassing 12 academic disciplines.

Many universities, Sands said, "do either problem-inspired research or curiosity-driven research. What I see at Virginia Tech is a great blend of the two." Faculty members and students, even if driven by curiosity, are able to recognize when discoveries can be applied to the problems of society. "I have the sense that at Virginia Tech, that is the spirit."

Fourth, *Ut Prosim* rang true for Sands. "It's not a dusty relic of a motto here," Sands said. "It's very clear to me that this is something that's deeply ingrained in the institution."

Lastly, describing himself as a builder rather than a maintainer, Sands said the university's momentum, for which he credited the BOV and Steger, was key. "This is a place that is clearly not happy with the status quo, that always wants to do better and always wants to improve—and that's the kind of institution that I want to be associated with."

Sands began his remarks at the press conference by introducing his family. His wife, Laura Sands, is the Katherine Birck Professor in the School of Nursing at Purdue. Her research focuses on optimizing care pathways for older adults. They have four



Timothy D. Sands and Laura Sands will move to Blacksburg from Purdue University, where Laura Sands is the Katherine Birck Professor in the School of Nursing.

children—Amanda, KC, and Kathryn, all of whom graduated from Purdue, and Haley, a junior at Purdue.

The appointment concluded a rigorous six-month search chaired by former BOV rector George Nolen (marketing management '78), during which 238 candidates were considered. The 22-person search committee represented a broad cross section of the extended university community including board members, students, staff, alumni, and 12 senior faculty members. □

*Editor's note: In-depth coverage of incoming President Timothy D. Sands will be available in the spring 2014 edition of Virginia Tech Magazine, published in mid-April. Meanwhile, visit [www.vtmag.vt.edu](http://www.vtmag.vt.edu) to learn more about the university's 16th president.*





## HANDS ON. MINDS ON.

At Virginia Tech, collaboration is at our core. Leveraging 13 consecutive years of research growth and 866 collaborative sponsored research awards last year alone, we partner with business and industry to accelerate entrepreneurialism and impact economies.

Invent cancer treatments. Build resilient communities. Lead the world in cybersecurity, advance the science of sustainability, and create technology.

Join us now.

[THISISTHEFUTURE.COM](http://THISISTHEFUTURE.COM)



PAT ARTIS '71

### Perfect timing

A B-25 from the Tri-State Warbird Museum in Batavia, Ohio, piloted by (at right) Paul Redlich (far) and Phillip Rountree (near), performed a flyover on Oct. 26, preceding the football game versus Duke. Small images at right by Maj. Gen. Randal Fullhart.



### Demolition of Rasche Hall under way

Home to cadets for more than a century, Rasche Hall is coming down as the first step in the redevelopment of the Upper Quad. The redevelopment plan includes the replacement of Rasche and Brodie halls with brand new residence

halls that will house more than 1,000 cadets.

“This is the first major step in the new era of the corps and the Upper Quad,” said Maj. Gen. Randal Fullhart, commandant of the Corps of Cadets. “While there is always an element of nostalgia, the overwhelming consensus is one of excitement and appreciation

that the corps, its history, and its future are being supported by the university.”

The new buildings will offer 21st-century housing concepts to meet the needs of students while intentionally maintaining the heritage of the Upper Quad. The plan also calls for a new corps leadership and military science building that

will house the corps and ROTC staffs, the corps museum, the tailor shop, and the Rice Center for Leader Development. Meanwhile, Lane Hall, a symbol of the university’s early history and the corps’ proud traditions, will be preserved and placed on the National Registry of Historic Sites.



**Polo club:**  
To see a video on the polo team, visit [www.vtmag.vt.edu](http://www.vtmag.vt.edu).



AMANDA LOMAN

## Polo club off and running

**Known as the sport of kings, polo dates as far back as 400 B.C. For the Polo Club at Virginia Tech, the sport dates to 2011, when Jenny Schwartz, a junior with a double major in marketing and management, started working toward creating a team that played regular games.**

In 2013-14, about 30 people joined the club. Some are learning and playing polo. Some just come to watch or give the horses their feed or learn to ride. No matter the level of involvement, polo experience isn't necessary.



ZEKE BARLOW

Brian Walsh

## New national FFA president from Virginia Tech

In middle school, Brian Walsh was a shy kid with limited experience in the world of agriculture. All that soon changed once Walsh donned the coveted signature Future Farmers of America (FFA) blue jacket that so many of his friends wore.

Now called the National FFA Organization, FFA—which provides leadership, personal growth, and career success training through agricultural education—not only helped pull Walsh out of his shell, but put him on the national stage. Walsh, a sophomore in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences majoring in agribusiness and minoring in leadership and social change, was recently elected president of the national organization, a prestigious role that means he will spend the next year traveling nearly 150,000 miles across more than 40 states as he meets with CEOs of major agricultural businesses; interacts with high-level politicians; advocates for industry; and, perhaps most importantly,

inspires the next generation of agricultural leaders.

FFA has helped Walsh come a long way from that shy kid growing up in rural Woodstock, Va. “FFA has a unique way of developing people and bringing them out of their own skin,” said Walsh. “I found a place where I was home and connected with people who cared about me and wanted me to grow.”

In November, Walsh ran against 41 other FFA leaders from around the country. The six-day process of nine interviews is rigorous and demanding. And while Walsh was surprised when the delegates named him the new FFA president, those who know him were not.

“Brian understands who he is, and he knows how to communicate effectively with others,” said Andy Seibel, Virginia FFA state specialist in the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education at Virginia Tech. “In my opinion, his character is what truly sets him apart from his peers.”

Now Walsh is busy trying to finish up his academic year early so he can start traveling the country to educate thousands about FFA. He will take a year off from school to fulfill his new role and will return to Virginia Tech in 2015. “I hope I can motivate and inspire thousands of FFA members in the coming year,” Walsh said. “But if I can motivate and connect with just one person this year, it will all be worth it.”



JIM STROUP

“People don't have to have played polo to be on the team,” said Schwartz, who enjoys not only teaching others about polo but also introducing them to the joy of horses. “Last year, most of the team were beginners. I'm so excited about how far the polo club has come.”

In the fall semester, the team played against the University of Virginia, the University of Kentucky, and the Garrison Forest School.



JOHN MCCORMICK

Sue Ott Rowlands

## College dean steps down

Sue Ott Rowlands, the dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences since 2007, recently announced her departure from Virginia Tech to become vice president for academic affairs and provost at Northern Kentucky University.

“Sue's leadership for the college has been invaluable over her six years at the helm,” said Senior Vice President and Provost Mark McNamee. “We wish her well as she moves on to her new opportunity at Northern Kentucky University, and we will miss her vibrant leadership.”

As the university undertakes an international search for a new dean, Joan B. Hirt, a professor of educational leadership and policy studies in the School of Education, is serving as interim dean. Hirt has been at Virginia Tech since 1994, beginning with two years as a visiting associate professor before transitioning into a tenure-track position as an associate professor. She earned the rank of professor in 2009.

“We are fortunate to have Joan step into this role, with almost two decades of experience here at Virginia Tech, as well as

almost two decades prior as a university administrator,” McNamee said. “I am confident she will ease this leadership transition in the college.”

## Virginia Tech ranked the fittest university in U.S.

Virginia Tech landed the top spot in The Active Times list of 50 Fittest Colleges in America 2013. The recently published rankings are based on fitness, health, and wellness factors, including athletic facilities, team sports participation, campus dining, and overall quality of student life. “Honestly, what fit list isn't Virginia Tech on?” the Active Times article asked. “This school's got dining halls dedicated to organically grown; sustainable food systems; an exceptionally athletic and active student body; and, according to the Princeton Review, it's home to some of the happiest students in the entire nation.”

## Seven varsity sports notch perfect graduation rates

Virginia Tech women's basketball, men's golf, women's lacrosse, softball, women's soccer, women's swimming and diving, and women's tennis all recorded a Graduation Success Rates (GSR) of 100 percent, according to an NCAA report released in October.

Developed by the NCAA as part of its academic reform initiative, the GSR allows student-athletes six years to earn their degrees. Virginia Tech's combined GSR for all sports is 90 percent, ranking sixth among ACC schools.



JIM STROUP

## Solar panels on Arlington center serve as student laboratory

A solar photovoltaic system on the roof of the Virginia Tech Research Center — Arlington is serving a three-fold purpose: It contributes to the LEED credentials of the 144,000-square-foot, seven-story building; lowers energy costs; and benefits graduate education by serving as a laboratory for engineering students.

“We are able to collect data about solar radiation, wind speed, and ambient and solar panel temperatures that allows us to create mathematical models for solar panel performance under various weather conditions and seasons. From this, we can determine how much power can be generated from a certain number of solar panels in similar climates,” said Saifur Rahman, the Joseph R. Loring Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering and director of the Virginia Tech Advanced Research Institute.

Rahman supervised the overall design and coordination of the solar photovoltaic system installed by the Center for Energy and Global Environment, which is a part of the institute. “This project is an excellent way for our students to learn about the benefits of solar and wind power and how they can apply this technology to real-world situations,” he said.

The 6.44 kilowatts system, online since February 2012, has fed more than 15,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity to the building.

In football, the Hokies' GSR of 78 percent, fifth among ACC schools, is 8 percentage points above the national average. In men's basketball, the GSR of 90 percent is 20 points above the

Division I average. Four other sports finished above 90 percent: men's swimming and diving (95), men's track and field and cross country (93), baseball (93), and volleyball (92).



## “I’m about to go airborne”

With a harness, goggles, and a bit of courage, the Weather Channel’s Jim Cantore pitted himself against the hurricane-force power of the Virginia Tech Stability Wind Tunnel at the Department of Aerospace and Ocean Engineering.

### Winded:

To watch the video, visit [www.vtmag.vt.edu](http://www.vtmag.vt.edu). To learn more about the tunnel and its global impact in renewable energy and other areas, visit [www.aoe.vt.edu/research/facilities/stabilitytunnel/](http://www.aoe.vt.edu/research/facilities/stabilitytunnel/).



The strongest winds I’ve ever stood in, probably between 85 and about 90 miles per hour.”



I’m going to be honest with you, I was a little apprehensive at first. When you start thinking about [Category] 5 winds, and then I started envisioning the destruction that they cause, I’m like, ‘I must be out of my freaking mind.’”



Here we are, at strong tropical storm force, at about 71 mph. ... I can feel my skin starting to vibrate.”



Here we are at minimal hurricane force. Look what happens. I start going for a ride.”



When he passed [the wind tunnel’s record for a human] at 133, then that’s a Category 4. We’ve never had anyone go that fast before. ... I was nervous watching it, in fact. I was egging on the tunnel operator to do it a little quicker so that we would be through faster.”

—William Devenport, professor and director of the wind tunnel facility



All right, here we are at 80. I can’t lean into it now. ... Look at my mouth. See what’s happening?”



At 135, you can’t really take a breath of air because there’s just so much force, even on your mouth. You could tell, just by the way my skin was flapping.”



When we got to 158.6, my ears had just popped. You can’t hear anything. I can definitely feel my skin on my neck and my face moving. I thought, ‘At any instant, I’m about to go airborne. ... I really wanted to go to 175, but they cut me off.’”

71 mph

Category 1  
75–95 mph

80 mph

Category 4  
130–156 mph

135 mph

Category 5  
157+ mph

PHOTOS COURTESY OF JIM CANTORE, THE WEATHER CHANNEL



Jim Weaver

## Athletic Director Jim Weaver steps down

Athletic Director Jim Weaver has stepped down as department head of the university’s intercollegiate athletics unit due to health reasons, announced President Charles W. Steger.

“We have been fortunate to have Jim’s strong leadership for more than 16 years at the

athletics helm,” said Steger. “He has significantly expanded the program’s size and quality, winning in competition and in the classroom. Financially, we are in very good condition. Jim is highly respected in the profession. I regret to see him leave this role. However, this is a demanding job. Jim’s health precludes him from maintaining the same commitment and devotion he has shown since arriving here in 1997.”

Said Weaver, “I have had the pleasure of serving a great university and working with outstanding staff and coaches. I am very proud of our many accomplishments. We compete and win. We have some of the nation’s best fans, and, most importantly, our students graduate with a first-class education. However, leadership [in] this important university

role requires active engagement. I am not able to do that at this time. The department is in good shape, but I am not. So, Dr. Steger and I agree that now is the right time to seek my replacement.”

During Weaver’s tenure, the university significantly expanded and improved athletic facilities. The Merryman Center sports medicine and conditioning complex was completed in 1998. The Lane Stadium South End Zone expansion added almost 12,000 seats in 2003, and the West Side expansion in 2006 provided club seats, luxury boxes, and office and academic spaces for the athletic program. A state-of-the-art basketball practice complex, the Hahn Hurst Practice Facility, was completed in 2009, while improvements for the softball, baseball, soccer, and lacrosse

programs, among others, were completed. And in 2003, the university achieved its long-held goal of joining the Atlantic Coast Conference.

The university expects to name a replacement early in 2014. Sharon McCloskey, senior associate athletic director, is serving as interim athletic director.

## Holt, Hollander receive American Institute of Architects chapter award

Jaen Holt, director of the College of Architecture and Urban Studies’ Washington-Alexandria Architecture Center and the Patrick and Nancy Lathrop Professor of Architecture, and Henry Hollander, coordinator of outreach and alumni relations for the center, have received the American Institute

of Architects Northern Virginia Chapter Award. The award is presented in recognition of individuals or organizations that have, through their professional activities and body of work, significantly inspired or influenced the architecture profession in Northern Virginia over a sustained period of time. The honor was presented to Holt and Hollander during the annual chapter meeting and honors celebration in October.

## Virginia Supreme Court reverses April 16 trial verdict

In October, Virginia’s highest court reversed a Montgomery County Circuit Court jury verdict in a wrongful death lawsuit brought by parents of two students killed on April 16, 2007.

Focusing on the fundamental facts of the case, the high court said, “Based on the limited information available to the commonwealth prior to the shootings in Norris Hall, it cannot be said that it was known or reasonably foreseeable that students in Norris Hall would fall victim to criminal harm. Thus, as a matter of law, the commonwealth did not have a duty to protect students against third-party criminal acts.”

Brian Gottstein, spokesman for the Office of the Virginia Attorney General, responded to the ruling. “While words cannot express the tremendous sympathy we have for the families who lost their loved ones in the Virginia Tech shootings of 2007—including the Prydes and the Petersons—the Virginia Supreme Court has found what we have said all along to

be true: The commonwealth and its officials at Virginia Tech were not negligent on April 16, 2007. Cho was the lone person responsible for this tragedy,” Gottstein said.

Larry Hincker, associate vice president for university relations, responded on the university’s behalf. “We are pleased that the Supreme Court recognized and corrected the errors of the lower court, which resulted in a faulty jury verdict,” Hincker said. “The court reversed an action based on incorrect interpretation of Virginia law. These clearly were important legal principles that had to be and were clarified.

“While these rulings are favorable to the commonwealth and her employees, they simply clarify the law and, indirectly, shine a light on the underlying cause of the mass tragedy of April 16. The court’s actions

can never reverse the loss of lives nor the pain experienced by so many families and friends of victims of one person. In the end, the cause of these heinous acts and continuing heartbreak was a troubled and angry young man with easy access to powerful killing weapons.”

Since this case devolves from state law, there are no further opportunities for appeal.

## Nobel laureate talks about innovation in modern research

In October, Nobel laureate and former U.S. Secretary of Energy Steven Chu discussed how to create a research and development environment modeled after the famously successful “Bell Labs.” The remarks came



during the initial Hugh and Ethel Kelly Speaker Series presentation, hosted by the Institute for Critical Technology and Applied Science and the College of Engineering.

Chu said researchers in today's research climate are forced to concentrate on their best ideas, work in small groups, and collaborate with experts from different fields. In that respect, the approach reinforces the Bell Laboratories' philosophy to build small research groups, typically containing just an investigator, a postdoctoral associate, and a lab technician, and to have active scientists fill the management roles.

"A small group makes you think hard about the most important things to work on, and being forced to share ideas may be a good thing," Chu said. "That's the lemonade from the lemons."

Bell Laboratories was a hub of innovation throughout the 20th century, with breakthrough discoveries, such as the transistor, communication satellites, touch-tone phones, digital signal processing, and data networking. Chu's work to capture atoms with laser light while he was at Bell Labs earned a Nobel Prize in physics.

"When people have a great idea, the first thing we want them to do is not to write it down, not to file a patent, but to go tell a colleague and start brainstorming," Chu told a capacity crowd in the Burruss Hall auditorium.



AMANDA LOMAN

### From a Nepalese orphanage, a common source of inspiration

**The course of Conor Grennan's life changed at an orphanage in war-torn Nepal.**

In 2004, before his 30th birthday, Grennan (above) planned a yearlong trip around the world, starting with a three-month obligation to volunteer at the orphanage.

When Grennan discovered that many of the children weren't orphans, but had been snatched from their homes by child traffickers, he gave up his plans for world travel and tried to reunite the children with their parents. In his book "Little Princes," the New York Times best-selling author documented those efforts—and now his memoir is Virginia Tech's Common Book for the academic year.

The Common Book Project began at Virginia Tech in 1998 to enrich the first-year experience and create a sense of community among first-year and transfer students as they discuss and learn from the same book.

"This personal and inspiring memoir has been central to an organic, shared experience on campus with the newest members of the Hokie Nation," said Rachel Holloway, vice provost for undergraduate academic affairs.

Virginia Tech's Common Book committee selected "Little Princes" because it challenged students and faculty to think globally and look for ways to make an impact. In various courses across campus, from the STEM fields to the humanities, the book is being used as a platform for dialogue. "[The book] allows students and faculty to transcend disciplines and see how they—academically and personally—fit into the bigger picture," said Mary Ann Lewis, assistant provost for first-year experiences.

## On the go with Virginia Tech

### Magazine launches digital app

Download Virginia Tech Magazine's free app for your iOS or Android device—available now in iTunes or Google Play—and experience every feature story, every class note, and all the news, along with video and audio extras.

- Receive a notification when a new edition is ready for download.
- Keep a library of your favorite editions.
- Bookmark your favorite stories.
- Share pages with your social networks.



We at George Mason University applaud departing Virginia Tech President Charles W. Steger for his nearly 14 years of leadership to not only Virginia Tech, but to Virginia's university community.

Thank you for being an example of courage, integrity, and action. Congratulations on your many achievements. And thank you for being a leader to follow.





