

FORECAST
 Friday: chance of rain,
 high 74, low 45.
 Saturday: sunny, high 71,
 low 52.



NEWS: Researchers
 examine college drinking,
 Page 3.



OPINION: 'Plexed in the
 City' analyzes single guys,
 Page 8.



SPECTRUM: Another
 delightful Krunk strip
 awaits you, page 6.



NEWS: A group is
 clamoring for more money
 for grad students. Page 3.

COMMONWEALTH TIMES

The Student Press of Virginia Commonwealth University

Thursday, April 12, 2001

Vol. 34, No. 48

Med students provide African tribes relief

Devon Marrow
 CT STAFF WRITER

A team of VCU medical students along with doctors from universities nationwide will travel to Kenya in July to provide medical care. The group will work at a health project near Kisumu, in western Kenya, where malaria is responsible for 75 percent of children's deaths.

Their mission statement:

- To provide volunteer medical relief in Kenya by battling a malaria epidemic and treating malnutrition;

- To promote the education of future physicians by patient service;

- And to promote the study and exchange of medical theory, practice, and technology with physicians from other cultures.

The group will also transport UNICEF vaccines to remote northern Kenya and establish a medical clinic for the nomadic Samburu and Turkana tribes.

Led by Thomas Kerkering, a VCU professor of infectious disease, the group plans to meet with doctors and

students from across the nation to establish a medical clinic in northern Kenya. Kerkering has more than 10 years of international medical experience and intends to teach students about the factors that shape health in developing countries.

The group of first- and second-year medical students aim to raise \$35,000 for the two-week medical relief trip.

"We need \$35,000 for the trip and so far we only have \$6,000 — so we definitely have a long way to go," said Reena Chhitwal, the fund-raising coordinator.

The university's medical community sponsored a party at Catch-22 on East Main Street on April 6. One hundred percent of the cover-charge proceeds

went toward the mission expenses, as did the revenues from a food and drink special that lasted four hours.

Bookstores on both campuses donated prizes for a raffle and tickets were sold at Friday's party.

Cash donations fund a major part of the trip but the team also needs medicine and new or used medical equipment.

At their Web site, <http://www.geocities.com/mcvkenyatrip>, readers find a list of the most urgently necessary medications. Medical equipment, including small items such as stethoscopes and blood pressure cuffs, is appreciated as well.



The \$35,000 will help pay for medicine, luggage, translator fees, Swahili language lessons and airplane tickets.

University forum examines diversity, multiculturalism

Marlene Obado-Dolla
 CT STAFF WRITER

How could you enhance diversity and multiculturalism at VCU?

Interested students and faculty recently gathered at the University Student Commons for a town hall forum to discuss ways of doing that. The forum, titled "Culture Talk," allowed students to air their views about what they would like to see incorporated into the university's educational and social structures to promote diversity and multiculturalism.

"Incorporating a mandatory diversity class into our courses would ensure that everybody admitted to VCU learns about other cultures," said junior S. Amira, comparing this suggestion to the university's mandatory computer requirement.

"I and other students are in the process of structuring a proposal to have a portion of the new addition to the Commons dedicated to different cultures.

"We hope to find out how many different cultures we have at VCU and ask them to

put a summary of their cultures and traditions on paper and a word of hello in their language."

The students could display the summaries in the commons.

Napoleon L. Peoples, director of the University Career Center, moderated the forum sponsored by the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs and the Center for Multicultural Activities. The forum attracted international students, staff members and local students from different cultures.

"I encourage you to write down the suggestions formally and submit them to the university for consideration," he told the assembled group.

Ideas with humble beginnings, he said, could go a long way in intensifying VCU students' knowledge of

the cultures of the international students attending the school. It then develops an understanding and friendship among students from different backgrounds.

"In doing this, people learn to respect others' differences," Peoples said, "and develop a more close-knit society."

Topics discussed at the nearly half-dozen round-chair discussions range from ways to educate students about the different cultures to plans for an intercultural fair to showcase international art, poetry, comedy and food.

Students also discussed questions that tackle the meaning of diversity and multiculturalism to other students and the places they consider most diversified at the university.

Some answers included living in harmony with the different cultures, learning

to appreciate commonalities and value differences as well as recognizing people's attributes because of their differences.

Most students agreed that VCU's diversity exists everywhere, from the classes on the Academic Campus to those on the Medical Campus.

They also agreed that the teaching staff is the only place with less diversity.

The Center for International Programs reports in its student application material that many international students attend VCU while the multicultural student affairs mission statement describes VCU as a "wonderfully diverse" university. That statement also estimates international and minority students comprise 36 percent of the university's 23,000 students.

"In doing this, people learn to respect others' differences and develop a more close-knit society."

— Napoleon Peoples,
 Director, Career Center



Peoples

Campus Briefs

University graduate programs rank nationally

In U.S. News & World Report's 2002 rankings of "America's Best Graduate Schools," 16 VCU programs placed among the best in the country.

Seven of the programs are in the top tier of their respective categories: rehabilitation counseling placed seventh; health services administration placed eighth; nursing service administration, ninth; community health, 11th; social work, 13th; physical therapy, 15th; and occupational therapy, 17th.

The magazine published its latest graduate school rankings in its April 2 issue. To determine the rankings, U.S. News & World Report surveyed deans and top administrators, asking them to rate the schools within their own disciplines.

Engineering professor wins national teaching award

Rosalyn S. Hobson, an assistant professor of electrical engineering at VCU, was named Educator of the Year by the National Society of Black Engineers, a student and professional organization with more than 10,000 members worldwide.

Hobson's work at VCU began in 1996 when she started as an adjunct professor. In 1997, she advanced to assistant professor and, one year later, earned her Ph.D. in control theory, neural networks and signal processing at the University of Virginia.

She was one of several thousand minority science and engineering professors across the nation who competed for the annual award. Recipients must hold a master's degree or higher and demonstrate an encouraging environment for blacks to pursue careers in engineering and science.

Award-winning author speaks at VCU

Writer Bob Shacochis presents a public reading of his work 8 p.m., April 17, in Commonwealth Ballroom A at the University Student Commons.

Shacochis has published two collections of short stories: "Easy in the Islands," which won the American Book Award in 1985, and "The Next New World," which was awarded the Prix de Rome from the American Academy of the Arts and Letters in 1989.

In addition, he has published several novels, including "The Immaculate Invasion," an eyewitness account of the 1994 invasion and occupation of Haiti.

