



TUE: Get thee to a nunnery.
High 71, low 57.

WED: Don't eat too much.
High 66, low 47.

Monday, November 22, 1999

The Student Press of Virginia Commonwealth University

Vol 31, No. 47

Bonfire tragedy unites school

Karen Brandon

CHICAGO TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

COLLEGE STATION, Texas — The decision to enroll at Texas A&M University can never be made lightly, for it means far more than choosing a school. It means choosing an identity.

Being an Aggie forever defines you. It confers a certain social standing, authorizes entry into a certain business network and guarantees that despite the school's high academic reputation you will serve as the butt of withering jokes.

"I always knew I was going to A&M no matter what," said Rachel McDow, a sophomore who didn't apply to any other school, and now wears the same khaki uniform worn 25 years earlier by her father, who raised her on A&M tales. "That's how it starts," she said, thinking back on his stories, "and then it's in your blood."

Last week, the world glimpsed what it means to be an Aggie, when revered tradition and unprecedented tragedy collided. Shortly before 3 a.m. Thursday, the university's famed bonfire stack—a towering mass of logs and object of student passion—collapsed, killing 11

students and one recent graduate, and injuring 27 others.

Funerals began Saturday, with services in the Houston suburb of Bellaire for Nathan Scott West, a sophomore oceanography major.

Two victims remained in critical condition while three were in serious condition.

Waiting rooms near the campus were crowded with students Saturday as they offered blood, sympathy and support for those still hospitalized. Up to 40 students have maintained a 24-hour vigil at St. Joseph Regional Medical Center.

At Thursday evening's memorial, conducted while two victims still lay trapped beneath the massive pile of logs, students spontaneously closed the service by singing "Amazing Grace." As the wind-whipped night wore on, with cranes painstakingly plucking away logs stacked on the flat grassy plain called the polo fields, sorority women passed through the vigil of several thousand students and townspeople, offering sandwiches, fried chicken, cookies and solace. One teary-eyed student stopped here and there offering sweaters and sweatshirts

Texas A&M, continued to page 3

Robotics competition comes to VCU

Sarah Edwards

CT REPORTER

VCU's School of Engineering and NASA Langley Research Center will sponsor the FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics Competition at the Siegel Center March 16-18, 2000. VCU will be one of ten regional host sites, with the others scattered throughout the United States.

Virginia Secretary of Technology Donald Upson said, "It is uniquely fitting that our commonwealth, recog-

nized by many as one of the leading high-tech centers in the world, showcases an event that will attract the engineers and scientists of tomorrow."

Robert Hammond, director of FIRST Robotics Competition commented Friday that VCU's "extraordinary school and fantastic facilities" would bring teams to compete all the way from Philadelphia to Florida.

VCU School of Engineering Dean Robert Mattauch said, "We hope this competition will not only ignite a new generation of engineers and scientists but also motivate

Robotics, continued to page 3



Tara Stubblefield

JUST A LITTLE PINCH. Nurse Anna Marie Snell gives a flu shot to Dewitt Drinkard, a counseling program assistant, in the Commons.

VCU employees flock to fight flu

Employee Health Services is offering university employees free flu shots in Room 120 of West Hospital on the Medical Campus. The new vaccine includes defense against the Sydney strain that caused problems last year, said Anna Marie Snell, a registered nurse supervising the vaccinations given out at the Student Commons last week.

She said "a lot bigger crowd" has turned out this season. As of last Monday, more than 3,800 university employees from both campuses had obtained flu shots through EHS, Snell said. Only 3,500 took advantage of the service last flu season.

Influenza is a serious disease that spreads from infected persons to the nose or throat of others. The flu season extends from November to March or April in the United States. The disease causes thousands of deaths each year, mostly among the elderly, according to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services literature. Symptoms include fever, cough, chills, sore throat, headache and muscle aches.

Although the vaccine doesn't protect against all the mutant strains of the virus, it does cover most major strains and results in milder cases if one is infected despite having the shot.

-compiled from news sources



TECH TALK. President Eugene Trani and Lieutenant Gov. John Hager (left) discuss technology at the announcement of VCU's serving as host to the robotics competition. Photo taken by Rita Potts, CT photographer

College Briefs

•Dorm fall takes a life

A University of Maine student died Wednesday afternoon after falling from a fourth-floor dorm room.

Public Safety investigating officers said there was no criminal activity involved in the death of Andrea Amdall, 20, a junior English major. Amdall was a student at UMaine for the current semester as part of a national student exchange program.

—Amdall had no roommate at the time of her death. Students expressed their sympathy by constructing a cross out of tree branches and placing it below her window.

•NAACP boycotts South Carolina

The Association for Black Cultural Center, which had plans to hold its annual conference at Clemson University in November 2000, is relocating to Kent, Ohio, because of a South Carolina boycott by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

The boycott results from a controversy over a Confederate flag which stands atop the state's capitol building. The controversy has affected all parts of the state, and Clemson is no different.

"Students need to be aware of the issue over the flag because they are the people the boycott is going to affect," said Bryant

Smith, associate director of student media and an instructor of speech and communications for the university. "It is going to affect conferences, tourism for students involved in related majors and a lot of students' summer employment opportunities."

The state's boycott by the NAACP has been in place since August. However, the controversy over the Confederate flag has deeper roots.

There are different viewpoints regarding the reasoning behind the flag's placement. Lawmakers say it was placed in commemoration of the Civil War centennial celebration after a vote by the 1962 General Assembly. Others say the flag was deliberately put on top of the capitol in defiance of the Supreme Court case *Brown v. the Board of Education*, which integrated the public school system.

After 37 years of debate, the NAACP recently began economic sanctions in an attempt to force the South Carolina government to remove the flag from its current location.

NAACP representatives released a statement last Friday that said, "It should be clearly understood that the call for economic action will continue and be augmented by other action as necessary until the flag is removed from positions

of sovereignty in the state of South Carolina."

•NAACP criticizes exams

The NAACP wants American universities to rely less on college entrance exams when admitting students because it says the tests are unfair to minorities, and focus more on teaching students critical thinking skills.

The stand is drawing praise from Michigan State University minority leaders and students, but not necessarily because the tests are discriminatory.

"These tests can have a useful purpose, but the problem occurs when the entire focus of the school system is teaching students how to pass a test," said Luis Garcia, MSU Chicano-Latino student affairs coordinator. "The problem doesn't just lie with minority students, but everyone. We just need to focus more on teaching these students to be critical thinkers."

The NAACP's claim is that tests such as the Scholastic Aptitude Test and American College Test are unreliable and unfair to minorities. The association held a conference last Friday in Los Angeles to discuss lessening the importance of the tests and helping minority and low-income students prepare for them.

