

# VIRGINIA

## STATE BRIEFS

FROM WIRE AND STAFF REPORTS

### Virginian among three killed in Md. attack

ADELPHI, Md. — Three men, including one from Virginia, were killed and a fourth wounded in what police suspect was an attack by a notorious street gang.

Police were searching for five or six assailants that witnesses said shouted "Mara Salvatrucha" before opening fire Friday inside an apartment building in Prince George's County in suburban Washington. The Spanish words are the formal name of the Salvadoran street gang also known as MS-13, which traces its origins to Los Angeles in the 1980s.

The Washington Post reported that investigators believe the gang, which has been building influence in Northern Virginia and Prince George's County, is responsible for the attack. Police said there is no immediate indication that the victims were affiliated with gangs.

According to the Post, Prince George's County police yesterday identified the three men fatally shot as Ruben Dominguez, 19, of Silver Spring, Md.; Jesse Salvador, 20, of Hyattsville, Md.; and Juan Freddy Rosales-Mendes, 29, of Chantilly, Va. A 21-year old Prince George's County man was injured in the attack.

### Monkey escapes from Roanoke zoo

ROANOKE — Zoo staff, animal-control officers and police searched yesterday for a monkey that escaped from the Mill Mountain Zoo.

The monkey, a 20-pound female Japanese macaque, escaped about 8:30 a.m. when the animals were being moved from their holding cells to the exhibit to be fed and cleaned, said David Jobe, education curator at the zoo.

At age 11, the monkey named Oops was the youngest of four so-called snow monkeys at the zoo. She got her name because the other monkeys were not supposed to reproduce.

Jobe said this is Oops' first trip out of the zoo. While the staff had not seen her since yesterday morning, they heard her throughout the day in the forest that surrounds the zoo. Jobe said he believes Oops is staying in the forest so she can be in earshot of her family.

The 4-acre zoo sits on a mountain inside a Roanoke city park. The zoo and the park were closed yesterday, one of the busiest weekends of the year, for the search.

Oops is the first animal to escape the zoo's grounds in its 55-year history, Jobe said.

### Man pleads guilty in officer's death

ALEXANDRIA — A man accused of killing a Pentagon police officer by running him down with a stolen car has pleaded guilty in federal court.

Ossie K. LaRode last week admitted in U.S. District Court to murder and firearms charges in the January 2005 death of officer James Feltis, prosecutors said. Under a plea agreement, LaRode faces up to life in prison when he is sentenced Sept. 19.

Feltis was manning a vehicle-inspection checkpoint outside the Pentagon and first thought he had seen a car make a wrong turn on a one-way street. He was hit as he tried to stop the car. Feltis, 41, never regained consciousness and died just more than a month later.

LaRode also fired shots at other officers and led police on a high-speed chase in the stolen car, prosecutors said.

### Last phase of ferry study to be released

PRINCESS ANNE, Md. — A consulting firm this month will release the findings of a study about the economic impact of a ferry crossing between Crisfield, Md., and Reedville, Va.

The \$70,000 study will be submitted to a two-state ferry review committee that could decide whether the proposed vehicular water transport becomes reality. The committee is expected to release study results after a meeting Thursday with the Pennsylvania firm John C. Martin Associates.

## Vision isn't all black and white, psychologist says

Perceptions shift based on how we feel and what we intend to do

BY JILL SAKAI  
TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITER

In Dennis Proffitt's eyes, seeing is not always believing.

For almost three decades, Proffitt, a psychologist at the University of Virginia, has tackled questions of visual perception. For example, what do our eyes see, and how do our brains turn what our eyes see into meaningful information?

His most recent findings may change the way scientists look at vision.

Traditionally, vision researchers believed that people see the world exactly as it is — a landmark 20 feet away from you will always look 20 feet away.

Not so, says Proffitt. In two papers published last month, he challenges this view by showing that our visual perceptions of the world change based on how we feel and what we intend to do.

"Most of the field assumes that the purpose of perception is to see the world accurately," he said. "But that's not it."

