

The Commonwealth Times

Free

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Round 2

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Rams head to N.C. for rematch with Wake Forest



News

One nation:
Leonard Pitts discusses the
polarization of America.
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Editorials & Letters

Taking it to the streets:
Traffic light enforcement cameras have privacy
advocates seeing red. / **Page 15**


IN BRIEF

CALENDAR NOV. 18 THROUGH NOV. 20		
Monday, Nov. 18	Tuesday, Nov. 19	Wednesday, Nov. 20
Laurel Lloyd, VCU's assistant director of pharmacy services, will speak about issues concerning graduate medical education from 7 a.m. to 8 a.m. in the George Ben Johnston Auditorium. Call Jean Hill-Atkins at 828-5093 for more information. 305 N. 12th St.	Catch Wanda Sykes , who has been on Comedy Central and "Wanda at Large," at the Carpenter Center for the Performing Arts at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$29.50. Call 225-9000 for more information. 600 E. Grace St.	University of Richmond's Lora Robins Gallery of Design from Nature features an exhibit with a number of drinking glasses that range from the mid- to late-18th century . Call 289-8276 for directions and more information.


CAMPUS FORECAST




Thursday
63/39



Friday
61/39



Saturday
58/40



Sunday
60/39

Compiled from wire reports

Man seeks compensation for gay pig

A Bulgarian farmer has gone to court demanding substantial damages after claiming the prize-winning pedigree pig he bought from a breeder was homosexual. Gale Dobrev, 43, from Bulgaria told the court the pig was only interested other male pigs and brought pictures of the pig and the testimony of fellow farmers as evidence of the 220-pound boar's sexual orientation. He also claimed that when other farmers heard about the pig it became impossible to sell – and in the end he turned the animal into sausages. The breeder who sold the pig claimed the farmer acted hastily by turning the boar into sausage and said that had the farmer waited for the pig to sexually mature it would have mated with female pigs.

Prepare for the iGlock

State wildlife officials in Texas are up in arms about a Web site that may soon let hunters shoot at animals on a ranch. Controversial Web site <http://www.live-shot.com> already offers target practice with a .22 caliber rifle and could soon let hunters shoot at deer, antelope and wild pigs, said John Underwood, the site's creator. Texas officials are not sure what to make of Underwood's Website, but may tweak existing laws to ensure that Internet hunting doesn't get out of hand. Mike Berger, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department director, said this was the first site of its type he had seen and current state laws don't cover provisions for remote hunting. Underwood

said Internet hunting could be popular with disabled hunters unable to get out in the woods or distant hunters unable to afford a trip to Texas. Berger has proposed a rule that will come up for public discussion in January that anyone hunting animals covered by state law must be physically on site when they shoot.

Go Speed Racer

A young male lost his driver's license after speeding past a camera 19 times in one night. The teenager swapped his car's license plate with a fake one and raced past the camera, but the 19-year-old and his three friends were snapped in various poses, usually hanging out of the windows making obscene gestures, in the belief that police wouldn't be able to trace them, but the police in Bern, Switzerland circulated the images to their patrol units and the men were stopped on their way home.

Well, it's certainly unusual

The principal at an Alaskan school was fired following an incident where he had a teacher whip him in front of two students. Steve Unfreid, principal of Matanuska Christian School, said Jesus inspired his unusual tactic. He asked teacher Joe Brost to whip him in front of two male students in the school's basement after the boys were caught kissing girls in the locker room for the second time in a week. He used this as an alternative to expulsion and told them their behavior had to stop and that because he let the environment get too lax he had to share in the punishment and told Brost to stop only when the students acknowledged their mistake. The school's board of direc-

tors unanimously decided to fire Unfreid. Brost later resigned.

It's about time

A group is offering music fans the chance to trade in copies of Ashlee Simpson's album for one of – what they call – higher entertainment quality. Fans can bring the CD to a New York venue and exchange it for albums by Elvis Costello, The Ramones, Ray Charles, Aretha Franklin and others. The group calls itself Horrified Observers of Pedestrian Entertainment and targeted Paris Hilton during a Los Angeles event where she signed copies of her book. The members carried signs with slogans such as "Why are You Famous" and "You Can't Buy Brain Cells."

Correction

In the Nov. 15 news article "Fun Graffiti helps shape new rule," The Commonwealth Times printed an incorrect headline. The intended headline was "Fan graffiti helps shape new rule." The Commonwealth Times regrets the error.

Cover photo illustration by Mary Franke Miller with Pat Kane's photos of B. A. Walker (left) of VCU and Chris Paul of Wake Forest University.

New teaser of Leonard Pitts by Pat Kane.

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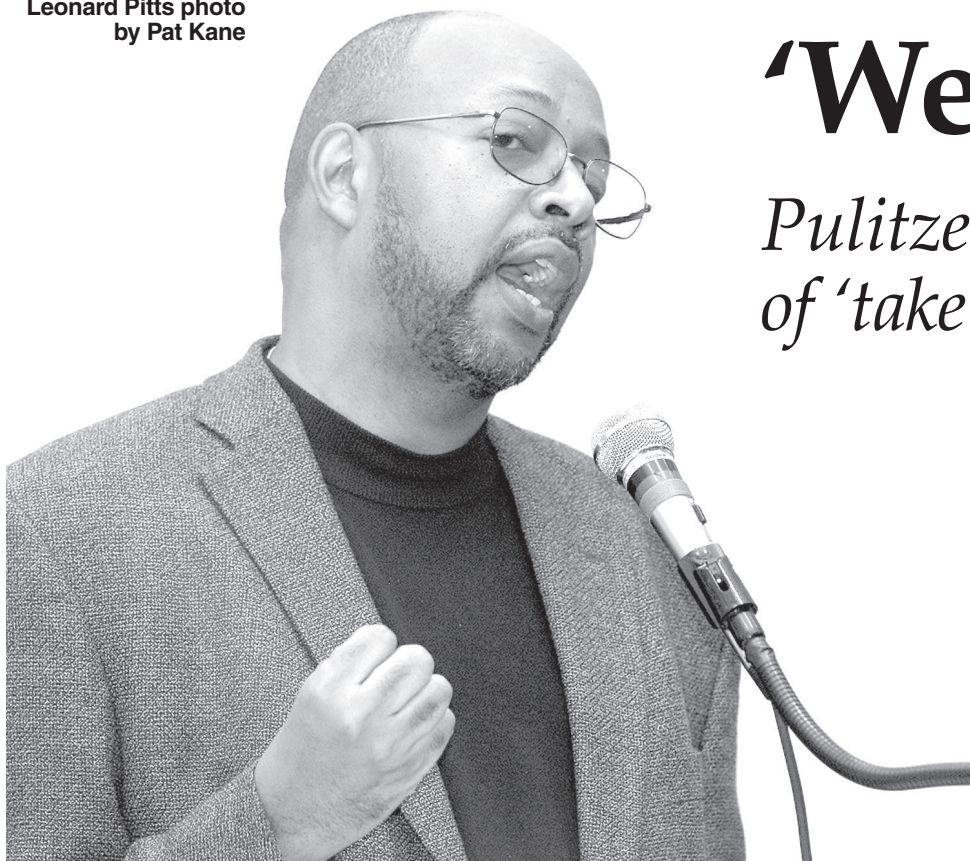
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NEWS

Leonard Pitts photo
by Pat Kane



'We must be family'

Pulitzer-Prize winner discusses impact of 'take no prisoners media' on America

CRAIG CARPER
Staff Writer

Leonard Pitts, this year's Pulitzer Prize winning commentary writer, Monday kicked off VCU's Mass Communications Week with a passionate speech about the current political climate, the role of the media in today's society and the nature of conflict in democracy.

With different sides of the political spectrum labeling him as a conservative or a liberal, Pitts said he always refuses to take a side.

"I would prefer to think of myself as the columnist that writes for 'the rest of us,' by which I mean the people who are not so far gone at either political extreme that they cannot think, reason and climb toward common ground. In other words for the majority."

