

WEATHER



MONDAY - Mostly sunny.
Highs in the upper 20s. West winds between 15 mph and 20 mph.

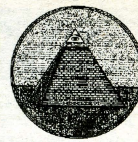


TUESDAY - Partly cloudy.
Highs in the 20s. Lows in the teens.

Commonwealth TIMES

INSIDE

• Are Ramen Noodles getting you down? Check out EYE's money-making tips. See pages 8-9.



MONDAY, February 6, 1995

The Student Press of Virginia Commonwealth University

Vol. 26, No. 48

Metro reaches deal with VCU, Va. Tech

Schools to receive at least \$960,000, will resign from league

Brian J. French
CT SPORTS EDITOR

Finis.

The Metropolitan Collegiate Athletic Conference has reached a deal with VCU and Virginia Tech, avoiding a return trip to Richmond District Court.

The deal, drafted as a result of arbitration meetings last Thursday at the law offices of Mays and Valentine, calls for both VCU and Virginia Tech to receive \$960,000 each from the five other Metro schools. The two schools also will split \$350,000 at a time yet to be determined by the league presidents.

In return, VCU and Virginia Tech will "resign" from the Metro, effective June 30. From there, the remaining five Metro schools (Louisville, Southern Mississippi, Tulane, UNC Charlotte and South Florida) would be free to invite DePaul, Alabama-Birmingham, Saint Louis, Marquette, Cincinnati, Memphis and Houston to form a 12-team "superconference."

"I am naturally disappointed that we will not be included in the new conference," said VCU President Eugene P. Trani. "But if there was to be a cash settlement, this is the one that we would do well by."

VCU Athletic Director Richard Sander said, "Once we determined that we would not be included in the new conference, then this decision was about as good as we could hope for."

METRO continued to page 11 ►



Bill Buckman/Commonwealth Times

YORKSHIRE PUDDING — Former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher addresses Friday a joint session of the Virginia General Assembly. Gov. George Allen and his wife Susan flanked Thatcher as she spoke in front of the Governor's Mansion. See story page 3.

Senate kills abortion bills

Martha Shelton

CT SPECTRUM EDITOR/CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

Pro-life activists usually can be seen in one of three places: picketing a local abortion clinic, vocalizing opinions on national television talk shows or sitting in a courtroom.

But in Richmond, pro-life and pro-choice activists also can be found at the Capitol addressing legislative committees.

After considering two separate bills detailing procedures governing abortions for minors, the Senate Education and Health Committee defeated both. These bills would have required a minor to obtain written or oral parental consent before having an abortion.

During the meeting, two 17-year-old females discussed past, present and future reactions that could occur among teenagers if these bills became law.

The women, representing a Planned Parenthood chapter in Virginia, touched on parental notification of abortions for minors as well as allowing a judge to decide when a minor could be exempted from this requirement.

"I am really lucky — I have an excellent relationship with my parents," said one of the women who identified herself only as Catherine. "However, if I found out today that I was pregnant, I don't think I would

even tell them."

Catherine further described the lengths young women might go to if the legislation was passed.

"Washington D.C. is only two hours away, and I would definitely go there or anywhere else I could to get an abortion," she said.

Fia, the other teen representative, quickly gained a more serious tone as she continued with her recollection of her parents divorce proceedings when she was 9 years old.

"My mother's lawyer asked me to talk to the judge to tell him what I thought I needed and to speak for my brother who was 7 and didn't want to talk to the judge," Fia said.

This young woman said she expected a much more respectful acceptance by the judge than what she received.

"What I got was an insensitive man who sat there and didn't even look at me and did other work while I told him what I wanted," she told the senators. "And it took five minutes instead of the 25-minute time slot I was allotted."

Fia agreed with Catherine's depiction of the serious nature of these bills and the options left for young women if either bill was enacted.

ABORTION continued to page 4 ►

Meeting focuses on CT editorials

Matthew J. Weeks

CT SENIOR WRITER

The credibility and content of the Commonwealth Times dominated discussion at the first meeting of the Council of Organizational Presidents Thursday night.

L. Victor Collins, interim director of student activities, invited all student organization presidents to the meeting to "open the process of communication," he said after the meeting.

"We exist in an environment where people are supposed to debate differences and share ideas in a hospitable and civil manner," he told those present at the meeting. "One thing that I want to try to guarantee is an atmosphere where we can talk about whatever it is that is on our mind."

Although Collins stated the topic of the meeting was responsibility of civility within a diverse environment, those in attendance focused on editorials previously printed in the CT.

The editorials questioned funding for the Black Student Alliance and the Black Caucus.

Collins said he organized the meeting in response to student concerns about the CT that were presented to him.

Black Student Alliance President Kateresea Calhoun and Rwana Bay, president of Phi Alpha Psi Sorority Inc., asked

CT members about the accuracy of facts that are presented in the newspaper.

"There are students out there who don't know anything about Black Caucus or BSA," Bay said. "They might not know anything about any student organization, and they are going to take what they read in the student media papers as (fact)."

Kendra Johnson, a representative from the Women's Caucus, not only criticized the CT's BSA editorial, but also the CT's articles.

"Aside from the editorials, I think that the overall articles are lacking in the integrity and caliber that you all should be putting out," she said. "The climate of the paper is argumentative, (and) the actual articles are not unbiased."

Dan Jasman, a member of the Alexandrian Society, however, countered that CT staffers are not perfect.

"You must remember the CT is a student organization like any other," he said. "This is a learning process (for them). They make mistakes."

Gage Harter, CT executive editor, said that he stands by the editorials.

"If I have anything to apologize about the BSA editorial, is that we were not present at their (regular) meeting," he said, adding that the editorial may have been

MEETING continued to page 4 ►

WORLD/NATION



• Quake jolts Wyoming

ROCK SPRINGS, Wyo. — An earthquake centered near a mining area left two workers missing.

The 5.4 magnitude earthquake hit southwestern Wyoming about 150 miles east of Salt Lake City about 8:26 a.m., the National Earthquake Information Center in Golden, Colo., reported.

Two miners were missing in the Solvay Minerals mine, officials said.

• Nurse pleads guilty to hospital rapes

INVERNESS, Fla. — As his victims looked on, a recovery room nurse pleaded guilty Friday to raping seven women while they were under anesthesia and was sentenced to 17 years in prison.

"Hope you burn in hell for the evil deeds you've done," a husband of one of the victims yelled at Bruce Alan Young.

Young, 45, pleaded guilty to seven counts of sexual battery upon a helpless person, the equivalent of rape in Florida, in a deal designed to spare the victims a trial.

Circuit Judge Hale Stancil sentenced Young to 17 years in prison.

• Surgeon general nominee has performed abortions

WASHINGTON — Henry Foster Jr., President Clinton's choice for surgeon general, disclosed Friday that he had performed abortions during nearly 30 years as an obstetrician-gynecologist.

He said he had performed fewer than a

dozen abortions, "primarily to save the lives of the women or because the women had been the victim of rape or incest," Foster said in a statement.

He said he also had delivered more than 10,000 babies.

The disclosure seemed certain to pose obstacles to confirmation for the 61-year-old educator. Foster is acting president of Meharry Medical College in Nashville.

VIRGINIA



• 58-year-old faces 20 sex-related counts

VIRGINIA BEACH — A 58-year-old man has been charged with more than 20 sex-related crimes involving a 12-year-old girl.

The charges against Antonio S. Galacia include six counts of rape and sodomy, Virginia Beach police said. Galacia also is alleged to have photographed the girl while she was nude or dressed in lingerie.

