

The Commonwealth Times

Free

The Independent Student Press of Virginia Commonwealth University Vol. 42 No. 5 Monday, February 7, 2005

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House party

Students rock as Rams roll Tigers for homecoming / Page 8

News

VCU class forms partnership
with local business. / **Page 4**

Editorials & Letters

American Idol: self-esteem isn't
everything. / **Page 11**

Spectrum

The Roots, Legend hit right
notes: Q&A with John Legend.
/ **Page 9**

WEIRD NEWS

CALENDAR

FEB. 7 THROUGH FEB. 9

Monday, Feb. 7	Tuesday, Feb. 8	Wednesday, Feb. 9
Looking for a way to help others in your community? VCU's chapter of the NAACP is sponsoring a blood drive in the Commonwealth B ballroom of the University Student Commons from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.. For more details contact Tiffany Townsend at 692-4723.	The University Career Center kicks off its Spring Career Development Conference with an etiquette seminar from 4 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Students are asked to dress in business casual attire and to register for this seminar with Career Connections located in the Career Center of the University Student Commons. Seating is limited. Call Alicia Aroche at 827-3686 for more details.	Learn how to play Texas Hold'em as Student Affairs sponsors a Texas Hold'em learn to play night at 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. at the Stuart C. Siegel Center. Once you learn the basics, get ready for a tournament that will take place on Feb. 16. Contact Constantine Alexakos at 827-0315 for more details.

CAMPUS FORECAST



Monday
55/39



Tuesday
58/44



Wednesday
64/36



Thursday
51/28

Correction

In the Thursday, Feb. 3 issue, the title and author of the comic "One Life" by Kenneth Seward was incorrectly identified as "Post Modernity Now" by Lyz Holder. The CT regrets this error.

Compiled from wire reports

Bed behavior

A theater in Chile launched a play that invites members of the audience to become part of the act – by climbing in a bed big enough for 40 members plus the actors. The randomly selected spectators are required to wear blindfolds during the entirety of the hour-long production. During that time, members of the theater group perform different experiences – including playing different sounds, whispering in ears, touching their bodies with warm towels and massaging them with oils – in an attempt to get emotional reactions from the participants. A spokesman for Aire Theater Company said people recounted the emergence of long lost memories.

Gravity defying granny

Helen Koton, 79, was walking across a drawbridge in Hallandale Beach, Florida when the operator decided to raise the bridge without asking her. She clung to the railing and her life as the bridge rose 100 feet in the air over a canal, leaving her purse to slide down and snag around her ankle. Drivers waiting to cross the chasm noticed the retired teacher using her eraser toughened hands to hang on and alerted the bridge operator. Koton received only minor bruises to her face and nose as a result of jumping down while the bridge was still being lowered.

Chairs grow on trees

A Chinese man recently patented a technique for growing chairs. The man, from the Liaoning province, molds the branches

of elm trees into shape while they're still growing. He uses elm because the wood is more pliant and doesn't snap as easily as other trees. He said it takes about five years to grow – from sapling to finishes product – and requires trimming and guiding to make a product worth sitting in and he hopes one day the whole world will grow their chairs instead of buying them in stores.

Arrest me

Prisoners in a Mexican maximum-security prison are complaining recently after the loss of several privileges – including sex and pizza. An investigation at La Palma Prison near Mexico City revealed a host of other illegal benefits – such as the use of flat screen TVs and cell phones. Now that the benefits are gone, prisoners complain that they are being treated like dogs, and even went so far as to take out an ad in La Reforma – one of Mexico's leading newspapers – complaining about their situation and appealing to Mexican President Vincent Fox to right the wrongs, restore their old privileges and to cease what they called the inhuman way there were being treated.

Like a fish needs a bicycle

In a recent study, 10 out of 11 women who used a electronic implant named Orgasmatron – named after a machine in the 1968 Jane Fonda movie Barbarella – reported increased feelings of sexual pleasure. Dr. Stuart Meloy, the American pain consultant who invented the device, said that while this was only the first research group, he thinks his device has found success. Test subject Mary Clegg, 52, reported that during her first usage the sensation caused her leg to fly into the air. The device

is implanted in the buttocks, costs about \$18,000 and uses a remote control to send tiny pulses of electricity through the spinal nerves to cause orgasm. Melroy originally invented the device to ease back pain, but became aware of the positive side effect when a patient suggested he teach her husband to perform like the implants.

Feeling froggy?

Police officers pulling over truck drivers violating traffic laws in the Indian state of Bihar are starting to hand out humiliating punishments instead of a day in court. For the most popular punishment – leapfrog – offenders must squat on their haunches, hold their ears and hop for about a third of a mile and chant the name of their favorite political leader while they bounce.

Leap of faith

Ashriward Ayre and Bharti Patel have decided to share their love for each other and their love for mountaineering with friends by combining the two and having a wedding ceremony at 2,000 feet. Ropes between Duke's Nose and Duchess Peak at Lonavala, India will suspend the couple as they move toward each other – a Hindu priest suspended by another rope will deliver the 45-minute ceremony. Their 150 guests will witness the couple tie the knot from a plateau on Duke's Nose. Ayre said he rappelled down Duke's Nose three years ago and remembers the marvelous feeling. He said he chose the site because he wanted the marriage to be at a place where everyone else in the world will look up to them.

Front cover photo by
Pat Kane.

The Commonwealth TIMES

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NEWS

SGA's revised constitution approved

Vice president takes on new role in student government

HOLLY HOBBS
Staff Writer

Concerns about structural changes in the Student Government Association's new constitution – the subject of much debate in the student government – echoed within the senate and the VCU community during the fall semester.

In its early stages of approval by the Student Senate, many of the then 23 senators wanted to delay a decision until the SGA had a full 50-member Senate after the midterm Senate elections that occurred Oct. 5-7.

Saying "No document is perfect," President Zmarak Khan and supporters of the constitution said the SGA was ready to move forward into the next stages of approval, starting with the approval of the students.

The Senate approved the constitution 16-0-6, allowing it to appear on the October midterm Senate election ballot. More than 1,000 students voted in the October elections, but not all students chose to vote on the constitution. The document was approved 450-43.

The SGA received final approval of the Constitution Revisions on Dec. 2.

