

# The Commonwealth Times

Free

The Independent Student Press of Virginia Commonwealth University Vol. 42 No. 7 Monday, February 14, 2005

CTVCU@hotmail.com  
www.commonwealthtimes.com  
(804) 828-1058

## Warning! Warning!

Valentine's Day is here.  
Be prepared. Page 12



### News

Students in off-campus classes communicate via e-mail with their professors. / **Page 3**

### Editorials & Letters

Home run proposal: R-Braves' new stadium would benefit VCU, Richmond. / **Page 11**

### Sports

Rams look ahead to ODU after avenging loss to Drexel. / **Page 8**

# WEIRD NEWS

## CALENDAR

## FEB. 14 THROUGH FEB. 16

Monday, Feb. 14	Tuesday, Feb. 15	Wednesday, Feb. 16
Join the Student Affairs Counseling Services as they present an <b>Academic Success Workshop</b> called Teaching Styles/Learning Styles: Where do you fit in? The workshop, which features speaker Kathryn Murphy-Judy takes place from noon to 1 p.m. in the University Student Commons Forum Room. Register online at <a href="http://www.pubinfo.vcu.edu/academic-success/">www.pubinfo.vcu.edu/academic-success/</a> or contact Darlene Pantaleo at 828-6200 for more details.	In honor of Black History Month, the VCU Friends of the Library is sponsoring the <b>Third Annual Black History Month Lecture</b> . Come out and learn something new about African-American history and culture. The event takes place at the University Student Commons Commonwealth Ballrooms from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. For more information contact Kimberly Separ at 827-1163.	Come join the Office of International Education as they offer the <b>International Student Coffee Hour</b> . The event takes place in the University Student Commons room Commonwealth B from 12:30 p.m. to 2 p.m.

### CAMPUS FORECAST



**Monday**  
**53/45**



**Tuesday**  
**66/38**



**Wednesday**  
**56/32**



**Thursday**  
**47/24**

Recycle this newspaper!  
For recycling information, visit:  
[www.vcu.edu/recycling](http://www.vcu.edu/recycling)

*Compiled from wire reports*

### Drunk steals dog's meat

A drunk Chinese man — who was jealous that his neighbor's dog was eating better than he was — needed hospital treatment after he attempted to steal the dog's dinner. The man started his night drinking alone at home. He then saw his neighbor's dog enjoying its lunch — a piece of pork chop. The man then looked at his own meal, a small plate of fried peanuts, and he attacked the dog trying to steal the meat. The dog then fought back to protect its pork chop and bit the man's right hand. Neighbors then sent the man to the hospital.

### Teenager rented out father's apartment

A teenager in China rented out his father's apartment while he was away on business. When the father returned from his week-long trip and he discovered he couldn't open the door, he knocked. Strangers answered the door saying they had just moved in. The man called the police, and they discovered what the teenager had done. The teenager's parents had recently divorced and he was living with his father. He apparently became angry when the father redecorated the apartment in honor of his new marriage. The teen hoped his plan would delay the father's new marriage, allowing time for his father to reunite with his mother. Since the teen was underage, the new tenant's contract was declared unlawful, and the father was allowed to move back in.

### Robber forgets wallet

Aman in Eules, Texas walked into a store and pulled out his wallet to buy a pack of cigarettes from the clerk. He then sprayed the person working the counter with pepper spray and proceeded to rob the store of \$110. The only problem is that as he fled the scene, he forgot his wallet, which had his phone number inside. After police arrived, an officer called the number and pretended to be a citizen who had found the wallet. When the robbery suspect arrived to claim his wallet, police arrested the 22-year-old man. He was later jailed over the robbery.

### Dog survives fall from cliff

A dog in North Yorkshire, England survived a 150 foot fall from a cliff to the beach below. The English setter named Hugo was the subject of a rescue operation involving the coastguard, a vet and a lifeboat. The dog suffered only a cut tongue in the fall. The vet climbed down the hill to rescue the dog that had fallen while chasing a seagull. The coastguard then helped her to sedate the dog until they could remove him from the precipice. The dog is reportedly back to his normal self.

### Dear Hitler

The postal service in Germany delivered a card addressed to Adolf Hitler 60 years after his death. The card was sent from the UK and was addressed directly to the Fuhrer in Berlin, Germany. The letter arrived at its destination with a stamp from the postal service saying it had a faulty address and

had to be readdressed. Officials in Berlin say the postal service showed poor taste in delivering the letter. A postal official said that it is not up to the postal service to decide not to deliver mail, and as long as an address exists — they will deliver mail to it whether the intended recipient is alive or dead.

### Bridesmaids can be real dogs

Sonia Wilde, a bride-to-be, wants her dog Lucy to be her bridesmaid. The woman said her vicar, the Rev. Brian Statham, was surprised at first but agreed to let the dog take part in the ceremony. The reverend said he had been marrying couples for 26 years and had never had a request like this. Wilde is designing a dress for the dog for the special occasion. Wilde says Lucy is her best friend and she can't think of anyone else she would rather have as a bridesmaid.

### Corrections

In the Feb. 10 issue, The Commonwealth Times incorrectly called the BSU House the BSU building and reported that it would be closing at the end of the spring semester. Please see the related article on page 4.

Jeff Kummer is the drummer for The Early November. His name was misspelled in the Feb. 7 issue.

*Front cover illustration by Andrew Babb.*

## The Commonwealth TIMES

Room 1149, T. Edward Temple Building, 901 W. Main St. Richmond, VA 23284-2010

Executive Editor  
**DEVON MARROW**

[CTeditor03@yahoo.com](mailto:CTeditor03@yahoo.com)

Managing Editor  
**VACANT**

News Co-Editor  
**KATIE GANTT**  
[ganttkt@vcu.edu](mailto:ganttkt@vcu.edu)

News Co-Editor  
**JONATHAN ROBBINS**  
[robbinsjs@vcu.edu](mailto:robbinsjs@vcu.edu)

Spectrum Editor  
**JOANNAH NWOKEABIA**  
[jhwokeabia@yahoo.com](mailto:jhwokeabia@yahoo.com)

Associate Spectrum Editor  
**VACANT**

Sports Editor  
**JULIAN BENBOW**  
[Benbowjj@yahoo.com](mailto:Benbowjj@yahoo.com)

