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SUNDAY

The Virginian-Pilot

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Volcanoes? Here? Virginia's strange geological history. **magazine**

i Pilot investigation

DONOR BEWARE

YOUR MONEY MIGHT NOT GO WHERE YOU THINK.

When nonprofits use for-profit fundraising companies, often only a small fraction of your gift ends up at the charity. The fundraiser keeps the rest.



If you donate \$1 through a professional fundraiser to a local group, on average, about 20 cents reaches the charity.



VIRGINIAN-PILOT STAFF ILLUSTRATION

By CAROLYN SHAPIRO and PHILIP WALZER | *The Virginian-Pilot*

THE ANSWER EXASPERATED the man on the phone. He had made a donation to Vietnam Veterans of Virginia and wanted to know how much went to the charity. // About a dime of every dollar, Charles Montgomery Jr., the president of the Virginia Beach-based group, told him. The remaining 90 cents paid the fundraising company that called to solicit the donation. // "It doesn't sound like much," Montgomery said, "but without their help, we wouldn't have anything."

Vietnam Veterans of Virginia supports veterans hospitals, homeless veterans and scholarships for veterans' children and grandchildren. For 13 years, it has relied on Xentel Inc., based in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., to do its fundraising. Locally based charities typically do little better than Vietnam Veterans, according to an analysis by *The Virginian-Pilot* of state records filed by professional fundraisers between January 2008 and June 2011.

The nonprofits – as large as Operation Smile and as small as the Suffolk Fraternal Order of Police #41 – collected \$15 million, or about 20 percent, of \$75.3 million in donations. The remainder went to the fundraisers, also known as professional solicitors.

Fundraising experts have no hard rule for how much

See DONOR BEWARE, PAGE 10

how it works

Charities sometimes hire professional fundraisers – often telemarketers – to seek out and collect donations. The two sides agree to a contract that specifies the breakdown, with the fundraiser often getting a larger share.

in Hampton Roads

An analysis of state records filed by professional fundraisers between January 2008 and June 2011 shows that locally based nonprofits collected \$15 million of \$75.3 million in donations. The remainder went to the fundraisers.

give directly

How can you be sure your entire donation will make it to the charity? Officials say mail it or bring it to them. To check how much of your donation the fundraiser will keep, call the Office of Consumer Affairs at (800) 552-9963.

part 1 of 2 Today: The business of fundraising for nonprofits. Tomorrow: For-profit fundraising and police charities.

online Search a database of charities to see how much they collected using professional fundraisers, at PilotOnline.com.

“I’m still strong and it seems like I’m doing all right, but I don’t want to overstay my time.” *Pat Robertson*

On CBN’s 50th, Robertson sees smaller political role



ROSS TAYLOR | THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

Pat Robertson speaks at the 50th anniversary of the Christian Broadcasting Network's first television broadcast on Saturday, at Regent University in Virginia Beach.

By Brock Vergakis | *The Associated Press*

PAT ROBERTSON took a tiny television station in Portsmouth and turned it into a global network that helped him launch a presidential bid and become one of the nation's most influential conservative Christians. But as the televangelist's network turned 50 on Saturday, he said he's getting out of the endorsement game.

"I've personally backed off from direct political involvement," Robertson said in a telephone interview. "I've been there, done that. The truth of the matter is, politics is not going to change our world. It's really not going to make that much of a difference."

See CBN, PAGE 8

\$20 million drug rings

Once, it was rare for authorities to break cases this big. Not anymore.

By Tim McGlone
The Virginian-Pilot

by the numbers

NORFOLK

Gary Beard liked to drive a Maserati. He wore tens of thousands of dollars of gold and diamond jewelry. He once plunked down \$17,000 cash for a bracelet.

But for three of the past five years, Beard reported no income on his tax returns and just under \$50,000 for the other two years combined.

Authorities say those are sure signs of a lucrative career in narcotics trafficking. The Beard organization, according to court records and federal agents, was worth \$20 million wholesale. The street value of the drugs the ring sold could be quadruple that.