The writer, born in Pennsylvania, grew up in Virginia, lived for three years in the Caribbean and now resides in Florida where he teaches creative writing at Florida State University.

This reading is part of the Visiting Writers Series sponsored by the Department of English, the New Virginia Review, the Graduate Writers Association and the VCU Student Government Association.

Campus Calendar

Friday, April 13

Film: "102 Dalmations" shows 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. in the University Student Commons Theater. Sponsored by the APB/Film Committee.

Meeting: Alcoholics Anonymous meets at 8:30 p.m. in the Hibbs Building, room 403.

Film: "Emperor's New Groove" shows 9:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. in the University Student Commons Theater. Sponsored by the APB/Film Committee.

Saturday, April 14

Film: "Emperor's New Groove" shows 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. in the University Student Commons Theater. Sponsored by the APB/Film Committee.

Film: "102 Dalmations" shows 9:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. in the University Student Commons Theater. Sponsored by the APB/Film Committee.

Sunday, April 15

Meeting: Narcotics Anonymous meets 8 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. in the Hibbs Building, room 326.

Monday, April 16

Program: "Preparing for Finals," sponsored by the Academic Success program, noon to 1 p.m. in the University Student Commons Theater.

Tuesday, April 17

Program: An orientation to CareerConnections, an online database that helps students find jobs and schedule interviews, sponsored by the University Career Center.

The workshop, required for all first-time users of the database, costs \$15 and meets at 11 a.m. in the career center at the commons.

Wednesday, April 18

Event: Bike cleanup and checkup sponsored by Conte's Bicycles and commons and activities, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Commons Plaza.

Program: Open mic night, sponsored by APB/Expressions Showcase, 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. in Common Ground at the University Student Commons.

Thursday, April 19

Program: Leonard Barry, retailing expert and Thalhimer Scholar in Residence, discusses his book, "Discovering the Soul of Service," 9:30 a.m. to 10:45 in the Commonwealth Ballroom at the commons. Sponsored by the School of Business.

Program: "Preparing for Finals," sponsored by the Academic Success program, 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the University Student Commons Theater.

Program: Golden Key National Honor Society induction ceremony, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. in Commonwealth Ballrooms A and B at the commons.

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The Commonwealth Times doesn't endorse the advertising that runs in the newspaper.

Organization seeking increase in grad-student research funds

Survey says: Greeks heavy drinkers during college years

Stuart Squier
CT STAFF WRITER

More than 100 graduate students participated in the presentation of 44 abstracts at last week's Graduate Research Symposium and Exhibit on campus.

The event was designed to give VCU graduate students an opportunity to present their work in a professional setting in the company of their peers from each of VCU's graduate programs.

Sponsored by the Graduate Student Association, its president, Stacey Cofield, opened the symposium by stressing the importance of the GSA's goals and its role in graduate student life.

"By participating in these events you can show your support for our organization," Cofield said, "and we can in turn provide events like this and other events geared toward graduate students."

Jack Haar, dean of the School of Graduate Studies, reinforced the importance of the GSA in his remarks to the group.

"I think graduate students, as all people do, need to have social contact. I think interacting with graduate students from other fields is also stimulating," Haar said, noting the wide variety of research areas

represented at the exhibit.

Both speakers reinforced the need for greater graduate student control in seeking and using student activity funds. Since graduate students pay \$14 each semester as an activity fee to the university, the two say graduate students deserve control of the activity fees to sponsor such events as the symposium.

The use of graduate student activity fees, which Haar estimated to be between \$70,000 and \$100,000, is left to the discretion of the Student Government Association, an undergraduate governing body.

"We need to impress on the higher administration the need for the graduate student activity fees to be used for the benefit of graduate students," Haar said in his remarks. "It could be used for graduate students to go to national meetings to benefit works, which benefits the university. We all benefit by working together to try to get better funding for the GSA."

Cofield also discussed the significant cost of the symposium and the funding the group received for the symposium from the SGA.

"For each of these abstracts it costs \$50 to set up, so that costs around \$1,000 to fund," she said. "Of the money that we

asked for, they (the SGA) gave us half. So we had to find a way to make this event possible for \$25 a person presenting (research)."

After Cofield and Haar addressed the GSA members and others at the event, John Morgan of Play, a creative consulting company in Richmond, urged graduate students to use their creativity not only to produce more innovative work but also to apply it to their everyday lives.

Morgan also emphasized the importance of teamwork and positivism in producing quality work.

"Put tools in place so that your team — when they are becoming innovative and creative — that they have the liberty to shoot the moon," Morgan said. "Because if you can't shoot the moon, where does your creativity and innovation go? Not forward."

Mary Dallas Allen, a social work graduate student who presented an abstract at the event, said she enjoyed Morgan's message about creative thinking.

"It is so much more productive to think about ways to make an idea happen or ways to change the idea so that it can happen," Allen said. "It really empowers people a lot more and makes it more encouraging."

Charles Gardner

THE DARTMOUTH (DARTMOUTH COLLEGE)

(U-WIRE) HANOVER, N.H. — Although researchers have long known that membership in Greek organizations is often linked to heavy drinking, a new study indicates that Greeks are no more likely than their unaffiliated peers to consume alcohol following graduation.

The study, which was conducted by faculty and student researchers at the University of Missouri-Columbia, also seeks to explain what drives many Greeks to heavy drinking during their undergraduate years.

Kenneth Sher, professor of psychology at the university and author of the study, suggested that social attitudes and perceptions of drinking are the primary factors.

"There seem to be perceived norms of heavy drinking, related to how much people you know drink and how much they think about drinking, and these seem to be very potent," he noted.

Recent Dartmouth alumni tended to agree with Sher's assessment of college drinking behavior as applied to the college.

"Especially in the all-male houses there's

DRINKERS continued to page 5

ADVANCE REGISTRATION for Fall 2001

The Schedule of Classes is available at this VCU website: <http://www.vcu.edu/schedule/>
Copies of the Schedule of Classes can be picked up in Founders Hall, Room 104, or in the school or college of your major, and in the University Student Commons.

Monday - March 19 --- Summer advance registration begins

Monday - Friday, March 26 - 30 --- Advising for Fall semester

Monday - April 2 --- Advance telephone registration for Fall term 2001 begins (except for Honors students).
See registration schedule below.

