

COMMONWEALTH TIMES

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The special problems of black students

By Misty Jones
Staff Writer

William, a black student at VCU has a conflict with a white faculty member. He feels the professor has trouble communicating with him because he's black. Where can he turn for help?

Mary, another VCU student, feels alienated because she's black. She is intimidated by her white professors and she has no one to talk to about her problems. What are her options?

Presently at VCU the answers to these questions are limited. There is no office designed specifically to handle the non-academic problems of black students. But that may change soon. A minority affairs task force has been set up to look into the problem.

"We created this task force because the Council on Higher Education in Virginia suggested that VCU look into this topic," said Dr. Richard Wilson, vice provost for Student Affairs and chairman of the Task Force.

"VCU already has an Affirmative Action/504 Committee and a subcommittee of that called Student Concerns, but they're not administrative offices, which is what we're looking at creating."

The office will be called the Office of Minority Affairs, continued Wilson; its focus will be looking into the problems and concerns of black students.

Gary Smith, a VCU senior, business major and member of the Task Force, feels a minority affairs office would be helpful to black students on campus, but that it needs to be marketed with the recruiting program.

"A lot of black students come here unprepared to deal with whites on an equal level," said Smith. "An office of minority affairs would provide emotional support for students, and they wouldn't find it so necessary to alienate themselves."

It could also direct students toward clubs and organizations they could join, he added. "I hear a lot of black students griping about how there are never any black bands in Shafer Court or any black movies in the Commons, yet they don't join any of the organizations that make these decisions, they don't provide any input. A minority affairs office would provide many black students with the encouragement they need to join the organizations."

Deborah Cartwright, VCU senior and a member of the Task Force, has talked to many students "who hope for tutoring services, counseling outside of advisors and help with racial problems. Lots of students go to black faculty who aren't their instructors because they have nowhere

else to go," she said. "A minority affairs office would take a lot of pressure off the professors."

A study done by Julianna Turner, a graduate student in public administration and Task Force member, shows that most large universities in Virginia have offices to handle minority affairs: the University of Richmond, George Mason, the University of Virginia, and William and Mary, to name a few. These offices handle topics from racial problems, cultural programs, and helping to build a rapport between student and professor, to leadership workshops, orientation programs, financial aid and interaction with academic services.

Revis Cox, assistant director of Student Activities, is also on the Task Force. He sees such an office "operating well" at VCU. "There is a need for some mechanism that will enable minority students, mainly black students, to negotiate through VCU." He said they should be able to find out about student organizations, financial aid or just be able to talk

about their problems.

Wilson echoes that point, "Black students need to know there are support mechanisms in place to help them with their problems."

"Right now we are still in the information gathering stage," Wilson said, but soon the Task Force will be hearing from students and faculty about their feelings on the issue.

"We haven't heard from them yet," said Wilson, "but there will be people who feel that the creation of such an office is unnecessary, that the problems of black students and white students shouldn't be separated," but for now, things look favorable for those who want such an office, he said.

"It's naive to think all the problems of black students and white students are the same," said Cox. "Any time you have a minority/majority situation, the minority will experience problems the majority doesn't."

Dr. John Borgard, assistant dean of the

College of Humanities and Sciences, and Dr. Grace Harris, dean of the School of Social Work, are both reserving opinion on the forming of a minority affairs office.

"I don't have an opinion right now," said Borgard. "I wish to make an informed decision," and would like to hear from faculty and students on this, those for and those opposed.

Harris reiterates this point, "At this time I would like to hear from students, and those who have questions before I decide. Certainly there are pros and cons to such an office."

Considering the large number of black students at VCU and the diversity of the group, said Borgard, "I question whether one office can represent the whole group." He went on to point out that an office "just can't be created and told to accomplish something without funds and materials to work with. Where will these funds come from? Where should this office be located administratively? These questions will also have to be answered."

"Whether there is an office or not," said Borgard, "we all need to be more sensitive to the needs and ideas of everyone. We should be raising the consciousness of everyone."

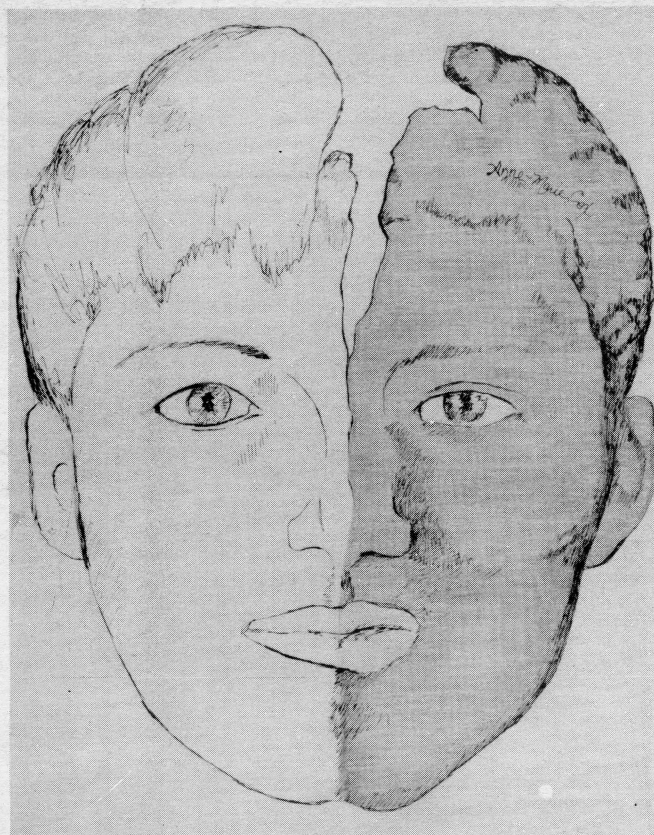
Senior psychologist of University Counseling Services, Dr. Valerie Batts, said, "The overall attitude at VCU needs to be looked at. One problem is separating the problems and not looking at the system." Creating a minority affairs office is not going to solve the problems of minorities at the university, she said.

"Being a black student at a predominantly white university that has not endorsed an appreciation of differences might mean your values and cultural approach to the world are not appreciated; this creates academic and social problems," said Batts.

According to several members of the Task Force, the problem black students have at the university has two sides: not only is there nowhere to go with their problems, but there are also very few black faculty members to look to for help. As Cartwright said, "You can't talk about a minority affairs office without talking about the lack of black faculty at the university. Maybe if there was a larger number of black faculty here we wouldn't need this office."

Wilson sees the lack of black faculty as "the single most important issue." He added, "Many students have said: 'To improve the black student experience here, hire more black faculty.'"

There have been genuine efforts made, continued Wilson, "but more effort has been placed on recruiting black students, not faculty."



See Problems page 8

Editorial

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When a 'man of letters' isn't

By
Sean Driscoll

Half a century ago, by virtue of my education, I would have been referred to as a "man of letters." Today, "a man of letters" sounds kind of sexist and implies that I get heaps of mail. Which I don't, primarily because my academic brothers and sisters "of letters" use the phone.

My great-grandmother could only "reach out and touch someone" if that someone was within arm's reach of her. Consequently, she wrote a lot of letters. I once browsed through some of the letters she had written, and was shocked to find out they were enjoyable to read. She was not a woman of schooling, but she wrote frequently, as everyone did in those days, and today her ordinary efforts seem remarkable. Her letters are clear and full of information. Without literary device, they are readable, enjoyable, and full of good cheer. Her love letters to my great-grandfather make good reading even if you're not related to her. The common correspondence between these two people was standard in their day. But because they both reflected meaningfully on the attitudes and issues of their times, those letters have some meaning today. Both of my great-grandparents were recent Irish immigrants in Boston, and their communication serves as a document of a particular ethnic experience in America. A few years ago the Boston Historical Society asked to have some of the letters they'd sent to each other because the letters themselves had some intrinsic value.

I'm not saying my ancestors were

gifted by the muse or talented in any way. Everyone, before the advent of the telephone, wrote letters that make modern correspondences seem insubstantial. Writing a few pages of prose each week was once a part of life, and in that weekly flexing of stylistic muscles the people of preceding generations practiced writing skills. I remember that when I read the letters of Ben Franklin in a high school course I was shocked by the fact that someone's personal communication could have literary value. I wonder if even the brightest modern politicians ever write a single letter worthy of being included in an anthology. Contemporary Americans don't practice writing in letters, we don't do the rhetorical push-ups our forefathers did, and I have to think that the quality of the written word has decreased as a result.

The most glaring difference I saw between my own letters and those of my great-grandparents was their ability to be reflective on paper. Their letters were part introspection, part editorial, and always substantial. They commented and proposed ideas with conviction, and sought to communicate not only information but also their opinions.

When I read the letters that I both write and receive today, I don't see that same reflective quality. They are deserts of ideas, more concerned with asking questions than communicating thinking. Always stuck in the interrogative, they ask, "how are you," "what are you doing," "do you think I'll ever get sick of asking questions?" I know that most of

their authors are bright people who are capable of writing quality prose. The problem is we're not used to the effort involved in creating worthwhile letters.

The telephone is probably the greatest detriment to writing in America. With incredible ease we can just pick up a phone and, after punching a series of numbers on a plastic box, talk to a friend in the Peace Corps in Sri Lanka. Being able to talk to people in that fast way, we get used to instant information. This is what I think social scientists call "rapid communication," and it's no wonder that with the possibility of instant communication the thought of the effort involved in writing a prosaic letter makes us pale.

Writing well, with substance, takes work. That's why you probably haven't seen a descriptive paragraph in a letter for quite some time. Who wants to walk when you can drive?

But something is being lost with the death of the letter, something essential. It's not just the quality of writing that deteriorates as we rely on the telephone. The meaningful exchange of ideas between common folks is being lost too. Clear writing and clear thinking are hopelessly mixed; you can rarely have one without the other. When people aren't willing to put their thoughts into "hard-copy," their ideas are as fleeting and limited as the length of their phone conversations. Our letters today are little more than informative memos with some extra baggage. Our ability to write clearly, and our reflective capacity are slowly sinking into the mire of mass communication.

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Racism: Another excuse for hate

By Gavin O'Hara

Editor's note: The following originally appeared in The Daily Orange of Syracuse, New York.

I was watching The Oprah Winfrey Show the other day. She was broadcasting from Forsyth, Ga., the all-white county that exploded with violence when blacks were brought in to march in honor of the late Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday.

Some of the people of Forsyth County showed genuine compassion and regret for what had happened. Some, of course, did not.

For the last several days I have not been able to get the face of one particular man out of my mind.

He had long, straight, brown hair and a beard. He spoke with the expected Georgia twang. But the thing that really bothered me was that he had the most honest pair of blue eyes I have ever seen. Baby blue.

So here was this man using the word that begins with "n" and that, in my estimation, is far more evil than even the most vulgar slang terms for body parts.

And I cried.

I've only cried three times in my semi-adult life and the other two were happy occasions.

As I sat in my room, all I could think was how could anyone be so completely void of feeling? How could anyone be so backward?

And my first reaction was violence. Why can't we, in a brutal but determined triumph of human strength and equality, do away with all these hopeless people who will never be through fighting the Civil War?

It was then that I began to drown in my own hypocrisy. Who is to say my idea of equality has more weight than anyone else's? Also, who is to say that my violent reaction against racism is any more justified than the racist's reactions against the

black man?

I have often wondered why racial discrimination affects me more than other kinds of prejudice. Why do I feel so much more deeply for the black man than for the homosexual or the immigrant or even the poor white?

Maybe it is the pride and integrity that I see when I look into a black person's eyes. Maybe it is the sense of togetherness that I so admire in the American black community. Maybe I just feel the need to balance out those whose views are the opposite of my own.

I am fascinated by the action of the Student Afro-American Society and the black fraternities here on campus. At first I was shocked and disappointed by their militance. But I have grown to understand and even appreciate their efforts that balance one extreme with another. It is still a stronger stand than I could ever take, but then I'm not black.

I'm not black. I'm just another white middle-class kid with his own ideas on the way the world should be run. The more I think about racism, the more I think it is just another way for people to

hate each other. Nothing more, nothing less.

