Welcome to another great year at Virginia Tech. Enjoy the first Fall issue of Psych ACCESS, the official undergraduate psychology newsletter.

The mission of Psych ACCESS is to create a venue to share information related to the field of psychology and the department. Our specific goal is to provide information about the developments and advances in the field of psychology and address issues that relate to you!

Have a topic you want covered? Email Jon at jwaldron22@vt.edu

When You Need a Good Laugh...
by Kristin Austin

Hump day got you down? Well here’s an idea to spice up your Wednesday nights! Head over to TOTS for Comedy Club around 9pm and you will not be disappointed. Comedy Club is the perfect escape if you are stressed about classes, dealing with homesickness, or annoyed with your roommates. The host, Anthony Quinn Robinson, a Hokie alum and local comedian, also offers opportunities for amateurs to perform, ranging from complete newbies who have never been on stage before to performers looking to hone their acts for bigger stages. For only $6 ($8 for those under 21), you will enjoy this “adult-rated” show with hilarious nationally-touring comedians along with some talented local amateurs. Either way, if you are looking for something to do on Wednesday nights, Comedy Club at TOTS is where you need to be! Who knows, you may even get an itch to take a chance as a comedian, like I did!

WHEN: Wednesdays at 9pm
WHERE: TOTS (Top of the Stairs)
HOW MUCH? $6 over 21; $8 under 21
WHY? Because you love/need to laugh!

Fall 2014, Issue 1

Check it Out:

Virginia Tech has some of the best food in the country. But, there are many other places off campus that provide a veritable smorgasbord of gastronomical delights

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It’s a great big beautiful world. And sometimes there’s no place like home. Learn about homesickness and what you can do to cope.

2

There’s a lot to do in this area and beyond. Check out some options for exploring Roanoke and other outdoor adventures.

3 & 6

It can be confusing whom to approach in Williams 109 with questions. Find a summary of the Psychology staff and their responsibilities.

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Psych ACCESS
Written By Students For Students
Virginia Tech offers GREAT food choices on campus. But, when you have friends or family come to visit, you might ask yourself where you should go or what is there to eat. Take a closer look, though, and you can easily find the perfect match for your palate, no matter how sophisticated it is. This guide is intended to help answer the question that has plagued many a VT student when first exploring the town: what’s for dinner?

Let’s begin with classic American food. My go-to restaurant is Bull & Bones Brewhaus and Grill (bullandbones.com), located on South Main Street. They have fabulous burgers, steaks, ribs, and more—and those of you over the age of 21 should note that they brew their own delicious beers in-house. If you’re willing to travel a bit further, I’d also heartily recommend Due South BBQ (duesouthbbq.com) in Christiansburg. Along with their phenomenal pulled pork, the restaurant hosts live bluegrass concerts. For those willing to go the extra mile, it’s my opinion that no stay in Blacksburg is complete without a visit to the famous Home Place Restaurant. This family style eatery serves bottomless country favorites, including dessert and drinks, for a reasonable price. Just bring a few friends to help you finish it all! Finally, it’s hard to forget Lefty’s Main Street Grille (leftysgrille.com), which puts a gourmet twist on classic favorites and makes for a perfect lunchtime stop, or Macado’s (macados.net), a local chain known for its variety of tasty sandwiches.

Of course, there are many other cultures and food styles represented in Blacksburg and the surrounding area. Sal’s Italian Restaurant & Pizzeria (salsrestaurants.com) offers delicious Italian cuisine, a good wine selection, and what I’d consider the best pizza in town. Cabo Fish Taco (cabofishtaco.com), located downtown, serves delicious, fresh Southwestern fare, and there’s no need to steer clear if seafood isn’t your thing. If you love Mediterranean food, you’re in luck; Pita Vera (pitavera.com) offers many healthy choices, and the graduate students in our department can

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It Takes Hands to Build a House, But Only Hearts Can Build a Home

by Deanna Swain

For even the most independent and outgoing college students, homesickness can strike when you least expect it. For me, I was very ready to escape the small southern town I had grown to call home and explore a new big city for my undergraduate college experience. It didn’t hit me until I came back to school after Thanksgiving break. The sudden change in temperature in addition to the increased workload left me pining to be back in my non-XL twin bed with my mom cooking breakfast and my

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Blacksburg benefits from being located in one of the most beautiful areas in Virginia. When you need a break from studying or just want to get outdoors with new friends, there are a number of options available nearby:

**McAfee Knob (pictured above)** is a popular hike, and happens to be one of the most photographed spots on the Appalachian Trail (AT) in Virginia. The summit of this 8.3-mile hike offers views of the Catawba Valley and Blue Ridge Mountains. From Blacksburg, take Harding Avenue (785) for 20 miles to 311. Take a right on 311 and continue to the top of the mountain. The hike begins in the parking area where the AT crosses 311. *Difficulty level:* moderate.