Editorials & Letters Editor  
**OMAR YACOUBI**  
[yacoubioa@vcu.edu](mailto:yacoubioa@vcu.edu)

Photography Editor  
**PAT KANE**  
[kanepm@vcu.edu](mailto:kanepm@vcu.edu)

Production Manager  
**MARY FRANKE MILLER**  
[mmiller@rmc.edu](mailto:mmiller@rmc.edu)

Production Chief  
**RACHEL BLACK**  
[blackrl@mail2.vcu.edu](mailto:blackrl@mail2.vcu.edu)

Graphic Designer  
**ANDREW BABB**  
[Andrew@toolatetorun.com](mailto:Andrew@toolatetorun.com)

Business Manager  
**DAN PRINCE**  
[princedd@vcu.edu](mailto:princedd@vcu.edu)

Accounts Manager  
**CHRISTINE MENDOZA**  
[catchrisjay@hotmail.com](mailto:catchrisjay@hotmail.com)

Advertising Director  
**MORGAN COPELAND**  
[copelandmd@vcu.edu](mailto:copelandmd@vcu.edu)

Advertising Representative  
**JUSTIN JOHNS**  
[johnsjp@vcu.edu](mailto:johnsjp@vcu.edu)

Office Manager  
**JAMES APPLEBACH**  
[applebachjr@vcu.edu](mailto:applebachjr@vcu.edu)

Webmaster  
**THOMAS GEHRING**  
[tagehrin@vcu.edu](mailto:tagehrin@vcu.edu)

Advertising and Classifieds  
[ctaddept@gmail.com](mailto:ctaddept@gmail.com)

[www.commonwealthtimes.com](http://www.commonwealthtimes.com)  
[ctvcu@hotmail.com](mailto:ctvcu@hotmail.com)  
(804) 828-1058

# NEWS

## Service-learning courses offer new options

*Students can make a difference in the community while learning*

**OKAI QUASHIE-IDUN**

*Staff Writer*

Service-learning courses provide students a special way to get an education by mixing real-world experiences with academic concepts.

Catherine Howard, director of the Office of Community Programs, which houses the service-learning program, said service-learning courses give students good opportunities to make changes in their community.

“Service-learning courses help students identify the critical issues in the community and think about how they can make a contribution to right the wrong,” Howard said.

“Students get a better sense of who they are and what they can do to make their communities better,” she said. “Students also believe that a difference can be made through their actions.”

Students who take service-learning courses learn basic concepts and then get the chance to practice them.

“Our students learn the theory and practice it in the field, which helps them to develop self-assessment skills as lifelong learners,” Howard said. “Students obtain values that can foster civic duties.”

For this to occur, students volunteer with community partners to address the community-identified needs of individuals, organizations, schools and entities in the community. These include agencies such as the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Richmond City Public Schools, senior centers, the Fan Free Clinic and others.

Allison Wilder, associate professor of recreation, parks and sports management, taught a service-learning course on recreation leadership last fall.

“Service-learning has a different contrast from a typical lecture course,” Wilder said. “Instructors are not just bound by the walls of the classroom. We carefully select projects that apply to real-world situations. This impacts our students in a real way because they take the theory and apply it to the real world.”

Howard said faculty members attend the Service-

Learning Associate Program in the spring to help them follow the university’s criteria in the program and maintain quality and consistency in the classes.

“Our faculty members identify our community partners to help our students get the learning objectives for service work,” she said. “Our great faculty members help students seek civic-education while they provide the necessary skill development valuable for their career preparation.”

Anne Chandler, associate director of the honors program, said the faculty also work with teaching assistants who complete special training through the honors program.

“We train students through the Service-Learning Teaching Assistant Program to help them obtain leadership skills, which is a great experience to have,” she said. “It also helps them to establish a relationship with the academic world and the real world.”

Wilder said the students participate in service activities at least 15 hours in one semester-long class.

“They tell what works or not and how it could work through a different approach,” she said. “Students balance the workload with a tradeoff of what they do in the field and writing essays, which evens it out.”

Furthermore, Howard said once students get the bug, it helps them to find themselves and they volunteer more hours with the community partners to reach out or help with an issue that affects the community.

“This is a great method for students to gain career experience and network opportunities,” she said. “See it, talk about it and do something about it. That’s all the service-learning is about. It has a different feel to it.”

Service-learning courses are only offered during regular semesters, not during the holiday intersession or summer session.

Some departments, however, do not offer service-learning courses, and Howard said that’s a problem.

“We would want more departments to offer service-learning courses so that students can critically reflect on their citizen values and responsibilities,” she said.

For More information on service-learning, visit [www.vcu.edu/ocp](http://www.vcu.edu/ocp)

## BSU House remains on campus

*No discussion on BSU property sale under way*

**KATIE GANTT**

*News Co-Editor*

Although the Commonwealth Times reported VCU has been interested in buying the Baptist Student Union House for about 10 years, Paul Jez, VCU’s assistant vice president for business services and treasurer, said the last time the university talked to the Baptist General Association of Virginia, the association members were not ready to sell the house.

“Last time the university talked to them was two to three years (ago), but they weren’t in a position to sell it,” Jez said. “The university would be interested in purchasing the property.”

The association governs nine Baptist Student Unions in the state. In mid-November, the group approved the possible sale of the BSU houses on the VCU and University of Virginia campuses because both buildings need repairs.

Frank Brown, a member of VCU’s BSU, said he understands that Richmond’s First Baptist Church might offer the money to repair the building. If that happens, the group still would need to talk to the association about the state of any potential sale of the BSU House.

Alan Jones, the full-time campus minister for VCU’s BSU House, said the ministry will continue with or without the building.

“The building is not a viable ministry tool,” Jones said. “It is a luxury.”

*Jenny Smith contributed to this article*

## Off-campus classes offer flexibility

**KAREN BOLIPATA**

*Staff Writer*

“We live in a society in which technology develops at a crazy pace,” Vasile Niculescu, an associate professor of physics at VCU, said. “If you learn everything about technology today, in five years it will be totally different.”

Niculescu teaches a class called Wonders of Technology at VCU – a course he said he developed in 1997. The class, which deals with technology used in everyday life, began with roughly nine students enrolled, he said.

“Now we offer it to 380 students,” said Niculescu, “which is at capacity.”

The course’s growth prompted Niculescu to develop an off-campus course last year, he said. The professor said his off-campus students conduct its laboratory

component at home.