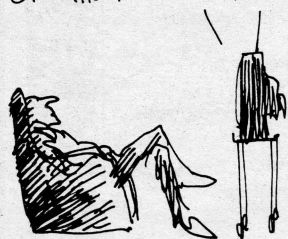
Hating is as natural as loving, and where would we be without love? So if conflict is so inevitable in a world where every person is different from every other person, and if conflict eventually breeds hate, then I guess what I'd better do is control the anger and violence within me and learn to accept it.

At least that way maybe I can keep my own conflicts from reaching the level of hatred. And maybe someday the people of Forsyth County will do that, too.

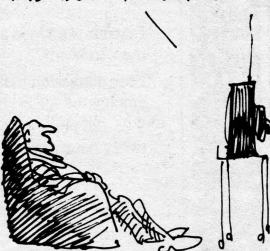


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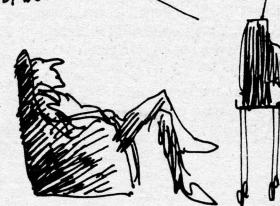
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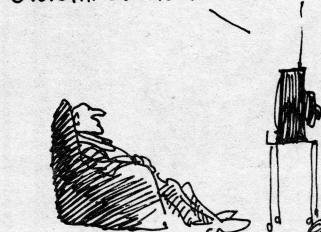
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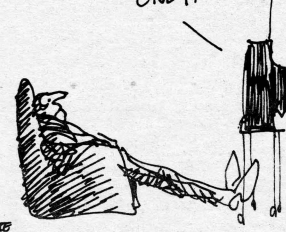
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LASTLY, THIS ADMINISTRATION BELIEVES IN A RESTRICTED INTERPRETATION OF THE AMERICAN DREAM.



WHITES ONLY.



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INTERNATIONAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Letters

A note to our readers:



The *Commonwealth Times* welcomes letters from our readers. The *Times* reserves the right to edit for grammar, taste and available space. Submissions must be signed and include a phone number. Letters must be received by 5 p.m. Thursday to be considered for the next edition. Our offices are located at 916 W. Franklin Street. Our mailing address is:

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To the Editor:

Those were some lame definitions of America's favorite word in that last paper. Let me offer some others:

Capitalism is fascism with a smile.

Capitalism is a power structure enabling a few elitists to fill their pockets with gold and masquerade it as a democracy.

Capitalism is your grandmother in a rest home that is more worried about her cash than her health.

Capitalism is a nuclear test site in your back yard.

Capitalism is the highest murder rate known to mankind.

Capitalism is a bum in a trash can eating tuna fish and drinking grib out of an old Budwiser can.

Capitalism is win-lose game theory.

Capitalism is money.

In memory of Susan Berkman:
Susan Berkman was ballet instructor for the VCU dance department. She died on Tuesday, Feb. 17, 1987. Ms. Berkman will be deeply missed by all the students and faculty, as well as the VCU community.

They told us you died; is that the truth? Is that really why you didn't come to class tonight? I do not believe that God would take such a kind person like you from this world.

You were one of the best dance teachers that I have ever had. I envied you as a dancer, also. You had a lot of patience and enthusiasm in teaching your classes, even though some students were just beginners or not so good. I believe this was because you really loved to dance, and hoped that your students would learn to appreciate it too.

You taught me a lot of new dance techniques in ballet class which I probably would not have learned elsewhere. I hope the angels will deliver this message to you. Thank you for giving me so much enjoyment at VCU. I shall never forget your kindness. Thank you for being my teacher.

Chen Harn-zi

Capitalism is greed.

And most of all, capitalism is the repression of education, creativity, and the arts.

Chip Walton

An invitation

The *Commonwealth Times* will soon be holding elections for the positions of Executive Editor and Managing Editor, as well as seeking replacements for section editors and staff members who are leaving VCU at the end of the semester. While certain positions by their nature require some background in journalism, others can be filled by students with such diverse interests as fine arts, business, political science, computer graphics, design and layout.

Do you see things in the paper that need improvement? If you don't, you're not looking. We're students, so we're far from perfect. Are you a journalism major who has a high regard for stylistic and ethical considerations, and who feels we fall shy of the mark? Do something about it. Apply for an editorship. Are you filling up on classroom training and looking for an opportunity to practice what you've learned by getting out in the field? Become a staff writer.

The old cycle is as true for journalism as any other field: You can't get a job without experience, and you can't get experience without a job. The ideals and standards of journalism are high, but on your way to a career you will experiment and make mistakes. And a college publication is more forgiving of those first attempts. A number of our editors and writers have gone on to good internships after getting their start on the *Times*. In addition to providing experience and material for resumes, certain positions include some financial compensation because the office hours involved tend to preclude outside jobs.

Information on time and dates, along with an application, is on page six of this week's issue.

Jeffery Smith
Executive Editor

Mission of the *Commonwealth Times*

- To inform the VCU community of facts and events, emphasizing, but not limited to, those facts and events which most directly affect it.
- To serve as a laboratory for journalists and other writers, where hands-on experience can be gained without fear of uninvited administration or faculty influence, with all the freedoms and responsibilities of a free press, and with the opportunity to learn in a professional atmosphere.

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News

Roberts makes a \$4.5 million ultimatum

By Diane Phaler
Staff Writer

Oral Roberts' recent television warning that God may take his life if he is unable to raise \$4.5 million by March may not have had the effect he was hoping for.

"I think it's just ridiculous," said Dr. Thomas Hall, professor of religious studies at VCU.

"It's a ploy to get money," Liz Beavers, a VCU student, stated. "I think he's being manipulative, and I think it stinks."

Others are taking Roberts' statement as an indication that the entire system of television ministry fund raising should be scrutinized more closely.

"I think there should be inner spiritual restraints," Dr. Paul Mickey, associate professor of pastoral theology at Duke University, said in a Duke press release. "Those restraints aren't being exercised

when people are manipulated or made to feel guilty about their lack of Christian discipleship or charitable contributions -- or, in the case of Oral Roberts, being made to feel responsible for causing his death."

Mickey believes there should be Christian organizations that look more closely at the content of the evangelical shows that appear on television and their methods of fund raising from that "internal spiritual restraint" point of view.

He also recommends checking to see if a television ministry is a member of an organization like the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability, which is composed of non-profit Christian organizations and provides internal policing of the financial records of such organizations. Voluntary compliance with the council, or making financial and fund-raising

records public, creates legal credibility for these ministries, and people can be more certain of where their donations are going.

Television evangelists began after World War II, when the electronic media were first becoming powerful forces in American life. Ministers like Charles Allen, pastor emeritus of the Houston, Texas church, the largest United Methodist Church in the world, emerged to successfully use television to reach millions. Rising costs of television time today create pressure to raise more and more money.

However, fund-raising issues should be addressed in ways that are not harmful to the faith and welfare of viewers and contributors, Mickey said.

He cites the case of an older woman he counsels. She has been giving to the Roberts Ministry, as well as numerous

others, for many years. "For now, she's continuing to give. But she realizes she's being manipulated, and she doesn't like it."

He believes that the faith of many people could be negatively affected by the incident. And some people may feel that they have been manipulated in less dramatic ways all along.

For those who were skeptical to begin with, Roberts' latest statement may be the final straw.

"I think Roberts is lying, and I think he knows he's lying. It'll be interesting to see what happens when he reaches his deadline," said Sean, a VCU sophomore.

"I hate to say this," another student confessed, "but I hope he doesn't raise the money. I'd love to see how he'll get out of this one."

White House officials debate Iran scandal at Mosque

By Michael Toler
Staff Writer

"The Reagan administration's handling of Iran indicates that it learned nothing from the previous administration's bungling of a similar situation," said Hodding Carter, State Department spokesman during the Carter administration.

Carter made these comments during a discussion with former Reagan White House spokesman Larry Speakes on Saturday, Feb. 21 at the Mosque before 2,000 people. The forum was sponsored by the Richmond Forum and Philip Morris. The moderator was Paul Duke, senior correspondent for the Public Broadcasting Service, and host of Washington Week in Review.

The previous administration's Iranian policy was a factor leading to the current situation, Carter said, but the current administration is repeating the same mistakes. "What was a shambles was not instructive to this administration." Many of the "moderates" the current administration was trying to deal with are the same that misled the previous administration, Carter said.

The major blame for the Iranian scandal lies with Colonel Oliver North, Speakes said. "North is a patriot of the first order, but patriotism has to be sprinkled with a little judicious judgement and he did not have this." The President probably "laid out broad policies," and North took control under loose supervision from

Admiral Poindexter. Speakes made the assessment based on his familiarity with the parties involved. He said he had no first-hand knowledge, being "blessed on this occasion not to know anything."

"White House Chief of Staff Donald Regan has been the victim of a vicious campaign to get him out of office," Speakes said, and his resignation is likely to come within a few days. "The heat has almost reached the unbearable stage," said Speakes based on his observations and not on "inside knowledge."

"For a step like that to be taken is very disturbing to me," said Speakes concerning the attempted suicide of former National Security Advisor Robert McFarlane. McFarlane "is a loyalist" who "had taken the weight of the whole thing on his shoulders." Speakes replaced McFarlane as speaker at the program. "It remains to be seen whose head will be on the chopping block" when the Tower Commission appointed by the President issues its report.

At the center of the problem is the continual struggle for power between the State Department and the National Security Council. The NSC, originally conceived as an advisory body, has become a center for action, said Carter. Their obsession with secrecy served to cut the Secretaries of Defense and State out of the decision-making process. It was an attempt to avoid leaks to the press by their staffs, Speakes said. "There was a point when admirals and light [lieutenant]



From left to right: Former Reagan White House spokesman Larry Speakes; moderator and host of "Washington Week in Review," Paul Duke; and State Department spokesman for the Carter administration, Hodding Carter.

colonels carried out policy," said Carter.

Carter added that also at the heart of the problem is the way in which we view hostage situations. If every situation is viewed as "America Held-up," then appropriate policies "will make hostages of the whole nation," said Carter. Excessive "breast-beating" gives terrorists legitimacy. Although terrorism has been a major issue during this administration, it is statistically less of a problem than in previous years, he said.

Speakes acknowledged the problem, "It is difficult to maintain perspective when Americans are taken hostage and you see the country held up to ridicule," he said.

The press can also give terrorists "a facade of legitimacy," said Duke at an earlier press conference. Media coverage

can help or aggravate a situation, he said.

"The public is tiring of the Iran scandal, but we do have to keep at it. I just wish we wouldn't be so preoccupied." The press is using "a lot of recycled news" on the subject, said Speakes.

Carter denied that the press was overplaying the issue, "The press is always obsessed with a big story."

"I don't know of any reporters shipping weapons or opening Swiss bank accounts," said Duke at the press conference. The media's role is "to report the facts and tell the truth. If people don't want to hear it, too bad."

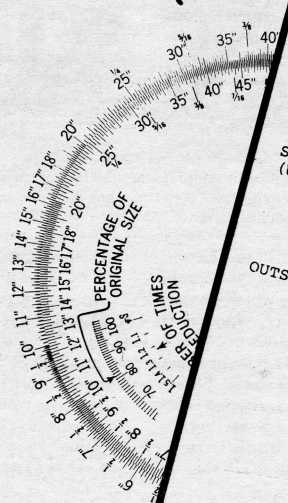
The scandal will have a detrimental effect on both Reagan's legislative agenda for his last two years and Bush's Presidential campaign, but both speakers agreed, the damage may be contained.

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Applications for these positions must be
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days prior to the election.



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Racial identity

By Kevyn Jefferson & Heather Bachschmid
Staff Writers

As a part of the observance of Black History Month, Dr. James E. Turner of Cornell University spoke on the topic of "Black History and Racial Identity: Two Implementations for Black Progress" at the Commons Theater Feb. 19. The lecture, one of several in a series, was sponsored by the Afro American Studies Program at VCU.

