University Libraries collaborates on Kentland history projects

By Juliet Crichton

Work to uncover the history of Montgomery County’s Kentland Farm and its slave cemetery has received an added boost, thanks to two new grants that will support research on the plantation, the cemetery, and the significance of the plantation to individuals in the surrounding communities.

Both the New River Valley Community Foundation and the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities have awarded grants to the Kentland Historic Revitalization Project for the work. Sam Cook, associate professor in the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences and chair of the steering committee; Susan Fleming Cook, a graduate student at the university; and Tamara Kelly, Tech’s university archivist, wrote the grant applications.

Virginia Tech University Libraries’ Special Collections Department will preserve documentation of the historical research and identify additional materials in its holdings that are relevant to the project.

Students dominate international autonomous-vehicle competition

By Liz Crabtree

The Virginia Tech Autonomous Vehicle Team won first place overall—as well as six out of nine event categories and $12,200 in cash awards—during the 12th-annual Intelligent Ground Vehicles Competition (IGVC), held in June at Oakland University in Rochester, Mich.

The Virginia Tech team, which constructed three of the 28 vehicles entered in the competition, also was the only group from the United States to place in any event category. Teams from Japan’s Hosei University and Canada’s University of Alberta placed second and third, respectively, overall.

The majority of Virginia Tech team members were mechanical engineering (ME) undergraduates: Sean Baita, Neal Buchanan, Michael Chaney, Jared Cooper, Jacob Dilllow, Michael Fleming, Brett Gombar, Jessica Grome, Curtis Hall, Patrick Hall, Ryan Limpin, Karl Muecke, Andrew Skidmore, Matt Swain, John Paul Thomas, Brent Weigel, and Nathan Welch.

Also on the team were Michael Avitable, an electrical-and-computer-engineering undergraduate; and mechanical-engineering graduate students Andrew Bacha, Ruel Farque, and Ankur Naik.

Autonomous vehicles are equipped with computer- and navigational technologies and programmed to maneuver without any direct human intervention. During the IGVC, each vehicle was judged in three events—the autonomous challenge, navigation challenge and design competition.

Virginia Tech’s “Johnny-5” vehicle placed first overall in the IGVC, first in the autonomous challenge, second in the navigation challenge and second in the design competition. “Gemini” placed third overall, third in the autonomous challenge, and first in design. The students built Johnny-5 and Gemini from scratch for this year’s competition. “Optimus,” which won first place overall during the 2003 IGVC, was entered again this year and placed third in the navigation challenge.

The three Virginia Tech vehicles were similarly designed and equipped for the competition, according to Baita, leader of the group that created Gemini. Each has four navigational sensors—a digital camera to determine course boundaries, a scanning laser range finder to identify obstacles, a global-positioning system (GPS), and a digital compass.

The sensors are tied together with LabView software developed by National Instruments, the team’s major industry sponsor. LabView analyzes sensor input and commands vehicle motion. The primary differences in vehicle operation are the result of variations the team implemented in the software.

Dairy-industry supporters celebrate opening of complex

By Lori Greiner

More than 500 dairy-industry supporters including alumni, producers, students, faculty members, legislators, and administrators helped Virginia Tech’s College of Agriculture and Life Sciences celebrate the opening of its new state-of-the-art dairy complex during a ceremony held at the Alphin-Stuart Livestock Arena on July 16.

According to Sharon Quisenberry, dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, the new dairy facility will greatly enhance the college’s ability to educate dairy-science students, increase research-funding opportunities, and provide the opportunity to demonstrate best-management practices.

“It will provide opportunities for our students to learn new tools and techniques for management practices as well as biotechnology. It will also allow us to disseminate state-of-the-art knowledge to these students both on an undergraduate and graduate level. In the research arena, this department’s goals will help us position the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences into a top-30 research institution,” Quisenberry said.