•Fraud may cost Minnesota

The Minnesota Golden Gopher's men's basketball team may have to forfeit many of the 161 games the team played since the 1994-95 season after an independent investigation of the men's athletics program revealed a systematic pattern of academic fraud, according to a report released Friday.

"The university's men's basketball team competed with at least one student-athlete who received improper academic assistance, and thus who was ineligible," the report states.

The investigators based conclusions on more than 150 personal interviews and 55,000 documents utilized in preparing the 2,500-page report.

The misconduct involved the routine writing of assignments, papers and exams for at least 18 men's basketball student-athletes.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association may require the University to pay back more than \$2 million for use of academically ineligible players in the Final Four season of 1996-97.

The total cost to the university is expected to hit \$5 million, including more than \$1 million in legal fees.

HOW TO REACH US

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PROMOTIONS

Delegate lectures about future GOP goals

By Lu Duong
CT STAFF WRITER

A packed classroom listened intently as Delegate Eric Cantor addressed "Issues Facing Virginia in the New Millennium" Thursday.

Cantor, a Republican member of the House of Delegates for the 73rd District, is entering his 5th term in the House. The delegate spoke at length about future GOP goals.

Cantor said that taxes still remain in the forefront in people's minds.

"I personally like to know where my money is going," he said. "We have so much in store and we're focusing on improving the everyday lives of people."

He added that he would like to see a

change within the budgeting format.

"We as a state can do much better budgeting and have a \$740 million surplus," he said.

Cantor discussed increasing the teaching force by 4,000 new teachers, road increases and improvements and spoke fervently on the subject of criminal justice.

"The state has stepped up funding and has found a significant decrease in violence," he said. "However, we seem to be having a problem with drugs. Unless we help the people and children who are affected by this in certain areas, we haven't done everything we can."

The impact of the issues Cantor discussed was not lost on the students in attendance.

"I agreed with his philosophy of clean-

ing up the streets," said senior Jag Galmutico. "I came out here out of my own curiosity and Delegate Cantor touched upon solid issues."

Cantor responded to many students' inquiries concerning technology.

"The Governor is doing an incredible amount in terms of improving technology," Cantor said. "He is looking forward to the goal of access to technology for every individual."

Cantor added that Gov. Jim Gilmore will launch another major conference in March in which all the major CEOs of computer companies will meet and discuss technology issues.

"Technology is going to have a major impact, and everyone will have to learn to adapt," said political science major Sylvia

Miller. "I think that we don't know what's in store regarding technology; however, everyone should have access and knowledge."

Many democratic supporters attended the lecture and remarked that Cantor spoke well with no attempt to dodge issues.

Nelson Wikstrom, Chair of Department of Political Science/Public Administration, arranged Cantor's visit as part of VCU's first Government and Politics Lecture Series.

"I enjoyed the speech immensely," Wikstrom said. "Delegate Cantor touched upon great issues concerning the people, particularly the state budget and the reorganization it faces."

Tragedy draws school closer together

Texas A&M, continued from page 1

to strangers, explaining by saying, "I just raided my closet."

The grief was compounded because the source of death and injury is one of the most revered symbols in the history of Texas A&M, founded in 1876 as an all-male military institution. The bonfire has been a fixture since it began in 1909, growing to such a size that the Guinness Book of World Records took note, and university officials imposed a strict height limit of 55 feet.

"Bonfire is not a stack of wood," said Kyle Foster, a 36-year-old A&M graduate, who lives in Bryan, College Station's twin city. "Bonfire is a concept." Bonfire, he noted, never uses "the" as a qualifier. "The bonfire is what other schools build," he said. "Bonfire is ours."

Texas, as it was called in 1957, when it was still an all-male military institution, with participation in its famed Corps required.

Bonfire is part of the large lore that surrounds one of the nation's most famed football rivalries, the source of irreverent pranks that have become Texas lore. The most famous of the pranks led to the naming of the longhorn that is the University of Texas mascot, BEVO. In 1915, when A&M beat Texas 13-0, some pranksters branded the score into the longhorn's hide. Texans then altered the brand, turning the 13 into a B, the hyphen into an E, and inserting a V before the O.

Over the years, Texas fans have tried to set Bonfire afire early. Attempts have included fire bombs from planes (1933 and 1948) and explosives (1956), according to A&M university records. In 1957 and 1994, Bonfire had to be rebuilt in a few days because of collapses, but only the death of President John F. Kennedy in 1963 stopped the lighting of the bonfire.

This year, there will be no bonfire. Investigators from the university and the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration are continuing their work to determine what caused the collapse of the structure, built of large logs wired together around a center pole, created by splicing two telephone poles together.

In a place so steeped in tradition, no one seems to want Bonfire to come to an end as a result of the accident.

"I think that's in the heart of everybody, that we want (Bonfire) to continue," Texas A&M University President Ray Bower said Friday. But, he added, ending Bonfire must remain an option.

One tradition will certainly continue, quite poignantly on Dec. 7. Silver Taps, as it is called, is described as one of A&M's most sacred and solemn traditions—and one Aggies hope never to have reason to attend. Dating to 1898, Silver Taps ceremonies are held on the first Tuesday of the month. With chimes from Albritton Tower and a 21-gun salute, Aggies pay respect to the memory of any students or faculty who have died within the previous month.

"And this is my favorite part," explained Jackie Gold, a Corps member from Wimberley, Texas, who is "the first Ag in my family." "The bugler plays taps to the north, south and west but not to the east, because the sun will never rise on those Aggies again."

VCU to serve as host for competition

Robotics, continued from page 1

high school students to achieve academically."

It is expected that an estimated 30 to 40 teams will be in Richmond to compete in the competition that was founded in 1992 by Dean Kamen, an entrepreneur and inventor with more than 100 United States patents.

"At FIRST, we see a world where science and technology are celebrated, where kids think science is cool and dream of becoming technology heroes," said Hammond.

Last year 270 teams competed in seven regional events and this year the number of teams to sign up has surpassed 230 with more than a month left for the application process. It is estimated that approximately 390-400 teams will participate in the 10 regional events this year. The competition has grown 40 percent each year since it was started in a high school gym in New Hampshire with only 28 teams.

In this competition, teams of high school students will have six weeks to build a remote-controlled robot, which will then compete in athletic-style events. Scientists, engineers, university mentors and corporate leaders will provide guidance to students during the robot construction process.

"Only about 200 people in the nation have the appropriate background to build a space robot like the Mars Sojourner. Given the number of robotic engineers NASA will need to hire in the next 10 years, we hope to lure a wider pool of young students to our field," said David Lavery, program executive for Planetary Exploration at NASA's headquarters in Washington, D.C.