# The Sounds of Science

Why your ears will love the Moss Arts Center

by JESSE TUEL  
photos by LOGAN WALLACE

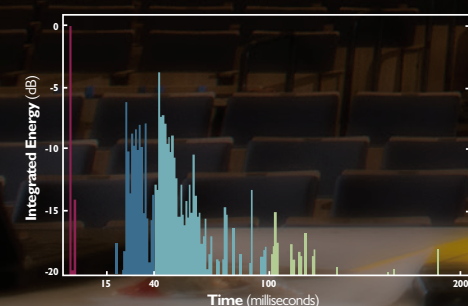
One evening in late July, the daytime clamor of ongoing construction at the Moss Arts Center gave way to some unexpected noisemakers: party balloons, a starter pistol, and a dodecahedron speaker and sub-woofer.

In a process called acoustical commissioning, consultants from Arup, a New York firm, were measuring the sound in the Anne and Ellen Fife Theatre in the Street and Davis Performance Hall. The firm was selected in 2008 to design the center's acoustic and audio systems, and Arup's Matt Mahon and Denis Blount have visited Blacksburg about once a month, testing and retesting the hall's acoustics as the building took shape.

They're pursuing a perfect sound. "Acoustic excellence has been the goal for everyone on the project team," Blount said. "Everything points to A-plus on acoustics. It will be a world-class acoustic music experience."

1. The consultants measured **"impulse" responses**. An impulse is a sound emitted into a space, and an impulse response is what is perceived in the space. The reverberation time is how long it takes for an impulse to decay by 60 decibels. If the space is too "dry," the reduction will occur before approximately two seconds elapse, meaning that the space absorbs sound too quickly. If the space is too "wet," surfaces are reflecting too much sound. Orchestra sound, for instance, is meant to reverberate more.

2. A sound simulation, courtesy of Arup, displays the behavior of an impulse over the first 200 milliseconds. Simulations help the consultants visualize the spatial perception of acoustics—where the sound is coming from and how enveloped the listener feels.

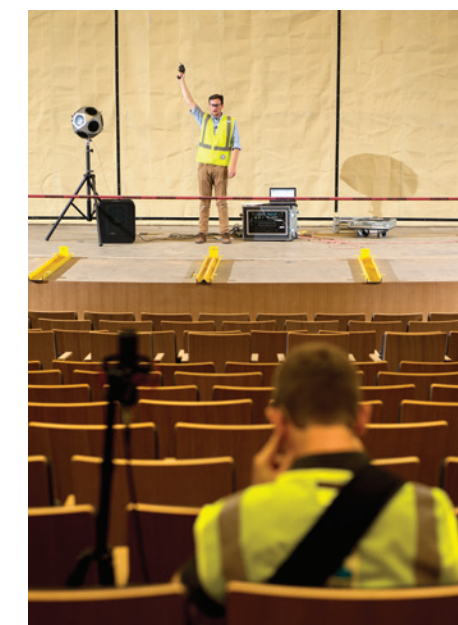


■ Red represents the first arrival of sound directly from the source.  
■ Light and dark blue indicate early sound reflections from the stage, orchestra shell, side and rear walls, and more.  
■ Yellow represents the later cluster of reflections from multiple sources.



3. Blount and Mahon measured the room response of each balloon pop and pistol blank using a variety of **microphones** positioned around the theatre, returning to the exact same seats from earlier visits. Multiple measurements were taken, as "all balloon pops are not the same, and all starter pistol shots are not the same," Blount said.

4. Those are specially calibrated acoustical **balloons**, right? Nope. The consultants bought them at a party store—and then manually inflated them while standing on the stage. Mahon rhythmically breathed into one balloon, growing light-headed. "And that's how Matt passed out in front of a video crew," he said with a laugh.



5. Also resting on the stage was a case holding two .38 Specials—six-shooters modified to be **starter pistols**. Ear protection was a necessity; the concussion after the pistol's firing reverberated through the chest cavity of an observer standing nearby.

## Sound work:

For a video of the Arup team at work on the acoustical commissioning, go to [www.vtmag.vt.edu](http://www.vtmag.vt.edu). You'll also find a collection of similar videos on the center's hydraulic stage, the pianos, dance floor, lighting, and orchestra shell.

6. The third noisemaker was the **dodecahedron speaker** and a **sub-woofer**, which emit what's known as a frequency sweep. Cascading from low notes to high, the sweep allows the consultants to measure every possible note that audience members will hear—from 30 hertz, near the bottom of the range the human ear can detect, up through 22.5 kilohertz, slightly above what humans can hear.

7. The hall is filled with acoustically designed features, from the shapes of the balconies and the proscenium down to the plenums under the seats that quietly circulate air.



8. A significant variable is the **seats**—and how many people are in them. Even winter or summer clothing on members of the audience makes a difference.

9. Arup has worked with the center's production staff to help them learn how to adjust the hall's sound according to the performance and the audience. Two primary methods are available. **Acoustic drapery**, horizontally deployed on a chain-driven system, can cover reflective surfaces on all levels. With adjustable angles, the **orchestra shell** can seal off the proscenium, yielding a concert hall. □





## David Schmale New Heights

by ZEKE BARLOW

David G. Schmale III, an associate professor of plant pathology, physiology, and weed science in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, was named to Popular Science magazine's 2013 Brilliant Ten list.

His research using drones—also called unmanned aerial vehicles or UAVs—to explore microbial life in the atmosphere earned him a spot on the prestigious list of international scientists, engineers, and thinkers whose innovations are changing the world.

Schmale and colleagues use research drones to track the movement of dangerous microorganisms that surf atmospheric waves. These waves collect, mix, and shuffle microorganisms across cities, states, and even countries. This research has deepened our understanding of the flow of life in the atmosphere and has contributed unique tools for scientific exploration in the burgeoning field of aeroecology.

“Important pathogens of plants, domestic animals, and humans can be transported over long distances in the atmosphere. Drones are important tools to study how these pathogens travel from one location to another,” said Schmale. “They can be used to help predict potential outbreaks of human and animal diseases and even help farmers time their application of pesticides to thwart crop destruction.”

Schmale, his team, and collaborators have gathered a number of high-impact findings since he began exploring high-flying microorganisms with drones. He was the first to develop an autonomous drone to sample microorganisms in the lower atmosphere. His drones collected strains of a fungus that caused a devastating wheat disease and produced dangerous toxins that far exceeded U.S. food safety thresholds. These discoveries have unleashed new and exciting civilian applications for drones, such as scouting for pests above crops and validating models for the spread of pathogens.

While Schmale is in Blacksburg, much of the flying takes place at Virginia Tech's Kentland Experimental Systems Laboratory, where he and other Tech researchers use the lab and associated airstrip to conduct sponsored research using a variety of unmanned systems.

Schmale and Boris Vinatzer, an associate professor of plant pathology, physiology, and weed science, are part of an international team that is leading a first-ever study to examine and run DNA analyses on millions of microbes that hit the earth with each raindrop. Their work is being sponsored by a \$2 million grant from the National Science Foundation's Dimensions of Biodiversity Program, which asked scientists to examine biodiversity in all corners of the world.

While lots of research has been done to catalog microbes that live in the sea and on land, the study of microbial life in the atmosphere and in rain is largely unexplored.

“It's an exciting time to be an atmospheric explorer,” Schmale said. “The sky is the limit.” □

*Zeke Barlow is the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences communications manager.*

**In the air:**  
To watch videos of Schmale, including his TEDxVirginiaTech speech, visit [www.vtmag.vt.edu](http://www.vtmag.vt.edu).

## Kathleen Alexander Outreach in Botswana

by DENISE YOUNG

Playing a dual role as veterinarian and scientist, Dr. Kathleen Alexander, an associate professor of wildlife in the College of Natural Resources and Environment and an affiliated researcher in the Fralin Life Science Institute, studies human and animal interactions with a focus on the transmission of diseases between people and wildlife. She co-founded a nongovernmental organization called the Center for African Resources: Animals, Community, and Land Use (CARACAL), which strives to conserve wildlife and improve livelihoods for the people of Botswana. The recipient of Virginia Tech's 2013 Alumni Award for Excellence in International Outreach, Alexander described her work.

### On life in Botswana:

Botswana is an amazing place, a stronghold for some of the largest wildlife populations in Africa and the world. In some places like Kasane in Northern Botswana where I work, you might walk past warthogs while you go into the grocery store or, if you are not careful, run into elephants while you walk your dog.

### On the human-animal interface of disease transmission:

As time has gone on, we've dramatically transformed our landscapes and, consequently, interactions between humans, wildlife, and domestic animals have become more complex and more frequent. The threat of zoonotic disease emergence—those diseases that originate in animals—is now widely appreciated by most everyone. From the fear of avian influenza to SARS, we all wonder when the next disease will emerge. What we don't understand is how the landscape, animal communities, and human behaviors can contribute to this process. What will open the proverbial Pandora's box?

My interest has been in looking beyond the hunt for the next new virus to focus on understanding how diseases might emerge. What are the connections? For example, how does shared surface water influence transmission pathways? How do landscapes transformed by humans escalate this process? How and where are we connected to animal populations? What attributes of animals and humans might change those connections, either minimizing or increasing risk [of transmission]?

### On how we don't always know what we think we know:

Diarrheal disease is a leading cause of death in children under five years of age—something we still have not managed to control, despite all of our medical advances. I wanted to understand how diarrheal disease was affecting people in Botswana and the region. I was persistent and hunted across offices, libraries, and stacks of long-

### An amazing place:

Alexander spoke about her work in Botswana at the 2012 TEDxVirginiaTech event. Find the video at [www.vtmag.vt.edu](http://www.vtmag.vt.edu).

forgotten government medical records to create a 30-year data set of diarrhea case incidence in the country. What I found surprised me: Diarrhea was highest when there was no rain. Now, that wasn't what I expected. Why would this be the case?

I went back to the hospital, a very small hospital—five doctors for 23,000 people and a handful of nurses. I said to one of the older nurses, “What do you think? Why would diarrhea be highest at this time of the year where there is no rainfall?” She paused only a minute and told me, “Well, I know what it is. Let me tell you. It's flies. Flies are the problem.” I started looking at the data on fly ecology and, interestingly, many of the species that are associated with sanitation and diarrheal disease increase in density and activity when it's the hottest and driest. Her ideas fit the system and gave us a new direction in our research. I was reminded how important it is to stay grounded and learn from the folks you are attempting to help, and not become too invested in your perceptions of knowledge as a scientist.

### On what inspires her:

I feel deeply committed to making sure that what I do makes a difference ... that people will be better off when I finish this work. So I'm very connected to the communities I work with and that's what inspires me—to know that you're helping the doctors and the nurses and community members and chiefs and, ultimately, that they trust you and know you are doing your best to help them. □



# Daniel Thorp

## Passion for the Past

by RACHEL CLINE

While teaching about the events of the past, Daniel Thorp brings excitement to the present for his students. As an associate professor of history in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, Thorp has received a near-perfect average teaching evaluation, as well as the university's 2013 William E. Wine Award. We sat down with Thorp to discuss how he uses his passion to get students interested in the past.

### On why he enjoys lecturing—and how it keeps him young:

I have an audience with whom to share my enthusiasm. It not only keeps me intellectually excited about what I'm doing, [but] also creates a situation where I don't realize I'm getting any older because year after year after year, I'm dealing with a group that hasn't changed. They're 18 and 19 years old, and they're excited about getting started in history. Well, if they're not changing, I'm not changing! So, intellectually and emotionally and physically, it's a really invigorating experience and environment.

### On selling his soul to the devil:

Year after year, the thing that I always get the most excited about is the Lewis and Clark expedition. With regard to most events as a historian, I know enough about the past that you couldn't pay me to live back then. The expedition is the one exception. I would sell my soul to the devil to have been on the Lewis and Clark expedition. I still just can't even really imagine seeing the West as they saw it.

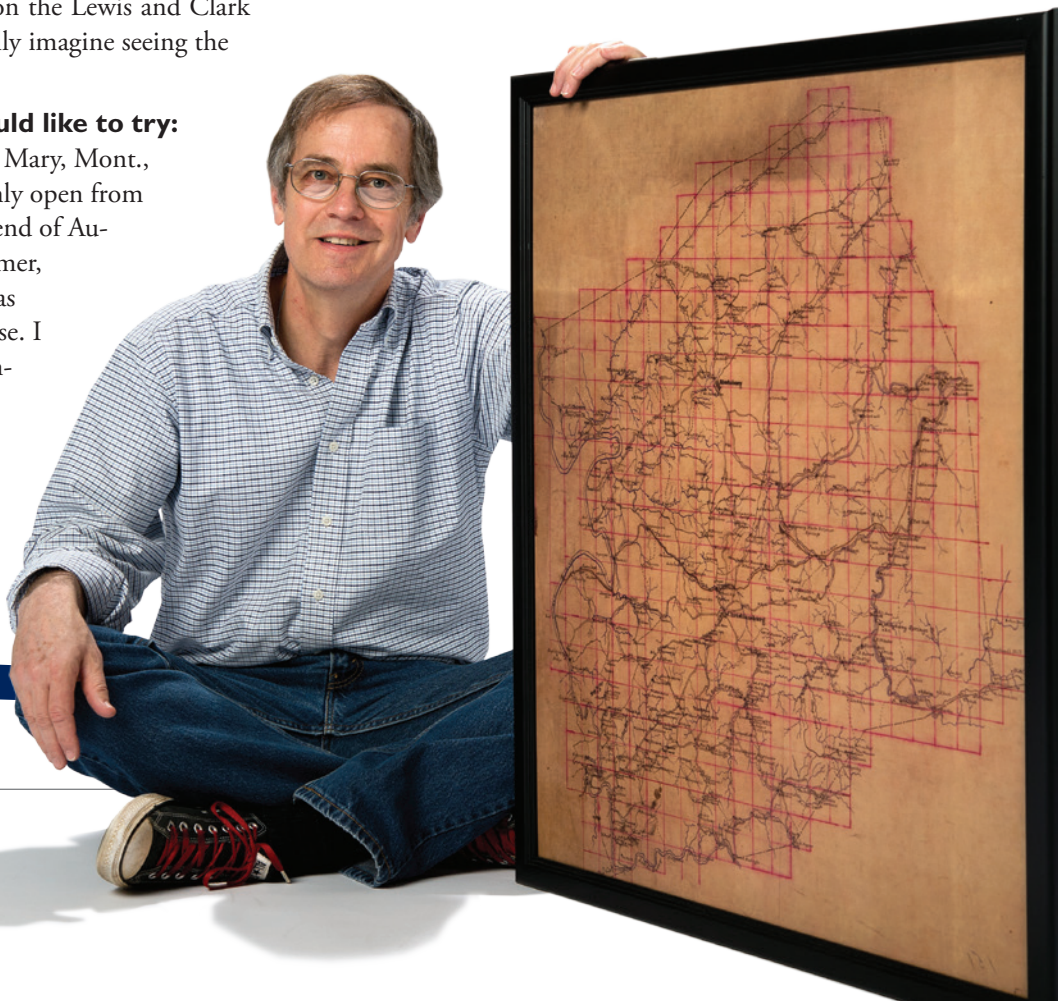
### On another profession he would like to try:

There's a restaurant and diner in St. Mary, Mont., called The Park Café, and they're only open from about the middle of May until the end of August or early September. Every summer, they hire dozens of people to work as waiters and cooks and everything else. I keep thinking that one of these summers, I'm going to just apply and spend a summer at The Park Café as a short-order cook. I think that would be fun.

### On relating to the smartphone generation from a land-line perspective:

[Students] are astonished that I'm an actual living person without a cell phone. I've never had a cell phone and have no interest in having [one], which even most of my colleagues find unusual and I think most of my students find inexplicable. So, in some ways, I can't relate to them, and I realize that. But I think the way in which I can relate to them is by demonstrating a genuine enthusiasm for the class or for the subject and helping them to feel some of that same excitement. □

*Rachel Cline, a senior communication and sociology major, was an intern with Virginia Tech Magazine.*



With a historical map of Montgomery County, Daniel Thorp is right at home.



**In this economy, why should I spend money on insurance right now?**

**Oh, that's why.**

Hokies and their families can save money with exclusive discounts on select insurance plans available through The Alumni Insurance Program®.

Call 1-800-922-1245 today or visit [www.TheAIP.com/VT](http://www.TheAIP.com/VT) for a full list of products including Life, Health, Auto, Home and Travel.

Brought to you by:



AG-9645

Underwritten by \*American General Life Insurance Company and \*\*The United States Life Insurance Company in the City of New York.

3PB

### Term Life Insurance Plans Available

#### AlumniTerm 10/20\*\*

Group 10- and 20- year level term life insurance policies are available up to \$1,000,000 for alumni under age 65.

#### AlumniTerm\*\*

Simplified issue group term life insurance available up to \$100,000 to alumni under age 60, and renewable to age 75.

#### AlumniTerm 50+<sup>SM</sup>\*\*

Basic group term life protection from age 50 to 74, renewable to age 95.



### Auto insurance that works for you.

Did you know that as a Virginia Tech alum, you could **save up to \$427.96 or more** on Liberty Mutual Auto Insurance?<sup>1</sup> You could save even more if you also insure your home with us. Plus, you'll receive quality coverage from a partner you can trust, with features and options that can include Accident Forgiveness<sup>2</sup>, New Car Replacement<sup>3</sup>, and Lifetime Repair Guarantee.<sup>4</sup>

CONTACT US TODAY TO START SAVING	888-438-9083	CLIENT # 8581
	<a href="http://WWW.LIBERTYMUTUAL.COM/VIRGINIA TECH">WWW.LIBERTYMUTUAL.COM/VIRGINIA TECH</a>	
	VISIT YOUR LOCAL OFFICE	



This organization receives financial support for allowing Liberty Mutual to offer this auto and home insurance program.  
<sup>1</sup>Discounts are available where state laws and regulations allow, and may vary by state. Figure reflects average national savings for customers who switched to Liberty Mutual's group auto and home program. Based on data collected between 1/1/2012 and 6/30/2012. Individual premiums and savings will vary. To the extent permitted by law, applicants are individually underwritten; not all applicants may qualify. <sup>2</sup>For qualifying customers only. Subject to terms and conditions of Liberty Mutual's underwriting guidelines. Not available in CA and may vary by state. <sup>3</sup>Applies to a covered total loss. Your car must be less than one year old, have fewer than 15,000 miles and have had no previous owner. Does not apply to leased vehicles or motorcycles. Subject to applicable deductible. Not available in NC or WY. <sup>4</sup>Loss must be covered by your policy. Not available in AK. Coverage provided and underwritten by Liberty Mutual Insurance Company and its affiliates, 175 Berkeley Street, Boston, MA. ©2013 Liberty Mutual Insurance





JIM STROUP



AMANDA LOMAN



MICHAEL KIERMAN

# Masterpiece

The Moss Arts Center comes to life

by DENISE YOUNG

The Moss Arts Center glinted in the drizzly night, a beacon for visitors keen to step inside and experience the long-awaited venue. More than a decade in the making, the center had at last sprung to life, its works of art and technology eliciting curiosity and enthusiasm from its patrons.