Galacia, a civilian meat-cutter employed by the Navy, was being held on \$100,000 bail.

• Judge goes one step beyond skateboard fine

ROANOKE — The \$100 fine was bad enough. But what really hurt, Michael J. Lisi said, was what the judge did with his skateboard.

After Lisi was convicted Thursday of skateboarding on a Roanoke sidewalk, General District Judge George Harris ordered the skateboard destroyed.

"I don't think it's fair," said Lisi, 20. "I'm

skateboarding, just trying to pass the time away, when I could have been out dealing drugs or something."

RICHMOND



• Marijuana worth \$80,600 seized in raid

Police confiscated 66 pounds of marijuana with an estimated street value of \$80,600 from a South Boulevard apartment Friday, according to Richmond police.

Juan Antonio Cantu, 42, of the first block of South Boulevard, was charged with possession of marijuana with intent to distribute, according to court records.

Police said Cantu's arrest was the result of cooperation between Chesterfield and Richmond police. Acting on a lead generated in the county, the Richmond police narcotics unit and the Chesterfield narcotics unit raided Cantu's apartment at 4 a.m.

In addition to the drugs, police seized Cantu's records and \$520 in cash, according to Capt. Kenneth E. Jenkins of the Richmond police.

"Cantu was born in Laredo, Mexico, and entered this country approximately 26 years ago. Mr. Cantu stated that he is not a U.S. citizen and that he had resided in Florida, Houston and several locations throughout California," Jenkins said, adding that Cantu has been in Richmond about a year and listed his occupation as painter.

Cantu's bond was set at \$10,000 Friday in Richmond General District Court where he is scheduled to appear for a hearing March 15. The investigation showed that

the marijuana came from the U.S. Southwest, police said.

• 3 students face weapons counts

Three Chesterfield County high school students have been arrested and charged with possessing weapons on school property after Manchester Middle School administrators found them strolling the halls. All three were suspended and recommended for expulsion, a spokeswoman said. Their names and schools were not disclosed.

The incident occurred Jan. 23, police Maj. Dennis McDonald said. Police responded to a call at the school and found an unloaded .25-caliber pistol, a 12-inch machete and a butterfly knife on the youths, he said.

The youths, one 14 and the others 15, did not say why they had the weapons, McDonald said. They said they were there to visit a teacher. One of the 15-year-olds also was charged with trespassing and possession of a beeper.

The 14-year-old was released to his parents, and the two older boys were sent to the Chesterfield Juvenile Detention Home.

CAMPUS



• Trani honors Teig

Eva Teig, a member of the VCU board of visitors, was honored by VCU President Eugene P. Trani at the January board meeting. Teig was recognized for her role as chairman of the annual Athletic Auction in November. The event raised more than \$57,000 for athletic scholarships.

— *Compiled from news sources.*

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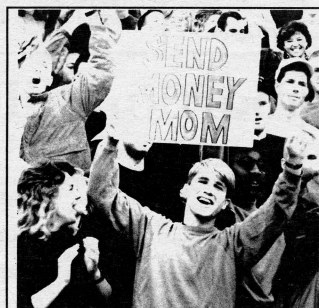
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The Commonwealth TIMES is published Monday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings and distributed throughout VCU and the Fan District. The Mailing address is Commonwealth TIMES, P.O. Box 842010, Richmond, Va. 23284-2010. For advertising call 828-1059 and for editorial offices call 828-1058. To fax call 828-9201. Comments and complaints should be addressed to Gage Harter, executive editor or Diane Giles, managing editor.

FYI

for your information

Lions and Tigers ...

BEARS! are coming to Richmond Feb. 11 at the Science Museum. This engaging exhibit examines the legend, life and true nature of the great grizzly and black bears. Explore America's most potent symbol of the wilderness in various interactive exhibits. See a re-created black bear den and 25 taxidermic mounts of the bears.

Giving the Gift of Life

The Science Museum of Virginia honors Charles R. Drew with a blood drive from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Feb. 9. Drew developed techniques for processing and storing liquid blood plasma. The Virginia Blood Services mobile unit will be on hand. For more information, call 367-1013.

With Honors

Convocation, an annual event at VCU since 1982, is a ceremony honoring all faculty members. Each year four professors receive Distinguished Faculty Awards in the areas of teaching, research, service and overall excellence. This year's ceremony will be at 7:30 p.m. Feb. 9 in the Performing Arts Center.

Amen

Area Civitan Clubs will have a Clergy Appreciation Week Luncheon at 12:30 p.m. Feb. 13 at The Downtown Club at Riverfront Plaza, 915 E. Byrd St., West Tower, 20th floor. Lunch costs \$9 and the guest speaker is James McDonald, executive director of the Virginia Council of Churches.

Flying Vasquez Brothers

At 7 p.m. Feb. 16 at the Virginia Aviation Museum, Korean War veterans Woody Crockett and John J. Suggs will share their experiences as Tuskegee Airmen. These men faced both official and unofficial racism as they flew in the newly independent and newly integrated U.S. Air Force. For more information, call 236-3622.

Help Wanted

The Direct Marketing Association of Washington Educational Foundation is seeking candidates for the John Swain Memorial Scholarship. A \$3,000 scholarship will be awarded to a student interested in pursuing a career in direct marketing. Applications are available from Cooperative Education and Internships, 827 W. Franklin St., Founders Hall, second floor. All applications are due by Feb. 24. Applicants should have a minimum grade point average of 3.0, junior or senior classification and be enrolled in a college in Washington, D.C., Maryland or Virginia. For more information, call 828-1579.

Thatcher tackles international politics

Former Prime Minister visits Richmond

Scott Bass

CT NEWS EDITOR/CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

Like the calm of the fury, she descended upon the Capitol amid a political hailstorm.

Both the General Assembly's House and Senate bestowed complete attention Friday on former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, an honor even Gov. George Allen passed on at the beginning of the session.

Thatcher reminded bedraggled legislators of Virginia's rich history and its roots in democracy.

"Virginia, after all, was the crucible of constitutional liberty. It was from your soil that so many of the great teachers of democracy arose," she said, noting Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, George Mason and others. "These are men whose names will forever echo down the history of democracy."

"When I consider all that this place has given to democracy, I am moved to say that in spirit I am a Virginian."

Thatcher, current chancellor of the College of William and Mary, came to Capitol Square as Allen and his Republican allies still fumed over the death of the governor's tax cut, buried the day before in the Democratically controlled House and Senate finance committees.

Thatcher mentioned nothing about Virginia's current political climate and instead addressed politics in the international arena.

"The victory of freedom and of the West in the Cold War, and the collapse of communism through most of the world was the most profound and beneficial revolution of my lifetime," Thatcher said, cautioning about the widening gap of living standards between Western countries and the former Eastern bloc countries.

"The contrast between Western coun-

tries whose living standards have surged and those of the former communist bloc still suffering their legacy of oppression, poverty and pollution is stark indeed."

The former prime minister added that she felt the wave of communism in years past was "totally unnecessary."

"Neither the French revolution of 1789, nor the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, added anything of value to — though they subtracted much from — the principles of the American Declaration of Independence," she said.

"It is to this Assembly of Virginia, not to the mobs and demagogues of the Old World, that those seeking to improve the human condition should have looked."

Thatcher said the political and economic situation in Russia "reminds us how uneven is that path from tyranny to democracy." "The process of reform has proved harder than either we or they had imagined. Events in recent months have demonstrated that we should be cautious in expecting Russia's inevitable progress to freedom."