"The robotics competition is the perfect setting to pique interest in the hearts and minds of students," Lavery said.

Professor lectures students from Web

Holly J. Carroll
CT ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITOR

As VCU braces itself for furthering its technological stance with new computer requirements for 2001 incoming freshman, one teacher has already embraced the transition.

Lynn Nelson, professor in the departments of Sociology and Anthropology at VCU, operates his classes mostly online. By doing so, Nelson said he affords his students choices, along with inciting active participation.

For example, in Nelson's Sociology 101 class, he puts the textbook with his class lectures on the Web, along with message boards, which update students on assignments or important dates pertaining to the class. Students can do the majority of the class's assignments from home, only coming to class to take tests or to listen to the lecture if they prefer to hear it live.

"It provides flexibility to students who want to listen to Web lectures," Nelson said, "and then can rewind or pause the lectures. With message board assignments ... there's active participation. You can't do that in traditional lecture classes."

The recent decision handed down from President

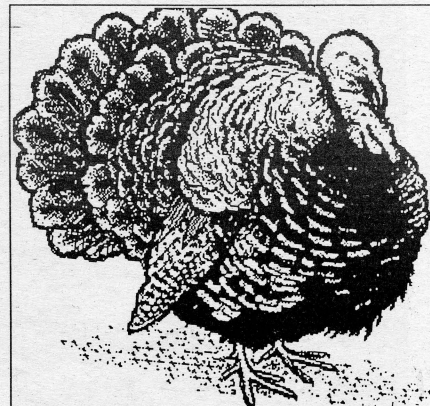
Trani requires all freshmen, beginning in 2001, to have personal computers upon entering VCU.

Nelson said problems concerning his class have been mainly technical, such as congestion on the Web. He also said people who don't have computers sometimes feel relatively inconvenienced, but said there are always ways to get to a computer.

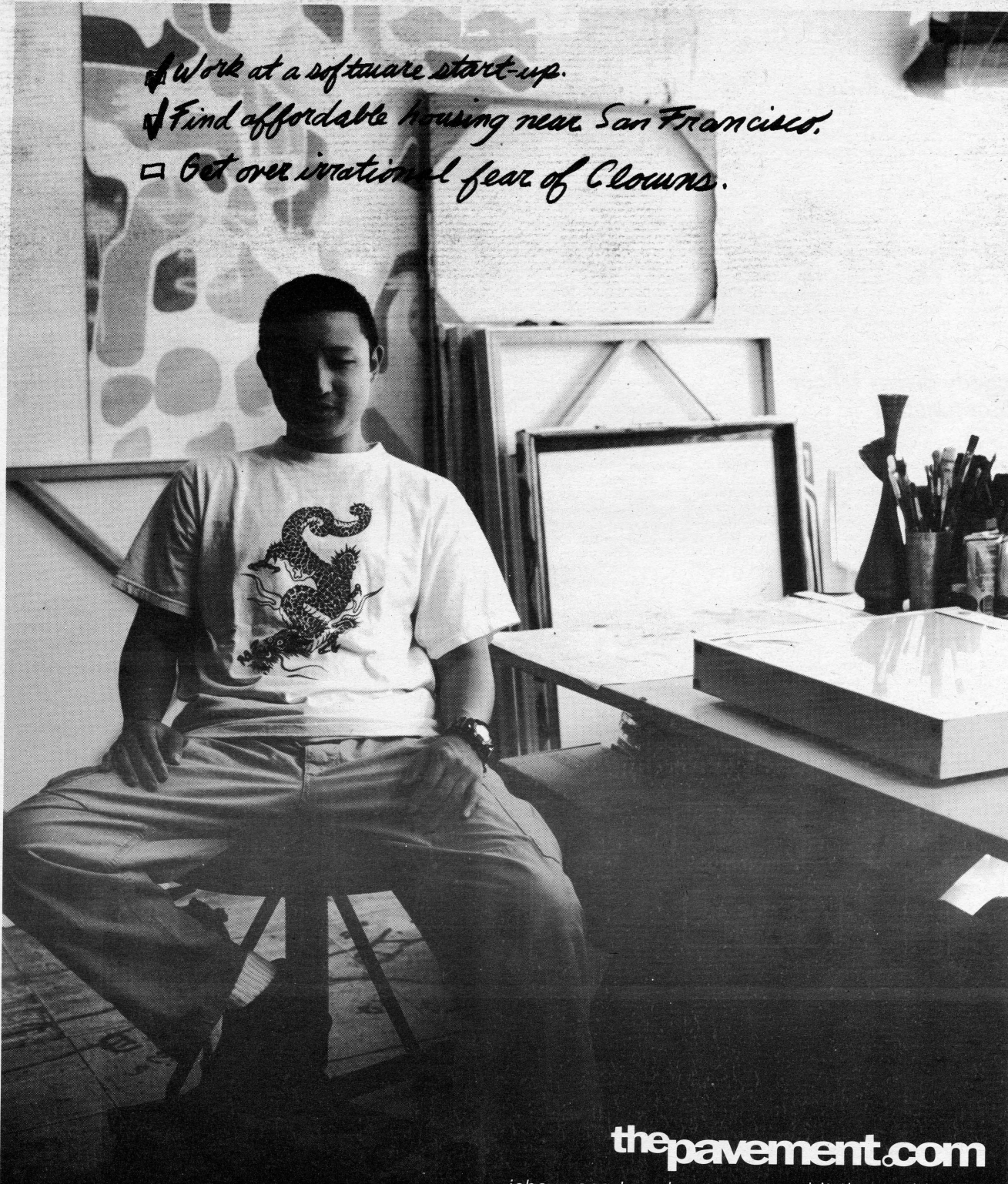
"I give the students lab time in class," Nelson said. "In reality, people have access, but would rather do it at home. People need the benefit of convenience and flexibility."