"We see the world in terms of our ways of life, the things that are useful for us to see."

Proffitt explored these issues by examining situations in which what people see does not match reality.

For one set of experiments, Proffitt asked volunteers to stand at the bottom of a hill and estimate how steep it was. People saw hills as steeper when they were exhausted after a long run or were carrying a heavy backpack. Age, physical fitness and mood also influenced their perceptions of the hills.

"If you're not fit, if you're depressed . . . the world is a challenging place to you," Proffitt said. "Distances seem far and hills seem steep."

Visual perception is unconsciously changed by feelings, needs and external environment, he concluded.

For example, a hot, humid Virginia summer day can make biking uphill look unusually daunting, even if it's a hill you bike every day.

Many vision scientists are surprised by Proffitt's results.

"It is quite a departure from the way most researchers in the field of space perception think," said Jack Loomis, a perception expert at University of California at Santa Barbara.

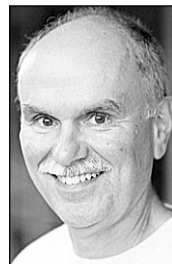
Proffitt is expanding his work to investigate other factors that influence perception. Some of his current studies examine positive social relationships and fear. People accompanied by a good friend see hills as less steep, while people standing on a balcony tend to overestimate distances to the ground, especially if they are afraid of heights.

Others in the field now want to understand how these nonvisual effects change what we see.

Perception researcher Roberta Klatzky of Carnegie Mellon University emphasized the complexity of the brain and said "seeing" is simultaneously controlled by many different brain areas. Multiple levels of visual processing may distort the accuracy of what we think we see.

"An interesting question is where — in all the layered calculations that the brain does — where is it starting to make this mistake?" Klatzky said.

Contact staff writer Jill Sakai at jsakai@timesdispatch.com or (804) 649-6860.



Proffitt



JILL NANCE/MEDIA GENERAL NEWS SERVICE

The congregation of Thomas Road Baptist Church worships in its new sanctuary for the first time. The church, founded by the Rev. Jerry Falwell, is also celebrating its 50th anniversary.

## Thomas Road opens its 6,000-seat church

BY RON BROWN  
MEDIA GENERAL NEWS SERVICE

LYNCHBURG — Early on the opening day of the new Thomas Road Baptist Church, workers were still putting the finishing touches on the \$20 million building.

The Rev. Jonathan Falwell, the church's executive pastor, arrived yesterday at 5:45 a.m. to make sure the church was ready for the first service in the 6,000-seat sanctuary on Liberty University's North Campus.

Some workers, toting ladders, left shortly before 8 a.m., when the church doors officially opened for the first time.

Falwell later said nearly 9,000 people attended the service. Of those, 7,000 were in the sanctuary and 2,000 were in several overflow areas, including the church's large lobby.

"I think we had an incredible opening," he said.

The opening of the new building, which coincides with the 50th anniversary of Thomas Road Baptist Church, marks the completion of a long-held plan by the Rev. Jerry Falwell to have his church, Liberty University and Liberty Christian Academy all on the same campus.

He said yesterday that the occasion is more than the opening of a new building. "We're starting a new church," he said.

That church will come with a fresh set of operating procedures.

Jonathan Falwell will serve as co-pastor with his father, a change that brings new responsibilities, including preaching each Sunday at the 8:30 a.m. service. Jerry Falwell, the church's founder, will continue to preach at the 11 a.m. service.

In 1956, the church started with 35 members. The new goal is to double its current 24,000 membership in the next five years.

About 140 new members joined the church yesterday.

"It looks like we need a bigger building," joked Charles Billingsley, a former church worship leader who returned to help dedicate the new building.

Yesterday's service was a mixture of nostalgia and looking ahead. Charter members from 1956 had a place of honor on the new church's stage.



The Rev. Jerry Falwell said the move signals a new start for the church, which aims to double its 24,000 membership in five years.

Jerry Falwell was given a standing ovation when he and his wife, Macel, came on stage.