“It’s very convenient because they don’t have to waste their time driving to VCU,” Niculescu said. “The time they use to travel they can use it learning.”

Brad Brubaker, a theater major, said he chose the online course last fall because of its flexibility.

“I liked the concept of the self-paced class,” Brubaker said. “I also could do the work whenever I wanted within the allotted time period. This meant I could fit it in rather than having to fit in other things around the class.”

The professor said his off-campus students take the course for various reasons: Some take the course as they pursue their master’s degrees, while other students are undergraduates who need to fulfill a general education requirement.

“There’s a variety (of students),”

Niculescu said. “This fall I have at least one student who is 40 or so. Two semesters ago I had a student who was older, and of course I have the students (who are) 18, 19, 20.”

He said he supplies each of his off-campus students a box filled with materials for the semester. The off-campus students need more initiative than the average student, Niculescu said, because they don’t have an instructor to oversee their work.

Brubaker said he used the textbook and the course’s Web site to conduct the experiments, but the absence of an instructor frustrated him at times.

“Sometimes I got lost in some of the wording or figuring out what exactly it was supposed to do,” he said. “I would get really frustrated when this happened because I couldn’t ask a professor for immediate assistance.”

When his students had problems, Niculescu answered questions via e-mail.

“He was pretty speedy with e-mail,” Brubaker said, “but nothing’s as speedy as raising your hand and getting immediate attention.”

Even with the disadvantage, Niculescu said his off-campus students have the great advantage of convenience and flexibility.

“They can start the lab and go to work,” he said, “come back and finish the lab.”

For students who may be struggling, Niculescu offered advice.

“If somebody decides to do something, the worst thing (to do) is to give up,” he said. “Every time you invest energy or time into any endeavor, (you) should try to finish it. Anybody who thinks that life is without struggle sooner or later will realize it is not so.”

# NEWS

## From cap and gown to Army fatigues *VCU students leave school for different adventures*

**ANTHONY MCBRIEN**  
*Staff Writer*

When college graduation nears, students begin to feel relieved and excited to start their new lives and enter the job market. Graduation for some, however, means becoming a soldier.

Harry Mars, a former psychology major, graduated in December. Instead of putting on a new suit and tie for job interviews, Mars dressed in an Army uniform to make the transition from student to soldier.

"You're making a transition from sitting around going to classes, sitting around going to bars and playing Xbox – next thing you know you have this great responsibility. When I sit back and think about it, it is pretty mind-boggling," he said before his graduation.

Maj. Stanley Jones, chairman of the Department of Military Science and Leadership at VCU, said he remembers what he was thinking as he made that same transition 15 years ago.

"I was looking forward to graduation and just getting out and going on active duty and just being in the Army," Jones said. "You know there is a lot out there that you don't know, but you'll never get to figure it out unless you get out there and you start doing it."

Jones ended up in Germany after graduating in 1989 from Loyola University. He still recalls his days between finishing college and waiting for his duty assignment.

"I knew I was going overseas, but I didn't know where I was going," he said. "Imagine – I don't want to say like you're taking a trip – but knowing that you're going to go somewhere. You just want that time to hurry up and just go do it."

Maj. Ivan Mikolic remembers being nervous about stumbling on his lines during his graduation ceremony.

"I was nervous about the ceremony. I was just thinking about the task at hand," Mikolic said. "I didn't want to screw up my lines. I wanted to make sure I recited the oath without stumbling on my words."

Mars' path to graduation hasn't been a smooth one.

"There were a few bumps in the road," he said. "I had a full-time job all the way through college, and I got side-tracked a few times – all the stress of having to put up with college and the ROTC course curriculum, and sometimes it got pretty overwhelming."

But with that finished, Mars said he was looking forward to the future while feeling a sense of relief and a sense of pride.

"It's a relief to be done with college," he said. "It's a great feeling now that I'm done with school, and that I'm going to lead soldiers now. Hopefully, I'll do a good job."

For Mars' graduation, VCU's military science department conducted a special military service in honor of his completion of the program. Family and friends attended the ceremony that involved Army traditions including the oath of office,

the first salute and the silver dollar exchange.

During the ceremony, Jones said after an officer takes the oath of office, he salutes the higher ranking official.

"In appreciation for being the first person to salute them as a noncommissioned officer," he said, "they present them with a silver dollar."

The silver dollar presentation is believed to be based on the \$1 wage for an enlisted British military adviser in 1816. The adviser's \$1 pay has been discontinued, but appreciation of that tradition still remains.

"It's one of those old Army traditions and the issue now is (with) our Internet, our debit, our credit card society," Jones said, "it's hard to actually find a silver dollar to use."

This is a difficulty Mars knows well.

"I tried a few places, and they were either sold out or didn't carry it. Then I went online to eBay and actually bid for the item, and it never came in the mail," he said. "So my girlfriend, she just happened to come across one. She gave it to me and bailed me out, but it was pretty difficult trying to find one."

Following graduation, Mars will serve as an Army recruiter for the University of Richmond, before leaving in March for six months of training at Fort Eustis. There he will learn where and when he will be assigned to duty, which could be at any of the U.S.'s bases around the globe.

"That in itself is pretty – I wouldn't say scary, but you know – the suspense," Mars said.

vcu libraries lecture

VCU Libraries invites you to attend its third annual Black History Month Lecture  
sponsored by the VCU Friends of the Library.

And still I sing:  
African-American women  
in three musical traditions  
presented by Christopher Brooks

Tuesday, Feb. 15, 2005 • 7:30 p.m.  
VCU Student Commons Ballrooms, 2nd Floor, 907 Floyd Ave.

This event is free and open to the public. Parking is available for a fee in the West Main Street Parking Deck and the West Cary Street Parking Deck. If special accommodations are needed, please contact Kimberly Separ at (804) 827-1163 or e-mail krsepar@vcu.edu.

www.library.vcu.edu

Virginia Commonwealth University



*Theatre***VCU**  
AT VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY  
Member of NAST - National Association of Schools of Theatre

# METAMORPHOSES



*Written by*  
**Mary Zimmerman**  
*Directed by*  
**Ron Nakahara**

**February 17-19 &  
23-26 at 7:30 pm  
February 20 & 27  
at 2:30 pm**

**Theatre VCU  
Box Office:  
804.828.6026**

**General Admission: \$12  
Seniors, VCU Faculty & Staff: \$8  
FREE for VCU Students  
with valid ID**

**Visa and MasterCard Accepted**

**Raymond Hodges Theatre  
Singleton Center for Performing Arts**


**Virginia Commonwealth University  
David Leong, Theatre Department Chairman**

*METAMORPHOSES*

# VCU

## School of Social Work

### Northern Virginia Master of Social Work Program



Take your professional future to the next level with a Master of Social Work from a top-ranked social work program in Northern Virginia, Virginia Commonwealth University's School of Social Work — a proven national leader in social work education rooted in the realities of life. Our professors write the textbooks; our graduates foster growth and inspire change.