When the center's galleries opened, community members basked in the vivid hues of digital artist Leo Villareal's work and Jennifer Steinkamp's towering virtual garden. Later that week, the Philip Glass Ensemble presented the center's inaugural performance, an evening that may come to signify a seminal moment in Virginia Tech's history, that instant when the arts assumed their rightful place alongside other pillars of a comprehensive university.

Positioned at the edge of campus and meant to act as a bridge between the university and surrounding community, the Moss Arts Center was designed by internationally renowned architecture firm Snøhetta. The building, named for Virginia artist and philanthropist Patricia Buckley Moss, houses the Center for the Arts at Virginia Tech, a professional presenting program that brings world-class artists and performers to Blacksburg.



AMANDA LOMAN



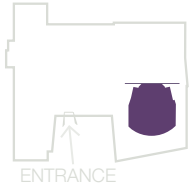
AMANDA LOMAN



AMANDA LOMAN

**A new home for the arts:** (Clockwise from upper left) The Moss Arts Center on opening night; Leo Villareal's "Digital Sublime"; the Philip Glass Ensemble rehearses; the Roanoke Symphony Orchestra performs; the Tech-or-Treat event in the Cube; and an a cappella performance at the grand staircase.





“

I was struck with the grandness of the place. When ... we performed with [the ensemble], it was like magic.”

—Patrice Yearwood '81, director of the Blacksburg Children's Chorale



**Anticipation:** With a world-class facility anchored by the Anne and Ellen Fife Theatre in the Street and Davis Performance Hall, Virginia Tech has staked its claim in the arts. Above right, a sell-out crowd awaited the center's inaugural performance.



### Grand and inviting: the theatre and performance hall

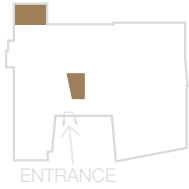
The Anne and Ellen Fife Theatre in the Street and Davis Performance Hall manages a rare feat—to be both grand and inviting for those in its 1,260 seats. Every aspect is designed with both acoustics and comfort in mind. “There’s just not a bad seat in the house,” said Jonathan Boulter (communication ’00), associate director of patron services.

The performance hall was designed to provide audiences with an immersion into the performing arts. “It’s a pretty intimate theatre. It’s built for the audience, and I think it will create such a great experience for our audience—and for multiple events. If it’s an orchestra, a spoken-word [event], even a dance troupe, [this space] provides so much versatility,” said Boulter, who most recently managed the front-of-house operations and box office for the Cirque du Soleil show at Downtown Disney.

The view from the stage is just as special. The Blacksburg Children’s Chorale, directed by Patrice Yearwood (music education ’81), performed on stage with the Philip Glass Ensemble during the center’s inaugural performance. “As a director of children, my focus was on them, and they were very excited and nervous. I had told them it was a once-in-a-lifetime event, and it was—for all of us. We were so focused on the music and doing a really fantastic job because it was such a large-scale event,” Yearwood said. “The stage was empty at dress rehearsal on Wednesday night, so when we walked into the theatre on opening night and saw the lights, the tiers, the box seats, heard the sound—I was struck with the grandness of the place. When ... we performed with [the ensemble], it was like magic.”

*Editor’s note: To learn about the performance hall’s acoustical excellence, see the How Tech Ticks section on page 12.*



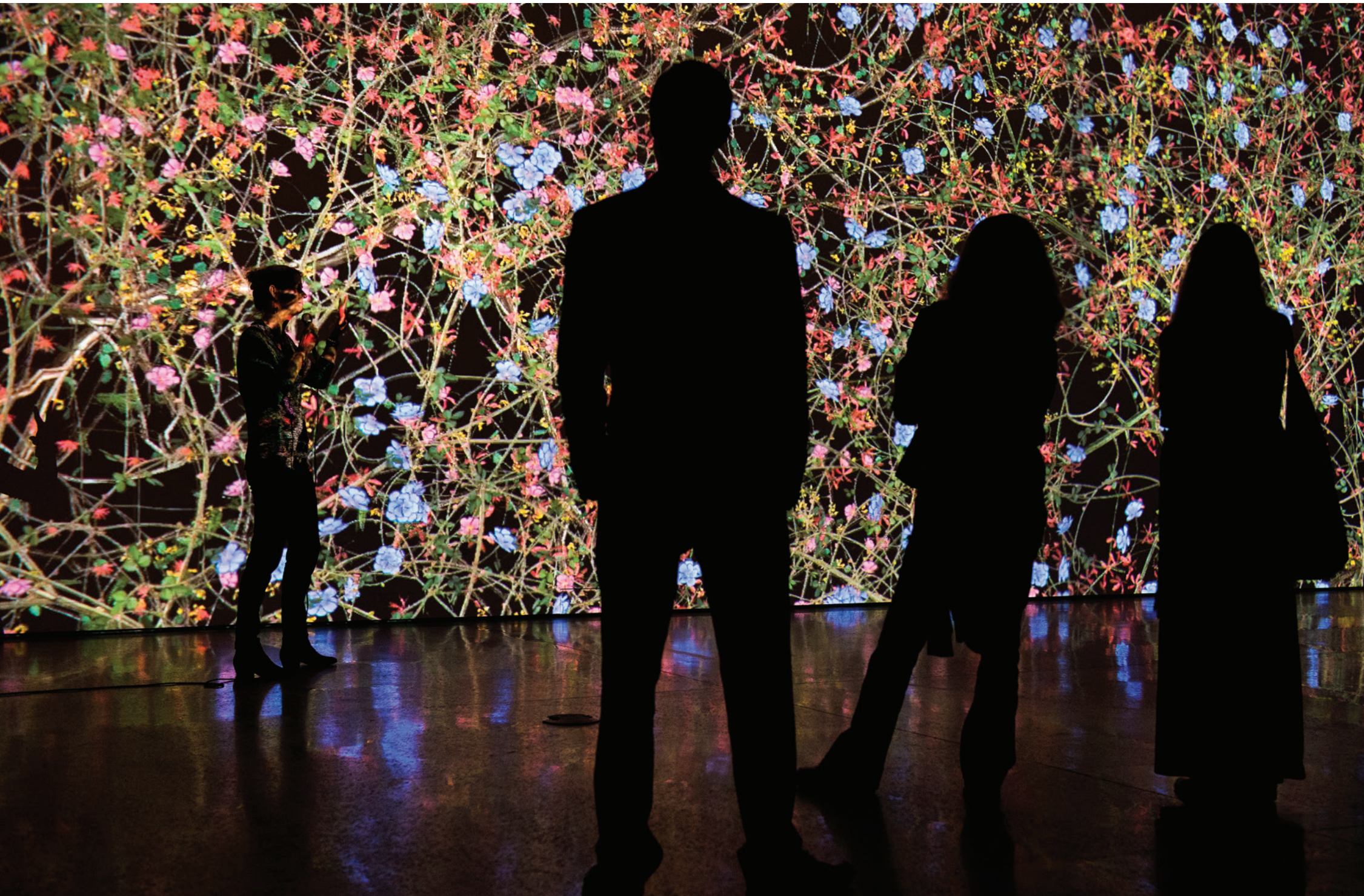


“

We are bringing artists of exceptional quality, of national and international renown. They're top-notch artists. But that's not all. We're also going to be showing artists living here and elsewhere in Virginia.”

—Margo Crutchfield, curator at large

masterpiece



### The galleries: Art meets science meets technology

Imagine that you could stroll through famed scientist Marie Curie's garden, casting your shadow across the daisies, the fuchsia, and the rambler rose. That's the sort of interactive experience that internationally renowned digital artist Jennifer Steinkamp offers in her video installation, “Madame Curie, 2011.” The work of art, in which the flowers of Curie's garden are recreated entirely out of computer code and sweep across the wall in a continuous cycle, was displayed in the center's Ruth C. Horton Gallery—the first installation in that space.

Because Steinkamp's work interacts with the architecture of a space, choosing a piece that would fit into the gallery's design was a painstaking process involving nearly a year of discussion. “The best fit for the piece is

actually the university itself, being a place where there are many scientists. The piece gets a deeper appreciation in that context. Beyond the architecture is that context of the school,” said Steinkamp.

Margo Crutchfield, curator at large for the center, noted that the center's first exhibits were selected to reflect the university's strengths in science and technology. “We are bringing artists of exceptional quality, of national and international renown. They're top-notch artists. But that's not all. We're also going to be showing artists living here and elsewhere in Virginia,” said Crutchfield.

Crutchfield said an exciting moment for her was seeing the diverse attendees at the gallery's opening exhibitions in October. “I felt really gratified that the art displayed at the center was reaching as many people as it did—and as it will.”

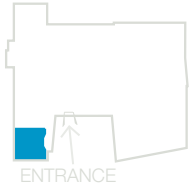
AMANDA LOMAN



LOGAN WALLACE

**Immersed:** The Moss Arts Center's galleries are versatile, to say the least. The Ruth C. Horton Gallery hosted Jennifer Steinkamp's video installation, “Madame Curie, 2011” (above), and also an exhibition of artwork by area elementary students (right).





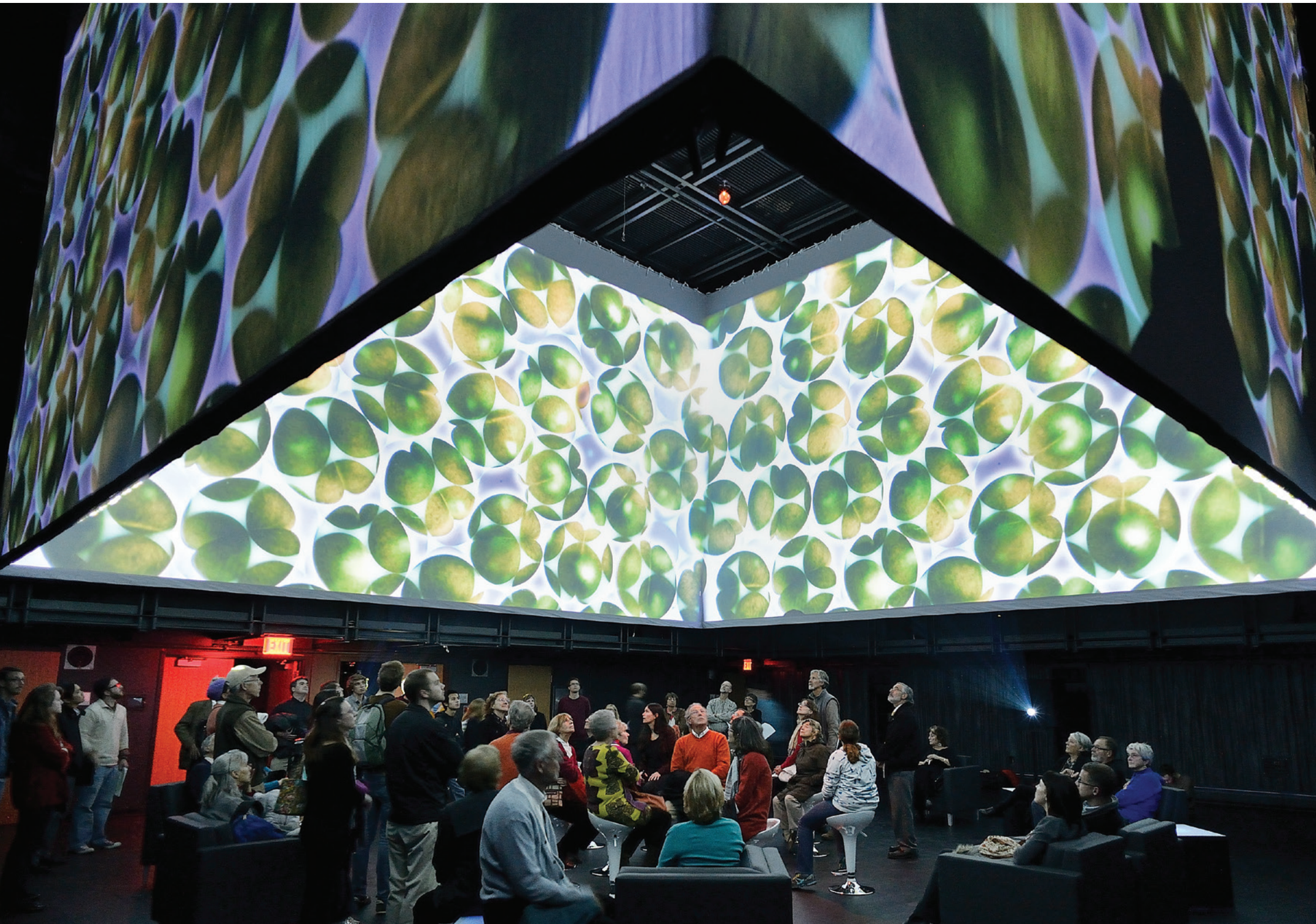
The space can function in very different ways ... [and] transform really effectively."

—Joan Grossman, a visiting assistant professor commissioned to create the video installation below

#### The edge:

To watch a video of "This Edge I Have to Jump," visit [www.vtmag.vt.edu](http://www.vtmag.vt.edu).

masterpiece



**Captivated:** What unites a mechanical engineer and a tap dancer? The creative process. Exploring various approaches to creativity, a video installment drew observers into the Cube (above and at right).

#### The Cube: From black-box theatre to research facility

In the Cube in the Moss Arts Center, onlookers gazed up at the images that surrounded them, completely immersed in Joan Grossman's "This Edge I Have to Jump," a digital journey into the creative process. Combining music, sound effects, and abstract imagery with interviews with everyone from a mechanical engineer to a tap dancer, Grossman's video installation examined the countless and often idiosyncratic approaches people take to creativity. On the exhibit's opening night, some visitors sat on sleek white stools, spinning to catch a glimpse of the video on each of the four screens. Others simply stood, caught up in an exhibit that was both psychically and visually enveloping.

Grossman, a visiting assistant professor of cinema in the School of Performing Arts who was commissioned to create the piece, said she wanted "people to feel like they can just relax with the work."

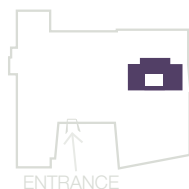
She was also struck by the versatility of the Cube. During the opening week, the space hosted a Halloween-themed, family-friendly event called Tech-or-Treat. "That showed right out of the gate that the space can function in very different ways and that the space can transform really effectively," Grossman said.

Originally designed as a three-story black-box theatre, the Cube quickly evolved into a research space as well, noted Ben Knapp, director of the Institute for Creativity, Arts, and Technology (ICAT), a newly created university-level research institute housed in the Moss Arts Center. The Cube allows researchers to create and physically explore 3-D renderings of large objects like Boeing 767 jets or homes for the elderly, or to perform advanced acoustics research. "When we put approximately 150 speakers in the space, you will be able to focus sound. So, all of a sudden, you will hear something in one area of the cube that you couldn't hear in another area. We will have a realistic acoustic environment as well as a realistic visual environment," said Knapp. "More abstractly, we can begin to look at and listen to data. We can look at a genome. We can hear models of contagion. ... We can look at any kind of data, whether it's engineering, whether it's scientific, whether it's artistic."

Whether the Cube is serving as a performance venue, a high-tech art exhibition space, or a state-of-the-art research facility, "this space is the perfect demonstration of the partnership between the Center for the Arts and ICAT," said Knapp.







“

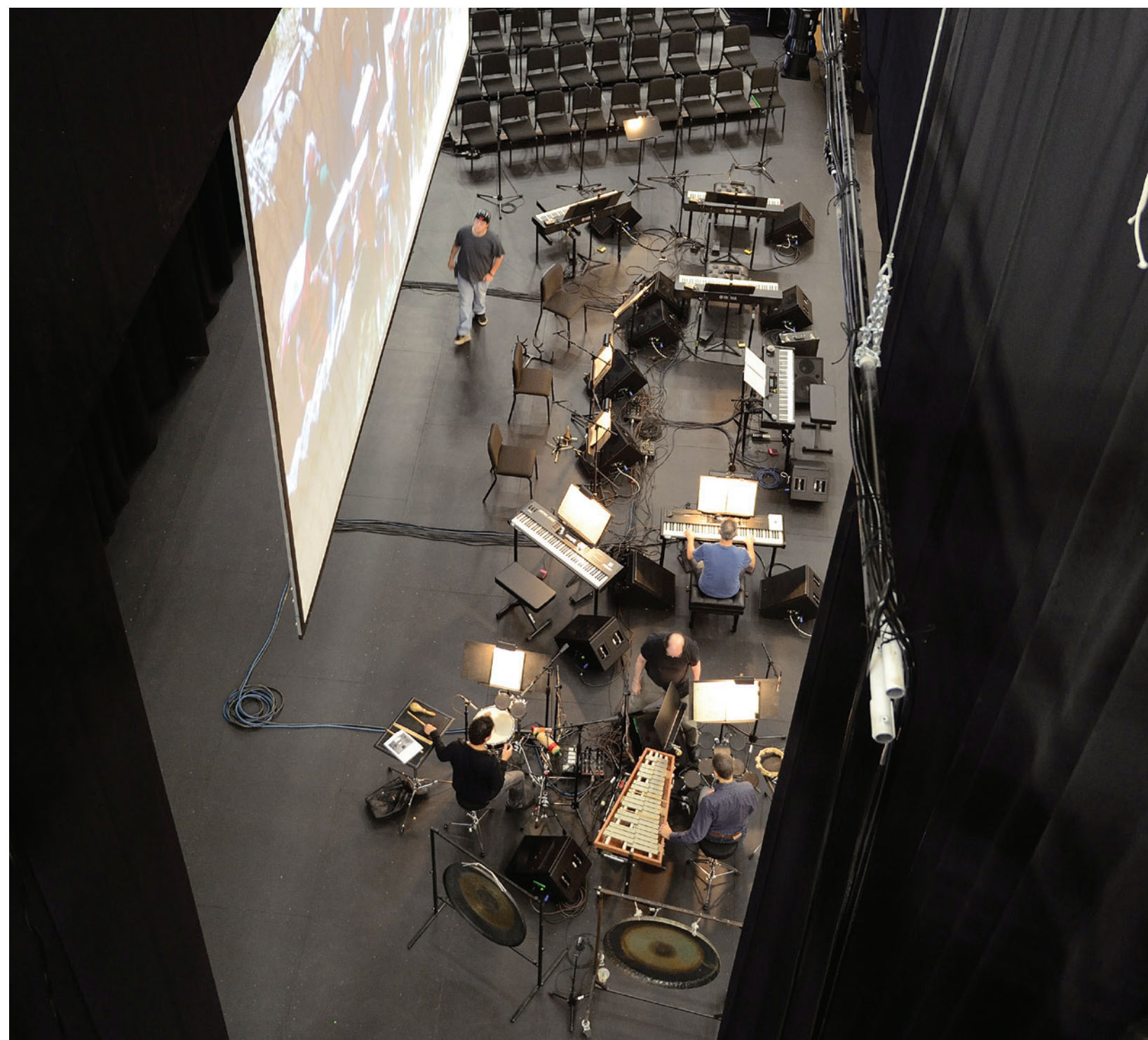
There are very few places that have the combination of facilities that we have here—the Cube, the performance hall, the TV studio, the outdoor spaces.”

