



ROGER CHESLEY  
OPINION

## SO, THE AP KNOWS 2012'S WINNERS? CARE TO SHARE ANY STOCK PICKS?

FEW Virginians believe that anyone besides George Allen and Tim Kaine will be the major-party candidates in the 2012 U.S. Senate race.

So, the fact that state media organizations invited just the presumptive Republican and Democratic nominees to a Dec. 7 debate should be fine. Right?

Wrong – on so many levels.

The Virginia Capitol Correspondents Association and Virginia Associated Press Managing Editors, with an assist from The Associated Press, are now in the unenviable position of making news instead of reporting it.

They have only themselves to blame.

Officials then compounded the problem by saying little about the controversy. When first questioned by The Pilot's Bill Bartel, they issued a short statement saying they needed to have "criteria" for the debate – which, in effect, limited the participants.

You heard that right: Journalists, who go around asking prying questions of public and private figures all the time, clammed up when the shoe was on the other foot.

Not very smart, colleagues.

(Full disclosure: The Pilot is a member of The AP and correspondents group but was not involved in the plans.)

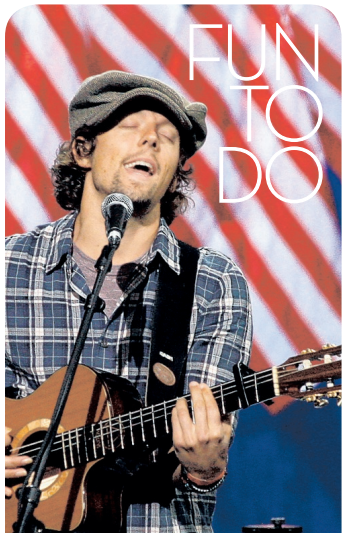
The organizations sponsoring the debate should rethink their decision.

For the past decade, AP Day has been held each December at the state Capitol "to provide a preview of issues coming up in the General Assembly session in January," Dorothy Abernathy, AP bureau chief for Virginia and West Virginia, told me by email Thursday. "We cover political issues, as well, but the timing is dictated by the legislative calendar."

The attendees each year are reporters and editors, panelists, speakers and their guests. Similar forums among candidates have been sponsored in the past.

Organizers hope the speakers make news, but they must know that most voters won't care a lick about the Decem-

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### Portsmouth GET READY TO ROCK

Pop rocker **Jason Mraz**, above, with special guest Colbie Caillat, performs at 7:30 tonight at nTelos Wireless Pavilion, 901 Crawford St., Portsmouth. \$35.75 to \$43.75. (800) 745-3000.

### Virginia Beach PREPARE TO LAUGH

Comedian and Emmy-nominated actor Rob Schneider performs at 8 and 10:30 tonight and at 7 p.m. Sunday at The Virginia Beach Funny Bone Comedy Club & Restaurant. \$27. (757) 213-5555.

### Hampton A NIGHT OF DANCE

Elisa Monte Dance takes the stage at 8 tonight and 2:30 p.m. Sunday at The American Theatre. \$30 to \$35. (757) 722-2787.

# hampton roads

THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT | PILOTONLINE.COM | SATURDAY | 09.24.11

## CHESAPEAKE BAY

# NOT A SIGN OF PLUME



DAVID B. HOLLINGSWORTH | THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

## TRANSPORTATION NEWS

# Busy Norfolk intersection to get \$113 million redesign

By Harry Minium  
The Virginian-Pilot

### NORFOLK

The traffic-clogged choke point where Military Highway, Princess Anne Road and Northampton Boulevard collide will soon get a \$113 million makeover thanks to a recent infusion of state money.

The area, called the Lansdale traffic intersection, will be rebuilt and expanded, with much of Military Highway going from four to eight lanes.

More than 50,000 cars and trucks a day traverse Military Highway at Lansdale. On weekends, traffic is generally backed up several light cycles with shoppers trying to get to retail outlets just south of the intersection around Janaf Shopping Yard and The Gallery at Military Circle.

The project will expand Military Highway from four lanes to eight south from Lansdale to Lowery Road near Janaf. It will be expanded from

### daily traffic

# 50,000+

More than 50,000 vehicles a day cross Military Highway where Northampton Boulevard and Princess Anne Road meet.