Turner sees Black History Month as a move towards positive affirmation of black existence. Turner said, "Black History Month is important, but its need shows the backwardness and racial exclusion in today's society." Turner cited as the biggest concern of Black History Month, the problem of miseducation. Mis-education is the system's failure to represent authentic black history. According to Turner, it has propagated derogatory statements toward Africans and Black History, and has brainwashed everyone, particularly black people.

The second basic concern of Black History Month is false consciousness. For whites, false consciousness was the notion of superiority which created an inferiority complex for blacks. "Education is so important. It is a knowledge and socializing function!" He added, "It's so hard for educated whites and blacks to understand the question of oppression."

The lecture ended in a question and answer session in which some question arose as to how black students at this university could make themselves more racially conscious. Turner replied by saying that there were several ways students on this campus could help to make themselves more culturally and racially aware. One way would be to provide air space on the college radio station for jazz or blues sections in programming. Another suggestion referred to by Turner was the need for an Afro American Library. He said, "It is important for black students to have publications to read." He also suggested that blacks identify and interact with one another on campus.

Turner concluded the lecture by reiterating the motive for Black History Month. He stated that blacks should be eager to find out "what we do not know," and "what we should know." When this can be done, said Turner, the real meaning of Black History Month can be achieved.

'Modern slavery' cited by El-Amin

By Eva Warner
Staff Writer

"Dishonor is what's troubling us now . . . it is the essence of slavery," said Civil Rights Movement activist Sa'ad El-Amin during his speech at the University Student Commons Theater Tuesday night.

El-Amin's speech, entitled "From Being Enslaved to Being a Slave," was one of three Black History Month speeches sponsored by the Educational Support Program last week.

El-Amin stated that the strife blacks endure today is a result of "three major elements, both powerful and seductive when placed in tandem and focused with malice." These elements are authority, social death and alienation.

"Authority," he said, "is really the key factor which permits slavery in a culture to exist."

El-Amin received his law degree from Yale University and has been active in the Civil Rights Movement for many years. Sa'ad described social death as "the definition by a culture of society that a person by description or status is a non-person." He discussed the development of social death in African Americans. "In order to have social death, one must have a violent, sudden uprooting of the slave from his traditional home and introduction into an alien society with the description of being a non-person."

El-Amin explained alienation as a "reasonable, predictable response of being a non-person." He added, "You're a product of how others perceive you."

He bellowed to a full audience, "It used to be [in downtown Richmond] a fifteen-year-old nigger boy was worth \$15,000, but today he's not worth a dime." People in the audience responded with "Amen" and "I hear you, man."

"Enslavement . . . occurs today when a sister sits with her babies . . . by different dudes waiting for the check in the mail, [when brothers and sisters are] turning hamburgers [for a living]."



Civil rights activist Sa'ad El-Amin speaks at VCU's Commons Theatre

El-Amin illustrated how society assures that "slavery becomes a self-perpetuating machine."

One of the examples he used is the CIAA basketball tournament. "Fifteen hundred blacks will come to Richmond ready to party; they will drop \$4.5 million in five days, yet the schools which will field the gladiators are on the verge of bankruptcy. Virginia State is laying off teachers. How do [these spectators] drop \$4.5 million dollars in five days? Without those schools, there wouldn't be any games."

He added, "The CIAA represents our ability to come together even under the most adverse circumstances . . . [but it also] represents the madness of making white folks rich. Like they say, 'spend money but don't stay too long.' The CIAA is a demonstration of the African American in his natural habitat."

El-Amin asked the question, "Is there a continuum? . . . Are we doomed to be slaves in perpetuity?"

He proclaimed, "The soul people of the world have been convinced that we don't have no soul . . . Our honor is the key to the salvation. Your faith can't be tested if you're going to be shy about it. When you know you're on target, then liberation hits you, start walking rather than shuffling. The rebirth of the slave comes from the reclaiming of his honor and his dignity."

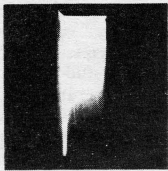
El-Amin used himself as an example. "They say I'm a militant — what they are saying is, 'That's a brother that we can't control.'"

VCU student Rodney Pulliam, chairman of the Black Leadership Awareness Committee, said of the speech, "He brought up outstanding critical and philosophical issues; we must start to deal with, at present, our progress as a people. He conveyed an air of positiveness, and the backbone must start with ethics, and that starts with the self."

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Superstitions color our attitudes

By Michele Trudel
News Editor

Another Friday the 13th is almost upon us. Does this mean anything to you?

Although most people would say it does not, the majority do have some kind of traditional beliefs which they hold dear to them, such as wearing a lucky sweater on an important day. Being called 'superstitious' simply has a negative connotation.

"I don't think we are any less superstitious today than we were a millenia ago," said Dr. Richard Priebe, an associate professor of English at VCU who teaches about folklore in one of his literature courses. "Human activity has a lot to do with things we have no control over. Superstitions allow us to participate in or explain things which are out of our control. As renowned anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski once said, 'Magic ritualizes our optimism.'"

"Superstitions or traditional beliefs have nothing to do with education." Priebe gave the example that students are more superstitious than blue-collar workers. "This is because students have more anxieties and uncertainties at that point in their lives. They eat certain foods before exams and wear certain clothes. It's a better-to-be-on-the-safe-side attitude."

Superstitions are pervasive in most areas of our lives where we are uncertain about the outcome, Priebe said. "For instance, acting is full of it. The saying 'break a leg' goes back centuries and was originally intended to try to divert the gods' attention away from the person's performance."

According to Priebe, courting, which seems to hold the most tension for humans in their lives, has all sorts of superstitions attached to it, regardless of the culture. "It is found in all the folklore."

"I spend a whole section [of one of my courses] on traditional beliefs. It's such a large part of the 'folk wisdom;' those unrecorded beliefs we all have. We're all the folk, right? People tend to think of the 'folk' as people who live off a mountain, but we're all the folk, each one of us," said Priebe.

Our culture is generally an oral one. People engage in oral communication more than in written. A good example is that most students accept as fact that they should wait 10 minutes for an associate professor and 15 minutes for a full professor if he or she is late for class. "This is not written down anywhere," said Priebe. "This belief has simply been passed down throughout the years by students through word of mouth. There are no special rules. The teacher is supposed to be

there on time."

Friday the 13th is another type of traditional belief which has been regarded as unlucky for centuries, and this spring it is striking twice, in February and in March.

There is superstitious significance attached to both Friday and the number 13. "Put the two together and it's a double whammy," said Dr. Holger Nygard, a Duke University professor who teaches a course on folklore.

In traditional European folklore, Friday has been held to the negative connotation that it gained when Jesus was crucified on that day of the week, Nygard said. Throughout history, people have remembered many tragic events occurring on Fridays by labeling those days as "Black Fridays." The British recall a Black Friday as the Dec. 6, 1745 landing of the young Pretender bent on seizing the throne in the name of Stuarts.

"The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore" cautions not to start a journey on Friday, or get married, wash clothes, get sick, ride a train, or go to court on Friday (if you're convicted, you'll get a much tougher sentence).

Avoiding the number 13 has become an international pastime, said Nygard. How many hotels do you know of that have 13th floors? Los Angeles International Airport has no gate 13; neither

does Raleigh-Durham Airport. Pilots, like sailors, are particularly superstitious.

In France having dinner with 13 people is unheard of. There are those who actually hire themselves out as professional 14ths to hosts who unexpectedly find themselves with a table of 13.

Closer to home, Durham, N.C. has a 9th Street and a 15th Street but no 13th Street. "You can go over and see right where it ought to be, but now it's called something else," Nygard said and grinned.

In all fairness, he added, the number 13 has had its occasional champions: in 1890 in England, the 13 Club of London flaunted fate by meeting on the 13th, beginning their meeting at 12:13 and concluding at 3:13. The *New York Times* reported that on May 13, 1960 the Friday the 13th Club met for lunch at 12:13, offering a cash prize of \$13.13 to anyone with a \$2 bill with four 13's in the serial number, before they adjourned at 3:13.

"Even though we have a kind of rational disbelief about these things, they color our attitudes and often become part of our thought patterns," Nygard said.

"I can't stress enough that it has nothing to do with education, technology or science," added Priebe. "I know I can call up my mom and ask her if she's superstitious, and she'll immediately say 'No.' But if she spills some salt she'll throw some over her shoulder, or if she drops a fork she'll say that company's coming."

VCU Tuition going up

By Dawn Bancroft
Staff Writer

The tuition and fees we pay to attend VCU will increase in the 1987-88 academic year.

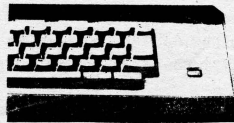
According to the VCU Planning and Budget office, this increase is necessary to meet higher operating costs. The increase will effect all students.

The amount the tuition will be raised will be decided in early March.

Dr. Mark Willis from the Department of Institutional Studies at VCU said the increase will be determined by the Board of Visitors after the General Assembly meets this Saturday and decides how much it can allocate to the general educational budget. This budget covers the faculty, administration, library and general staff, plus others at VCU.

The proposal, which is presently being reviewed by the Virginia House of Representatives, is for a nine percent increase in the faculty salary. The state covers 70 percent of the budget while student tuition makes up the remaining 30 percent.

The university and student activities fees will also go up. "This money," Willis said, "will go toward a non-educational budget and student activities budget." The university fees cover the Student Commons, intercollegiate athletics, debts on service items and mortgage payments for the Commons. The student activities fee increase is recommended by the VCU Student Government and covers the media publication, the campus radio station and other student organizations on the west campus.



NEWSBRIEFS

Compiled by Michele Trudel
News Editor

College freshmen and sophomores can call a toll-free number to help them find financial aid. The number, 1-800-AID-FIND, belongs to Student Aid Finders, a nation-wide scholarship matching service, based in Boston. This company has computer-access to more than four billion dollars in student aid sources; a virtual bank of information that took more than 10 years to compile.

"Practically all students can and do qualify for student aid, regardless of academic achievement or financial need," said Ann

Hemphill, vice president of the firm. "The real problem," adds Hemphill, "is where to find it. That's why over 100 million dollars in student aid goes unclaimed every year. Most people, including good guidance counselors, just don't know where to find the thousands of grants, scholarships, awards, much of which is free, that 'go begging' each year."

Hemphill's service, which costs \$39, guarantees to find any student a minimum of five (and as many as 25) student aid sources based on information the student supplies on a data form.

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Problems

Harris is on the Affirmative Action/504 Committee which she said is looking into the process of hiring black faculty at the University. "The Affirmative Action Committee has recommended that the provost give some direction to the department heads about the recruitment of more minority faculty members," said Harris.

She added, "Progress has been made: there is a possibility that there will be several more black faculty members next fall."

Cox disagrees, "Overall there has been no improvement, especially in the area of black faculty receiving tenure."

"The point is," said Cox, "we need to hire more black faculty to improve the overall environment and quality of education for all students. It's important that students get a broader perspective, but mainly this will help black students."

Batts agreed, adding, "Black faculty are important because they give black

students role models, but also it would change the views of some of the departments if there were more black faculty members involved. It's a form of institutional discrimination, and changes have to be made, not only at the student level, but at the faculty level as well."

"Of course it's necessary to have more black faculty," said Borgard, "But I don't think it's necessary that the role models for black students be black." Black students can appreciate the achievement of white faculty as well and strive for equal success, he continued.

The solution to the problem of lack of black faculty isn't as easy as it seems, Borgard continued, VCU can make offers of employment, but if we don't have the budget to pay them what they want then they'll go to the school which makes a better offer.

Cartwright sees the lack of black faculty and low retention rate as linked. "Not a lot has to be said about [black faculty]

to the specific student aid for which the student qualifies. Within three to four weeks, the student receives a computer read-out of the matching sources, complete with addresses, contacts and requirements. "Plus," says Hemphill, "if we don't find a minimum of five sources, we refund the required fee and give the student whatever sources we do find at no charge."

The winner of the 1980 Nobel Prize for Literature, Czeslaw Milosz, will speak at VCU and the University of Richmond on Monday, March 16.