Music included church favorites Billingsley and Doug Oldham, who was a mainstay on television broadcasts during the heyday of the "Old Time Gospel Hour." Guy Penrod, a Liberty University graduate and member of the Gaither Vocal Band, sang "The Old Rugged Cross Made the Difference."

Next to the huge sanctuary, the new church features an area called Main Street that includes seating areas, coffee shops and a restaurant that is open seven days a week. That area is designed to be family-friendly and includes a huge indoor playground named Kids Cove, which is built around biblical themes.

The sanctuary itself has movie theater-type seats, two huge high-definition television screens and a series of televisions that give people sitting in the back a clear view of the service.

Yesterday's services were followed by the church's annual Fourth of July celebration, called "Thunder on the Mountain."

The event, which is held each year at the Arthur L. Williams Football Stadium, included games, rides and appearances by U.S. Sen. George Allen, R-Va., and Reps. Virgil H. Goode Jr., R-5th, and Robert W. Goodlatte, R-6th. It ended with fireworks shot off atop Candler's Mountain.

Ron Brown is a staff writer at The News & Advance in Lynchburg.

## Make plans for the Fourth

### Brookneal

#### "Fourth of July Celebration at Red Hill"

The Red Hill Plantation at the Patrick Henry National Memorial will feature fireworks, live music from After Midnight, historical re-enactments, food, children's games, site tours, artists, vendors and special appearances from surprise guests. Admission rates for the Fourth of July celebration are \$10 per automobile carrying up to 8 passengers; \$3 per additional passenger. No alcoholic beverages or fireworks permitted. Runs 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. For more info, call (434) 376-2044 or visit [www.redhill.org/calendar.html](http://www.redhill.org/calendar.html).

### Chesterfield

#### "Comcast Fourth of July Celebration"

at Chesterfield County Fairgrounds. Gates open at 5 p.m. Admission is free. Alcohol, glass bottles, pets and personal fireworks will not be permitted. Blankets or lawn chairs are recommended. For details, call 748-1132.

### Chincoteague

#### "Old Fashioned Fireworks"

Today. The town of Chincoteague will host its 20th-annual Fourth of July fireworks display at the carnival fairgrounds on South Main Street on Chincoteague Island. Starts at 10 p.m.; free and open to the public. For details, call (757) 336-6161.

### Colonial Heights

#### "City of Colonial Heights Fourth of July Celebration"

at Southpark Mall. The events start at 6:30 p.m. and will take place on the Temple Avenue side of the mall; games, rides, music by Jubeus and concessions followed by 9:30 fireworks. For details, call 520-9390 or visit [www.colonial-heights.com](http://www.colonial-heights.com).

### Dogwood Dell

#### "Fourth of July Celebration"

Radio Disney will host 90 minutes of family fun that includes interactive games and a live concert from RD Frequency, followed by a free concert by Bak' N Da Day (5:30 p.m.) Lawrence Robinson Carillon concert (7 p.m.) and the Richmond Concert Band (7:30 p.m.). Fireworks will conclude the event's entertainment. Rain date is set for Wednesday. Free shuttles to Byrd Park are available at the University of Richmond Stadium lot. For details, call 646-1437.

### Doswell

#### "Paramount's Kings Dominion"

Today and tomorrow. Three days of fireworks, included in general admission to park. For details, call 876-5561.

### Fort Lee

#### "Fourth at the Fort"

The event will feature activities for kids, arts and crafts, a patriotic concert by the Fort Lee Army band and a fireworks show. Runs 5-10:30 p.m. For details, call 765-3053.

### Henrico

#### "Henrico Independence Day Celebration"

at Richmond International Raceway. Gates open at 6:30 a.m.; admission: \$10 per car (before Tuesday); \$20 at the gate; admission without vehicle is \$5. Food and beverages available. No coolers or tailgating. Bring your lawn chairs. Registration for the 8 a.m. Tuckahoe Jaycees Firecracker 5K Run and 1 Mile Fun Run around Richmond Raceway Complex and inside Richmond International Raceway starts at 6:30 a.m. Proceeds benefit Camp Virginia Jaycee and Juvenile

## Spectacle

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on Independence Day, the International Space Station will join the light show along the East Coast.