**We offer:**

- convenient location.
- easy access to the Metro and free parking.
- emphasis on student-faculty collaboration.
- rich field placements.

**Register now for an on-site information session:**

Tuesday, Feb. 22, 5:30 – 7 p.m.  
Monday, March 21, 5:30 – 7 p.m.  
<http://www.vcu.edu/slwwweb>  
or call (703) 823-4130 or (800) 450-8595

**For more information:**  
Virginia Commonwealth University  
Northern Virginia Master of Social Work Program  
6295 Edsall Road  
Alexandria, Virginia 22312

an equal opportunity/affirmative action university 041116-01

**V i r g i n i a   C o m m o n w e a l t h   U n i v e r s i t y**



# CLASSIFIEDS

## HELP WANTED

**Spring Break 2005.** Travel with STS, America's #1 Student Tour Operator. Jamaica, Cancun, Acapulco, Bahamas, Florida. Hiring campus reps. Call for discounts: 800-648-4849 or [www.ststravel.com](http://www.ststravel.com).

Douglass Aquatics is seeking lifeguard. Managers, and lifeguard/swim instructors. FT/PT throughout Richmond area. Certification avail. Great pay, incentives, and advancement. [www.douglasaquatics.com](http://www.douglasaquatics.com) (804) 232-0225.

**Attention Businesses!** Hiring? Want to know an easy way to reach the VCU community? Classifieds 25 words or less are **\$10!** Anything above 25 words is only 10¢/word. For the full *Terms of Use*, check out our classifieds section at [www.commonwealthtimes.com](http://www.commonwealthtimes.com).

## ADOPTION

**Loving, Christian couple** is wishing to expand family with second adoption. We have met all state and agency requirements. Counseling available and all contacts shall remain confidential. Please call to find out more about us. Leigh Robbins: Daytime- 804 (706-5656); Evenings/Weekends- (804) 796-2870; or [Robbinsdll@comcast.net](mailto:Robbinsdll@comcast.net).

**VCU students!** Classifieds 25 words or less are **FREE!** Anything above 25 words is only 10¢/word. For the full *Terms of Use*, check out our classifieds section at [www.commonwealthtimes.com](http://www.commonwealthtimes.com). (FYI: This ad would only cost \$2.50!)

We want to hear from you!



Send your comments and letters to [ctvcu@hotmail.com](mailto:ctvcu@hotmail.com).

Save a tree.  
Recycle this CT  
when you're  
done reading.

## A Valentine's Dinner to Remember In The Compass Room

**Shafer Court Dining Center**  
(Open to all Students, Faculty & Staff)

Chef Joel Blice and the VCU Dining Team is presenting an all inclusive intimate three course prix fixe served Valentine's Sweetheart Dinner on February 14th from 5:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.  
For more information and to view our full menu go to:  
[www.bsv.vcu.edu/vcufood](http://www.bsv.vcu.edu/vcufood)

We accept VCU Dining Plan, Credit Cards, RamBucks and Cash  
Reservations Recommended: 804-828-1272  
or stop by Suite 135 in Shafer Court Dining Center

READ YOUR  
FAVORITE NEWSPAPER  
ON THE INTERNET.

[www.commonwealthtimes.com](http://www.commonwealthtimes.com)

Classified

Classified

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Text: \_\_\_\_\_

**Submit to:**  
**Commonwealth Times**  
**1149 Temple Building**

## NEWS

# Got what it takes?

The Commonwealth Times is looking for a managing editor for spring 2005. For more info, please contact Jonathan Robbins at 828-1058.



**CT Sports** is looking for students with skill to cover all the VCU sports action this semester.

---

The section is looking for beat writers for:

---

**Baseball  
Basketball  
Track and Field  
Tennis**

For more information, contact Sports editor Julian Benbow by e-mail at [benbowjj@yahoo.com](mailto:benbowjj@yahoo.com) or by phone at (804) 828-1058.

**The Commonwealth Times**

# SPORTS

## Upcoming Sports EVENTS

### Men's basketball

**Feb. 14:** VCU vs. George Mason at the Stuart C. Siegel Center. at 7:30 p.m.

**Feb. 16:** VCU vs. Delaware at the Stuart C. Siegel Center at 7:30 p.m.

### Women's basketball

**Feb. 17:** VCU at Hofstra at the Stuart C. Siegel Center at 7 p.m.

**Feb. 20:** VCU at James Madison, Harrisonburg, Va. 2 p.m.

### Men's tennis

**Feb. 25:** VCU at Ohio State in Columbus, Ohio

**Feb. 27:** VCU at Harvard, at the Thalhimer Tennis Center, 10 p.m.

### Women's tennis

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

**Feb. 20:** VCU at Maryland in College Park, Md. at noon

### Men's track and field

**Feb. 26:** UNC, Last Chance Meet in Chapel Hill, N.C.

**Feb 27:** George Mason, in Fairfax, Va.

### Women's track and field

**Feb. 19:** George Mason in Fairfax, Va.

**Feb. 27:** George Mason University in Fairfax, Va.

### Baseball

**Feb. 18:** VCU at Auburn in Auburn, Ala. 4 p.m. (CST)

**Feb. 19:** VCU at Auburn in Auburn, Ala. 4 p.m. (CST)

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



Monarchs fans celebrate the fall of a streak that has spanned the careers of senior Michael Doles (2) and freshman Mike Anderson (4).

## Cause for celebration?

*Monarchs party after first win over Rams since 2001*

**JULIAN BENBOW**  
*Sports Editor*

All VCU basketball coach Jeff Capel could do was stand on the sideline and stare at the court blankly.