Honors students	March 26
Graduate Students	April 2
Post-Baccalaureate Certificate workers	April 4
Seniors	April 4
Juniors	April 9
Sophomores	April 16
Freshmen	April 23
Special Students (non-degree seeking)	April 30

Telephone registration hours:

Monday - Thursday: 8 a.m. - 7:30 p.m.

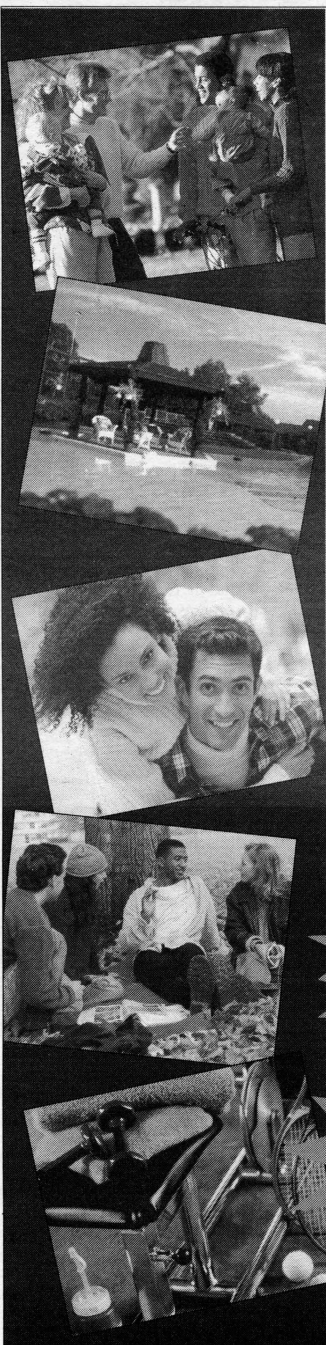
Friday: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Saturday: 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Telephone registration number: (804)828-1495

If you have any questions, please call Records and Registration at 828-1349.

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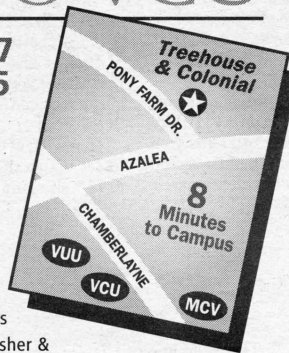
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DRINKERS continued from page 3

an environment where you can drink and it's OK and, in fact, encouraged," said Kenneth Harker.

Randall Dottin, a former member of the university's Kappa Alpha Phi fraternity, attributed alcohol consumption to easy availability and to a school culture that encouraged it.

Despite the prevalence of heavy drinking among Greeks during college years, the study found that alcohol use drops off among most students after college, and that Greek members drink no more than nonaffiliated students in the years after graduation.

"There's a powerful socializing effect that is pretty much gone by three years afterwards," Sher said. "They're in a setting that presents barriers to heavy drinking, such as holding a job or being a parent."

Matt Guenther, who was unaffiliated during his time at Dartmouth, agreed. "In the real world, you have to have a job and maintain a certain focus; the rigors of life — growing up, being responsible — make it so that you drink less."

Dottin added that most of the students he knew decreased their alcohol consumption after leaving Dartmouth. "I would say it does drop off. By the time we graduate, it's kind of a been-there-done-that," he said.

Sher said the findings were consistent with the need for norms-based prevention approaches on campus, such as the recent poster campaign at Dartmouth that seeks to inform students of the amount an average partygoer drinks on a Saturday night.

The study, which was co-authored by Bruce Bartholow and Shivani Nanda, an undergraduate at the University of Missouri-Columbia, surveyed hundreds of students, both freshmen and graduates, and involved extensive diagnostic interviews of the participants.

With Gore, Letterman talks politics, humor

Rob Saliterman

COLUMBIA DAILY SPECTATOR

(U-WIRE) NEW YORK — "I've never been this excited in my entire life. Honestly, I mean that," said Late Show host David Letterman Wednesday as he walked toward the Columbia Journalism School to speak to former Vice President Al Gore's class on national affairs in the information age.

Like the weather, the atmosphere in Wednesday's class was warmer than two weeks ago, when Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan was the guest. Joined by Late Show writers Gerard Mulligan and Bill Scheft, Letterman spoke to the class about the intermingling of humor and politics.

"This was another very productive, profound class," said architecture student Benjamin Bolger. "He covered a lot of serious issues."

Gore's approach to those issues, however, did not seem so serious.

"Everybody was laughing the entire time," said Gore, who added that the "spontaneous jokes (Letterman's writers) were telling the whole time" were the highlight.

Upon leaving the building, Gore sounded off on current events for the first time since his December concession speech. Asked by Newsweek reporter Howard Fineman to comment on the situation of the Navy airplane and pilots currently in the possession of the Chinese government, Gore said, "My prayers are with the personnel there and with their families and I think we are right to insist upon return and I hope that they will be returned very soon."

During the class, political apathy was a main topic of discussion, with Letterman saying that he hopes his jokes do not make viewers disinterested in government.

"Letterman weighed in thinking that in general he tries to get people involved in political activities, and that humor is a way of trying to get people into the fray," Bolger said.

Discussion centered not only on the impact of political humor on the public, but also on politicians themselves.

"There was some comment about President Ford (and) what cost him the election," Bolger said. "(Whether it was) pardoning Nixon over Watergate or the impression comedians created that he stumbled too much."

That led to a discussion of the popular Saturday Night Live sketches that lampooned candidates' performances in last year's presidential debates. Gore acknowledged that the portrayals of him did have an impact on his campaign, according to Bolger.

Letterman told the journalism school, School of International and Public Affairs, and the handful of Columbia College students that he enjoys having guests who are able to talk about serious topics.

"He said a lot of actresses like to talk more about makeup than real hard-hitting facts. So when he has a chance to get someone like Tom Brokaw on the show or Al Gore, he really looks forward to that," Bolger said.

As approximately 40 students in the class walked through the lobby of the journalism school on their way to the door, some were approached by Columbia Se-

nior Public Affairs Officer James Devitt, who told them that a reporter from People magazine was waiting outside and hoping to interview them about the course.

Teaching his fifth of eight classes this year, Gore appeared strongly in control.

"Gore said he'd give a brief introduction," said Bolger. "Around 20 to 25 minutes into his setup, Letterman interrupted and said that he wasn't sure whether he should (have) agree(d) to do this or not because Gore is known to be a content-oriented person, but then his writers assured him that all he really needed to do was appear, and that Gore would speak most of the time."

