

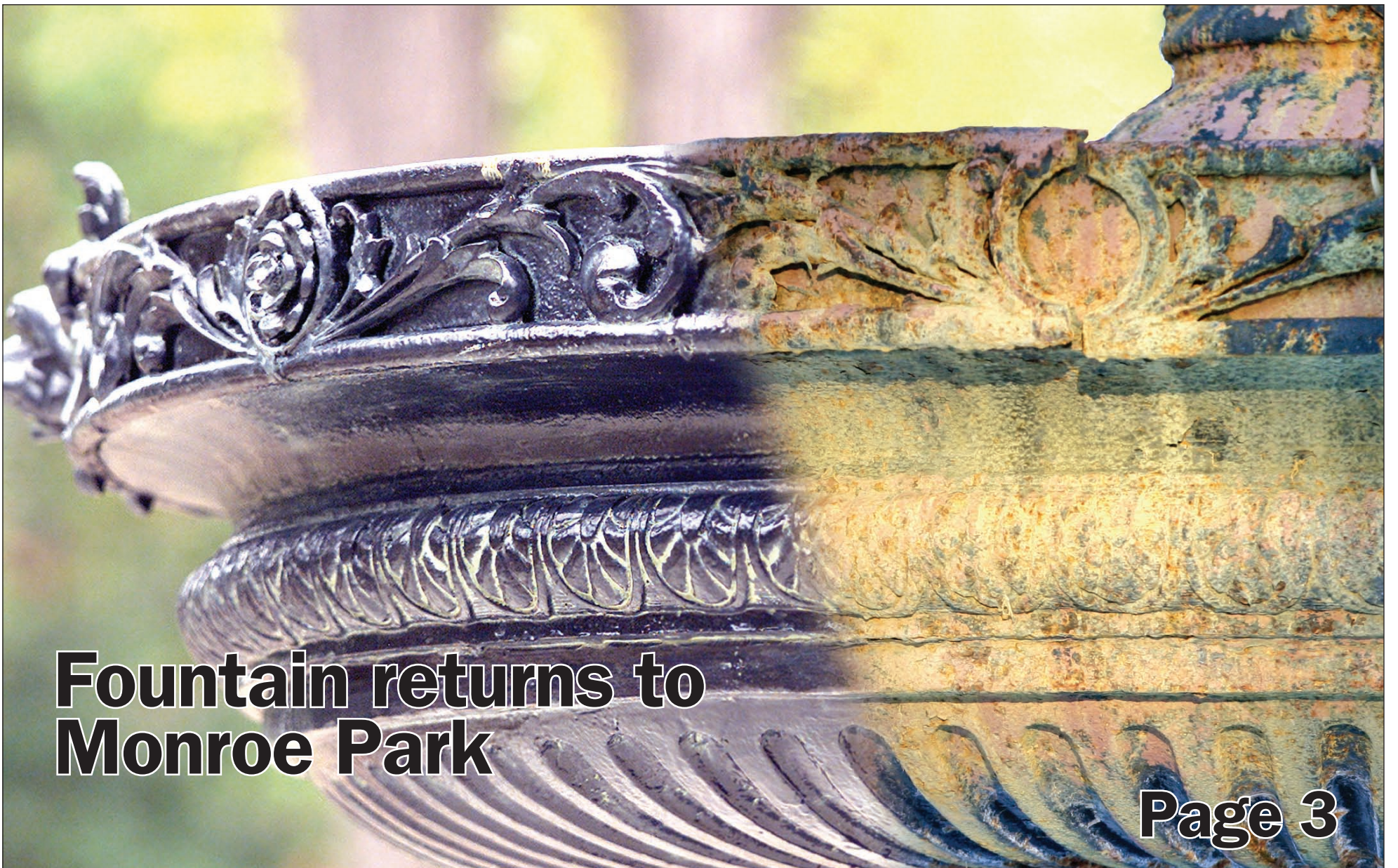
The Commonwealth Times

Free

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From beastly to beautiful



Fountain returns to Monroe Park

Page 3



Editorials & Letters

Check the ballot:
Go out and make your voice heard. / **Page 15**



Spectrum

New "Grand Theft Auto" sticks with a winning formula. / **Page 10**

Sports

Perfect hosts: Women's soccer wins regular season title and clinches home field for CAA tournament. / **Page 8**

IN BRIEF

CALENDAR

NOV. 1 THROUGH NOV. 3

Monday, Nov. 1	Tuesday, Nov. 2	Wednesday, Nov. 3
<p>Greek Council knows how much you love burritos, so it's sponsoring the Great American Burrito Eating Contest today from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in the Commons Plaza of the University Student Commons. Call Michael Karnjanaprakorn at 828-4496 for more information.</p>	<p>Go out and vote! Poll sites are open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.</p>	<p>The VCU Health System is sponsoring a lecture on diabetic dining from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. that covers the foods people with diabetes should and should not eat. The lecture costs \$35, however Medicare covers the course for people with diabetes who have a referral from their physician. The lecture is in the first floor conference room of Stony Point Fashion Park. Call Mary-Jo Sawyer at 327-8830 for more information. 1420 Parham Road.</p>

CAMPUS FORECAST



Monday
68/52



Tuesday
74/57



Wednesday
71/50



Thursday
68/46

Compiled from wire reports

Funded by underwear

The Darkness has sold enough official band thongs to pay for its new album. According to a new report, the band has sold so much official merchandise – including black G-strings emblazoned with the band's name – that they can afford to make another album and go on tour without having to sell any albums. Russell Coulthart, who runs a pop merchandise Web site, said that bands ultimately want to reach fans and maximize revenue without giving a large chunk to labels.

No more smooching in St. Petersburg

Russian politicians have recently been handed orders to stop using the traditional greeting of a kiss and just stick with handshakes from now on. They've been told the kissing takes too long and that by banning the greeting extra time will be freed up for dozens of other meetings. Officials in the Moscow regional government are also said to be annoyed at local media using pictures of them kissing to make fun of them and entertain readers.

Homeless boy finds prize

Evans Kamande, a homeless Kenyan 17-year-old was urinating in a Nairobi park when he noticed a box wedged in the forks of a cactus. He removed it and looked at a piece of paper inside, eventually getting a student to read it for him. The paper was a voucher for a \$5,040 prize being given away by a local radio station. The station has promised to give the

money to Kamande, whose first thoughts upon hearing the news were of his mother. He said his mother works as a housemaid in Nairobi and he wants to use the money to buy a piece of land and build rental houses for her.

Meat lovers diet

A Berlin chef has developed a German version of the Atkins diet based on pork knuckles, sauerkraut and beer. The diet centers around the schweinshaxe, a large knuckle of pork that comes from traditional Bavarian style of cooking. Schweinshaxe is usually associated with big-bellied Bavarians, but chef Gero Winiarski claims he has developed a special way of roasting the knuckle to get most of the fat out and that his dish can help people shed pounds. Winiarski said the dish is similar to the low-carbohydrate Atkins diet in that by ditching the dumplings usually served with the meal restaurant patrons can eat with a clear conscience. Guests at his restaurant can get the diet pork knuckle, a side of sauerkraut and a half-liter of Starkbier beer for about \$20.

Sweet smell of champions?

The Chilean champions were forced to leave a practice session without showering because their club's water supply was cut off for non-payment of bills. This followed last week's deduction of three points for Universidad de Chile because of failure to pay the players' wages on time. Defender Nelson Pinto said nothing like this has happened to him before, even when playing for a neighborhood team. He added that he hoped the directors get their act together.

Lunches of love

A Chinese restaurant manager is offering a free meal to dining couples if they come back, still together, a year later. Chen Guang'en said lots of young people fall in love, but do not take the relationship seriously and this offer rewards couples searching for lasting love. He runs the promotion by taking two pictures of the couple – one for him and one for them – and then in a year if the couple returns, still together, they get a free meal. To date, 100 couples have participated.

Corporate censorship

Wal-Mart, the nation's largest retailer, will not be selling George Carlin's newest book in stores. Wal-Mart spokeswoman Karen Burk said the book was not being stocked in stores because the company did not think it would appeal to a majority of Wal-Mart customers, but that the book will be sold on the company's Web site. Jeff Abraham, a spokesman for Carlin, said he thinks the reason the book won't hit shelves is because the cover parodies Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper."

Photo illustration by Pat Kane, from photos taken Jan. and Oct. 2004.
Op/Ed teaser by Phil McKenney.

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NEWS

Candidates emphasize student vote

WESTON REEVES

Staff Writer

When Richmond citizens go to the voting booths tomorrow, more than the presidency will be up for grabs. Thomas Benedetti and William Pantele are both running for the 2nd District seat on Richmond City Council. VCU is situated within the 2nd District.

City council is a group of nine elected officials who represent nine districts in Richmond. Council members work closely with city government officials and with the soon-to-be-elected mayor of Richmond to run and manage the city. They deal with issues such as public safety, crime, transportation and city services.