Structural changes in the new constitution include: the appointment of the vice president to president of the senate, the extension of powers granted to the president, the switch from a steering committee to a joint branch committee and the creation of a judicial board.

Already transitioning to the new constitution, Senate Chairman Matthew Haynes, who was elected in the fall, and former Senate Assistant Speaker Daniel Plaugher, questioned the role of the SGA's vice president within the new constitution.

Formerly, senators held the positions of a non-voting speaker and assistant speaker. Now, the speaker is the vice president and the senate has a chairman and assistant chairman holding voting-leadership positions.

"The largest concern that has been presented to me is that the executive branch could say who speaks," Haynes said.

Plaugher agreed, saying, "My one concern is a conflict of interest by having the vice president preside over the senate."

In response to the Monday, Nov. 29, article "Some senators wary of SGA leadership changes" that quoted senators Plaugher's and Haynes' concerns, SGA Vice President Edward O'Leary wrote a

letter to the editor saying he was surprised at the senators' comments.

"(The) placement of the vice president as the president of the senate mirrors the structure of the government of the United States," he said in a Dec. 2 letter published in The Commonwealth Times.

"The student government's new constitution was drafted with the Constitution of the United States in mind," O'Leary said. "I hope that he (Plaugher) would be proud to have our student government modeled after such exceptional and proven institutions (the Virginia and U.S. governments)."

The SGA constitution was based on Virginia Tech's and other universities' student government constitutions, said Parliamentarian Ali Khan, who was a member of last year's constitution draft committee. O'Leary was not a member of the constitution draft committee or this year's constitution revision committee.

Attorney Robert Dybing, director of the firm Thompson and McMullan P.C. and a graduate law professor at VCU, also disagrees with O'Leary's perception of what model the SGA used when writing its new constitution.

"No, they did not base it on the U.S. Constitution," he said. "It doesn't look like anything I see in the U.S. Constitution. They can say they did, (but) they could have just as easily said it was based on Julia Child's cookbook."

Dybing continued by saying he did not see the executive branch as having significant power over legislation by allowing the vice president to hold the position of senate speaker in the new constitution. The reverse might happen, he added, explaining that the president might want to keep an eye on the senate's abilities to limit the executive's powers.

"I'm confused procedurally (about whether the bylaws are a part of the new constitution)," he said. "It's confusing to me to see a structural document like a constitution with bylaws attached to it."

The new constitution grants the president few powers, like the power to appoint justices. Most powers given to the president are listed in the bylaws, which require a two-thirds vote by the senate to be amended. These powers include: the power to serve as chief spokesperson for the student body, to recommend consideration of resolutions or bills that he or she judges necessary and expedient and the power to appoint a chief of staff to serve as executive assistant to the SGA president.

Sen. Ali Faruk, a member of the revision committee, said he wasn't sure whether the bylaws were a part of the new constitution or a secondary document.

Dybing, however, said this inclusion could make all the difference.

"Can powers of the president be changed by a bylaw amendment rather than a constitutional amendment (which requires a student referendum as well as two-thirds of the senate's approval)?" Dybing said. "To the extent that there are powers in the bylaws set forth, it would seem to me that they could easily change the president's role."

If the senate wanted to go after the president and wipe out most of his powers, Dybing said it could do so easily if the bylaws are a secondary document to the constitution.

Another change causing argument is the SGA's switch from a Senate Steering Committee to a joint committee.

The old constitution places a committee,

SGA continued to page 4

Changing Gears

Nicole Footen moves from mass communication to social work

MAGGIE SOUZA
Staff Writer

Since the beginning of last semester, students in the Raleigh Building who had questions regarding the School of Social Work housed there probably had to wait a little longer than usual to find an answer.

After all, they didn't have a director of student services – one of the key positions in providing student assistance.

That is, until Nicole Footen filled the position Jan. 3.

Whether supplying them with information about admissions to the Master of Social Work (M.S.W.) Program or securing a meeting place for one of their student associations, now social work majors have someone devoted entirely to helping them again.

Footen, who earned her bachelor's degree in anthropology as well as her M.S.W. from West Virginia University, was the coordinator of student services for VCU's School of Mass Communications from 2001 until the end of last semester. While helping VCU students, she has also been working towards a Ph.D. in public policy.

FOOTEN continued to page 5



News

Clothing store, fashion illustration class come together

CRAIG CARPER
Staff Writer

A local storeowner and some VCU fashion design students had a unique opportunity this semester.

Charles Brown, the owner of campus-based clothing store Urban Traders formed a partnership with VCU professor Linda Lee's fashion illustration class allowing the students to showcase their work while also getting some notable exposure for his store.

The collaboration started out simply.

"Professor Lee just happened to walk in here one day and she was admiring the store," Brown said. "We started talking. When she said fashion design that just struck a bell in my head and I said, 'First of all welcome to VCU. If there's any kind of project or collaboration that Urban Traders and the VCU Fashion Department could work together on, just let me know.'"

Lee's idea was a hip-hop based concept that would allow students to get some real world experience designing their own line of clothing for a specific retail outlet.

The students were instructed to visit the store and find inspiration from specific pieces and incorporate these ideas into their own designs.

For students like Rebecca Marks, a junior from professor Lee's class, this was a new experience and a bit strange at first.

"It was different for me because I've never gone into a store and been told to take something from that store," Marks said. "Usually we have to think of things on our own."

Marks said that this was experience gave her insight into designing in the real world.

"When we go into the industry that's really what it's all about," she said. "I just kind of got ideas and I tried to take things that I wasn't normally used to designing. My inspiration was mostly the accessories."

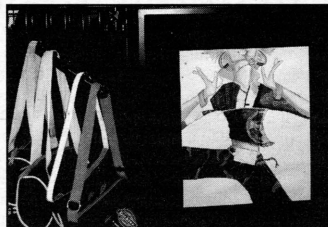
This was also senior Zachery McGee's first attempt at designing for a specific client.

"It was different because you actually had someone who was going to weigh in on what you did," McGee said.

"It was more of a challenge because you had to not only consider what you like but also (the client) as well."

McGee said Lee made sure that the students considered more than just aesthetics when designing the clothes.