Speaking out against the Russian onslaught in Chechnya, Thatcher said, will be welcomed by those in Russia who truly believe in democracy and freedom.

"It is not a question of whether the Chechens have acted lawfully or whether Russia has been provoked," she told the legislators. "What matters is that Russia has been wrong in its response, and wrong in a way that has left thousands dead."

Thatcher noted that "NATO has served us well" and should continue as a defense mechanism for the West.

But more importantly, Thatcher warned legislators not to let their "moral sense to grow numb."

"As we witness the atrocities in Bosnia, the war in Chechnya and the continuing oppression in those few countries still under the yoke of communism, we see how real the dangers still are," she said. "Let these be to us, to borrow Jefferson's powerful words, as a 'fireball in the night,' waking us to our political duties and our moral responsibilities."

Margaret Hilda Thatcher

The Right Honorable Baroness Thatcher of Kesteven

- British Prime Minister 1979 to 1990.
- Elected to Parliament as a Conservative in 1959.
- Served as secretary of state for education and science in Edward Heath's cabinet.
- Elected first woman leader of the Conservative party in 1975.
- First female British prime minister.
- Served longer than any other British prime minister in the 20th century.
- Her legacy, known as the "Thatcher Revolution," went some way toward dismantling Britain's postwar welfare state.
- Studied chemistry at Oxford and later became a lawyer.

Thatcher's Message

• "Virginia, after all, was the crucible of constitutional liberty. It was from your soil that so many of the great teachers of democracy arose. These are men whose names will forever echo down the history of democracy. When I consider all that this place has given to democracy I am moved to say that in spirit I am a Virginian."

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Church continues rebuilding effort

Robert Wilhelm

CT STAFF WRITER

Sometimes tragedy brings people closer together. When lightning struck St. James's Episcopal Church on West Franklin Street on July 13, 1994, that is exactly what happened.

Lightning caused a fire, seriously damaged the church, forcing the congregation to find a new place to worship until construction could be completed.

Since the fire, people have been attending services at the Temple Beth Ahabah, just up West Franklin Street.

"The spirit is up and attendance has actually increased," said Robert G. Trache, rector of St. James.

Though debris from the fire has been cleared, the rebuilding construction still is not under way.

Trache said the church is having a problem with the insurance company in reaching a settlement, but he expects construction to begin in late spring and to be completed by late summer.

"You can't just start building — you have to have plans for everything," he said.

Before construction can begin, Trache said, plans have to be drawn up, finalized and then approved, all of which adds to the cost and the time. The rector could not estimate the overall cost since more problems arose as debris was cleared.

Nevertheless, the congregation has embarked on things that might not have taken place were it not for the fire.

At the annual St. James's Christmas pageant this year, the role of baby Jesus was played by a newborn Jewish girl, whose parents are both members of the Beth Ahabah congregation. This was a first for St. James.

St. James and the Beth Ahabah congregations also participate in joint study groups. In addition, Larry Kushner, a well-known rabbi in the Jewish community, will preach at St. James Feb. 19. Trache credits Kushner with teaching him more about Jesus than any of his preachers or teachers.

A program establishing a relationship between St. James and Fort Lee Baptist

Church was in the infant stage at the time of the fire. Fort Lee is a predominantly black church in Church Hill, where Richmond's Mayor Leonidas B. Young II is minister. "It's one of the most innovative and exciting things we have going on now," Trache said. "We began talking about it in May and began in earnest after the fire."

Trache noted that the support from the community has been instrumental in the rebuilding effort. He called the community's response "gracious" and "committed."

Saying a church is not just a place for prayer, the rector explained that it gives people a "sense of a place in the city" and is a commitment to outreach and mission in the city.

"People are searching for something to understand — a connection for something beyond themselves," he said.

One mother of three summed it up as a way to develop socialization skills for her children:

"Maybe if I take them to church they'll stay out of trouble," she said. "Mom can't always be home, but He can."

Panhellenic wants to improve image

Coordinating children's projects

Jenifer L. Vancil
CT STAFF WRITER

With several new service projects in the works, VCU's Panhellenic Council is looking to improve its image and increase interest in sororities.

At their weekly meeting last night, Mary Crishock, Phi Sigma Sigma delegate, encouraged the other members to improve the visibility of the organization.

"If we are going to do some PR (public relations) together as Panhellenic, we need to start doing it," she said. "We aren't seen on this campus."

The group is coordinating projects for children including a clothing drive for foster children and a child-care list for faculty.

"I think it would be a positive thing for us to publish a list," said Panhellenic Council President Amy Lewis.

Elizabeth C. Bell, assistant director for student activities who also oversees Greek

affairs, said child-care lists are popular at the University of Richmond and the University of Virginia.

"We used to do one and when new faculty would come in they would usually call the Panhellenic office for the child-care list," she said.

The biggest project for the council this semester is an Easter egg hunt. Children from the Fan area as well as children in the Adopt-a-School and Carver Promise programs will be invited to an April 15 egg hunt on the grounds of the Business Building and the student commons.

Before the event can become a reality, though, the money must be raised, so the members of VCU's Panhellenic sororities are organizing a doughnut sale March 6 and March 7 to bring in money. Some of the money raised will be used to cover expenses for the South Eastern Panhellenic Conference in Atlanta.

Council members said they hope to garner support from local businesses, including grocery stores and restaurants to pay for supplies and prizes.

Money allowing, the delegates also would like to offer T-shirts to the participating children.

ABORTION

continued from page 1

"I would rather take a trip to New York to get an abortion than talk to a judge about it," she said.

Sen. Jane H. Woods, R-Fairfax, concluded the discussion by saying this subject has been brought before this committee many times in the past five years.

"I guess I feel very concerned that there was an opportunity last year to ensure that youngsters were not jeopardized and that, in fact, some abortions would have been

avoided," Woods said.

But last year, Woods said, the committee received only one bill and no negotiation or discussion of amendments could be heard in conjunction with it.

"I feel compelled to vote for this bill, but this year will be the last year, because I feel there are compromised language provisions that will do what I said last year that will protect two lives," she said.

After Wood's final comment, the committee defeated the parental notification proposals 8-7, thus enabling minors to continue receiving abortions without parental consent.

MEETING

continued from page 1

misunderstood.

Collins, who moderated the meeting, said that perhaps the newspaper underestimated the response it was going to receive from the editorial.

"You probably didn't understand the sensitivity because you don't have enough diversity when you made the decision," he said.

After the meeting, Johnson expressed her frustration about the Harter's refusal to apologize for writing the editorial.

"For them to say that they stand by that editorial regardless of what we said, and

(they) still call for the dissolution of (the) Black Caucus, is racist to me," she said. "They did not make that statement for the IFC (Interfraternity Council) or any other organization. I think it was just blatant racism."

Collins said the meeting was a success, and that there would be future meetings once every month this semester. He did not say what topics are on tap, but that diversity and unity on campus are front-burners.

"If we can find better, more effective ways to talk to one another, I think we'll be better off," he said.

Harter agreed.

"I think it was necessary," he said. "I hope things are at least clarified (now)."