The facility features a 232-cow freestall research barn and a double-eight rapid-exit herringbone milking parlor and milking center. The complex also includes the latest design in waste-management technology, including solid separation and composting, and the recycling of wastewater after extensive separation and a three-stage...
I ALR hosts Impacting Rural Communities conference

**By Curtis W. Callaway**

Next month, Aug. 16-19, the Institute for Advanced Learning and Research (IALR) will host its first annual technology conference, Impacting Rural Communities through New Age Technologies (IRCNAT). The three-and-a-half-day conference will focus on the importance of bringing new technology to rural and smaller populated areas, such as Southside Virginia.

IRCNAT will be particularly interesting to economic developers, K-18 educators, small-business owners, and information-technology professionals.

The IRCNAT conference will feature keynote addresses from IBM and Avaya, businesses that are directly involved in the technology field. Individuals such as George Newton, secretary of technology for Virginia, Lan Neugent, assistant superintendent for technology for the Virginia Department of Education, and Cheryl Garnette, director of the Technology in Education Programs Division at the U.S. Department of Education, are responsible for emphasizing the importance of technology in businesses and classrooms.

**Bullets**

**Updated campus maps available**

The Virginia Tech Campus Guide, which includes a map of campus and information of interest to visitors, has been updated and is now available from the Publications and Outreach Communications unit of University Relations. The unit will provide 25 copies of the map per year free to departments or organizations. Those departments and organizations wanting additional copies will be charged 30 cents for each copy above 25.

To secure copies of the campus guide, contact Phyllis Olinger at 1-8687 (before noon Monday-Friday) or phyllo@vt.edu.

**Employees request leave donations**

Employees in Development and Student Programs have requested leave donations. Salaried classified employees or a 12-month regular faculty members may participate by donating annual leave in increments of eight hours. There is no maximum donation limitation per year, nor is there a minimum balance that must be maintained. Donation forms can be downloaded from the Personnel Services web site at http://www.psvt.vt.edu/forms. Click on Alphabetical List, then open the Leave Donor Form PHA.

For more information, call Lynett Cruise at 1-5304.

** Activities **

**Events**

**Friday, 30**

Pay Date for Faculty and Staff Members.

**Monday, 2**

Temporary Housing Available for International Students, open 24 hours through Aug. 16, 129 Main Eggleston. Call 1-6527.

**Wednesday, 4**

“With Good Reason,” 7:30 p.m., NVTTF.

**Garage sale to benefit Kaminski Memorial Fund**

There will be a garage sale from 8 a.m. until 2 p.m. Saturday, July 31 at 2004 Christopher Drive in Blacksburg to raise funds for the Jeff Kaminski Memorial Fund. Participants may assist by donating goods or services on or before Saturday.

Organizers are seeking quality, used items for donation. All the items will be sold with all proceeds going to the Kaminski Memorial Fund. Donated items that are not sold during the sale will either be returned to the donor (by previous arrangement) or donated to Goodwill/YMCA, SPCA thrift store.

Smaller items can be brought to Chesthall Ham and stored in room 132. See Michelle Davis to log in merchandise. Larger items can be brought directly to the Christopher Drive location Friday or Saturday.

For more information, contact Scott Klopfer at 1-8825.

**Electronic Records workshop scheduled**

“Electronic Records Guidance/Managing Your E-Mail,” the second of two workshops by Jerry Palmer, university records manager will be held in 3100 Torgersen Hall Thursday, Aug. 19 from 3:30 until 5 p.m. Discussions will center on the general management of electronic records, retention, storage, destruction, and responsibilities thereto, with the focus on e-mails.

To attend, e-mail registration, including name and department number, togepalmer@vt.edu. Walk-ins will also be welcome.

**Blacksburg-Roanoke Shuttle under way**

The new SmartWay shuttle began providing service July 28 to residents between the Roanoke Valley and the Virginia Tech Campus. The new shuttle provides express service between Squires (Alumni Mall inbound side) and Campbell Court with just five stops along the way: Christiansburg K-Mart, the park-and-ride lots at exits 118A and 140 off of Route 81, Roanoke Regional Airport, and the Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center.