"She definitely puts an emphasis on fabrics and how



it moves," McGee said. "With the project that we did I really thought a lot about how the clothing would move on someone who was dancing. It couldn't be skintight but at the same time someone who was wearing it might want it to be sexy but still be able to dance."

After putting their concepts together, the students narrowed down their ideas to three drawings. They then had to create a pitch using three boards as visual aids.

"We had a mood board, a flat and a fabric board, and then we had our three drawings," McGee said.

"The mood board is kind of your inspiration," McGee said. "It conveys what you want your line to say, what you want your clothing to say."

"From there we also had to do the flats. Flats," McGee said, "are when you actually take the clothing and draw them as you would see them everyday, without someone wearing them. It's so you can see the fine detail."

"We also had a fabric board," McGee said, "...so they know whether they like the material or whether it's too heavy. We usually do basic 3 x 3 squares and they can get the basic feel of it and pull it if they need to, to see how it stretches and moves."

After watching the student's presentations Lee and Brown had to choose the best pieces, which Brown would display in his store for three weeks.

Brown said that the drawings got a lot of attention while on display.

"People wanted to buy some of the drawings," Brown said, "and I said 'No they aren't for sale.' I thought all the works were great. I know they had to put a lot of time and energy and their minds to work."

McGee, who had two of his drawings selected, was excited about the exhibit.

"To have that opportunity to display it in the store," McGee said, "we thought it was a big deal. Someone finally got to see our work outside of it being in the fashion department. I think that on some level we got a better understanding of what it is to run a store."

Learning how to adopt ideas made an impression on Marks.

"I think that we've gotten a better grasp of how fashion works as it sifts down through the different levels money wise," she said, "because usually it starts out at the designer level which is really, really expensive and very few people can afford it and then what happens is you alter it to make it more cost efficient."

Even Brown was able to learn something new from the experience. He has been in the merchandising part of the business for 25 years but has had little experience with the design aspect.

"I learned how fashion goes from telling someone, to them putting it on paper and then you can go to them and say 'Hm that's interesting, can you do this or do that?'" he said. "So I learned if Urban Traders ever wanted to put out their own line, how to start it and find the right people – the bright people."

McGee is appreciative of the efforts his professor put into the project.

"I think Ms. Lee has definitely brought something different," he said. "A different level of style and a different level of desire as far as our work is concerned, and I think she brings a realistic view of what can be expected in the industry."

SGA *continued from page 3*

composed of three members of the executive branch and 11 senators in charge of steering the direction of senate meetings. Within the new constitution, the SGA Joint Committee was established to coordinate and communicate among the branches. It seats three executive members, two senators and two justices.

Faruk said the joint committee won't have the same power to prioritize legislation as the steering committee.

"As far as I know, I don't think the joint committee has anything to do with legislation," Faruk said, "but the executive branch has more people on the joint committee than anyone else."

The role of the joint committee is "yet to be seen," said Tim Reed, director of University Student Commons and Activities and senior adviser to the Monroe Park Campus SGA.

"The perception that (the joint committee won't be able to prioritize legislation)

won't happen now with the joint committee," he said. "I don't see that. When I read this constitution I think there's just as many ways to block something from getting to the senate as there was before. In fact there might be more."

The flaw in logic, Reed said, is that SGA members don't think the committee will do that much.

"The assumption that this committee won't end up doing much of the work to make sure everybody else is getting stuff done, I think, is fallacy," he said.

Reed said it could be very likely that the executive branch, which has more members in the joint committee plan, could have a say in senate legislation.

The interpretation of these changes and the additions, Dybing said, rely on two things: who is going to interpret the constitution and how closely the SGA intends on following its constitution. Some organizations rely on precedent and

tradition rather than constitution.

"I just don't know how it's going to work in practice," Dybing said.

The SGA wanted to follow the guidelines of the constitution more closely than before.

"That's our intention," Faruk said.

To interpret these changes the SGA added a judicial board composed of four justices and one chief justice. A fifth justice will be appointed no later than next Monday. Among those approved Monday, Dec. 6 for appointment by the senate was Sen. Ali Faruk to head the judicial board.

"I really had a vision as the constitution was being revised that I could see where I wanted it to go and what role (it would play)," Faruk said, while questioned by the senate.

Another senator questioned Faruk's statement.

"You said you were involved in writ-

ing the constitution, and you just said you had a vision for the constitution. Do you think that could affect your ability to remain unbiased, because if you already have preset notions on what the constitution means and what is implied," he said. "can you honestly say that if anyone interprets it differently that you can come from outside? The rest of the candidates, they didn't write it so they are looking at it...from the outside."

Faruk responded by saying no one is unbiased, but he wouldn't go out of his way to push for a decision that was obviously not meant by the constitution.

The reason the old constitution was redrafted was it had "some pretty obvious authority holes," Faruk said.

Dybing disagrees.

"I don't see any controls in the (new) constitution itself," he said. "I don't know what the old holes were. I don't know why they redrafted the whole thing."

CLASSIFIEDS

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ADOPTION

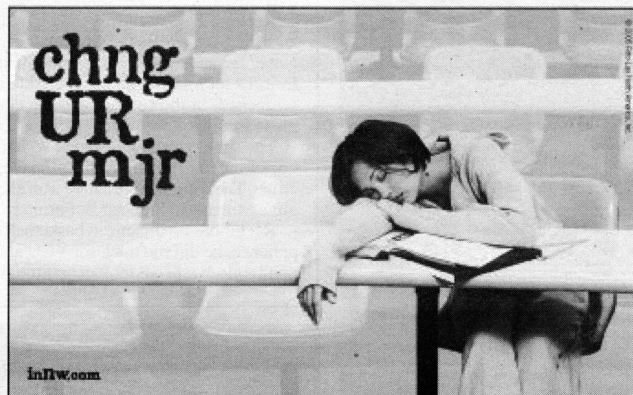
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FOOTEN *continued from page 3*

"I do know that they haven't had a person in that position for (fall) semester, which has probably made things pretty difficult for the students," Footen said. "My guess is that efforts are going to really have to be stepped up."

Footen said her new position in VCU's School of Social Work will help her move closer to what she eventually wants to do.

"The director of student services position for the School of Social Work is probably a little better fit for me (than my previous position) for my future plans and goals," Footen said.

