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Editorials

**Labor Day
by the numbers**

As Americans enjoy picnics and a long weekend, they should reflect for a moment on the workers they honor today.

UNEMPLOYMENT

In July, **155 million** Americans were in the labor force — 82 million men and 73 million women. **12.8 million** of those workers were unemployed — 8.3 percent of the labor force.

AVERAGE ANNUAL PAY

	2009	2010	2011
United States:	\$43,460	\$44,410	\$45,230
Virginia:	\$46,360	\$47,840	\$48,870
Roanoke area:	\$36,840	\$37,980	\$38,890
New River Valley:	\$38,820	\$38,630	\$39,010

THE GENDER GAP

29%

Portion of families with a husband and wife working in which the wife earns more than the husband.

\$865

Median weekly earnings for men.

\$688

Median weekly earnings for women.

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UNION BENEFITS

Portion of workers in private industry with access to listed benefits.

	Non-Union	Union
Retirement benefits:	62%	92%
Medical care:	67%	94%
Dental care:	42%	72%
Vision care:	23%	57%
Outpatient prescription drugs:	66%	90%
Life insurance:	55%	85%
Paid holidays:	76%	89%
Paid sick leave:	62%	71%
Paid vacation:	76%	90%
Median weekly earnings:	\$729	\$934

DEADLY JOBS

Deaths per 100,000 workers in 2010

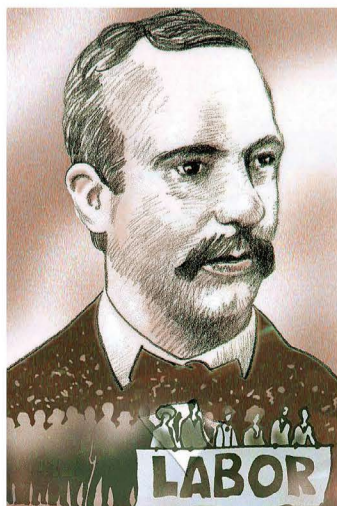
Profession	Deaths per 100,000 workers
Fishers and related workers:	152
Logging workers	94
Aircraft pilots	71
Farmers and ranchers	43
Mining machine operators	37
Roofers	32
Drivers/sales and truck drivers	23
Police and sheriff patrol	18



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STAY IN SCHOOL

	Unemployment rate (July)	Median weekly earnings
All workers 25 and older:	7.0	\$821
Less than a high school diploma:	12.7	\$483
High school graduate, no college:	8.7	\$659
Some college or associate degree:	7.1	\$754
Bachelor's degree or higher:	4.1	\$1,164



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The first Labor Day celebration took place in New York City on Sept. 5, 1882. The holiday spread quickly, and on June 28, 1894, Congress passed an act making the first Monday in September a legal holiday.

Historians disagree about who originated the holiday.

Some credit Peter J. McGuire (left), general secretary of the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners and a cofounder of the American Federation of Labor.

Others believe Matthew Maguire, secretary of the Central Labor Union in New York, founded Labor Day.

The U.S. Department of Labor credits both.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, "2012 Statistical Abstract of the United States"; Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics and Bureau of Economic Analysis.