**Dragon’s Tooth** is a 5-mile, steep hike ascending to a jagged rock pinnacle at the top of Cove Mountain. Hikers are rewarded with beautiful views when they reach the top of the mountain. From Blacksburg, take Mt. Tabor Road (624) for about 24 miles to 311. Take a left on 311 and the trailhead sign is shortly thereafter on the left. *Difficulty level:* moderate to difficult.

**New River Junction** is a must-do on a hot day. They offer tube rentals and people can choose to float down the New River or just spend the day in the water hanging out with friends. Weekend rental fees are $10.00. From campus, take Prices Fork Road out of town, and take a right onto McCoy Rd after approximately 4 miles. *Continued...*
miles. Take McCoy Rd for 7 miles before turning right onto Big Falls Rd. New River Junction is the first place on the left after the train tracks.

Pandapas Pond is a great recreational day use area located just 6 miles down 460W. People can choose to walk, run, ride horses, or bike on the extensive trail network that surrounds the 8-acre pond.

The Cascades (pictured below) is a 66-foot tall waterfall accessible via a four-mile (round trip) scenic hike. From Blacksburg, take 460W for approximately 14 miles and turn right onto 623. The Cascades trail is located at the end of the road. Parking is $3.00. Difficulty level: easy to moderate.

Food Lover’s Guide to the Burg (Continued)

often be seen at The Cellar (the-cellar.com), which offers a great beer selection along with a wide variety of dishes. If you can handle a bit of extra spice, Café de Bangkok (blacksburgthai.com) makes scrumptious Thai cuisine.

If you have a special occasion to celebrate, naturally you don’t want to go just anywhere. A trip to 622 North (622north.com) will practically guarantee a second date. I’d also recommend Kabuki Japanese Steakhouse in Christiansburg for dinner and a show. However, you’ll want to budget for a slightly higher bill at either of those restaurants. For a business brunch, try Gillie’s (gilliesrestaurant.com) or the London Underground (lugpub.com). Both are likely to please.

Watching your wallet? No problem! Believe it or not, Monday is the night for fantastic restaurant deals in Blacksburg. Sushi lovers will enjoy Dollar Sushi Night at Sake House (sakehouserestaurant.com) on South Main Street or the free futomaki upgrade available (on Monday and Wednesday) at Green’s Grill and Sushi Bar downtown. Sharkey’s (sharkeyswingandribjoint.com) has a multitude of tasty burgers waiting for you to try on Free Burger Monday. There are lots of other bargains for those willing to look at other restaurants on other nights during the week. You may find yourself not wanting to wait until Saturday night to go out!

Finally, no meal is complete without a delicious dessert. A popular choice in our department is the Frosty Parrot (thefrostyparrot.com), a self-serve frozen yogurt shop located downtown. I’d also recommend Gobble Cakes (gobblecakes.com) for a yummy cupcake—great for splitting with a friend or date.

As you might be able to tell, this foodie could go on and on about all the wonderfully tasty choices there are for meals in Blacksburg. I’d wager anyone could find something they like if they just venture a little ways off campus (perhaps even Gordon Ramsay, should he ever decide to visit our humble town). I hope this article inspires you to go out and sample some of the delicious local fare waiting for you.

WHO’S WHO IN WILLIAMS 109
BY RACHEL MILLER

Vicki Thompson is your go-to person in Williams 109 for general questions or if you are unsure about whom to talk to for a Psychology Department issue.

Susan Armstrong is the Graduate Coordinator for psychology grad students and also a resource for general questions if Vicki is not present.

Cindy Koziol is the Undergraduate Advising Coordinator for psychology. Cindy can help you with all matters related to the Psychology major/minor, such as forms for declaring your major/minor, advisor questions, adding you to a research lab on HokieSpa, forms for graduation, etc.

Kim Raymond coordinates the finances for the department. Kim can help you if you have scholarship money, need to be reimbursed for research materials, or have a paid position in a Psych research lab.

Ben Pfountz coordinates all of the computers and other technology for the department. Ben can also help you if you need access to the Psychology Computer Lab for a psychology class.
dogs coming to keep me company. I missed the familiarity and routine of home that was now being juxtaposed with my tumultuous college life.