"Eventually, I want to go into teaching at the university level, and I'm also interested in administration. This position gives me the opportunity to get some teaching experience," said Footen, who worked as a program administrator at the Embassy of United Arab Emirates in Washington, D.C., before coming to VCU.

Frank Baskind, dean of the School of Social Work, said some of Footen's main duties include working with students to bring them together; providing support and guidance to the leaders of the different student organizations, assisting with admissions, recruitment and retention of students and identifying services that students require from the school and the university.

Footen acts as "the point of contact for students," Baskind said.

Baskind also said that now with Footen working for the School of Social Work, "we have someone in the school who will understand their needs and issues and will be

able to articulate and advocate for them."

Second-year M.S.W. student Allison Rothschild is one of the co-chairpersons for the M.S.W. Student Organization. This group organized many different events last semester ranging from brown-bag lunch sessions for faculty and students to fundraisers for various service projects.

"Although we lost a valuable asset in former Director of Student Services Randi Buerlein," said Rothschild in an e-mail interview, "we are excited to work alongside Ms. Footen. We are hopeful that we will work together to develop more ideas and to achieve even more (this) semester."

Ann Nichols-Casebolt, the associate dean of social work and the person to whom Footen reports, assumed some of the student service responsibilities when Buerlein left.

Footen, she said, "will assume the day-to-day work involved directly with students, primarily our undergraduate students and our master students, not so much our doctoral students."

Last semester, Nichols-Casebolt and Baskind, along with other faculty members, worked together to provide the student organizations with staff support.

"I pretty much acted as the interim director of student services," Nichols-Casebolt said, "and then myself and the director of the M.S.W. program helped the students whose advisers weren't around. We (are) glad to have Nicole here to be able to help us out, particularly now that we're entering the busy season with admissions."

Footen said many of her new responsibilities parallel those she had in the School of Mass Communications. For instance, she works again with prospective students, has an advising load and handles graduation applications. She even uses much of the same software that she did before.

"A lot of it's going to be the same but in a different place," Footen said. "Any time you have to learn a new job, there's always a learning curve so it takes like a year to learn a new job, and it's going to be a completely different student population, so the students are going to be different from the mass communications students."

Nichols-Casebolt said she will work with Footen to familiarize her with the particular social work programs here, "but she's got a master's in social work and the curriculum for a M.S.W. is pretty much the same across the country, so that will be helpful to us."

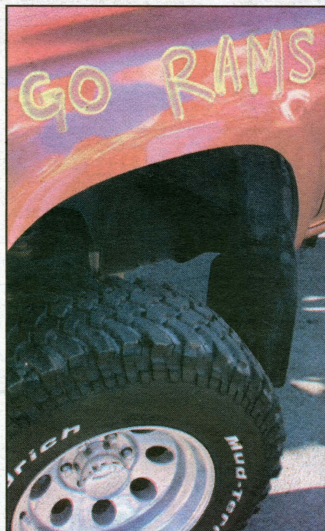
"The advantage of having someone like Nicole come here is that she's already very familiar with VCU," Nichols-Casebolt said. "She's familiar with accessing student records on the student information system. She's familiar with how students register, and the scheduling and that kind of stuff."

Footen said that while she will miss those in the School of Mass Communications, she looks forward to meeting new people – both faculty and students.

"I'm going to be representing the School of Social Work, which I feel has a lot of value," she said. "Social workers are necessary in our community."

GOLD RUSH

2005 VCU Homecoming photographs by Pat Kane



Fraternal organizations rolled out in their decorated cars and trucks (above) to the Chill n Grill.



2005 VCU Homecoming Queen Ashley Jones (above) and King Ronald Young (left) react to the announcements of their victories.



John Legend (above) performs at the Siegel Center.

Fan cashes in at halftime

JULIAN BENBOW
Sports Editor

Everything was going in the basket on Saturday night.

And that includes the nothing-but-nylon shot that Kevin Rector hit from a cozy recliner during halftime at VCU's win over Towson.

Rector, a 22-year-old psychology major, was the Stephen B. Furniture fan of the game. He and a bunch of his frat buddies from Delta Iota Kappa sat courtside and crunched on the recliner and the couch made for four at the most.

The shot, which Rector took with textbook form rather than the typical heave, hit all net. The King George native won a \$250 gift certificate to Stephen B. Furniture.

Rector has no organized basketball experience, he did run track for VCU at one point and now spends most of his time play-

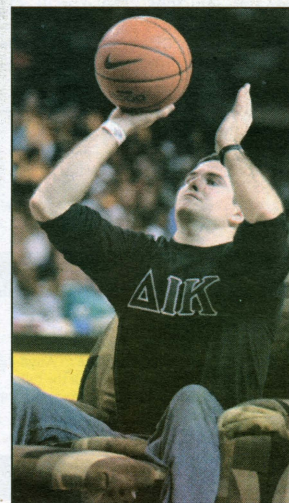
ing intramural soccer for with Annonsem FC, which he and all his friends courtside will tell you is the four-time undefeated champion of IM soccer.

Rector said the shot had more to do with his natural athletic ability and the fact that he had his friends backing him up the whole way. So he wasn't surprised at all when it fell through.

"I knew I was going to make it from the time I went out there," he said "I got the friends. They supported me, like, 'You're not going to miss it.' It's all about my friends."

As for the celebration--the finger pointing to the sky, the spinning on his back around mid-court right on top of the Rams logo until he lost his shoe—he said that since he knew he was going to make the shot, he knew how he was planning to show off.

"It was in the bag," he said.



Kevin Rector netted a shot.



GOLD RUSH



The Roots (above) played a live concert at the Siegel Center Friday night after a performance by John Legend.

Revelers at the Chill n Grill (left) get ready to go to the VCU-Towson men's basketball game Saturday.



Advertisement



SPORTS

Upcoming Sports
EVENTS

Men's basketball

Feb. 9: VCU at Drexel in Philadelphia, Pa. at 7 p.m.

Feb. 12: VCU at Old Dominion in Norfolk, Va. at 4 p.m.

Women's basketball

Feb. 11: VCU vs. Towson at the Stuart C. Siegel Center at 7 p.m.

Feb. 13: VCU at Delaware in Newark, Del. 4 p.m.