Milosz was a member of the Warsaw resistance movement against the Nazis. He defected from Poland in 1951 during the Stalin regime and settled in Paris, the

See Briefs page 9

(from page 1)

except that they're non-existent, except in Afro-American studies, of course," she said sarcastically.

"The University has no trouble with recruiting black students, but once they get here they have nothing to relate to. If they have a problem, chances are they don't even have a black professor to talk to." It can be an upsetting situation and "that's why we need a minority affairs office: to keep students from leaving school because they can't handle the stress," said Cartwright.

Smith likened the faculty situation at VCU to the business world, "Everyone in authority is white. It's a terrible situation, but at least black students don't go through culture shock after leaving VCU. It's just like the real world."

For more information about meetings of the Minority Affairs Task Force, or to get on the agenda to speak, call Dr. Richard Wilson's office at 257-1244.

Briefs

(from page 8)

city which a hundred years earlier had been the place of exile for the great Polish Romantic poets.

Since 1961, Milosz has been professor of Slavic languages and literatures at the University of California at Berkeley. His works include "The Captive Mind," "Bells in Winter," and his most recent volume of poetry, "Unattainable Earth."

"Literature and Politics" will be the topic of his address at VCU's Performing Arts Center at 4 p.m., followed by "The Poet's Voice: A Reading in English and Polish" in Keller Hall at U. of R. at 8 p.m. The evening lecture will be followed by a reception.

All events are free and open to the public. For more information, contact Molly Bell at the Office of Communications, 289-8056.

Students to make up snow day

VCU students, faculty and staff will have to make up a day of classes which were cancelled because of snow. Day classes for Tuesday, Feb. 17 at the Academic Campus will be made up April 29. Day classes for the Health Sciences Campus will be made up May 2.

In issuing this notice, President Edmund Ackell expressed his appreciation for "the grace with which you accepted the inconveniences of the January snows," and praised the efforts of those "who met early morning classes and made special efforts, despite icy roads, to get to class."

Ackell also noted that "while accommodations are being made to overcome the recent loss of class time, it is necessary to plan for any additional class time that might be lost during the remainder of this winter."

In the event of any additional school

closings, the schedule printed below will go into effect:

CONTINGENCY MAKEUP SCHEDULE

ACADEMIC CAMPUS

Day Classes:

- First day cancellation — makeup day April 30, 1987.
- Second day cancellation — makeup day May 1, 1987.
- Third day cancellation — makeup day April 25 (Saturday).
- Fourth day cancellation — makeup day April 18 (Saturday).

If April 30 or May 1 are used as makeup days, final examinations for the spring semester will not begin until May 4 and will end of May 12. Commencement will occur as planned on May 16.

Evening Classes:

- First evening cancellation — makeup day April 24.

- Second evening cancellation — makeup day April 17.
- Third evening cancellation — makeup day April 10.
- Fourth evening cancellation — makeup day April 3.

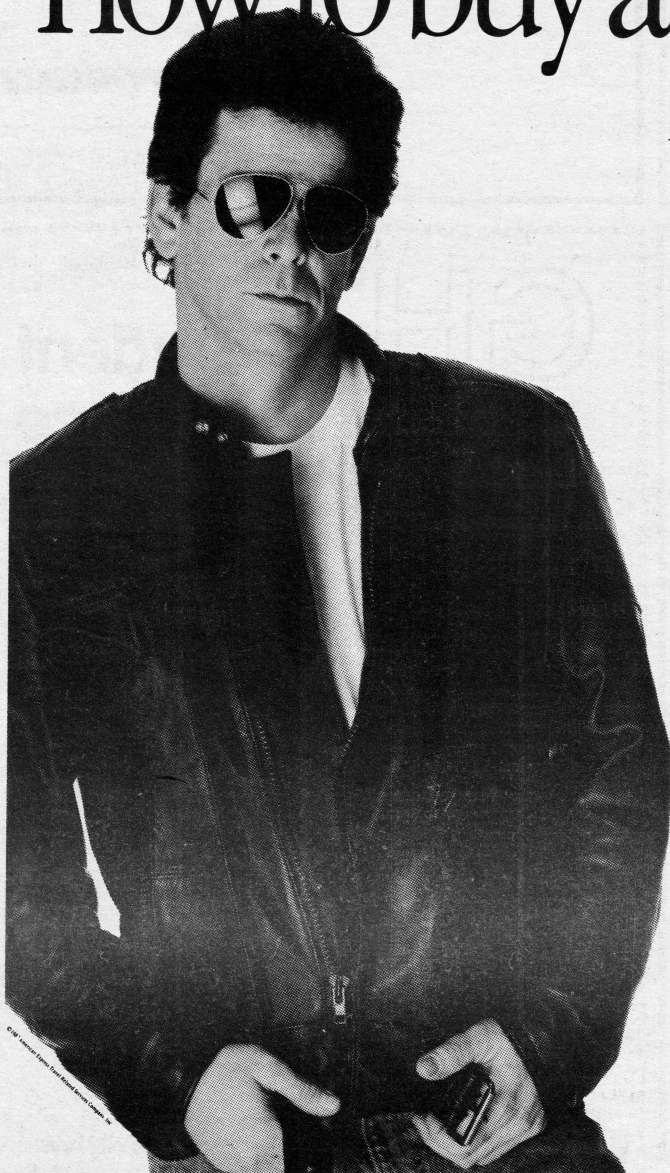
Final examinations for Spring semester: MAY 4-9.

HEALTH SCIENCES CAMPUS

- First day cancellation — makeup day May 4.
- Second day cancellation — makeup day May 5.
- Third day cancellation — makeup day April 25.
- Fourth day cancellation — makeup day April 18.

If May 4 and 5 are used as makeup days, final examinations for the spring semester for Health Sciences students will begin on May 6 and extend to May 9. Commencement will occur on May 16 as planned.

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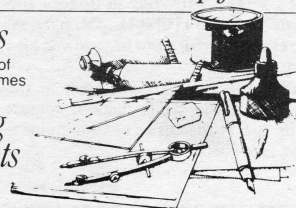
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They're Coming to VCU**

THE MEDIA REVOLUTION: HOW CORPORATIONS & GOVERNMENT ARE SHAPING THE NEWS

10-11:30 a.m. — VCU Performing Arts Center

Broadcast Deregulation:

Will quality and content suffer?

Steve Bookshester
NAB

Andrew Schwartzman
Media Access Project

1:15-3:30 p.m. — VCU Performing Arts Center

Terrorism Coverage:

How well is it handled?

An editor's viewpoint:
Forest Landon
Roanoke Times

A sociologist's viewpoint:
Lynn Nelson
VCU Sociology Professor

A governmental viewpoint:
Gerald Batiles
Virginia Governor

A reporter's viewpoint:
Jeremy Levin
CNN, Washington

3:45-5 p.m. — Student Commons Ballrooms

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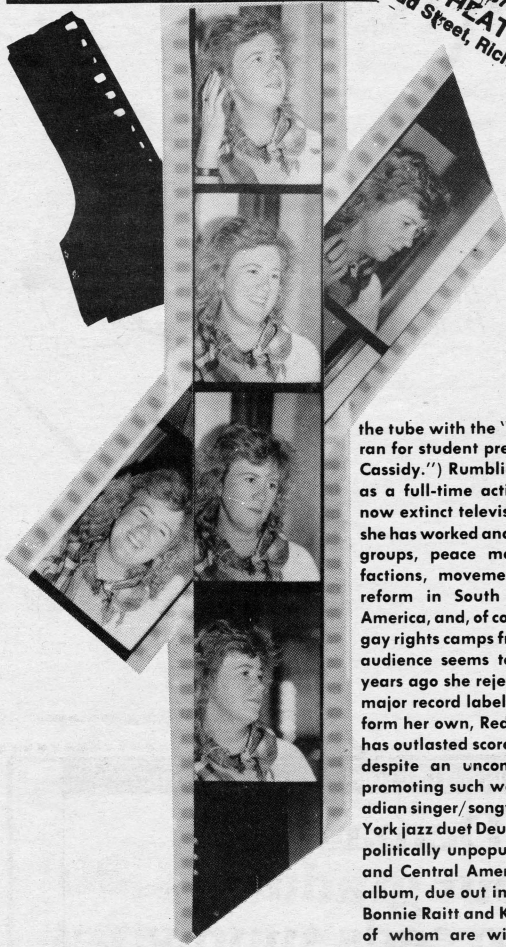
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the tube with the "Partridge Family" ("I ran for student president against David Cassidy.") Rumbly of a future career as a full-time activist?) and a host of now extinct television series. Politically, she has worked and sung for anti-nuclear groups, peace movements, anti-racist factions, movements for international reform in South Africa and Central America, and, of course, the feminist and gay rights camps from which most of her audience seems to be drawn. Fifteen years ago she rejected approaches from major record labels, choosing instead to form her own, Redwood Records, which has outlasted scores of such small labels despite an uncompromising policy of promoting such women's music as Canadian singer/songwriter Ferron and New York jazz duet Deuce, as well as music by politically unpopular artists from South and Central America. And on her new album, due out in April, she sings with Bonnie Raitt and Kenny Loggins, neither of whom are widely known for any stand on any issue, musical or political.

With such impressive across-the-board credentials, what does one make of a crowd of 600 in which perhaps a dozen males can be found? On the one hand, it's a fantastic turnout for a folk musician these days; promoters who were said to have had doubts about renting an 800 seat hall for such a controversial (what's one more label?) artist in a town like Richmond must have felt vindicated in the extreme by the high spirits and rebel yells that filled the performance space and spilled out onto Broad Street afterwards. And for lesbians and feminist activists from Norfolk to Charlottesville,

this was clearly the networking event of the season. But what about the half of the human race that was so conspicuous in its absence? What of the Black audience that wasn't, and the progressive music community as well?

These questions are among the several things that do not seem to bother Holly Near, at least not much. Her attitude is similar to the grass-roots aphorism, "Think globally, act locally."

"I tend to work more like a tree," she says. "Trees grow one ring at a time . . . and I think that if you leap out to the outer edge, you're without any support. But if you go to the next layer, you're always touching shoulders on one side with someone who supports you and on the other side with someone who's dealing with a new concept." She admits to wishing she could attract more new faces and minds, but describes her role as a unifying force rather than a strictly informative one. "The military women come to hear lesbian songs mainly for the greater awareness of imperialism, the radical feminists may start thinking about nuclear power perhaps a bit more than they have been, and so on."

This puts her new album, *Don't Hold Back*, which she describes as "a very good pop record," into a very perspective. She's borrowed Kenny Loggins' musical director (Loggins and Near go back a ways, Near having sung at Jim Messina's wedding,) and pieces of the backing bands for Al Jarreau and Jackson Browne. "I'm not anti-success, and at the same time it would be a way for people to know that my music exists. I don't want to manipulate people into wanting it, but I'd like them to at least know that it's there," she says. The new songs are all love songs ("...although not all of them are happy. . .") and less clear about the genders of the subjects, which has over the years been a major stumbling block and source of frustration for her as one of the best-known representatives of the feminist folk music realm.

"When Meg Christian and I were in a relationship and we would sing together . . . if we just looked at each other onstage the way that any two people who play music together will, you could hear the first 15 rows sigh!" admits Near. Such is the unique relationship between Near and her audience, many of whom see her first and foremost as a celebrity who came out in public and affirmed the lifestyles of lesbians every

where. She has become a heroine and a sex symbol to one of the most invisible subcultures in America today. Often during the evening's show it seemed that had she never sung a note onstage, she would have received standing ovations for sheer chutzpah.

Reports that she has been dating men also do not seem to bother Near as potential trouble for her largely gay audience. "I think that once a woman has been a lesbian she never goes back to being straight," says Near. "She may have relationships with men, but she's a different person for having loved women because she loves herself in a way that is inexplicable." She says she is quite unashamed of any heterosexual proclivities or activities, but she doesn't see a need to discuss them in public. "You see heterosexuality everywhere," she notes, "I see no need to affirm that."