"So Letterman looked at his watch and said 'we're doing really good,'" Bolger added.

As to Letterman's personal political leanings, Bolger said, "He mentioned that he voted his conscience and voted across the board."

Before walking out the door of the School of Journalism to allow the dozen or so members of the media assembled in front of the building to take pictures of the two of them together, Gore proudly boasted to Letterman of a joke he made when Greenspan spoke to the class.

In that class, Gore pre-empted Greenspan's answer to one question, according to a student quoted by Dow Jones. The question had to do with whether one could predict the turnaround speed of a recession-bound economy, and Gore gave the answer:

If plotted on a fever chart, a recovery "could be a U, or it could be an L, like a hockey stick, or a V and, if the wrong choices are made, it could be a W."

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April 12, Plyometrics from 2 - 3 pm with Scott, Multipurpose Room

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Additional Ab Exercises from 5:30 - 6:30 pm with Jake, Fitness Center

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Wrestling Clinic from 7 - 8:30 pm with Jordon, Tyler & Sergio, Franklin St. Gym Room 308

Learn techniques, take downs, forms and much more.

April 16, Strength Training for Women from 6 - 7 pm with Carrie, Fitness Center

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April 17, Exercises to Improve your Golf Game from 6 - 7 pm with Marq, Fitness Center

Learn exercises to aid in improving your golf game.

April 18, Plyometrics from 2 - 3 pm with Scott, Multipurpose Room

Want to spruce up your training, add some plyometrics. Learn what plyometrics are and how it can work for you.

The HIT Method of Training from 3 - 4 pm with Anton, Fitness Center

Discuss the HIT Method of Training, the advantages and disadvantages and how you can make it work for you.

April 19, Dumbbell & Cable Upper Body Clinic from 5 - 6 pm with Chris, Fitness Center

Learn various exercises focusing on the upper body using dumbbells and the Modular Extension Machine.

Additional Ab Exercises from 6 - 7 pm with Jake, Fitness Center

Learn additional exercises for the abdominal muscles that can be done in the Fitness Center.

Lower Body Clinic from 7 - 8 pm with Kirk, Fitness Center

Learn various exercises to strengthen, build and tone the lower body.

Wrestling Clinic from 7 - 8:30 pm with Jordon, Tyler & Sergio, Franklin St. Gym Room 308

Learn techniques, take downs, forms and much more.

April 23, Flexibility & Stretching from 4 - 5 pm with Anton,

Multipurpose Room Learn how to warm-up & stretch properly. Learn exercises to help maintain and/or increase flexibility.

April 24, Dumbbell & Cable Upper Body Clinic from 6:30 - 7:30 pm

with Chris, Fitness Center

Learn various exercises focusing on the upper body using dumbbells and the Modular Extension Machine.

April 25, Supplements from 7 - 8 pm with Carrie, Wellness Center

Learn about supplements and what they can and can't do for you.

April 26, Exercises to Improve your Golf Game from 2 - 3 pm with Marq,

Fitness Center

Learn exercises to aid in improving your golf game.

Free Weight Clinic from 5:30 - 6:30 pm with Ricky, Fitness Center

Learn proper exercise form, techniques and spotting.

Lower Body Clinic from 7 - 8 pm with Kirk, Fitness Center

Learn various exercises to strengthen, build and tone the lower body.

Also included is Self Defense Class on Sunday, April 22 from 3 - 4 pm, Tuesday,

April 24 from 3 - 4 pm and Thursday, April 26 from 2 - 3pm all a part of STRESS RELIEF WEEK ACTIVITIES.

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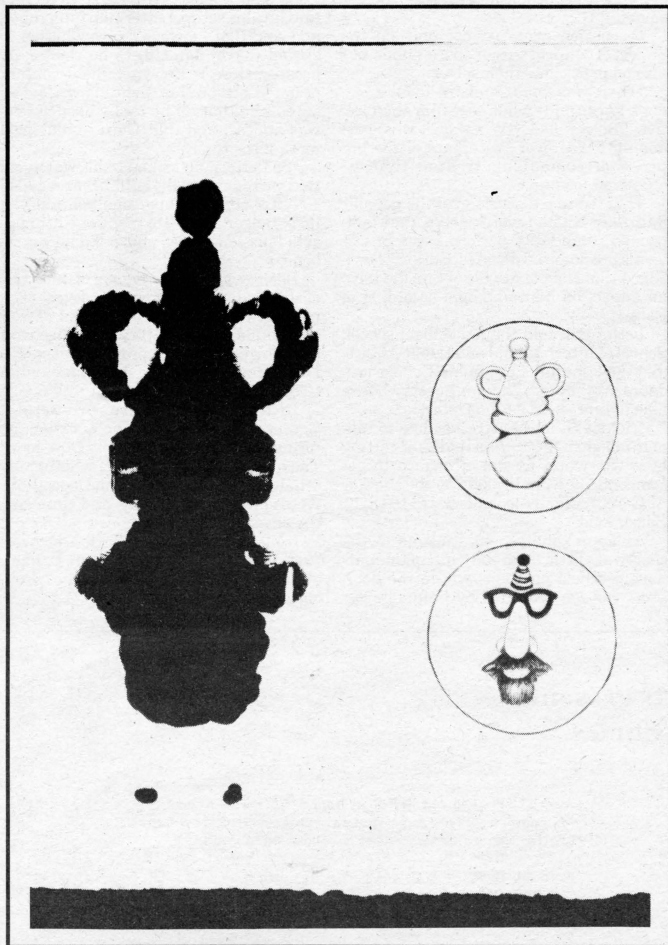
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Student exhibits open this weekend

New music by old-school rappers, French robots



"Untitled" by Sarah Gilbert, done with acrylic and ink, will be one of the pieces at the "Interaction 18 by 20: No Rhyme But Reason" exhibition at the Student Art Space beginning April 12.

"Interaction 18 by 20: No Rhyme But Reason" at the University Student Commons

This show at the Student Commons Art Space features works by 20 graduating seniors from the Department of Painting and Printmaking. Media used in this exhibit includes lithography, etching, silkscreen, computer-generated imagery, oil and charcoal. "No Rhyme but Reason" opens April 12 with a reception from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. and closes April 26. The gallery is open during daily hours at the commons.