Men's tennis

Feb. 11: VCU at Wake Forest in Winston-Salem, N.C. at 5 p.m.

Feb. 12: VCU at Minnesota in Winston-Salem, N.C. at 2 p.m.

Women's tennis

Feb. 13: VCU vs. Old Dominion at the Thalhimer Tennis Center 11 a.m.

Feb. 19: VCU at Penn in Philadelphia, Pa.

Men's track and field

Feb. 11-12: Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Va.

Feb. 11-12: Christopher Newport in Newport News, Va.

Women's track and field

Feb. 11-12: Virginia Tech in Blacksburg

Feb. 19: George Mason in Fairfax, Va.

Baseball

Feb. 12: VCU vs. St. Joseph's in Petersburg, Va. at 2 p.m.

Feb. 13: VCU vs. St. Joseph's in Petersburg, Va. 1 p.m.

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

Home
boys

5 Rams reach double figures in homecoming blowout

JULIAN BENBOW
Sports Editor

The three-pointer from the top of the key by Jesse Pellot-Rosa, a floater by Michael Doles as he cut through the lane and a two-handed flush by Ricardo "Slim" Dixon.

They all fell.

So did another 3 by Doles on the wing, another two-hander by Dixon (with Towson forward Lawrence Hamm caught underneath) and another long jumper from Pellot-Rosa. Even big man Calvin Roland got in on the action, hitting a rangy jump shot from the baseline that capped a 21-8 run and official started VCU's rout of Towson on homecoming.

The Rams were dropping baskets all night from all over the court, scoring a season-high 84 points in a blowout win over Towson.

Five Rams reached double-digits point totals in Saturday night's win 84-51 win over the Tigers. VCU shot 49.2 percent from the field and 36.4 percent from three-point range and all but two players made a mark in the scoring column for the Rams.

Shots weren't dropping the same way for the Tigers, who lost their 24th straight road game and their sixth straight contest in the Colonial Athletic Association.

The Tigers (2-10 CAA, 5-17) shot 30 percent from the field, 20 percent from beyond the arc and missed all six of second-half 3-pointers.

The Rams (8-4, 12-9) frustrated Tigers coach Pat Kennedy, who's had a rough introduction to CAA play in his first season. Kennedy picked up a technical foul in the second half for arguing a foul as the game was getting out of hand.

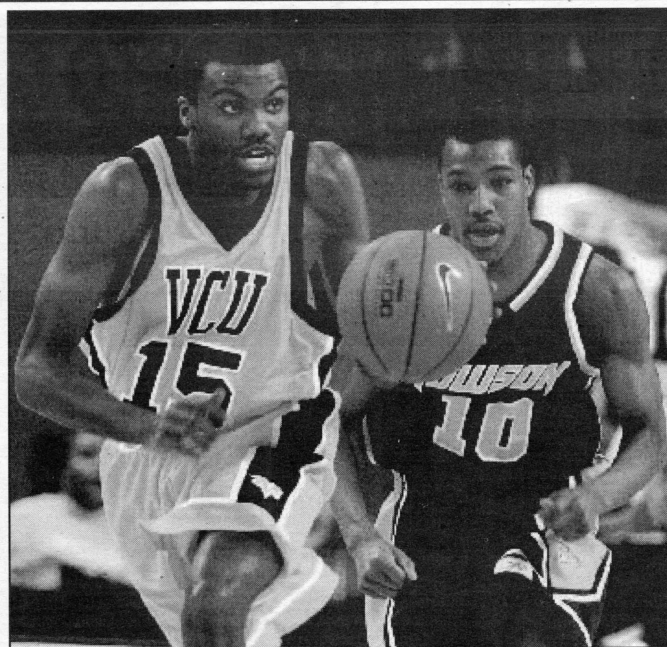
"We've lost a lot of games in a row," Kennedy said. "When you're losing and you're not getting frustrated there's something wrong with you. It's like you're accepting the losing."

VCU also got in the head of Towson's leading scorer Mike Green, who came into the game averaging 12.6 points, by holding him to 9 points on 3-of-17 shooting. Green missed all five of his shots from behind the arc, and his off night was capped by being stuffed by Pellot-Rosa after Green tried to put him on a street.

"He was doing all this dribbling and he wasn't going (anywhere)," Pellot-Rosa said. "I was just trying to stay in front of him."

Defense hasn't been a concern recently for VCU, which is holding CAA competition to 63.5 points per game—the third stingiest clip in the conference. But after Wednesday's loss to Hofstra, the Rams were looking to improve their attack.

They did, posting their fourth 80-point performance of the season, and the homecoming crowd of 6,986 fans at the Stuart C. Siegel Center, Doles said, may have had something



Pat Kane

Rams Freshman Jamal Shuler (15) scored 8 points in just three minutes. Towson starting guard Mike Green was held to 9 in 34.

to do with it.

"If you don't want to play in front of all your peers," Doles said, "you don't want to play."

Doles, a senior swingman, scored a game-high 17 points, hitting double digits for the 13th straight game. Towson flip-flopped between box-and-one and triangle-and-two defenses, focusing on Doles and B.A. Walker and forcing Doles into ball handling situations.

The consequence, however, was Doles being able to find teammates like Pellot-Rosa, who "wanted to come out and be more aggressive on offense."

"They were leaving me a couple of wide-open shots," said Pellot-Rosa, a 6-foot-4 sophomore. "I just had to take advantage."

Pellot-Rosa's 14 points were the most he's put up since a Dec. 1 home game against Hampton. He was two points shy of his career high.

He scored 11 of his 14 points in the first half not only by knocking down the open shot when it was there, but also by connecting from the free-throw line (4 of 6 in the first half) and by picking up scavenger points by crashing the boards and getting tip-ins.

Head coach Jeff Capel was most impressed with the way the team made baskets in the first half. Cold starts have crippled the Rams' first-half production. The team has scored 658 points combined in the first half of all its games, 14 percent less than the 751 second-half total.

"We've talked about our offense, and we've worked on our offense," said Capel, who even took a scene from the classic hoops movie "Hoosiers" and took a tape measure to both baskets just to show his team that the goal at the west end of the court (which the team shoots at in the first half) is the same as the one at the east end.