—Doug Witney (theatre arts '86), production services director for the center

masterpiece



JIM STROUP



JIM STROUP

#### Supporting cast: Behind the scenes

“What this facility gives us is the ability to support the vast majority of touring groups of all different genres,” said Doug Witney (theatre arts '86), production services director for the center, explaining that dance ensembles, theatre companies, and a range of other touring groups need a certain amount of technology and space. “It’s just the right size for Virginia Tech,” Witney said. “There are very few places that have the combination of facilities that we have here—the Cube, the performance hall, the TV studio, the outdoor spaces.”

For a large touring company of performers and technicians, there’s much to worry about when on the road. That’s where people like Sara Bailey (theatre and cinema '11), program manager for the center, come in. Beyond her role in creating contracts and handling other arrangements in advance of opening nights, Bailey also makes sure that the backstage area meets the needs of visiting performers once they arrive. That might mean stocking the green room with a shopping cart’s worth of goodies—or making sure that one musician had a piano in his dressing room. “Pretty much everyone I take into the green room thinks it’s great,” said Bailey, who recalled being shown early plans for the building as an undergraduate. “I thought, ‘Wow, one day I could work there.’ Working here is a dream come true.”

**Backstage:** Thanks to the Moss Arts Center, the university can now host a broader range of productions. Here, the stage is prepared for the Philip Glass Ensemble.





numerous  
**dressing rooms**  
of various sizes support  
more than **75** people  
at a time

**wardrobe facilities** washers, dryers, and a steaming cabinet



**loading dock**  
supports  
**3** trailers being unloaded/loaded simultaneously



**green room**  
performers can relax during shows or between rehearsals as audio and video feeds display what's happening on stage

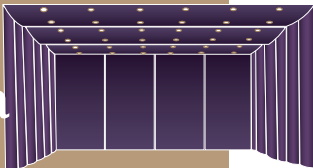
## Amenities | in the Moss Arts Center

**5,000**  
square feet of stage

**50 percent larger**  
than the stage in Burruss Auditorium

A trappable area of the stage allows crews to run cables underneath or someone to enter the stage from below

**orchestra pit**  
with an elevator system that allows touring groups to perform with live music



**portable orchestra shell**  
installs in a matter of hours, acts as a monitor so that musicians can hear each other; lends amplification to the house

**acoustical damping system**  
curtains can be added to absorb sound or removed to reflect sound

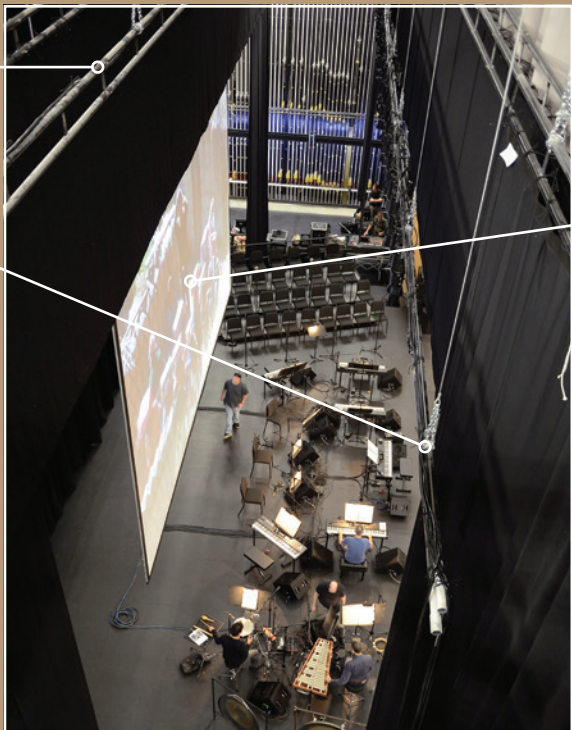
**80** line sets  
for rigging scenery and masking and hanging lighting

**fly tower**  
**85** feet tall  
allowing staff to fly scenery in and out

**state-of-the-art**  
lighting and sound systems,

- **20,000-lumens** projector with an
- **18-by-32-foot** screen
- **technical booths** for audio and video
- **2** 9-foot Steinway concert grand pianos, a 7-foot Steinway grand piano, and two upright pianos

**One cool thing:**  
For a series of "One Cool Thing" videos on the center—focused on the hydraulic stage, the pianos, dance floor, lighting, and orchestra shell—visit [www.vtmag.vt.edu](http://www.vtmag.vt.edu).




**Arts enabled:** More than 350 donors, some of whom joined President Charles W. Steger at the ribbon-cutting ceremony, pledged their support for the construction of an elegant new home for the arts at Virginia Tech.

## Motivated by the Arts

by ALBERT RABOTEAU

The role of philanthropy in the completion of Virginia Tech's \$100 million Moss Arts Center was overwhelmingly evident at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the facility on Nov. 1.

Speaking to a crowd of 300 seated people and many others standing, Ruth Waalkes, the university's associate provost for the arts, who also oversees the center, described the building as "a unique combination of facilities made possible by a community of philanthropists."

She then asked all donors in the audience to stand. Dozens did, including many whose names now grace prominent spaces within the center. But the total community of philanthropists that helped make the building a reality is broader still. In all, more than 350 people donated toward the center project during a fundraising effort that started in 2004. With more than \$31 million received or pledged, the university surpassed its \$28 million private fundraising goal for the center's construction.





“

All of us have to try to make a difference, to educate kids, and to help them have some self-esteem. I learned my self-worth through the arts.”

—Patricia Buckley Moss, the Moss Arts Center's namesake

LOGAN WALLACE



LOGAN WALLACE

**1. Patricia Buckley Moss**, who named the center, said that the educational portion of the center's mission, along with the impact the facility will make on Southwest Virginia, appealed to her. "All of us have to try to make a difference, to educate kids, and to help them have some self-esteem," Moss said. "I learned my self-worth through the arts."



LOGAN WALLACE

**2. Sherwood "Sherry" Payne Quillen** (health and physical education '71), who described the scope of the arts center project as "larger than life," provided support for the Sherwood Payne Quillen '71 Reception Gallery.

**3.** (From left) **Roya Gharavi**, **Floyd W. Merryman III** (management '81), and **Pat Merryman** posed in the Merryman Family Learning Studio. Pat Merryman said that her personal interest in the arts, along with



LOGAN WALLACE

the potential for area schools to partner with the university on learning programs in the center, "were the real selling points for me."

**4.** In the Ann F. Holtzman Conference Room with her husband, **Bill Holtzman** (horticulture '59), **Ann Holtzman** said Virginia Tech "has come to represent so many different parts of the human being and of the mind" and added that developing an arts center was "the last horizon the university had not done."



AMANDA LOMAN



LOGAN WALLACE

**5. William C. "Jack" Davis** (left), standing with his wife, **Sandra** (to his left), in the Street and Davis Performance Hall, said the facility would be a "dynamo" that would help advance both the university and its surrounding region. (At right) **Nicholas Street** (general business '53), standing with his wife, **Fay** (finance '77), was one of several donors motivated by President Charles W. Steger's championing of the importance of the arts in education. Street said that he "just believed in Dr. Steger's vision for the university."



AMANDA LOMAN



LOGAN WALLACE

**6. Chris and Gail Wollenberg** gave a gift toward the Wollenberg Foundation Orchestra Pit. Chris Wollenberg said he and other trustees of his family's foundation saw the project as a way to help the university become an even more comprehensive institution and to demonstrate in high-profile fashion that "this isn't just an engineering school; it's an everything school."

**7.** In the William Marshall Hahn '74 Theatre Foyer, former Virginia Tech President **T. Marshall Hahn Jr.** gathered with (from left) **Betty Hahn** (art '82), **Jean Hahn**, **Doug Chancey** (secondary education '78), and **Anne Hahn Hurst** (management, housing,

and family development '80, M.A. student personnel services '83). Hahn said donating toward the arts center appealed to him and his family. "It's truly an amazing facility, and it will be a source of support and a catalyst for the continuing strengthening of the arts at Virginia Tech," Hahn said.

**8.** Similarly, **Gene Fife** (business administration '62), with his wife, **Anne**, in the Anne and Ellen Fife Theatre, said the facility "fits right in with President Steger's concept of educating the whole student." □

*Albert Raboteau is the director of development communications.*





**OPERAcraft:** High school students imagined a world in Minecraft, and their characters were brought to life with the voices of Virginia Tech music students.

# Stagecraft

by SUSAN BLAND M.A. '10  
photos by LOGAN WALLACE

*The versatility of Virginia Tech's  
newest institute and artistic venue*

Ariana Wyatt is passionate about opera. As an assistant professor of voice in Virginia Tech's School of Performing Arts, a Julliard Opera Center graduate, and a soprano who has performed for prestigious opera companies, Wyatt shares her love for music with students every day.

Now, an innovative research project combining arts education, technology, and storytelling has provided a rare opening for Wyatt to cultivate an appreciation for art and music in an unexpected place—the hearts and minds of teenage boys.

Wyatt's project, OPERAcraft, has given eight local high school students the opportunity to produce a virtual opera from scratch. The students worked together to create the story and libretto (the opera's text or words). Instead of a traditional set, however, the students built a virtual set for the production using Minecraft, a video game that allows users to create their own world and avatars for the characters that inhabit it.

To help transform OPERAcraft from concept to reality, Wyatt recruited Tracy Cowden, an associate professor of piano and vocal coach in the School of Performing Arts; Kelly Parkes, an assistant professor of teaching and learning in the School of Education; Katie Dredger, a visiting assistant professor in the School of Education; and Ivica Ico Bukvic, an associate professor in the School of Performing Arts. Wyatt also received a grant from Virginia Tech's Institute for Creativity, Arts, and Technology (ICAT). In addition to providing funding for the project, the institute provided other resources, including equipment, technical support, and spaces for collaboration and performance.

OPERAcraft is just one of a long list of projects supported by ICAT. Virginia Tech's seventh university-level research institute operates at the nexus of the arts, design, engineering, and science to promote learning, discovery, and engagement.

As is evident in Wyatt's work with the high school students, the institute is committed to preparing students, from kindergarten through high school, to succeed in a world that demands teamwork and collaboration among the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) disciplines. ICAT supports teachers and students in the development of critical and creative thinking skills and explores collaborative learning environments that emphasize the importance of the connections between and among disciplines.

The ICAT mission also includes fostering research and the creative process. The institute has developed a collaborative environment where all kinds of people—from faculty and students to industrial partners and community volunteers—can make change happen. One of the unique aspects of the institute is that its faculty reside in other departments and colleges across campus. While they don't work for the institute specifically, they receive varying levels of support.





“It’s all about place, time, and opportunity,” said Ben Knapp, ICAT’s founding director. “That’s what we provide for Virginia Tech faculty and students. They come here to work and play with other people, and we do an excellent job of giving them the resources to do just that.”

OPERAcraft and other ventures are what Knapp refers to as “ICAT-enabled projects” conducted by the institute’s 30 affiliated faculty members from 12 Virginia Tech departments. This collection of projects involves creating computational and interactive environments for learning and entertainment; understanding the continuum among the body, computation, and imagination; incorporating new materials, objects, and methods for creativity; and stimulating local innovation and cultural awareness in Southwest Virginia.

Located in the new Moss Arts Center, the institute has a suite of “living labs”—flexible spaces with technological capabilities to support a wide variety of research, experimentation, and creative practice. These new spaces provide a home base for faculty and students to collaborate, co-create, perform, and explore the intersections of art and science.

“Why is this important for Virginia Tech? It’s this kind of work that will help prepare our students to thrive in a world where design, aesthetic, and technology have become symbiotic,” Knapp said. “Students need to think not only in a computational sense but [in] a design sense, and feel comfortable working across disciplines to meet challenges. Our students must become scientists, engineers, artists, and designers.”

That combination of skills exemplifies the institute’s output goal—innovation. Of course, innovation comes in many forms, including preparing a new generation of entrepreneurs, transforming education, increasing public engagement, and spur-



**The Minecraft crew:** (Standing, from left) area high school students Carter Croy, Isaiah Battaglia, Adam Chittenden, Elias Sarver-Wolf, and Chris Brumback (sitting).

ring economic development through the creation of jobs and spin-off companies.

These results have been showcased nationally. Aki Ishida, an ICAT-affiliated faculty member and an assistant professor in the College of Architecture and Urban Studies, led a team of Tech students and faculty to create a digitally interactive audio-visual lantern field installation at the Smithsonian’s Freer Gallery of Art during the National Cherry Blossom Festival in Washington, D.C., last spring. The work features mulberry paper lanterns lit with LED lights to create a multisensory space that responds to the presence and behavior of viewers. Inspired by traditional Japanese lantern festivals and cherry blossom viewing, the installation created an ephemeral place of gathering through light. Integrated technology gave participants an opportunity to interact with their environment and each other, while a public workshop allowed them to also become makers of the work.

For Wyatt, one result of the OPERAcraft is performance. On Dec. 4 and 7, OPERAcraft became a reality, with two performances in the Cube at the Moss Arts Center. As the interactive world created in Minecraft was projected on a scrim, Virginia Tech music students sang the finalized score to “The Surface: A World Above,” while the high school students controlled the character avatars, prompting body gestures and lip-syncing with the live soloists.

“I learned a lot about the creation and implementation of an opera,” said Blacksburg High School sophomore and OPERAcraft participant Adam Chittenden. “In all honesty, I never really enjoyed opera very much, but OPERAcraft gave me the opportunity to see the work put into creating an opera. I am now able to appreciate opera more. Minecraft was the perfect tool for set design—and I strongly believe that video games such as Minecraft can be used in the arts.”

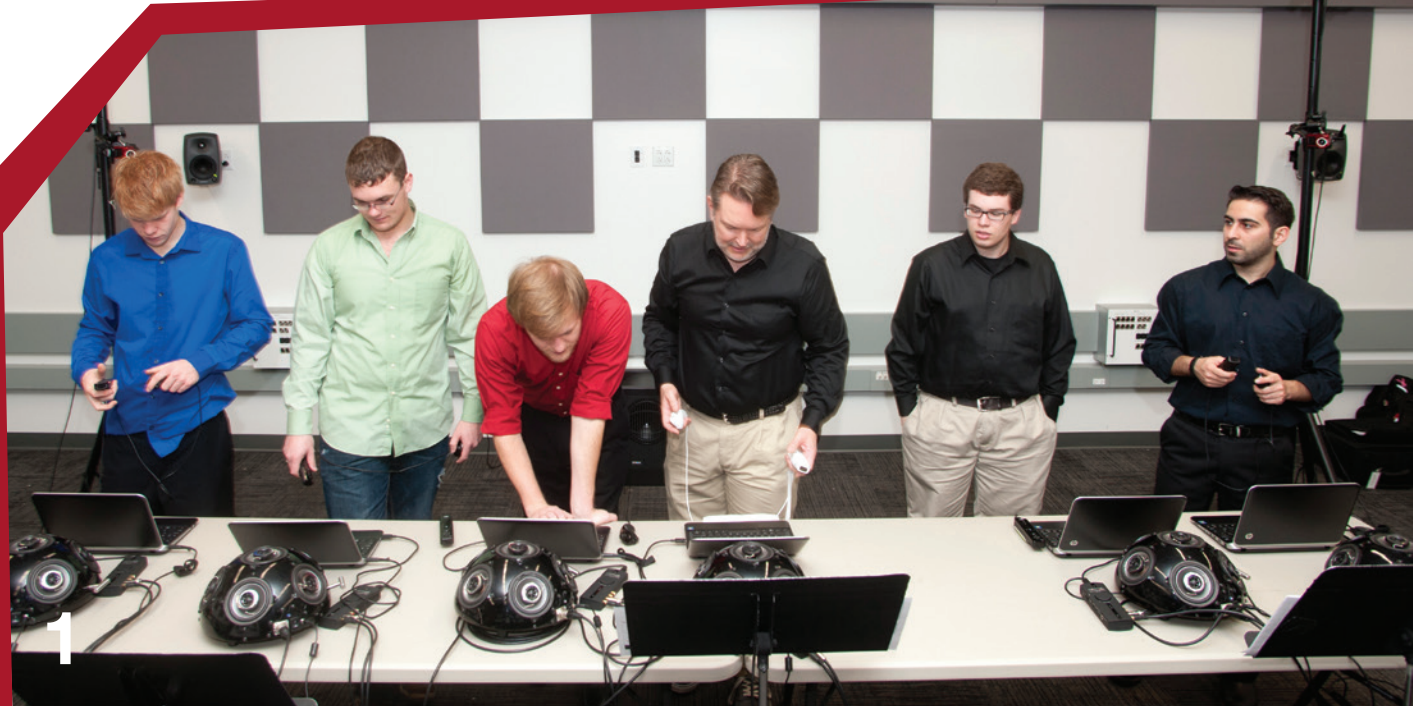
Said Wyatt, “OPERAcraft was a crazy idea to try something completely outside the box and provide an opportunity for in-depth exposure to the arts. The most gratifying aspect of this project has been the complete engagement by the participants. The boys have shown up week after week for months and created a work of art together. The ultimate success of the final performance [was not how we measured] our achievement in this project. If we gauge by commitment, this project [was] a victory. This would not have been possible without the continuing support of the Institute for Creativity, Arts, and Technology and the Center for the Arts.” □

*Susan Bland (M.A. communication ’10) is the communications manager for the Center for the Arts at Virginia Tech.*

**Avatars:**  
For a video on the OPERAcraft project, visit [www.vtmag.vt.edu](http://www.vtmag.vt.edu).



## ICAT Living Labs



photos by AMANDA LOMAN

1

### The Perform Studio

The Perform Studio is where arts, technology, and creativity meet the human mind and body. Pairing an acoustic space with multi-channel audio, a motion-capture system, and dynamic lighting, researchers study human gestures, emotions, spatialization of audio-visual stimuli, and embodied interaction over great distances, as well as performance in its broadest context.



2

2

### The Sandbox

The Sandbox is ICAT’s idea incubator. Teams meet here to brainstorm, discuss visions, and start projects. With moveable furniture, dry-erase boards, and a projection array, this flexible meeting space encourages collaborative creativity.