For a **map of the intersection**, and areas of Military Highway to be rebuilt and widened, see the Back Page.

four lanes to six north of Lansdale to Robin Hood Road at the entrance to the Norfolk Commerce Park.

Designing the project will take at least two years, with two to three years of construction to follow.

Mayor Paul Fraim has called Lansdale an "intersection that has failed

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# Obama to nominate Pilot's publisher for housing agency post

The president looks to Maurice Jones to fill the deputy secretary role at HUD

By Josh Brown  
The Virginian-Pilot

President Barack Obama intends to nominate Maurice Jones, the publisher of The Virginian-Pilot, as deputy secretary for the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the White House announced Friday.

Jones, 47, has been publisher of The Pilot since

April 2008.

He has served as commissioner of the Virginia Department of Social Services and deputy chief of staff to then-Gov. Mark Warner. At the U.S. Treasury Department, Jones was special assistant to the general counsel. While at the Treasury, he also served as legal counsel to

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## inside OPTIMA TO HALT PROGRAM

With failing finances and an unsure future, Optima drops its Medicare program.

PAGE 2

## REUNIONS

Find out when and where your graduating class is gathering.

PAGE 2

## SCIENTISTS EXPECTED MUDDY WATERS FROM POWERFUL STORMS

By Scott Harper  
The Virginian-Pilot

THERE WERE NO DEAD bodies, no tree limbs, no brown mud washing toward the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay on Friday, and that was somewhat surprising.

The massive sediment plume flowing south down the Bay from the flooded Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania and New York was a no-show, and scientists now suspect the forecasted wall of storm debris may not hit Virginia.

"I don't think it'll impact Virginia much at all, that's my gut reaction right now," said Michael Ford, ecosystem science manager for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Chesapeake Bay Office, based in Maryland.

Ford made his comments Thursday, a week after he and other scientists predicted the brown curtain of mud, debris and, yes, even carcasses, appeared headed down the Bay on its

See SEDIMENT PLUME, PAGE 3

Tosca Ballerini, above left, an ODU researcher, and graduate student Manju Nagarajan pull water samples from the Chesapeake Bay on Friday. The samples, taken at different depths, will be tested to determine the ecological damage to the Bay from recent storms and a sediment plume.

### online

To see a video, visit PilotOnline.com.



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\$750,000



LES ORE CONSTRUCTION  
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SASSER CONSTRUCTION  
\$549,900



ABT CUSTOM HOMES  
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## Be the first to see and own a Fall 2011 Homearama Home

In October, The Riverfront at Harbour View in Suffolk will open the doors of nine exquisite custom homes for the Tidewater Builder Association's Fall Homearama. Three of the homes have sold already so only six lucky families still have the chance to purchase these designer homes before the show opens. Schedule your tour today!

the-riverfront.com  
638-9100

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The Riverfront  
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## CURRITUCK CO. HAS BEST JOBLESS RATE IN STATE

RALEIGH, N.C. | Currituck County had the lowest August unemployment rate in North Carolina at 4.5 percent, while the state rate rose to 10.4 percent.

Currituck is the only county in the state with a rate below 5 percent, falling from the July rate of 5.2 percent, according to a release from the North Carolina Employment Security Commission.

Dare County's rate stayed at 7.5 percent from July to August. Pasquotank and Perquimans remained in double figures, rising slightly

to 10.5 and 10.4 respectively. Camden County's unemployment rate rose to 8.4 in August from 8.1 in July.

The U.S. August rate was at 9.1 percent.

Over the past year, employment in the business and professional services increased by 15.5 percent, followed by hospitality and leisure with an 11.3 percent increase, according to statistics compiled by the commission.

Currituck County's Outer Banks depends heavily on the tourism industry and has historically maintained low unemployment rates during summer months.

Government lost 14.7 percent of its jobs in the past year after years of rising.

— Jeff Hampton, *The Pilot*

## Chesapeake BRIDGE CLOSURES TO CONTINUE

The Gilmerton Bridge will continue to close to vehicular traffic overnights Sunday through Thursday from 8 p.m. to 5 a.m., according to a Virginia Department of Transportation released.

Drivers are encouraged to use the Downtown Tunnel on I-264 as an alternative route. The Gilmerton Bridge will reopen at 5 a.m.

Tower construction activities are being performed on the bridge.

Maritime traffic won't be affected by the bridge closures.

In addition, the High-Rise Bridge closure scheduled for three hours Sunday morning has been canceled because of weather.