Setup for the homecoming concert forced the team to practice at Franklin Street Gym on

Friday, but Capel said that with the way his team played, he may have to consider practicing there more often.

Dixon scored 14 off the bench for the Rams, pulling up for a couple of J's, but mostly throwing down dunks that gave the homecoming crowd something to scream about. Freshman Jamal Shuler completely did away with the concept of garbage time, scoring eight points in the final three minutes of the game. Shuler connected on both of his three-point attempts, and the only thing that kept him from being VCU's sixth player to reach double figures was a pair of missed free throws with 1:16 remaining.

The team got major production from its post players, who have been under intense scrutiny all season. Nick George scored 12 points, pulled down eight rebounds and dished out a game-high five assists. Junior transfer Calvin Roland nearly matched George with 11 points and eight boards.

"We have some other guys that are capable of scoring," Capel said, "but we need to do it on a more consistent basis."

It would be convenient for VCU if that consistency kicked in this week, considering the Rams are on the road against two of the top three teams in the conference: Drexel (8-4, 12-8) and Old Dominion (11-1, 21-3).

VCU is 2-4 against Drexel in the Capel era. The Dragons fled the Siegel Center Jan. 12 with a win at the buzzer. The Rams handed ODU its only CAA loss of the season Jan. 29. But in the three games since then, the Monarchs have pounded their opponents by a combined score of 230 to 194.

With the CAA tournament less than a month away, Doles said, "We really need to win these two games if we want to put ourselves in a good position at the end of the season."

Spectrum

Roots, Legend deliver soulful live concert

JAMES APPLEBACH AND
JOANNAH NWOKEABIA

The line outside the Stuart C. Siegel Center stretched several blocks as more than 4,000 people turned out Friday night to see The Roots and John Legend perform live at VCU's Homecoming Concert.

Tia Ruggles, a junior, came to see Legend sing his hit song "Ordinary People," which is already in heavy rotation on MTV and VH1. Friday night also marked her first Roots concert.

"The Roots tell a story in their songs and it's just not something you get to hear everyday on the radio," the 20-year-old said. "I think everyone can appreciate The Roots."

Many in the crowd hadn't even heard of Legend. Before this show, first-year student Diana Wagner had never heard of the piano-playing prodigy. She had seen The Roots perform last summer. "They're such an eclectic mix of music," she said.

Inside the center, the lights dimmed, the crowd's pandemonium swelled in anticipation and two background singers harmonized. By the time John Legend stepped behind the keyboard center stage, it seemed the forgiving crowd forgot that the concert began an hour late.

He first performed "Get Lifted," the titular song to his album, which is currently 6 on Billboard Top 100 chart and 2 on the Billboard R&B/ Hip-hop chart.

Legend moved seamlessly from one song to the next, stopping only to chat and jest with the audience of mostly college students. He also showed his humor about file sharing, a hot subject on college campuses and in the music industry.

"How many of y'all bought the album 'Get Lifted'?" he asked. To the crowd's loud response he clarified, "Nah. Y'all college students. How many of y'all got the real one?"

Legend has lent his sultry voice to several artists' hit tracks. He treated the audience to a medley, singing hooks from Jay-Z's "Encore," Dilated Peoples' "This Way" and Slum Village's "Selfish." Many in the audience were surprised to learn that Legend hit the high notes on Alicia Keys' "You Don't Know My Name."

More than anything, Legend made his audience a part of his performance and kept

their eyes glued on him until the end. He played the keyboard passionately and told stories behind his songs. While new to the mainstream success, Legend worked the crowd like a veteran.

At one point, as Legend belted out his latest single, "Ordinary People," audience members waved opened cell phones and lit up the darkened arena. The gesture of glowing neon lights was a tech-age throwback to how concert-goers showed audience participation and adoration in the past by waving ignited cigarette lighters in the air.

Legend told the audience, "I've got to come back to VCU — just let me know."

His return to VCU may be complicated by his success. The university contracted Legend before his album sky-rocketed to the top of the charts. Tim Reed, director of University Student Commons and activities, commented before the show that Legend's asking price per show has also sky-rocked into the six-figure range.

Legend left a good impression with the audience, especially Maker Jök. The sophomore biology major called him a legend.

"He performed really well. A lot of people liked his music. He's a legend. The music, the sound, the tone — everything reminded me of a legend."

Legend's performance also solidified his status as a sex-symbol.

Bonita Moore, senior criminal justice major, said after the show, "I liked John Legend hitting that high note in that song by Alicia Keys. And he looks good!"

Ben Cokely, a psychology major who had started his party before the concert began, complained that Legend's set was too lengthy and geared toward the ladies.

"My buzz wore off," he said, adding that Ludacris' concert a few years back was better.

The Legend fans who left after his performance missed a spectacular dance-off between students during intermission and an even livelier Roots show.

The Roots hit the stage for a nearly two-hour, nonstop performance that had nearly everyone on their feet. Even John Legend came on the floor to watch Black Thought rap at spitfire pace over the group's songs.

The group's lead lyricist was amazed by the huge turnout — a sold-out crowd. "It's a pleasant surprise to see how many people



Pat Kane

?uestlove and Frank Knuckles deliver an amazing percussion jam.

turned out," Black Thought said.

For many fans, the highlight of the night came toward the end when each group member had a solo part on their instruments and played a medley of popular artists' songs. Sounds from the bass, percussion, drums, keyboard and electric guitar pierced the pavilion at heartbeat-altering volumes.

The crowd seemingly threatened to mosh when The Roots played Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit." The electric guitarist brought the house down with an extremely electric rendition of Ray Charles' "Hit the Road Jack." The group also paid tribute to late rapper Ol' Dirty Bastard.

Drummer ?uestlove proved why he has a large following all his own, playing drums and percussion in an incredible finale.

This year's concert garnered much comparison to the 2002 concert featuring Ludacris.

Jennell Holmes, a senior sports marketing major who scored a second row seat, said after the show that this concert was better planned and had better artists than the Ludacris show.

"This is definitely an improvement and I hope they do this for years to come. The homecoming committee did a good job of selecting talent this year."

Even the drab black backdrop, huge view-obstructing sound equipment and cheesy smoke effects couldn't hold back the show of two of the best live performers in music today.

