



January 2015

Chapter Team

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Don't Forget

You are REQUIRED to have a Virginia Tech PID (vt.edu email address) to access the Chapter Forms database.

The Chapter Newsletter is a communications tool between the Virginia Tech Alumni Association and its chapters.

If you have any comments or suggestions, please send them to your chapter liaison. If you have problems viewing the newsletter, please contact [Ginny Ritenour](#), Chapter Program Coordinator.

Dear Chapter Volunteers,

Welcome to 2015! As we begin a new year, we are looking forward to working with you on your chapter programs and events scheduled for this spring. If you're still looking for a speaker, be sure to contact your chapter liaison for assistance.

We will continue with our new "Chapter Chats" this spring, so be on the lookout for more information about upcoming topics exclusively for chapter officers. All chats will be hosted on the 10th of each month at various times in an effort to meet a wide variety of schedules. If you're interested in learning more now, we have materials from previous chats available on the [Chapter Resources page](#).

This April, we will continue our *Hokie Nation Serves* initiative. As we have for the past several years, we encourage all chapters to initiate or participate in community service projects in your local area. As a reminder, you may request your official "Hokie Nation Serves" t-shirts for your event by completing the form on our [Chapter Resources page](#). The only requirements are that you wear your shirts proudly and submit a photo to our office of your chapter volunteers in action. We will also be partnering with the student-run "Big Event" again this year on Saturday, April 11; be on the lookout for more information coming soon. If you're looking for new ideas for service projects, contact your chapter liaison.

As you begin to plan your spring and summer travel, be sure to check out the offerings in our [2015 Drillfield Series](#). You're sure to find a fun and informative program to bring you back to Blacksburg this spring or summer.

We look forward to working with you in the upcoming year!

Associate Vice President for Alumni Relations



Chapter Event Highlight: Chapter Holiday Parties

Annual Hokie Holiday Parties are a long-standing tradition for many of our alumni chapters. From Dallas to Chicago to Miami, Virginia Tech alumni take the opportunity to join together and share the holiday spirit with their fellow local Hokies. These holiday parties take many forms and grow over the years to reflect the unique personalities of the local alumni groups.

Our Community Service Highlight in the [December 2014 newsletter](#) featured many chapters who combine a service project with their party, such as food and toy drives. The Denver Chapter comes together for a traditional cookie exchange and adds on a gift wrapping group activity to prepare gifts they've collected for local families. The Shenandoah Chapter asks alumni to support their HokieBird Fights Hunger food drive and even provides babysitters at their parties!

The Dallas/Fort Worth and South Florida Chapters invite alumni from other universities in the ACC or the state of Virginia to round out the fun at their parties. This provides a chance for alumni with shared experiences to gather together and mingle with one another.

Several chapters have joined the tradition of hosting an "Ugly Sweater" themed holiday event; the NC Triad Chapter has taken this idea a step farther and included competitions for "Tackiest Tie" and "Ugliest Hat" with Hokie prizes provided.

The Tampa Bay Chapter takes advantage of their warm Florida temperatures and hosts an annual Holiday Beach Party, complete with a bonfire cookout, bocce ball games, and cornhole tournaments.

For the Rockbridge, VA Chapter, the traditional holiday party serves as their annual signature event, something that alumni in the area look forward to attending year after year. Other chapters host a simple holiday-themed happy hour, bringing local alumni together to toast the Hokie spirit of the holidays.



Chapter President Katherine Forbes '11 (front right) and fellow alumni at the Middle TN Chapter holiday party



Tampa Bay Chapter alumni enjoy a holiday party on the beach, Florida-style!