The service runs Monday through Thursday, with extended Friday and Saturday hours. Buses arrive and leave about every 90 minutes throughout the day.

For those traveling to the airport and returning on Sunday, a special transfer is available which allows passengers to travel back on the Roanoke/Blacksburg Airport Shuttle for just $3 (regularly priced at $30).

For updates, schedules and more information, visit the SmartWay web site at www.smartwaybus.com or call toll free at 1-800-388-7005. Schedules are also available in Squires Student Center or by calling the Office of Transportation at 1-1737.

**International Student Orientation to begin**

International Student Orientation activities will begin Aug. 2, when temporary housing will be available in Main Eggleston. The office for temporary housing is 129 Main Eggleston.

In the following weeks, a number of activities for international undergraduate and graduate students are planned. On Thursday, Aug. 5, and Friday, Aug. 6, there will be an Off-Campus Housing Fair from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in Squires Busch Mountain Room. Other activities offered will include a tour of Roanoke, shopping and campus walking tours.

There will be a mandatory international-student-orientation session for all new undergraduate and graduate students from 9 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 19 in Squires Colonial Hall. The session will include essential immigration and other information. A separate mandatory session for graduate students will be held Friday, Aug. 20 from 9 a.m. until noon in Squires Colonial Hall. The mandatory session for undergraduate students will be held at the same time and date in Squires Busch Mountain Room.

For more information on International Student Orientation, call 1-6527 or go to http://www.uusa.vt.edu/cranwell.

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**Golf tourney to raise funds for diversity scholarships**

By Tyus Jackson

Golfers in the greater Washington, D.C., community will have an opportunity to support educational diversity at Virginia Tech when they participate in the university’s Opportunities Scholarship golf tournament Aug. 27 during the Black Coaches Association Football Classic Weekend in August. The Virginia Tech football team will play the University of Southern California on Aug. 28 at FedEx Field in Landover, Md.

The “captain’s-choice” tournament will be held at the Hampshires Greens Golf Course in Silver Spring, Md., and proceeds from the event will support the Groove Phi Grove Scholarship, part of Virginia Tech’s Opportunities Scholarship program. Groove Phi Grove was the first African American organization at the university.

ABC News Correspondent and Virginia Tech alumnus Pierre Thomas will host the awards program that follows play. Thomas, a member of the Class of 1984, was a reporter for The Roanoke Times and The Washington Post before joining ABC News. Major F. Riddick Jr., the former chief of staff for Maryland’s governor, is the honorary chairman for the event. Riddick, president and chief executive officer of Strategic Solutions Center, holds degrees in political science and public administration from Virginia Tech.

Virginia Tech’s Opportunities Scholarship Program provides support for students who have proven leadership and service in the area of educational diversity. Ben Dixon, vice president for multicultural affairs, said the scholarship program is designed to extend well beyond the classroom.

“Recipients participate in programs that give them the tools and leadership skills to continue to strive for the advancement of under-represented groups in our society,” Dixon said. “Students are required to develop and implement activities in their home communities that promote post-secondary education and the creation of inclusive educational environments.”

More information is available from Garfield Cross at 703-916-9670 extension 104 or e-mail opportunityscholarship@vt.edu.
University presents awards for outstanding leadership

Linda Woodard, assistant vice president for personnel, presented two Outstanding Leader of the Year awards and 24 Academy for Leadership Excellence Fellow Certificates July 16 at the annual Academy for Leadership Excellence Recognition program.

The Outstanding Leader of the Year award was presented to two university employees. Rhonda Pennington, office manager for international and exchange programs, and Elizabeth Waterman, academic advisor in the biology department, were honored at the annual CASE luncheon.

As business manager for the Department of Materials Science and Engineering (MSE) for the past 12 years, Hill is responsible for most of the department’s budgeting. She works with faculty members to prepare research budgets and manage the department’s state and research contract funding. She also plays a major role in hiring students and personnel and purchasing equipment for the department and research projects.