A critic of the Bush administration and the war in Iraq, he reminded everyone that he also has had harsh words for some Democrats.

"A few years ago, when I was metaphorically beating the stuffing out of Bill Clinton on a regular basis, I got e-mails that blasted me for being too conservative. These days when I take that same rhetorical two-by-four to George W. Bush, I get e-mails taking me to task for my liberalism.

"I have at one time or another earned the wrath of the nation of Islam, the Sons of Confederate Veterans, the National Organization for Women and the National Rifle Association. I tell you all of that with a certain amount of pride. The highest compliment that anybody has ever paid me is when they say, 'I could not predict what you were going to say.' I love (it) when they agree with me, but that's even better when they say, 'I couldn't predict what you were going to say, you made me think.'"

The audience consisting of students, faculty, media professionals and other members of the Richmond community asked questions on topics ranging from past commentaries, the separation of church and state, predictions for the future of American politics, the Patriot Act and its impact on civil liberties plus the words people use to describe their own ideologies.

Discussing the stark division the country experiences right now, the columnist referenced an e-mail that he received from a 33-year-old man who wrote that the nation is so angry, so sharply divided that he would not be surprised if the United States were split into two or more countries in his lifetime.

Although Pitts said he did not particularly agree with the man's prediction, he also could not ignore that this was a possibility however small. Thus, he responded by writing a column titled "Maybe this is how America ends."

Saying the media are responsible for much of the bitterness in American politics, Pitts said there seems to be an unspoken agreement in the business that news is what happens at the extremes.

"Which is why it has become commonplace for people who do what I do for a living," he said, "to think of and to present the nation as balkanized, polarized, divided along the fault lines of politics, race and culture.

"And as a result this is increasingly the way the nation has come to think of itself.

Obviously there is truth to that image. I'm not saying that there is not, but what I am saying is that is not the whole picture and that if you dig a little bit deeper something much more complex emerges."

In the picture the media paint, he said, people are liberal or conservative and with just that much to go on you can predict the way people will feel about any issue.

"The people in that picture do not much resemble the overwhelming majority of the people that I see when I travel this country. Those people are more like the ones that I see when I scan the Gallup polls," he told the 200 member audience. "They agree on more things than you'd think and when they disagree it's not this hateful, sharp, polarized, 'angry at the world' thing that you see in the news.

"Those people somehow manage to work together. They go to school together. They walk the streets together. And somehow most days they manage to get along without killing each other."

Citing Ann Coulter, Rush Limbaugh and Michael Moore as some of the pundits he identified as fueling the extreme division in the country.

"I thought (Fahrenheit 9/11) made some excellent points. I also thought the movie un-

dermined its own credibility with charges like the claim that President Bush invaded Afghanistan basically because he wanted to allow his cronies to build an oil pipeline," Pitts said. "For me, once you lose your credibility — once I understand that you will say

anything to win the argument — you begin to lose the ability to sway me. I wanted to like that movie more than I did."

While speaking of the need for the media's failure to portray the more moderate portion of the population, he began to address the objectivity issue.

"We in the news media are privileged," the columnist said. "We frame the world every day. We look at everything that's happening in our town, in our state, in our nation, in our world. We filter it for our audiences. We distill it into a sheet of paper that lands in their rosebushes, occasionally in their driveways.

"And that privilege comes with certain

responsibilities, the highest of which is simply this: To be fair. Not objective. Objectivity is an impossibility. But fair. Fairness is a standard that we can and should strive for."

The Miami Herald journalist then provided an example of the picture the media often ignore.

"Of all of the wholesome tributes that were made when Ronald Reagan died earlier this year, there was one that really stuck out for me," he said. "It spoke of how at the end of a day that Reagan had spent trying to further his conservative agenda and House Speaker Thomas 'Tip' O'Neil had spent trying to frustrate that same agenda, the two men would get together at the White House and talk over drinks.

"I like that picture. It strikes me as a hopeful picture, but it is a picture you will seldom see in our 'take-no-prisoners' media. And see I'm not sure if that's because the picture no longer exists or because no one cares to see it anymore."

As the crowd intently listened to Pitts, who recently published the book, "Becoming a Dad: Black Men and the Journey to Fatherhood," he talked of the country and its people being able to change the picture the media have painted of them.

"At the end of the day we are still one nation. We are black children in Harlem. We are Muslims in Atlanta. We are Cuban immigrants in Miami. We are farmers in Nebraska. We are cops in San Diego. We are students in Richmond.

"We are right, left and every gradation in between. We are one nation."

He closed his speech with the following statement:

"It is inevitable that we as a people will disagree. It is necessary that we will disagree. It is probably even good that we will disagree.

"I disagree with my son sometimes. I disagree with my sisters. And I know this will shock you, but I also disagree with my wife — but we are family. The same goes for the American people, and we in the news media can serve no higher purpose than to remind us all of that sometimes.

"We will disagree, we will fight but we must be *family* bound by common fears, common desires and common heritage. One thinks again of Ronald Reagan and 'Tip' O'Neil getting together after a day of fighting political war. They understood that at the end of the day, this is our country and we all have to find a way to live together in it.

"They got this. Why can't we?"

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NEWS

Viacom executive concerned about broadcast media

Swanson: New regulations could eliminate live coverage

ARTHELIA GATLING AND MATTHEW HARRIS
Staff Writers

The broadcast industry faces new challenges in an uncertain future.

This is the message Dennis Swanson, executive vice president and chief operating officer for the Viacom Television Stations Group, left with the VCU community after he addressed his concerns about the Federal Communications Commission's increasing regulations and his outlook for the future of television broadcasting.

The halftime show incident at Super Bowl XXXVIII where Justin Timberlake exposed Janet Jackson's breast during a performance sparked a wave of controversy, which, he said, led authorities to impose stringent penalties.

"It took nine-tenths of a second, but the ramifications have had a tremendous impact on the broadcast industry," Swanson told students, faculty and area media professionals during Tuesday's School of Mass Communications' Turpin Lecture on the Monroe Park Campus.

When the FCC fined Viacom and its subsidiaries \$550,000 and issued a Notice of Apparent Liability citation, he said, it sent a clear message to broadcasters to re-evaluate their program content before its airing.

Swanson said this citation and others since threaten First Amendment rights for broadcasters and citizens alike.

"Think about if you want to live in a country where the First Amendment is not practiced," he said, suggesting the latest FCC regulations could mean the end of live television.

For example, most shows choose to run on a 5-second delay. But to ensure they abide by FCC guidelines, some stations now avoid live coverage altogether.

Although American broadcasting has always been different from other countries because of the First Amendment, Swanson said he fears that the government regulations of the media in other countries may cross over to America.

Another issue he addressed during his lecture covered the 1966 Telecommunications Act that allows companies to own a greater number of broadcast outlets than they have in the past. Since this enables groups such as Viacom, Disney, Fox and General Electric to control 7.5 percent of television stations in the United States, Swanson said he doesn't view this as a major issue at this time.

"You have major networks now that don't make money," he said. "That's why so many are trying to acquire stations."

What he does see as a major concern for media management, however, centers around companies having a fair, accurate and balanced approach to broadcasting.

"There's an awful lot at stake," Swanson said, referring to the high-profile incidents that may have discredited the integrity of broadcasting.

He cited two examples that occurred before the 2004 presidential election: Dan Rather's endorsement of forged documents about President George W. Bush's military record and the Sinclair Broadcast Group's decision to

air a documentary only on presidential candidate John Kerry's military record. Neither report was considered fair, accurate or balanced.

The Turpin Lecture, first introduced in 2003 with speaker Tom Curley, newly appointed president and chief executive officer of The Associated Press, honors the legacy of William H. Turpin, former professor and first associate director of the School of Mass Communications.

Since Turpin's expertise was editing and media management, the lecture's purpose is to bring respected media professionals to help benefit mass communications students and professionals in the community.