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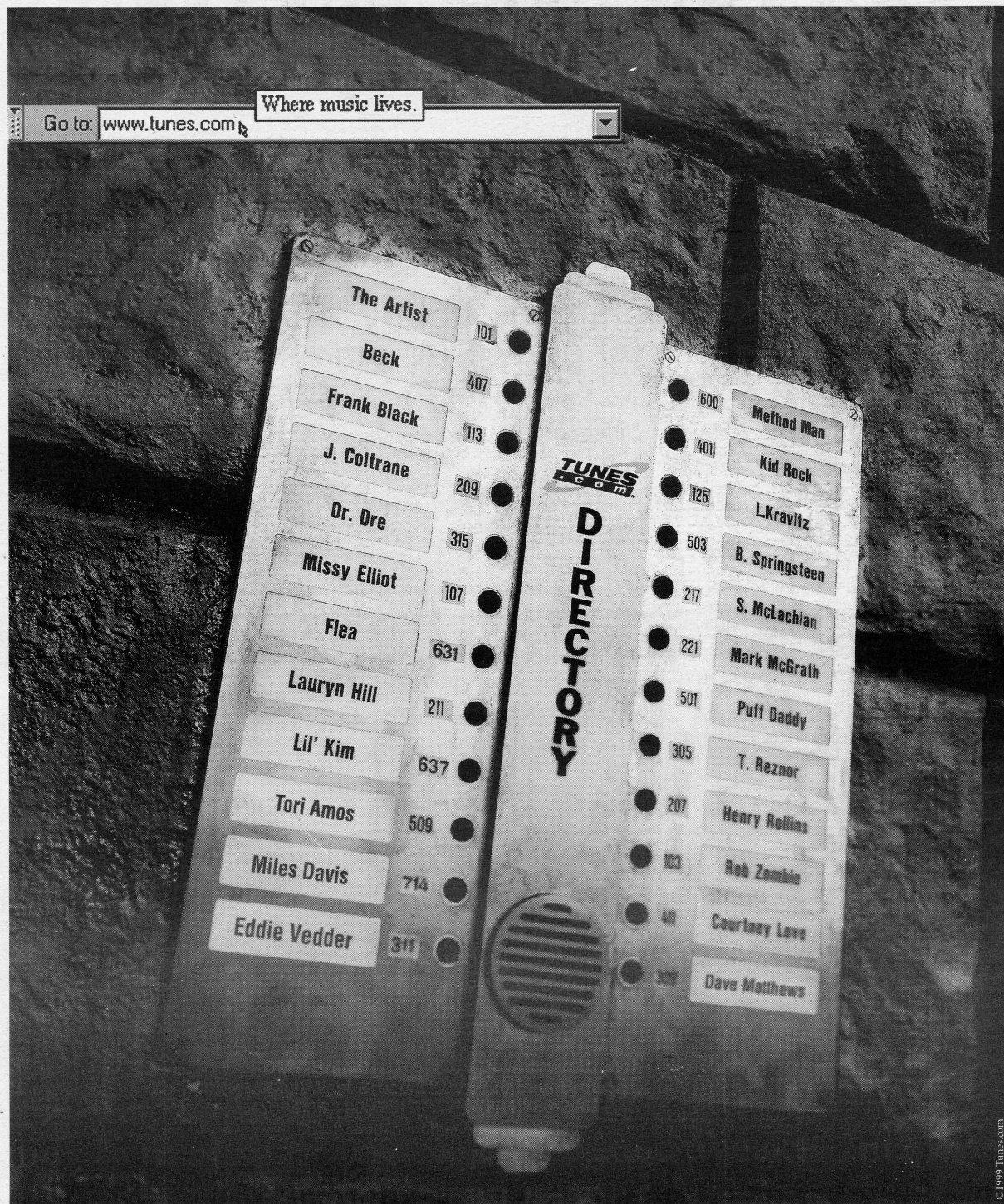
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Thanksgiving's true meaning

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (U-WIRE)—It's almost Thanksgiving again, when we give "thanks." The problem is, to whom? A few years ago, most people have said we give thanks to God. But now? In our technically sophisticated, superior age? Give thanks to — God?

I decided to check out Thanksgiving in cyberspace. America On line headlined a discussion on Thanksgiving with the words, "Thanksgiving 1999: Home for the Holidays." AOL continued, "Join us next week for more holiday ideas, handy tips to help you get ready for the big feast, the Thanksgiving football lineup and more."

Sadly, that epitomizes "Thanksgiving" for an increasing number of Americans. If they're giving thanks at all, it's gratitude of sorts for a day off work and the opportunity to guzzle Miller "low-life." Isn't there more to life than that?

Another site talked about a 1998 vegetarian Thanksgiving, and yet another welcomed surfers to its Halloween-Thanksgiving collection.

Ben and Jerry's ice cream was also in on the act, with their 1998 Thanksgiving page on proud display, and if you didn't have enough by then, you could always surf on over to a page titled, quite simply,

"Thanksgiving." It touted cards, self-described as "Unique, clever, and thematic designs that will delight your clients, customers, and partners." Wow! So we can have a vegetarian Thanksgiving and guzzle down Ben and Jerry's for dessert.

Then, for academically stimulating after-dinner conversation, we can "deconstruct" the Halloween-Thanksgiving collection. After all, there has to be a deep underlying reason (doesn't there?) why this Web site chose to combine Halloween and Thanksgiving artifacts.

So where's God in all of this? Isn't there more to Thanksgiving than turkey, television and booze?

Way back in 1789, President George Washington proclaimed a national day of Thanksgiving. This was the first ever presidential proclamation issued in the United States, and read:

"Whereas it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor; and whereas both Houses of Congress have by their joint committee, requested me to recommend to the people of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer..."

However, not everyone was in favor of this National Day of Thanksgiving. It took 74 years and President Lincoln to set things straight. In his 1863 proclamation, Lincoln proclaimed the last Thursday of November as a national day of Thanksgiving.

Lincoln wrote "No human counsel has devised nor has any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy."

Lincoln also encouraged his fellow citizens that, while praising the Almighty for his blessings, they also needed to exercise "humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience ... and to fervently implore the Almighty Hand to heal the wounds of the nation and restore it as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purposes to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquillity and union."

So as we get closer to Thanksgiving Day, consider stopping and giving thanks to the God of the Bible, "Lincoln's God and my God too," for the many blessings which you enjoy. You might just enjoy the experience!

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R. Alex Whitlock- The Daily Cougar (U. of Houston)

Jackson's jailing justified?

HOUSTON (U-WIRE) — I can respect anyone who is willing to go to jail for their beliefs, so long as there is no violence, theft or terrorism involved. That's why when the Rev. Jesse Jackson knowingly put himself in a situation to get arrested, he captured my attention.

It would be easy to dismiss Jackson's actions as the last-ditch actions of a glory hound who's desperate to grasp on to a weakening power base. For those of you unfamiliar with the situation, six students in Decatur, Ill. were expelled after participating in a fight at a high school football game.

Jackson found this to be grossly unfair because no one was injured (except the participants), no weapons were displayed and no one had been punished this harshly before. To his credit, Jackson has not made this purely a race issue.

The kids were initially given a two-year expulsion. After some protests at this arguably excessive sentence, Ill. Gov. Ryan intervened and reduced the penalty to a year in "special education" (i.e. reform school) for a year. Not enough, said Jackson. He wanted them back next semester.