A few adventurous souls from the NC Triad Chapter compete for the "Tackiest Tie" at their holiday party

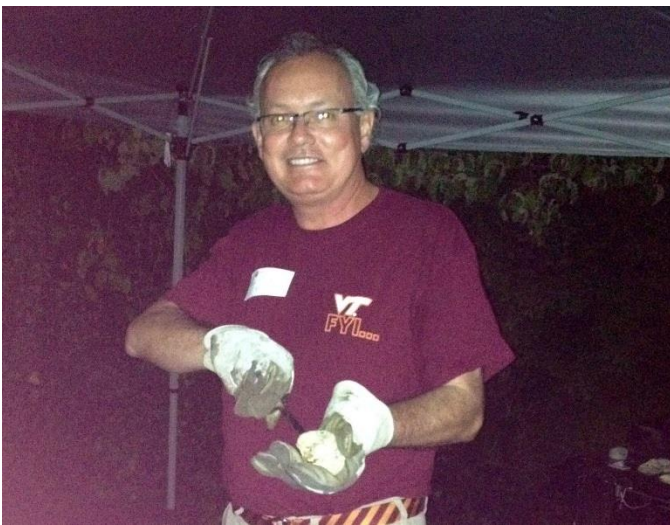
Chapter Volunteer Highlight: Hugh Ferguson III '85, Southwest Virginia Chapter

by [Gwen Harrington](#)

Getting the Team Back Together!

Southwest Virginia is a region of spectacular views with a culture rooted deep in history, known for its vibrant culture of music and craft. In recent years, the local alumni chapter has struggled to get participation at the levels they had experienced in the past. In the 1990's and 2000's the Southwest Virginia (SWVA) alumni chapter was very active and received an Outstanding Chapter Award almost every year. Hoping to "get the team back together," alumni in the area actively recruited

Hugh Ferguson III '85 to revise his role as chapter president. More than 10 years since he last served, Hugh has successfully motivated his fellow alumni to make this an outstanding year for the chapter. In their first meeting in June 2014, 12 enthusiastic alumni attended. Their events and meetings continue to have a strong attendance. Hugh helped the chapter host a successful speaker event, game watching party (hosted at the home of Hugh and his wife Annette '86), and bowl watching party to name just a few, all with over 50 people in attendance. Hugh has not done it alone, but serving as a catalyst, he has gathered a great group of Hokies! Looking to the future, Southwest Virginia is already building excitement for the Battle at Bristol. They are currently working on plans for an over the top Hokie Tailgate in September 2016!



Hugh could be found shucking oysters at the Southwest Virginia Chapter's Ohio State game watching party



Hugh pictured at the William & Mary game tailgate with wife Annette '86, and daughter Laura '15

REMINDER: Share your Networking success stories!

Calling all chapters! The Virginia Tech Alumni Association is in search of success stories from your chapter networking events.

If you know of any job offers, promotions, professional connections or anything else that has helped another Hokie from their networking efforts, please send the information to Katie Marquis at kmarquis@alumni.vt.edu.

Important Chapter Updates

Communications Requests

We are approaching our busiest time of the year. Please be mindful of our five business day turnaround for chapter email requests. Keep in mind that requests should be submitted early enough to allow people time to respond and plan to attend your event.

To submit your email request, log-in to the online [Chapter Database](#) and follow the instructions.

Save the Date: Big Event 2015

The Big Event is one of Virginia Tech's largest community service events and all chapters are invited to participate. This year's Big Event will take place on Saturday, April 11, 2105. We encourage you to begin thinking about local service projects that your chapter could participate in on that day. Be on the lookout for an email with more information about registering and ordering official Big Event t-shirts for your volunteers.

2015 Day of Remembrance Events

If your chapter is planning on holding a Remembrance event this year, please send us the details so we can have these posted to the site and available for other Hokies in your area. Details should be submitted to [Ginny Ritenour](#).

2015 Scholarship Program Updates

If your chapter is planning on awarding local scholarships for the 2015-2016 academic year, you should have already updated your information letter and application. If you haven't done so, contact [Ginny Ritenour](#) to get a copy of last year's version to be updated.