Greek Calendar

• CONFERENCES:
Adopt-a-School Conference
Time: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Date: Saturday, Feb. 11
Place: University of Richmond

The Southeastern Interfraternity Conference Leadership Academy
Date: March 2 to March 5
Place: Atlanta

The Southeastern Panhellenic Conference (SEPC)
Date: March 20 to April 2
Place: Atlanta

• TRAINING:
TIPS training (ABC Board Program for presidents and social chairs)
Time: 6:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.
Date: Wednesday, Feb. 21

NIC "Right Way Rush" Seminar (presidents, rush chairs, chapter members)

Date: March 25

SAIL Leadership Series (ongoing)

For more information, call the Office of Student Activities at 828-3648

• EVENTS:

Blood Drive

Date: April 11 and April 12

Greek Awards Ceremony

Date: April 23

Midnight Madness

Date: Feb. 24

—Compiled by CT Staff Writer Crista Birmingham.

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Jeff Qureshi

I Want My Money

They came with guns strapped to their hips, ready for the draw. In the blink of an eye, the Virginia General Assembly dropped Gov. George Allen's proposed tax cut.

According to Senate Finance Committee Chairman Hunter B. Andrews, D-Hampton, "I am not willing to sell the future of Virginia for 33 pieces of silver [probably means gold]... I am not going to be crucified on that." Andrews' melodramatic statement casts quite a shadow on Allen's tax plans.

Yet, I believe that he fails to observe a basic tenant in science, conservation of energy. Einstein's Theory of Relativity relates this to mass, which means that we can extend this to money. How's that you ask? Money is supposed to be related to the value of precious metals. While the relationship is no longer 1:1, you can pay \$376.25 in New York and get one ounce of gold. So there is a relationship.

With the complex stuff out of the way, let us now apply the Law of Conservation of Energy (masses) to Allen's proposed tax cut. Calculations point to a saving of \$33 for the average taxpayer, i.e. you and me. Sounds quite worthless. But you multiply that by the number of Virginia taxpayers, and we come up with a whopping \$149 million per year in tax relief. Hmm, \$33 adds up quickly.

The conservation of energy law says that one can neither create nor destroy energy or mass. Applying that theory to money, one cannot create or destroy it. So if the government is not getting it, that

does not mean the dollars just disappear as Andrews would have us believe. In fact, \$149 million has the potential to make more money for the state through transactions and services, all of which are taxed at some level or another.

If we get a tax cut, even as small as \$33 per person, it adds up to quite a large

break, pumping more money into the economy. Of course someone always wants to bring up the impact on government employees. As I see it, they have been living it up at the tax-

payors' expense. I am without great health coverage, lots of holidays, pension and other boni; we could make up the money with cuts in Andrews' salary. Our state congressional leaders make an awful lot of money for but a couple of months work per year. All of us civilians face "competition" in the private sector—a word not spoken in civil service circles, for good reason. There is none!

Tax cuts are good because they leave the average citizens with more control over their lives. If one chooses to spend wisely and save, there will be something to retire on. On the other hand, those lacking in responsibility will have none. The current system rewards such poor behavior and will continue to do so as long as taxes provide not a safety net, but more like a harness hooked up to oxygen, IV, MTV, E!TV the list goes on and on.

To the point, I want my extra \$33 a year. It is my money.

I earned it plain and simple. Get the message?

All of us civilians face "competition" in the private sector. That word is not spoken in civil service circles, for good reason. There is none!

Gage Harter

The Art of Giving

I'm a bad gift giver.

For example, for Christmas my father got the same flannel I bought him last year. I couldn't believe it when he showed me. The shirts were the same colors, the same pattern and the same brand. One was just a size bigger.

Needless to say, he was thrilled. He has never worn the other shirt.

My brother got a Washington Bullets team jersey. I couldn't find Chris Webber's or Rex Chapman's number, so I got him No. 40. Anyone know who that player is? My point exactly.

Plus he's an Orlando Magic fan.

It is not because I don't put a lot of thought into my gifts, it's just I lack a certain degree of taste. What I think is "so cool," is way out of style as a gift. I mean, I'll probably be the guy who buys his wife a used washer and dryer for an anniversary present.

Maybe I should stop watching ESPN so much and turn on MTV more. I might get a sense of what's in.

So as we approach yet another gift-giving day, I tremble in horror. For this day in the middle of February, is "special." It is a day when you select one person to receive a gift that explains all your feelings and emotions. In turn, this person will cherish the gift for years to come.

That's a lot of pressure for bad gift givers.

A box of chocolates, or a teddy bear or a bouquet of flowers seem cliché now. That eliminates many viable options. And it's not like you can get a belt and expect them to hug you till Feb. 15.

What is a good gift?

It has to radiate your personality without being too corny. It has to show a degree of intimacy without making you out to be a horn dog. And it has to touch the heart in a surprising and subtle way like Cupid's own arrow.

Personally I think that a nice scarf would make a great gift.

But someone told me, "that's pretty lame."

This is absolute torture.

Why isn't there a hotline for gift givers? You just call and describe the person you are giving the gift to, and voila, the perfect gift.

And don't you hate the people who know what gifts to get every time. I mean they could buy anyone a gift, even if they don't know that person. I asked one such person. Here are the replies:

Brad Pitt — a big kiss.

Julia Roberts — a dinner for two down the Seine on a rented Bateau Mouché.

David Letterman — a Top Ten list on why he is so wonderful.

Steve Young — a note saying, "this is good for one night of anything you want."

Elle — long silk stockings.

WOW — I never thought it could be like that.

This person should write an advice column on gift giving.

So I hope things go right for you and your date. I hope you find the gift that will bring you both a little bit closer together. I hope that the night is filled with romance and candles.

I just have one favor to ask.

If you want to send me a gift — I'd really like a date.

**Got an opinion?
Write editorials.
Got a sense of humor?
Draw cartoons.**

**Call 828-1058 and ask for Erin
or stop by GPAB room 1149.**

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TIMES**

EDITORIAL BOARD

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GAGE HARTER

The *Commonwealth TIMES* welcomes readers' letters. We reserve the right to edit all letters for grammar, style and space. Letters should not exceed one single-spaced typed page and must be submitted by noon Thursday to be considered for publication the following week.

Letters must be signed and include a daytime phone number.

Our offices are located in room 1149 of the General Purpose Academic Building; our campus mailbox number is P.O. Box 842010.

The editorial section of the *Commonwealth TIMES* is a forum open to all members of the Virginia Commonwealth University community. Students, faculty and administrators are encouraged to submit editorials expressing their opinions and concerns about university issues.

All submissions to the editorial section must include a daytime phone number where the writer can be contacted. The opinions expressed are those of individual writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the *Commonwealth TIMES* or VCU.

Diane Giles

Slam the Door on Rudeness

I don't understand the door thing.

Some women get angry if a man opens a door for them. Others get mad if he doesn't.

While feminists and masculinists debate the issue, I'd just like to know how anyone can drop a door in someone's face.

It doesn't matter if it's men involved or women, or some combination of the two. It just boils down to common courtesy.

At the risk of sounding like Miss Manners (Gentle Reader) or George Bush in his kinder, gentler moments, we could definitely use a little more courtesy on this campus.

I've seen doors dropped on men and women, those walking and those in wheelchairs, those swinging their arms and those armed with loads of books.

And doors are not the only things getting slammed around here. Why is it when you try to skirt someone walking directly toward you, they rarely give you the same consideration?

Sometimes, I admit, they're busy talking with the person beside them or admiring themselves in the big, plate-glass windows. But often they're looking directly at you and still think you're going to do all of the moving, even if it means running someone else off the sidewalk.

The 50-50 give and take of personal space just doesn't apply.

Another big complaint I hear from students, usually as I'm sharing an elevator with them, is about people who can't take the stairs up one or two flights. I know you've been on an elevator with them — the ones that people groan at as soon as the doors slide shut behind them on the second floor.