What's the Buzz?

Once upon a time reality shows featured 'real' people? Add Tommy Hilfiger and Martha Stewart to the growing list of celebrities with reality shows. Twenty-one-year-old R&B singer Houston, who scored a hit last year with "I Like That," recently underwent eye surgery after gouging out one of his eyes in a botched suicide attempt, according to close sources. Actor Jennifer Lopez and hubby Marc Anthony will perform together at the Grammys Feb. 13. That same night, rapper 50 Cent gets animated on "The Simpsons." Actor Jamie Foxx won a Golden Globe award last month and a Screen Actors Guild Award yesterday for "Ray," but will he get Oscar? And in sad news, actor-activist Ossie Davis died last Friday at 87. And that's the buzz.

Black History Happenings

Monday, Feb. 7

Take a ride to Charlottesville to see Nathaniel Gibbs Paintings of African-American Life at Monticello, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Monticello. Through Feb. 28. For more info call (434) 984-7500.

Tuesday, Feb. 8

Follow a young slave mother's perilous escape to freedom and learn about key figures of the Underground Railroad in the Carpenter Science Theater play North Star Light: Pathways to Freedom at 11 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. \$7. Science Museum of Virginia. Through March 11. For more information call 864-1400.

Wednesday, Feb. 9

Virginia Historical Society presents American Visions of Liberty & Freedom: An African American and Woman's Perspective. The tour focuses on blacks and women who shaped America's history. Topics include civil rights movement, woman suffrage movement, Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King and Susan B. Anthony. Noon. Free w/ \$3 student or \$5 adult admission. For more information call 358-4901.

Feb. 7 through Feb. 9

Spectrum

John Legend gets lifted with The CT

JOANNAH NWOKEABIA

Commonwealth Times: Explain the concept behind your album title, "Get Lifted."

John Legend: It's based off the song "Get Lifted." I wrote the song first before we decided on the album title. The song is about saying, I got some good news that'll make you feel good. It triples (in meaning). At the same time I'm kinda coming on to a girl telling her my mojo's gonna work. So it's basically saying that the album is a feel-good album.

CT: How did you prepare for the transition from a hook singer to a major recording artist and was it difficult adjusting to the spotlight?

JL: I was already a recording artist on my own, but no one knew about it. Not as many people knew about it back then. I was working on my first demo record in '98 and I was putting out independent albums from '99 to '03 and just building my own fan base on an underground level. I didn't see myself as a hook singer. I saw myself as an artist who did a couple of hooks on the side.

CT: Which single black person, dead or alive, do you think has contributed the most to music?

JL: Quincy Jones. His career has spanned decades, many decades. He's worked behind the scenes producing — even magazines and just black music. He's responsible for Thriller and Off the Wall, I think. He's responsible for helping Ray Charles get his thing together. Maybe not responsible, but he was part of it. 'Cause (of) a lot of great music over a long period of time and he's influenced a lot of people behind the scenes. And he's probably one of the most influential people in black music.

CT: How much of your gospel background do you draw from in your music?

JL: It's always in my head. You hear it in arrangements and vocal arrangements and the way I play instruments. My first major musical experience was playing gospel so it stuck with me.

CT: How did you land the gig touring with Alicia Keys?

JL: My manager talked and made it happen. I guess it just made a lot of sense. We knew that her tour would be great exposure for me. It just made a lot of sense artistically that we were on the same tour. They agreed



Pat Kane

that my presence on the tour would be good for the tour. We wanted to give the fans the best show we could. So I think it's a good combination for that.

CT: What are some of your musical influences?

JL: I listen to a lot of different things — Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye, a lot of gospel music, Aretha Franklin, hip-hop, Bob Marley. All kinds of things. The Beatles. I listen to everything.

CT: A lot of singers are endorsing products these days. What product will you not endorse?

JL: Anything that I don't believe in and I won't buy myself. I wouldn't endorse cigarettes, for instance. And something that's swack and doesn't fit with my image.

CT: What has given you the most pleasure in the past year?

JL: The fact that I'm doing so well and my shows are doing so well — it's very fulfilling and exciting.

CT: What book are you reading right now?

JL: I'm not reading a book right now. I'm actually reading the Atlantic Monthly, pretty much cover-to-cover. It's a good magazine. It talks a lot about issues like political issues and things.

CT: Do feel a lot of pressure to surpass this album since it is doing so well?

JL: Yeah, I put pressure on myself to do it.

CT: What is next up for you?

JL: The tour. I'm going to keep touring probably throughout the year, and also writing on the side for my next album. I won't put it out until I can get as good or better than this album.

Rock bands take action against suicide

ALI BRESLIN

The end of winter opened the Sub City Take Action! Tour '05, sponsored by Hurley International. Bands such as Sugarcult, Hawthorne Heights, The Early November, Anberlin, Hopesfall, Head Automatica and more spread Take Action!'s message of suicide prevention. The Canal Club served as Richmond's venue last Thursday night and was only the second stop on the little over month-long tour.

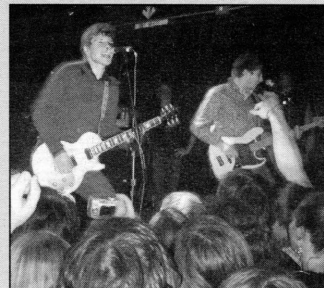
This venue featured Sugarcult, with The Early November, Hawthorne Heights, and Hopesfall. Head Automatica was originally on the ticket as well, but due to lead singer and former singer of Glassjaw Daryl Palumbo's Crohn's disease, they were forced to drop the date. Nonetheless, the show's turnout was exceptional.

Since Take Action!'s start in 2001, its mission is to raise the awareness level of suicide and suicide prevention among teens and college students. Throughout the night each band mentioned something concerning the cause and where more information could be found.

Beside the bands' merchandise tables was a table for pamphlets and clipboards where kids could sign a petition to raise funding for help-hotlines and mentors. A fraction of the tour's proceeds go to these hotlines, where kids can talk to peers about their feelings and problems.

Tim Pagnotta, front singer for Sugarcult, said, "As a band, you get to the point where you get to show more than just music and photos, and get to touch on real issues." Members of Sugarcult actually went to Capitol Hill while in Washington, D.C., and spoke to some people from Washington about funding for mental health.