Students' reactions about the lecture varied. "I think it provided a wonderful insight into some executives' perspective of what goes on in the broadcasting world," said Angela Castleberry, a senior broadcast major.

Others were disappointed. "I thought it was going to be more about how he got into his career and about other careers in broadcasting," said Maria Walker, a senior public relations major.

Many students said they were just satisfied to hear this television-broadcast pioneer speak. Swanson established one of television's most popular primetime programs, Monday Night Football, and created the award-winning Oprah Winfrey Show.

The Peabody Award winner concluded his lecture by giving advice to broadcasting students by saying there is no magic formula to success in the industry.

"It's more important to believe in yourself or no one else will believe in you," he said. "Your performance will become your resume."

Council works to promote interdisciplinary studies

KRYSTAL JONES
Staff Writer

After 10 years of working for The Richmond Times-Dispatch, Lorraine Blackwell decided to enroll in VCU's Interdisciplinary Studies Program to finish her bachelor's degree. Blackwell said she knew about the program only because she worked for the university in the late 1980s when students could earn a Bachelor of General Studies degree.

The program, previously known as the Nontraditional Studies Program, has been offered to students at the university for 27 years, but some alumni said the public doesn't really know about it.

Therefore, Blackwell and other interdisciplinary studies graduates want people to know that the program at VCU still exists.

"The Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies has got to get the word out," Blackwell said. "It should be promoted on the Web site more and through advertisements, newspapers, radio and TV."

Robert Putney, president of VCU's Non-traditional Studies Council, agrees with

Blackwell and offers some ideas on helping the program become more visible in the community.

"I think an advertising campaign will be very beneficial," Putney said. "I also believe more re-

sources can be used in order to inform people about the program."

Linda Spinelli, coordinator of the program, acknowledged that promotions for the program are an issue.

The program, she said, is not designed for the traditional freshman or the undecided sophomore but

"For those that are older in the working world, it is not convenient to attend traditional one-hour classes. However, they would love the opportunity to further their education to advance in the work place."

— Jeff Martin, Nontraditional Studies Council member

for older students who have acquired many credits.

"I've only been in this position since September 18, but I do plan on working on some ways to inform people about the program," Spinelli said. "It's hard to inform students about applying to the program because it has to be the right kind of student."

Jeff Martin, a council member who represents one of the students Spinelli describes as appropriate for the program, said he didn't have to leave his job at Philip Morris to earn his degree in manufacturing management. Instead, he said he completed the program off-campus.

Martin called it "a good program" that would be beneficial for adults who work and want to earn a bachelor's or a master's degree.

"For those that are older in the working world, it is not convenient to attend traditional one-hour classes," Martin said, recalling his experiences. "However, they would love the opportunity to further their education to advance in the work place."

VCU, he said, needs to sell this program to companies where it would benefit the university as well as the individual. Martin told council members that it would be difficult for the council alone to try to promote the program based on the number of people on the council and the time they could devote to it. The university, he said, does have a lot to offer and promoting this program would require some creativity as well as innovation to make people aware of it.

The Virginia General Assembly in 1972 created interdisciplinary studies and other similar programs when it passed legislation calling for senior universities to develop a nontraditional degree for people ages 24 and older who work full time.

NEWS

Director implements stricter criteria for honors students

FRANK BROWN

Staff Writer

The University Honors Program offers various activities, courses and incentives to well-performing students. Some honors students, however, would be happy with just one perk – early registration.



Timothy Hulseley

According to the class schedule, honors students and those with disabilities have the first choice of classes. They are allowed to register one week before graduate students, who are next in line for registration.

"The biggest benefit is clearly registering for classes early," said Matt Sievert, a junior honors student. "That makes a humongous difference as far as signing up for classes."

The incentive was so appealing that some students said they joined the program with no plan to graduate with honors. But no more, because the program implemented a rule this fall to encourage its students to become involved in the program's activities. Honors students now must attend at least three seminars per semester and complete at least one honors class yearly to remain eligible for the program's housing and scholarships.

"I know there are a lot of students who sign up for the program and never take a class, never come to anything," said Timothy Hulseley, director of the honors program. "It just seems to me like it's damning the system."

Hulseley said he wants to "change the culture" of the honors program.

"We're trying to create a sort of 'community of scholars' feel," he said, "and I think we can keep the numbers down and have active students."

"I know there are a lot of students who sign up for the program and never take a class, never come to anything. It just seems to me like it's damning the system."

— **Timothy Hulseley, director of the honors program**

Still, some students disagree with Hulseley's vision for the program. Chanel Call, a sophomore criminal-justice major, said she joined the program solely for the early-registration perk.

"People who have good grades should be rewarded by letting them register early," she said. "They should be

For more information about the University Honors Program go to <http://www.vcu.edu/honors>.

given an incentive to continue making good grades."

Sievert said he was disappointed that students enroll in honors classes just to register early because that's not what the honor program is all about.

"But I think that's just part of the game," he said. "If you're offering incentives, then there will be people who will come to take advantage of those incentives."

Sarah Broughton, a junior social work major, said she, however, became displeased with the honors program because of the time commitment.

"I've taken about four or five modules, and I really enjoyed them, but I just don't have time in my schedule to do it anymore," she said. "I probably won't graduate from the honors program. I can graduate with honors from the social work program."

Nonetheless, Hulseley said the response to the rule change has been dramatic and positive.

"Attendance has been way up; enrollment has been way up," he said, adding that he hopes to expand the requirements within the next couple years. If that happens, merely remaining in the program will require participation in its activities "just to show that (students) are working toward graduation with honors."

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NEWS

Lewis hopes to leave Faculty Senate with a strong leader

KYLE TRYGSTAD
Staff Writer

Editor's Note: This is the third part of a three part series.

Judith Lewis, an associate professor in VCU's School of Nursing began serving her second term as Faculty Senate president this fall. Because of her position and the changing face of VCU's faculty, the Commonwealth Times interviewed Lewis to discuss the major issues she and other Senate members will work on during the 2004-2005 academic year.



Judy Lewis

CT: How much of a role does the Faculty Senate have in hiring the provost?

The Board of Visitors hires everybody. I would be sure that not only the Faculty Senate, but the faculty is involved. But the other thing that happens is that as candidates come to campus there are open sessions with faculty and students, and you get an opportunity to go to the sessions to ask questions and fill out evaluation forms. And I think students and faculty both need to meet people and find out where they're coming from.

CT: What other goals have you set forth for the Faculty Senate?

One of the things that is important to me since this is my second and last year as president is to make sure that we've got good leadership in place so that this will work again.

One of the things I like to do is mentor people and to work to make sure that we have folks waiting in the wings.

You always need to find three people to replace yourself, because something happens to one or two of them. So one of the things I'm working on is continuing to develop faculty and also continuing to develop our relationship with the administration.

Faculty members are always working on developing new curricula and new programs. We're working on getting our research funded. So to make sure we have the infrastructure in place to work with administration on things like that is very important.

Personally I'm excited because we're in the final phases of design and will be breaking ground in the spring for a new School of Nursing building. And that's been an issue because this building is just old. It used to be a dormitory. It wasn't designed architecturally for classrooms.

So we're looking forward to having a facility in which we can have human-patient simulators and some other state-of-the-art technologies—because there is a tremendous nursing shortage. The building is going to be on Lee Street at the corner of Lee and 11th streets. So we're very excited about that.

CT: What's being done to combat the nursing shortage?

We have more than doubled our undergraduate program since I came 12 years ago.

When I came, the course I'm teaching right now had 40 students. I now have 80 students in that class. So we've really increased the number of new nurses we're putting out.

We have a large program of folks who are already reg-

For more information about the Faculty Senate go to <http://www.facultysenate.vcu.edu>

istered nurses but don't have college degrees—they went to a junior college or diploma school. We have lots and lots of those.

We have a big program now for folks who have bachelor's degrees in something other than nursing. So we're looking to get the best and the brightest. Someone told me the other day that they went to a movie theater, and during the ads and previews there was an ad for VCU School of Nursing. So we're really working hard to get the word out.