Agents also say the case is

See DRUG RINGS, PAGE 8

Authorities say that in the past decade they have uprooted nine drug rings in the region worth at least \$20 million and one worth nearly \$10 million. They credit more cooperation among agencies for the increase in major cases.

wow!

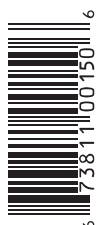
Much more than castles. Take in the sand sculptures carved at the Oceanfront.

Hampton Roads

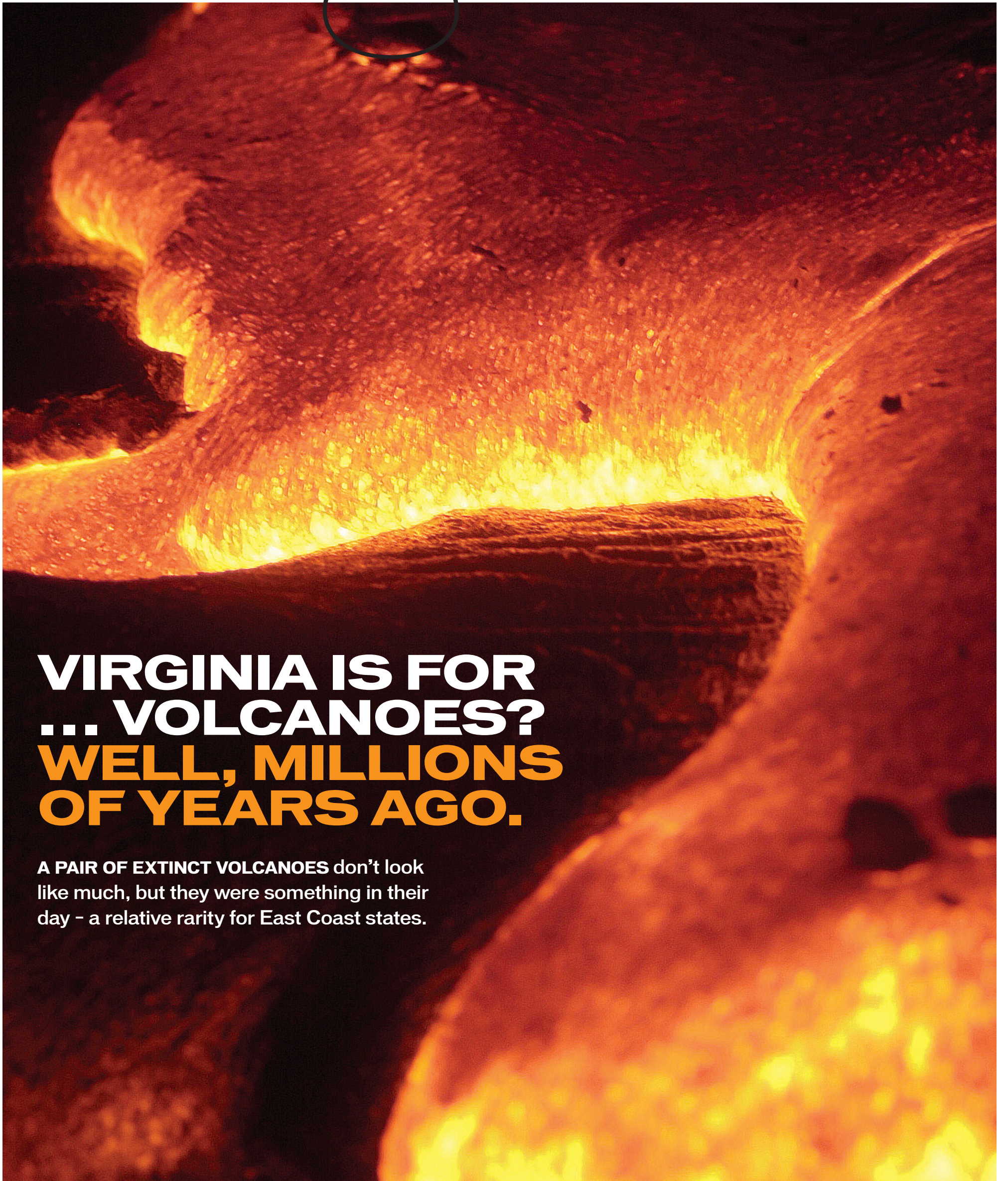


variably cloudy

High: lower 60s.
Low: upper 40s.
Details on the back page of Sports



m a g a z i n e



LAVA FLOWS FROM THE KILAUEA VOLCANO IN HAWAII. RONEN ZILBERMAN | ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE PHOTO

VIRGINIA IS FOR ... VOLCANOES? WELL, MILLIONS OF YEARS AGO.