Pantele, the incumbent running for re-election, has been a council member since 2001. The Richmond lawyer said he has worked to improve the overall quality of life in the city by restoring parks and neighborhoods. If re-elected, he hopes to continue his work and concentrate even more on new issues such as public safety.

"Where I hope to go is to really start addressing the challenges of public safety, parks and congestion of traffic and the parking problem," Pantele said.

Benedetti, Pantele's challenger, said the current city council does not address important issues such as crime and public education as well as it should. He said there needs to be a change of leadership in the city. He said he will address Richmond's crime rate and formulate a clear plan to get local businesses and the community involved to stop crime.

"The city businesses will follow a well thought out plan, and they will get involved," Benedetti said. "They are hungry to get involved and solve the high crime problem, but they will not follow this current city council and this current mayor."

When people think of Richmond, he said, they think of a racial divide and a high crime rate.

He wanted everyone to know that first and foremost he wants to return the integrity back to the city of Richmond and its city council. He said, after that he will work to reduce the crime rate.

If elected to city council, he said, he will initiate a 60 day crime summit, which he describes as a series of meet-

ings addressing crime

He wants them to be open to everyone and include members of the community, as well as other city council members and the mayor-elect. He said he wants to include heads of surgery from MCVH because they see the result of violent crime every day and could play a role in addressing it.

He said after the summit everyone will know their role in the city, and what they can do to stop crime.

"We need to work together," Benedetti said. "Only together are we going to be able to solve this (crime) problem."

Along with the summit, he wants to create a community focus fund, in which the council will work with local business groups to raise money to increase police officer salaries and create incentives that would encourage officers to patrol.

Benedetti said he wants to encourage police officers to stay in Richmond by increasing salaries for those who have put in more than 5 years of service. He said the city is losing good officers to suburban areas and he wants to keep them in Richmond.

Along with crime, city council members deal with construction, city district lines, parking and the overall quality of life in their district, said Donald Gehring, vice president for government and community relations at VCU.

Because VCU falls within the 2nd District, the 2nd District city council member works closely with VCU officials concerning decisions that affect the university and how the university affects the surrounding area. He said if university officials and the councilperson do not work well together, it would be difficult for VCU to expand.

"If the city does not cooperate with VCU," Gehring said, "that has a very negative effect on our day-to-day lives."

However, he said city council members understand VCU is the engine driving the "economic truck" of Richmond.

"The relationships have been pretty darn good," Gehring said. "And we're very pleased with the cooperation we've had."

Both candidates emphasized the importance of VCU students and their role in the community, adding that

students are critical to shaping the city.

Benedetti said many students think they are not citizens of Richmond, but rather students who happen to live in Richmond because they are going to VCU. He said he feels differently, and he wants to keep VCU students here after they graduate.

"I think it's important that the students be part of the fabric of Richmond," Benedetti said.

Pantele said VCU itself is almost a neighborhood. He described his strong track record for advancing things for VCU students and said he encourages students to vote and keep things moving in the direction the university has been going.

"There is no question VCU has made tremendous progress over the past couple years," Pantele said. "(Students) can't take that for granted."

Both candidates plan to address crime.

Pantele said Richmond has a reputation for crime, and that he has worked and will work to get rid of that reputation. Pantele's plan to eliminate crime in the city includes cleaning up and restoring areas of extreme poverty around the city.

"Violent crime is grouped around concentrations of extreme poverty in this city," he said.

Pantele said during his three years on city council Richmond's crime rate has decreased by 20 percent. "But it needs to decline more," he said.

He said three years ago police in the city were understaffed by 15 percent and that he worked to put an emphasis on restoring those vacancies. He said about 100 more officers patrol the streets because he lobbied for a larger police force.

During his tenure as a city council member, Pantele said he has emphasized the importance of technology in public safety. He worked with the Richmond Police Department to install the FlashCam Program, in which covert cameras were installed around the city in key locations to discourage vandalism and other crimes.

"Students want a good place to live," Pantele said. "So when we have unfortunate things such as vagrancy and outsiders coming in and committing crimes we need to have the tools available to address it and make it stop."

Richmond welcomes back fountain

ARTHELIA GATLING

Staff Writer

After two months and \$35,000 water once again flows through the Monroe Park Fountain, which shines after being refurbished via a special partnership of Richmond citizens and VCU.

"This is a great day because all the people have made a personal commitment.

It's about partnership between citizens and policy-makers," said Calvin D. Jamison, Richmond's city manager, at the Oct. 22 rechristening of the fountain that stands in the middle of Monroe Park.

That partnership included the Monroe Park Advisory Council, VCU and the Historic Monument Avenue and the Fan

District associations.

"VCU had a problem going forward. As a state institution they were not permitted to spend funds on property they did not own," said William J. Pantele, Richmond's 2nd District councilman.

But after partnering with other organizations and creating the park's advisory council, he said VCU could help with the funding.

"We could not have had a better partner," Pantele said.

Still, the fountain is just one phase of a multiphase improvement plan for Monroe Park. Other projects for it are on the drawing board.

"The key thing is to have a very positive working relationship and partnership with

VCU, the Monroe Park Advisory Council and the neighborhood groups where the common mission is to restore and beautify the historic park," said Dinesh V. Tiwari, director of Richmond's Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities.

During the rechristening ceremony, Binford Middle School represented the Fan District by providing a drum roll while members of each organization and other attendees joined in the countdown to flip the switch. Local officials, community citizens—including some from VCU—and others applauded as the first burst of water spouted quickly from the fountain.

Rudy McCollum, Richmond's mayor, told the group that cities would love to have the beautiful space Richmond has:

"I think the new fountain is a perfect example of what's happening in Richmond. We're taking old assets and giving them fresh and new opportunities to excite people and upgrade the quality of life in Richmond."

Pantele agreed, telling the people watching the flowing water that the fountain restoration project started a year ago when he began receiving e-mails that led to the Monroe Park Advisory Council. Consequently, he said, the council developed a plan and worked with the city to restore the fountain, which Pantele called a "giant step" for the park and the "lynchpin" of revitalization for Richmond.

NEWS

Major parties losing black youth vote

CHERYL TRICE

News Writer

In 2003 12 percent of black males in their 20s and early 30s were behind bars, according to National Public Radio. In addition, 11.8 percent of blacks were unemployed and 53 percent of black children lived in single parent households, according to the Associated Press.

Yet, only 42 percent of eligible, black 18-to-24-year-olds voted in the 2000 Presidential election. The majority of those who voted were college students.

Why?

In 2004, David Damron of the Orlando Sentinel said black "students are notoriously apathetic, turning out in low numbers on Election Day."

Manley Elliot Banks Jr. a political science professor at VCU questions whether it is apathy that turns black people away or a lack of recognition for their

concerns in the realm of politics.

"What happens a lot of times is that Democratic candidates take for granted that blacks will support the party," said Banks. "If they are seen as too sympathetic to the needs and concerns of blacks it will make them less appealing – especially in the South."

Banks said the factors influencing young black voter behavior include the considerable amount of young blacks who are not registered, incarcerated – thereby losing their right to vote in many states – or impoverished.

Among black college students, Banks said the lack of stability in relation to jobs, family and career may hinder their grasp of the importance of voting.

"They don't see how closely it affects our lives," said Marcia Massenberg, 21, a black mass communications major with a concentration in public relations. "It is important to research the candidates

and what they stand for to become more knowledgeable on how government works and what voting does."

In an article by Rosalind Jordan, an MSNBC news correspondent, voters between the ages of 18 and 35 are concerned with "the lack of job creation, the vanishing opportunities to make it in the middle class and the continuing expense of the war in Iraq."

"All I care about right now is our troops," said Joy Newsome, 18, a black theater major.

Although black voting has steadily declined since the end of the Civil Rights era, MSNBC analysts said black voter turnout could affect the 2004 candidates' chance of winning.

According to a 2002 Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies survey among blacks 18 to 34 years old, 54 percent pledge themselves to the Democratic Party and 9 percent align themselves with the

Republican Party.

Now more than ever, young black voters are distancing themselves from the traditional parties and establishing themselves as independents. Between 30 and 35 percent described themselves as independent in the recent polls conducted by the center.

More than half of black people older than 34 -- 63 percent -- remain loyal to the Democratic Party.

Banks said young black voters feel their issues have been neglected and Democrats, who have traditionally been the party of black people, are not focusing on bringing them to the foreground. This is because many young black people don't see any positive influence the party has had on the community, Banks said.

"They don't see any clear benefits that the Democratic Party has provided to the black community."

Understanding appropriations, how groups get money

ALEX WOOLRIDGE

Staff Writer

Every semester, students pay student-activity fees, and every semester students wonder who spends their money and for what. Some of it goes to groups such as the Student Media Commission, while the SGA Appropriations Committee allocates one-third of the \$45 student-activity-fee funds to student organizations.

Timothy Reed, SGA's budget adviser, said before allocating funds the committee asks one question: "Will VCU students be direct beneficiaries?"

The appropriations committee, which is the financial arm of the SGA, bases its decisions on at least five factors:

- The number of VCU students who can participate or benefit
- The admission charge, if any, for the event
- The group's presentation to the committee
- The completion of the organization's registration and completed paperwork
- The group's representation at the presidential roundtable.