The faculty and staff members and students rely heavily on her for problem solving, not just financial but with other issues related to getting the job done,” said MSE Department Head David Clark in nominating Hill for the award.

In addition to managing fiscal affairs for faculty members and administrators, Hill works with students on a number of projects. “In my four years at VTIE, I have yet to encounter a problem that Amy cannot find an answer to, and it is always delivered with a smile,” said MSE student Adam Maisano, an engineering technology major.

By Lynn Davis
Two hundred 4-H and Scouting programs from across the United States competed in this year’s 4-H Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Program (4H WHEP) contest, which is part of the larger Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Program (WHEP). The contest was held at the Virginia Tech Virginia Living Laboratory Farm in Blacksburg on July 20.

The students won their states’ contests and will use skills they have learned through their local 4-H Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Programs. This year’s winning states were: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, and Washington.

Students receive their fellow certificates: Greg Beecher, University Unions and Student Affairs; Keith Boyd, Mechanical Utilities; Al Cooper, Budget and Financial Planning; Vijji De Datta, Facilities; Jeffrey Earley, Budget and Financial Planning; Erica Estep, University Unions and Student Affairs; Rosa Jones, Multicultural Programs; Carrie Kirk, President’s Office; Cathy Lally, Alumni Relations; Roberto Mayorga, Graduate School; Mark Owczarczak, University Relations—News and Information; Diana Ridgwell, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; Roby Robinson, Environmental Health and Safety Services; Terri Sadler, Outreach and International Affairs; Bradley Scott, Controller’s Office; Anne Sheppard, Computing Support; Miya Simpson, Academic Enrichment and Excellence; Nini Smiley, Multicultural Academic Opportunities; Judy Watson, 4Help; and Karen Watson, College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON ALL FACULTY AND CLASSIFIED STAFF POSITIONS, SEE WWWJOBSVTEDU

STUDENT DEATHS
Antonia Margaret Toth, Pamplin College of Business, Bernard Joseph Kuhn Jr., College of Engineering.
Smelly plant seems ready to bloom

By Sally Harris

Tech’s second Amorphophallus titanum, or “corpse plant,” seems ready to bloom and emit its intensely powerful stench. People are invited to tie bandanas over their noses and come see the rare and unusual plant.

The horticulture greenhouse containing the plant is open to visitors Friday, July 30, and August 2 through 6, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The likely date for the plant to bloom is Wednesday, Aug. 4, said Scott Rapier, greenhouse manager in the Department of Horticulture in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences; follow the plant’s progress on the web at http://www.hort.vt.edu/VTHG/ to see it on the date it blooms.

Although a blooming Amorphophallus titanum, or titan arum, is rarely seen, Virginia Tech’s first bloomed last year, drawing crowds that braved the odor and the football traffic to see it. The smelly plant is rare because it puts forth one blossom every four to 10 years. This year, the second plant, located in Virginia Tech’s greenhouse complex, should bloom ahead of football traffic, making it easier for the public to visit the greenhouse. The first of these plants in the United States bloomed in 1937 at the New York Botanical Garden, and since, only about 20 have bloomed in this country.

4-H

Continued from 3

captured the honor of hosting the event this year. The actual competition site will be in the Jefferson National Forest near Virginia Tech’s campus. WHEP is the flagship wildlife education program for Cooperative Extension and land-grant universities.

Contestants must judge the suitability of habitat for wildlife species through on-site evaluation, aerial photographs, and wildlife foods identification. Each state team must write an urban and rural wildlife-management plan for nine wildlife and fish species.

The teams will go through a trial run Thursday, with the judges sift through the plans, the 4-H members will enjoy natural-resource activities at Mountain Lake, the Cascades, and Jefferson National Forest such as canoeing the New River, swimming, horseback riding, fishing, caving, rock climbing, hiking, birding, and range shooting. “I think the most unique part of the competition is the analysis of aerial photographs of the surrounding land,” said Jeff Kirwan, associate professor of forestry in the College of Natural Resources and Extension specialist for natural-resources education, who is one of the coordinators for this year’s conference. “Each team is presented with four different aerial maps and a species. The kids must use the maps to rank the best habitat for the given species.”