A PAIR OF EXTINCT VOLCANOES don't look like much, but they were something in their day - a relative rarity for East Coast states.

By Scott Harper
The Virginian-Pilot

VIRGINIA IS KNOWN for many things, from its beaches to its mountains, its farms and universities.

But volcanoes?

True enough, Virginia has a quirky if still unexplained history with volcanic activity, one of the few East Coast states that can make that claim.

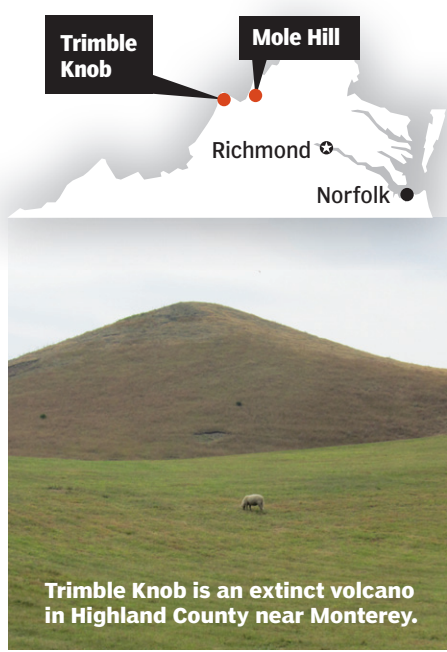
While many small fractures and cracks remain as evidence that lava once flowed freely millions of years ago, two ancient and prominent examples still can be seen today: Trimble Knob, in Highland County near the West Virginia line, and Mole Hill, near Harrisonburg.

They could not look any more different. Trimble Knob is small, stubby and nearly treeless; Mole Hill is taller, sprawling and covered by thick bramble and forest.

Mennonite farms, including horse-drawn carriages on country roads, lie at the foot of Mole Hill. Sheep graze atop Trimble Knob.

Both land features are what geologists call plugs,

See VOLCANOES, PAGE 7



Trimble Knob is an extinct volcano in Highland County near Monterey.

JANE HARPER, FOR THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

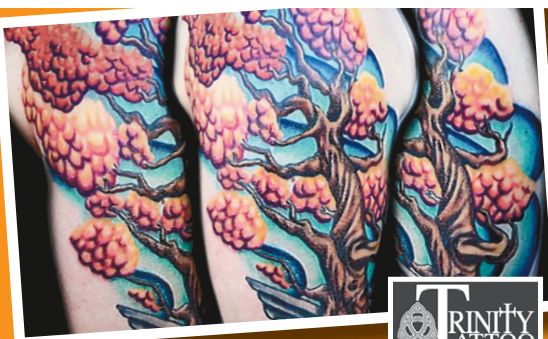
travel
NEW ENGLAND'S
GENERAL STORES:
UNIQUE PAGE 4

books
OLD DOMINION'S
34TH LITERARY
FESTIVAL PAGE 6

back by popular demand ...

The New York Times best-seller list returns today. We had eliminated it a few weeks ago for space reasons, but readers told us they missed it. So you'll find that it's back and can usually be found on the back page of this section. Thanks for keeping us on our toes.

- Jim Haag, features editor



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FROM THE COVER

THESE VOLCANOES ARE MYSTERIES



JANE HARPER PHOTOS, FOR THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

Volcanic rocks blasted from the Earth some 40 million or so years ago can still be seen at the summit of Trimble Knob, an extinct volcano in Highland County.