The Rams were trailing Old Dominion 77-70 when Michael Doles launched his fifth 3-pointer of the game. It hit the inside of the rim and ricocheted out. Jesse Pellot-Rosa pulled down the rebound—his only offensive board of the game—then missed a six-footer. B.A. Walker gathered the long rebound and pulled a trey, which hit nothing but net, but that was after an official had called big man Derrick Reid for an offensive foul.

The basket that would have cut the Monarchs lead to 4 points with a little less than a minute left was negated, and VCU missed one of several opportunities Jeff Capel said his team had to overcome conference-leading ODU.

Instead, the Monarchs slowly shoved the dagger into the Rams rally, knocking down five free throws down the stretch. The 82-76 win was ODU's 23rd win of the season, but it was their first win over VCU since 2001.

The Monarchs (13-1 CAA, 23-3) had lost the past 10 meetings with the Rams (9-5, 13-10), and after snapping the streak the team and their fans celebrated.

Isaiah Hunter, who had his best scoring

game of the season with 25 points on 8-of-14 shooting, sent the game ball soaring into the highest seats of the Ted Constant Center as many students from the sold out crowd flooded the court.

The Monarchs' pep band squeaked as fans engulfed Hunter and lifted teammate Alex Loughton above the pile.

Capel held his players aside as ODU reveled, making sure the players stored the scene in their memories as the conference tournament looms.

"I just told them to remember it because hopefully we'll see them again," Capel said.

"You've got a team that's 22 and 3, 13 and 1 and they beat a team that's 13 and 9 and they're celebrating like that. I just wanted our guys just to see what it means for certain teams in this league to beat us."

Monarchs coach Blaine Taylor said he expected the crowd to be frenzied for the rivalry and he encouraged his players to be a part of that excitement even before the game.

"It was a really enthusiastic crowd, and we wanted to respond to that crowd," said Taylor, who was 0 for 9 against VCU before Saturday. "We knew that this was going to be a festive moment. And I told

the kids before the game, 'Stay out there and enjoy it. Don't worry about going to the locker room.'

"We took care of VCU first. We shook hands. They went to the locker room. And I told the kids before the game, 'Stay out there.'"

The post-game mob scene was different from the sight two weeks earlier at the Stuart C. Siegel Center, Capel pointed out.

"We won at our place and we just walked off the court," Capel said, "because we felt like we were supposed to win."

The crowd in Norfolk was manic even before the jump ball. Rams sophomore Jesse Pellot-Rosa had to shout at teammate

Calvin Roland to let him know that coach Capel was barking instruction from the Rams bench just 15 feet away.

The crowd blew up midway through the second half when Hunter exploded along the baseline, dashed by Rams guard Alexander Harper then rose above him for a right-handed flush that sparked a 12-6 run.

Harper left the game after that play, then he left the court minutes later to get stitches, because he was cut above one of

*"We won at our place  
and we just walked off  
the court, because we felt  
like we were supposed to  
win."*

—VCU head coach Jeff Capel

*HOOPS continued to page 9*

SPORTS

Rams clip Hawks in new digs

JULIAN BENBOW  
Sports Editor

VCU's baseball team threw a two day housewarming party and it invited Saint Joseph's over to join.

The Rams capped a sweep of the Hawks in their first series of the season by winning 9-3 yesterday in front of 166 fans at their new home at the Petersburg Sports Complex.

The turnout for the Rams season opening set was about a third the crowd that came to the Rams first three games at the Diamond last season. The Rams' offensive output for the series, however, jumped by about the same rate the other way.

The Rams combined to outscore the Hawks 34-9, including a 21-5 drubbing on Saturday in the first game of a double-header.

"I thought we played real well," said sophomore second baseman Scott Sizemore, who was 7 of 12 for the weekend with five RBI and four runs scored. "I thought we swung the bats real well. Shoot 21 runs in your first game. You can't do much better than that."

VCU (3-0) pounded Saint Joseph's last year 7-2, 7-0, 12-4. But this time around, the Rams did heavy damage with the long ball. VCU hit seven homeruns in the three games. Junior outfielder Joe Meader and newcomer Alex Gary each hit two ding-

ers. "It's definitely a bigger advantage this year for home runs, because playing at the Diamond for so long, you don't hit too many balls out," Sizemore said. "But this field's about 30 feet smaller than the Diamond. So it definitely helps out us."

The true benefactor of the increased offense is the Rams pitching staff.

Ace Harold Mozingo was given the win in his first start since winning CAA Rookie of the Year for last season's 7-4 campaign even though his start didn't last the five innings needed to earn a win.

The sophomore right-hander struck out seven of the 21 batters he faced in just four innings of work. Sophomore John Leonard came on in the fifth and allowed one run in three innings of middle-relief duty.

Junior Wayne Renfrow threw six shutout innings in the second half of the twin bill and the Rams won 4-0.

Marcus Davis, who moved up to be the team's Sunday starter after being the midweek starter last season, struck out five batters in five innings of work on Sunday. He left the game with a comfortable five-run lead and said that while the ballpark was smaller than the Diamond, this weekend had more to do with the effectiveness of the Rams' bats.

"Of course the field plays more to offense, but I still think we hit the ball well this weekend," Davis said. "We got a few homeruns that probably wouldn't have been homeruns in other parks, but other than that we still played well."

The Rams had to start adjusting hours be-

MEN'S BASEBALL	
VCU	21-4-9
SJU	5-0-3



Pat Kane

Junior Marcus Davis struck out five batters in five innings in yesterday's 9-3 win over Saint Joseph's.

fore the game as they prepared for their bus ride down Interstate 95 to Petersburg.

Because the new ballpark is about 30 miles away, the team will have to get used to the idea that every game is a road game.

Sizemore said that after the first trip of the season, he isn't too worried about it.

"It's a little taxing," Sizemore said. "You get a little tired, but it's not that big of a deal. We'll tough it out. We're ready to go for the whole haul of the season."

Davis said before the season that the team simply must accept the challenge and continue to play ball.

"Everything's fine," Davis said. "We

know we're going to have to travel here. We know this is the field we're going to play at all season. So we've just got to get used to it and just roll through it."

VCU has its first true road trip of the season next weekend as it heads down to Georgia to face the Auburn Tigers. Davis said that while the team smashed the Hawks, it can expect Auburn to put up more of a fight.

"I think we're going to be ready," Davis said. "I'm sure we're going to be ready, and I think it's just going to be a real good weekend for us to find out who we really are."