There is a huge projected shortage in nursing. In my many years in the field there have been shortages and surpluses and shortages and surpluses. And this is a shortage that's not going to go away.

There's also the fact that as those of us of my age that are moving toward retirement, we're going to have a huge shortage of faculty as well. You can only grow as fast as you have qualified faculty to teach.

But we've got a really nice partnership with the hospital. On this campus the academic medical center and the hospital are just wonderful partners in terms of working with us to increase training facilities for students.

So we've been working really hard to keep the curriculum innovative. We compete really well. We have no shortage of qualified applicants. We've been really pleased. The nursing students are great.

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STATE & NATION

INTERNATIONAL IN BRIEF

Albanian university professors on 3-day strike for pay rise

TIRANA, Albania — Albanian university professors went on a three-day strike Wednesday seeking a pay rise and better work conditions.

Some 200 professors from the faculties of construction, electronics, mechanics and geology at the Polytechnic University of Tirana gathered at Mother Teresa Square to call for a 100 percent salary increase. The faculties jointly have around 5,000 students.

All other universities in Tirana and other towns supported the strike, stopping lessons for one hour, Albanian media reported.

"Unless the government responds officially in a written form, we shall continue our protest," said professor Emil Lamani, a spokesman for the group, adding they did not trust government statements that it was considering a pay rise for professors this month.

"Reforms have been in the government programs but never applied or supported financially. We shall go to the end this time," Lamani said without making clear what would be the next step.

Up to 30 percent of professors, most with postgraduate scientific degrees, have left post-communist Albania for the United States, Canada or Western Europe during the post-communist period.

"The government should consider that without the intelligence there would be no development in this country," said professor Luljeta Bozo.

Monthly salaries at the university range from 30,000 leks (US\$319; euro246) to 60,900 leks (US\$648; euro500).

The average monthly salary in Albania is 21,000 leks (US\$223; euro172).

"We want dignity and not think any moment of emigration or staying at the streets to sell bananas," said professor Marenglen Gjonaj.

The Science and Education Ministry said it agreed with the professors' financial requests, but that pay increases were up to the Finance Ministry.

"Their demands need to find place in the government budget and that is up to the Ministry of Finance," said spokesman Vladimir Lame, adding that a meeting would be held this week.

Colleges look for ways to cap book costs

KRISTEN WYATT
Associated Press Writer

ATLANTA — It's one of the most common college complaints: expensive textbooks. Some of them cost hundreds of dollars, and with new required editions every few years, students have slim opportunities to buy used ones.

The state Board of Regents examined ways to curb rising textbook costs Wednesday, fearing that if they don't do something to stop textbook inflation, the Legislature will force caps for them.

Last session three measures to cap textbook costs were considered, and even though none became law, college policymakers say the complaints aren't going away and they better stop runaway costs before they're forced to stick with old books.

"The cost has become prohibitive to an awful lot of people," warned Chancellor Tom Meredith.

Textbooks can now make up 20 percent of the cost of attending public college, said Bill Bowes, staff treasurer for the Regents' vice chancellor of finance. College textbook editions are updated on average every 3.8 years, forcing many students to buy new books instead of saving about 25 percent by buying used books, he said.

Bowes set up a six-campus task force of campus bookstore administrators to exam-

ine how to keep costs down. The Board of Regents isn't proposing any rules for professors and bookstores yet, but those could be on the way. College textbook complaints are getting big attention from lawmakers and college administrators nationwide.

Just three months ago, the California legislature passed a law requiring college presidents to work with faculty to find least-costly textbooks. The governor of Illinois, Gov. Rod Blagojevich, ordered a state investigation into high textbook costs in May.

Even Congress is considering stepping in. The U.S. House has considered, though not approved, an investigation into possible textbook price gouging and whether books are sold cheaper overseas.

Meredith said Georgia colleges need a plan before politicians step in and require professors to keep the same textbooks for longer periods of time.

"We're not saying anybody's doing anything wrong," he said. "We're just looking at it closely."

Among the explanations for the skyrocketing costs of college books: more add-ons like CDs and online study aides, more graphics in the texts and more frequent new editions, especially in science and technology fields.

Bowes defended college bookstores and professors and said they're unlikely to

blame for the fast growth of book costs. College bookstores make a higher profit margin on used books than new books, he said, so there's little pressure by the stores to bring in new books. And many schools, including the University of Georgia, don't allow professors to assign textbooks they wrote without higher approval, cutting the likelihood that professors order new editions just to line their own pockets.

Bowes' recommendations included encouraging schools to adopt standard core curriculum books and asking professors to meet earlier deadlines for choosing new books, saving college bookstores from paying rush-shipment fees. Bowes also suggested that professors be more clear with students about which books are required, and which are only recommended.

Also, the Regents are considering asking the Legislature for a sales-tax exemption on college textbooks, which would save students a few pennies per dollar.

No decisions were made Wednesday by the Regents, but they expect to revisit the book question. A state lawmaker who proposed profit caps on textbooks last session, Democratic Rep. Barbara Massey Reece of Menlo, said she'd hold off on pushing another bill while college officials try to fix the problem themselves.

"We'll probably wait and see what the Regents do," she said.

Va. Beach lawmaker starts campaign for attorney general

LARRY O'DELL
Associated Press Writer

RICHMOND — Del. Bob McDonnell of Virginia Beach on Wednesday became the first candidate to officially announce for statewide office in 2005, saying his top priority as attorney general would be protecting Virginia from terrorist threats.

McDonnell, 50, declared his candidacy for the Republican nomination at the state Capitol, the first of 13 stops on a three-day statewide tour. He will likely be opposed in the June 14 GOP primary by Richmond lawyer Steve Baril, who is organizing a campaign and raising money but has not officially announced his candidacy.

Incumbent Jerry Kilgore is the presumptive GOP nominee for governor in 2005.

In his appearance before about three dozen supporters, McDonnell contrasted his experience with that of his opponent without mentioning Baril by name. Baril has been active in GOP politics but has not held elective office.

"It is easy for candidates who have not been elected to office to engage in political rhetoric, to complain about what has not been accomplished while making promises about what they are going to do," McDonnell said. "But I believe voters will want to make sure there is actually a track record of results to go along with the rhetoric."

Baril did not immediately return a phone call seeking comment.

McDonnell is a former state prosecutor who was elected to the House of Delegates in 1991, defeating 20-year Democratic incumbent Glenn B. McClanan. He has sponsored legisla-

tion reforming the welfare and juvenile justice systems and toughening the state's drunken driving laws.

He is chairman of the House Courts of Justice Committee, which handles crime bills and screens judicial nominees.

McDonnell said Virginia's proximity to the nation's capital, its ports and its large number of military bases makes the state a potential terrorist target and "we must ensure the very best training for our first responders."

He told reporters later that he is especially interested in improving port security. He said he will have specific recommendations later in the campaign.

Other priorities, McDonnell said, will include fighting Internet-related and gang crimes. He also vowed to "defend our traditional values," including the state's prohibition against same-sex marriages and its ban on procedure that abortion opponents call "partial-birth abortion." A lawsuit challenging the abortion law is pending in federal appeals court.

The attorney general's office has been a steppingstone for gubernatorial hopefuls. Former Gov. Jim Gilmore held the job, as did unsuccessful gubernatorial candidates Marshall Coleman, Mary Sue Terry and Mark Earley.

McDonnell said he is focused only on the next two elections — the GOP primary and the November general election. Possible Democratic candidates include state Sens. Creigh Deeds of Bath County and John Edwards of Roanoke.

McDonnell has raised just over \$800,000 and Baril about \$785,000, according to the most recent campaign finance reports. McDonnell said he expects to raise about \$1.3 million for the primary and just over \$3 million for the general election.

SPORTS

Upcoming Sports EVENTS

NCAA

Thursday Nov. 18

Preseason NIT on ESPN
Men's basketball vs. Wake Forest, 7:30 p.m.