3

### The Merryman Family Learning Studio

The Merryman Family Learning Studio is a flexible space designed to foster creative engagement, design, and inquiry across the disciplines for student, teachers, and researchers.

### The Cube

The Cube is an experimental space for ICAT and the Center for the Arts at Virginia Tech, allowing for research and experimentation, immersive environments, intimate performances, and audio and visual installations of all types. Four stories high, the Cube is a combination theatre and high-tech laboratory that serves multiple platforms of creative practice by faculty, students, and national and international guest artists and researchers.



3

### The Experience Studio

The Experience Studio is a flexible space for quick prototyping of a variety of interactive virtual environments, including video games, augmented

reality, motion-tracked virtual collaboration, and mixed-reality performance.

### The Create Studio

The Create Studio hosts the tools to turn ideas into working prototypes. Featuring small-scale 3-D printing, laser-cutting, basic hand tools, soldering supplies, electronic testing equipment, and more, the studio offers a practical workbench to bring diagrams and schematics to life.



# Celebrating Skipper

by CARRIE COX

Fifty years ago, three cadets from the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets Class of 1964, Alton “Butch” Harper (business administration ’64), Homer “Sonny” Hickam (industrial engineering and operations research ’64), and George Fox (mechanical engineering ’64), came together with one goal in mind: to build the biggest game cannon the world had ever seen. Through their perseverance and effort and the support of the entire corps, they made the goal a reality.

On Nov. 22, 1963, while driving back to Blacksburg after picking up the barrel and carriage, the three cadets learned that President John F. Kennedy had been assassinated. Kennedy’s legacy and naval background would inspire them to name the cannon Skipper. The cannon was introduced in spectacular fashion on Thanksgiving Day during the annual football game against Virginia Military Institute (VMI).

On Oct. 31, 2013, the three 1964 cadets joined today’s cadets to commemorate the cannon’s 50th anniversary. While sharing his memories of developing Skipper, Harper emphasized that one never knows what might set the course of the rest of one’s life. For him, his course was set by the building of Skipper. He went on to create Thunder over Louisville, the largest annual fireworks show in North America.



According to Hickam, passion, planning, and perseverance are the three P’s of success—qualities instilled in the cadets because of their corps training. “It’s ingrained in all of you, whether you know it or not,” Hickam told the cadets.

Telling the story of trying to devise the charge for Skipper, Fox said they made the mistake of using cherry bombs as part of their propellant. Fox encouraged the cadets to learn from their mistakes. “If we [hadn’t], Skipper wouldn’t have lasted past that first game, let alone 50 years,” he said.

Following the presentation, the corps assembled in front of War Memorial Chapel for a 21-gun salute in honor of President Kennedy. As Harper, Hickam, and Fox approached, the Highty-Tighties played the “The Parade of the Charioteers,” the song played when Skipper was first introduced at the 1963 VMI game. The Gregory Guard, the Corps of Cadets’ precision rifle drill team, executed the first two volleys before the seventh rifleman yielded the honor of the 21st round to Skipper.

After serving proudly for 19 years, the original cannon suffered a blowout in 1982. In 1984, Paul Huffman Jr. (materials engineering ’78), whose father had created the original Skipper in his foundry, volunteered to fabricate a new cannon at no charge. The original cannon is currently on



**Honoring Skipper:** Celebrating its 50th anniversary with a bang, Skipper the cannon fired the 21st round during the Oct. 31 event (directly above). (Far above) Cadets Forrest Rush (middle left) and Jordan Disney (middle right), who are former members of the Skipper Crew, escorted Class of 1964 alumni (from left) Alton “Butch” Harper, Homer “Sonny” Hickman, and George Fox during the celebration.

display in the Holtzman Alumni Center, located at 901 Prices Fork Rd., until the new Corps Leadership and Military Science Building has been built.

For the past 50 years, the cannon and the Skipper Crew have become embedded as Virginia Tech traditions. One of the most recognizable icons of the corps and the university, Skipper symbolizes family, tradition, and Hokie pride. □

*Maj. Carrie Cox, U.S. Air Force Reserve, is the Corps of Cadets’ executive officer.*



To watch a video on Skipper and learn more, visit [www.vtmag.vt.edu](http://www.vtmag.vt.edu).

# For Your Home or Office

## Undergraduate and Graduate Diploma Frames



Mahogany Lacquer



Mahogany Braid



Cherry Lacquer



Burruss Hall Watercolor

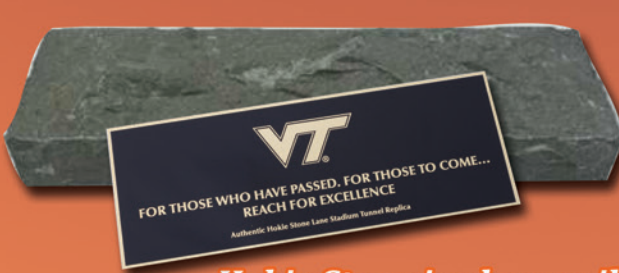


Fall at Burruss Hall Watercolor



War Memorial Watercolor

## Hokie Stone Collection



**Hokie Stone is also available with customized engraving.**  
**Expanded selection available exclusively in our stores and at [www.bookstore.vt.edu](http://www.bookstore.vt.edu)**



Scan with your smartphone to shop online.

**University Bookstore, on campus • Volume Two Bookstore, off campus**  
**Dietrick Convenience Store • Squires C-Store • Stadium Hokie Shops**



contents

Board of Directors ballot	PAGE 40
Drillfield Series	PAGE 40
Black alumni reunion 2014	PAGE 42
Strong Together	PAGE 42
Business growth	PAGE 43
2014 travel tours	PAGE 44

contributors

**Tom Tillar '69** Vice President for Alumni Relations  
**Dave Hunt** Communications Director  
**Shirley Fleet** Class Notes Editor



Virginia Tech places among top schools in alumni rankings—again

You did it again: For the second consecutive year, Hokie alumni have ranked their alma mater among the top schools in a nationwide survey known as the Alumni Factor rankings. As the survey concludes, “It is very difficult to find a group of alumni more enthusiastic about their alma mater than those from Virginia Tech, and for good reason.”

In the overall rankings, Tech is first among 55 very large universities and 10th

among 136 national universities. The university ranks first, second, or third in categories such as “financial success,” “immediate job opportunities,” “alumni would personally choose again,” and “would recommend to a student.” The results are a true and deserved tribute to our university by our alumni.

These rankings all reflect the enormous support from and solidarity of the Hokie Nation. Our network of alumni chapters

across the country has never been larger or more active. Many chapters support scholarships for first-year students from their regions. Reunions and academic college gatherings are held on campus and throughout the country, and new regional gatherings offer alumni a chance to meet with fellow Hokies who share common career interests.

There are more than 110,000 Virginia Tech alumni registered on LinkedIn, and many of those also are in a career network

On a game day in early October, the Alumni Association’s Homecoming tailgate, presented by Lowe’s, drew more than 1,200 Hokies to the Holtzman Alumni Center.

organized specifically for alumni. Our Alumni Association has a career resources program to encourage networking and to refer alumni to opportunities. (Visit [www.alumni.vt.edu](http://www.alumni.vt.edu) for access to the career resources link, as well as alumni chapter contacts and a number of other services and programs.)

We’re offering yet another opportunity for alumni through a partnership between the Alumni Association and Discover card.

Access the application site through our website to get your personal card, which offers cash back and special incentives with major retailers and brands. Choose from two distinctive campus scenes to put on your card, and display your Virginia Tech pride every time you use the card. Every application and use of the card benefits the university and its programs.

Take advantage of the many opportunities to connect with fellow alumni through

our Alumni Association. There is no group of alumni more enthusiastic about their alma mater anywhere in the world ... and that is documented!

*Tom Tillar '69*  
Vice President for Alumni Relations



Alumni Association Board of Directors ballot

The Alumni Association Board of Directors nominating committee has proposed the following nominees for election to three-year terms from 2014 through 2017. Please vote for up to 12 nominees, and return the ballot by April 1. Results will be announced at the Alumni Association board meeting in early April.

- \_\_\_Morgan E. Blackwood (industrial systems and engineering '02), Washington, D.C.
- \_\_\_Marvin J. Boyd (management/management science '00), Ashburn, Va.
- \_\_\_Justin A. Yulang (finance '05), Christiansburg, Va.
- \_\_\_Thomas H. Hughes (architecture '90), Winston-Salem, N.C.
- \_\_\_Michael T. Kender (chemical engineering '83), Ridgewood, N.J.
- \_\_\_Adeel S. Khan (accounting and information systems '09), Atlanta, Ga.
- \_\_\_Nathan T. Lavinka (marketing management '11), Philadelphia, Pa.
- \_\_\_Jacob A. Lutz III (finance '78), Midlothian, Va.
- \_\_\_Gordon "Gordy" Bryan (theatre arts '82), Lansdowne, Pa.
- \_\_\_Karen E. Torgersen (elementary education '78, M.B.A. '89), Blacksburg, Va.
- \_\_\_Jim L. Wade (accounting '76), Roanoke, Va.
- \_\_\_Erich A. Windmuller II (history '76), Oakton, Va.

Return to  
Virginia Tech Alumni Association  
Holtzman Alumni Center (0102)  
Virginia Tech  
901 Prices Fork Road  
Blacksburg, VA 24061

Write-in nomination \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Alumni Association  
Virginia Tech for Life Merchandise

Men's and Women's Caps

Visors

Blanket

Men's and Women's Polos

Available exclusively in our stores and at [www.bookstore.vt.edu](http://www.bookstore.vt.edu)  
University Bookstore, on campus • Volume Two Bookstore, off campus

Virginia Tech Services, Inc.  
University Bookstore  
On-Campus (540) 231-5991  
[www.bookstore.vt.edu](http://www.bookstore.vt.edu) • [www.hokieriver.com](http://www.hokieriver.com)  
Volume Two Bookstore  
Off-Campus (540) 231-9674  
Proudly Serving A Great University

f t

foursquare

Scan with your smartphone to shop online

2014 DRILLFIELD SERIES

The Drillfield Series continues in 2014 with weekends devoted to fine dining, photography, student legacies, and healthy pets, along with special opportunities to connect with fellow alumni for a round of golf, a glass or pint of your favorite adult beverage, and activities at a scenic mountain retreat. Make plans now to attend these events designed for alumni and their families and friends, and take advantage of the specially discounted accommodations available at The Inn at Virginia Tech, and at Mountain Lake Hotel on June 6-7.



Food for Thought

Join us for a fun and elegant weekend. Highlights of this palate-pleasing excursion include a chef demonstration, a mid-Atlantic food and wine-pairing brunch, and high tea in the alumni center—all crowned with a five-course wine-pairing dinner. Experience the fine hospitality of The Inn at Virginia Tech when you stay overnight.

- \$165 per person; \$320 per couple

Focus on Photography

Year No. 4 of this popular program features sessions on sports photography, taking better portraits, an introduction to HDR photography, and more. The weekend starts with a photographer's boot camp and ends with a critique session in which presenters help you identify ways to improve your images. In addition to instruction and an information packet, participants will have periods of time to take pictures. The registration includes dinner on Friday and breakfast and lunch on Saturday, with the program concluding late that afternoon. Accommodations are available at The Inn at Virginia Tech.

- \$195 per person

Top of the Mountain at Mountain Lake

Enjoy a getaway adventure to the new Mountain Lake Lodge at Mountain Lake. Registration includes a Friday dinner, Saturday breakfast and lunch, and Sunday breakfast. Learn about the history of one of only two naturally formed lakes in Virginia and about the lake restoration project from the lake naturalist. There is a new aerial adventure course to enjoy, plus guided hikes, mountain biking, archery lessons, treasure hunts, naturalist programs, and other family-friendly activities.

- \$125 per adult; \$99 for children 12 and under

June 16



Hokie Classic Golf Tournament

Join fellow alumni, guests, and friends for a captain's choice golf tournament at the award-winning Pete Dye River Course. Registration includes greens fees, cart, scoring and door prizes, a commemorative polo shirt, adult beverages, lunch, and a post-tournament dinner in the beautiful clubhouse overlooking the New River. Enjoyable for golfers of every skill level, the tournament will feature several varsity coaches and former varsity players from the university.

- \$135 per person; \$500 per foursome

June 28

Summer Beer Festival at Virginia Tech

Calling all craft beer lovers: Experience a unique Saturday beer festival at the Holtzman Alumni Center with live entertainment, special guest appearances, and more than 40 local, regional, and national breweries pouring their best brews. Join friends in Blacksburg for frosty tastings and food favorites from local restaurants. Those arriving on Friday, June 27, may opt for a beer-pairing dinner provided by The Inn at Virginia Tech for an additional fee and reservation.

- \$25 per person; VIP tent \$50 per person

July 10-11

A Day in the Life of College Admissions

The popular annual Day in the Life of College Admissions is a program designed especially to assist prospective 2015 and 2016 high school graduates and their parents in navigating the college application process. Program highlights include pointers for conducting an effective college search, a behind-the-scenes look at college admissions, and application preparation tips from admissions professionals.

- \$120 per adult; \$95 per student

August 8-9

Happy and Healthy Pet Weekend

Join us for an interactive and informative program focused on companion animals. Learn about pet care, diets, vaccines, toxins, and sight, plus state-of-the-art research in cancer and translational medicine taking place at the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine on campus. Take a tour of the animal hospital and hear from faculty members and the dean in a question-and-answer panel. Registration includes a dean's reception and dinner on Friday plus lunch and an evening picnic on Saturday. Accommodations are available at The Inn at Virginia Tech.

- \$125 per adult; \$99 children 12 and under





ANNE WERNIKOFF

Alumni at a 2013 gathering agree: The chance to reconnect is always worth the trip.

## Alumni unite in the spirit of Strong Together

For the past year, Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion William T. Lewis has partnered with alumni chapters along the East Coast to host Strong Together networking receptions. The Virginia Tech Strong Together initiative is coordinated by the Office for Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) to promote the values set forth in the Virginia Tech Principles of Community.

Alumni who attended had the opportunity to meet Lewis, learn about ODI initiatives, and network with fellow alumni, while reaffirming the Principles of Community. Alumni from all backgrounds were inspired by Virginia Tech's commitment to inclusive excellence and its efforts to make their alma mater a welcoming and supportive community.

Future events are planned for 2014, including receptions in Virginia with the Loudoun County, Prince William County, Peninsula, and Williamsburg alumni chapters. ODI will also partner with chapters in Annapolis, Md., Baltimore, and Atlanta for additional events. Alumni in these areas will receive emailed invitations in the coming months.

Read more about Strong Together and the Principles of Community at [www.diversity.vt.edu/principles-of-community/strongtogether.html](http://www.diversity.vt.edu/principles-of-community/strongtogether.html).



ANNE WERNIKOFF

## VIRGINIA TECH BLACK ALUMNI

Heritage. Culture. Legacy.

### Black Alumni Reunion 2014

"Sharing Our Story: Past, Present, Future"

March 20-23, Blacksburg, Va.

Set your sights on Blacksburg for a special occasion to embrace the past, celebrate the present, and inspire the future. Join us March 20-23 for an exciting reunion weekend full of celebrating, socializing, and networking with students, faculty, and alumni. Held every other year, the Black Alumni Reunion brings together old friends and welcomes new alumni into the family. Events include the Influential Black Alumni Awards Brunch, new Black Alumni Society activity updates, dancing, games, bowling, and more. Make plans now to attend. To register or to learn more, visit [www.diversity.vt.edu/alumni/bar](http://www.diversity.vt.edu/alumni/bar). For volunteer or sponsorship opportunities, contact Latanya Walker at [latanya@vt.edu](mailto:latanya@vt.edu).

## Business growth attracts alumni back to Blacksburg area

by GWEN HARRINGTON '07 and CHARLIE JEWELL

When alumni reflect on Blacksburg, they think of the beautiful fall foliage evoking our collegiate colors, picturesque mountain views, and majestic Hokie Stone structures. They might not associate the New River Valley with a growing job market, but in the past two years the area has been ranked among the best places in the country for job growth by CNBC, Forbes, 24/7 Wall St., and NewGeography.com.

Since 2010, employment in Montgomery County, including Blacksburg and Christiansburg, has jumped 6 percent and wages have risen 5.3 percent. The unemployment rate has fallen to 5.6 percent, retail sales are up 11 percent, and the area's population continues to climb at a steady pace, according to statistics from various sources compiled by the Montgomery County Economic Development Department. The community is riding a promising wave of growth and success.

With more alumni looking to re-establish roots in the area, the Virginia Tech Alumni Association and the county economic development department have joined forces. The association uses its career resources program to assist alumni in finding quality jobs in the area, and the

county works with those who are interested in starting, expanding, or relocating a business in the community.

Virginia Tech's alumni are having a big impact on economic growth in Montgomery County. Since 2010, at least 12 companies founded or led by alumni have announced almost 500 new jobs and \$13 million in economic growth, according to the economic development department. Several companies, including Comprehensive Computer Solutions, Harmonia, Modea, and UXB International, have been named to Inc. Magazine's prestigious list of the fastest-growing companies in the nation.

It should be no surprise that alumni are building successful companies in the area. In 2008, CNN Money recognized Blacksburg as one the best places in the country to live and launch a business. Montgomery County has a supportive entrepreneurial culture that is cultivated by the Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council and is home to several successful corporate parks, including the Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center and Falling Branch Corporate Park in Christiansburg.

Montgomery County's award-winning quality of life helps businesses attract and

retain critical talent. The community has an exceptional public school system, a cost of living that is 6 percent below the national average (according to the Council for Community and Economic Research, a nationwide membership organization), and numerous cultural and outdoor recreation opportunities. Montgomery County's family-friendly reputation received national attention when Bloomberg Businessweek ranked Blacksburg the No. 1 place in the U.S. to raise kids.

For more information on career opportunities and business development, contact the Alumni Association's Nancy Brittle at 540-231-6285 or Montgomery County's Charlie Jewell at 540-382-5732.

*Gwen Harrington (psychology '07) is the Alumni Association's director of alumni relations for sponsorship, travel, and young alumni programs. Charlie Jewell is a project manager for the Montgomery County Economic Development Department.*

**On the rise:** From business growth to family fun, the New River Valley offers a wealth of amenities. Citing how the area's family-friendly reputation helps it recruit employees, Rack-space recently decided to expand in Montgomery County (below).



VIRGINIA TECH CORPORATE RESEARCH CENTER



CHRISTIANSBURG AQUATIC CENTER



# 2014 travel tours



COURTESY OF GO NEXT

Bora Bora

College of Engineering Dean Richard Benson (back row, center, in black) and his wife, Leslie (front row, white blouse and orange sweater), recently hosted a Mediterranean cruise.