This often sparks a conversation among those remaining for the ride to the fourth or fifth floors about laziness and/or rudeness — depending upon how far past the hour it is, and how close to late the rest of us are.

The funny thing is, with all the tensions about racism, sexism, political correctness, etc., we seem to have forgotten that the key to good relations with *anyone* is respect.

Whether we're male or female, purple or green, straight or gay, Republican or Democrat, we all expect to be treated with consideration.

If you make an effort at kindness, you'll be making an effort to calm all those tensions and repair a little of the damage done by the lack of respect in this society. You'll also gain the respect of others, which, in turn, can open up doors for you that may not otherwise exist.

And if you're too cool, too busy or just too rude to make that effort, maybe the next face smacked with a door will be yours.

In more ways than one.

Tell us what you think!

What topics would you like to see featured more often in the Commonwealth Times?

News section: _____

Sports section: _____

Editorial section: _____

Spectrum section (arts and entertainment): _____

EYE section (special interest): _____

What topics would you like to see featured less often?

News section: _____

Sports section: _____

Editorial section: _____

Spectrum section (arts and entertainment): _____

EYE section (special interest): _____

Who's reading the CT?

Please tell us your ...

age: _____ interests: _____

year at VCU: _____

major: _____

sex: _____

race: _____

The results of these surveys will be published in a future issue and used to guide our coverage of news and events! So tell us what you want to see!

Just fill out this form and drop in the submissions box outside of room 1149 in the General Purpose Academic Building, or mail to Box 2010, campus mail, or 901 W. Main St., Richmond Va. 23284-2010, regular mail.

Factory show filled with diversity

Sarah Fisher
CT STAFF WRITER

Music is not meticulous.

I came to understand this important concept after seeing Damn Near Red, Tuscadero and Sebadoh at The Factory last Thursday. Forget categories. Punk rock, rap, reggae, metal or any other musical genre would not describe any of these three bands.

Damn Near Red played first in the packed house that evening. The vocals of lead singer Marie Bethel gave the crowd a reason to cheer. The band fit the program, playing like an opening act is expected to play. They lacked energy at the beginning of the show, giving the audience a sort of bird's eye view of a garage band's practice session. They never introduced themselves and only spoke with the crowd to introduce their songs or when technical problems arose. But the Tori Amos-like vocals of Bethel and her shy, girlish dancing were an interesting act to watch. Their songs dealt with love, death and loneliness.

"It's hard to do vocals well live," said a female audience member. She gave Damn Near Red a thumb's up for their live musical quality, comparing them to Pavement.

"I've seen a lot of bands, but Damn Near Red is really dedicated," said Stacey Greeves, former VCU concerts chairperson. "They're half melodic and half grunge."

Damn Near Red, in an aftershow inter-

view admitted, "We don't really have a particular sound in mind. We just do what we have to do." The band also said Pat Benetar, Yazz and Bikini Kill have been some of their musical influences.

Tuscadero stepped on stage next and got the crowd enthused. They exuded a stage presence that made their music worthwhile. Guitarists and lead singers Margaret and Melissa, wearing flashy, turquoise sequined dresses, jammed on the first song, "Dime a Dozen." The lyrics were choppy, yet fun: "When I first met you I thought you were tops/ like sweet, sweet sugar pops...Your daddy must have married his first cousin and guys like you are a dime a dozen."

After a couple of songs Melissa told an anecdote about the band's experience eating in Richmond for the first time. Finding a knob from the restaurant's kitchen stove buried in a burrito was pretty unbelievable, Melissa said. But it made for a good story between songs, and they continued to rock.

The sounds of Kristen Hersch, Throwing Muses and Sonic Youth were brought to mind as they continued to play. Their last song, "Hollywood Handsome," ended their jam session. It revealed the image of Hollywood usually held by those obsessed with wealth and fame.

As Sebadoh was about to begin their set, the crowd rushed the stage to hear them play. Their music was mellow, as were the



Sarah Fisher/Commonwealth Times



DAMN GOOD — Marie Bethel, lead singer of Damn Near Red, performs in front of a packed house this past Thursday at The Factory.

band members. When the rowdiness of the crowd got out of hand, band member Lou Barlow stepped in.

"We're not going to turn into Biohazard ... we're not a punk rock band ... this is not D.C.," he said. As the mosh pit got started and some audience members became angry because they didn't want to be involved, Barlow continued in an intolerant manner:

"Go lift weights or something. There's a

lot of people who don't want to be jumped on."

The Factory's show was their last date on a seven-week tour.

Their songs weren't very long, but had good effects and soothing vocals. Frequently the band members switched instruments to give their set more variety.

"I think they are very innovative and bring their lyrics to life," said Michele Young, a VCU graduate student.

Stuffed Skins and patrons at Darryl's

Leila M. Ugincius
CT SPECTRUM EDITOR

Tired of the same old crowded, stuffy Fan restaurants? Have a little extra cash you wouldn't mind spending somewhere different? Got the munchies?

If you answered yes to any of the above, head out to Darryl's restaurant and bar sometime.

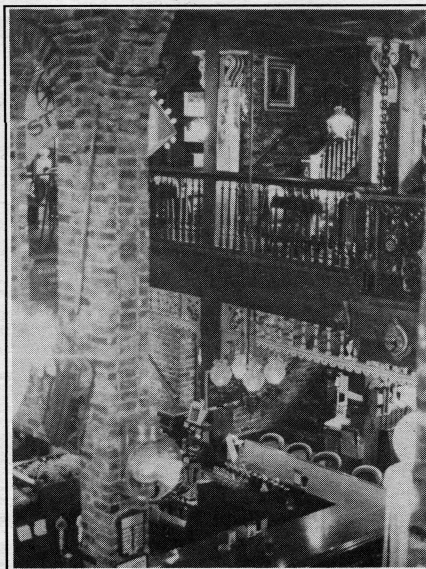
With a cozy, warm atmosphere and plenty of good humor to go around, Darryl's specializes in good old-fashioned Southern favorites with huge portions and fairly moderate prices.

But when you visit Darryl's just remember two little things: make sure you're really really hungry — I recommend not eating all day before you go — and be sure to bring lots of money, because after going all day without eating, you won't be able to resist their incredible appetizers.

Darryl's has got the absolute best potato skins anywhere in the Richmond area. They're available in two sizes, a large size for \$5.99 and a sampler size for \$2.99. They also now have two kinds for you to choose from — bacon and cheese or barbecued pork.

If the thought of potato skins doesn't appeal to you, perhaps one of their many other appetizers would be more to your liking: stuffed mushrooms filled with herb and garlic cheese, buffalo wings dipped in Cajun batter or how 'bout the artichoke and spinach dip?

Can't make up your mind? Not a problem, since Darryl's also offers the "snack attack," a sampler of their most popular picks for just \$6.99.



Stacy L. Reed/Commonwealth Times

Don't worry if you can't finish everything — remember, you get to take whatever's left home with you, which means you won't have to go to the grocery store for at least a week. Just make sure you save room for dinner.

Among Darryl's Southern specialties

are the Tennessee "Jack Black" Chicken for \$8.99, Cajun Catfish for \$7.99 and Cajun Fried Shrimp for \$10.99.

And the ribs! I've known people who've travelled more than 100 miles just to get some of Darryl's Barbecued Pork Ribs for a measly \$12.99.