Continued from Page 1

the slowly eroding remnants of extinct volcanoes. Here, black basalt rocks indicating their fiery origins can be found amid a sea of green sedimentary stones that otherwise dominate the Shenandoah Valley landscape.

Both are relatively young volcanoes, active between 38 million and 48 million years ago, making them the babies in any state east of the Mississippi River. And both are held by private landowners, which limits their access and keeps most tourists away.

Gerald Knicey in May bought a big chunk of Mole Hill, including access to the woody summit, and hopes to soon develop trails for mountain bikers and hikers. Knicey also owns Mole Hill Bikes, a cycling shop in the town of Dayton, within earshot of the dead volcano.

"I grew up here and have always felt a really strong connection to Mole Hill," he said recently at his office. "There's a spirituality about the place, a uniqueness. It's hard to explain."

Little scientific study of the two volcanoes has been done, though that is changing.

Elizabeth Johnson, a geology professor at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, has taken a keen interest in Mole Hill, which she can almost see from her campus office. She regularly shuttles her students there for field trips and research projects and has a friendly rapport with Knicey.

This summer, for example, several JMU students completed projects aimed at better understanding what lies beneath the ancient volcanoes. Using rock samples and mathematical models, the students determined the depths of the Earth's mantle below Mole Hill and how hot it must be down there.

The answers, they estimate, are 24.2 miles deep and 2,192 degrees Fahrenheit. Generally speaking, Johnson said, those numbers gradually get smaller toward the coast.

"It's the first time we've started to look closely at this site," Johnson said recently in her lab, where she was showing off thin slices of volcanic rock under a microscope while wearing a JMU Geology T-shirt. "I'd love to spend more time working on this. It's new, and the kids love to get out and see it first-hand."

While Johnson has visited Trimble Knob, she has not done serious field work there but definitely wants to, noting how it is younger than Mole Hill by about 13 million years.

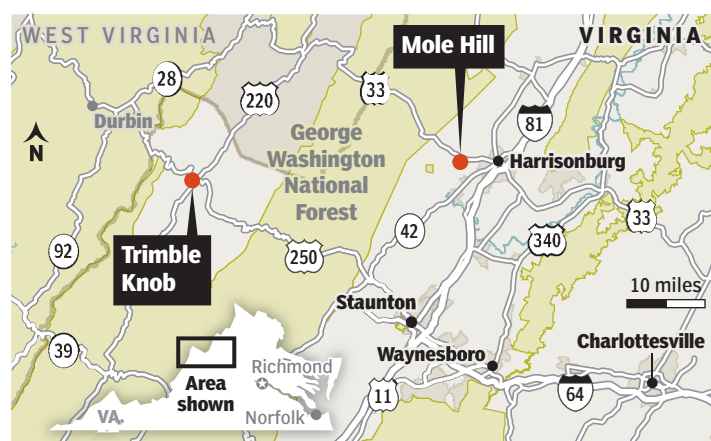
The recent earthquake that shook much of the East Coast also has sparked new interest in seismic activity and volca-



Mole Hill is surrounded by farms, many owned by Mennonite families, on the outskirts of Harrisonburg. The summit, about 1,900 feet above sea level, is covered by thick scrub and forest.

VIRGINIA VOLCANOES

There are two ancient, extinct volcanoes that continue to elicit scientific debate – one at Trimble Knob, near Monterey, the other at Mole Hill, near Harrisonburg.



SOURCES: ESRI, Tele Atlas

THE VIRGINIAN-PILOT

noes. Asked if the two state volcanoes could somehow become active again and erupt, Johnson paused.

"Well, they are extinct, and there's no reason to think there's magma being created there. So I'd say there's probably no effect to worry about. But stranger things have happened."

One of the mysteries of Mole Hill and Trimble Knob is what caused volcanic eruptions there. Scientists are simply not sure.

Volcanoes typically go off because of the constant rubbing and shifting and internal pressures of tectonic plates within the Earth. When a big slippage occurs in an active area, magma can be released and volcanoes often burst forth.

But 50 million years ago was not a time of major shifting and seismic activity in Virginia, leaving scientists to wonder what triggered the events in the Shenandoah Valley.