"New Talent," "New Artists" at Artspace

Presented by the Department of Crafts, the senior exhibition "New Talent" features ceramics, metal, glass, furniture and fiber. "New Artists" is the senior exhibition from the Department of Printmaking and

Painting. Both shows close April 29.

Artspace, 6 E. Broad St., is open Wednesday through Sunday from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. Later this month at Artspace is "Menspeak," featuring poetry and prose readings from artists including Steven Barza and Kelly Lane (April 21) and the Floating Folk Festival April 28. Call 782-8672 for more details.

Student Fine Arts Exhibition at the Anderson Gallery

Opening April 13 with a 5 p.m. reception, the Student Fine Arts Exhibition features paintings, video, photography, crafts, drawings and sculptures. This year the show will be judged by Dennis Szakacs, deputy director of the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York. The show closes April 22.

-compiled from news sources

Kelly Gerow

CT SPECTRUM EDITOR

Kings of Convenience, "Quiet is the New Loud" (Astralwerks/Source)

The second album from Norway's Kings of Convenience is like Belle and Sebastian stripped, or what Belle and Sebastian would sound like as a Norwegian duo instead of a gaggle of musicians who refuse to be photographed together. The simple sounds, produced by the man who produced Badly Drawn Boy, are sweet and airy. "Quiet is the New Loud" is the best description for KOC's music. How convenient.

RUN DMC, "Crown Royal" (Arista)

I can't say enough about RUN DMC's first album in eight years - not enough bad remarks, unfortunately. I knew things would be ugly when I read the press release touting the album. Apparently, and I'm not sure why I didn't know this, RUN DMC has been as influential as Elvis Presley and the Beatles. Which could be true, but after listening to this scraped-together effort, it's hard to say how a band that mimics every annoying thing about hip hop today can be influential. I am no aficionado of hip hop music, and if I were to stereotype it, I'd use "Crown Royal" as my inspiration. Most of the songs are about how great RUN DMC is. Artists that have brought pop music to its ill (and not in the cool way) state in the past few years offer what they confuse as skills to the heavily sampled tracks. Kid Rock, Fred Durst, Sugar Ray and Stephan Jenkins of Third Eye Blind all make appearances, as do Jermaine Dupri, Nas, Everlast and Jagged Edge (whose version of Al Green's "Let's Stay Together" should be taken to the river and drowned). RUN DMC's

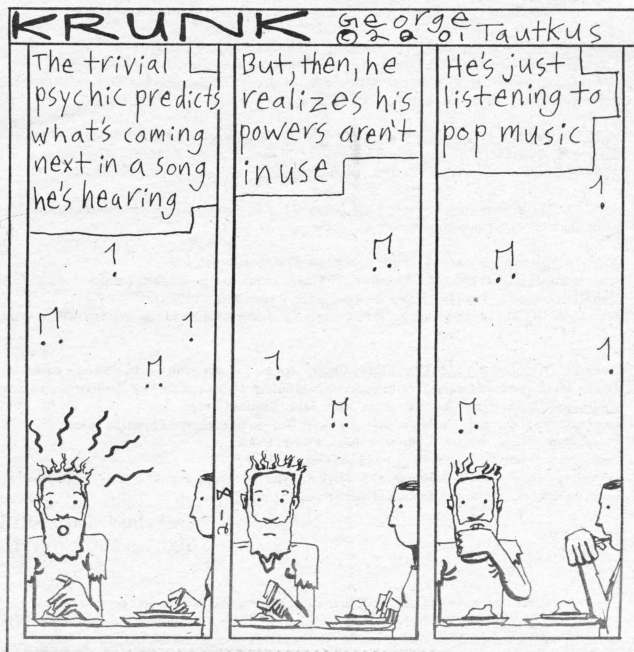
fear of being alone leaves them with only one track without guest appearances. The songs are only noteworthy because the way-too-easy samples (Steve Miller, Mary J. Blige) overwhelm whatever sexist Durst or brown-nosing Jenkins can say. DJ Run, DMC and Jam Master Jay are back, but where they went and what they left there should be investigated immediately.

Daft Punk, "Discovery" (Virgin)

Daft Punk, the French techno duo, are now claiming to be robots. And some funky ones at that. Their second full-length album, a follow-up to 1996's "Homework" that offered "Around the World" and "Da Funk," is shorter and more consistent. Starting with the vocoder-heavy "One More Time" (the title alone is enough to get the song stuck in your head), love songs and big beats carry the rest of the album. Some vocals are provided by Daft Punk, most notably on "Something About Us." Though not ground breaking work, "Discovery" is a solid dance album that can even get the non-robots moving.

Mirwais, "Production" (Epic)

Mirwais, the producer best known for his work on Madonna's "Music" has come out with his own album, "Production." The most startling thing about this electronic album is that it's way under an hour long, whereas most techno LP's generally exceed their limits of listenability. Oddly enough, Mirwais has made an album that sounds like a more realistic follow-up to Daft Punk's "Homework" than Daft Punk's "Discovery." Maybe it's a French thing. "Disco Science," "Naïve Song" and "Paradise (Not For Me)" (featuring Madonna, who co-produced) are the standout tracks on this overall enjoyable and unpredictable debut.



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Shannon Ely's 'Plexed in the City'

Examining the single male

Oh Jesse Einsig, how you make me smile. Thank you so much for letting me and my fellow females know how attractive you are. If only there was a way to back up such claims? I also want to thank you for calling us "the other team." Such a flattering way to describe the fairer sex. Yes, you are right, the game we all play is very complicated.

And once again, you're right in that we should change how it is played. Here's a novel idea: Let's not play it at all!

I'm relieved to know that men feel pain like we do.

But you must know the relationship isn't going to last when you meet someone in a club on a night when single people typically feel a little sad and lonely. Six months and you're living with her? Didn't your mother ever tell you to get to know someone a little before living with the person? At least I waited until past the one-year mark.

Jesse, did you really expect a girl you met in a club to be totally herself? I am always myself. Most of my friends are always themselves when on a first date. But you have to accept that not everyone is like you and me (I know it's hard to be-

lieve).

Women I know never say the "L-word" unless we mean it. I said it two weeks after it was first said to me because I wanted to be sure. Recently I said it again, and I mean it. Yep, that's right, Jesse. I'm now a girlfriend. And I feel it now. I really feel it.