Still, organizations may not receive the amount requested because of money shortages.

The last, but one of the most important items on the list, started this semester. Last year's senators decided that a representative from an organization can miss only one SGA Presidential Roundtable meeting and remain eligible for student-activity-fee funds.

"If paperwork is not submitted properly," Reed said, "it can be one of the reasons the appropriations committee can immediately reject (a request)."

As far as the other funding issues, Reed and the Senate want to ensure that many students can participate in an

event because this indicates that the money can be used by as diverse a group as possible. Similarly, the budget committee serves as a screening committee.

If an organization charges admission for its event, then the event partially funds itself, which means the group may need less money than others sponsoring free events. For instance, a group can charge admission for a dance or a dinner it sponsors to pay part of the bill.

After Sessa Moon, the Black Caucus' president, spoke at SGA budget committee's Sept. 24 meeting, she later said her organization would appeal the decision if it did not receive the funding it needed.

"First we would have an appeal once again to the appropriations committee," Moon said. "If not through them, then (we would) take it to the steering committee through SGA."

After that meeting, Moon said having co-sponsored events would help with the caucus' potential financial woes.

Still, other groups directly associated with a department or program might look for other solutions.

"We would go directly to our department and get the money directly from our department if they'll give us the money," said Bryan Rhodes, treasurer for the Graduate Organization of Biology Students.

Reed strongly advocates organizations send representatives to a budget workshop. This way, he said, the representative knows the exact information needed to receive the highest funding possible.

"They need to have all kinds of specific documentation to back up specific dollar requests," Reed said.

Excess money "rolls over" into a special account when technicalities arise for groups having allocated funds on hand, or when a group does not use its allocated money by the year's end.



CRIME LOG



Oct. 20

Male arrested for possession of cocaine on the 900 block of Kinney Street.

Oct. 25

Two male students advised that unknown person(s) removed personal property valued at \$300 from Rhoads Hall.

Male juvenile arrested for possession of cocaine at Kinney and Moore streets.

Oct. 26

Male arrested for driving under the influence at 19th and E. Broad streets.

Female employee advised that unknown person(s) removed property valued at \$25 from D Deck.

Male arrested for possession of marijuana on the 1200 block of Moore Street.

Male arrested for possession of crack cocaine on the 900 block of Kinney Street.

Oct. 27

Male arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol on the 1500 block of W. Main Street.

NEWS

Study abroad holds surprises for students

MICHAEL MCDONNELL
Staff Writer

Irony: A result that is the opposite of what is or might be expected or considered appropriate.—Webster's New World Dictionary, Fourth Edition.

Some people might call it ironic. While America's foreign policy seems less and less accepted around the world, more and more students at Virginia Commonwealth University look forward to studying abroad.

The number of students studying abroad took a dramatic decrease in spring 2003 after the United States invaded Afghanistan. Jennifer Ludovici, director of VCU's Education Abroad Program, said after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks many young people feared taking the chance of being a stranger in a strange land.

"Now that people have settled into the new state of affairs in the world, people are realizing that it's just as dangerous to be in the United States as it is anywhere else," Ludovici said.

This past summer nearly 250 students studied abroad, while this semester 36 students are studying in 26 countries including

Ghana, China, Kenya, Malta and Russia.

Contrary to what some might think, the unpopularity of America and its foreign policy is all the more reason for students to consider studying overseas, Ludovici said.

"Relationships are built on an individual level," she said. "The more we get out there the more we break down those barriers."

were very curious as a culture."

Instead of being judgmental, Childers said, students there just wanted to know what he thought.

In assessing the situation, Ludovici said, people are more curious than outraged at American people overseas, because she thinks there have been no major issues with students who have studied abroad.

parents are more hesitant," he said.

Tai Jenkins, a senior majoring in English, spent last summer in a four-week program in Cuernavaca, Mexico. She said she had some uncertainty when she decided to enroll in the summer session not only because of the threats in Cuba but also because of some possible terror threats of people from countries upset with America.

Nonetheless, Jenkins said this did not deter her from going to Mexico.

"There were so many people who would just want to come up and touch you and ask you where you are from," Jenkins said. "There were so many people that were so fascinated with meeting an American that there was not a great deal of resentment."

On the other hand, Ludovici said travel warnings do deter some students from going to another country.

"We can't send students to anywhere there is a travel warning," she said. "I think what has actually happened is that with all the hype about terror in the United States, people have become a little bit cynical about it."

Students interested in studying abroad should contact Jennifer Ludovici at 828-8471.

VCU Outgoing Study Abroad Totals

Excludes students who withdrew before classes began.

YEAR	VCU Summer	Fall	Spring	Summer Consortium*	Total
98-99	130	12	15	15	172
99-00	151	9	22	9	191
00-01	134	22	24	10	190
01-02	190	28	30	26	274
02-03	160	23	26	15	224
03-04	229	23	34	17	303
04-05		36			

*Student doing a summer program but not associated with VCU

Source: Jennifer Ludovici, director
VCU's Education Abroad Program

Zac Childers, a junior mass communications major who studied at the University of Sydney in Australia last spring, said most students in Sydney were very politically aware and motivated.

"Once they found out I was an American the first thing they asked was what I thought about Iraq and about Bush," he said. "They

Instead, people just question them about their views.

Childers said he, too, had no fears of foreign hatred, and safety is important to advisers and students, but it should not stop someone from going.

"I think a lot of students are very curious of what is out there and would go, but their

ASME unveils shirt design

OKAI QUASHIE-IDUN
Staff Writer

All I know is $F=ma$, baby!

These words will appear on the back of VCU's American Society of Mechanical Engineers black T-shirt with the phrase outlined in black and yellow. The back of the T-shirt will complement the traditional Rams logo with the phrase, "All I know is $F=ma$, baby!"

"This is a known equation in sciences, and engineers use it all the time," said Qui Nguyen, a junior mechanical engineering student and chairwoman of the organization. "The equation means force equals mass times (x) acceleration."

The front of the black T-shirt bears the inscription *mechanical engineering* in white block letters with yellow VCU letters superimposed on the inscription.

ASME members suggested the prices for the T-shirt range from \$12 to \$13 with sizes to fit all students even though the organization has not yet listed its final prices.

"I thought of the design and my colleague David Holliday and I put it in Photoshop (a digital editing

program)," said Matthew Massaro, a mechanical engineering student. "The T-shirt would get our names out there and give us a better representation."

In early October, ASME members voted on the colors for the T-shirt, with seven voting for a black T-shirt and six for a grey shirt. At that same meeting, the group also voted on the four phrases to be printed for the back of the shirt.

Some losing phrases included "Science is the study of what is," and "Engineering is the study of what could be." Another states "10 reasons why you should date an engineer."

"This T-shirt is a good way to promote our existence at VCU and also another means of giving to the community," said Tin Htut-Myint, a junior mechanical engineering student and treasurer of the organization.

The group meets again Friday, Oct. 29, for further discussion on the design and future events.

Copies of upcoming events can be found at
www.engineering.vcu.edu/asme

We want to hear from you!



Send your comments and letters to
ctvcu@hotmail.com.

STATE & NATION

IN BRIEF

Teacher kicks student for wearing Republican shirt off campus

DURANGO, Colo. — A part-time college instructor has apologized for kicking a student because he was wearing a Republican shirt.

Fort Lewis College student Mark O'Donnell said he was showing people his College Republicans sweat shirt, which said "Work for us now ... or work for us later," when Maria Spero kicked him in the leg at an off-campus restaurant.

"To physically take that out on someone because you disagree with them, that is completely wrong," said O'Donnell.

Police Sgt. Mitch Higgins said Saturday that O'Donnell wanted to press charges and a misdemeanor summons would be issued.

Spero, a visiting instructor of modern languages, apologized to O'Donnell in a letter dated Oct. 29.

"I acted entirely inappropriately by kicking you, giving vent to a thoughtless knee-jerk political reaction that should never have happened," she wrote. "Before the incident, I did not know you and that you are a Fort Lewis student."

The college also formally apologized, said David Eppich, assistant to the school's president.

O'Donnell said the apology wasn't enough and he plans to file a complaint with the college.

Justice Dept. will monitor Chesterfield County poll sites

RICHMOND, Va. — Chesterfield County is among 86 jurisdictions the U.S. Justice Department will monitor on Election Day.

The agency plans to have about 840 federal observers and more than 250 Civil Rights Division personnel in 25 states.

Since the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the federal agency has regularly sent observers around the country to protect election-related civil rights.

According to a Department of Justice news release, the observers and department personnel will monitor "whether certain localities are complying with federal voting laws."

The agency will be looking to see whether "any voters are challenged improperly on the basis of their race, color or membership in a language minority group; complying with the minority language provisions of the Voting Rights Act; permitting voters who are blind, disabled, or unable to read or write assistance by a person of their choice; and permitting all eligible voters to cast a ballot."