The bridge was supposed to close at 6 a.m. for ongoing maintenance.

— Jennifer Jiggetts, *The Pilot*

## Norfolk DIRECTOR OF D.C. MUSEUM TO SPEAK

The director of The Phillips Collection in Washington will speak at 11 a.m. Wednesday at the Chrysler Museum of Art.

Dorothy Kosinski will discuss how her museum's collection evolved by 1921 into the nation's first museum of modern art.

Her free lecture in Kaufman Theatre is hosted by the Norfolk Society of Arts; a coffee reception precedes it at 10:30 a.m.

The museum is at 245 W. Olney Road, Norfolk. For more information about the society, call (757) 853-0221.

— Teresa Annas, *The Pilot*

## Norfolk CNN'S 'LATINO' PROGRAM INCLUDES CITY BOXING COACH

A boxing coach with the Norfolk Recreation, Parks and Open Space's Team Norfolk Boxing Club will be featured on a CNN program Sunday night, according to a city news release.

Gloria Peek will be seen on CNN's "Latino in America 2: In Her Corner" at 8 p.m. The show will follow a female Latino boxer training to reach the Olympics.

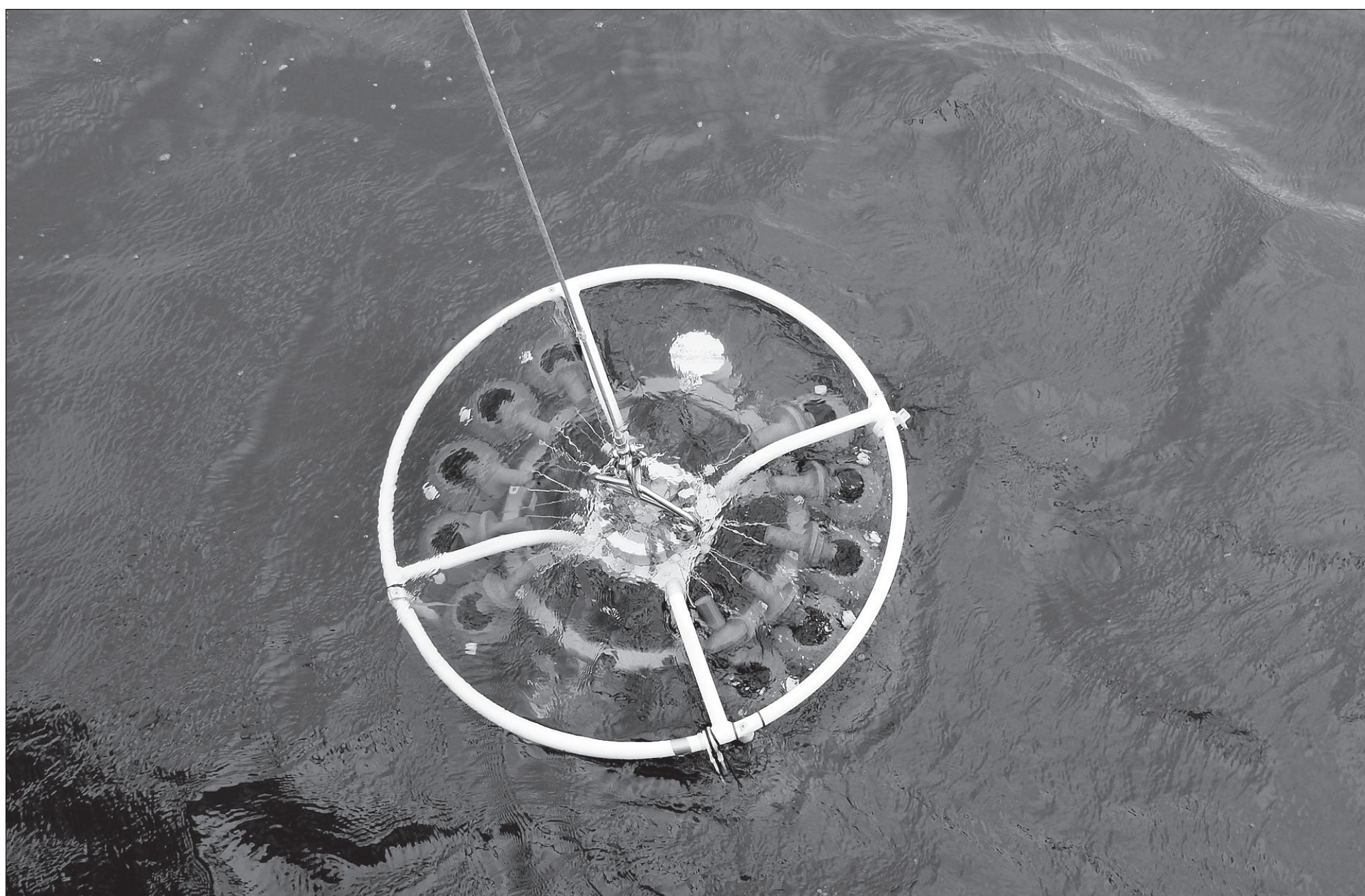
Peek was interviewed because of her 30-year-plus coaching career in the sport. She has been selected to head the male and female boxing teams for the 2011 Pan-American Games next month in Guadalajara, Mexico.