**Belize Scuba Adventure**  
April 6-26 | \$2,199\* per diver, \$1,699\* per non-diver

**Historic Reflections**  
Go Next, Oceania Cruises' Riviera  
April 20-May 1 | \$3,499\* (air included)

**Mediterranean Marvels**  
Go Next, Oceania Cruises' Insignia  
May 7-15 | \$2,499\* (air included)

**Greek Isles Odyssey**  
Go Next, Oceania Cruises' Riviera  
May 14-22 | \$2,499\* (air included)

**Virginia Tech Grad and Young Alumni Trip**  
Alumni World Travel  
May 27-June 14 | \$3,675\*

**Discover Wales and Yorkshire**  
AHI  
May 31-June 11 | \$2,499\*

**Alumni Campus Abroad - Tuscany**  
AHI  
June 11-19 | \$2,795\*

**Alpine Lakes and Scenic Trains**  
Collette  
June 13-22 | \$2,999\*

**Provence - International Lifestyles Explorations**  
AHI  
July 12-Aug. 3 | \$3,390\*

**Alaskan Frontiers and Glaciers**  
Go Next, Oceania Cruises' Regatta  
July 14-24 | \$2,999\* (air included)

**Canadian Rockies Family Discovery**  
Collette  
July 20-26 | \$2,199 per adult, \$1,149\* per child

**The Wild West and Yellowstone Family Adventure**  
Collette  
July 26-Aug. 1 | \$1,699\* per adult, \$1,099\* per child

**Great Pacific Northwest**  
Go Next, American Express  
July 26-Aug. 3 | \$3,795\*

**Cruise The Waterways of Russia**  
AHI, River Victoria  
Aug. 7-20 | \$3,895\*

**Baltic Treasures**  
Go Next, Oceania Cruises' Nautica  
Aug. 21-Sept. 1 | \$4,299\* (air included)

**Ireland - Kilkenny, Killarney, and Dublin**  
Go Next  
Sept. 19-27 | \$2,499\*

**Spanish Serenade**  
Go Next, Oceania Cruises' Marina  
Sept. 23-Oct. 4 | \$3,999\* (air included)

**Accent on the Rivas**  
Go Next, Oceania Cruises' Marina  
Oct. 3-11 | from \$2,499\* (air included)

**Treasures of Southern Africa**  
AHI  
Oct. 8-22 | \$7,320\*

**Cruise the Panama Canal**  
AHI, Crystal Cruises  
Nov. 19-30 | \$3,290\*

**Old Fashioned Holidays in the South**  
Go Next, American Queen  
Dec. 5-13 | \$2,549\*

**Caribbean Getaway**  
Vacations To Go, Celebrity Reflection  
Dec. 6-13 | \$764\*

[www.alumni.vt.edu/travel](http://www.alumni.vt.edu/travel)

\*For more information, visit [www.alumni.vt.edu/travel](http://www.alumni.vt.edu/travel), contact [alumnitravel@vt.edu](mailto:alumnitravel@vt.edu), or call 540-231-6285. Dates and prices are subject to change. Pricing is based per person on double occupancy without air, except as noted. Free air is based from North American gateway cities. The Alumni Association encourages all alumni to consider purchasing travel insurance. Learn more at [www.alumni.vt.edu/travel/insurance](http://www.alumni.vt.edu/travel/insurance).

# SHOW YOUR HOKIE PRIDE



Get the official credit card of  
Virginia Tech at [Discover.com/VT](http://Discover.com/VT)

A brand new partnership program through  
the Virginia Tech Alumni Association

1-800-204-1336  
Invitation number FAR6



SHOW YOUR HOKIE PRIDE



# Book Notes

BOOKS BY ALUMNI

## nonfiction

**Ryan N. Burnette** (biochemistry '99, Ph.D. '04), "Biosecurity: Understanding, Assessing and Preventing the Threat," biosecurity, John Wiley & Sons.

**Jodi Ecker Detjen** (management science '86), et al., "The Orange Line: A Woman's Guide to Integrating Career, Family, and Life," work-life balance, JMK Publishing.

**Donald Grebner** (M.A. economics '96, Ph.D. forest economics '98), "Introduction to Forestry and Natural Resources," textbook, Academic Press.

**Dayna Laur** (history '95), "Authentic Learning Experiences: A Real-World Approach to Project-Based Learning," education, Routledge: Taylor and Francis Group.

**Bonnie Kerrigan Snyder** (M.Ed. counseling and student personnel services '91), "The New College Reality: Make College Work for Your Career," career advice, higher education, Adams Media.

## fiction

**Kathleen Ann Goonan** (English '75), "Angels and You Dogs," short story collection, PS Publishing.

**S. Matthew McNally** (psychology '04), "The Reclaiming (The Kalatheptoris Cycle)," novel, epic fantasy, Omnifisc.

**Archana Prasanna** (political science '07), "Ganges Boy," novel, coming of age, India, Koehler Books.

## young adult/children's

**Dana Caldwell Davis** (communication '88), "Hello, YoUDee!," picture book, University of Delaware mascot, Mascot Books.

**P.D. Hall** (accounting '80), "Asael and the Grand Orange Effect," picture book, Christianity, P.D. Hall and Simple Scribes Publishing and Distribution LLC.

**Sana Hoda Sood** (international studies '03), "Diwali: A Cultural Adventure," picture book, Indian culture, Mascot Books.



## featured author

**Garret Mathews** (economics '71) is a retired metro columnist for the Evansville (Ind.) Courier & Press. During a 39-year career, he wrote more than 6,500 pieces on everything from snakehandlers to a woman who kept bootlegging into her 90s. His books include "Baseball Days," "Swing, Batta," "Past Deadlines: Past Lives," "Can't Find A Dry Ball," "Defending My Bunk Against All Comers, Sir!" and "They Came To Play."

In his two-act play "Jubilee in the Rear View Mirror," Mathews tackles the subject of race relations in the segregated South of the 1960s. The drama about a young black man from Ohio and a racist Caucasian sharing a Mississippi jail cell is based on dozens of interviews Mathews conducted with men and women who went to Alabama and Mississippi in the early 1960s to register black voters and to help desegregate schools, restaurants, and stores.

For more information on the play, visit [www.jubileeplay.com](http://www.jubileeplay.com). To learn more about Mathews' books, visit [www.pluggerpublishing.com](http://www.pluggerpublishing.com).

Below is an excerpt from the play, reprinted with the author's permission:

*MINISTER: What about the cops?*

*KATES: Ah, yes, the cops. Stormed in like Marines.*

*MINISTER: I'll bet they weren't handing out lollipops.*

*KATES: Arrested them for trespassing. Leroy said he didn't think it was possible to fit that many people in the back seat of a squad car and still be able to shut the door. Took them to a place that was more like a cess-pool than a jail. Gives each man an aluminum cup and a toothbrush.*

*MINISTER: That's a hard way to go.*

*KATES: The students passed the time singing protest songs. When they wouldn't shut up, the guards took away their mattresses. When the singing continued, the guards removed the screens on the cell windows so the mosquitoes could come in. Leroy said he almost got eaten alive.*

*MINISTER: But their spirit wasn't broken.*

*KATES: No books. No newspapers. They had to provide their own entertainment. One of the guys was a foreign language major. Taught the others French and Spanish. Another kid majored in Russian history. Gave lectures on the Romanovs. It was like exam time at school. All that was missing was the midnight oil.*

Submission guidelines are available online at [www.vtmag.vt.edu/bookreview.html](http://www.vtmag.vt.edu/bookreview.html). To submit a book, mail it to Book Notes, Virginia Tech Magazine (MC0109), 205 Media Building, Virginia Tech, 101 Draper Rd. NW, Blacksburg, VA 24061. You can also email your name, the name of the publisher, the genre, and a brief description of the book to [booknotes@vt.edu](mailto:booknotes@vt.edu). We must receive the book within one year of its publication date. Photo by Logan Wallace.

# Say hello to the future.



On the road from New York to the United States Air Force, Matt Pucci is becoming a leader at Virginia Tech.

Pucci was the black-shirt noncommissioned officer during new cadet week for the Corps of Cadets this past fall. He also plays an important role in readying the corps' famed Highty-Tighties band for game days. Matt will carry the leadership skills he has developed at Virginia Tech into the Air Force after he graduates.

Generous financial support makes it possible for this New York native to attend Virginia Tech. To learn more about how the contributions of donors benefit students like Matt, or to make your gift, please visit [www.givingto.vt.edu](http://www.givingto.vt.edu).

Office of University Development (0336) | Virginia Tech  
902 Prices Fork Road | Blacksburg, VA 24061  
540-231-2801 or 800-533-1144 | [www.givingto.vt.edu](http://www.givingto.vt.edu)

 **VirginiaTech**  
Invent the Future®



# Simplicity, Transparency, and Attitude

The Pylon value that Philip Shucet (history '72) exhibits best is leadership. In late 2009, The Tide, a \$317.6 million, 7.4-mile light rail system under construction in the Norfolk and Virginia Beach area, was over budget and behind schedule. Then, Philip Shucet (history '72), a consultant and former commissioner of the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), took the reins, reviving the project just as he had done with VDOT. For his efforts, the man whose Twitter bio simply reads "I turn things around. I finish things" was named the 2012 Virginia Business Person of the Year by Virginia Business magazine.

by PHILIP SHUCET '72



HONOR • **LEADERSHIP** • SERVICE • UT PROSIM • BROTHERHOOD • SACRIFICE • DUTY • LOYALTY

photos courtesy of HAMPTON ROADS TRANSIT



Philip Shucet '72 (right) visits with Anthony Burfoot (left), recently elected as the city treasurer in Norfolk, Va., and Virginia Sen. Mark Warner.

I don't have a single special quality or skill. The only knowledge I have is what others have been kind enough to teach me. When I graduated from Virginia Tech and set out to find a job, my dad told me to "do good work." He never encouraged me to find a particular career—just to do good work. His words stuck with me. Along the way, two other people—one in the public sector and one in the private sector—had tremendous influences on me. One taught me the value of helping others achieve more than they themselves thought they could. And the other, the first CEO I worked for, showed me that leaders have to stand up and be accountable for everything that happens in an organization. He showed me that leaders have to be 110 percent "in." Ninety-nine percent won't do.

A relentless focus on three important qualities is required to make any private business or public agency sustainably successful: simplicity, transparency, and attitude. Whenever an organization or major project is in crisis, you can generally find that at least one, and frequently all three, of those essential qualities is missing.

For some reason—and for the life of me I don't know why—people like to overcomplicate darn near everything. And when things are more complex than they need to be, communication and understanding fall off fast. But, of course, no one admits it. When things start going wrong, no one wants to talk about them. Worse yet, folks get caught up in hiding the truth. As a result, simplicity and transparency can sometimes be the first two causes—and casualties—of a crisis. That's not good.

By "attitude," I mean knowing something as opposed to thinking you know it. There's a big difference. If you're running a business or working on a major project, you'd better be sure you know what's going on. If you don't really know, it's best to sit down and not say anything until you do. The great thing about not knowing something is that you can ask. If you say "I don't know," there's always someone around who will help you figure it out.

Admitting you don't know, searching for truth, and gathering context were all lessons I learned at Virginia Tech. The wisdom of one professor stands out in my mind. Ali Isani, professor emeritus of English, had a way of pulling you into the context of the time. When you read what he had assigned, he put your head into the space and time of the author. Whether it was the literature of the Southern U.S. or Japanese literature, Isani

put you right there. You could say that he taught me the meaning of "context." I guess that goes along with keeping things simple. If you understand the context of a situation, you can usually break it down into simple components. That's a lesson I try to bring to any leadership situation, and a lesson I try to leave behind for others as well.





If you asked me what experience at Virginia Tech most prepared me to be a leader, my unwavering and immediate answer is the Corps of Cadets. I'm not sure I can put it into words. The corps puts a mark on your soul that never washes off. At least it did for me. The corps teaches the meaning of working together, of pulling for one another. And it teaches you the true meaning of what it is to be a team. A lot of companies talk about teamwork. In the corps, you live it. Whenever I go back to campus, the first thing I do is kneel in front of the Rock [a memorial to Tech alumni lost in WWI] and kiss it, and a familiar tear touches my cheek every time. The corps meant—and still means—that much to me.









Leadership, to me, is not a special quality or skill, but a series of lessons from the teachers and experiences that life offers you—if you're willing to learn. □













Alumni, we want to hear what you've been doing. Mail career, wedding, birth, and death news to Class Notes, Virginia Tech Alumni Association, Holtzman Alumni Center (0102), 901 Prices Fork Rd., Blacksburg, VA 24061; email the news to [fleets@vt.edu](mailto:fleets@vt.edu); or submit the news online at [www.vtmag.vt.edu/submit-classnote.php](http://www.vtmag.vt.edu/submit-classnote.php), where photos may also be uploaded for consideration.

Alumni mailing addresses may be viewed online at [www.alumni.vt.edu/directory](http://www.alumni.vt.edu/directory) by logging in with your Virginia Tech PID and password. For assistance, call 540-231-6285.

-  career accomplishments
-  weddings
-  births and adoptions
-  deceased






















- '40**  **Lloyd H. Burton** (ME), Virginia Beach, Va., 9/29/13.  
**Alfred H. Hoblitzell** (ARE), Bradenton Beach, Fla., 7/26/13.
- '41**  **Wallace F. Holladay Sr.** (ARE '42, ARE '42), Washington, D.C., 1/25/12.
- '43**  **Norman A. Powell** (GSC), Edmond, Okla., 1/26/13.
- '45**  **Stanley M. Giddings** (ME, ME '49), Williamsburg, Va., 8/9/13.  
**Oscar W. Olson Jr.** (BAD), Pensacola, Fla., 8/15/13.  
**William T. Smorzewski** (IE '48), Acton, Mass., 1/8/13.
- '46**  **Paul F. Mowry** (BAD '47), Derry, Pa., 7/2/13.
- '47**  **Raleigh S. Rogers** (GSC '50), Ripley, W.Va., 7/24/13.
- '49**  **Russell D. Andrews** (BAD), Smithfield, Va., 7/21/13.  
**Bill B. Gregory** (GAG '51), Kingsport, Tenn., 9/4/13.
- '50**  **Robert R. Bowen** (BIOL), Lynchburg, Va., 8/7/13.  
**R. Gatewood "Bob" Dashiell Jr.** (EE), Norfolk, Va., 8/30/13.  
**Charles M. Fisher** (EE), Blackstone, Va., 1/25/13.  
**C.A. "Art" Hall Jr.** (ME), Toledo, Ohio, 9/11/13.  
**John W. Lunsford** (AGED), Blairs, Va., 10/1/13.  
**J. Curtis Payne** (BAD '54), Virginia Beach, Va., 9/22/13.





- H. Lay Phillips Jr.** (ANSC), Quantico, Md., 8/12/13.  
**Joseph H. Piper** (IE), Houston, Texas, 7/3/13.  
**James B. Way** (IE), Roanoke, Va., 9/26/13.
- '51**  **George L. Evans** (ME), Princeton, W.Va., 7/25/13.  
**C. Kelsie Hughes Jr.** (IAED '50), Elkton, Va., 7/20/13.  
**Betsy Cregger Stewart** (HEED), Jekyll Island, Ga., 9/13/13.
- '52**  **Frank H. Baber Jr.** (AGED), Cartersville, Va., 8/7/13.  
**Clyde N. Gauldin** (BC '51), Richmond, Va., 9/8/13.  
**Brown G. Howard III** (BAD), Floyd, Va., 8/2/13.  
**Fred W. Thompson** (CERE), California, Md., 9/19/13.
- '53**  **Richard A. Downing** (DASC), Exmore, Va., 8/14/13.  
**John K. Groseclose** (ARE, ARE '60), Mobile, Ala., 9/1/13.  
**James A. Paul Jr.** (IE '54), Richmond, Va., 8/6/13.  
**Vernor R. Vines** (ME), Atlanta, Ga., 9/6/13.
- '54**  **John Henry Carter Jr.** (ANSC, ANSC '59), Suffolk, Va., was inducted into the Virginia Livestock Hall of Fame for his contributions to the commonwealth's livestock industry.
- '55**  **John Dennis Kennedy** (CE '59), Pearisburg, Va., 7/20/13.  
**Leonard A. Wingard** (GSC), Abingdon, Va., 8/11/13.
- '56**  **Donald L. Pemberton** (EE), Hague, Va., 7/10/13.
- '57**  **William L. Owens Jr.** (BAD '60, ECON '61), Norfolk, Va., 8/7/13.  
**Ashton L. Trice** (EE), Richmond, Va., 10/11/12.
- '58**  **Leslie H. Christian** (IE '53, EE), Chester, Va., 6/27/13.  
**Henry "Hank" Crittenden** (BAD), Crewe, Va., 8/28/13.  
**Earl C. Hancock** (EE), Boulder, Colo., 7/10/13.  
**Fred C. Prince** (EE), Mechanicsville, Va., 8/7/13.  
**Robert "Army" Smith** (BAD), Kingwood, Texas, 7/27/13.
- '59**  **S.D. Moore** (BUS), Roanoke, Va., was named a 2014 Best Lawyer in America by U.S. News & World Report and Best Lawyers.
-  **Revel D. Crowson** (EE), Suffolk, Va., 9/20/13.  
**Kendren A. Jukkola** (MATH '61), Aliquippa, Pa., 4/6/13.  
**C. John Renick** (BAD '60), Roanoke, Va., 8/15/13.  
**Donald A. Williams** (BAD), Salem, Va., 7/30/13.




WENDY WILKERSON


Brian Donovan Wilkerson '96, Concord, Va., a son, Donovan Tate, 12/31/12.