Information from: *Richmond Times-Dispatch*

Religious leaders divided over death penalty for student's killer

MINNEAPOLIS — The Rev. Bill Humiston sees biblical justification for executing the man charged with killing college student Dru Sjodin, if he's convicted. And he's not alone among religious leaders.

"It tells us in the Old Testament that the death penalty is for the removal of evil from the world," said Humiston, of First Assembly of God Church in Crookston, hometown of the accused killer, Alfonso Rodriguez Jr. "This guy has a proven track record of being repetitively evil."

The Rev. Mark Whittemore of Pequot Lakes Baptist Church, in Sjodin's hometown, said capital punishment would be appropriate for the person convicted of abducting and killing Sjodin, a 22-year-old University of North Dakota student.

"I was already an advocate of the death penalty," Whittemore said. "But when you go to a candlelight vigil and stand there with the family — when you see that agony — it solidifies it."

Other clergy members, however, said they were saddened and disappointed by federal prosecutors' decision to seek the death penalty if Rodriguez is convicted. It would

be the first capital punishment case in North Dakota in a century.

"I'm dismayed they've chosen to do this," Bishop Peter Rogness of the St. Paul Area Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America said Friday. "It reduces the state to the same level of violence as the offender. It legitimizes the taking of human life."

Bishop Samuel Aquila of the Catholic Diocese of Fargo issued a statement calling the decision "a troubling sign of the escalating disrespect for human life within our society, which erodes a culture of life."

Aquila added that the federal decision runs counter to what most citizens want in North Dakota and Minnesota. The last execution in Minnesota, a hanging, occurred in 1906. The Legislature abolished capital punishment five years later.

The decision in Rodriguez's case came after Drew Wrigley, U.S. attorney for North Dakota, and Tom Heffelfinger, U.S. attorney for Minnesota, made an unusual joint recommendation to U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft.

Archbishop Harry Flynn of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis also objected

to the decision to seek the death penalty, said the Rev. Kevin McDonough, vicar general of the archdiocese.

The leader of Minnesota's largest Jewish congregation, Temple Israel in Minneapolis, said she, too, disagrees with the decision.

"Killing someone who has killed seems like a cultural response that promotes the violence," Rabbi Marcia Zimmerman said. "And revenge is short-lived, if that's the goal, because nothing can bring back the loved one."

Linda Walker, Sjodin's mother, said last week that the family supports the decision to seek the death penalty.

Several religious leaders said Scripture appears to justify the death penalty.

"From a biblical standpoint, there are grace and forgiveness regarding a sinner's activities, but there are also consequences," Whittemore said. "When you've taken a life and you have the kind of record this man has, the death penalty would be in line with Old Testament law."

Other clerics rejected that argument.

"If someone is to take the Old Testament literally, then we're back to cutting off hands

NATIONAL NEWS

R. Kelly kicked off tour after alleging he was pepper-sprayed at New York concert

LARRY MCSHANE
Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK — The tumultuous tour pairing platinum-selling stars R. Kelly and Jay-Z came to an abrupt end Saturday, one day after Kelly walked offstage during a performance and allegedly was blasted with pepper spray by a member of Jay-Z's entourage.

Kelly was booted from shows Saturday and Monday at Madison Square Garden by the promoter, who told the "I Believe I Can Fly" singer that he was banned from the facility, said his publicist, Allan Mayer. The promoter announced that Jay-Z, with special guests, would do the shows alone.

"The fans deserve better than this," Kelly said in a statement. "I'd like the show to go on. It's really disappointing that Jay-Z and the promoter don't."

Jay-Z and R. Kelly were in the midst of a 40-city "Best of Both Worlds" tour, which has been beset by canceled shows and reports that the feuding performers weren't even on speaking terms.

The tour, which had been scheduled to run through Nov. 28, has been canceled, said promoter Jeff Sharp of Atlanta Worldwide

Touring. Jay-Z's publicist was unsure if the rapper would try and fill the remaining dates as a solo act.

The pepper-spray incident happened about an hour into Friday night's show, when Kelly walked on stage and said he saw two people in the audience waving guns, Mayer said. Kelly abruptly stopped his set around 9:30 p.m. while arena security employees searched for weapons.

Finding none, guards told Kelly it was safe to continue performing, Mayer said. But as the singer was making his way back to the stage, a man in Jay-Z's entourage — apparently miffed that Kelly interrupted the show — sprayed him and two of his bodyguards in the face, Mayer said.

"I'm pretty sure Jay didn't realize what was going on," Mayer said.

All three men were treated at St. Vincent's Hospital and released, he said. Jay-Z performed for another 45 minutes after Kelly was sprayed.

Jana Fleishman, publicist for Jay-Z, said Saturday that the rapper's entourage knew nothing about the incident because it occurred while Jay-Z was performing. Jay-Z "did not attack R. Kelly in any way, shape or form,"

Fleishman said.

In a radio interview on Hot 97 FM radio Friday, Jay-Z said he couldn't understand why Kelly left the stage.

"You can't get a gun inside Madison Square Garden," the rapper said. "If people give me love he can't take it."

Mayer said Kelly's lawyers were filing a criminal complaint against the man who allegedly sprayed him and also were considering legal action over the decision to remove the singer from the remaining tour dates.

"We're considering all possible ways of protecting Robert's interests," Mayer said.

The Chicago Sun-Times reported discord between the two performers after Kelly showed up more than two hours late for a show in Chicago and walked off the stage mid-performance in St. Louis this month.

Three shows on the tour were canceled because of "technical difficulties" suffered by Kelly, Fleishman said.

On Tuesday, Kelly and Jay-Z released their collaborative CD "Unfinished Business."

Associated Press writers Nekesa Mumbi Moody and Chaka Ferguson contributed to this story.

SPORTS

Upcoming Sports EVENTS

NCAA

Friday, Nov. 5

Ukrop's City Challenge
Women's Basketball vs. Virginia Union, 5 p.m.

Men's Basketball vs. Virginia Union, 7:30 p.m.

The Rams, minus a Jones and a Godwin, take the court for the first time this season in an exhibition against a Virginia Union team ranked No. 4 in the Division-II poll. The game features two former Times-Dispatch high school players of the year—Rams forward Jesse Pellot-Rosa (in 2002) and the Panthers Luqman Jaaber in (1999), both George Wythe grads.

In the early game, coach Beth Cunningham will lead the Rams against VUU's women, picked to finish second in the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association. The Rams got one first place vote in the CAA preseason poll, and senior Lauren Hogan made the pre-season All-CAA team, but the team's backcourt could get a workout from Panthers preseason all-CAA point guard Pria Stellmacher (16.3 points per game, 5.7 assists 2.8 steals).

Volleyball at Hofstra, 7 p.m.

VCU (1-9 CAA, 5-18) is looking to end a four-match losing streak with a win over the Pride (8-2 CAA, 17-7) on the road, where they picked up three of five wins. The Rams let George Mason slip by 3-2 last weekend,

Saturday, Nov. 6

Men's soccer at UNC Wilmington, 7 p.m.

The Rams travel south with a chance to clinch the CAA regular season championship, not to mention home-field advantage in the conference tournament. A win gives them the title, a loss opens the door for James Madison, which beat the Rams 3-1 earlier this season.

Women's Soccer ends season with 2 wins, clinches home-field

NICHOLAS ARNOLD

Staff Writer

A 2-0 win over Old Dominion on Thursday, coupled with the 3-0 victory over William and Mary on Saturday, earned the Rams home-field advantage for the Colonial Athletic Association tournament this week.

VCU faced an Old Dominion team trying to finish first in the conference as well on Thursday. The first half was played wide open by both teams. Defender Hedda Gardsjord set the tempo for the Rams, making attacking runs upfield at the end of the first half and the beginning of the second half.

"It was a very direct game," co-head coach Denise Schilte-Brown said. "That caused the pace of the game to be sped up. When the pace slowed down, we knew that we were the better team."

In the 49th minute, sophomore midfielder Leigh Anthony scored the Rams' first goal, which ended up being the game winner. After taking plenty of cracks from directly in front of the ODU goal, Jen Parsons looped a pass across the field to Anthony, who rocketed the ball from eight yards out past ODU goalkeeper Stephanie Miller.

Parsons added the Rams' second goal in the 66th minute by beating the ODU offside trap and splitting two Monarch defenders. She slipped the ball underneath the keeper for the 2-0 advantage. Goalkeeper Lauren Hardison made two saves in the shutout, which was VCU's 10th straight at home.

Anthony, who played the frigid first half in short sleeves, put on a long-sleeve undershirt at halftime. "I was just freezing out there," Anthony said. The sleeves helped.

"This is the game I wanted most of all this entire season," Anthony said after the game. "And now I want Saturday's game (against William and Mary) more than anything."

Like ODU, William and Mary came to Richmond with a chance to win the CAA regular season title. Celebrating senior day, VCU honored Parsons, Kasey Sandvig, Katie

MacDougall and Amy O'Toole before the game. Within the first five minutes of the game, head referee Mike Stutt seemed to lose control of a very physical game. Tribe forwards challenged Hardison in the goalkeeper's box, knocking her down and almost out within the first few minutes of play.