You, my dear boy, have been looking for love longer than I have, as you are older than me by two and a half years. But the search is the same. I think the search for love is universal, regardless of sexual orientation, religion, race, or socio-economic status. How the search is carried out varies among individuals. And it sounds like a cliché, but you really do meet that special person when you relax about dating. Don't put so much pressure on yourself to find him or her that night. The night before I met my current boyfriend, I told a friend, "I'm so glad I'm not bogged down in a relationship." And I believed it. The next day I met someone who I'm crazy about.

Girls don't walk around smiling like morons. Some people may think I look angry when I walk around campus. There's a reason, and it's not because I'm angry. It's because I'm thinking about things I have to do, people I have to write about and so

forth. I never see women walking around campus smiling to themselves. I take that back; I did once. I had just read your letter, Jesse.

We all have flaws. Karen's claiming that playing rugby, riding a Harley, and having tattoos are flaws is false. Those things make you who you are. Was she flawless? I would hardly think so. Just as wearing black Chucks, being opinionated and giggling when provoked are flaws of mine. They're not. That's who I am. And good for you Jesse for not faking anything!

I would like to thank you, on behalf of my gender, for taking the time to tell us what you kind of look like. I just can't figure out how a 25-year-old who's still in college can afford a Harley and all these tattoos. Did I miss out on the free money giveaway? Your description made you sound endearing, puppy and all. But if you're so available and so good-looking, why not leave some way for the single ladies of VCU to get in touch with you? My e-mail address can be found on the VCU Web site (by doing a people search) or you may e-mail me at plexedgirl@hotmail.com.

Jesse, I bid you good luck in your search for her. I'm sure you'll find her soon.

Amul Madan

2001: A Mars Odyssey

After two failed attempts to find some sort of life on the planet Mars, NASA is at it again. This time around though, NASA is fine-tuning its mission, making sure that *absolutely* nothing goes wrong.

Last week the Mars Odyssey took off from the Cape Canaveral Space Station in Florida to begin its long trek to the Red Planet. The Odyssey will reach Mars in late October and thereafter slip into orbit around the planet.

For the 2 1/2-year duration of its orbit, the Mars Odyssey will study minerals in the rocks and measure chemical elements, such as hydrogen, in its quest for water. NASA's main goal here is looking for life, explains Arizona State University geologist Phil Christian.

Looking for life means looking for water. While some people look at this Mars mission as just another mission, the team of scientists that worked on the two failed missions in 1999 are looking for redemption.

The team is looking for redemption because they want a chance to show the world that the mission of finding life on Mars can work. If this mission to Mars goes well, there is no telling what could happen next.

It is possible that if water or hydrogen is found, it will be inferred that life is on that planet and soon after, explorations in regard to whether living conditions are suitable could be determined.

To avoid another mission failure, NASA spent millions of extra dollars on this Mars mission, that brought the total cost of the entire mission to Mars to \$297 million dollars. NASA also added dozens of extra eyes on the project to make sure nothing goes wrong.

The question that lingers on everyone's mind is, "Will it work?" Well, it certainly has the possibility of doing well. After two failed attempts at a successful Mars mission, NASA strongly believes that the third time is the charm in its quest to find some sort of life on the Red Planet.

If this mission is deemed successful, NASA will send rovers to the planet in 2003 to further explore the planet and its resources, if any.

All that can be left to do is hope that the Mars Odyssey mission goes well and that some sort of life is found on the Red Planet.

• After that discovery, who knows what might happen?

Letter to the editor

I write to clarify a number of inaccuracies on Messrs. Powell's and Crocker's articles on McDonald's that appeared in the Feb. 22 and March 1 issues of the Commonwealth Times, respectively.

First and foremost, McDonald's incurred more than \$812,000 in renovating and equipping the University Student Commons at the contract inception in 1997, not VCU.

CT article missed its mark

The university and McDonald's have now negotiated an agreement whereby the university will pay McDonald's \$400,000 to acquire the capital improvements and most of the food services equipment in the commons.

As part of this agreement, McDonald's will be entitled to remove certain proprietary equipment with a current value of approximately \$93,000.

In my interview with Mr. Powell, I provided a number of reasons that led us to work with McDonald's to negotiate an agreement for the termination of the contract to include McDonald's not providing the type of diversity that our customers demanded and to include student dissatisfaction.

Mr. Powell chose only to include an out-of-context quote regarding McDonald's marketing efforts.

To clarify, I told Mr. Powell, "McDonald's is the leader in operating fast-food restaurants and McDonald's markets far more successfully to children with its Happy Meals menu and playgrounds and does not market as well to college students." McDonald's only sells a limited menu of value-priced foods that clearly did not meet the food diversity needs of our customers.

In closing, we are pleased that we could reach this agreement with McDonald's that will now allow us to respond sooner to our customers' requests for greater food diversity.

We hope students, faculty and staff will continue to provide us with valuable input and feedback regarding our dining services program at VCU.

Paul P. Jez
VCU Assistant Vice President
for Business Services and Treasurer

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*Henshaw SK. Unintended pregnancy in the United States. *Fam Plann Perspect*. 1998;30:24-29,46.
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What is DEPO-PROVERA Contraceptive Injection?

DEPO-PROVERA Contraceptive Injection is a form of birth control that is given as an intramuscular injection (a shot) in the buttock or upper arm once every 3 months (13 weeks). To continue your contraceptive protection, you must return for your next injection promptly at the end of 3 months (13 weeks). DEPO-PROVERA contains medroxyprogesterone acetate, a chemical similar to (but not the same as) the natural hormone progesterone, which is produced by your ovaries during the second half of your menstrual cycle. DEPO-PROVERA acts by preventing your egg cells from ripening. If an egg is not released from the ovaries during your menstrual cycle, it cannot become fertilized by sperm and result in pregnancy. DEPO-PROVERA also causes changes in the lining of your uterus that make it less likely for pregnancy to occur.

How effective is DEPO-PROVERA Contraceptive Injection?