HOOPS continued from page 8

his eyes after the driving Hunter caught him with an elbow.

Even in losing efforts, Hunter has poured buckets on the Rams. The junior guard is averaging 17.2 points in the past five games against VCU, which is why Capel said he keyed in on the junior guard in preparing for the game, as opposed to Loughton, who gets most of the nods in the conference, including the one last week for CAA Player of the Week.

"He's the guy that we fear the most on their team, because in my mind he's the guy that can make wild plays.

"The play where he drove baseline and dunked it, that's a wild play," Capel said. "The play where he had the ball, did a couple of crossovers and stepped back and hit a three. That's a wild play. It's just (the) kind of plays that a lot of guys can't do."

Although the game featured two of the top three defenses in the Colonial Athletic Association, both teams lit up the scoreboards. The Monarchs shot 57 percent for the field, and VCU knocked down 53 percent of its shots.

But at crucial moments, like when the game was tied at 54 with about 13 minutes remaining or when Doles made a lay-up

minutes later to make the score 65-64, Capel said his team just missed opportunities.

"Junior forward Nick George said it was all because of Old Dominion's gritty man-to-man defense. "The shots that we were getting were tough shots," he said.

George hit 7 of 13 shots from the floor. His 19 points led the four Rams that reached double-figures in scoring. Doles and B.A. Walker both had 15 points, and center Calvin Roland hit a career-high 13 points missing only one of his seven attempts from the field.

As for the post-game party at half court, George shrugged it off, especially since it came after a regular season game.

"You've got to look at it like it's a big deal for them," George said. "They haven't beat us since I've been here. We're the defending champions. We're the one everybody's coming after."

VCU will play its final four CAA games at the Siegel Center. Tonight the Rams battle George Mason (9-5, 14-9) at 7:30 p.m., then they host Delaware (7-7, 10-15) on Wednesday. The only way they'll run into the Monarchs again is in the CAA tournament, and George said, "We'll be ready come tournament time."

Rams stun CAA leader in Delaware

From news sources

VCU apparently has it in for top teams.

The Rams women's basketball team led by senior Lauren Hogan's ninth double-double of the season, beat Colonial Athletic Association leader Delaware 68-65 on Sunday, making them the second basketball team on campus to end a top team's unbeaten streak.

In snapping their three-game losing streak, the Rams also put an end to the Blue Hens 17-game winning streak, and their 12 consecutive wins at the Bob Carpenter Center in Newark, Del.

VCU (4-9 CAA, 8-14) dominated Delaware (12-1, 19-3) on the glass, out-rebounding the Blue Hens 45-31. VCU pulled down 12 of its 16 offensive rebounds in the first half, scoring eight

WOMAN'S BASKETBALL	
VCU	68
UD	65

points on second-chance attempts and taking a 27-26 lead at the half.

The Rams held on in the second half, which saw nine lead changes. Miranda Smith's lay-up with 41 seconds left gave VCU a 3-point lead. The Rams then hit eight straight free throws to hold on.

Hogan scored 17 points and grabbed 10 rebounds (four offensive boards) in 33 minutes.

Michele Cosel hit two of the Rams four 3-pointers and dropped 16 points off the bench. She also pulled down six boards.

LaKea Jones scored 15 points on 5-of-11 shooting. She also hit two of her six attempts from beyond the arc.

Tiara Malcom, the Blue Hen's leading scorer, hit 20 points, playing all 40 minutes, but she shot just 5 of 14 from the field.

The Rams look to build on their win on Thursday when they host Hofstra (6-7, 11-11) at the Stuart C. Siegel Center at 7 p.m.

# Spectrum

## Valentine's Day horror stories

*VCU students share their most mortifying memories*

**HEATHER ALEXANDER**  
*Spectrum Writer*

Leslie Whitmore, a sophomore, said her worst Valentine's Day was when her serious boyfriend forgot her completely. She said he made up for it the following day, but she was depressed to find he had done nothing to celebrate on the actual day.

Lauren Mcadams, a sophomore, recalled her junior year in high school. She said someone whom she'd never seen before walked up to her and gave her a ruby, diamond ring. She had no idea who he was, and never saw him after that day. Thinking it wasn't real, she gave the ring to her mother, who got it appraised. Her mother still wears it because the ring turned out to be real.

Taylor Tuseen, a first-year student, told an embarrassing story about how he and two of his close friends ventured into Priscilla's (an adult novelty store) to buy his girlfriend a new vibrator for Valentine's Day. The embarrassing moment in this story is during the shopping process. After explaining that the gang of guys were interested in buying something for his girlfriend, the salesperson was aware of their true intentions.

While helping him pick out the object, the salesperson proceeded to loudly mimic the noises vibrator made while operating at various speeds. Completely embarrassed, Tussen proceeded to the checkout line, where he was informed and forced to purchase lubrication and batteries. In an attempt to be helpful, the employee opened the box, inserted the batteries, and turned the object on. Tussen and his friends only watched as the new "toy" gyrated across the counter and almost fell on the floor.

First-year student Robyn Shady explained that her worst Valentine's Day was during

high school. "All the cool kids got called up to the office to get their gifts," she said. So when her name was finally called, her classmates accused her of having a boyfriend. Shady went to the office to claim what she thought would be something for Valentine's Day. She arrived to find a note from her mother saying that said she didn't have to pick up her sibling after school. Embarrassed, Shady said she waited outside the classroom until class was over because she couldn't face her classmates empty handed.

Jan Austin, a junior, remembers her worst Valentine's Day. It happened years ago when she was in the second grade. She explained that she had the biggest crush on one of her classmates. When everyone passed out their Valentine's Day cards she was so excited to see that his said: "I'm monkeys about you." Austin said she knew the card had to mean that he was interested in her. Thrilled that he chose her to give this specific card, Austin showed her best friend, who showed her the same card from the same boy.

Emily Ruijmers, a freshman, said her worst Valentine's Day was when a boy handed her a card and she accepted it thinking it was intended for her. After she read it and thanked the boy for his card, she said he told her, "No, I'm just showing it to you," and made her give the card back.

Jake Bowers, a sophomore, said he spent his entire paycheck — about \$200 — on his girlfriend for the special day. When he arrived at her house the day before Valentine's Day, she opened the door and told him, "We need to talk." They proceeded to have a conversation resulting in a break-up. Jake said, "I spent the next day at home, bitter and angry." He was reminded of his ex-girlfriend and Valentine's Day every time he looked at the \$200 worth of gifts he never got to give her.