"It's an honor to be arrested for a righteous cause," Jackson said. If only his cause was righteous. Unfortunately, the more information that is divulged about this encounter, the more obvious it is that this justice had been done.

In the age of Columbine, schools need more discipline and punishment — not less. The truth is that every day kids are being pushed to the edge by schools who will not act swiftly, justly or surely in response to violent behavior by bullies and oppressors.

It was always very disconcerting to me that I could never turn to the administration when one of my friends or I was being picked on because the school could (or would) do nothing about it. At worst, the offenders would be kicked out for a semester before they'd come back — and they'd come back angrier than ever. Kids need to know they cannot get physical without serious consequences.

Jackson argues that no one was injured but those involved. However, that is in spite of the efforts of the Decatur Six. Anyone who sees the video (which some networks curiously do not air) can see that they acted in blatant disregard for public safety as they assaulted one another while running through the filled stands kicking and mauling one another.

No violence, whether it be between consenting combatants or one-sided, should be tolerated. There is also the matter of the "unprecedented" punishment of these individuals. The reason it is unprecedented is that the district passed a "zero-tolerance" policy and this was the first case to which it applied.

If Jackson is trying to use this opportunity to denounce excessively rigid zero-tolerance policies, I could actually support him in this endeavor.

However, this is hardly the sample case to use to argue against zero-tolerance policies. There are countless buttr knife incidents that exhibit the flaws in these well-intentioned but faulty policies.

The Decatur Six had more than 350 truancies between them and three were freshmen for the third straight year. They are hardly upright individuals caught up

in the moment, or even the rule taken to an absurd extreme. In fact, the rule was intended exactly for this purpose.

I don't know why Jackson chose this fight. If there are no better examples of "injustice" than this, surely this country is the most just on the planet. A bunch of miscreants misbehaved and put others' safety in danger. They were punished according to pre-established statute.

While I admire Jackson's resolve, that doesn't change the fact that he's simply wrong.

CommonwealthTimes

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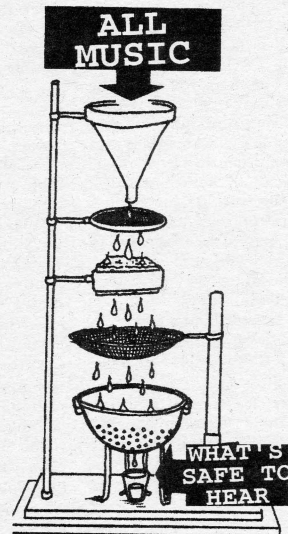
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Cravey's costumes successful in VCU play

Marisa C. Hayes
CT STAFF WRITER

If you've ever wondered who is responsible for the glamorous look actors achieve on stage, then look no further than Maura Cravey, costume designer for Theatre VCU's production of "As You Like It."

As Cravey's designs began to take form in September, the VCU costume shop became a swirling mass of silk and velvet amid a million different colors.

Planning for the show started in July when Cravey attended production meetings with the director to discuss the show's look. The time period decided upon for the show was the Empire Era.

The Empire Era is most recognized for its soft feminine look of beautiful dresses with high waists and low necklines.

In September, Cravey and costume shop supervisor Karl Green completed a four-day trek to New York City in search of the best fabric they could find. The trip paid off and Cravey returned with some of the finest fabric imaginable. One piece of fabric they found came from a designer's studio in California and had been originally priced at \$350 per yard. This fabric turned into Anna Tulou's opening silk-velvet dress.

Before making the new costumes, Cravey first had to pull from the costume vault of previously constructed costumes

to see what could be used in "As You Like It." She then noted what new pieces would need to be made. In addition, all principal roles were made brand new costumes.

"In order to do this," said Cravey, "a designer has to be familiar with each character in the play and understand the director's interpretation of each character."

Not only does the costume designer have to worry about characterization when making the costumes, but working with the sets and lighting are other important elements of making a show look well designed.

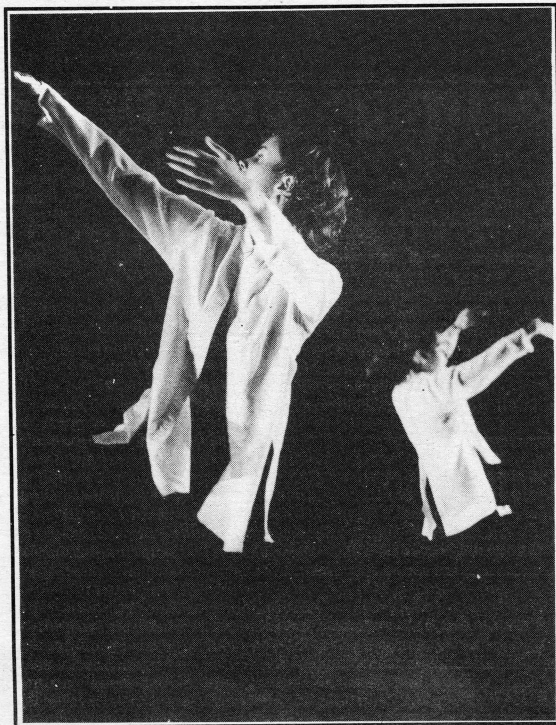
For the opening scene Cravey designed costumes with cool colors, an array of blues, greens and gray. For the forest scenes fall colors were used to give the scenes a natural look.

Cravey was aided by shop supervisor Karl Green, who also served as cutter/drafter for "As You Like It." Green tediously cut out all the pieces of fabric to be sewn for the show in addition to advising the Theatre 104 classes, which constructed and made alterations for many of the costumes in the show.

"It was a very labor-intensive show," said Green.

Assistant Costume Designer Jessica Ott also helped Cravey. Ott's job was to complete additional research for the show's costumes and to do shopping for the show. In addition, Ott was also assigned a garment to make for the show.