The efficacy of DEPO-PROVERA Contraceptive Injection depends on following the recommended dosage schedule exactly (see "How often do I get my shot of DEPO-PROVERA Contraceptive Injection?"). To make sure you are not pregnant when you first get DEPO-PROVERA Contraceptive Injection, your first injection must be given **ONLY** during the first 5 days of a normal menstrual period, **ONLY** within the first 5 days after childbirth if not breastfeeding, and, if exclusively breastfeeding, **ONLY** at the sixth week after childbirth. It is a long-term injectable contraceptive when administered at 3-month (13-week) intervals. DEPO-PROVERA Contraceptive Injection is over 99% effective, making it one of the most reliable methods of birth control available. This means that the average annual pregnancy rate is less than one for every 100 women who use DEPO-PROVERA. The effectiveness of most contraceptive methods depends in part on how reliably each woman uses the method. The effectiveness of DEPO-PROVERA depends only on the patient returning every 3 months (13 weeks) for her next injection. Your health-care provider will help you compare DEPO-PROVERA with other contraceptive methods and give you the information you need in order to decide which contraceptive method is the right choice for you.

The following table shows the percent of women who got pregnant while using different kinds of contraceptive methods. It gives both the lowest expected rate of pregnancy (the rate expected in women who use each method exactly as it should be used) and the typical rate of pregnancy (which includes women who became pregnant because they forgot to use their birth control or because they did not follow the directions exactly).

Percent of Women Experiencing an Accidental Pregnancy in the First Year of Continuous Use

Method	Lowest Expected	Typical
DEPO-PROVERA	0.3	0.3
Implants (Norplant)	0.2*	0.2*
Female sterilization	0.2	0.4
Male sterilization	0.1	0.15
Oval contraceptive (pill)	-	3
Combined	0.1	-
Progestogen only	0.5	-
IUD	-	3
Progesterast	2.0	-
Copper T 380A	0.8	-
Condom (without spermicide)	2	12
Diaphragm (with spermicide)	6	18
Cervical cap	6	18
Withdrawal	4	18
Periodic abstinence	1.9	20
Spermicide alone	3	21
Vaginal sponge	-	28
used before childbirth	6	18
used after childbirth	9	28
No method	85	85

Source: Trussell et al. *Obstet Gynecol.* 1990;76:558-567.

*From Norplant[®] package insert.

Who should not use DEPO-PROVERA Contraceptive Injection?
Not all women should use DEPO-PROVERA. You should not use DEPO-PROVERA if you have any of the following conditions:
• if you think you might be pregnant
• if you have any vaginal bleeding without a known reason

- if you have had cancer of the breast
- if you have had a stroke
- if you have or have had blood clots (phlebitis) in your legs
- if you have problems with your liver or liver disease
- if you are allergic to DEPO-PROVERA (medroxyprogesterone acetate or any of its other ingredients)

What other things should I consider before using DEPO-PROVERA Contraceptive Injection?

You will have a physical examination before your doctor prescribes DEPO-PROVERA. It is important to tell your health-care provider if you have any of the following:
• a family history of breast cancer
• an abnormal mammogram (breast x-ray), fibrocystic breast disease, breast nodules or lumps, or changes from your nipples
• kidney disease
• irregular or scanty menstrual periods
• high blood pressure
• migraine headaches
• asthma
• epilepsy (convulsions or seizures)
• diabetes or a family history of diabetes
• a history of depression
• if you are taking any prescription or over-the-counter medications

This product intended to prevent pregnancy. It does not protect against transmission of HIV (AIDS) and other sexually transmitted diseases such as chlamydia, genital herpes, genital warts, gonorrhea, hepatitis B, and syphilis.

What if I want to become pregnant after using DEPO-PROVERA Contraceptive Injection?

Because DEPO-PROVERA is a long-acting birth control method, it takes some time after your last injection for its effect to wear off. Based on the results from a large study done in the United States, for women who stop using DEPO-PROVERA in order to become pregnant, it is expected that about half of those who become pregnant will do so in about 10 months after their last injection; about two thirds of those who become pregnant will do so in about 12 months; about 83% of those who become pregnant will do so in about 15 months; and about 93% of those who become pregnant will do so in about 18 months after their last injection. The length of time you use DEPO-PROVERA has no effect on how long it takes you to become pregnant after you stop using it.

What are the risks of using DEPO-PROVERA Contraceptive Injection?

Irregular Menstrual Bleeding
The side effect reported most frequently by women who use DEPO-PROVERA for contraception is a change in their normal menstrual cycle. During the first year of using DEPO-PROVERA, you might have one or more of the following changes: irregular or unpredictable bleeding or spotting; an increase or decrease in menstrual bleeding, or no bleeding at all. Unusually heavy or continuous bleeding, however, is not a usual effect of DEPO-PROVERA; and if this happens, you should see your health-care provider right away. With continued use of DEPO-PROVERA, bleeding usually decreases, and many women stop having periods completely. In clinical studies of DEPO-PROVERA, 55% of the women studied reported no menstrual bleeding (amenorrhea) after 1 year of use, and 68% of the women studied reported no menstrual bleeding after 2 years of use. The reason that your periods stop is because DEPO-PROVERA causes a resting state in your ovaries. When your ovaries do not release an egg monthly, the regular monthly growth of the lining of your uterus does not occur and, therefore, the bleeding that comes with your normal menstruation does not take place. When you stop using DEPO-PROVERA, your menstrual period will usually, in time, return to its normal cycle.

2. Bone Mineral Changes

Use of DEPO-PROVERA may be associated with a decrease in the amount of mineral stored in your bones. This could increase your risk of developing bone fractures. The rate of bone mineral loss is greatest in the early years of DEPO-PROVERA use, but after that, it begins to resemble the normal rate of age-related bone mineral loss.

3. Cancer

Studies of women who have used different forms of contraception found that women who used DEPO-PROVERA for contraception had no increased overall risk of developing cancer of the breast, ovary, uterus, cervix, or liver. However, women under 35 years of age whose first exposure to DEPO-PROVERA was within the previous 4 to 5 years may have a slightly increased risk of developing breast cancer similar to that seen with oral contraceptives. You should discuss this with your health-care provider.

4. Unplanned Pregnancy

Because DEPO-PROVERA is such an effective contraceptive method, the risk of accidental pregnancy for women who get their shots regularly (every 3 months [13 weeks]) is very low.

While there have been reports of an increased risk of low birth weight and neonatal infant death or other health problems in infants conceived close to the time of injection, such pregnancies are uncommon. If you think you may have become pregnant while using DEPO-PROVERA for contraception, see your health-care provider as soon as possible.

5. Allergic Reactions

Some women using DEPO-PROVERA Contraceptive Injection have reported severe and potentially life-threatening allergic reactions known as anaphylaxis and anaphylactoid reactions. Symptoms include the sudden onset of hives or swelling and itching of the skin, breathing difficulties, and a drop in blood pressure.