What is homesickness?

It’s not an all or nothing event (i.e. you don’t “have it” or you don’t). Rather, homesickness can best be defined as the degree in which one experiences these feelings of missing home. Often, we misinterpret these thoughts as longing for the physical comforts of home (e.g. bed, house); however, homesickness may best be described as desiring what is familiar, comfortable and habitual. College, on the other hand, provides many unfamiliar and uncomfortable situations and choices daily.

How to cope?

Go easy on yourself.

Yeah, that’s right! You are not alone in experiencing these feelings of apprehension, insecurity and uncertainty. In fact, a study showed that individuals who demonstrate higher levels of self-compassion (i.e. degree to which people treat themselves kindly during stressful situations) report lower levels of homesickness. Bottom line: next time you feel homesick, don’t be too critical of yourself and try to suppress those feelings. Instead, try to actively acknowledge and accept the emotions you are experiencing and cut yourself some slack!

Stay active.

Familiarize yourself with your environment. Remember, feeling homesick often reflects missing familiarity and routine. Try to create structure to your day! Get to know your roommates, hall mates, classmates and professors! Meet new people by participating in an intramural sport or club on campus. While college may be daunting, everyone has their own niche - sometimes it just takes some searching and motivation to step outside of your comfort zone.

Don’t be afraid to ask for help.

Asking for help is a sign of strength. Seriously. The act of recognizing that you are having a difficult time (to whatever extent) takes a lot of courage; furthermore, being open with others about it demonstrates a true sense of strength as an individual. You may likely make some long-lasting friendships in the process.

It’s also important to monitor your levels of feeling homesick. While the majority of students experience feelings of homesickness to varying degrees, sometimes these feelings can trigger more serious anxiety and depressive symptoms. If these feelings begin to occur on more days than not and interfere with your social and academic functioning, you should consider contacting Cook Counseling Services [http://www.ucc.vt.edu/] or Psychological Services Center [https://www.psyc.vt.edu/outreach/psc] for additional help and assistance.

Work Cited:

Exploring the New River Valley and Beyond
by Tyler Hassenfeldt

Once you’ve explored the great offerings of campus and Blacksburg, consider getting out of town and enjoying the best of the New River and Roanoke Valleys. Some highlights:

- **Roanoke City Market** (Intersection of Campbell Ave. and Market St. in downtown Roanoke). Hours are roughly 7am to 3pm. The market is open all week, but the atmosphere is best on Saturdays. See [http://www.downtownroanoke.org/city-market](http://www.downtownroanoke.org/city-market) for more info. Through late October, live music or cooking demos are offered on Saturdays from 11am-2:30pm, ending with the Haley Harvest Festival on October 4th.

- **Shopping in downtown Roanoke.** Check out the cute little bookstores, boutiques, and restaurants on and around Market Street! Look up [http://www.downtownroanoke.org/shopping/retail](http://www.downtownroanoke.org/shopping/retail) for a listing.

- **Concerts** at the Roanoke Civic Center. This fall, check out comedian Bill Engvall (September 13), Cirque du Soleil (October 4-26), or the Blue Man Group (November 10-11). Calendar of events available at [http://calendar.roanokeciviccenter.com/iebms/coe/coe_p1_all.aspx?oc=10&cc=coe](http://calendar.roanokeciviccenter.com/iebms/coe/coe_p1_all.aspx?oc=10&cc=coe)

- With Opening Night on September 19 at the Roanoke Civic Center, support the VT Ice Hockey team! [http://vticehockey.pointstreaksites.com/view/vticehockey/schedule-1055](http://vticehockey.pointstreaksites.com/view/vticehockey/schedule-1055)

- **Mill Mountain Zoo** is open 7 days a week from 10am til 4:30pm (grounds close at 5pm). Adult admission is $7.50. While this is not a fancy, big city zoo, it is a fun, quaint zoo on the top of Mill Mountain. [http://www.exemplum.com/mmzoo/SitePages/index.aspx](http://www.exemplum.com/mmzoo/SitePages/index.aspx)

- While you’re up there, make sure you visit the **Mill Mountain Star** - After all, Roanoke is the Star City! The star is lit up until midnight every night and is visible throughout the city below. On a clear day, you can see across the city to the Blue Ridge Mountains. The address is 2198 Mill Mountain Spur. For more trivia about the Star, go to [http://www.playroanoke.com/parks-and-greenways/mill-mountain-park-2/roanoke-star/](http://www.playroanoke.com/parks-and-greenways/mill-mountain-park-2/roanoke-star/)

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