We anticipate receiving the list of students who have accepted the offer of early decision admission the first week in April. Visit our Chapter Resources page for a [complete timeline](#).

Dates to Remember:

- February 10 (7 PM Eastern): Chapter Chat – Community Service Projects
- February 20-21: [Drillfield Series: Food for Thought](#)
- March 10 (Time TBD): Chapter Chat – Broadening Audiences for Increased Alumni Engagement with Latanya Walker, Director of Alumni Relations for Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement
- March 20-21: [Drillfield Series: What Fuels Our Planet?](#)
- April 11: The Big Event 2015
- April 16: [2015 Day of Remembrance](#)
- April 18: [3.2 for 32 Run in Remembrance](#)
- May 16: Spring Commencement
- June 5-6: [Drillfield Series: The Rich Heritage of Southwest Virginia](#)
- June 15: [3rd Annual Hokie Classic Golf Tournament at the Pete Dye River Course](#)
- June 27: [2nd Annual Summer Beer Festival at Virginia Tech](#)
- July 10-11: [Drillfield Series: Alumni and Legacy Weekend](#)
- July 17-19: [Drillfield Series: Women's Weekend](#)

Share your Hokie pride with #VT4L!

When posting your favorite Virginia Tech pictures on social media, be sure to use the new #VT4L hashtag! This is a fun and easy way to share your Hokie pride and keep up with Hokies around the world.



Staff Highlight: Matthew Dowdy, Manager, Printing and Mailing



Matthew Dowdy is the Printing and Mailing Manager at the Virginia Tech Alumni Association. Matthew has worked for Virginia Tech since 2009, where he joined the Environmental, Health and Safety Department as a Hazardous Waste Technician.

Since joining the Alumni Association in 2014, Matthew has assumed many duties as a member of the Communications Team. His responsibilities include scheduling email and print requests for alumni chapters, colleges and constituencies, printing and mailing for Alumni Association events and reunions, and various other printing and mailing needs.

Matthew's many avocations and interests include painting, drawing, and photography. In 1998, he won a competitive fellowship award to the Virginia Center for Creative Arts for painting. During his lunch break, you can usually find him at the Art and Architecture Library on campus.

Matthew lives in Christiansburg with his wife and daughter and enjoys spending time with his family and friends.

Important Message from Tom Tillar about the Virginia Tech Discover Card Program

Dear Chapter Leaders –

Our Alumni Association began an affinity credit card agreement with Discover slightly over a year ago. However, Discover has chosen to exit the affinity card market after only a short period of time experimenting with it. Discover informed us in December that they would no longer accept applications for additional Virginia Tech cards. Our Association had entered a multi-year agreement with Discover in late 2013, which was similar to an earlier program we had through Chase Bank. As you know, the Association relies on corporate partnerships to partially fund our operating budget. These programs have been popular with many of our alumni through the years and we intend to seek another bank relationship for an affinity card program that markets a card nationally, as opposed to regionally.

Any alum who enrolled in the Virginia Tech Discover Card program may retain their current card and their account remains active with no changes to its services or fees. Once their branded Virginia Tech card approaches its account expiration date, Discover will reissue a generic Discover card that does not display any Virginia Tech marks.

We greatly appreciate your chapter's support and promotion of our Discover card partnership. We regret that it has been terminated by Discover. However, we hope to have another program in place in the near future.

If you have any specific questions or comments, please contact [Greg Fansler](#).

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Tillar".

HOKIES on FACEBOOK



Chicago area alumni joined together in January for a basketball game watching party



Palmetto Chapter President Brian Moran '08 shows his Hokie holiday spirit in the office!



The Tampa Bay Chapter participated in a community service project with Metropolitan Ministries in December



The Richmond Chapter hosts a monthly breakfast networking function for "Hokies Helping Hokies"



The Middle Tennessee Chapter hosted its first Networking event with music, food, drinks, and lots of Hokies