6. Other Risks

Women who use hormone-based contraceptives may have an increased risk of blood clots or stroke. Also, if a contraceptive method fails, there is a possibility that the fertilized egg will be developed outside of the uterus (ectopic pregnancy). While these events are rare, you should tell your health-care provider if you have any of the following problems listed in the next section.

What symptoms may signal problems while using DEPO-PROVERA Contraceptive Injection?

- Call your health-care provider immediately if any of these problems occur following an injection of DEPO-PROVERA:
- sharp chest pain, coughing up of blood, or sudden shortness of breath (indicating a possible clot in the lung)
 - sudden severe headache or vomiting, dizziness, or fainting, problems with your eyesight or speech, weakness, or numbness in an arm or leg (indicating a possible stroke)
 - severe pain or swelling in the calf (indicating a possible clot in the leg)
 - unusually heavy vaginal bleeding
 - severe pain or tenderness in the lower abdominal area
 - persistent pain, pus, or bleeding at the injection site

What are the possible side effects of DEPO-PROVERA Contraceptive Injection?

1. Weight Gain
You may experience a weight gain while you are using DEPO-PROVERA. About two thirds of the women who used DEPO-PROVERA in clinical trials reported a weight gain of about 5 pounds during the first year of use. You may continue to gain weight after the first year. Women in one large study who used DEPO-PROVERA for 2 years gained an average total of 8.1 pounds over those 2 years, or approximately 4 pounds per year. Women who continued for 4 years gained an average total of 13.8 pounds over those 4 years, or approximately 3.5 pounds per year. Women who continued for 6 years gained an average total of 16.3 pounds over those 6 years, or approximately 2.75 pounds per year.

2. Other Side Effects

In a clinical study of over 3900 women who used DEPO-PROVERA for up to 7 years, some women reported the following effects that may or may not have been related to their use of DEPO-PROVERA: irregular menstrual bleeding, amenorrhea, headache, nervousness, abdominal cramps, dizziness, weakness or fatigue, decreased sexual desire, leg cramps, nausea, vaginal discharge or irritation, breast swelling and tenderness, bloating, swelling of the hands or feet, backache, depression, insomnia, acne, pelvic pain, no hair growth or excessive hair loss, rash, hot flashes, and joint pain. Other problems were reported by very few of the women in the clinical trials, but some of these could be serious. These include convulsions, jaundice, urinary tract infections, allergic reactions, fainting, paralysis, osteoporosis, lack of return to fertility, deep vein thrombosis, pulmonary embolus, breast cancer, or cervical cancer. If these or any other problems occur during your use of DEPO-PROVERA, discuss them with your health-care provider.

Should any precautions be followed during use of DEPO-PROVERA Contraceptive Injection?

1. Missed Periods

During the time you are using DEPO-PROVERA for contraception, you may skip a period, or your periods may stop completely. If you have been receiving your DEPO-PROVERA injections regularly every 3 months (13 weeks), then you are probably not pregnant. However, if you think that you may be pregnant, see your health-care provider.

2. Laboratory Test Interactions

If you are scheduled for any laboratory tests, tell your health-care provider that you are using DEPO-PROVERA for contraception. Certain blood tests are affected by hormones such as DEPO-PROVERA.

3. Drug Interactions

Cytadren (aminoglutethimide) is an anticancer drug that may significantly decrease the effectiveness of DEPO-PROVERA if the two drugs are given during the same time.

4. Nursing Mothers

Although DEPO-PROVERA can be passed to the nursing infant in the breast milk, no harmful effects have been found in these children. DEPO-PROVERA does not prevent the benefits from producing milk, so it can be used by nursing mothers. However, to minimize the amount of DEPO-PROVERA that is passed to the infant in the first weeks after birth, you should wait until 6 weeks after childbirth before you start using DEPO-PROVERA for contraception.

How often do I get my shot of DEPO-PROVERA Contraceptive Injection?

The recommended dose of DEPO-PROVERA is 150 mg every 3 months (13 weeks) given in a single intramuscular injection in the buttock or upper arm. To make sure that you are not pregnant at the time of the first injection, it is essential that the injection be given **ONLY** during the first 5 days of a normal menstrual period. If you follow the delivery of a child, the first injection of DEPO-PROVERA **MUST** be given within 5 days after childbirth. If you are not breast-feeding or 6 weeks after childbirth if you are exclusively breast-feeding. If you wait longer than 3 months (13 weeks) between injections, or longer than 6 weeks after delivery, your health-care provider should determine that you are not pregnant before giving you your injection of DEPO-PROVERA.

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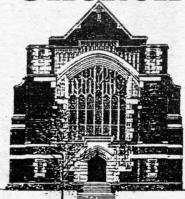
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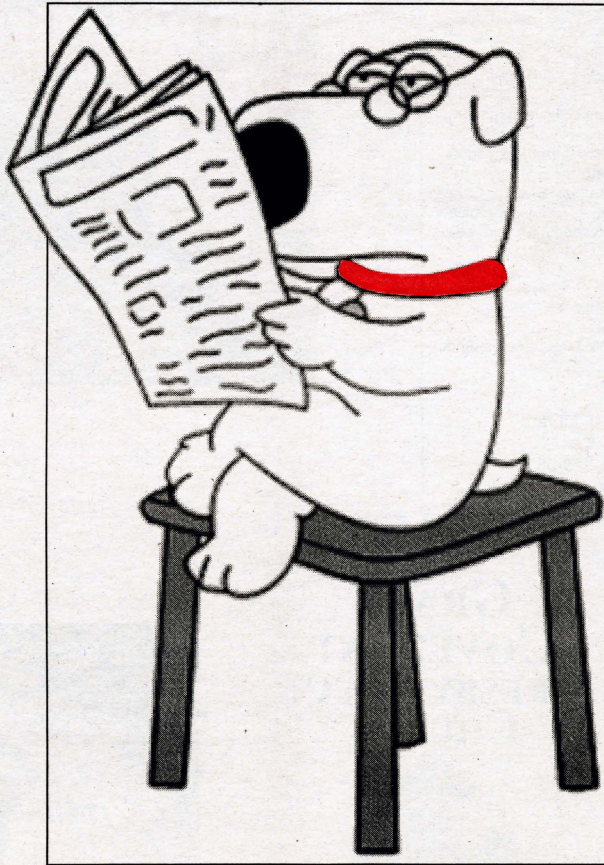
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