The Rams face the Demon Deacons in a rematch of last year's NCAA tournament first-round game. A lot of Wake's faces are the same, including point guard Chris Paul, but the Rams will take a new-look team to Winston-Salem.

Saturday Nov. 20

Women's basketball vs. Belmont, 2 p.m.

After running through their two preseason games, the Rams travel to Tennessee to face the Bruins and senior forward Brandi Miller, the preseason All-Atlantic Sun player who averaged 16 points and 9.8 rebounds in her 28 games last season.

Intramurals

3-on-3 Basketball Tournament

Captains meeting Thursday, Nov. 18.

Play begins Monday, Nov. 22.
Entry fee is \$15 per team.

5-on-5 Basketball Leagues

Early registration runs from Nov. 29 through Dec. 3.
Entry fee is \$15 per team.

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



Give the Week 12 crown to Raj Sethi. He went a perfect 4-0 last week. Almost everyone else was a game back, being tripped up either by the Eagles or, in the case of your favorite sports editor, the Packers. C'mon, the *Packers*?

Us: 57-43 (.570). Them 51-29 (.638).

Raj Sethi

Last Week: 4-0

Denver at New Orleans: Mike Shanahan has had two weeks to prepare for this game, and the Saints haven't beaten a team with a winning record this year. Not going to happen this week. **Broncos**



Detroit at Minnesota: Both teams are in a tailspin. The Vikings win this one simply because they're playing at home and they have Dante Culpepper. The Lions don't. **Vikings**

Tennessee at Jacksonville: QB David Garrard will show for the second week in a row that he deserves to be a starter somewhere next year. With Air McNair on the sidelines, the Titans are finding the going to be very tough. **Jaguars**

New England at Kansas City: On paper, the Chiefs look to be out-matched simply because they have no defense whatsoever, but I have a feeling they'll win a shootout, even without Priest Holmes. Call it a hunch, because the pick definitely defies logic. **Chiefs**

Jon Kennaugh

Sophomore

Favorite Team:

Redskins

Broncos over Saints

Vikings over Lions

Titans over Jaguars

Patriots over Chiefs



Julian Benbow

Last Week: 3-1

Denver at New Orleans: The Broncos biggest edge in this game is probably Jake Plummer's ability to throw the ball forward, unlike Saints QB Aaron Brooks. **Broncos**



Detroit at Minnesota: The Vikings can score, even without Randy Moss, but I'm willing to go with Detroit as an upset special. **Lions**

Tennessee at Jacksonville: The Jaguars have been lucky all year, why would their luck run out against the Titans, who had games against the Bengals, Texans and Bears and only came away with one win? **Jaguars**

New England at Kansas City: So the Chiefs have a backup running back that can score touchdowns. The Pats have a kicker that can do the same thing and a wide receiver that can play defense. How do you beat that? **Patriots**

Sam Martinez

Sophomore

Favorite Team:

Redskins

Saints over Broncos

Lions over Vikings

Jaguars over Titans

Chiefs over Patriots



Broncos/Saints highlight slow Week 11

RAJ SETHI

Staff Writer

Week 11 provides no games that jump out at you as the game of the week, but this one pits two teams in need of a win more desperately than you might assume. The Broncos enter coming off a bye, and needing to keep pace with San Diego in the AFC West. The Saints, meanwhile, come into Sunday's game as probably the most schizophrenic team in the NFL. A week after allowing 43 points to the Chargers, the Saints' D allowed just 20 in a home win over Kansas City. New Orleans has a weak schedule the rest of the way, and a second straight win could kick start a winning streak that could propel them into the playoffs. Jim Haslett's job is on the line.

Bend but Don't Break

Well to be honest, it's been more break than just bend so far for the Saints' defense this season. The unit has given up at least 20 points in every contest. Having the worst-ranked defensive unit in the NFL, and the fact that the Saints' four wins this season have been by a combined margin of 18 points typically aren't ingredients included in the recipe for success, but somehow they have managed to pull it off. One main reason is that the defense has been opportunistic, evident by a +5 turnover margin. Last week, they forced turnovers on the Chiefs' final two possessions to preserve a come-from-behind win. Still, the defense will have to keep them in the game; the Saints can't expect to rally every week.

How 'Bout Some Consistency?

New Orleans possesses a potentially explosive offense, *potentially* being the key word there. Talent-wise, the Saints feature a group that rivals any team, but the difference between them and the elite is consistency, or lack thereof in this case. QB Aaron Brooks can be directly attributed to this problem; he has to be the most Jekyll-and-Hyde player in the NFL. He shows flashes of brilliance, but also flashes of immaturity. When Brooks is on his game, the offense is almost unstoppable, featuring studs Deuce McCallister and Joe Horn at the other skill positions. Brooks is the key, though.

One-on-One

There is no more of an intriguing matchup in this game than the one between Saints WR Joe Horn and Broncos CB Champ Bailey. While New Orleans does have other capable receivers in Jerome Pathon and Dante Stallworth, Horn is the star. A perennial Pro Bowler, he will be locked up by the premier shutdown CB in the game today in Bailey. Denver appears to have made away like bandits after their trade with Washington in the off-season, especially with the rise of RB Reuben Droughns. Bailey makes the entire defense better when he's able to lock up the other team's #1 WR, but he will be tested this week by one of the league's best.

SPORTS

Instant Replay

VCU Rams, Wake Forest Deacons set for another tournament battle

JULIAN BENBOW
Sports editor

VCU forward Nick George and his teammates have been dying for a rematch with Wake Forest since the people in Bracketville set up the Preseason National Invitational Tournament with the two teams just a game apart.

They'll get that shot on Thursday night in the tournament's second round, but they had to put the brakes on American gunner Andre Ingram to get it.

Ingram, the Eagles' off guard who made a name for himself just a few miles away at Highland Springs High School, scored 38 points, including a runner to send the game into overtime.

But the Rams used timely defense plus George's 24 points—all in the second half and overtime—to spoil Ingram's homecoming and win their fourth straight home opener at the Alltel Pavilion, 82-76.

"We're fortunate to get out of here with a win," said Rams head coach Jeff Capel, who won his 42nd game as a Division-I head coach.

The Rams found out late that day projected starter Michael Doles, who averaged 11 points off the bench last season, would sit out because of mononucleosis.

To add to that loss of scoring power, VCU had to figure out what to do about the Eagles' Ingram, who came out like a lit match in the first half.

The 6-foot-3 guard drained his first four shots—treys from both corners, another from the wing plus a lay-up—and personally dug a 12-point hole for the Rams at the end of the first half.

VCU fell right on in by making just nine of their 26 shots in the period—two of nine from beyond the lengthened three-point line.

"But you knew they had a run in them," said Ingram, who almost stopped every rally on his own.

The Rams were down by as much as 17 in the first half, but Capel said he never thought they were out of it.

"Loser's think that way," Capel said. "We think that we're going to turn it around. We're going to start

making baskets." They did. But when VCU point guard B.A. Walker, who quietly scored a team high 27 points, made a mid-range jumper to cut the Eagles lead to four points. Ingram came right back down on the other end and pulled up over Walker to hit a baseline J.

Or when George, who missed all of his shots in the first half, scored eight points during VCU's 15-4 second-half run, including an up-and-under move that tied the game at 44.

Ingram pulled a three pointer from the wing in front of his head coach Jeff Jones that bounced off the front of the rim before falling.