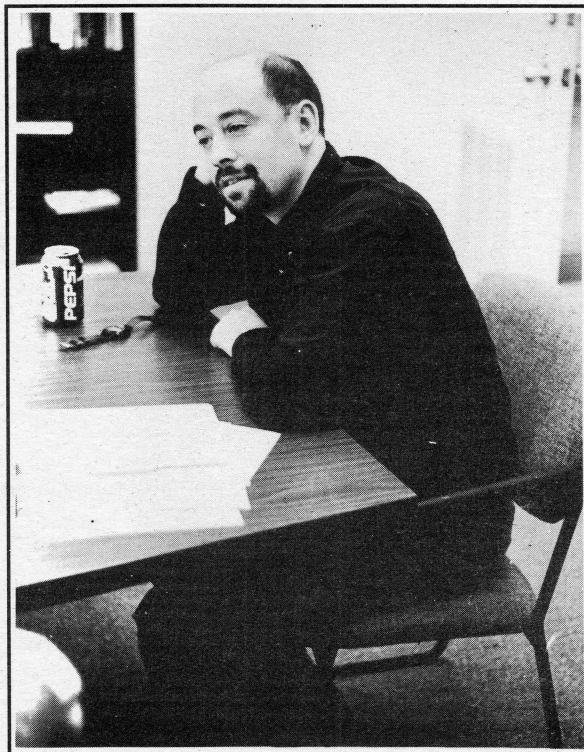
It's show time



Jessamyn Miller/Commonwealth Times

Performers take part in "Works in Progress," an informal recital by VCU Dance department faculty Friday.

Discussion time



Rita Botts/Commonwealth Times

Jonathan Silverman, a member of VCU's English department, talks about his work, "Re-imagining America," Wednesday during a symposium.

English magazine seeks submissions

Rebecca Sams

CT ASSOCIATE SPECTRUM EDITOR

VCU's budding poets, playwrights and artists still have a short time to turn in submissions to "Millenium," the annual Department of English literary magazine. The all-student staff will continue to take submissions of fiction, non-fiction, poetry, plays and screenplays, artwork and photographs. Any student may submit work.

"They've been taking submissions all fall," said English professor Ann Woodlief, who acts as "Millenium" staff advisor. Both graduate and undergraduate students comprise the staff, with Michelle Trezona as this year's editor.

"It's a student publication all the way," Woodlief said. "They get the submissions, they edit them, and they publish them. . . . The creative writing faculty helps them understand how to edit, when they need it."

Student funding also puts out the magazine, although this year advertising will pay part of the costs. When the finished product appears at the end of spring semester, it will be free to all students.

The student staff also makes all the decisions on what type of content is appropriate for inclusion. No limit has been placed on subject matter.

"There has been poetry about sex - not obscene, because that's not poetry," said Woodlief. "The limits of good taste are always also literary limits, but it's really (the "Millenium" staff's) choice. They're editing it, so it's their choice, we don't censor them. . . . We've never had to take a stick to them."

"Millenium" has been around for roughly 25 years, but previously under a different name.

"The magazine itself was called 'Writers' Corner' for years," said Woodlief, adding with a chuckle, "I don't know what they're going to do after the year 2000."

Written works should be submitted on disk (with a hard copy included) and placed in an envelope that includes the writer's name, phone number and e-mail address. Those who wish to have their submissions returned should also include an SASE. Submissions may be left in the "Millenium" mailbox in the English Department, located in room 318 in the Hibbs Building.

AN APPEAL FOR HELP

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"BHUBANESHWAR, India (Reuters) - Food, clothing and other vital aid have yet to reach millions of Indians in the eastern state of Orissa six days after a devastating cyclone crashed into its coast" (Yahoo)

"PARADIP, India -- Dead bodies, some washed up from the bay like driftwood, others bobbing like corks in the river, have become so plentiful in this port city that the authorities simply collect what they can and lay them out in tight bunches on the beach." (NYTIMES)

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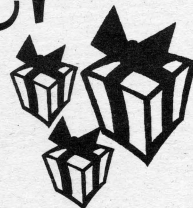
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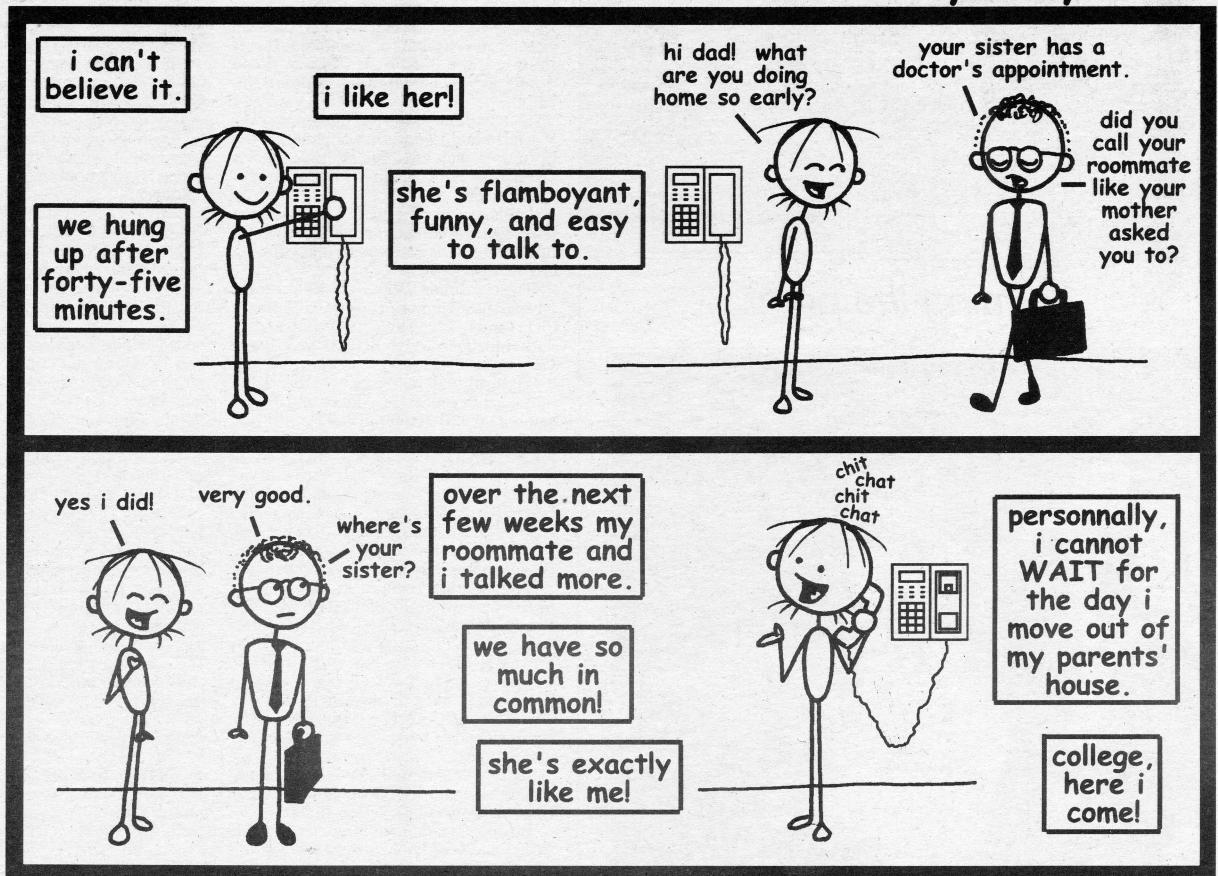
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STiX

by kelly lewis



Ram Stat
VCU men's basketball is 1-8 lifetime against Tulane, another former Metro Conference member.