- '60**  **Thomas E. O'Brien** (BAD), Appomattox, Va., 9/8/13.
- '61**  **David A. Leonard** (ANSC '62), Lebanon, Va., was inducted into the Virginia Livestock Hall of Fame for his contributions to the commonwealth's livestock industry.
- '62**  **Charles H. Barnes Jr.** (CE '64), Midlothian, Va., 9/30/13.  
**Jimmie S. Necessary** (IE), Kingsport, Tenn., 7/1/13.
- '63**  **Michael J. Reid** (BAD), Sioux Falls, S.D., 8/26/13.
- '64**  **J. Burton Eller Jr.** (ANSC, ANSC '70), Gaithersburg, Md., was recognized by BEEF magazine as one of the U.S. beef industry's top 50 leaders.
-  **Leroy "Roy" M. Crawley** (SOC '65), Alton, Va., 7/15/13.
- '65**  **Eugene C. Saunders** (ECON), High Point, N.C., 7/15/13.
- '66**  **Paul M. Helbert** (GEOL), Broadway, Va., 6/29/13.  
**Michael F. Lucier** (ME '68), Cape Charles, Va., 7/30/13.
- '68**  **J. Thomas Ryan** (BIOL), Fredericksburg, Va., was appointed by Gov. Bob McDonnell to the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors.
-  **Glenn Anderson** (AGED, EDVT '85), Mechanicsville, Va., 8/13/13.  
**Dan Goodman** (BAD '69), Winnetka, Ill., 8/22/13.
- '69**  **Marvin "Skip" H. Schuelke Jr.** (MKTG), Virginia Beach, Va., was recognized by the Virginia Biotechnology Association for his contributions to the life sciences in Virginia and beyond.
-  **David E. McClinton** (BAD '70) and Susie Kane, Tucson, Ariz., 3/25/13.
- '70**  **Norman H. Jones Jr.** (PSCI '71), Franklin, N.C., 12/24/12.  
**F. Wayne Martin** (BAD), Blacksburg, Va., 8/21/13.  
**Jefferson J. Oakes** (BAD), Greenville, S.C., 8/11/13.
- '71**  **David R. Mills** (IE), Johnstown, Pa., retired from Earthtech Inc. after 33 years of service as vice president, chief financial officer, and founding partner.
-  **Berkley "Jack" Elliott** (MKTG), Lynchburg, Va., 7/24/13.  
**Frank H. Holland** (HIST), Midlothian, Va., 9/19/13.
- '72**  **Charles "Buddy" Litchfield III** (HIST, HIST '74), Blacksburg, Va., was conferred the title of assistant professor emeritus by the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors.
-  **Robert E. Bryant** (HPE, HPE) and Ruth Harper Bryant, Roanoke, Va., 7/13/13.
-  **Jerry W. Bryant** (PSCI), Roanoke, Va., 10/6/13.  
**James N. Smith** (ARCH), Roanoke, Va., 7/6/13.
- '73**  **Edward P. Milhous** (FIN, HORT '75), Haymarket, Va., was named a True Professional of Arboriculture by the International Society of Arboriculture.
-  **Donald E. Munsey Jr.** (FW), West Monroe, La., 8/28/13.
- '74**  **A. Jack Davis** (ARCH, ARCH '76), Blacksburg, Va., was named a Senior Fellow by the Design Futures Council.

-  **C. Milton Driver** (SOC), Staunton, Va., 8/16/13.  
**James P. Newman Jr.** (ZOOL, BIOL), Santa Rosa, Calif., 8/1/13.
- '75**  **Glen E. Thompson** (PSCI), Roanoke, Va., retired after a 32-year career in information technology with Norfolk Southern Corp.
- '76**  **Sam P. Saufley** (AGED), Grottoes, Va., 6/16/13.  
**Brenda Blackburn Talbott** (EDCI), Grundy, Va., 6/12/13.  
**Tom H. Twine Jr.** (ETE), Altoona, Pa., 5/18/13.
- '77**  **William F. Foy** (COMM), Blacksburg, Va., is director of communications and innovative technologies for the Division of Student Affairs at Virginia Tech.  
**W. William Gust** (PSCI), Roanoke, Va., was named a 2014 Best Lawyer in America by U.S. News & World Report and Best Lawyers.

-  **John F. Aubin** (EE), Doylestown, Pa., 8/28/13.  
**Mark B. Warlick** (PSCI), Norfolk, Va., 7/31/13.

- '78**  **David W. Miller** (MGT), Louisville, Ky., saw Healthcare Strategy Group, the firm he founded and owns, named to the Inc5000 list of the fastest-growing privately held firms in the U.S.

-  **R. Kevin Phelan** (ACCT), Clemmons, N.C., 9/11/13.  
**Alan L. Roper** (DASC), Shippensburg, Pa., 9/7/13.

- '79**  **James L. Chapman IV** (HIST), Virginia Beach, Va., was appointed by Gov. Bob McDonnell to the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors.  
**Craig S. Eddy** (CE), Stafford, Va., is a senior engineer with Pennoni Associates Inc. in Chantilly, Va.  
**Leslie Roberts Gregg** (ART), Blacksburg, Va., was commissioned to paint former Pamplin College of Business Dean Richard E. Sorensen's portrait.



COURTESY OF DIANE RAGONE

Diane Ragone '77 is executive director of the Breadfruit Institute.

## Breadfruit is life

by ALEX BARUCH

**E**ver heard of breadfruit? Even residents of the beautiful island of Kauai, Hawaii, where breadfruit grows naturally, may ask that same question about the nutrition-rich fruit.

The island is home to the Breadfruit Institute—a part of the National Tropical Botanical Garden—and to the institute's executive director, Diane Ragone (horticulture '77). Raised in the Roanoke area, Ragone first became interested in plants through a botany class she took in her senior year of high school. The class "opened my eyes to a new way of looking at the world around me, [at] the fascinating nature [of] plants and their structure," said Ragone, whose interests in botany flourished when she studied horticulture at Virginia Tech.

Today, Ragone is dedicated to researching the nutritional benefits and sustainable nature of breadfruit. High in iron and other nutrients, the starchy fruit grows on trees in tropical climates—climates that are often found in developing countries where iron deficiency and malnutrition are significant problems.

At the institute, Ragone's efforts have been twofold: to research the propagation of breadfruit—the process of growing new plants by using roots or tissues from mature plants—to bring its nutritional benefits to larger populations; and to spread knowledge about the nutritional benefits of the fruit and to work with chefs and other culinary experts to find ways around the fruit's natural blandness.

Ragone and her team at the institute, along with colleagues at the University of British Columbia in Okanagan, have focused their research on bettering propagation. Previous methods were less successful and did not allow for quick growth; however, tissue culture, a new method of propagation, has revolutionized the speed at which breadfruit can be grown. Using the new method as a springboard, Ragone hopes to continue educating the world about the fruit's benefits.

*Alex Baruch, a graduate assistant with the Marketing and Publications unit, is pursuing a master's degree in public administration and policy.*





COURTESY OF ASHLEY HOYT

MICHAEL KEYES PHOTOGRAPHY

R. Brent DiGiacomo '03 and Stacey E. Vidt '03, '07 share a wedding day kiss on a beautiful July evening.



NATALIE FRANK PHOTOGRAPHY

Adedoyin Oladele Adewodu '07 and Veronica Gentry Adewodu '08, Annapolis, Md., 3/2/13.

**Ernest "Gene" Copenhaver Jr.** (ANSC), Meadowview, Va., was inducted into the Virginia Livestock Hall of Fame for his contributions to the commonwealth's livestock industry.

**Daniel C. Josephson** (FIW), Old Forge, N.Y., received the 2013 Distinguished Alumnus Award from Jamestown Community College.

**Mary Kathryn Burkey Owens** (ENGL), Chesterfield, Va., was included in the 2014 edition of Best Lawyers in America.

**'84** **Thomas R. Fox** (FOR), Christiansburg, Va., received the Barrington Moore Memorial Award in Biological Science from the Society of American Foresters.

**Richard P. Bowman** (CE, CE '86), Alexandria, Va., 2/3/12.

**'85** **Dennis R. Cogswell** (EDAC), Radford, Va., wrote a book entitled "Families are Forever: Communication."

**Kenneth Ritche Moore Jr.** (PSCI), Southern Pines, N.C., was promoted to brigadier general.

**Tony M. Burnette** (UA), Fairfax, Va., 7/5/13.

**William D. Colletti** (ME), Lisbon, Conn., 9/14/13.

**'86** **Bradford A. King** (COMM), Ashland, Va., was included in the 2014 edition of Best Lawyers in America.

**James B. Lackey** (AOE), Madison, Ala., is director of engineering at the U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Research, Development, and Engineering Center.

**Timothy J. Graver** (CHE), Cheshire, Conn., a son and daughter, 4/25/13.

**'87** **George A. Eberling** (FW), Clear Spring, Md., is the western regional forester for the Maryland Forest Service.

**C. Randolph Wimbish III** (PSCI), Richmond, Va., was included in the 2014 edition of Best Lawyers in America.

**'88** **D'Arcy P. Mays III** (MATH, STAT '89, STAT '93), Richmond, Va., received the Paul Minton Distinguished Service Award from the Southern Regional Council on Statistics.

**Steven L. Sims** (CE), Dumfries, Va., retired as a captain in the U.S. Navy's Civil Engineer Corps.

**'89** **Richard L. Eisbrouch** (TA), Woodland Hills, Calif., retired from his role in theater set design at Pasadena City College.

**Timothy W. Maas** (PSCI), Vienna, Va., is assistant director of the division of reserve bank operations and payment systems for the board of governors of the Federal Reserve System in Washington, D.C.



Blair Hoyt '03 and Ashley Dawson Hoyt '04, South Riding, Va., twin girls Reese Morgan and Michaela Chatten, 10/10/12.

**Stephen W. Shebest** (PSCI, BAD '11), Leesburg, Va., is director in the discovery services practice for Deloitte Financial Advisory Services LLP.

**'90** **Bonnie Kerrigan Snyder** (EDSP), Lancaster, Pa., wrote two college-themed books entitled "The New College Reality" and "The Unemployed College Graduate's Survival Guide."

**'92** **James D. Bennett** (LASC), Red House, Va., was recognized by BEEF magazine as one of the U.S. beef industry's top 50 leaders.

**Henry T. Kopf** (ECAS), Cary, N.C., is an associate for Shanahan Law Group PLLC.

**Patrick S. Larkin** (HORT), Nashville, Tenn., is senior vice president of gardens and facilities at Cheekwood.

**W. Craig Short** (BAD), Flowery Branch, Ga., helped develop a technologically advanced U.S. Navy SEALs combat submersible.

**'93** **Steve L. McMullin** (FIW), Radford, Va., is interim head of the Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation at Virginia Tech.

**Catherine Guy Batchelor** (FCD '93, EDCI '96) and **Daniel A. Batchelor** (MBA '13), Aurora, Colo., a son, 7/10/13.

**'94** **Mitchell E. Blumenfeld** (CSA), Downingtown, Pa., is chief financial officer for Packaging Coordinators Inc.

**Debra Cartwright Meade** (ENGL '77, EDAC), Roanoke, Va., retired as president and publisher of the Roanoke Times.

**Mary E. Sams** (FCD), Williamsburg, Va., is president of the Friends of Barnabas Foundation.

**Robert L. Smith** (FPR), Christiansburg, Va., was appointed head of the Department of Sustainable Biomaterials in Virginia Tech's College of Natural Resources and Environment.

**Michael A. Szymanski** (BIOL), Elizabethtown, Pa., is site director of the GlaxoSmithKline vaccines facility in Marietta, Pa.

**Richard M. Wardrop III** (BIOL), Raleigh, N.C., is associate professor of medicine and pediatrics at the

University of North Carolina School of Medicine and program director for the combined internal medicine and pediatrics residency training program at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

**Kristina Branstetter Curry** (MSCI) and **Daniel T. Curry** (HIST '96), Springfield, Va., a daughter, 4/25/13.

**'95** **Scott M. Cowan** (MSCI, PAPA '99), Windermere, Fla., founded Little Sinks LLC with his wife. The company offers a HokieBird-inspired hooded towel.

**Peter J. McCourt II** (HIST), Glen Allen, Va., is vice president of the Mission for Bon Secours Richmond Health System.

**Jason E. Melby** (MATH), Melbourne, Fla., wrote a book entitled "The 4C's of a Meaningful and Lasting Romance."

**James D. Neddo Jr.** (ME), Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla., is director of mechanical strategy in mechanical operations for CSX.

**Jennifer R. Spisak** (EDCI, EDCI '96), Richmond, Va., won the 2012 School Librarian of the Year award from the Virginia Association of School Librarians.

**William C. Worrell** (FW, FOR '10), Lebanon, Va., received the 2013 Young Forester Leadership Award from the Appalachian Society of American Foresters.

**'96** **Daniel H. Dougherty** (PSCI), Bettendorf, Iowa, is the manager of business development and solutions strategy for the Intelligent Solutions Group at John Deere.

**Sean D. Henrickson** (PSYC), Beaufort, S.C., was selected as the Hokie Hero for the Virginia Tech vs. Georgia Tech football game.

**Brian D. Wilkerson** (AAEC), Concord, Va., a son, 12/31/12.

**'97** **John W. Kilareski** (MGT), Woodbridge, Va., was selected as the Hokie Hero for the Virginia Tech vs. Marshall football game.

**James L. Moore III** (EDSP, EDCO '00), Alexandria, Va., was named the American Council on Education Fellow for 2013-14 and is the Distinguished Professor of Urban Education in The Ohio State University's College of Education and Human Ecology.

**Mitzi L. Frank** (PSYC) and **Scott S. Frank** (CE '00, CE '01), Jupiter, Fla., a son, 7/17/13.

**'98** **Matthew O. Duffey** (CHEM), Cambridge, Mass., is a patent scientist with Michael Best & Friedrich LLP.

**Donald L. Grebner** (ECAS '96, FOR), Starkville, Miss., wrote a book entitled "Introduction to Forestry and Natural Resources."

**Sherri L. Newell-Kelly** (ACCT), Studio City, Calif., is an executive director for Ernst & Young LLP's advisory practice.

**George S. South** (ARCH), New York, N.Y., was inducted as the president of the International Interior Design Association's New York chapter.

**'99** **Ryan N. Burnette** (BCHM, LSBC '04), Chesterfield, Va., wrote a book entitled "Biosecurity: Understanding, Assessing, and Preventing the Threat."

**Karen Bednarczyk Cowan** (ELPS), Windermere, Fla., founded Little Sinks LLC with her husband. The company offers a HokieBird-inspired hooded towel.

**Robert E. Emard** (ARCH), Alexandria, Va., is an associate at The Lukmire Partnership and was appointed to the Beauregard Urban Design Advisory Committee by the Alexandria City Council.

**Melissa L. Hobbs-Hendrickson** (BAD) and David Hendrickson, Hagerstown, Md., 7/27/13.

**Aron Boggs-Johnson** (HTM), Wilmington, N.C., a son, 10/31/12.

**'00** **Mark W. Button** (MKTG), Richmond, Va., co-founded Salty Grips, a company that sells cork putter grips inspired by the cork handles on fishing rods.

**Charles D. Gilmer** (ME), Harvest, Ala., helped develop a technologically advanced U.S. Navy SEALs combat submersible.

**Robert E. Burr** (BC), North Chesterfield, Va., a son, 5/9/13.

**Stephen J. Korving** (FIN) and **Megan Halstead Korving** (FCD '01, EDCI '02), Chesapeake, Va., a son, 8/1/13.

**Michael R. Munsey** (ME), Roanoke, Va., a son, 7/20/13.

**Claude Eugene Skelton II** (ME) and **Susanna Wohlford Skelton** (HIDM '02), Sunnyvale, Calif., a daughter, 10/21/12.

**Kristine I. Purawic Starkey** (FCD), Chesapeake, Va., a son, 2/19/13.

**'01** **Orlander B. Harrison Jr.** (SOC), Washington, D.C. a daughter, 3/27/13.

**'02** **Clinton W. Flowers** (MKTG), Denver, Colo., co-founded Salty Grips, a company that sells cork putter grips inspired by the cork handles on fishing rods.

**Jolene D. Hamm** (APSC, EDCT '03, GSCR '09, LSAE '10), Ringgold, Va., is director of institutional research, planning, and institutional effectiveness at Piedmont Virginia Community College.



Whitney Saunders Anderson '99, with her husband, Erick, at right, has become an advocate for families dealing with infertility. Above, Anderson and her gestational carrier, Nicole Tyma, hold Anderson's twins—son Cole William (left) and daughter Ellis Nicole (right).



## Alumna sheds light on silent disease of infertility—and champions change

Many people who struggle with infertility issues do so in silence—but that veil of secrecy will be a thing of the past if Whitney Saunders Anderson (international studies '99) has her way. By day the Internet communications manager for Roanoke College in Salem, Va., Anderson also dedicates much of her time to advocating for this very personal cause. "This is such a silent disease, and there are so many people that don't feel comfortable talking about it, and I do, so I just feel that I should," said Anderson. "We have to speak up, or nobody's going to do it for us."


Anderson and her husband, Erick, struggled with infertility issues for eight years—a difficult journey involving surgery and multiple miscarriages that they chronicled on their blog. The couple tried a number of approaches, including invitro fertilization (IVF), before they ended up working with a surrogate. Their twins were born in October 2013. "For people going through [infertility], my biggest piece of advice is that you don't have to go through it alone. Seek out a support group and find people you can talk to," said Anderson, who serves as a tireless advocate for infertility and adoption legislation and was recently honored by RESOLVE: The National Infertility Association as an "infertility hero."


In the U.S., couples who grapple with infertility are dealt an additional challenge, according to Anderson, since insurance doesn't typically provide coverage for treatment, the cost of which can easily reach thousands of dollars. "I really can't think of anything else that's a disease that has no coverage," Anderson said. "Some states have mandates, but there are a lot of loopholes, so [coverage isn't] a given, even in those states."


The fight is personal, but Anderson is working publicly on behalf of all patients who've faced infertility. Anderson's mission is twofold: to fight negative legislation that would hurt infertility patients and to press for positive legislation that would help. She has testified in front of the Virginia legislature against personhood legislation, which could have hindered infertility patients' access to certain treatments, and met with members of the U.S. Senate and House about the Family Act, which aims to provide a tax credit for costly IVF treatments. "There's really effective treatment out there, but many can't access it [because of cost]," said Anderson. "That is why the Family Act would be so important—it would offset some of [the cost] and give people a chance to afford [treatment]."


Though her family's journey has reached a happy ending, Anderson continues to fight to ensure that other couples can have the same opportunity. To read more about the Andersons' story, visit [www.whitneyanderick.com](http://www.whitneyanderick.com). To learn more about infertility issues, visit [www.resolve.org](http://www.resolve.org).




 **Amanda W. Burrowes** (MKTG), Hampton, Va., a son, 7/30/13.  
**James Kitora IV** (BIOL), Chula Vista, Calif., a son, 5/30/13.  
**Ashley Smith Seppala** (HD), Gray-slake, Ill., a daughter, 5/14/13.


**'03**  **Alex C. Brown** (BIT, ACIS '06), Apex, N.C., is vice chair of Students Against Violence Everywhere (SAVE).  
**Sana U. Hoda** (IS), Washington, D.C., wrote a book entitled “Diwali: A Cultural Adventure.”


 **Josh B. Bishop** (MGT) and **Monika Anderson Bishop** (HD '11), Roanoke, Va., 6/16/13.  
**Robert Brent DiGiacomo** (COMM) and **Stacey E. Vidt** (HNFE, HNFE '07), Greensboro, N.C., 7/6/13.  
**Stacey Hitzelbery Waite** (HNFE) and **David S. Waite** (MGT '07, MKTG '07), Sterling, Va., 3/23/13.