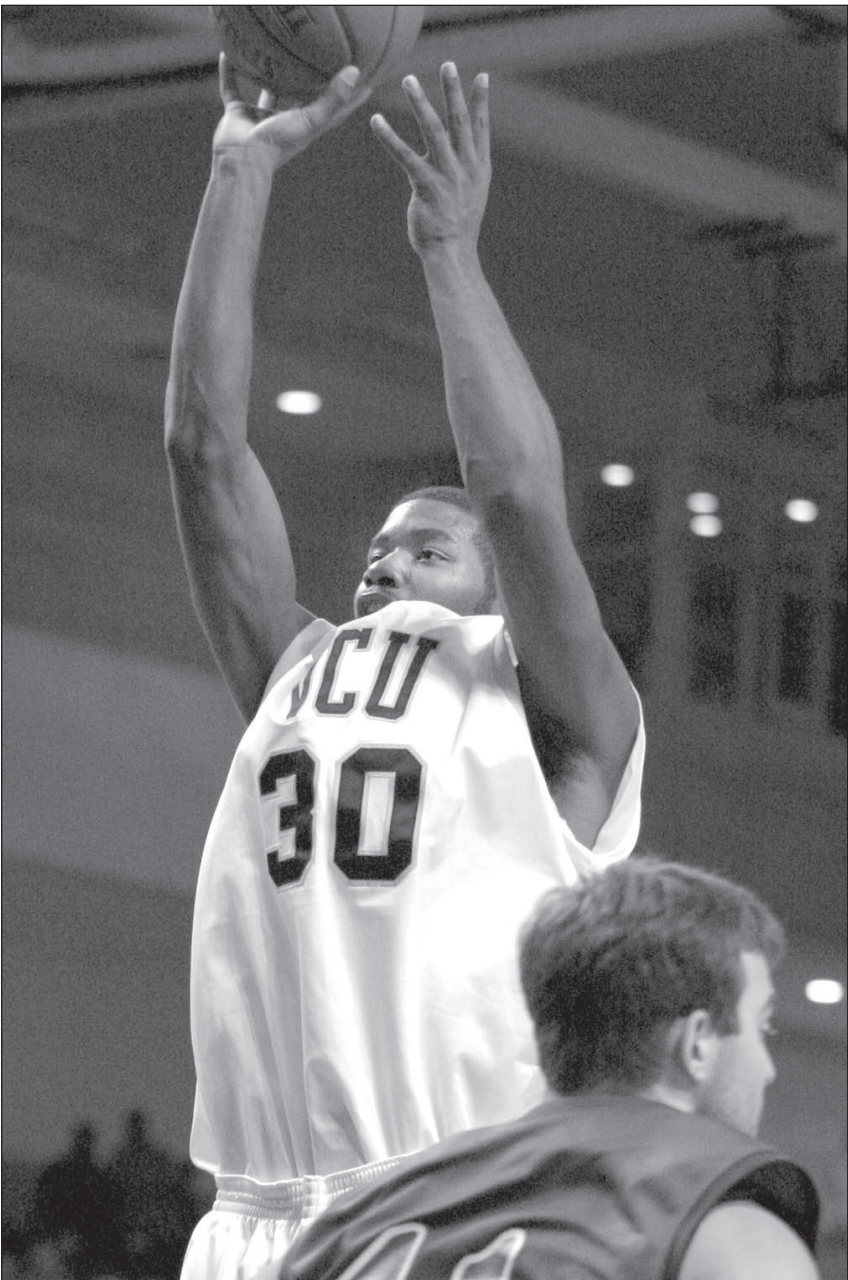
And finally when George hit a catch-and-shoot three to give the Rams a 66-64 lead with the clock ticking down from 11.1 seconds. Ingram took the inbound pass, streaked down the sideline until he was about five feet out and sent the game into overtime by hitting a running bank shot.

B.A. Walker's 10 points in overtime was the only thing that cooled down Ingram, who only took one shot in the extra period.

"We tried throwing different guys at him, and to be honest with you none of them really worked. He's a phenomenal player."

The Rams have to deal with another strong guard Thursday night in Winston-Salem. Preseason All-American point guard Chris Paul scored 25 points and dished out six assists in the Demon Deacons 97-76 win over George Washington. He had 22 points and seven assists last year when Wake edged VCU 79-78 in the first round of the CAA tournament.

This time around, Capel said, "We're a different team.



Calvin Roland (30) scored 10 points and grabbed 9 rebounds in his first game with VCU.

Pat Kane

They're kind of the same. They haven't lost anybody. We lost two really, really good players."

George, one of the teams returning leaders, had 16 points and six rebounds against Wake in last year's game, and said he's willing to do anything to win this year.

"It felt terrible to lose to them the first time," George said. "Now that we have another shot we're going to go at them just like we did the first time. This time we want a victory."

Game notes

- In his first NCAA basketball game, center Calvin Roland scored the Rams first six points, nailing a turnaround and a couple of baby hooks in the low post. He finished with 10 points and nine rebounds.
- Guard Alexander Harper finished with six points, going a perfect 5-for-5 from the free throw line. The Rams shot 82 percent from the stripe, their best effort since hitting 83 percent on March 3, 2003 against James Madison.
- Monday night's win upped VCU's record against American to 10-3, although the last meeting between the two teams wasn't as close. The Rams beat the Eagle 71-61 in front of 7,421 fans at the Alltel Pavilion in 2001.

NO	NAME	TOT-FG FG-FGA	3-PT FG-FGA	FT-FTA	TOT REBOUNDS	TP	A	TO	BLK	S	MIN
AMERICAN											
40	PATRICK OKPWAE	4-9	0-0	1-1	6	9	2	3	0	0	35
41	MATEJ CRESNIK	4-7	3-4	2-4	1	13	3	1	0	0	33
12	JASON THOMAS	3-6	0-3	2-2	2	8	0	5	0	1	30
20	ANDREW INGRAM	12-18	6-7	8-10	5	38	2	5	0	1	43
43	LINAS LIKAVICIUS	2-4	1-1	2-1	2	6	3	4	0	0	25
04	BRAYDEN BILLBE	0-1	0-0	0-0	2	0	0	0	0	0	6
14	RYAN GRHAM	0-0	0-0	0-0	1	0	4	1	0	1	20
15	RAIMONDA PETRAUSKAS	1-2	0-0	0-0	1	2	0	1	0	1	15
21	ARVYDAS EITUVICIUS	0-1	0-0	0-0	1	0	0	0	0	0	17
34	TRAVIS LAY	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
TEAM		5									
TOTALS		26-48	10-15	14-19	26	76	14	20	0	4	225
VCU											
21	NICK GEORGE	7-17	5-6	5-6	1	24	2	3	0	3	35
30	CALVIN ROLAND	4-7	0-1	2-4	9	10	0	2	3	0	32
20	B.A. WALKER	11-14	3-4	2-2	2	27	3	1	0	2	33
23	JESSE PELLOT-ROSA	2-10	1-5	0-0	5	5	4	1	0	2	35
25	ALEXANDER HARPER	1-1	0-0	5-5	3	7	1	1	0	3	29
01	RENARDO DIXON	0-3	0-1	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
05	JULIAN CAPEL	1-2	0-0	0-0	0	2	2	0	0	0	17
15	JAMAL SHULER	1-2	1-2	0-0	0	3	0	0	0	0	6
32	DREW JOHNSON	0-2	0-1	0-0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3
34	DERRICK REID	2-5	0-0	0-0	8	4	1	1	0	2	26
TEAM		1									
TOTALS		29-63	10-20	14-17	33	82	13	11	3	12	225

Game Ball



Pat Kane

Alexander Harper's steal with under a minute to go was clutch. So was Nick George's three-pointer with 11 seconds on the clock. But B.A. Walker's play for 45 minutes was consistent. The sophomore point guard was 3-of-4 shooting in the first half, he went basket-for-basket with American's Andre Ingram in the second half. Walker then scored 10 of VCU's 16 points in OT.

Spectrum

The Top Five

Associated Press

TELEVISION

1. "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation," CBS
 2. "CSI: Miami," CBS
 3. "Without a Trace," CBS
 4. "Survivor: Vanuatu," CBS
 5. "ER," NBC
- (From Nielsen Media Research)

FILM

1. "The Incredibles," Disney
 2. "The Polar Express," Warner Bros.
 3. "After the Sunset," New Line Cinema
 4. "Seed of Chucky," Focus Features
 5. "Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason," Universal Studios
- (From Exhibitor Relations Co.)