But let there be no mistake: Near is far from being a one-issue artist or person. In her interview with *Times* reporters, she was quite outspoken on every topic from ABC television's recent mini-series, "Amerika" ("a non-physical form of child abuse, when we teach our children to hate. . .") to the accusations of apathy leveled against the American people of the 1980s. "How can anyone say that,

See Holly Near page 14

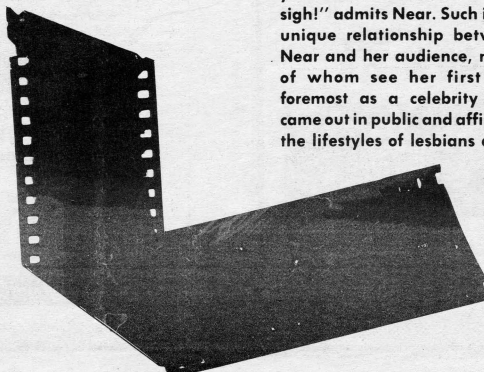
By Paul Bloch and Pam Kiely
 For the Times

Labels often overshadow more important facts than they present. Case in point: singer Holly Near. Near has been dubbed a "political lesbian-type" vocalist for most of her career, a description that many people refuse to look past.

Near thinks differently.

"I'm not a political lesbian-type singer. That's what other people call me," she says. "Labels are used as short cuts because people don't always have a lot of time to sit down and discuss things. A (label) like that goes right over my head. I see myself as a rather all-encompassing person."

The track record is clear enough on that point. Holly Near has demonstrated enough artistic versatility to put to shame any five artists on the charts today. In recent years she has worked with Nashville reggae band African Dreamland, Chilean and Nicaraguan musicians in exile and at home, and folk ensembles from the supergroup HARP (with Pete Seeger and Ronnie Gilbert of the Weavers and Arlo Guthrie) to the more progressive Trapezoid. She has appeared onstage with HAIR and Jane Fonda's "Free The Army" non-USO tour of Vietnam; on-screen in "a lot of bad movies," as well as the films of John Cassavettes; and on



Dear Readers. As you know, we here at the Times, strive to be on the cutting edge of local cultural events. Roger Mrazek is a graduate of Theatre VCU and author of "Dudes, Fags and Other Men."

To: Kerthy Fix Hearn
From: Roger Mrazek, Guest Critic
Re: Lysistrata-review

Ms. Hearn,

This letter is to express my deepest regrets in failing to produce a review for Theatre VCU's latest production, Lysistrata. I find my reasons for this extremely difficult to verbalize. I have tried, however excruciating the effort, to make a list of thought blocks that prevented my writing. Most were developed from notes I took during the rehearsals and one performance I witnessed.

- 1.) "My God, why are they doing that?" (Comedy follows a certain logic; even cartoons have logic. The chorus often does things that have no relationship to the plot; no relationship to anything! A hoedown in Greece? An opera? This is much too Polish.)
- 2.) "Huh? What? What are they saying? Oh well, it looks like even they don't understand." (A diction problem exists with the chorus, but even when you can hear them it doesn't appear as if they understand what they are saying. Whose problem is this?)
- 3.) "This poor cast. Trapped in a bad cartoon, no continuity, no focus, no real sense of humor. I'd rather watch an hour and a half of Pee Wee Herman. How can I say this? I know these people." (The leads are confident and self-assured. Good. Great. But it's just not enough.)
- 4.) Oh, what the hell. So maybe 25% of the audience will know this comedy's a tragedy. The other 75% will, predictably, marvel at the set and costumes, be impressed by the acting "tricks" and howl at every "bit" and phallus. They'll leave laughing and never know the difference. Guess that's what's important. Right.

So you see, Ms. Hearn, where could I have begun?

Please accept my apology. Perhaps the next VCU production won't be another Lysistrata. (Though somehow I imagine...) As always,

Roger Mrazek

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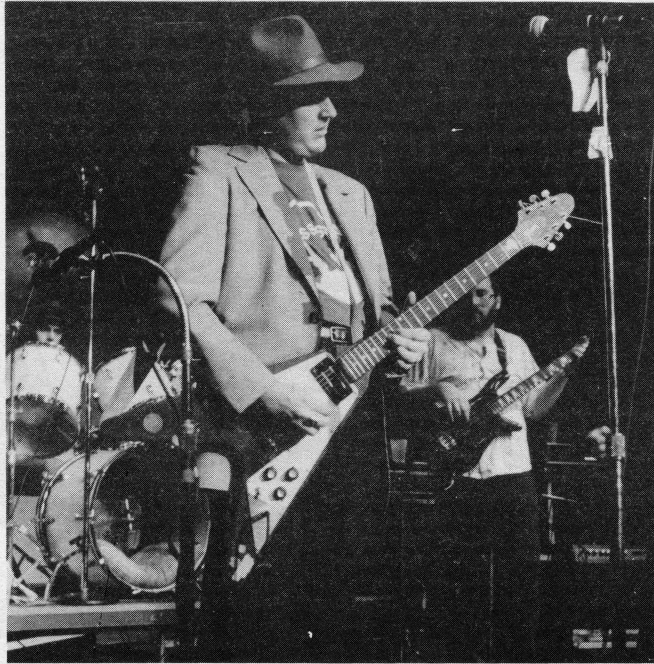
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By Chris Falcon
Staff Writer

Assassin-ated Blues and Rock'n'Roll



The following year the band decided to do the same thing as a vacation band, having recorded tracks at Bias Studios (this time they added horns). When the band played at the Cellar Door in Richmond, the feel of the music was so good they decided to pursue the Assassins as a full-time project.

Road time with the Assassins is different from other bands; this is one of the funniest groups of people I've seen. Dave Strong, who sings his ass off, plays lead along with Thackery and is stirring his coffee while we all eat in an IHOP. He nonchalantly pulls his spoon out—and there's no end on it. "Pretty strong coffee today," the diminutive figure remarks, with a slight twinkle in his eye. Seems he's had this spoon for years, pulling the same gag on lots of unsuspecting folks.

Wade Mathews (legendary D.C. bass player), nicknamed "Matimba" (because of his size? his monster-like playing?) constantly cracks one-liners. Thackery is a master of imitation, doing Donald Duck, Walter Brennan (saying nasty things about Luke's wife and the kitchen table), or countless unnamed characters. The drummer Brian Albert will watch on the fringes, then throw in a killer comment guaranteed to make you howl. Boogie-woogie pianist Phil Baron not only has a reputation for having the nicest hair in the band, but he acts as a pratfall king off stage. And Alex "Rockin' Daddy"

See Assassins page 14

Some Kind of Hideous

By Miranda Kerouac
Staff Writer

The entertainment industry is in a jam. First Liberace goes and dies on us. Then the Beastie Boys topped the charts. Then some idiotic casting director put possibly the most annoying soap opera child ever in the new Stallone movie; gee, I hope it doesn't ruin the "film." (heh-heh-heh) Then the brainy bagpipe girl, our favorite contestant, lost on Teen Jeopardy. That maxi-series "Amerika" (excuse me, isn't that a typo?) was just an absolute teevee disaster. Then David Susskind died. No new episodes of "Moonlighting." Then the worst that can possibly happen in this here pop culture, happened: Mr. Andy Warhol died. There has been speculation that his heart attack occurred, not because of post-gall-bladder-surgery-complications, but because the artist was terrified of those hideous ultra-sanitary hospital room interiors. No more obscure films like "Bad" or "Eat" or "Flesh of Frankenstein in 3D." What will happen to *Interview* magazine? Who will be the new King (or Queen) of the lower east side pretentious-glamour-club-scene? Whose pictures will fill the fashionable pages of *Details* magazine? Some magazine that calls itself "America at it's best" is suggesting that there may have been some bizarre love triangle involving Liberace, Rock Hudson and yes, the late Mr. Warhol. It can't be. Then there's everybody's favorite former b-movie actor Ronnie who seems to be suffering from something worse than amnesia. And if that's not enough, I missed the Pat'n'Vanna entourage, who actually spent a fragment of their oh-so-precious time in our lovely city of murder. I feel like a social outcast.

So in hopes of dragging myself out of this apathetic entertainment rut, I went to a teen movie, but to no avail. John Hughes has done for teen movies what squeeze catsup has done for the consumer. His films, which are drastically regressing, have presented us with a theme: today's teens base the quality of one's character on the limit of one's Gold American Express card and the net value of one's automobile.

His latest "tour de cinema" is called "Some Kind Of Wonderful." He didn't direct this baby, so we mustn't condemn him completely, but he is responsible for producing and writing it. At times the dialogue is nauseating.

Here's the story: Artist boy, Keith worships (from afar) Miss Amanda Jones, the middle class brainless-but-beautiful teen queen, who isn't rich but spends all her time sucking on her rich boyfriend's cash like a leech. Rich-beau drives a camaro or fiero or whatever with mags, and the chicks think he's a real hot babe.

Keith's kid sisters get all the good lines. The funniest scene is when teen-sis is sitting in class and her father appears in the classroom doorway window. "Hi, honey!" he says, and she lets out a manic scream in a fit of total embarrassment. These teens don't even want their peers to know they have parents!

Enter Watts, the drummer girl, who is in love with and best buddies with art-boy. She's the most clean cut, fashionable tomboy in school; she's tolerable but hardly convincing as a drummer.

Keith stupidly blows his life savings on diamond studs for the teen-queen for their big date, and then he takes her to a museum, where in the midst of all the



classic art, hangs a painting of, yes, Amanda Jones. Amanda laughs in the museum and Keith says, "Shhh this is my church." (He's a perfect candidate for AFO at VCU).

Art-boy and teen queen escape a party full of dreadful, stuck-up "richies" and as they approach the car, art-boy flashes back to him kissing drummer-girl, and he realizes he doesn't love Amanda Jones after all, he loves Watts.

He takes "his future" (the diamond earrings) back from teen-queen and gives 'em to drummer-girl. They kiss and hug and he spins her around and of course it's a happy ending, this is a BLOCKBUSTER MOVIE! Drummer-girl puts art-boy's future on her earlobes and he says, "You look pretty good in my future." Get it? I was touched.

Hughes is marketing soundtracks through these films more so than the films themselves. But some songs that are on the soundtrack, like the Jesus and Mary Chain song, are not even in the movie, just as many of the "Pretty in Pink" soundtrack songs weren't in that. The soundtracks are successful, but they're not really soundtracks, are they?

This is Hughes' answer to the eccentric, different, artsy sect of teenhood. But if these kids are anything but normal, then Liberace was a heterosexual superstud. The story is just "Pretty in Pink" in reverse, so I guess we can rename this movie "Ugly in Black." This teen movie typifies the current entertainment state-of-the-nation, which seems to be almost as ugly as Andy Warhol was in real life.

Holly Near

(from page 11)

when the student movement in the United States, along with what's going on in South Africa, forced banks and corporations to divest?"

In concert, she sang and rambled about the "poison power" of nuclear reactors, Harriet Tubman, and the police bombings of Philadelphia, as well as the simple joys of playing in irrigation ditches as a child and going to friends' weddings. Anyone who came to get fired up on any one issue surely got what they came for, as well as some food for thought on other matters.

The crowd came to cheer Holly Near. At every pause in her patter between songs, the house erupted with adulation, just as every remark that could possibly be interpreted as innuendo sent the crowd into hooting and laughter that made these reporters wonder if they had slipped into a Molly Hatchet concert by mistake. Many of the members of the audience knew the older songs by heart and let their voices ring out in a touching display of unity. The new songs received a somewhat cooler reception, but some old chestnuts ("My Funny Valentine"



Courtesy Irene Young

and "Somewhere Over the Rainbow", to name two) went over very well indeed.

Near's classic anthem of gay love, "Nothing But a Perfect Night Will Do," was lost in the roar that followed the lines "A gentleman asks 'Are you ladies alone?' They smile and say, 'No, we're together.'" This was definitely an audience that was tuned in and primed for the evening, and while Near and her accompanist demonstrated excellent musicianship and showmanship, the audience proved to be the real electricity of the event.

By evidence of Near's never-faltering smile, that was just fine by her.

Assassins

(from page 13)

Holland (why *that* nickname?) looks over at me while I'm incapacitated with laughter and says, "Hey cheer up, will ya?"