WEST END SALOON
— Darryl's, across from Regency Square Mall, has the remedy for your snack attack

Now you're probably thinking there's no way you could ever eat dessert after all that, but come on, you're at Darryl's, remember? Go ahead and order a little something from the "Sweets" section to share.

Darryl's, located across from Regency Mall — heck, you might as well go see a movie while you're out there, because after eating at Darryl's you won't be able to move for a couple of hours anyhow — is just one of 32 in the Southeast. The decor is part of Darryl's notoriety. Although this particular one doesn't have tables set up in taxicabs, elevators, trains or double-decker buses, it's still worth checking out.

Darryl's
1400 Starling Drive.
741-1861

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SERVICES OFFER WELCOME WAGES WITHOUT WORK

Matthew Dobias
CT STAFF WRITER

Have you ever eaten spaghetti for two weeks in a row? I mean for lunch and dinner — and sometimes without any sauce? Has tuna fish become a staple in your diet? And have you ever argued that people actually can live on a steady diet of Ramen Noodles as long as they mix up the flavors every now and then?

Have you ever found yourself at the money machine, praying that soon you will hear the familiar whirring of the ATM granting you a \$10 reprieve?

If you answered 'yes' to any of these questions, then at some point in your life you probably have been flat, busted broke.

Balancing my checking account has become easier during the past couple of semesters because, quite frankly, I've always been good at subtraction.

So it has come to this: You promise yourself that tomorrow you will wake up extra early — usually about one in the afternoon — forgo the Matlock reruns on channel 35 (it has to be channel 35 because you couldn't pay last month's cable bill), steal a newspaper from a recycling bin and start looking for a job.

But wait.

Who are you fooling? You hate to work and, well, you have kind of developed a fondness for Matlock. ("Now how did ol' Ben know that 'the killer is right here in this courtroom?'")

So forget about it. There are other ways to make a quick buck without *actually having to work*.

My long history of avoiding labor has led me to seek out alternatives to joining the minimum-wage work force. I began searching for inventive ways to make a buck here in Richmond. After all, who needs a job as a McDonalds' fry-cook when you can make money giving your body, piece by piece, to science.

There are several offers, especially by the medical establishment, that will pay you for your time and services.

Bioclin Research (1001 E. Main St.) has earned some fame throughout the Richmond area and the VCU campus for paying healthy volunteers to participate in medical studies.

"We look for specifics when recruiting from a certain population of healthy people," said a spokesman for Bioclin, who withheld his name. "Volunteers must be non-smokers and drug-free."

A clinical research company, Bioclin is used by pharmaceutical organizations when they have new products coming out or when further testing is needed on a product.

Because research studies are dependent on volunteers, Bioclin often posts notices when looking for recruits for new tests. If chosen for a program, the volunteer is treated under a doctor's supervision in order to

insure the patients' safety.

For their time, volunteers are paid (by check) after completing the designated program.

"We get a cross section of people volunteering," the spokesperson said, adding that there are several short-term studies that attract a lot of students.

And let us not forget that volunteers do get paid for their time. The lesson here is simple: The actual work factor is relatively low, and the time you spend probably is saving lives. What a great way to make money!

For those with no fear of needles, plasma donation is another way to get paid.

Again, the importance of donating plasma is not to be slighted. Approximately 70 percent of all hospital patients use plasma, so you can see the need for donors. Healthy drug- and alcohol-free volunteers are needed and are tested upon first visit. What you get is kind of like a mini checkup. For a first visit a person can be paid \$25, with follow-up visits paying out \$15.

Plasma can be donated up to three times a week. Outside of the medical studies, a student can find several other ways to make extra cash.

Two years ago some friends of mine cleaned house of



PHOTOS BY CHRISTIN GREENLAND/COMMONWEALTH TIMES

PLAY IT AGAIN, SAM — Hurting for money? Sell your used CDs to Plan 9 Records at 3002 W. Cary St.

everything unimportant and had a yard sale.

"Pretty much anything that wasn't bolted down went out on a table outside and was priced accordingly," former Fan resident Stephen Harper said about his garage sale. "Later in the day we blew the profits on a keg and pizza, left whatever didn't sell outside, and closed up shop."

Yard sales are a good way to make some quick money, and often you don't even have to leave your house. Besides, it's always fun to see just what people will pay for junk.

"An old KISS poster of mine sold for \$2," Harper said. "And we sold two toasters and an iron, among several other little things that you just don't think there is a market for," Harper said.

Still, another way to turn a quick buck is to use the services of one of the many pawn shops in Richmond.

The problem here is that you have to have something of worth to sell to the shops. Stereo equipment, jewelry, video games and televisions are popular items seen at pawn shops. Since everyone in Richmond is in a band the shops also specialize in buying and selling musical equipment.

But be careful. Often the money you receive is not exactly comparable to the item's worth. It's also important to find out the store's buy-back policy and to keep all receipts.

So the point here is that there is plenty of money to be made without actually working, and isn't that what we all really want anyway?



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PLASMA DONATION

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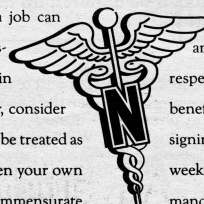
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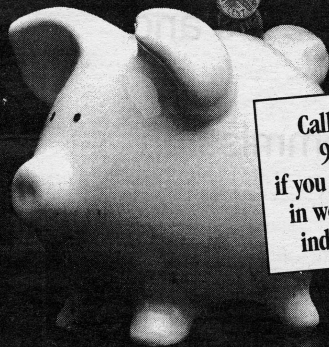
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-Tom Brown
Donaldson, Lufkin & Jenrette Securities Corporation
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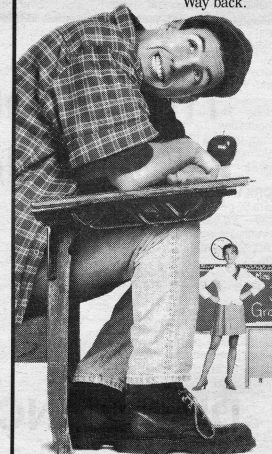
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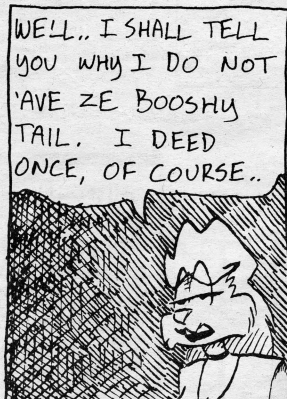
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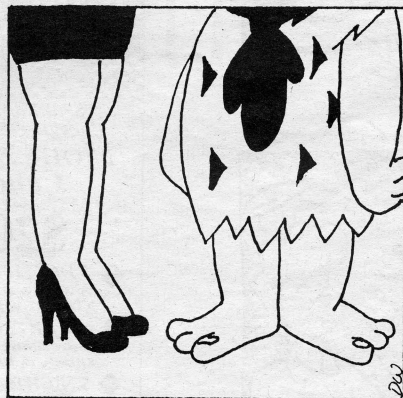
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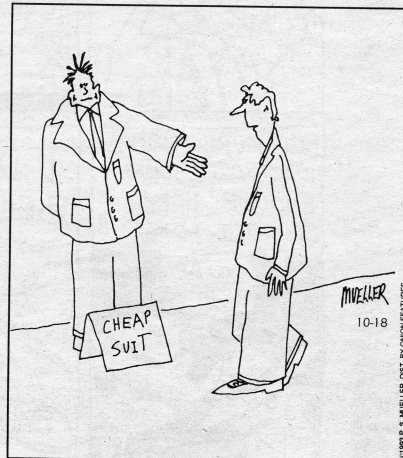


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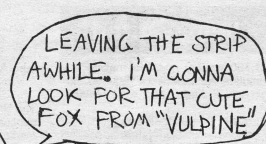
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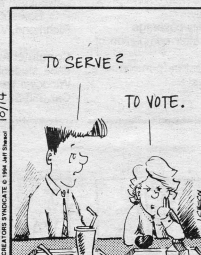
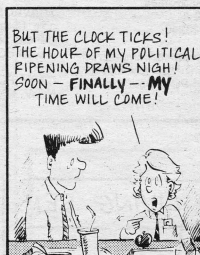
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Renegades scalp the Cherokees

Coveh Solaimani

STAFF WRITER

A three goal explosion in the second period and some sharp goaltending by Duane Derksen helped propel Richmond to a 5-1 victory over Knoxville at the Freezer yesterday.