HOT FIVE

1. "My Boo," Usher and Alicia Keys
 2. "Drop It Like It's Hot," Snoop Dogg (feat. Pharrell) Doggystyle
 3. "Lose My Breath," Destiny's Child. Columbia
 4. "Over and Over," Nelly (feat. Tim McGraw). Curb
 5. "Goodies," Ciara (feat. Petey Pablo). Sho'nuff
- (From Billboard magazine)

ALBUMS

1. "Now 17," Various Artists. Sony BMG/Universal/EMI/Zomba/Capitol
 2. "eMOTIVE," A Perfect Circle. Virgin
 3. "Suit," Nelly. Derrty (Platinum)
 4. "Confessions," Usher. LaFace (Platinum)
 5. "Stardust ... The Great American Songbook," Rod Stewart
- (From Billboard magazine)

CONCERT TOURS

1. Prince
 2. Phil Collins
 3. Sting
 4. Bette Midler
 5. Metallica
- (From Pollstar)

VHS RENTALS

1. "The Day After Tomorrow," FoxVideo
 2. "White Chicks," Columbia TriStar Home Entertainment
 3. "Dawn of the Dead," Universal Studios Home Video
 4. "Van Helsing," Universal Studios Home Video
 5. "Garfield the Movie," FoxVideo
- (From Billboard magazine)

Los Angeles County recorder's office: Spears' wedding official

LOS ANGELES — Britney Spears and Kevin Federline have filed their marriage license with the county registrar's office, an agency spokeswoman said Tuesday.

The "Oops! ... I Did It Again" singer, 22, married Federline Sept. 18 in a Studio City home, but didn't immediately file the license with the county, raising questions about whether they were legally wed.

Kathy Tacawy, a county registrar's spokeswoman, confirmed the documents were filed in Los Angeles County within the 10-day legal window. She said the marriage was official, but declined to comment further and wouldn't say when the documents were filed.

A Spears' spokeswoman had previously said the couple had filed the marriage license, but county officials hadn't confirmed it.

Federline, 26, has said the delay in filing the paperwork was caused when the couple moved up their wedding date as

it leaked out that they planned to marry Oct. 16. Moving the date up a month, he said, didn't give their lawyers time to finish the prenuptial agreement.

In a recent posting on her Web site, Spears wrote: "This is the happiest I've ever been in my life. ... We are just settling into our new home and it is coming together perfectly.

"I'm redecorating a lot of things because when we decide to start a family, everything in it needs to be perfect!"

Her new album, "Britney Spears Greatest Hits: My Prerogative," was

released Nov. 9.

In January, Spears married childhood friend Jason Alexander in a surprise wedding in Las Vegas. That marriage was annulled 55 hours later.

Federline was previously involved with actress Shar Jackson of TV's "Moesha." They have two children — a 2-year-old and a newborn.

On the Net:
<http://www.britneyspears.com/>

Police search for rapper wanted in Vibe awards stabbing

RYAN PEARSON
Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES — Police were searching for rapper Young Buck in connection with a stabbing at the second Vibe Awards, an assault apparently sparked when Buck's musical mentor, Dr. Dre, was punched just before being handed a lifetime achievement award.

Buck fled the Santa Monica airport hangar, where the awards show was taped Monday night, police Lt. Frank Fabrega said in a statement. A warrant was being prepared alleging assault with a deadly weapon.

The incident was sparked as Snoop Dogg and Vibe magazine founder Quincy Jones were about to give Dre, whose real name is Andre Young, a lifetime achievement award. A man later identified as Jimmy James Johnson approached Dre, who was seated at a table in front of the stage, and appeared to ask for an autograph before punching the veteran hitmaker, police said.

Johnson was dragged away by security

staff, but then suffered a serious stab wound when he was attacked by a number of people, including Buck, whose real name is David Darnell Brown, according to police. He is signed to Dr. Dre's record label as part of the G-Unit clique, which was named best group by the music magazine.

"Brown is clearly depicted (on videotape) as holding a knife after the assault and is one of a number of fight participants that was pepper-sprayed by officers in their attempt to stop this fight," Police Chief James Butts told a news conference. "We're asking Mr. David Darnell Brown to surrender himself to police."

Johnson, 26, was in stable condition at a hospital.

"It is unfortunate that an event so many people worked very hard to create has been tainted by the actions of a few individuals," Kenard Gibbs, president of Vibe, said in a statement.

Many in the constantly feuding rap community speculated that longtime Dre antagonist Marion "Suge" Knight, who attended the awards, arranged for Dre to get punched. Suge and Dre started the

legendary Death Row record label together in the late 1980s, then had a bitter separation over money and the violence that has surrounded Knight during his 15 years in the music business.

Knight denied any involvement in the attack on Dre.

"One thing about me -- if I do something I'm (taking responsibility for it)," Knight told reporters after the show. "I'm not an idiot. See, an idiot would go out there and do stuff."

Buck, a native of Nashville, Tenn., is a member of 50 Cent's G-Unit posse. He released his debut solo album, "Straight Outta Ca\$hville," in August, which debuted at No. 3 on the Billboard charts.

Vibe wasn't the first hip-hop awards show to be interrupted by violence: The 2000 Source Awards were marred by fights — and then got their highest TV ratings ever.

Taping continued after the Vibe fracas was squelched Monday night. The show, broadcast Tuesday night on UPN, was seamlessly edited to remove any trace of the attack.

Happenings

Nov. 18 through Nov. 20

Thursday, Nov. 18

Tapas and rock music, what better combination is there? Every Thursday is **Hard Rock Night** at Emilio's Tapas Bar. Cost is \$5 or \$3 with a VCU ID. 9 p.m. 1847 W. Broad St. For more information call 359-1224.

Friday, Nov. 19

His name is Tony Montana and he'd like to introduce you to his little friend. Check out **"Scarface"** in the University Student Commons Theater. 7 p.m. Free with student ID.

Saturday, Nov. 20

Spend your evening on a high note. Join **OperaVCU** as students perform selected scenes from various operas. 7:30 p.m. W. E. Singleton Center for Performing Arts in the Sonia Vlahcevic Concert Hall. Free.

Spectrum



Like being entertained??

The Commonwealth Times is looking for a Spectrum editor. For more information, contact Devon Marrow at 828-1058.

EDITORIALS & LETTERS

OPINION IN BRIEF

Nation/World

Bush cabinet shuffle

At a time when our president campaigned on staying the course, and our nation needs stability more than ever to stay strong against new threats, a steady exodus of members of the Bush administration's cabinet doesn't bode well for the immediate future. Even at the CIA, where the president wants to enact major reforms, senior-level officials are resigning in protest.

Two key cabinet members, Secretary of State and Attorney General, have been replaced with Bush confidants Condoleezza Rice and Alberto Gonzales, assuming they win Senate confirmation.

Let us hope that the new administration does not become a group of yes-men who will put loyalty to the president ahead of what's best for the country.

Virginia

Red light blues

The red-light cameras in place throughout Virginia to crack down on red light runners are in jeopardy of being taken down. The law that allowed them to be put in place is set to expire in July of next year, and on Monday a bill in the Virginia legislature to renew the law was killed in committee.

Red light cameras are a powerful tool to catch those who would deliberately flaunt the law, but like any tool must be used prudently. Unfortunately, too many innocent bystanders are caught in the cameras' net.