Monday, November 22, 1999

Sports

Commonwealth Times 14

Upcoming
Turkeys, stuffing, sweet potatoes, pumpkin pie, cornbread and Thursday football. The CT will not publish during this week.

Demon Deacons finish off Rams, 2-1

WINSTON SALEM, N.C. — A 70th-minute goal by Ben Stafford put fifth-seeded Wake Forest through to a 2-1 victory over the VCU men's soccer team at Spry Stadium.

VCU season ends with a 14-7-1. "It's a disappointing end to a good year," said VCU coach Tim O'Sullivan. "Wake Forest's direct play caused some problems."

"They are very physical and very strong in the air."

Chris Lonteen, who assisted Stafford's winner, put the Demon Deacons (13-2-5) ahead 8:03 into the contest. Stafford and Aaron Thomas picked up assists on the goal.

On the stroke of 28 minutes into the match Kevin Jeffrey knotted the match at

one. Roman Otten recorded an assist on the goal.

It was Jeffrey's 18th goal of the season, a single-season school record.

Sean Conner made two saves for the Demon Deacons while Adam Mead made one save for the Rams.

WFU outshot the VCU 11-9 and enjoyed a 7-2 advantage in corner kicks. The physical match saw 18 fouls apiece called on both teams.

VCU's loss marks the end of the college careers of Jeffrey, Ricardo Capilla, the school's all-time leader in points scored, Guillermo Henriques, Matt Kirkpatrick, Heath Matysek-Snyder, and Kofi Sey.

In the second round WFU will face Furman, a 2-1 double-overtime winner over North Carolina.

—compiled from news sources

Running the point



Joshua Komarnicki/Commonwealth Times

VCU's Rochelle Luckett surveys the defense with the West Virginia's Alia Clark guarding her. For more about the Rams opening weekend, see story on page 15.

VCU opens Siegel Center with close win over Louisville

Jennifer Walker
CT ASSOCIATE SPORTS EDITOR

A number of fans gathered at Siegel Center Friday night didn't think the men's basketball team could pull through against Louisville.

"Everybody around campus said we weren't going to win this game," said Scott Lilly, of the Rams. VCU lost the title of "underdog" by beating the Cardinals 79-74.

Louisville holds a series advantage over VCU. In addition to that advantage, the Cardinals won two out of three games against the Rams in the Metro Conference Tournament.

Louisville was ranked in the top 40 in preseason rankings, including Sports Illustrated, Associated Press, and USA Today/ESPN/NABC.

The Cardinals had a significant height advantage in the guard positions. Bo Jones (5-11) and LaMar Taylor (5-9) matched up with Marques Maybin (6-3) and Reece Gaines (6-6).

The Cardinals' massive advantage didn't make a difference, with Jones and Taylor coming up with a combined 29 points and nine assists to eight points and four assists for Maybin and Gaines.

"They went to the boards hard and the guards were dominant," said Louisville coach Denny Crum, one of the three active coaches in the Basketball Hall of Fame.

"The front line held our guards and that's what killed us."

The game looked like a possible blowout in the first 10 minutes of play, with the Cardinals holding a 29-9 lead at one point. Louisville led 49-31 at the half. Senior, Patrick Kodjoe led the half with 10 points.

The second half was a game of cat and mouse that went back and forth for a while, but VCU never led the game. The Rams were down 10 points with 10:18 left in the game.

In only four minutes, VCU erased the 10-point deficit with Lilly hitting a jumper to tie the game at 67 with 6:19 left.

Bo Jones made a lay-up to finally pull VCU to a 74-72 lead with 2:51 left in the game.

Louisville's Dion Edward made a jumper from the center, tying it up again. Jones saved the night again by first making a three pointer and then with the opportunity to shoot one and one, Jones made both to bring the Rams the win.

"We were nervous coming into the games against Louisville," said Jones. "They are a ranked team and we aren't."

Jones made some of the most prominent turning points in the game despite his not playing for more than five minutes in the first half.

"I calmed down in the second half and fed off the crowd and my teammates," said Jones. "I just kept my composure till the last horn."

Lilly agreed with his teammate. "Yeah, we fed off the big crowd," said Lilly. "For the first time we felt a true college atmosphere here."

Each individual player made some huge contributions to bring themselves to the triumph. Jones, Taylor, Kodjoe, and Lilly added to the excitement and the win. Jones had 19 points, all in the second half. Taylor gave the Rams 10 points, nine assists and seven rebounds. Kodjoe finished 17 points, while Lilly contributed 12 points to the game.

VCU's Matt Treadwell continued to play solid and consistently with six points and seven boards.

"He's not in the best shape yet because he hasn't practiced as much as the rest of the team and he's not as strong because of the injury, but he's going to be really good," said VCU coach Mack McCarthy.

McCarthy praised VCU's effort in the comeback.

"This is the ideal way to open this place. We put the ball on the floor, established the inside, stepped up to make some plays, and cut down on turnovers. The mental part of the game was exciting to see."

On the opposing side, Cardinal Tony Williams had 23 points for Louisville.

After an unexpected and tremendous win, fans rushed to center court to get a glimpse and a congratulations in to the well-deserved Rams.

"We all feel like one right now," concluded Lilly.

UPCOMING EVENTS

NOTES

MEN'S SOCCER
(14-7-1, 6-2-0)

SEASON COMPLETE

THE RAMS HAVE NOT WON AN NCAA TOURNAMENT GAME IN THREE TRIPS.

MEN'S BASKETBALL
(0-0, 0-0)

Nov. 26 DEL. STATE	Nov. 28 COLO.	Nov. 30 TULANE
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COLORADO ADVANCED TO THE SECOND ROUND OF THE NATIONAL INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENT LAST SEASON.

VOLLEYBALL
(15-14, 3-9)

SEASON COMPLETE

VCU'S 15 WIN TOTAL IS THE MOST IN CHERYL CARLSON'S FIVE-YEAR TENURE.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL
(1-1, 0-0)

Nov. 26-28 RAINBOW WAHINE CLASSIC VS. HAWAII
--

VCU COULD FACE EITHER PORTLAND OR WASHINGTON IN THE SECOND GAME OF THE TOURNAMENT.

indicates home games.