But when they hit the stage they are as serious as the proverbial heart attack.

At Mary Washington College, Phil surprises the band and the audience at the beginning of the second set. He doesn't play "The Phil Dirt Boogie" as they suspect (it's a hard-driving New Orleans-styled instrumental); instead, he pounds through Vince Guaraldi's "Linus and Lucy" (the "Peanuts" theme). It's a hit. Holland walks out onto the crowded dance floor at Barney Google's in Cleveland, playing his tenor sax with the mike shoved in the bell. He dances with the assassinated while he wails on his horn, playing Buddy Johnson's '40s song, "Crazy 'Bout a Saxophone."

When Strong sings, he belies his size (about which he receives more jokes than any normal person would take—even though he's a prince about it). Instead, he epitomizes his last name. This dude can sing. He outshines the wonderful Robert Cray on "Bad Blood" and "I Guess I Showed Her." This clean-hot lead playing breathes fire.

Thackery himself has never sounded better. He has stretched out beyond where he was with the 'Hawks. He plays behind his shoulder or picks with his teeth at the Roxy in D.C. He grimaces with the pain of *Partners in Crime* (title to the new album, available through Seymour Records, P.O. Box 4631, Richmond, VA 23220). He smokes the icy Albert Collins' "Don't Lose Your Cool" instrumental. In short, this cat has *wolved*, man.

I haven't been this fired up about a band since I saw Robert Cray a year and a half ago. I was right about him going places. I know I'm right about this tight-as-a-preacher band.

Jimmy Thackery and the Assassins will be playing at the New Horizon Cafe on March 12th.



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Sports

Game of the Week

By Jim Ellis
Sports Editor

Senior guard Brenda Smith hit 1,000 points for her VCU career and the Lady Rams subdued Randolph-Macon College on Tuesday, Feb. 24, in Ashland, 72-51.

Smith also led or tied for the team leadership in steals (8), rebounds (9), points (23), assists (6), and blocks (1).

"Brenda Smith leads our team with her all-out hustle and hard play," head coach Mike Dunavant said after the game. "Nothing is more important to her than winning."

"It feels good. It's a great accomplishment. I'm just really excited," said Smith after reaching her milestone. "I couldn't have done it without my teammates, all of them."

This is actually the second thousand points for Smith, who scored 1,063 in two years at Virginia Wesleyan playing for Dunavant there. When Dunavant came to VCU, Smith transferred, and the duo has been at the center of the Lady Rams' rise to power.

VCU (19-7) started slowly against the Lady Yellow Jackets, whom they had beaten in December by 32 points. RMC did not collapse under VCU's zone press early, and when point guard Rhonda Jackson fouled Macon's Wendy Tiller in

the lane with 9:40 left in the first half, the Yellow Jackets were in the bonus, down only 16-8.

Tiller missed both ends of the two-shot foul, though, and over the next three minutes VCU went on an 8-2 run. Smith capped the run with a jumper from the left wing off a Jackson steal for points number 1,000 and 1,001.

The game was halted momentarily, with 6:38 to go in the half, when several rolls of the Festive Tissue, 2-ply style, came from the stands in celebration of the mark.

The Lady Yellow Jackets came back from that 24-10 deficit with a vengeance, however, outscoring VCU 20-11 the rest of the way to make it 35-30 VCU at the half.

Beth Dunkenberg registered the big play in the run when she canned an outside shot and was fouled afterward by Carroll Ann Clements (18 points). Dunkenberg was awarded a one-and-one opportunity and converted the four-point play to bring RMC to within 26-16.

Macon center Karen Eye (12 points, 12 rebounds) took over from there, hitting from the low post three times as RMC came to within 28-24. But Nikki Gilliam and Kelly Hoover (15 points) carried VCU to a 34-28 advantage just before halftime.

The Jackets stayed with VCU in the second half, trailing by just 50-41 after Eye hit a shot from the top of the lane with 12:03 to go. But they tired down the stretch and VCU's press began to take its toll. The Lady Rams finished the game

Golf team tuning up

By Mark Schmidt
Staff Writer

Younger than springtime, the VCU golf team begins action this weekend. No fewer than seven of coach Jack Bell's 10-member team are underclassmen.

"We're heavy with sophomores and freshmen," Bell said in a recent interview. He pointed out, however, that such younger players as freshmen Tommy Joyce and David Boardman received a lot of playing time during the fall season.

More experienced returnees include senior Matt Ball, senior Chuck Calhoun, and sophomore Micky Moore.

Team captain Ball averaged a sizzling 74.71 strokes through 14 rounds during the fall segment, including a low of 68 at the Cardinal Invitational, good for an individual second-place finish.

Bell rates Ball, a marketing major, as one of the two best players in the state. "Matt has been a real leader, and has the right attitude," Bell said. "He certainly is pro material."

Moore, Calhoun, Joyce, and Boardman also hit well during the fall season, each averaging in the upper seventies.

Other veteran players include sophomore Gary Soltes, junior Carl Filipowicz and sophomore Rick Chalkley. Filipowicz and Chalkley missed the fall campaign.

Bell hopes to combine the talents of the Commonwealth Times

younger players with Ball's experience to produce another winning season. The Rams have had a winning record in seven of the past eight years.

"We'll have a very unusual schedule," Bell said. Two tournaments will take place at the Homestead Resort in Hot Springs, Va. The Rams will also face stiffer than usual competition this spring because of the preponderance of tournaments that feature teams from the highly-touted Atlantic Coast Conference and the state of Florida.

"The University of South Florida, for instance, has a big advantage — they can play outdoors 12 months a year," Bell said.

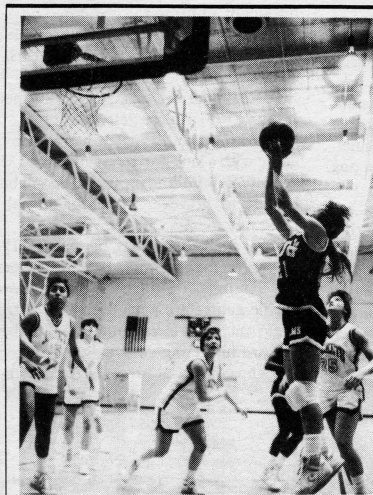
The season's highlight will be the Hyatt-Richmond Intercollegiate Invitational, played March 20-22 at the Confederate Hills Country Club. VCU will be the host school for the 17-team encounter, which includes Old Dominion, considered to be the strongest team in the state this year.

The Rams will open the spring season at Tampa University on March 8 in a 24-team tournament. "If we finish there in the top quarter, we'll be doing very well," Bell said.

The top five shooters in the qualifying round at Tampa will represent the Rams there. Bell said he expects Ball, Filipowicz, Brown, Calhoun, Chalkley, and freshman Michael McCutcheon to be among the qualifiers.

The Rams will then journey to Harrisonburg, March 12-14, for the James Madison Invitational.

Each tournament is free of charge to all student spectators.



Smith closes in on 1,000 points

*Brenda
Smith
1,000
Points*

by outscoring RMC 22-10; they had 18 steals and caused 29 turnovers overall.

Dunavant is a team-oriented coach, so it is not his style to praise individuals, but he did have some things to say about Smith. "Her steals are unbelievable; she possibly leads the nation in steals [she has 114 in 26 games]. We're proud of her and we're going to honor her at our last home game [Virginia Tech]."

But he quickly reverted to form. "Individual stats are important, but nothing is more important than the team.

That's how it is and that's the way it'll be as long as I'm here." Which might be awhile. Although Smith and center Mary Kay Messick will leave after this season, along with Jewell Lyons, the team is young overall. "Our future looks good," Dunavant said.

Following senior night at the Franklin Street Gym on Monday, the Lady Rams travel to the Sun Belt Conference tournament March 5-7. VCU is seeded third and will play UAB at 6 p.m. on Thursday.

Tennis team is ready

By Jim Ellis
Sports Editor

The VCU tennis team is off to a 2-0 start and head coach Jim Stanley is pleasantly surprised with a squad that features several newcomers.

"We started off with a pretty decent team and one of the [fall] recruits decided not to come back this semester. He was our second-best player," Stanley said in an interview last week. "But we've added some additional players who seem to be taking up his slack."

Mark Troxell, Rich Lord, and Adrian Polliack joined the team this semester and have worked well with top players Jamie Hevron and Eric Wammock, both juniors, and senior captain Feisal Hassan.

The schedule this spring is loaded with home matches — 11 of them between March 18 and April 13, nine against state schools. "It's going to be a tough road," Stanley said. "It seems the majority of the state schools are pretty equal. It could go either way."

The Rams have already defeated the University of Richmond at UR on Feb. 25, 5-4, after warming up with a 7-2 decision at Atlantic Christian College on Feb. 20. The team will be in Florida over spring break for six matches in eight days.

"It sounds great to go to Florida for spring break, but it's not exactly a pleasure trip," Stanley said. "It's fun, but mostly business."

The home season opens at Byrd Park with Rutgers on Wednesday, March 18, UVa on the 19th, James Madison on March 20, and George Mason on the 21st. The GMU match is at noon; the others start at 2 p.m.

Look for Hevron in the top singles spot, Wammock at number three singles, and Hassan at number four. Stanley said he may juggle the second, fifth and sixth slots after filling them with Lord, Ashley Veloso, and Troxell, in that order, for the first two matches.

Stanley is especially pleased with the team's spirit this spring. "Most of the guys have a lot of heart, they're out playing hard."

"This year there's much more unity than in the past. Everybody pulls together and pulls for the other guy. I think it's great. The guys are closer together this year."

Stanley singled out Wammock and Hassan as examples of team leadership. "Wammock is a great asset to the team. He works hard and he's always plugging. He's good for the team."

About Hassan he said, "He's doing a tremendous job and helping me out a lot. He's a real good captain. He's a good leader."

"I think if anybody wants to see some good tennis, they should come out and see some of our matches."

The team practices and plays all home matches at the Byrd Park courts.

March 3-23, 1987

First-hand account!

By Timothy Redmond & Alex Bolling
Rugby Players

The VCU rugby football team opened up the 1987 season with an awesome 19-7 home victory over Wahington and Lee on Saturday, Feb. 28.

As the two teams took the field under the darkened winter sky, one could almost taste the tension. The crowd was quiet, perhaps too quiet. In the distance a dog barked.

Tim Redmond drew first blood for VCU on a spectacular 20-meter run that he will be talking about for quite some time.

Winger Robby Hisel played well, on one occasion juking out his opponent so badly they had to stop the game for five minutes so the guy could look around for his jockstrap.

The VCU backs have a number of fresh faces this year, including Rusty Jones, who was last seen tattooing his opponent's butt to the ground. The pack played exceptionally well, totally dominating the Generals. Superstar Jeff Herb sent the crowd into a frenzy with his hard-driving running style on a 20-meter try, and his ruthless defensive play.

Washington and Lee rallied late in the game with a kick-for-point and a try. Alex "Frenchie" Bolling nipped the comeback in the bud, however, punching the ball in from five meters.

The rugby team has begun the 1987 season on a good note. For a number of the veterans, it will be the last season. Home games are played on Cary Street Field on Saturdays, and Jefe Stephens has promised to give five dollars to every fan who comes out to see us. (He's lying.)

Rec Notes: powerlifting

By Pete Bassett
Staff Writer

Sonya Banks, a junior pre-med student majoring in biology here, didn't start seriously training with weights until last December. Despite that, she nearly won the women's competition at the Recreational Sports powerlifting tournament at the Cary Street Gym last Sunday, Feb. 22. Banks finished a close second to Dana Lowe.

When I hear the term "powerlifting," an image of fat Russians squatting down to lift some incredible amount of weight comes to mind. However, after witnessing the tournament last Sunday, my idea of the sport has changed dramatically.

To be honest, I was expecting a bunch of over-developed muscles, as well as egos, at the event. But the competitors were well-built, lean athletes.

There were almost as many females as males competing, and the ladies proved their might in the same three events: the bench press, dead lift, and squat.