You won't need a telescope to see the space station as it passes by slowly. It will be about as

### ELSEWHERE

**SHUTTLE GROUNDED:** Weather delays launch of Discovery for a second day. Page A3.

bright as Jupiter appeared earlier in the evening. The station does not blink as do airplanes or twinkle like a star.

While in sight of Virginia, the space station will pass almost directly over Valley Forge and Philadelphia as it heads east.

Weather permitting, Virginians should be able to see the station pass from the north to the east for about two minutes beginning tomorrow at 9:39 p.m.

Initially, it looked as if stargazers might have been able to see NASA's space shuttle Dis-

covery attached to the space station tomorrow night if the Saturday launch took place. Because the launch was delayed by stormy weather Saturday and yesterday, officials said they will try again tomorrow.

Discovery is expected to dock at the space station on the third day of its mission, which would be Thursday at the earliest.

Sightings of the space station and shuttle together are possible later in the week, according to NASA's Web site, <http://spaceflight.nasa.gov/realdata/sightings/index.html>. One suggested time to watch from the Richmond area is Friday at 9:12 p.m., when the station and shuttle may be visible for about three minutes, moving from the west to the southeast.

George Spagna, director of Randolph-Macon College's Keeble Observatory, said yesterday that visibility during the narrow window of time will depend on the weather and how cloudy and hazy it is.

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The Associated Press contributed to this report.

### Orange

#### "Picnic in the Park" Saturday

Food, patriotic music and fireworks will take place at Booster Park off state Route 20 in Orange behind the Orange Airport. Runs 4:30-10 p.m. Admission is \$5 per car. For details, call (540) 672-1794.

### Richmond

#### "Richmond Braves" Diamond Fireworks Extravaganza"

Today and tomorrow. Richmond Braves annual Fourth of July Fireworks Extravaganza will take place after the Braves play the Ottawa Lynx. Fireworks scheduled both nights. Box seats sold out; limited general admission tickets available for \$11, seniors (60 and older) and kids (12 and younger) \$8. For details, call 262-8100.

### Syria

#### "Fourth of July at Graves Mountain Lodge"

Starts at 9 p.m.; admission is free. Donations are requested for the Madison County Volunteer Fire and Rescue Squads. For reservations, call (540) 923-4231 or visit [www.gravesmountain.com](http://www.gravesmountain.com).

### Williamsburg

#### "Busch Gardens" Fireworks Extravaganza"

Today and tomorrow. Seats available the Black Forest Picnic Area behind Das Festhaus for an all-you-can-eat buffet beginning at 8 p.m. Reservations are required and space is limited. Additional charge applies for the picnic. The costs for viewing the park's fireworks are included in the price of park admission tickets. Starts at 9:15 p.m. Tickets are \$51.95 for ages 7 and older, \$44.95 kids ages 3 to 6. Children 2 and younger are admitted free. For details, call (800) 343-7946.

### "Colonial Williamsburg Independence Day"

A reading of the Declaration of Independence will precede a performance from the Fifes and Drums in the evening as a prelude to fireworks in the style of those popular at the time colonialism. A Governor's Palace Picnic of food, fireworks and entertainment will help salute the 13 original colonies. Lawn chairs and picnic blankets are welcome. Adult picnics can be reserved for \$45. Child picnics are \$25. For details or reservations, call (800) 447-8679.

### Wintergreen

#### "Fourth of July Jubilee"

Today and tomorrow. Events at Wintergreen will begin with campfire storytelling at 8 p.m. tomorrow. The event will also include an arts and crafts show, courtyard music, family BBQ and fireworks. Johnny White and the Elite Band will perform Saturday. The Worr will perform Tuesday. Both concerts are followed by fireworks from 6:30-9:30 p.m. For a complete schedule of events, visit [www.wintergreenresort.com](http://www.wintergreenresort.com). For details and reservations, call (434) 325-8180.