After slow start Rams rip Red Foxes for weekend split

George Templeton
CT SPORTS EDITOR

Coming off an opening night defeat, the VCU women's basketball team started out of the gate slow against Marist.

The Rams led 21-18 with five minutes left in the first half, and then outscored the Red Foxes 27-10 over the next eight minutes to blow the game open and take an 89-52 win.

"I think our defense pressure helped us get into a rhythm in the first half," said VCU coach David Glass. "We started hitting the shots that we didn't hit Friday night."

Guards Rochelle Luckett and Liz Remus rebounded from a poor shooting night in the opener to help lead VCU (1-1). Luckett scored 12 points and had six assists, while Liz Remus had a game-high 19 points, including four three-pointers.

"Rochelle just had a bad night in the last game," Glass said. "Rochelle played very well today and Liz had some key three's for us."

In addition to the play of the guards, Tawanda Washington poured in 13 points and eight boards, Candice Phelps had 12 points, all in the second-half, and Kristine Austgulen had 10 points.

"When I went to the high post, I was able to drive to the basket because they (Marist) were expecting me to shoot instead," Washington said.

VCU shot 58.6 percent in the second half, something Remus attributed to an advantage in quickness.

"We were faster than them," Remus said. "They were getting down in the second half, and we could see it in their eyes.

We knew we could get to the basket quicker than them."

Rebounding, a major focus for the Rams during the offseason, hurt VCU in its 63-56 opening-night loss to West Virginia. The Mountaineers outrebounded the Rams 48-31.

"Part of it was we shot poorly and they didn't, so we didn't get as many defensive rebounds," Glass said. "I was very disappointed because rebounding was something

we wanted to get a lot better at."

Holding a precarious 57-56 lead, the Mountaineers missed two shots in the final minute, but grabbed the offensive board twice. Mandy Ronay (10 points, nine assists) made the Rams pay by hitting an off balance, eight-foot jumper to up the lead to 59-56.

"She's (Ronay) our senior leader," said Mountaineer coach Alexis Basil. "That last basket was key for us and we expect her to step and make some key shots for us at the end of some games."

Washington recorded her first double-double, 14 points and 10 boards, but was frustrated by WVU's dominance on the boards.

"It's very hard to accept," Washington said. "That's my job and we missed a lot of opportunities on the boards."

In a physical game underneath, the Mountaineers' Marlo Thomas and Brandi Batch grabbed eight rebounds apiece. Batch led WVU with 12 points.

"Batch is a very athletic player and she has not reached her potential yet," Beal said. "She has good feet and when she learns how to finish better, she will be an excellent player. Batch and Thomas did a

great job for us on the glass tonight."

Remus led VCU with 15 points despite a 3-of-10 shooting night. Overall the Rams shot 30.6 percent (19-of-62).

"We didn't get into any rhythm tonight," Glass said. "We needed to have a couple of good possessions in a row tonight, and we never did that. We had to scratch and claw tonight because we struggled on offense."

In addition to the loss to the Mountaineers, the Rams lost the services of ShaVohn McKinnon.

In the second half, McKinnon drove into the lane and went down with an ankle injury.

The training staff said a ligament in McKinnon's ankle was stretched into her avulsion bone and caused it to fracture. McKinnon will be out 2-6 weeks.

"Losing her is tough because we are real thin at the guard position," Glass said. "We don't have a lot of one or two type guards."

Over the Thanksgiving break the Rams will travel to the Asahi Rainbow Wahine Basketball Classic. VCU opens up with the hosts, Hawaii.

"We will face some really stiff competition in that tournament," Glass said. "We're going to go there to play hard, play basketball, and have fun. We need to progress week-to-week, if not day-to-day."

With the field including national-powers Texas and Virginia, Remus sees the tournament as an opportunity to make a statement.

"We won't be going there for vacation," Remus concluded. "We are determined to have a good trip and make a big statement for the conference."

Rams nearly upsets Patriots

WILLIAMSBURG -- For the sixth time this season the VCU volleyball team played a match that went five games.

For the sixth time this season the Rams lost a five-game match.

Despite a team-leading 18 kills and a gaudy .447 hitting percentage from Jennifer West, sixth-seeded VCU (15-15) fell 7-15, 15-4, 11-15, 15-9, 15-13 to third-seeded George Mason at the Colonial Athletic Association tournament.

Shelley Sprouse added 10 kills and compiled a .533 hitting percentage.

The night before the tournament, West became the first Ram named all-CAA first team since VCU joined the CAA in 1995.

The Patriots were led by Shelbylynn McBride who had a match-high 22 kills and 16 digs.

--- compiled from news sources

Happy Thanksgiving from Sports

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CHARITY STRIPE

GEORGE TEMPLETON
CT SPORTS EDITOR

What a start for VCU and the Siegel Center

It was quite a night for the VCU basketball program. After waiting 370 more days than originally thought, the men's basketball team has place to call home.

The ALLTEL Pavilion at the Stuart C. Siegel Center is a 7,500 seat thing of beauty that sits on the corners of Ukrop's Street and Hannaford's Boulevard, (oops, I guess got a little carried away with the corporate sponsor thing).

After \$30.6 million, and a more than year delay in actually playing basketball games there, the Siegel Center (or the Better-Late-Than-Never Arena) better be a thing of beauty.

The bathrooms were pristine, the concessions stands seemed to be in good working order and other than a malfunctioning scoreboard (it only showed two of the players that were on the floor for Louisville)

there were no major hassles.

Gone are the days of not knowing from one minute to the next where VCU would play its games.

The Richmond Times Dispatch's Sunday Punch cartoons lampooning VCU's need for more corporate sponsors to recoup money lost from the late opening, or the changing of the dates on the ribbon-cutting for the new place are a long memory.

No longer are the Rams the college basketball equivalent to the Houston/Tennessee Oilers of the last few years.

Finally the new gym is here and not a moment too soon.

Because, Louisville was ready to run VCU out of the gym after taking a 29-9 lead in the first half.

VCU fans were about to witness the Cardinals taking the Rams behind the

woodshed. Then a game broke out in the middle of it.

Were it not for the sound of 7,396 screaming fans in the pit that could also be called, "The Big Stew" (a good nickname for the new place), the Rams would have been dead meat at that point in the game.

Buoyed by a noisy arena full of Ram rooters the basketball team came up with a large comeback to upset the highly-regarded Cardinals 79-74.

"We fed off the crowd," said an ebullient Bo Jones. "The fans, the students, the alumni were great."

Fan support and a home-court advantage have finally come back to VCU thanks to the Better-Late-Than-Never Arena.

For the basketball programs at VCU, the old saying is true; Good things come to those who wait.

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