The contest is divided into five different parts: identifying wildlife foods; judging wildlife habitat from aerial photographs; prescribing wildlife-management practices on a given site; developing an urban management plan for selected species; and developing a rural management plan for selected species.

The competition includes both individual and group events.

WHEP is a 4-H youth natural-resource program dedicated to teaching wildlife-and-fisheries habitat management to junior and senior-level (ages 8 to 19) youth in the United States. Youth learn the science of wildlife management and gain skills in oral and written communication, critical thinking and decision making, while participating in an activity that encourages observation of detail.

Music

Continued from 1

several lawsuits targeted at those who download music illegally.

iTunes offers an extensive music library of more than 700,000 songs for Mac and PC customers to legally discover, purchase, and download music on line. The iTunes Music Store gives users the ability to play songs on up to five personal computers, burn a song onto CD’s an unlimited number of times, burn the same list up to seven times, and listen to their music on an unlimited number of iPods.

“There is competing software on the market, but to date, no one else has approached us with this type of agreement,” Kralman said. “The university is open to offering additional solutions for our students.”

University

Continued from 1

to revitalize Kentland’s historic district. Most of the interviewees are community elders who are eager to add their stories of the community and of Kentland to the public record. Interviews will be made available through Tech’s Special Collections Department Web site at http://spec.lib.vt.edu/ and through the Virginia Heritage database at http://www.virginia.edu/specoll/ihp/about.html. Development will begin on a special Internet site showcasing the interviews, primary source materials, and other documentation about the history of this rural, agricultural area along the New River near Brush Mountain.

“We hope to compile a book for the community, which we would ultimately like to publish locally,” Cook said. “On a larger scale, we will use the oral history project as a springboard to hold a number of ‘community days’ at Kentland, which we hope will lead up to an open house/fund raiser. The purpose of the community days is to make people in surrounding communities a part of the revitalization project and to let them determine how they would like to be represented and how they would like to see their histories represented.”

The two projects are part of a larger initiative through which the Kentland Historic Revitalization Project aims to preserve the site while revitalizing the Kentland historic district as a community-based, multicultural museum/living history site.

Vehicle

Continued from 1

“The autonomous challenge is the most prestigious event at the competition and the event that the most teams enter,” said Gombar, leader of the group that created Johnny-5. The goal was for vehicles to navigate a 603-foot-long course, framed by painted white lines, and avoid orange construction barrels placed as obstacles—all with no human intervention. Johnny-5 zipped through the obstacle course in only three minutes and 30 seconds. “The second place team from Hoses University completed the course in over eight minutes,” Gombar said.

Gemini won the design competition, which consisted of a written design report, an oral presentation, and vehicle inspection by IGVC judges. “Gemini was presented as the total package,” Baity said. “Reliability, flexibility of design, ease of use and professional appearance were emphasized as the selling points of the vehicle’s design.”

Johnny-5, which has a hybrid electric power system, came in second for design.

“The quality of entries in this year’s IGVC was better than ever before,” said Charles Reinholz, a nationally distinguished professor of mechanical engineering and co-adviser of the autonomous vehicle team. “Our students worked relentlessly to refine their vehicles and their accompanying reports and presentations. They also developed some very clever algorithms to address previously intractable navigation problems.”

Baity and Gombar, both of whom received their bachelor’s degrees in May and are now mechanical engineering graduate students at Virginia Tech, plan to work again next year readying vehicles for the IGVC. Gombar said, “The future of Gemini and Johnny-5 looks bright. One of our major goals is to refine them so they can be sold to industry as test platforms.”

“Our students, some of them only sophomores, are involved in sophisticated technological work,” said the team’s co-adviser, Al Wicks, professor of mechanical engineering. “We’ve had great success for several years at the IGVC because we have excellent students and quality tools for them to work with—plus the organizational and leadership skills of Charlie Reinholz.”