## Arthur Miller, playwright of 'Death of a Salesman,' dies at 89

**MICHAEL KUCHWARA**  
*AP Drama Writer*

NEW YORK — Arthur Miller, one of the greatest playwrights of the 20th century, gave America and the world "Death of a Salesman" and its iconic title character Willy Loman.

A dramatist of personal and public responsibility, Miller wrote forcefully about moral issues in such plays as "All My Sons," "The Crucible," "A View From the Bridge," "After the Fall," "The Price" and more over a span of six decades.

Broadway marquees dimmed their lights Friday at curtain time in tribute to Miller, who died of congestive heart failure Thursday at his home in Roxbury, Conn. He was 89.

Miller attained a celebrity few American playwrights achieve, in part because of his marriage to film star Marilyn Monroe. He first dealt with their relationship in "After the Fall," his most autobiographical play, and later in "Finishing the Picture," his final major work, which had its world premiere last October at Chicago's Goodman Theatre.

Miller was particularly fascinated by success and failure, two components of the American Dream. And nowhere are success and failure more profound and treated with more compassion than in "Salesman," his best-known play. Loman, its stoop-shouldered protagonist, became synonymous with everything that went wrong with the dream.

Miller married Monroe in 1956, following his divorce from his first wife and childhood sweetheart, Mary Slattery.

In a 1992 interview with a French newspaper, he called Monroe "highly self-destructive" and said that during their marriage, "all my energy and attention were devoted to trying to help her solve her problems. Unfortunately, I didn't have much success."

In 1962, he married his third wife, photographer Inge Morath. That same year, Monroe committed suicide.

Miller's success, so overwhelming in the 1940s and 1950s, seemed to wane during the next two decades, despite the well-received Broadway revival of "Death of a Salesman" starring Hoffman in 1984.

Undaunted, Miller continued to write, even as he became increasingly disillusioned with Broadway. In 1991, he premiered a new play, "The Ride Down Mt. Morgan," in London -- the first time he had opened a play outside of the United States.

Born Oct. 17, 1915, Miller was one of three children in a middle-class Jewish family. His father, a manufacturer of women's coats, was hard hit by the Depression and could not afford to send Miller to college. A tall, imposing man with a gruff accent, Miller worked as a loader and shipping clerk at a New York warehouse to earn tuition money and eventually attended the University of Michigan, where he earned a bachelor's degree in 1938.

Miller had two children, Jane Ellen and Robert, by Slattery, and he and Morath, who died in 2002, had one daughter, Rebecca, a filmmaker married to actor Daniel Day-Lewis.

### What's the V-Day buzz?

The buzz is Grammy-winning singer Christina Aguilera is engaged to Jordan Bratman, her music-executive beau. Saudi Arabia is one place where lovebirds won't be seeing red today. V-Day is against the law and the sale of roses and red paraphernalia are banned. Will Smith's romantic comedy "Hitch" took the No. 1 spot V-Day weekend.

## Black History Happenings

Monday, Feb. 14

The Elegbra Folklore Society presents **AfroBics!**, an aerobics class based on African dance. Mondays through Feb. 28. To sign up call 644-3900

Tuesday, Feb. 15

Christopher Brooks gives a lecture on "**And Still I Sing: African-American Women in Three Musical Traditions**," 7-9:30 p.m. Commonwealth Ballrooms A & B. Free and open to the public. For more information call 827-1163.

Wednesday, Feb. 16

The Library of Virginia presents "**A Documentary Perspective on Slave Housing**," at noon. Discover critical clues on slave life and housing in the Chesapeake region. 800 E. Broad St. For more information call 692-3592 or visit [www.lva.lib.va.us](http://www.lva.lib.va.us).

Latino Student Association and Office of Multicultural Student Affairs present "**Rhythms and Movimientos: African Rhythms through Latin Dance**," 7-9 p.m. Commonwealth Ballrooms A & B. Free. For more information call 828-6672.

# Spectrum

## “Metamorphoses” director plunges into VCU Theatre

*Ron Nakahara discusses his career and tackles the new play, which takes place mostly in a pool*

**J. ADAM WRIGHT**  
*Spectrum Writer*

Who can make a living from acting? That’s what Ron Nakahara, director of the new VCU Theatre production, “Metamorphoses,” thought when he was growing up. It was not a career choice, he said. However, that career chose him when he was in his early twenties.

Nakahara, a Hawaiian-born Japanese-American, said he received his calling to the stage during a trip abroad to study in Japan. He was asked by classmates to participate in an original sketch as part of a festival. Since then, he said, it has been his salvation.

Nakahara’s calling has led him all over, including New York University and production companies in Washington, D.C. In addition to being a director, he has appeared in plays and on television.

So what brings Ron Nakahara to Richmond? When the VCU Theatre Department decided to put on the award-winning Mary Zimmerman play, “Metamorphoses,” Ron Nakahara said he received a call from his long time friend David Leong, chair of the theatre department. Little did Nakahara know that his first play in the Richmond area would be nothing like anything he has been a part of in the past.

The greatest challenge for the director did not lie in the actors, production staff, or script. According to Nakahara, those elements were terrific. He said he was pleased with the professionalism of all who were involved and has enjoyed his work here at VCU.

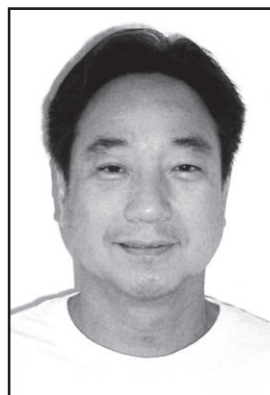
The element that sets this play apart and makes for an especially challenging production is simply part of the set. This particular part of the set happens to be a large pool of water, set in the center of the stage. Nakahara said that the entire play takes place around and even inside the pool.

Nakahara said that the greatest challenge has been adjusting to the difficulties of moving around in water. The timing changes and actors’ range of motion is limited. Considering that this play opens in February, even with the heat on in the W.E. Singleton Center for the Performing Arts building, acting right after getting out of a pool would be a challenge for anybody.