 **Blair M. Hoyt** (EE) and **Ashley Dawson Hoyt** (ACIS '04, ACIS '05), South Riding, Va., twin girls, 10/10/12.  
**Erich L. Stenzel** (AAEC) and **Stacey Blackburn Stenzel** (APSC), Bedford, Va., a son, 7/20/13.

**'04**  **Stephen W. Crawford** (BIT), Annapolis, Md., an assistant vice president at Alion Science and Technology, led an Alion team awarded a contract to human research protection program accreditation for all Veterans


Affairs medical centers. Last summer, the team launched a parallel commercial offering.

 **Kristin N. Delo** (SOC) and **Daniel W. Myers** (IDS), Berkeley, Calif., 6/1/13.  
**Caroline Elizabeth Sneed Van-Harmelen** (MUS, ARCH) and **Daniel L. VanHarmelen**, Seattle, Wash., 8/31/13.


**'05**  **'05 Adam G. Jeckel** (ARCH), Philadelphia, Pa., is a project manager for the Coscia Moos Architecture firm.


 **Mark A. Gondek** (MKTG) and **Megan Heath Gondek** (FIN), Sterling, Va., a son, 10/21/12.


**'06**  **Sonia A. Schmitt** (BAD), McLean, Va., is executive director of the College of Business and visiting professor of marketing at the University of South Florida.  
**Laura C. Pautler** (PSCI), Miami Beach, Fla., is manager of sales delivery for Burger King Corp.


 **Jennifer Basham Batchelor** (COMM), Hope Mills, N.C., a daughter, 6/11/13.  
**Jessica Miller Druck** (BIT), Vienna, Va., a daughter, 6/14/13.


**Brian R. Dudrow** (ISE) and **Lindsey M. Weise Dudrow** (MGT), Virginia Beach, Va., a daughter, 6/4/13.  
**Joshua D. Elliott** (PSCI, MGT), Rockville, Va., a son, 5/14/13.  
**Jennifer Lennox Folden** (ENGL) and **Matthew A. Folden** (PUA '07), Olney, Md., a son, 9/22/13.  
**Lauren Fix Fortenberry** (ENGL, EDCI '08, PH '12) and **Ryan C. Fortenberry** (CHEM '12), Statesboro, Ga., a son, 7/30/13.  
**Elizabeth Barrell Polinsky** (MUS), Ashburn, Va., a son, 6/18/13.

**'07**  **Alaina A. McCormack** (CS), Arlington, Va., developed an iPhone app called TRIPSTOP that allows motorists to efficiently plan their next travel stop.





 **Adedoyin O. Adewodu** (EE) and **Veronica Gentry Adewodu** (ACIS '08), Atlanta, Ga., 3/2/13.  
**Christopher A. Geruso** (ISE) and **Amber Smith Geruso** (ISE '12), Atlanta, Ga., 9/28/13.  
**Michael D. Williams** (ACIS, ACIS '08) and **Madison Landa Williams** (PIA '12), Boston, Mass., 6/1/13.


 **Seth P. Brewer** (CHE), Blue Ridge, Va., a daughter, 11/29/12.  
**Joseph B. Church** (EDCI) and **Jennifer Dawn Church** (EDCI '08), Radford, Va., a daughter, 7/23/13.


**'08**  **Michael V. Butera** (PHIL, ASPT '10), Nashville, Tenn., invented the Artiphon Instrument 1—a guitar, keyboard, drums, and bass, all in one.  
**April G. Hylton** (BAD), Floyd, Va., is interim assistant dean of administration for the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine at Virginia Tech.  
**Andrew K. Smithey** (AE), Stafford, Va., was selected as the Hokie Hero for the Virginia Tech vs. Western Carolina football game.


 **Jonathan A. Clifton** (COMM), Chesterfield, Va., a son, 12/12/12.  
**Aaron P. Myhr** (CS, HIST) and **Eileen McCaffrey Myhr** (IDST), Centreville, Va., a daughter, 5/4/13.


**'09**  **William G. Blevins** (ECON), Mars, Pa., was appointed a commissioned risk management examiner for the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp.  
**Amy L. Carrozzino-Lyon** (FIW, GSCR '12, FIW '12), Christiansburg, Va., was selected to participate in the Wildlife Society's 2013 Leadership Institute.  
**Sarah E. Visich** (HNFE), Devon, Pa., earned a master of science degree in physician assistant studies from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine.


-  career accomplishments
-  weddings
-  births and adoptions
-  deceased


 **Kevin W. Cupp** (BIT) and **Taylor J. White Cupp** (GEOG), Christiansburg, Va., 6/8/13.  
**Kate Huffman Harrell** (IDST, EDCI '11) and **Mathew D. Harrell** (HNFE '10), Roanoke, Va., 6/29/13.


**'10**  **Ryan B. Murphy** (IS), Fair Haven, N.J., was selected as the Hokie Hero for the Virginia Tech vs. Pittsburgh football game.  
**Tracy M. Porter Jr.** (GEOG), West Point, Va., was selected as the Hokie Hero for the Virginia Tech vs. Alabama football game.


 **Natalie Watson Chamberlain** (ARCH) and **Ryan T. Chamberlain** (ARCH '11), Annapolis, Md., 8/24/13.  
**Gina M. Hayes** (BSE) and **Joshua L. Arnett** (BSE), Silver Spring, Md., 5/26/13.  
**Stuart H. Worley** (BIOL) and **Sarah E. McQuail Worley** (HNFE '12, PSYC '12), Columbus, Ga., 9/14/13.


 **Timothy P. Hall** (HIST) and **Ashley Hidalgo Hall** (PSYC '12), Washington Depot, Conn., a son, 11/3/12.


**'11**  **Nathaniel J. Bier** (HIST), Macon, Ga., was selected as the Hokie Hero for the Virginia Tech vs. North Carolina football game.  
**Matthew R. Lyons** (ACIS, ACIS '12), Blacksburg, Va., is an associate accountant for the Butler & Burke accounting firm in Winston-Salem, N.C.  
**Matthew F. Smith** (PSCI), Lexington Park, Md., was selected as the Hokie Hero for the Virginia Tech vs. East Carolina football game.

 **Ryan A. Anderson** (BIOL) and **Jenna Ryan Anderson** (PSYC, BIOL), Blacksburg Va., 7/13/13.  
**Ian K. Barnes** (MKTG) and **Caitlin A. Boyle** (ENGL, EDCI '12), McLean, Va., 7/20/13.  
**Emily May Myrick** (BCHM) and **Joseph T. Myrick** (BIOC), Newport News, Va., 6/8/13.  
**Rebecca Myers Ovelgoenner** (ISE) and **Paul A. Ovelgoenner** (PHIL, PSYC), Christiansburg, Va., 8/10/13.

 **Kelley C. Boyer** (STS), Leesburg, Va., a son, 2/1/13.

**'12**  **Kyle D. Dingus** (FORS), Blacksburg, Va., is a forester with the Northern Virginia Department of Forestry.

 **Jacob A. Buttz** (CE) and **Kaitlin N. Kallini**, Blacksburg, Va., 8/14/13.

**'13**  **Robert M. Davis** (GSCR, PAPA), Staunton, Va., completed a master's of public administration

at Virginia Tech's Center for Public Administration and Policy.  
**Krystyn Haecker** (ARCH), Austin, Texas, completed a design for the National Museum of the American People near the National Mall in Washington, D.C.  
**Amelia E. Liarakos** (ARTF), Blacksburg, Va., received a national Gold ADDY Award from the American Advertising Federation for her work, “North by Northwest Titles,” in the “elements of advertising, visual” category.

## obituaries

### friends

**Floyd W. “Sonny” Merryman Jr.**, an entrepreneur and philanthropist for whom the Merryman Athletic Facility is named, died Dec. 7, 2013. Merryman founded one of the nation's premier bus dealerships, Sonny Merryman Inc. Along with supporting capital projects at Virginia Tech, he endowed a professorship in the Pamplin College of Business and multiple scholarships within the university. His generosity and volunteer service were recognized with the William H. Ruffner Medal in 2006.

### faculty/staff

**Craig Leonard Brians**, associate professor of political science in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, died Nov. 10, 2013. A member of the faculty since 1998, Brians taught undergraduate and graduate courses in American politics, elections, political communication, public opinion, and political science research methods. Regularly interpreting elections and political behavior for the media, Brians also served as associate chair of the department for several years. Brians completed a bachelor's degree from the California State University, Fresno, and a master's degree and Ph.D. from the University of California, Irvine.

**Antonio A. Fernández**, emeritus associate professor of Spanish in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences, died June 17, 2013, in St. Petersburg, Fla. Born in Cuba in 1949, Fernández earned his Ph.D. from the University of Kentucky and then taught at Virginia Tech from 1979 until he retired in 2010. He received numerous teaching awards and was widely known as “la voz” for his wonderful voice.

**Kenneth F. Rystrom Jr.**, a retired Virginia Tech journalism professor, died Aug. 4, 2013, in Eugene, Ore. He began his newspaper career in Vancouver, Wash., in 1956, at The Columbian and became an editorial writer for the Des Moines Register and Tribune from 1960-64, moving back to Vancouver to lead The Columbian's editorial page. Rystrom left the newspaper field for academe in 1977 and received a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Southern California in 1983. He taught editorial writing and other journalism courses at University of Redlands and Virginia Tech until his retirement in 1997.

To advertise your business in Class Notes, email us at [vtmag@vt.edu](mailto:vtmag@vt.edu).

WINE

DINE

STAY

PLAY



*Beliveau Estate Winery*

5414 Gallion Ridge Road  
Blacksburg, VA 24060

Award-Winning  
Wines

[www.BeliveauEstate.com](http://www.BeliveauEstate.com)

Sherman's

Smithman's

Quality . Selection  
Service

Distinctive Fashions for Men  
& Women for 45 years.



106 N. Franklin St. Downtown Christiansburg    Like us on Facebook - Smithmans



salute vantaggio

September 28, 2013    Christiansburg, VA

Be a part of history, be a part of a World Record....



Come on HOKIES, help build the New River Valley

Supporting the AES PTSO Playground Fund

[www.attimowinery.com/salute](http://www.attimowinery.com/salute)    540-382-7619

*Main Street Inn*





205 SOUTH MAIN STREET  
BLACKSBURG, VIRGINIA 24060  
540.552.6246

LOCATED IN THE HEART OF DOWNTOWN BLACKSBURG  
[WWW.MAINSTREETINNBLACKSBURG.COM](http://WWW.MAINSTREETINNBLACKSBURG.COM)

## Alumnus scales language barriers with new app

by RACHEL CLINE

Visiting another country can be an eye-opening experience, but one that can quickly turn stressful for travelers who don't speak the language of the culture they're visiting. Enter **Kunal Sarda** (M.S. industrial and systems engineering '05), who hopes to remedy this problem with an app called Verbalizelt.

The app allows users to quickly connect with live translators around the world for on-the-spot translations rather than having to rely on machine-generated translations that are often ineffective in conversational contexts. The idea came about when Sarda realized that he had been pick-pocketed and had no money or a way to explain the situation to his French taxi driver. “What I ended up doing was calling a friend of mine on the phone who spoke French and having him translate on my behalf over the phone,” Sarda said. “And that’s where the light bulb went off.”

While Verbalizelt is helpful for world travelers, it has also proven useful in the business world. Businesses can sign up for the service for assistance in everything from translating documents to speaking with international clients.

The business world is taking notice. In May 2012, Verbalizelt was accepted to Tech Stars, a technology incubator program, which gave his company new resources and networking capabilities. Shortly afterward, Verbalizelt appeared on an episode of ABC’s “Shark Tank,” which helped the app’s name recognition. “It was amazing to be able to pick up the phone the next day to call potential partners and to hear them say, ‘Hey, we watched you guys on ‘Shark Tank!’ It’s a level of awareness that served us really well,” Sarda said.

Today, Verbalizelt is a global community of more than 14,000 translators—from professional translators to stay-at-home moms who can now leverage their skills—and is available in the 10 most commonly spoken languages in the business world. Looking back at how far the company has come since its conception only a few years ago, Sarda recognizes an important life lesson. “Fail quickly and learn from your mistakes,” he said. “If you’re not failing enough, that implies that you’re not trying new things.”

*Rachel Cline, a senior communication and sociology major, is an intern with Virginia Tech Magazine.*



COURTESY PHOTO

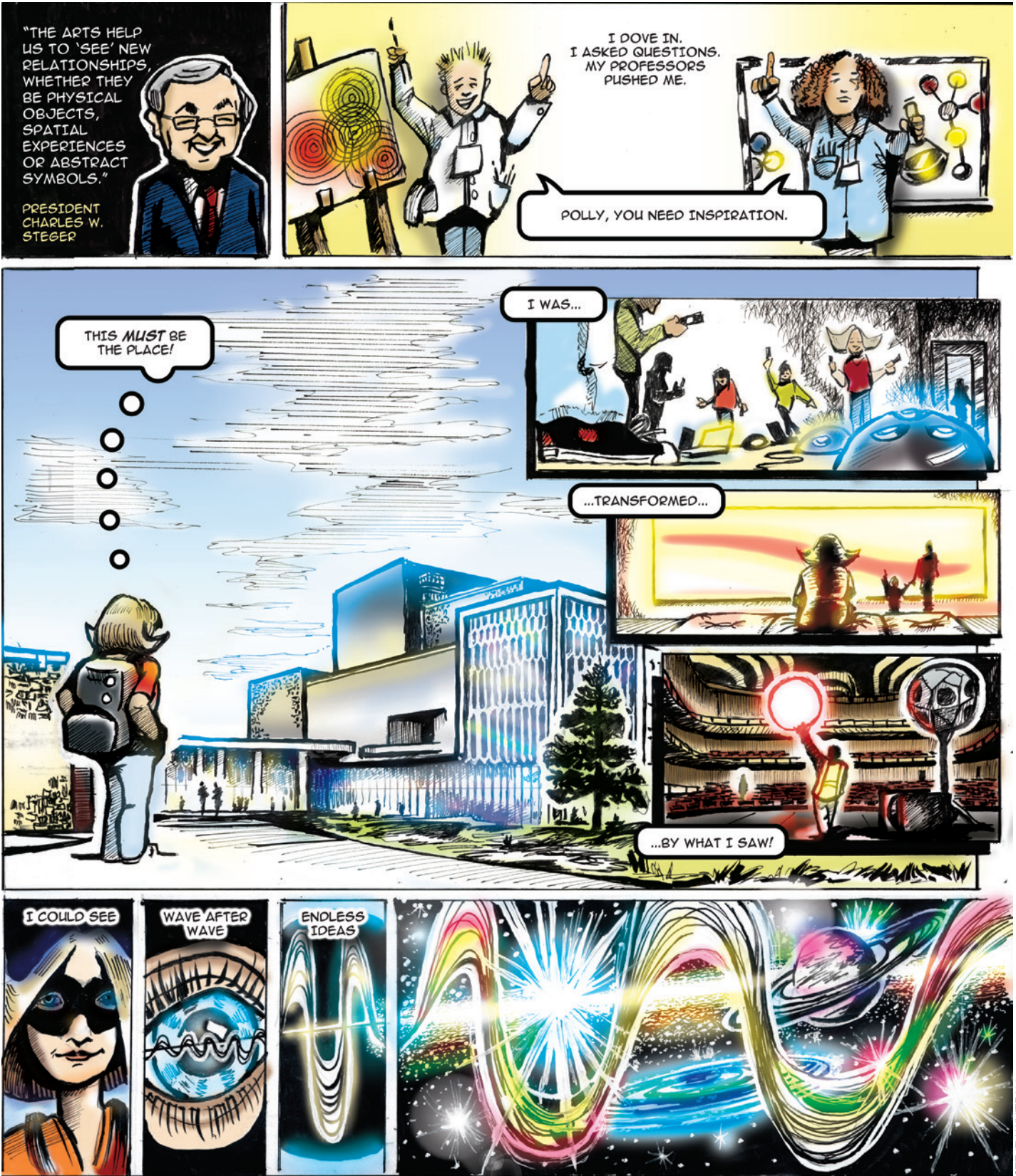


**Editor's note:** While contemplating how to tell the story of the university's opening of a new center for the arts, those of us who make Virginia Tech Magazine were captivated by the underlying purpose of the university's arts initiative. Enacting a vision long championed by President Charles W. Steger, the university and its educators aim to institutionalize the creativity and sensory learning that is intrinsic to the arts—and to all academic endeavors.

Consider this excerpt from a June 2013 column that Steger wrote for the Roanoke Times:

*Since the beginning of humankind, our ancestors learned about the world around them through sensory perception: touching, feeling, seeing, smelling, and hearing. This represents a whole other way of experiencing and perceiving the nature of our being, as opposed to the modern analytical approach. Indeed, it is an alternative way of thinking and analyzing. ... To sustain the arts, we should intentionally foster interplay between science, technology and the arts. The challenges of the 21st century demand creative processes that stem from the realization that design, aesthetics and technological development have become symbiotic.*

To tell this story of transformation in students' lives and intellects, we hit upon a universal symbol of transformation: the superhero. And the use of panels, or sequential art—often seen in comic strips and graphic novels—streamlines the presentation of an expansive topic. The panels are the work of Steven White (communication studies '92), a web developer with University Relations.







## 2014 DRILLFIELD SERIES

The Drillfield Series continues in 2014 with weekends devoted to fine dining, photography, student legacies, and healthy pets, along with special opportunities to connect with fellow alumni for a round of golf, a glass or pint of your favorite adult beverage, and activities at a scenic mountain retreat. Make plans now to attend these events designed for alumni and their families and friends, and take advantage of the specially discounted accommodations available at The Inn at Virginia Tech.

<b>Feb. 7-8</b>	Food for Thought
<b>May 30-31</b>	Focus on Photography
<b>June 6-7</b>	Top of the Mountain at Mountain Lake
<b>June 16</b>	Hokie Classic Golf Tournament
<b>June 28</b>	Summer Beer Festival at Virginia Tech
<b>July 10-11</b>	A Day in the Life of College Admissions
<b>Aug. 8-9</b>	Happy and Healthy Pet Weekend

## Food for Thought

Join us in February for a fun and elegant weekend of exceptional dining. Highlights of this palate-pleasing excursion include a chef demonstration, a mid-Atlantic food and wine-pairing brunch, and high tea in the alumni center—all crowned with a five-course wine-pairing dinner. Experience the fine hospitality of The Inn at Virginia Tech when you stay overnight (lodging discounted).

• \$165 per person; \$320 per couple

For more information on these events, see page 40 or visit [www.alumni.vt.edu/drillfieldseries/](http://www.alumni.vt.edu/drillfieldseries/).