VCU took an early 1-0 lead in the third minute of play. Parsons took a pass from Shelley Lyle at midfield and sprinted past the William and Mary defense. From about 25-yards out, Parsons blasted a shot that took one bounce and went in the right far corner of the goal. It was Parsons' league-leading 15th goal of the season.

In the ninth minute of the game, the Tribe's leading scorer Taline Tahmassian collided with Hardison in the box on a 50-50 ball. Referee Stutt pulled out a red card and ejected Tahmassian from the game. Hardison left the game as well, limping off the field with a swollen and bruised right knee. Emily Niman entered the game for the Rams and played the rest of the contest.

At the 20-minute mark, Lyle picked up her second yellow card of the game for slide-tackling a Tribe midfielder from behind. Stutt ejected her as well, leaving the teams with 10 players each.

The penalty didn't phase the Rams.

Captain Jennifer Woodie picked up her first assist of the season on a beautifully served ball to midfielder substitute Jennifer Wilks in the 33rd minute. Woodie stood by herself from about 30 yards out when she lofted a pass into William and Mary's box. Wilks moved into position and headed the ball into the near post of the goal, making the score 2-0.

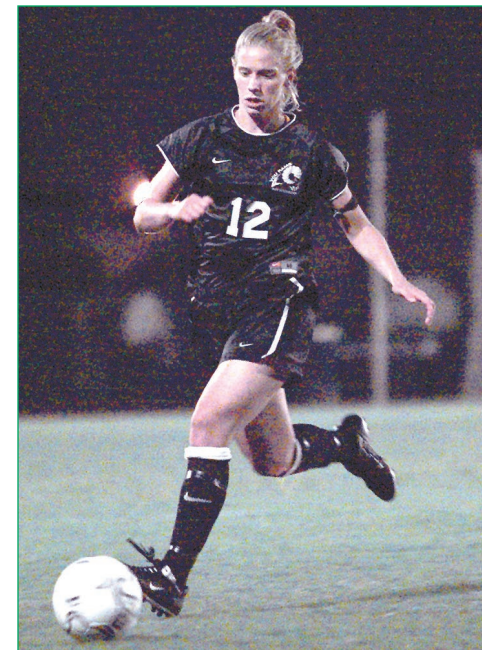
The Rams concluded their scoring in the 42nd minute. Senior Katie MacDougall came off the bench, dribbled the ball down the far corner of the field and fired a cross into the Tribe box. Freshman midfielder Bridgit Cooley headed the ball into the back of the net and give the Rams a 3-0 lead.

Niman and the defense played tough and

held on for VCU's 11th straight shutout at home. The win clinched the championship, the bye, and home-field advantage.

The quarterfinals of the CAA tournament start Tuesday. VCU will face the winner of the JMU-GMU quarterfinal matchup.

The Rams lost to both teams in a horrendous road trip last weekend, but finished the season 9-0 at home.



Pat Kane

Sophomore Leigh Anthony scored her sixth goal of the season in Thursday's 2-0 win over ODU.

CAA Women's Soccer Tournament

Quarterfinals—Tuesday, Nov. 2
No. 6 George Mason at No. 3 James Madison, 7 p.m.
No. 5 Old Dominion at No. 4 William and Mary, 7 p.m.

Semifinals—Friday Nov. 5
ODU/W&M at No. 2 Hofstra, 8 p.m.
GMU/JMU at No. 1 VCU, 5:30 p.m.

Championship—Sunday Nov. 7, 2 p.m.



Nicholas Arnold
Titans over Bengals
Broncos over Falcons
Eagles over Ravens
Chiefs over Colts



Raj Sethi
Bengals over Titans
Broncos over Falcons
Eagles over Ravens
Chiefs over Colts

Julian Benbow
Bengals over Titans
Broncos over Falcons
Ravens over Eagles
Colts over Chiefs



David Boone
Sophomore
Favorite Team: Miami
Bengals over Titans
Falcons over Broncos



Eagles over Ravens
Colts over Chiefs

Justin Deletis
Freshman
Favorite Team: Giants
Titans over Bengals
Broncos over Falcons
Eagles over Ravens
Colts over Chiefs



For more information contact the VCU sports line: 828-7000. VCU sporting events are free to students with a valid student ID.

Email your picks to ctsports04@yahoo.com

SPORTS

Men's soccer alone in first with 1 game left

From news sources

Junior Dominic Oduro's 13th goal of the season was unlucky for the struggling Towson Tigers. Oduro's shot sailed out of the reach of Tigers keeper Zak Thompson, and the Rams defense held on for a 1-0 win.

The senior keeper didn't have to save any shots in his fifth shutout of the season. The Tigers took three shots all game, none on goal and none in the second half.

The Rams (7-1-0 CAA, 11-4-1) no lead the CAA outright after James Madison (6-2-0, 14-2-1) dropped a 2-1 decision to Hofstra. Each team has a game left, and if they should finish the season tied, the Dukes, who beat VCU 3-1 earlier this season at Sports Backers Stadium, hold the tiebreaker.

The Rams could clinch their third straight CAA regular season championship and lock up home field for the semifinal and championship games of the CAA tournament with a win next Saturday over UNC Wilmington.

James Madison finishes their season with a game against George Mason (3-4-0, 7-9-1), which has lost seven of its past eight games.

In other CAA games:

Hofstra 2, James Madison 1: The Pride jumped ahead of James Madison early with first-half goals from juniors Michael Todd and Jason Gates to knock the Dukes from the top spot in the CAA. Denny Fulk scored JMU's only goal, a header from about 10-yards out about two minutes into the second half, but Pride keeper Matthias Gumbrecht shut the Dukes down with most of his five saves coming in the second half.

UNC Wilmington 3, Delaware 0: After Russell Bienias put the Seahawks ahead early, the team used second-half goals from Chris Murray and Colum Grant to pull away from the Blue Hens and win 3-0. The Seahawks (11-5-1, 5-3 CAA) handed the Blue Hens (4-12-1, 1-8 CAA) a loss in their final home game. Delaware ended the season on a three-game losing streak.

Drexel 1, George Mason 0: Joe Banks headed a corner kick from Domonick Balsama past Patriots keeper John O'Hara with less than a minute left in the second overtime to give the Dragons (2-6-0, 5-11-0) a win in their final game of the season.

South Hill Select wins MCV

MARCUS HUDGINS
Staff writer

On a chilly evening, with friends and family watching from the sidelines, South Hill Select defeated Team Ditka 20-12 to win the MCV men's division championship.

The game itself was fairly close, with the score 12-12 at the midway point. In the second half, Ditka's offense floundered, coming up empty on several long pass attempts with no reward. South Hill's defense was impenetrable for the remainder of the game.

After some celebration, the champs donned their "Champion" shirts and posed for a final snapshot. The backs of the shirts read, "Sometimes one word tells the whole story."

South Hill Select team captain Ben McEvoy said, "We wanted to win this

one pretty freakin' bad."

IM Football Playoff Results

Men's A League
Major League 33, Feb 15

Men's B League
Da Truth 33, Mactar 0

Men's Greek League
Delta Chi 12, Theta Chi 6



South Hill Select

Kari Davis

Out With the Old, In With the New!



Representing a New Generation of Leadership.

Tom Benedetti

Tom knows that VCU and its students are an exciting part of our city. That's why he is committed to tackling the issues important to the VCU community.

- Lower bus fares
- Reduce crime
- Restore integrity to City Council

If you believe that Richmond needs new, young, energetic leaders, then vote for Tom Benedetti on November 2nd.

Richmond City Council ★★★★★
BENEDETTI
—A New Vision for Our City—
www.tomforcitycouncil.com

Vote for Tom Benedetti, because it's your City too.

Paid for and authorized by Neighbors for Benedetti

Spectrum

They may be sitting but punk band Moments in Grace will make you bounce. Make time to see Florida rockers (from left) Tim Kirkpatrick, Jake Brown, Jeremy Griffith and Justin Etheridge Wednesday when they join Hotwater Music, Alexis on Fire and Planes Mistaken for Stars at Alley Katz. The show starts at 6 p.m. \$10 in advance and \$12 at the door.



Halloween fear factor keeps 'Grudge' on top at box office

DAVID GERMAIN
AP Movie Writer

LOS ANGELES — Halloween spirit possessed movie-goers as Sarah Michelle Gellar's fright flick remained the top draw for the second straight weekend with \$22.4 million.

The film biography "Ray," which has drawn Academy Awards buzz for Jamie Foxx as Ray Charles in the title role, debuted in second place with \$20.1 million, according to studio estimates Sunday.

The horror tale "Saw," about a serial killer who puts victims through grisly morality trials, opened at No. 3 with \$17.4 million. The cast includes Cary Elwes and Danny Glover.

In narrower release, Nicole Kidman's "Birth" had a so-so debut, coming in at No. 11 with \$1.7 million in 550 cinemas to average \$3,091 a theater. Kidman plays a widow about to remarry when she encounters a 10-year-old boy claiming to be the reincarnation of her dead husband.