Pagnotta said they were petitioning for \$80 million worth of funding, and that "it's time to know." Previous to this tour, the band also helped with Life Beat, a program set up with other bands for



Pat Kane

the prevention against AIDS.

Pagnotta also performed a song Thursday night that he wrote in his own time of depression. He opened the song with a brief explanation of how writing music is his outlet when he feels lonely. The song was touching, and just by judging the kids' faces in the audience, it seemed as if they had absorbed more about how important the cause really is.

Jeff Krummer, drummer of The Early November, said he thought the show went great. "I like places where it's small," he said. "It's more personal to look out at kids and sing along with them."

Joe Marro, guitar player for The Early November, pushed back the recording of their upcoming CD, which he hopes will be out this summer, to join part of the tour. Their last show with the Take Action! crew will be on Feb. 14. In addition to this cause, they played at two previous benefit concerts where proceeds went to the tsunami relief.

The night was amazing, and thanks to everyone who came out to support the bands and Take Action!'s mission, the show earned money to add to their cause. Other bands on the tour are helping as well.

For more information, log on to www.takeactiontour.com

Happeni

Monday, Feb. 7

Delta Sigma Theta presents a forum on Survival Skills & FAFSA in the Commons Virginia Rooms A, B and C. For more information contact Fai'ye at fireoverice200@yahoo.com.

Tuesday, Feb. 8

What do you get when you mix a small room, dimmed lighting, a mic and a lot of talent? Verses — a hip-hop, spoken word poetry jam at Tropical Soul. Bring your original poem, song or act to 314 N. Second St. at 9 p.m. \$5. For more information call 771-1605

Wednesday, Feb. 9

Café Gutenberg presents The Office Parties 1, 2 & 3, 7-10 p.m. Watch the first season of the award-winning BBC show, The Office, on the café's big-screen. It's "inappropriate British humor" at its best. Free. For more information call 497-500 or visit www.cafegutenberg.com.

Rock with Saliva at the Canal Club. \$15. Doors open at 8 p.m. 1545 E. Cary St. For more information call 643-2582.

EDITORIALS & LETTERS

Professors under fire

Accusations of campus liberalism undermine intellectual freedom

MIKE DICKINSON
Op/Ed Writer

Central to the idea of college campuses and education is the academic freedom professors enjoy in teaching. This freedom allows professors to give their expert opinion and analysis on the subjects they teach. Alarming, this academic freedom is now under fire from conservative students who say college professors are too liberal.

The credentials of college professors are vastly underrated. In order to get a doctorate, which is what one must have to be a professor, one must endure four years of undergraduate work and five years of graduate study. Then one must be willing to move frequently to build up a resume and reputation by continually speaking at seminars and getting published in national academic journals. It is not an easy task.

Academic freedom is one of those things that makes college different than high school. High school teachers read from a book and give basic instruction, but university-level professors teach their subject and provide interpretation. After all, they are the experts who have done the research, written the books, and become world-renowned. By the time one is a professor, he is regarded as an expert in that field who has contributed to the body of knowledge on the subject.

This issue goes deeper than the complaints of recent students, as for many years there has been a social rivalry between great scholars who base their thoughts and philosophies on the logic they have studied and seen, and those of faith who want to base everything on religious principles. It's a feud as old as the earth itself.

College campuses are where some of the great ideas of the world come from, as professors can think, read, study and experiment with unimaginable concepts. Go into the office of any faculty member, and you will see many books that they have written and read, as each professor is truly an expert in his or her field.

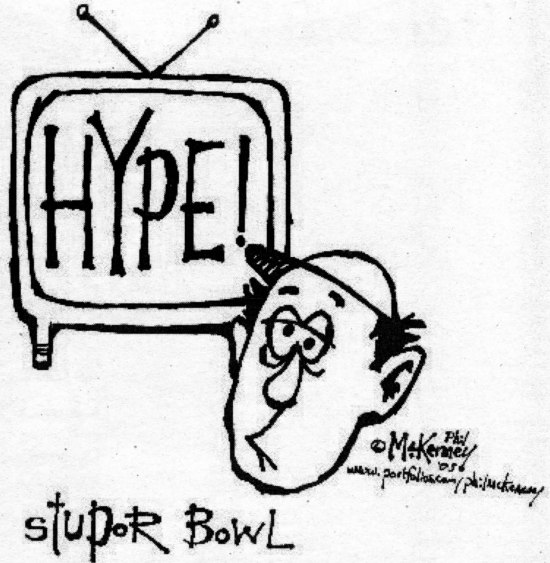
Allowing students to dictate what is taught and in what manner is ridiculous. I can only imagine the slanted view students would want taught about the civil rights movement, for example, in the racially charged South.

If conservative students don't like the liberal opinions some professors have, then perhaps they need to look themselves in the mirror because they are what is wrong with this country.

In the mode of conservative radio talk show host Rush Limbaugh, a man who talks a lot but takes little action, these students make spectacles to news channels for publicity. They want someone to step in and make change, but the responsibility for that lies within themselves.

These conservative students that do not like liberal professors have an option — which is to go to school for nine years, get a doctorate, become an expert in the field, and then they can teach the class any way they want to. Until then, they don't have the educational credentials to determine what should be taught.

Conservative leaders often attack the correlation between university faculty members and liberalism. I don't think it is some vast conspiracy, as I feel it boils down to a real simple idea: the smarter you are, the more liberal you are.



Editorial Cartoon | by Phil McKenney



Your Turn

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

While watching American Idol this week, I just felt the pain of these young people who were convinced without question that they were going to be the next American Idol. When listening to some of them present their "talent" and the reaction of the judges, one has to wonder where in the world such confidence comes from in the first place?

I used to teach self-esteem curriculum to primary school children in the public school system of Arizona. After two years, I discontinued teaching the self-esteem curriculum as I began to see it as hollow band-aids for hurting children needing more than "I think I can, I think I can" to meet the demands of academic tracks laid down for future aspirations.

American Idol is a good lesson in how the art of self-esteem is not the total answer.

Sincerely,

Annette Gibson
Washington, D.C.

The Commonwealth TIMES

The independent student press of
Virginia Commonwealth University

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