— Jennifer Jiggetts, *The Pilot*



It's kind of odd, to be honest. This was not expected."

John Donat, director of the water quality lab at Old Dominion University



DAVID B. HOLLINGSWORTH PHOTOS | THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

## SEDIMENT PLUME

# ODU TEAM TAKES SAMPLES ALONG MOUTH OF BAY

Continued from Page 1

way out to the Atlantic Ocean. The material stemmed from Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee, which swelled the mighty Susquehanna — the Bay's biggest source of freshwater — to near-historic levels.

Ford and others now are seeing the plume spread out near the Maryland-Virginia border, with the mud and sediments slowing down and settling to the bottom.

John Donat, director of the water quality lab at Old Dominion University, said research crews were out in the Virginia portion of the Bay earlier this week and "didn't see any evidence of the plume."

"It's kind of odd, to be honest," Donat said Thursday. "This was not expected."

Another research team from ODU took water samples Friday on a line crossing near the mouth of the Bay, from Kiptopeke State Park on the Eastern Shore to just off the Chesapeake Bay-Bridge Tunnel in Virginia Beach.

The water was its usual green, with no hint of brown, though scientists did notice that freshwater from the storms had made conditions slightly less salty.

"It's pretty clear out there, not bad at all," said Ryan Morse, a water investigator for the Hampton Roads Sanitation District, who was helping to analyze samples during the ODU research cruise Friday.

"I don't think we'll get the big loads of sediment from the

plume," Morse added, "but we'll get a lot of freshwater, probably some nutrients too."

Nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus, from fertilizers, storm drains, farms and animal waste, wash off the land and cause algae blooms and dead zones in the Bay. Excessive nutrients are the biggest pollution problem facing the Bay, and governments are spending hundreds of millions of dollars to combat the trend.

Researchers have fanned out across the Bay in the aftermath of the storms and the plume, trying to determine the ecological damage. Samples will undergo chemical tests in labs, a process that can take weeks.

Scientists fear the muddy runoff will choke oyster beds and key underwater grasses under a thick blanket of dirt. Luckily, the storms arrived late enough to not strike when fish and shellfish are spawning, and after most sea grasses had bloomed.

The research cruise Friday was one of many scientists will take in the months ahead, a grueling exercise of lowering collection devices into a roiling Bay and then carefully retrieving water samples at differing depths.

Two graduate students aboard the Fay Slover, an ODU research vessel, got seasick Friday from churning waves stirred up by thunderstorms that blew across the Bay. Still, they painstakingly separated the samples, freezing some in liquid nitrogen or in refrigerators so they could later study



Above: A water collection device is lowered into the mouth of the Bay Friday from the Fay Slover, an ODU research vessel. Left: Becca Ostman, a relief captain and engineer on the Slover, and water investigator Ryan Morse monitor the device.



Ivy Ozmon, a graduate student at Old Dominion University, transfers a water sample. The ODU crew spent nearly nine hours on the water Friday, taking samples from 12 sites.

their molecular components and algae growth.

"It's hard work, but it's what we have to do if we want to understand the problem and find solutions," said Ivy Ozmon, a graduate student at ODU.

They stopped at 12 sites on an arc near the mouth of the Bay, spending almost nine hours on the water. And they will come back again before sharing the results with colleagues in Virginia and Maryland and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, all trying to figure out the complex puzzle that is the Chesapeake Bay under extreme stress.

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