

VIRGINIA BEACH: COME ON DOWN

New York Times’ list of places to visit leaves city ‘ecstatic’

By Stacy Parker
Staff writer

VIRGINIA BEACH — This year kicked off with a bang for Virginia Beach with the city landing on a prestigious worldwide travel list. Virginia Beach made The New York Times’ “52 Places to Go in 2026.” The 2026 catalog of destinations includes a descrip-

tion of why each place is worth visiting. Freelance travel writer Will Fleeson wrote about Virginia Beach, leading with the city’s plans to host the Super Girl Festival, an all-female action sports event, on Labor Day weekend. Fleeson also mentions the ViBe Creative District, the surf lagoon at Atlantic Park as well as the recent reopening of the Francis Land House, a plantation home of the 1800s. The listing also features a photograph of Virginia Beach surfer Saydee Stiles,

13, carving up a wave near First Street, taken by local surf photographer Ed Obermeyer in October. He provided dozens of photographs of girls surfing to a New York Times editor, who requested them, he said. Stiles is wearing a red and blue wetsuit in the picture. She’s been a competitive surfer since age 4 and was thrilled to see her image published with the list. “It makes me feel proud of myself,” Stiles said. “My

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Virginia Beach surfer Saydee Stiles, 13, carves up a wave near First Street. This photo was featured in The New York Times. Stiles has been surfing since she was 4. “It makes me feel proud of myself,” she said. **ED OBERMEYER**

The Virginian-Pilot

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“It’s like fifth graders bullying the small guy in the corner.”
— Henrik Bager, Danish soldier who served in Iraq and Afghanistan



Thousands of Danes pack a plaza Saturday before marching to the U.S. Embassy in Copenhagen to protest President Donald Trump’s statements about buying or taking over Greenland. **HILARY SWIFT/THE NEW YORK TIMES PHOTOS**

Danish distress

Denmark feels betrayed, bewildered by Trump amid Greenland threats

By Elisabeth Bumiller
The New York Times

Henrik Bager, a Danish soldier who served with Americans in Iraq and Afghanistan, said President Donald Trump’s vow to get Greenland from Denmark and his insults about Denmark’s military were “a punch to the gut.” Rasmus Jarlov, a voluble center-right member of the Danish parliament and the chair of its Defense Committee, said “we know full well that the Americans can destroy

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Trump’s tariff threats for opposing U.S. control of Greenland anger European countries. **Page 6**

us,” but should Trump, who has not ruled out military force, attack a fellow NATO ally, “of course we will fight back.” In the next breath, Jarlov said it was “absolutely so weird to be uttering something like that.”

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EDUCATION

Governor overhauls university leadership

Spanberger quickly transforms boards at UVA, GMU, VMI

By Stephanie Saul
The New York Times

Gov. Abigail Spanberger lost no time Saturday in altering the tenor of the board that controls the University of Virginia, appointing 10 new members to the 17-member body within hours of being inaugurated. She also acted to revamp the boards of two other state schools. The day before, she had asked five UVA board members, all appointees of Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin, to step aside. The swift change in university leadership followed more than a year of partisan acrimony over the university’s direction. Conservative members of the school’s board, in alliance with the Trump administration, had moved successfully last summer to remove James E. Ryan from the university presidency, largely because of his support for diversity initiatives. More recently, the Youngkin-appointed board prompted strong objections from the university’s faculty by signing an agreement with the Trump administration to eliminate diversity programs, which the government argued were illegally discriminatory, and to follow the administration’s prescriptions for university admissions. Over the objections of Spanberger, who had asked for a delay until she took office, the board rushed to replace Ryan,



Spanberger

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On standby

Pentagon orders about 1,500 active-duty soldiers to be ready for possible deployment to Minnesota. **Nation & World, Page 6**

Indiana intel

ODU coach Ricky Rahne shares his thoughts on the Hoosiers, who beat the Monarchs in the season opener. **Sports**

Inside Business

The Hampton Roads Business Journal, complimentary for 7-day subscribers, is now included in Monday’s editions.

MOSTLY SUNNY

High: 50 Low: 25

Details on the back of news



Of premium concern: Soaring premiums



Mark Patrick’s time and helped him find a better homeowner’s insurance rate for his Virginia Beach home. **STEPHEN M. KATZ/THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT**

Homeowners finding ways to grapple with rising insurance rates

By Sandra J. Pennecke
Staff writer

Mark Patrick has seen the cost of his homeowner’s insurance fluctuate — and not in a good way. In the past six years, he has changed insurers three times. Before his last change, his premium had increased by

roughly 40% though he hadn’t filed a single claim. And he’s not alone. Hampton Roads homeowners faced premium increases averaging 33%, or \$835 per year, from 2021 to ’24, according to the Consumer Federation of America. That reflects an average increase from \$2,509 to \$3,344 in those three years. The nonprofit consumer advocacy organization found premiums increased in 95% of U.S. ZIP codes because of rising building costs, an

increase in extreme weather events and climate change risk factors, and weak regulatory oversight. The Virginian-Pilot and Daily Press asked readers to share their experiences. Patrick lives in a three-story townhome-style condominium in Virginia Beach’s North End and said he proactively attempts to mitigate insurance increases. With the help of a broker, he shops

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