By comparison, "Ray" debuted in 2,006

theaters with a healthy \$10,020 average, while "Saw" averaged \$7,516 in 2,315 cinemas.

"The Grudge," starring Gellar as an American student tormented by a hateful spirit lurking in a Tokyo house, lifted its 10-day domestic gross to \$71.3 million. A remake of a Japanese horror hit, "The Grudge" cost just \$10 million to produce.

Scary movies tend to plummet in their second weekend because hardcore horror fans catch them in the first few days. Halloween weekend helped shore up "The Grudge," whose receipts fell just 43 percent, a relatively strong hold from its \$39.1 million debut.

"The Grudge" and "Saw" drew mostly younger viewers looking for Halloween scares. The audience for "Ray" was older, with three-fourths of viewers age 30 and over.

Films that play to older crowds tend to stick around longer at theaters, and distributor Universal Studios is counting on the movie's Oscar prospects to extend its

appeal through awards season.

Interest in Charles has surged since his death last June and Foxx has received enormous acclaim for his uncanny recreation of the blind singer's mannerisms and spirit.

"This is the most talked about performance of the year," said Paul Dergarabedian, president of box-office tracker Exhibitor Relations. "His performance even transcends the movie itself."

Director Taylor Hackford, who had Charles' full support on "Ray," struggled for 15 years to get the movie made. Financed independently, the finished film was shopped around futilely among Hollywood studios until it found a home at Universal.

"Nobody wanted this movie, so as a result we are celebrating like you can't even believe," said Nikki Rocco, head of distribution for Universal. "We expect a long life for this movie."

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at North American theaters, according to Exhibitor Relations Co. Inc. Final figures will be released Monday.

1. "The Grudge," \$22.4 million.
2. "Ray," \$20.1 million.
3. "Saw," \$17.4 million.
4. "Shark Tale," \$8 million.
5. "Shall We Dance?" \$6.3 million.
6. "Friday Night Lights," \$4.1 million.
7. "Ladder 49," \$3.3 million.
8. "Team America: World Police," \$3.1 million.
9. "Surviving Christmas," \$2.6 million.
10. "Taxi," \$2.15 million.

Spectrum

Zodiac Cookies

Crack one open and find out what's in store for you.

♏ **Scorpio** Oct. 24 - Nov. 21
Crawl out of your grave and get back into the real world.

♐ **Sagittarius** Nov. 22 - Dec. 21
Pick up the pumpkin guts off the road, DUDE.

♑ **Capricorn** Dec. 22 - Jan. 19
Take a stroll in the park and get some fresh air. Then, try to keep that feeling all day because these are trying times.

♒ **Aquarius** Jan. 20 - Feb. 18
Tell that special someone how you really feel finally.

♓ **Pisces** Feb. 19 - March 20
Was it worth it? Is anything worth it? You will receive answers to this before Thursday.

♈ **Aries** March 21 - April 19
Leftover Halloween props, blood and costumes still have many uses.

♉ **Taurus** April 20 - May 20
Try not to be overwhelmed.

♊ **Gemini** May 21 - June 21
Rock out with those who matter most... We all know this, but who really cares the most about you? Answer this and you will sleep better at night once you admit this to those special few.

♋ **Cancer** June 22 - July 22
Love lost, love forgotten.

♌ **Leo** July 23 - Aug. 22
Red nailpolish is sexy. Look for the red this week to find a new friendship.

♍ **Virgo** Aug. 23 - Sept. 22
Still in need of some assistance??? Always keep the friends near for support.

♎ **Libra** Sept. 23 - Oct. 23
You should be upset but somehow this all washes over you. Let yourself feel again. Apathy doesn't last...living is worth the pain.



Happenings

Nov. 1 through Nov. 3

Monday, Nov. 1

The Casualties, Lower Class Brats, Monster Squad and The Piss Ants will be dropkicking it for **The Punx Unite Tour** at the Nanci Raygun. 929 West Grace St. \$10. 5 p.m.

Tuesday, Nov. 2

Come check out student art in the **Mezzatesta Exhibit** sponsored by Student Artspace. University Student Commons Art Gallery. Call 828-9502 for more information. 7 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Wednesday, Nov. 3

Local metal legends **Monarch** play with **Ion Dissonance**, **Premonitions of War** and **Embrace** at the Nanci Raygun. Early show at 5 p.m. \$7.

Submit your own happenings to the Spectrum editor: Liz@passtthewasabi.com

'Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas,' ride or get rolled on

LOUIE CORBO
Spectrum Writer

The new installment of the "Grand Theft Auto" franchise has finally arrived. Is it worth it? Well let us rap about it for a minute. Ever since "Grand Theft Auto III" arrived on Playstation 2 the franchise has gone from obscure car game to a piece of American pop culture. The game, which is about committing crimes, created a new genre with its free roaming mission-based game structure that has taken over the videogame industry. "SpiderMan 2," "Jax 2" and even "Mortal Kombat: Deception," have ripped off "Grand Theft's" structure.

While "Grand Theft Auto III" is hot stuff, "Grand Theft Auto: Vice City" has its own impact. Instead of totally updating the engine, the fine folks at Rockstar Games had an epiphany. Tweak the engine a little to allow a few new features, add a new story, and set the game back in the '80s. This allows for a stylized gaming experience, complete with a soundtrack full of classic '80s music. "GTA3," and "GTA:VC" were both huge hits, so the question now is could they do it again? With "GTA: San Andreas" the answer is "eh, I guess, kinda."

"GTA: San Andreas" takes the idea of "Vice City" and continues it. The setting this time is the West Coast in the early '90s. The biggest feature of this game is that it doesn't just take place in a city, it takes covers the entire fictitious state of San Andreas. Within the state there are three cities each the size of Vice City in the last games, not to mention countryside populated by about a dozen small towns and various nooks and crannies to keep explorers busy.

One thing that detracts from the game is the lighting. In San Andreas the city in the beginning of the game goes for a hazy smog look. This effect makes the makes the lighting screwy and although it can be avoided by adjusting the brightness on the TV screen, it still might not be enough.

Another thing that detracts from the game is are the dated

graphics. The graphics dilemma is obviously due to the fact that the game has an entire state filled with people and cars, and no loading times. Still the graphics are a little edgy, and make some of the character skins look silly. An additional graphics complaint is the tendency for walls to disappear and there is slight clipping. This isn't that big of a problem, but it does add to making the graphics look sub-par.

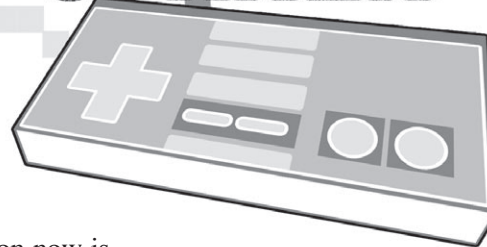
The game keeps all the features that made GTA games popular. You can go where you want, and do what you want. Once you've finished the main story line, you've only completed about half of the game. You can go on dates, rob houses, race dirt bikes and shoot pool. With all the variety, it does make the game feel worth the \$50 price tag.

The story and production values are easily the biggest attraction to passive gamers. The basic storyline is that you are Carl "CJ" Johnson, ex-gang member coming home after five years away. You're immediately framed by some crooked cops, and your old gang reluctantly lets you back into the hood. There are hours of voice work in the game, and all of it is well done. Guest voices pop up

random places, and never feel out of place. Samuel L. Jackson is the voice of the corrupt cop framing you. Charlie Murphy, Eddie Murphy's funny brother, pops up as a pimp. James Woods plays a... well he's in there.

If you like edgy game play, or are a fan of GTA this game is a must.

GAMER'S CORNER



"Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas"
Rated M
★★★★
(out of five)