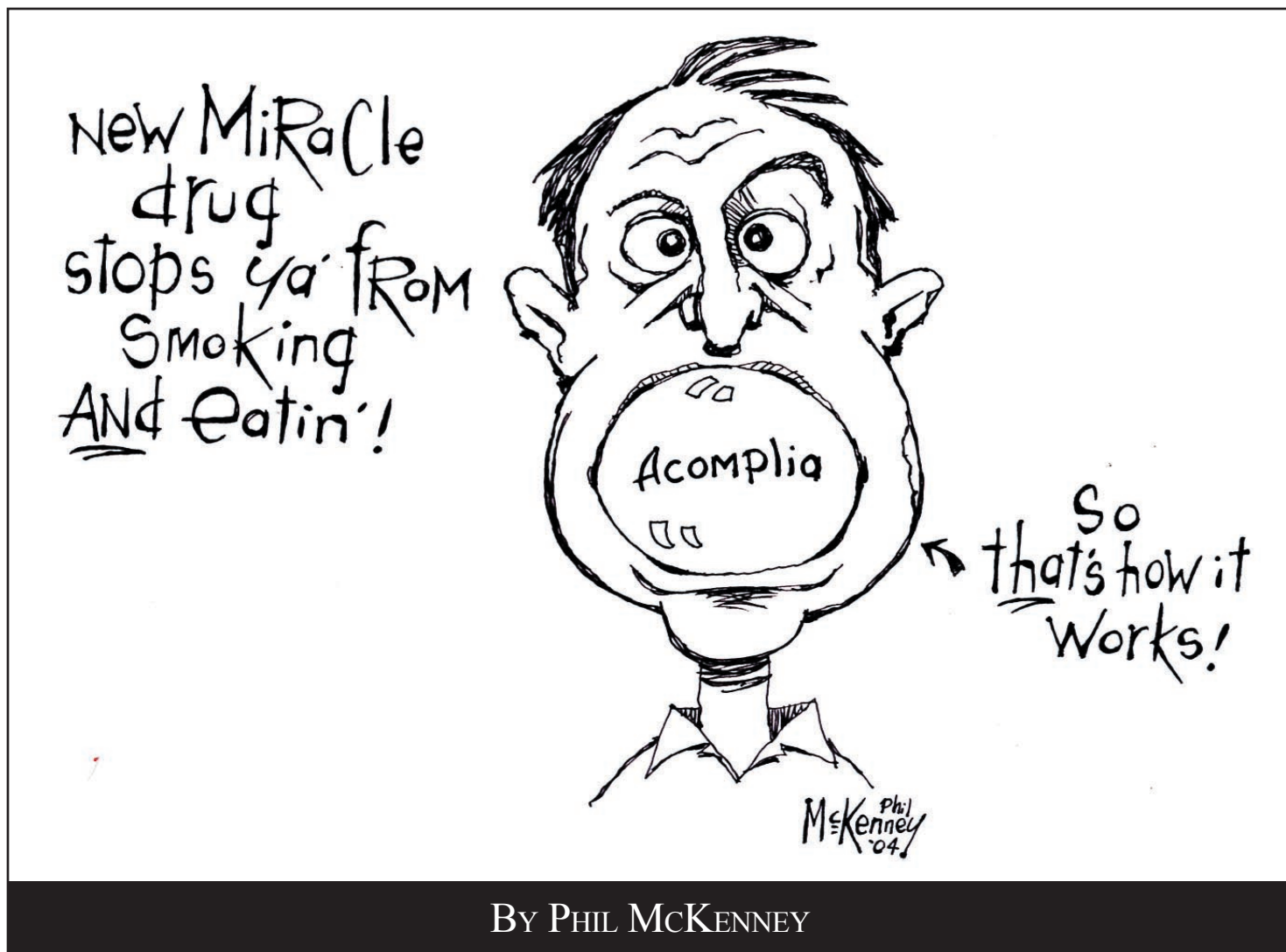
Perhaps a more fair combination of lengthened yellow lights and a delayed snapshot would help capture the most egregious violations of the law without needlessly punishing ordinary citizens who may have been guilty of simply misjudging the timing of the light.

Richmond

Lower fares at RIC

Richmond's international airport got a boost on Tuesday when, according to the Richmond Times-Dispatch, "Delta Air Lines announced that it has lowered fares by up to 57 percent in nine key markets, including New York and Atlanta." Walk-up fares – tickets purchased without a reservation – saw the biggest discounts, while "leisure fares" made with 14-day advance purchase and requiring a weekend stay, will be reduced in "selected popular markets."

Walk-up fares mainly benefit business travelers who often have to travel on short notice. Students going home for break, on the other hand, need more access to lower



BY PHIL MCKENNEY

fares. The only long-term solution to lowering fares at RIC will be to attract a low-fare airline to provide real competition.

Of course, there's always Amtrak and Greyhound.

VCU

Wireless needs improvement

The wireless access on the ground floor of Shafer Dining Center is a welcome addition

to the school's wireless network, providing students with an opportunity to find time to study while grabbing a bite to eat at the campus's new dining facilities. However, there remains a noted lack of wireless access in and around the Student Commons, as well as several classrooms, lecture halls and most dorm rooms.

The university should review its security procedures and allow students to log in without a separate download, both on wired and wireless network connections around campus. The university should also work to expand wireless access throughout the buildings where it exists, in public areas and student housing.

The Commonwealth TIMES

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We want to hear from you!



Send your comments and letters to
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Op/Ed

Red Light, Green Light

Traffic cameras help enforce safe driving habits

TERRY BURTON
Op/Ed Writer

Red lights. We've all been tempted to run them at one point or another in our time behind the wheel. Perhaps we were running late for class, or wanted to get to the store before it closed, or were just plain tired of being stuck behind that moron who left his turn signal on. For the most part, though, we choose to obey the law and stop because we're aware that the penalties if we don't aren't that fun.

Despite the fact that the potential costs of running a red light far exceed the rewards, some individuals continue to do so. In certain areas, the problem of people running red lights was extreme enough that local authorities experimented with placing cameras at intersections to snap a photo of the vehicle and license plate so that the owner could be ticketed at a later time for the infraction of the law.

This experiment, in Virginia anyway, is about to come to an end. As reported by the Washington Post on Tuesday, "Bills that would have allowed some Virginia communities to keep red-light cameras at intersections died in a House of Delegates Committee Monday, jeopardizing the state's decade-long experiment with the technology."

While this technology was well-received by the law enforcement community, its opponents raise the issue that these cameras constitute an invasion of privacy and, according to the Post, "many say that there are alternatives that are just as effective, such as extending the length of yellow lights and placing unmanned police cars at intersections to slow motorists."

I fully believe in an individual's right to privacy and that we shouldn't have to worry about "Big Brother" peering into every aspect of our lives. However, there are certain times when there should be a decreased expectation of that right to privacy, and driving on public thoroughfares is one of them.

Speeding through a red light is not a decision that only affects the driver of the speeding vehicle, but it puts the lives of other individuals at potential risk as well. The right to get where we're going as quickly as we like needs to be weighed against the right of others to be secure in the assumption that if they are obeying the laws, they are not going to suffer physical or financial injury.

Furthermore, part of the experience of learning to drive includes learning the laws of the road. Every licensed driver, even those without driver's licenses, are aware of the fact that it is against the law to run a red light.

Whether they think the law is important or not is im-

material. The fact of the matter is that the decision to break the law is not protected by a right to privacy. I feel that the House of Delegates has dropped the ball on this issue in not extending the length of time that the cameras will be used, as they are in place not to spy on drivers, but to help enforce the law and protect the lives of everyone who gets behind the wheel.

As for the alternatives that opponents feel would be as effective, I'm all for extending the time of yellow lights. I'm not a perfect driver myself, nor do I claim to be. There have been a few times when I've scraped through on the last second of a yellow light and performed a double-take just to make sure the police didn't have a different view of my maneuver than I did.

However, placing an unmanned police car at intersections just to psych potential red light runners into not running the light wouldn't necessarily work. For one thing, there are those who wouldn't care if the cop was there to begin with, and their belief that it's cool to run the light may be reinforced if the unmanned car didn't begin to chase them down.

For another, in many areas police forces are understaffed and overburdened. Taking a car out of commission for the sole purpose of trying to intimidate people into obeying the traffic laws would be a waste of taxpayer money.

While there will always be those who feel that the laws don't apply to them, the camera lights at least increase the chances that the law would affect everyone who chooses to run a red light equally. Losing the cameras will increase the danger faced by law-abiding drivers by taking away a visible deterrent to light-running behavior.





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