Theories abound, but the most commonly held one was developed by the U.S. Geological Survey in a landmark 1993 study. It speculates that a combination of factors, including a regional fracturing event in

the valley, might have done the trick, creating a big enough crack to allow magma to flow upward toward the surface.

Applying this theory, scientists do not think the eruptions in Highland and Rockingham counties carried on too long in geologic time, perhaps a few millions years, according to a 2006 paper by the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy.

"It's a hot-spot type of volcano," said Jim Beard, a geologist and the curator of earth sciences at the Virginia Museum of Natural History in Martinsville, who has written about Mole Hill. "No one's really sure why they erupted, or why they stopped."

The museum does not maintain an exhibit on Virginia's volcanoes, Beard said, though it once produced a traveling exhibit that eventually found a home at Virginia Tech. Beard noted that a vast expanse of molten rock, called the Petersburg pluton, can be found within the James River. This material did not erupt, however; it is liquid rock that hardened beneath the Earth's surface, affecting parts of six counties and stretching more than 60 miles.

Most residents near Trimble Knob and Mole Hill simply shrug when asked if they know they are living next to a volcano.

"It doesn't bother me," said Doris Folks, deputy clerk of the court in Highland County, whose office is just blocks from Trimble Knob. Locals, she said, call it "Volcano Hill," adding that she has never been to the top in her life.

"Visitors will ask about that funny-looking bump, and I'll tell them it's a volcano," said Lisa Jamison, manager of the Highland Inn in Monterey, where Trimble Knob can nearly be seen from the front porch. "But they think you're lying to them."

Students at the Monterey elementary school visit the site for science class, Jamison said, but the volcano is not mentioned in any walking tours in town or in tourist pamphlets.

Pam Lambert lives at the foot of Trimble Knob, which rises about 200 feet above surrounding farmland. She can recall an Easter Sunday church service at the summit one year that was especially inspiring.

"I've always loved it," she said. "I wish they'd open it up and sell tickets. They'd make a fortune."

The volcano is owned by Lavinia Bird, who tolerates curiosity-seekers but is not thrilled at having trespassers on her farm. She declined to talk about Trimble Knob when contacted by phone, saying she doesn't know much about it.

Someone has built a small step ladder that jumps Bird's back fence and provides access to the knob. The volcano is covered by long, lush, reddish grass that ripples in a nearly constant breeze. The top provides breathtaking views of Monterey and the Appalachian Mountains around Highland County.

Little mounds of volcanic rocks are strewn about the



“They are extinct, and there's no reason to think there's magma being created there. So I'd say there's probably no effect to worry about. But stranger things have happened.”

Elizabeth Johnson (pictured above), geology professor, James Madison University, Harrisonburg

summit, as if spit out onto the ground, but there is no visible hole where the lava came out; the mouth has long since eroded away.

Access to Mole Hill is restricted as well, though Knicey, the owner, will let most people visit if they sign a liability waiver at his bike shop.

Two paths lead up the hill through oak and paradise trees. They split and then reconnect near the top. Spider webs must be swept away to keep moving ahead, and one gets the feeling of embarking on an Indiana Jones excursion through some dense rain forest. A deer suddenly leaps nearby, crashing through the brush.

Halfway up, a cross has been erected to mark where a previous owner, Lowell Ulrich, died while clearing a path to the volcano for a church group. His tractor flipped and trapped him beneath, killing him on Sept. 25, 2008.

History texts say locals celebrated the conclusion of the War of 1812 with a barbecue on top of Mole Hill, where an ox was roasted.

Unlike Trimble Knob, there are no spectacular views at the summit. A dense canopy of trees makes it difficult to even tell you've reached the top, some 1,900 feet above sea level.

Butterflies dance through thickets of goldenrod, and volcanic rocks are tossed randomly about on the ground, some cracked open to show their tell-tale ebony interiors.

The going is easy back down Mole Hill, the trail looking familiar.

At the bottom, tractors are plowing fields and cars wind through two-lane roads. Civilization has been found, leaving only the round shape of a dead volcano in the rear-view mirror.

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