Don Lester, Blaine Moore and Kurt Mallett lit the lamp six minutes apart to help bury the Cherokees (20-21-5).

"The three goals in the second period really helped us relax," said Shane Henry. Henry, the Renegades' center, contributed a goal and two assists to the Richmond effort.

In goal, Derksen stopped 35 of 36 Cherokee shots, allowing only a meaningless goal late in the game to break up the shutout.

"This was definitely my best game of the season," said Derksen, who is now 8-3 in net for Richmond and has a 2.66 goals against average.

From the outset of the game, the Renegades' (29-13-5) defense dominated Knoxville.

It took the Cherokees nearly seven minutes before they attempted their first shot

on goal, and when they did get close to the net, Derksen stopped them cold. Knoxville was 0-7 on the power play, and Richmond's penalty killing line scored two short-handed goals.

"It's our defensive system," Derksen said. "We are playing extremely well and guys like Lester and Darren Wetherill are doing a great job."

Leading scorer Scott Gruhl opened the scoring in the first period with his 29th goal of the season on assists from Lester and Wetherill.

The three second-period goals helped stretch Richmond's lead to 4-0 and the first place Renegades put it in cruise control.

In the third period both teams played sloppy, and each team scored one goal. Murphy scored on a breakaway for Richmond and Mike Murray tallied the only Knoxville goal with less than three minutes left in the game.

Former Renegade and current Cherokee Mike Vandenberghe brought the loudest outburst from the crowd of 5,568 when he tried to start a fight with a couple of his old teammates in the penalty-filled third period.

Richmond's win was their third in a row and helped improve the team's record in the Freezer to 19-3-4.

"With the fans behind us, we feel more comfortable and can just go out and play,"



Bill Buckman/Commonwealth Times

GRUHL(ING) NIGHT — Richmond's Scott Gruhl is pursued by Knoxville's Alain Deeks in yesterday's match-up at The Freezer. Gruhl left with an ankle injury, but not before registering two assists and a goal.

said Henry.

All was not rosy, however, for Richmond. Gruhl, who finished the game with one goal and two assists and is arguably the Renegade's best player, left the game

in the third period with an apparent sprained ankle after getting banged into the boards.

"We think it's a mild sprain, but he went to the hospital for X-rays," Lester said.

METRO

continued from page 1

As part of the deal, VCU was guaranteed one home game for men's basketball from each of the remaining Metro schools during the next five years. Virginia Tech did not request such scheduling considerations.

The arbitration, handled by Boston firm Endispute, was a last-ditch effort to avoid a temporary injunction hearing.

Bill Boland, part of the head legal counsel for VCU and Virginia Tech, presented the court with an agreement from both sides to enter non-binding arbitration to solve the problem Jan. 26, the original date of the injunction hearing. It was postponed, pending the outcome of the arbitration.

Cold, hard fax starts fight

The whole ordeal began Jan. 13, when UNC Charlotte Chancellor J.H. Woodward faxed a letter to Trani, outlining plans to expel VCU and Virginia Tech from the Metro and to invite the seven schools (all from the Great Midwest Conference, with the exception of current Southwest Conference member Houston) into the current Metro.

Until this point, it was believed that the five schools would resign from the Metro to form a new, unnamed league to begin play in the 1995-96 academic year.

Trani and Virginia Tech President Paul Torgenson then filed suit to block the plans, citing a desire to avoid paying withdrawal fees as the reason for the schools' decision to kick out VCU and Virginia Tech.

An injunction hearing, scheduled for Jan. 26, was to determine whether the plans could be halted until a settlement was reached.

Decision "sends a message"

"This decision sends a message," to other conferences and school presidents looking to implement similar measures, Trani said. "Those who follow these practices will pay a heavy price."

Trani stated that he still was disappointed that the National Collegiate Athletic Association declined to mediate the dispute, adding that he is looking to bring the matter up to the NCAA President's Council.

"I plan to raise the issue," said Trani, who could not specify a time or place to make such a move. "This (move

by the Metro presidents) sets a dangerous precedent in college athletics."

"We really need to be on the forefront of this movement," said Sander, of opposition to actions such as those taken by the Metro presidents.

Trani went on to say the expulsion of conference members for reasons not directly related to major NCAA or conference rules violations was "unprecedented."

Sander: "no reason to promote the conference"

With the Metro split now set, VCU has made the symbolic gesture of removing the conference insignia from the free-throw lane at the Richmond Coliseum, where the men's basketball team plays its home games.

The school also removed the signs of the Metro schools from the Coliseum rafters, with the exception of VCU's and Virginia Tech's.

"It was my idea," Sander said. "I figured there was no reason to promote the conference or the other schools. They have done nothing for sportsmanship or camaraderie."

Next step: new conference affiliation

The next move for VCU and Virginia Tech is to present conference affiliation options to their schools' board of visitors.

Both the Colonial Athletic Association, based in Richmond, and the Atlantic Ten Conference, based in Woodbridge, N.J., have been mentioned as possible homes for the two schools.

VCU's board of visitors will meet in a closed-door session Wednesday to discuss the conference options, along with some legal matters. The choices, Trani noted, would be offered "with no recommendations at this point."

A decision from the board recommending conference affiliation is expected within the next two weeks.

Virginia Tech's board of visitors is scheduled to meet Feb. 13 and Feb. 14, at which time Torgenson will discuss conference possibilities. Both Trani and Torgenson have stated that they would like to enter a conference, either the Atlantic 10 or CAA, together.

Sander agreed.

"Our relationship with Virginia Tech is very important," Sander said. "If the two schools move together, they would make a conference more powerful."

Answer to sports trivia: Nine: Paul Gonzalez, light flyweight; Steve McCroy, flyweight; Meldrick Taylor, featherweight; Pernell Whitaker, light weight; Jerry Page, light welterweight; Mark Breland, welterweight; Frank Tate, light middle weight; Henry Tillman, light heavy weight; Tyrell Biggs, super heavy weight.

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CURVE BALL
• How many Americans won Olympic boxing gold medals in 1984?
A. See page 11.

SPORTS

Inside
• The Renegades won their third game in a row last night after scalping the Cherokees 5-1 at The Freezer. See page 11 for details.

MONDAY, February 6, 1995

Commonwealth TIMES

Vol. 26, No. 48

Turnovers, second half slump doom Rams

Despite technicals, Eagles pull away late

Brian J. French
CT SPORTS EDITOR

With one second left on their shotclock at one point in the second half, Southern Mississippi's George Scott, who scored two points in the first period, hit a three-pointer.