"I mainly started weight lifting to improve my body work and tone," said

Banks. She entered this, her first competition, with the same attitude shown by the other contestants. It was more of a personal challenge instead of a grudge match against one another; participants continuously cheered on and encouraged each other.

When asked if she was worried about becoming huge and intimidating to men, Banks emphatically replied "No" with a smile.

That basically sums up the philosophy of the competitors. If you're going to place a stigma on them because you don't understand why they do it, or because you're jealous or insecure, then the hell with you.

A powerlifter is not a moose who does nothing but heave dumbbells all day. For instance, Sonya is interested in other sports, particularly basketball.

Although Banks finished second in a close call, the Cary Street Gym staff member was pleased with her performance overall.

Banks' top bench press was 125 lbs., she made a 235-lb. lift in the dead lift, and her top squat was 185 lbs. More power to Sonya and all others who competed.

Scoreboard

Baseball

VCU 10, Christopher Newport 1
Feb. 27

Tennis

VCU d. Atlantic Christian, 7-2
Feb. 20

VCU d. UR, 5-4
Feb. 25

Rec Notes

Men's Basketball

Booze and Snooze 54, Blind Ambition 53
Rage 63, Runnin Rebels 61
Buckets 74, Hardcore 57
Show-U-Rite 72, MCV 70
Blazers 53, Men of Seven 42
PF's 39, SPE-Too 24
Shooting Stars 45, Sigma Phi Epsilon 40
The Fish 49, AKL-The Wasteoids 25
Capt. Crunch Bunch 75, AKL 30
The Fish 66, PF Too 38
Capt. Crunch Bunch 51, Heads 48
PF Too 63, KDR #2 26

Racquetball

Men's Final: C. Kilmartin d. T. Batt
Women's Final: K. Goodrich d. L. Saab

If you're in town over spring break, go see the VCU Late Great All-Stars take on the Washington Redskins basketball team, the D.C. Warriors. Players scheduled to appear include Kelvin Bryant, Art Monk and Gary Clark from the Redskins, and Calvin Duncan, Edmund Sherod and Monte Knight for VCU; there will be an autograph session after the game.

The contest is Monday, March 9, at 7 p.m. at the Ashe Center. Tickets are only \$4, and are available in Richmond at the ticket office in the Franklin Street Gym and at all C. P. Dean stores. The money goes to the VCU Athletic Scholarship Fund.

Bill Hawkes

Due to the pressure of deadlines for this newspaper, the following preview of the upcoming NCAA men's college basketball tournament is being written before conference tournaments and the issuing of NCAA tournament bids. As a result, the opinions stated herein are likely to be quickly outpaced by the course of events.

Few events in college athletics surpass the excitement, suspense, and hype of the NCAA men's college basketball tournament. Each year, 64 of the best teams in the nation gather in four regional tournaments to decide the "Final Four," and each year the results have a certain amount of predictability. Most years, there are a number of almost-sure things, teams so loaded with talent and experience that they seem virtually certain to reach the promised land of the Final Four.

Every year, as well, there are certain unheralded squads who capture the public's imagination and one crowded hour of glory as the dark horse candidates. Of

the former, recent years have seen the likes of UNC, Georgetown, Duke, and Kansas crowned by the Top Twenty polls as certain Final Four members. However, rarely has anyone predicted that an N.C. State or a Villanova would rise to the top. That, however, is the delight of a 64-team single elimination tournament: it is wide open for an underdog to defy all odds and triumph. This year is slightly different from most previous years in that there is no obvious choice as the most likely team to win it all. Clearly, UNC, UNLV, Indiana, and others are highly ranked and tapped by many as most likely to reach the finals, but I think that 1987 will be the year of the dark horse.

What makes a team an excellent dark horse candidate? I think that there are a number of important ingredients. One of the most important is defense, predicated either on quickness or discipline. Good defense can keep a club in a game against a team with better athletes, and control or frustrate an offense-minded opponent.

Further, a dark horse needs senior leadership. Frequently, teams will have had a good recruiting year several years prior, only to be regularly slaughtered against the nation's best in conference play (Villanova in the Big East, N.C. State in the ACC). In the tournament, however, each club is likely to face teams unfamiliar with their style of play. Seniors, often players who have played and even

started together for several years in a row, are well placed in such a situation to win early tournament games. Success breeds success, and that thing called momentum begins to gather on a team's side, especially when it begins to think of itself as a "team of destiny," as did both N.C. State and Villanova when they won national championships as heavy underdogs.

In addition, this year I think it will be important for any team to be able to shoot well outside to take advantage of the very short three point line, which by itself could spark several upsets of highly ranked teams by relative unknowns. This, then, is the purpose of this article: to suggest who the big winners, the big losers, and the big surprises of this year's college tournament will be.

First, let us look at the three top-ranked teams. UNC, Indiana, and UNLV must be seen as favorites among the coaches and sportswriters who vote for the AP and UPI top twenty polls. Of the three, I think only UNC will reach the Final Four. The Tarheels have senior leadership in Kenny Smith, youth and inside power in J.R. Reid, and one of the best coaches in the country. Their ability to hit both the inside shot and the three-pointer should overwhelm most of their early opponents, and their experience, depth and strength should outlast most of their late-round foes. The only knock I might put on UNC is that they have a

tendency in many games to apparently lose concentration and turn the ball over several times in a row. No team in the country, however, is better at righting itself when things go wrong, and if the national tournament can't keep their attention, nothing can. Indeed, if anything, I think this tournament might be theirs to lose.

UNLV, despite their number-one ranking, plays an undisciplined style of basketball that eschews good defense in favor of a potent high scoring attack and a lot of individual play. There is little question that they are a team loaded with good athletes, but sooner or later they may meet a team adept at shaping the tempo of a game and lose to an underdog in an uncomfortably slow-paced match. Their gaudy record has come at the expense of some of the weakest teams in the nation, and I question their ability to play consistently with the best.

At Indiana, I am inclined to believe coach Bobby Knight's comment that his team is basically a group of over-achievers. Indiana has played very poorly against weak Big Ten opponents of late, and only in their recent defeat of Iowa shown any sign of life. Senior guard Steve Alford may have shaken off his recent scoring slump, but when he has an off night the entire team struggles. I think both Indiana

See NCAA page 17

Commonwealth Times

Softball '87

It's not just a job, but an adventure

By Jim Ellis
Sports Editor

Head softball coach Chris Schroeder wants just two things this season: a .500 record and a field to call her own.

"We've never had a winning season here [in three years]. We didn't have a good season last year," Schroeder said in a recent interview, and the team is small and young this year, consisting entirely of two seniors, one junior, three sophomores, and five freshmen. That's 11 players for a nine-woman game (this is fast-pitch softball; slow pitch requires 10 players).

"Hopefully we'll have no injuries," Schroeder said.

Schroeder said that defense could carry the Lady Rams this season, citing short-stop Lisa Albright and second baseman Laura Hevener, sophomores. "Those two have been working real well in practice together, and they both can hit the ball."

Assistant coach Scott Brunet said moving Sharon Waltman from catcher to third base and Kelly White from the infield to the outfield has strengthened the defense further. In addition, he said, "Our pitchers are strong defensively. We're strong up the middle."

But the key to fast-pitch softball, as the name implies, is pitching, and Schroeder is worried about VCU's pitching this season. Some of the pitchers the Lady Rams will see this season will be whipping the ball in at 70 to 80 miles per hour.

"We might throw 40 to 45, which is a whole lot slower," said Schroeder. While the slow speed throws off the timing of opponents who practice against their own fast pitchers, the Lady Rams will experience a similar effect when they face the speedy pitchers after practicing against their own slower teammates, Schroeder said.

"I'm just asking our pitchers to be consistent and throw strikes," Schroeder said.

The other concern for Schroeder is where her team's home games will be played. Originally, she said, the city had agreed to maintain the Parker Field annex for VCU softball (the annex is one block north of the Diamond, adjacent to the Richmond Visitors Center).

"We went out to practice about two weeks ago and there was no backstop.

You need a backstop. Especially at what must be the busiest intersection in Virginia." Although the annex is surrounded by a waist-high fence, a wild underhand pitch or a foul ball had nowhere to go but into North Boulevard.

"Apparently the city of Richmond has a communication problem and no one knew about this backstop being taken down," Schroeder said. The city told her the field would be ready on April 15. Her last home game is April 18.

The city has said the team can use the Henderson softball complex, located adjacent to John Marshall High School. "It's a beautiful complex," Schroeder said, but the switch means contacting visiting schools with new directions to the field. "That's the hard part about coming from an urban school like this — you don't have your own facilities."

Win or lose, here's betting the 1987 softball team becomes a *real* close unit.

VCU starts the season with a home doubleheader against George Mason at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, March 17. The game is slated for the Henderson complex.

Men end hoop season

By Jim Ellis
Sports Editor

BOWLING GREEN, KY — Fifth-seeded UNC-Charlotte blitzed fourth-seeded VCU by shooting 61 percent from the field (30 of 49) as they pulled away early in the second half and won easily, 88-73, on Thursday, Feb. 26.

It was the second game played in the first round of the Sun Belt Conference tournament, and the fourth meeting of the year between the two teams.

VCU head coach Mike Pollio tried to mix his defenses against the 49ers more than in previous games, and the strategy seemed to work at the start of the game. The 49ers were missing shots and moving poorly on offense, while the Rams were finding Phil Stinnie (29 points, 7 rebounds) inside and outside and building a 19-14 advantage.

But UNCC's guards — Jeff West (10 points), Keith Williams (11) and Byron Dinkins (13, 3 of 5 three-pointers) — came alive. With VCU defenders playing soft to prevent penetration, the 49ers started hitting open outside shots. When VCU's defense challenged them, they penetrated the lane and dished to centers Dan Plondke (16 points) or Ray Gromlowicz (8).

"We gambled that they wouldn't be able to hit from the outside today and they did," Pollio said afterward. "We followed the game plan and it didn't work."

"The key to the game was the start of the second half," Pollio said. "We missed three layups and they came down and scored. They broke our back."

UNCC led by six at the half, 41-35, and scored their first points of the second half on a breakaway layup by Williams who was fouled by Bruce Allen. Williams converted for a 44-35 lead.

Stinnie answered for the Rams on a jumper, then Michael Milling (20 points) hit a three-pointer to make UNCC's lead 47-37. A 49er teal and break on VCU's next possession was thwarted, but UNCC scored off the ensuing inbounds play when Ronnie Bellamy (10 points) hit from the corner for a 49-37 lead.

Stinnie lost the ball on VCU's next trip down the floor, then Allen was called for blocking and VCU asked for a timeout, having been outscored 8-2 over the first 3:43 of the second half.

The Rams had a couple of chances to stay in the game after UNCC turnovers, but they gave the ball right back over the next few minutes, and when VCU put UNCC in the bonus with over 11 minutes to go trailing 54-41, the suspense evaporated.

"We're just burned out," Pollio said, citing a long 30-game schedule and intense pre-season workouts and summer league play. "We haven't played well in the last two weeks."

"In retrospect, 17 wins in a rebuilding year is not bad. With Phil Stinnie back next year, we expect to be better."

Pollio has said that he is excited about next year's recruits. "We've got 14 major big-time players we're after. I think it's shaping up to be a really good year. If we get the people we're talking with, it'll be the best year ever for recruiting," Pollio said in an interview before the Sun Belt tournament. "We're looking first for guards that can shoot the basketball," Pollio said. The next position he would like to fill is forward, to find someone who can complement Stinnie.

Pollio also said that reserve center Martin Henlan has shown tremendous improvement in practice this year, and has a shot at the starting role next season. "How good he'll be depends on how hard he works during the summer. He's extremely intelligent; he soaks it up like a sponge."

The Rams finish in fourth place in the Sun Belt Conference, 17-14 overall. Stinnie made the second-team all-conference team, the only Ram to do so. Although the school athletic staff has kept the NIT selection committee informed about VCU this year, a tournament bid for the Rams is extremely unlikely after ending the season with three losses. No matter what happens in the SBC tournament final, look for Western Kentucky, UAB, and Jacksonville in the NCAA tournament, with UNCC probably going to the NIT, although an NCAA bid for them is a possibility.