EDITORIALS & LETTERS

Vote Nov. 2nd

OMAR YACOUBI

Editor of the Editorial Page

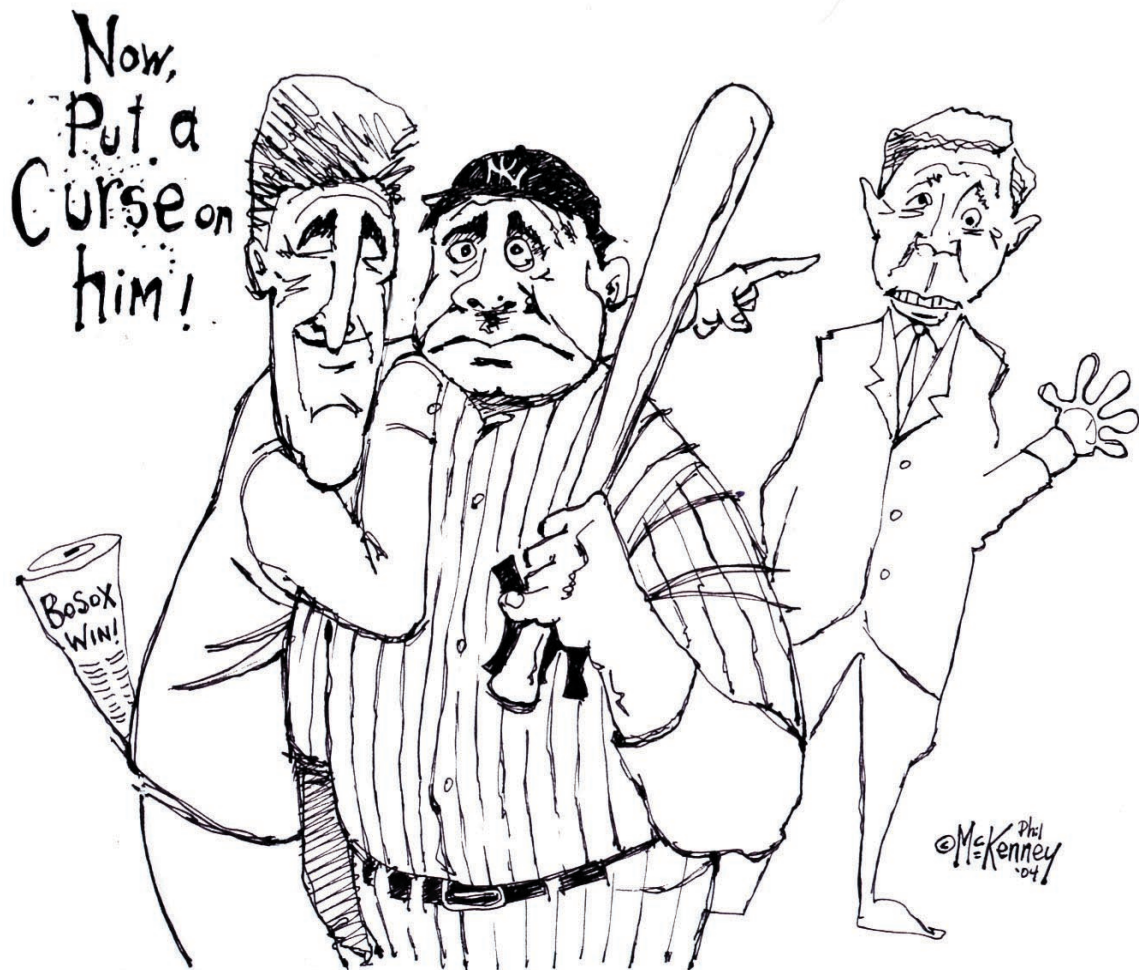
Tomorrow Americans have an important choice to make between two very different visions for the future of our country.

Don't be fooled: this election isn't about Democrats or Republicans. Both sides have received at least some endorsements from the opposite party, and newspapers that in the past endorsed the candidate of one party have this year switched sides. Clearly there is something larger at stake here than traditional partisan politics.

Both candidates have used fear appeals and stretched the truth to present their case to the American public. In many cases the debate between the two candidates has left the truth somewhere in between, and key similarities between the candidates are evident: they are both Yale graduates and come from wealthy backgrounds.

But the policy differences between the two candidates could not be more clear, and anyone who has witnessed the events of the last four years must know the importance of this election.

As a wise Saturday morning cartoon character once said, "the power is yours."



BY PHIL MCKENNEY

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:

Like any good Massachusetts liberal, John Kerry thinks he is better than you. He thinks he is classier, more refined and most of all, smarter than the average voter. Senator Kerry thinks that the electorate is too stupid to call him on his facts.

Kerry has used his platform as a Democratic candidate to do nothing but lie to the American public. His continuous slander has consisted of everything from mistruths and distortions to absolute lies. The only possible reason that Kerry would attempt to deceive voters so much is that he thinks he can get away with it.

During the first presidential debate, Kerry asserted that President Bush had not done enough to make the nation safe from terrorists. As an example, Kerry stated that the New York subway system had to close during the Republican National Convention for security reasons. The problem is that according to the New York Transit Authority, the subway never closed.

In the second Presidential debate, Kerry told the voting public that Bush underfunded both the No Child Left Behind Act and the C.O.P.S. programs, when in reality both of these program's funding increased under Bush. The No Child Left Behind Act's funding, for example, actually increased by 2.7 billion dollars. But wait, it gets worse.

During the second debate Kerry said that he would make a better commander-in-chief because he would be more attuned to international relations. To support this, Kerry made the assertion that a week before voting to force Iraq to comply with U.N. resolutions, he met with members of the United Nations Security Council.

But the Washington Times broke a story last week that reveals the truth: after speaking with five members of the UN Security Council, it was clear that this was just another Kerry lie. Four of the delegates, including those from Mexico, Bulgaria and Columbia, stated that they had never met Kerry, nor had anyone

representing their country.

Don't worry, there's more – for the past month, Kerry has stated and restated his claim that, after telling the president that he would need more troops to invade Iraq, the Army's chief of staff was forced to retire. This is a concoction that Kerry has seen as important enough to use in both the second presidential debate and multiple speeches.

The problem is, the facts tell a different story. General Shineski made a speech stating that the President would need more troops to invade Iraq effectively on Feb. 25, 2003. This is the speech that Kerry repeatedly refers to in his assertion, but in actuality the General's impending retirement was reported by the New York Times almost a year earlier in March of 2002.

Kerry's perverse manipulation of the facts and his tendency to invent things that he feels will be helpful to his campaign is almost physically disgusting. The way he believes that he can tell the voting public anything and they will believe him is insulting to just about everyone who takes the time to examine his claims.

Tomorrow you will have the chance to elect your next representative to the world. Do you really think someone who believes that he better than you will best represent your interests?

Sincerely,
Benjamin Colbert

To the Editor:

Tomorrow on Nov. 2nd, VCU students will have the opportunity to participate in what is being called the most important election of our generation. I would like to shed some light on three of the major differences between President George Bush and Senator John Kerry.

LETTERS continued to Page 15

The Commonwealth
TIMES

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OP/ED

Vote while you can

Use it or lose it: voting rights not necessarily a given

LYZ HOLDER
Op/Ed Writer

This election year is supposedly going to bring in a lot of voters. I have heard from some news panels and from the general public that many of these votes will be coming from the younger voters. I can imagine this Election Day will be an important one, given the war over in Iraq and the more intense sense of national pride distilled in Americans since Sept. 11, 2001.

There was a time when women could not vote. There was a time when non-Caucasian people couldn't vote. If you really take the time and think about it, the ability for every American citizen who is 18 and older to vote is a momentous ability – a true democratic society that lets the majority of the people decide what is best for them. Those who don't vote have no right to complain when policies are changed and laws are revoked or put forth.

In the 2000 election, only 50 percent of eligible voters turned out to vote. As a democratic system, this is the kind of thing that puts the forefathers to shame. Have Americans become so complacent that they do not even vote for their leaders anymore? This country was founded

Citizens with fewer rights have the danger of possessing no rights. Citizens with no rights are slaves.

on the basis that not only are all people created equal, but also they all have fundamental natural rights that cannot be taken away. What kind of democratic system are we living in today?

In this age where much of the emphasis is on the progression of societies and governments, there is such a thing as regression. Being left with fewer rights than initially given can demonstrate the questionable nature of our leaders' intents, as well as the citizens themselves. Citizens with fewer rights have the danger of possessing no rights. Citizens with no rights are slaves.

So go out and vote on Tuesday. Take the time to get to those voting booths and choose the candidate you believe is best for leading this country – even if it's Mickey Mouse. By demonstrating your right to vote, you are letting the state and federal governments know that you are an informed and mighty citizen of America. To let something as precious as your own rights slip away, is a crime against yourself.

You have rights, so you might as well use them to your advantage.

O weapons, where art thou?

Missing explosives give voters hard example of Bush's poor planning

OMAR YACOUBI
Op/Ed Writer

This is it – the last day before the election, and tomorrow America goes to the polls to decide who will be president. They do so with a cloud hanging over the Bush administration's credibility on Iraq: the failure to secure nearly 400 tons of high-explosive material during the invasion in March of 2003.

The Bush campaign, not surprisingly, tried to defer responsibility for its actions. It claims that the weapons may have been moved before the invasion, and that Kerry is making unsubstantiated charges, saying anything to get elected (a running theme for the Republicans, it seems).

While Saddam may well have moved the weapons before the invasion, a common thread has emerged from reports of troop movements through the area at the time: there were no orders to search for high-explosive materials – only weapons of mass destruction, the Bush administration's chief justification for going to war.

Right-wing pundits have charged that the media is digging up old news for political gain, but as a Virginian-Pilot editorial reported on Thursday, the Iraqi interim government reported the loss of the materi-

als in an Oct. 10 letter to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), making the issue more current.

According to a Washington Post article that same day, Weekly Standard Editor Bill Kristol said the New York Times story that broke the news was "somewhat hyped" and that it "didn't put it into context how important 380 tons are when there are tens of thousands of explosives in the country."

The IAEA warned the Bush administration about the site before the invasion, but there never was any special effort to secure the site, or any of Iraq's other suspected weapons sites for that matter.