After Glen Whisby missed a free throw with 3:31 left in the game and up by only five, the Golden Eagles retained possession, and Scott hits another three-pointer.

And Whisby, who averages 57 percent from the foul line for the season, hit four straight free throws in the final 43 seconds.

When those kind of things happen, it can be hard to win a game, even at home.

Southern Mississippi pulled away late in the second half and used 23 VCU turnovers to win their final Metro Conference game at the Richmond Coliseum, 74-66 against the Rams.

The two teams meet again this Saturday in Hattiesburg, Miss.

Damien Smith, the Metro's top scorer, led the Golden Eagles (12-6, 3-3 in the Metro) with 24 points, 17 in the first half.

When Smith cooled off in the second half, backcourtmate Scott picked up the pace, scoring 17 of his career high 19 in the period.

"I am awfully proud of this win," Southern Miss coach M.K. Turk said of his squad's first win in Richmond since 1992. "It was a good win against a quality opponent on the road, in a very difficult place to play."

Again leading the way for the Rams (14-8, 2-4) was Sherman Hamilton with 17 points and seven assists, and Bernard Hopkins with 12 points, 11 rebounds, seven assists and three steals. Both posted similar numbers in Wednesday's Radford win.

But in a game dictated by more runs than a cheap pair of pantyhose, it was a second half spurt that put the Golden Eagles in the lead for good and sent the Rams to

their fourth consecutive Metro loss.

With 16:33 left in the game and the Rams holding a 42-36 lead, Southern Miss rattled off a 13-0 run, led by Scott's eight points on a pair of three-pointers and a layup.

The run provided the Golden Eagles with a win that seemed unlikely enough in the first half, when the Rams outscored Southern Miss 16-0 during a five minute-plus stretch. They turned a 24-14 deficit into a 30-24 bulge that,

were it not for VCU's 13 first half turnovers, may have been larger.

"The biggest thing ... was that M.K.'s outfit shut down our half-court offense in the second half," Rams coach Sonny Smith said.

But even after Southern Mississippi's run, the Rams had a number of opportunities to regain control of the game.

Turk was nailed with a technical foul for jawing with the referees at the 10:05 mark, and Golden Eagles forward Fred Williams was hit with a technical with 5:51 left.

Tyron McCoy hit one of two free throws after the Williams technical, then drilled a three-pointer to bring the Rams to within 59-58.

They would get no closer.

Southern Miss scored the next seven points and hit their free throws down the stretch.

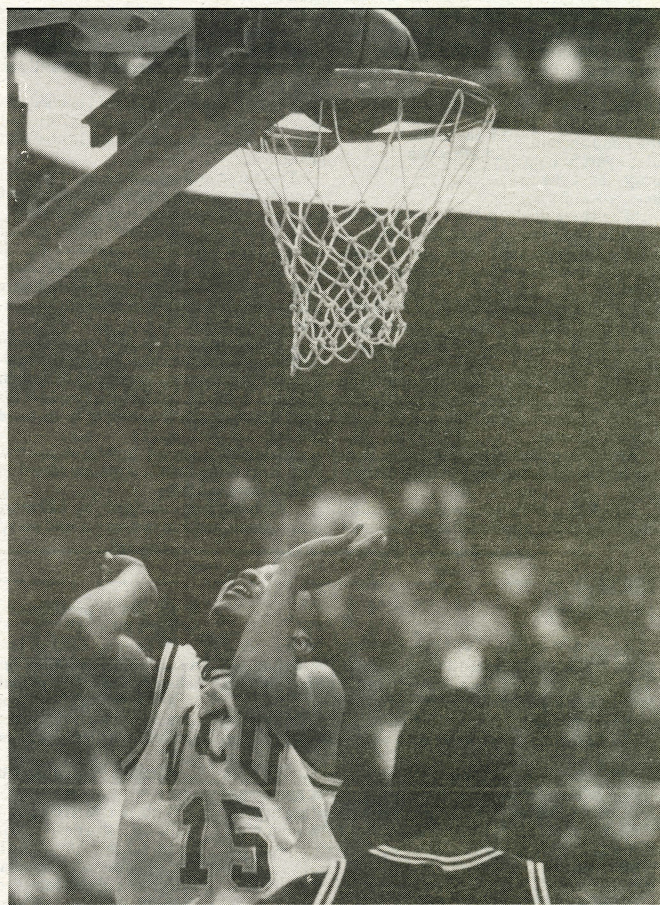
"We did (the right things in the closing minutes), too," Smith said. "We fouled the right people, went for the two, got good shots. They (USM) handled it well because they only had three team fouls."

Said McCoy (11 points, five rebounds): "It's a tough loss, but we'll try to forget it ... and get ready for the next game."

The next game is tonight against Old Dominion in Hampton. The Monarchs have won the past four meetings with the Rams. The Rams then face Tulane on Wednesday in New Orleans.

MEN'S BASKETBALL

| | |
|-----|----|
| USM | 74 |
| VCU | 66 |



Steve Floyd/Commonwealth Times

WHAT'S UP — VCU's Ben Peabody waits for the rock to drop while Southern Mississippi Maurice Morris looks on. The Golden Eagles soared to a 74-66 victory against the Rams.

Rams need more consistency

Matthew J. Weeks
CT SENIOR WRITER

Tsk, tsk, tsk. VCU let's another one slip away.

But this time around the Rams didn't play shabby with four players racking up double digits in points, and Bernard Hopkins once again nearly hitting a triple-double.

MEN'S BASKETBALL

ASPECT

So the question is obvious: What happened?

From the onstart of the game VCU fell behind by as much as 10 points but looked solid in the offensive rebounding category with Hopkins swiping 9 rebounds (6 offensive) alone in the half.

The Rams did a good job keeping the

small Southern Miss team to the perimeter, but that's where it may have hurt them the most.

Sophomore sensation Damien Smith, a point guard for the Eagles, exploded for 13 of Southern Mississippi's 17 points early in the first half.

By the end of the period, Smith was 7-15 from field goal range (3-6 from three-point land) and flushed 17 points under his belt.

Although Smith tore up VCU early in the game, his squad's offense broke down later in the first half, highlighted by bad passing, missed shots and little offensive rebounding.

Credit a hot Ram defense, and a cooling Smith as factors for VCU's 35-30 lead at the half.

Whatever momentum VCU carried go-

ing into the second half fell apart as Southern Mississippi's George Scott scored 17 of his 19 points, and 6'9" center Glen Whisby added 10 of his 14.

Hopkins was put on the bench after garnering three fouls, and that hurt the Rams.

Losing your leader in assists and rebounding doesn't help.

VCU forked over the ball 24 times, and head coach Sonny Smith said that was expected because of the fast breaks.

"The reason we went up-tempo is because they are the best offensive rebounding team in the league," he said.

Maybe so, but the fast break technique backfired with Southern Miss capitalizing on numerous rampages in the second half, including a 13-2 run.

VCU's faltering was allowing George

Scott to get the shot off, instead of Southern Miss's Kelly McCarty.

Seeing Smith was shut down, the Eagles proved their depth by going to Scott and Whisby.

And if VCU wants to win ballgames, they need to improve their shot accuracy, e.g. Tyron McCoy.

When your preseason All-Metro pick is only 2-11 from the field, then you have problems.

As a team, VCU earned a .440 field goal percentage, compared to the Eagles' .609, in the second half.

Now that's ugly.

You need consistency to win, and the Rams need to find it before they can be considered at least a contender in the Metro Conference.

Or any other conference.