NCAA

(from page 16)

and UNLV are ripe for big upsets at the hands of some as-yet-unknown teams who will be giant-killers.

Other top teams who deserve mention include Clemson, Oklahoma, Duke, Purdue, and Navy. Clemson will surprise many teams who haven't seen them play this year. The Tiger attack has strength both inside and outside, but rests too heavily on one man, Horace Grant. If he gets in foul trouble, the Clemson inside game is fatally compromised, and it seems unlikely that he can avoid such foul trouble throughout the entire tournament.

Duke has experienced leadership in Tommy Amaker and was not expected to do this well after losing so many players from last year's excellent squad. But Duke sorely misses the play of the injured Billy King, and without his help probably will not do well in the national tournament.

Purdue is a solid team that has survived the Big Ten wars this year and sports a late-season victory over Indiana. If they can put their experience and strength to good use, they could be a team to reckon with.

Oklahoma, a team that scored 133 points in one game this year, may be another strong entry. Their lack of defense will hurt them against a truly disciplined team, but their raw ability to put the rock in the hole could propel them past many teams and into the Final Four. The biggest problem for the Sooners may be their tendency to play to the level of their opposition, but if they get by the early rounds, I would look at them as a serious contender.

Navy has the best big man in the country in David Robinson, who will be a sure-fire NBA star after his service obligations are fulfilled. However, Robinson has a disturbing tendency to ignore the defensive aspects of the game and want to play offense only (so naturally he will fit right in with the pros). The supporting cast is not that impressive, and I believe that one aircraft carrier and four light cruisers do not a task force make, as the Naval Academy should well know.

Who will be the giant-killers this year? I think among their ranks could be Notre Dame, UCLA, UAB, and Virginia (yes, UVA). Notre Dame has turned in some great performances on national TV this year and has the ability to control the tempo of a game, forcing the opposition to play at their level. They have gotten

inspirational leadership from guard David Rivers, and are statistically one of the best defensive teams in the country.

UCLA won the Pac-10 and should enter the NCAA tournament with a lot of momentum. Their early season victory over UNC was simply one of the finest-played college basketball games I have ever seen, and they may surprise some teams who take them lightly. They seem to have found new life under coach Walt Hazzard, who has them playing an exciting, well-coached brand of team basketball.

UAB is a well-coached and dangerous team, as Mr. Jim Ellis wrote in his Sun Belt Tournament preview. Especially if they should triumph in their conference tournament, they could be a team to upset some of the thoroughbreds.

Virginia has suffered from the lack of a strong inside game this year, but their style of play is sometimes so anachronistic (yet methodical) that they control a more talented opponent and remain close enough to pull out the upset. They seem almost fated to be seeded in the West Regional, where they could well meet UNLV. If this happens, I'd put my money on UVA winning a game with the final score in the 70s.

But beyond the giant-killers, who might be a good bet as a dark horse Final Four team? Year after year, the SEC seems to produce an LSU or an Auburn, some team that jells at tournament time and surprises everyone. Look for whoever wins the SEC tournament to be a good choice as a Final Four contestant. UCLA and Notre Dame, as mentioned above, could have a good shot at a berth, and each year there is some completely unexpected team like Cleveland State last year that seems to come out of nowhere to reach the summit of college hoops. This year's Cleveland State could be South West Missouri State, or New Orleans, or...er...Tulsa, coached by...ahem...the legendary J.D. Barnett.

There are a number of other good teams around, such as Temple, TCU, and Pitt. This just seems to be a wide open year, one of the least predictable in recent memory. It's time now, though, to put my predictions on the line. Here is my Final Four: UNC, Purdue, UCLA, and Oklahoma. Final score of the national championship: UCLA 74, UNC 72. And if by some chance it should all happen this way, remember, you heard it here first.

March 3-23, 1987

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Calendar

Thursday the 5th

The Pyramid Dance night
Biograph Cinema "Sid & Nancy" at 5:40 p.m., 7:40 p.m. and 9:40 p.m. And in the other theater, "Ghame Aghan" at 6 p.m., 7:45 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.
Commons Theater The best film of 1985, from the sublime filmmaker Jim Jarmusch, it's "Stranger Than Paradise" at 9 p.m.
Byrd Theatre "On Valentine's Day" at 7:15 p.m. and "1918" at 9:15 p.m.
Richmond Comedy Club Comedian Jeff Cesaro
The Pyramid Lyres, Divine Horsemen and the Organ Grinders
Theatre VCU "Lysistrata" at 8 p.m. in the Performing Arts Centre
9:30 Club (DC) Roomful of Blues
Arena Stage "Glengarry Glen Ross" at 8 p.m. In the Creeger Theatre, "Crime and Punishment" at 8 p.m.

Sunday the 8th

New Horizon Reggae
Biograph Cinema "Sid & Nancy" at 3:40 p.m., 5:40 p.m., 7:40 p.m. and 9:40 p.m. And in the other theater, "Hollywood Erotic Film Festival" at 3:45, 5:45, 7:45 and 9:45 p.m.
Byrd Theatre "Otello" at 2:30, 5:00, 7:15 and 9:30 p.m.
Richmond Marriott The 3rd annual wood Erotic Film Festival from noon to 9 p.m. in the Grande Ballroom.
East Side Theater (DC) Dead Milkmen
Theatre IV Last day of "Isn't It Romantic" at 2:30 p.m.
Warner Stage (DC) Dwight Yoakam
9:30 Club (DC) Hoodoogurus
Arena Stage "Glengarry Glen Ross" at 7:30 p.m. and in the Creeger Theatre, "Crime and Punishment" at 7:30 p.m.

Friday the 6th

Rockitz Acceleration in dance with DJ Randall B.
The Pyramid Dance night
Biograph Cinema "Sid & Nancy" at 5:40 p.m., 7:40 p.m. and 9:40 p.m. And in the other theater, "Ghame Aghan" at 6 p.m., 7:45 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. And at midnight, "Hollywood Erotic Film Festival."
Byrd Theatre Placido Domingo in "Otello" at 7:15 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.
Paragon Pub Dickie and the Dewdrops
Theatre VCU presents "Lysistrata" at 8 p.m. in the Performing Arts Centre
Richmond Comedy Club Comedian Jeff Cesaro
9:30 Club (DC) concrete blonde!
Last day to withdraw and get a "W!"

Saturday the 7th

The Pyramid Dance night
Byrd Theatre "Otello" at 2:30 p.m., 5 p.m., 7:15 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.
Biograph Cinema "Sid & Nancy" at 2:30 p.m., 5 p.m., 7:15 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. And in the other theater, "Ghame Aghan" at 6 p.m., 7:45 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. And at midnight, "Hollywood Erotic Film Festival."
Theatre VCU presents "Lysistrata" at 8 p.m. in the PAC, but go earlier in the week cause this show is already sold out!
Richmond Comedy Club Comedian Jeff Cesaro
9:30 Club (DC) March Violets w/Flesh
Arena Stage (DC) David Mamet's "Glengarry Glen Ross" at 2:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. In the Creeger Theatre, "Crime and Punishment" at 2:30 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Wednesday the 4th

Bus Stop Newsflash! They've redecorated again and it looks great! But the DJ still won't play anything but British "New Wave!"
Rockitz Del Fuegos with concrete blonde. The latter is the best new band of 1987! Two shows 8 & 10:15 p.m.
Biograph Cinema "Sid & Nancy" at 5:40 p.m., 7:40 p.m. and 9:40 p.m. And in the other theater, "Caravaggio" at the same times.
Byrd Theatre "On Valentine's Day" at 7:15 p.m. and "1918" at 9:15 p.m.
Richmond Comedy Club You've seen him on Letterman, it's comedian Jeff Cesaro.
Theatre VCU presents "Lysistrata" at 8 p.m. in the Performing Arts Centre.
Highland Park Plaza Community Center Self-Defense class for women at 7:30 p.m. For info call 780-4466.
Hochkiss Field Community Center Crime Prevention Program at 6:30 p.m. For info call 780-4466.
Arena Stage (DC) David Mamet's "Glengarry Glen Ross" at 8 p.m. In the Creeger Theatre, "Crime and Punishment" at 8 p.m.

Tuesday the 3rd

The Pyramid Donnie from Plan 9
Rockitz Dance-O-Rama with Randall B. \$1.00, but free before 10 p.m.
Anderson Gallery "Police State," exhibit by Sue Coe, has been extended until March 6
Virginia Museum "Giants of German Expressionist Art" exhibit, runs through March 8. Also, "Old Russian Enamels: Revival in 19th century Moscow" exhibit, runs through March 8.
Biograph Cinema The long awaited director of "Repo Man," at 5:40 p.m., 7:40 p.m. and 9:40 p.m. And in the other theater, "Caravaggio" at the same times.
Tobacco Company Club College night from 8 p.m. until 1 a.m. with 25 cent drink specials and \$50 giveaways at 9, 10 and 11 p.m.
Theatre VCU presents "Lysistrata" at 8 p.m. in the Performing Arts Centre
Randolph Community Center Plant Care program at 5 p.m. For info call 780-6227.
Pace Memorial Church Food For Thought: Dialogue Luncheon Series
Prof. Emeritus, Physics, VCU, from noon to 1 p.m.
Arena Stage (DC) David Mamet's "Glengarry Glen Ross" at 8 p.m. And in the Creeger Theatre, "Crime and Punishment" at 8 p.m.

Monday the 9th

New Horizon Dead night
Rockitz Monday Night Disco!
Biograph Cinema "Sid & Nancy" at 5:40 p.m., 7:40 p.m. and 9:40 p.m. And in the other theater, "Parting Glances" at 6 p.m. and 9:20 p.m.
Tuesday the 10th
Rockitz Dance-O-Rama
Biograph Cinema "Sid & Nancy" at 5:40 p.m., 7:40 p.m. and 9:40 p.m. And in the other theater, "Parting Glances" at 6 p.m. and 9:20 p.m.
The Pyramid Descendants with Sordid Doctrine

Upcoming Events

March 11 Firehose with DC3 at the Pyramid
March 12 APB (dance band) at Rockitz and Jimmy Thackeray and the Assassins at New Horizon Cafe.
March 13 The Limit at Rockitz
March 15 "The Official Story" at 5 & 7:30 p.m. in the Commons Theater
March 16 Czeslaw Milosz, winner of the Nobel Prize for literature will speak at 4 p.m. in the PAC on "Literature and Politics: a discussion. At 8 p.m., "The Poet's Voice: a reading in English and Polish" at Kellogg (U of R).
March 17 St. Patrick's Day Irish Children's Summer Program Benefit at the Empire Theatre from 8-12 midnight. Bands featured are the Bopcats, Apocow-lypsio and Dika Newlin and much more.

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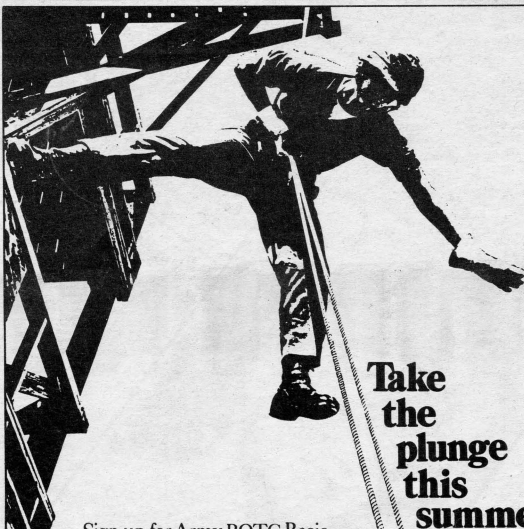
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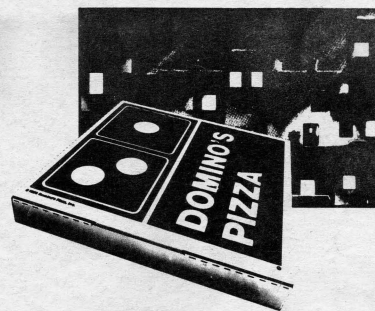
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