But what makes the 380 tons so important is that only one pound is powerful enough to bring down an airliner – there are 2,000 pounds in every ton. And while it is true that other explosives have been used elsewhere throughout Iraq in insurgent attacks, these are no ordinary explosives.

The high-explosive material at the al-Qaqaa weapons depot south of Baghdad was called "high" for a reason. Of the three types of explosives that are missing, one

– HMX – is called a "dual use" substance because it is both a conventional explosive and powerful enough to be used in the detonation of a nuclear bomb.

Vice-President Dick Cheney has argued that if Kerry were president, Saddam would still be in possession of these explosives. But because of the way the Bush administration went to war without the proper planning, we don't even know where the

weapons are anymore, which could be an even worse proposition.

According to a report last Wednesday by the Associated Press, the weapons depot where the explosives were held "was considered the pre-eminent site in Iraq for high-explosive materials," where the IAEA deliberately concentrated Saddam's declared weapons after the 1991 Gulf War for easier monitoring.

The IAEA warned the Bush administra-

tion about the site before the invasion, but there never was any special effort to secure the site, or any of Iraq's other suspected weapons sites for that matter. While Bush had troops stationed at oil wells, looters ran rampant through the streets of Baghdad.

We needed better security, and we could have had it if the president had done a better job of bringing allies to our side. Winning the support of Turkey, for example, would have allowed more troops to enter the country, preventing the looting in the days after the war that made democracy in Iraq harder to achieve.

The Bush administration may well continue to insist that Saddam moved the weapons before the invasion. But even if this is true, the fact remains that we will never know because our president never fought the right war – he didn't take the necessary steps to make sure a well-known weapons depot would be secure.

As Comedy Central's "Daily Show" correspondent Stephen Colbert put it, "U.S. military intelligence was caught off guard – the idea that Saddam would store weapons in a weapons depot, it just seemed insufficiently diabolical." Hopefully the candidate we next choose at the polls won't be so tripped up by the obvious.

OP/ED

Just Me and the Governor

Mayoral candidate L. Douglas Wilder shares his thoughts on the city of Richmond

ALEXANDER MARRA

Op/Ed Writer

Former Virginia Governor L. Douglas Wilder is someone from the history books: the first and only black governor in the United States – and a professor here at VCU.

Born and raised in Church Hill, the Governor is coming out of semi-retirement to run for a position that will give him no more political prestige than he already has – Richmond mayor. But he is running for a different reason than to climb the political power ladder. Governor Wilder is doing it because there's no place like home.

"I didn't need the title; I could rest on my laurels. But Richmond's my home, and I've lived here all my life. And I'm not happy with the way things are going," Wilder said.

While elaborating on the subject of Richmond's sad condition the former governor pointed out how recently "at great expense" current Mayor Rudy McCollum published a colorful pro-Richmond brochure in the Times-Dispatch bragging about how great the city is doing while trying to take credit for its accomplishments. The Governor said he was not fooled.

"If you look at it, you would think Richmond's the grandest place. But if you look in [the brochure], you will not see a single word about education. I'm here to tell you that Richmond lost 3500 jobs in the last two years." The Governor went on to tell more of Richmond's woes.

Governor Wilder said the biggest problem facing Richmond is our high crime

rate. "Boston today is screaming because they are saying, 'we have 53 murders in Boston, what are we going to do?'"

Boston, he said, is more than three times the size of Richmond. Richmond has had 73 murders this year.

"Richmond has less than 200,000 people with 73 murders already. This year! And what do you read about it in terms of crime."

He pointed to the pamphlet, "City records lowest annual homicide rate in nearly two decades and they continue to remain well below the all time high nearly 10 years ago."

The all-time high he noted was near 150 homicides.

He turned back to the pamphlet.

"City enjoys strongest financial health in more than 20 years. We lost 3500 jobs. That's the strongest financial health we've had?"

Then VCU came up. Referring to the VCU Medical Center's excellent health care, the Governor said, "The homicide rate would be much higher if those persons didn't have emergency care treatment right away after they've been shot and done in and the city pays nothing for it. In many major cities the cities have to pay up for health care. Not Richmond."

"How will we bring the business back into the city?"

"Get rid of the crime."

"How do we stop the crime?"

"Easily. Take charge. Be in charge. The Chief of Police from Charleston, South Carolina, came up to tell us how to recognize open-air drug markets. My comment to that was if Stevie Wonder can and Ray Charles could – before he died – recognize them, you could too! They're right there!"

The topic then changed to our civil liberties. The Governor was outraged with the ferocity with which the city secludes its officials away from the public whom they serve.

"You go to City Hall and first you have to be frisked and searched! What the hell is somebody going to do to someone in City Hall? They built a wall around the General Assembly! If you dropped a bomb and every member of the General Assembly and the Governor and Lt. Governor was blown up, you'd get someone else. They're not essential. You understand what I'm saying?"

"Government officials should be –"

"Open to the public. If you get to the point when you are so protected, oh man, I don't like that, I want you [the government official] to be available."

The subject then changed again, this time to the city's work ethic.

"Five guys come out, one is sitting there sleeping, one guy is doing [the job], three others are standing around doing nothing. It reminded me of when I was in a communist country, in Hungary. They had no incentive to work. Here, you're paying people. Cosby said to me, why are there weeds around Arthur Ashe on Monument Avenue?"

"What do you think about public transportation? I heard you got on a bus –"

"And rode all over town! That's the only way you learn what's going on. You get off the bus and you got weeds all over the sidewalk."

"It costs \$1.65 to ride a bus, one way. That's a lot of money. You think people ride the bus because they like it? No, they ride it because they have to. And yet they [the city council] raised the bus fare."

But don't worry, VCU. The Governor promises,

"Help will be on the way, that's all you need to tell your readers."

But I think I also need to tell you: "Vote or Die!" And more specifically, "Vote Wilder for Mayor!"

We need to remember as students at VCU that Richmond is our city, even if we are from Northern Virginia, Virginia Beach, or wherever else we may be from. As Richmonders we should be concerned with our city's elected officials, especially that of mayor now that there is an at-large election that the Governor won for us through tireless efforts.

Op/Ed writer Alexander Marra interviewed former Governor Wilder. Some of Marra's comments have been included in italics.

LETTERS continued from Page 13

The next president will have the opportunity to appoint several new Supreme Court justices. In his last four years, Bush has done everything he could to stack the courts with justices who want to turn the clock back on reproductive freedom and the right to privacy. Kerry, on the other hand, promises to appoint judges who will protect *Roe v. Wade*.

When it comes to international family planning, Bush will continue to uphold his previously implemented Global Gag Rule which denies critical health care and reproductive education to women and families around the world. Kerry promises to lift the Global Gag Rule to allow women in developing countries the right to access family planning health care.

In the second debate between Kerry and Bush, Kerry stated that he believed it to be a woman's right to decide what is right for her body in private with her own doctor, family, friends and support group. Bush wants to reopen maternal homes for unwed mothers.

Lastly, Bush supports abstinence-only based education, even though it has been proven insufficient in preventing unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted infec-

tions. Kerry supports medically-accurate, comprehensive sex education so that teenagers can make responsible decisions.

I believe choice is critical. I believe the choice for our next president is clear. Voice your vote tomorrow!

Sincerely,
Crystal Koch Pintac

To the Editor:

As a non-student, non-faculty observer who has a vested interest in what takes place at VCU, I try to read the Commonwealth Times at every available opportunity.

The "Sounding Off" column of Michael Dickinson never fails to amuse me with its slanted view of the economy, particularly his view of the policies of our current administration.

Skyrocketing oil prices are no more the fault of the Bush administration than they are of the Commonwealth Times. We live in a free market society where the price of a product is determined by supply and demand. I am

not so naive as to totally discount regulations, tariffs, and other governmental intervention into the market equation, but to blame the politicians of either party is foolish. And if the average worker is struggling to pay for a tank of gas, could someone explain the presence of all the gas guzzling SUV's in the college parking lots?

Michael's proposal that we adopt easier bankruptcy laws would allow individuals who do not want to accept the responsibility for their debt to bail out and spread out the cost of that action over the people who do pay their obligations, namely you and me. Furthermore, his attempt to equate minimum wage to the cost of living denies the fact that labor is a commodity just like food, clothing, housing and medical care that is also determined by supply and demand.

It would be refreshing to read an article penned by this young man 10 years in the future after the experience of working within this great society as a taxpaying citizen has matured his thought processes.

Sincerely,
Ernest Mooney
President, Virginia Book Company

Commonwealth University

Don't wait in line go online!

Purchase your spring semester decal online

Student parking decals may be purchased via the VCU Parking Web site:

<http://www.bsv.vcu.edu/vcupark> beginning **Monday, November 15, 2004, at 8 a.m.**

Spring semester decals also may be purchased from either Parking Office location (1111 W. Broad St. or 1000 E. Clay St.) Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., beginning **Monday, December 13, 2004.**

Online-purchase options are available to students with valid VCU identification cards only. Assignments will be made based on availability.

For more information, please call customer service at (804) 828-8726.



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