“Metamorphoses” changed the way that Nakahara approached the play. Despite the challenging set design, Nakahara had nothing but praise for the cast. He described them as hard working and very professional, but also very fun to work with. Perhaps because the actors are students, he said he found himself teaching as well as directing. This was also a learning experience for him.

Although he read the script, Nakahara never saw the original production of “Metamorphoses” and therefore has no basis of comparison. He said that in a way this gives him a fresh canvas and makes the play his own interpretation, rather than a reproduction of the original.

While staying completely faithful to the script, the wide scope — in relation to stage direction — allows for a completely unique presentation.



**Ron Nakahara**

Nakahara explained that, like his interpretation of the text, each person in audience would get something different and personal out of the play. Like a mirror, he said, a person could see a part of themselves in it.

“No two people will be touched in the same way.”

“Metamorphoses” is based on the Ancient Transformation Myths of Ovid. The Greek roots of the play lend a classical tone to the theme; but since it has been re-written for a current audience, finding a connection to this play will not be a stretch.

These stories reflect on the human condition and cover themes of greed, love, loss and triumph. VCU theatre’s retelling of them provides modern humor and relevant social commentaries. Nakahara assures that the play will truly be an experience not to be missed.

“If you like theater, this is a play worth seeing,” the director said.

Even if you have novice experience in live theater, it will be exciting to see exactly what this seasoned director and his “terrific cast” have created.

**WHAT:**  
“Metamorphoses”

**WHEN:**  
Feb. 17-19 and  
23-26 at 7:30 p.m.  
and Feb. 20 and 27  
at 2:30 p.m.

**WHERE:**  
Singleton Center  
for the Performing  
Arts

**TICKETS:**  
Free to VCU  
students with  
valid ID and \$8 for  
faculty, alumni and  
senior citizens.  
General admission  
tickets are \$12. To  
purchase tickets,  
visit Theatre VCU  
Box Office or call  
828-6026.

**MORE INFO:**  
Call 828-2695.

## Author sheds light on root of ‘color complex’

**HEATHER ALEXANDER**  
*Spectrum Writer*

Author Marita Golden visited VCU last Thursday to speak about a serious, and clandestine issue that her book, “Don’t Play In The Sun: One Woman’s Journey Through the Color Complex,” tackles.

Golden defined the “color complex” as a belief system that maintains white is better than black or lightless is more desirable than darkness in an individual’s skin tone.

People listened and a few related as Golden read excerpts from her book about discrimination within different races, specifically blacks.

“Nobody really wants to talk about it,” said Shannon Wilson, a sophomore. She said she attended the seminar because she was interested in the topics and not just because her class required her to do so.

Cassandra Tyler, also a sophomore, explained how pleased she was because “it’s being addressed”.

The two girls explained that they could relate to the implications of race and the negative standard of images of beauty that reflect on self esteem and mental health that Golden described as she read from her book.

Golden explained that she was inspired to write about this topic after hearing the song, “Video”, by singer India Arie.

“I’ve got to dialogue with this,” Golden said.

She said her book was extremely hard to write because she felt she had to “speak the unspeakable.”

The issue of racism within the African-American community exists, Golden said, but is an issue that is hardly ever addressed. She believed the legacy of slavery and colonialism convinced blacks that they were better off they looked like the people that previously

enslaved them.

Golden also gave statistics about jobs and income, saying they are directly related to an individual’s shade of skin. She described situations regarding the “color complex” all over the world, including scenarios in Sudan and Africa.

Golden used anecdotes to get her point across. She told stories about when she was young her mother would say, “Don’t you know you’re going to have to get a

light-skinned husband for the sake of your children?”

During her reading, Golden further explained some of the anecdotes included in her book and taken from people she’s interviewed.

Even though the writing process was hard and frustrating,

Golden said, the book has enabled her to “live in my brown skin with much more compassion for lighter skinned sisters and brothers.”

After the reading, Jacqueline McDon-

*“Don’t you know  
you’re going to have  
to get a light-skinned  
husband for the sake of  
your children?”*

—Golden’s mother

nough, a teaching and learning professor in the School of Education, stood up to personally thank Golden for speaking about the color complex issue.

McDonough believed examples and continuous conversation helps to improve the complex.

Shucona Artis, a senior psychology major, attended with a friend because “it seemed like an interesting and appealing topic.”

“I can actually relate,” said junior Sandra Burnett, referring to Golden’s remarks about how some men associate skin color and beauty. The urban studies and planning major said she found the seminar overall informative and a motivation to buy the book.

**For more information on Marita Golden visit [www.maritagolden.com](http://www.maritagolden.com). “Don’t Play in the Sun: One Woman’s Journey Through the Color Complex” can be purchased at the VCU bookstore or on the author’s Web site.**

## Spectrum

# 12 things to do with your significant other this Valentine's Day

ANDREW BABB  
Graphic designer

## 1. Take them out for a picnic

There are a number of places you can have lunch around VCU that require minimal walking from campus. Monroe Park is a pleasant place to picnic, and most of the University apartment buildings have common areas with tables. If you want something just a bit more scenic, it will take longer to walk there. Belle Isle and Byrd Park are still in walking distance of the Monroe Park campus, but expect to spend half an hour or more getting there on foot. And don't forget Maymont!

## 3. Give them a hand-made card

Giving someone a hand-made card is a way to tell them that you cared enough about them to put whatever creative skills you have to work. You can make a card easily with a single sheet of paper - just fold it in half along its short side, then fold it in half again. Now all you have to do is decorate the front and write a message inside.



Chris Powell

## 5. Make them dinner

A romantic dinner for two on Valentine's Day means one of two things: either you break the bank going to an expensive restaurant or you're going to be cooking yourself. Find something that your Significant Other likes that you can make easily, and you'll be riding high. If you don't get it just right, don't worry. Play it off - it's the thought that counts.

## 7. Take them to see an art exhibit

We've got the Anderson Gallery behind the Hibbs building, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts down the street on Boulevard, and we've got the School of the Arts right here. Face it, most people here like art. Take your SO out to see some of the things on display at the public galleries near campus.

Unfortunately the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts' galleries will be closed on Valentine's Day. But if you don't mind putting festivities off a few days, those over the age of 21 can enjoy the Art After Hours series this Thursday from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. (for more information, visit <http://www.vmf.state.va.us/aah2005.html>).



Chris Powell

## 9. Draw a picture of your girl/boy

Find a picture (you should have one if you've been together for any length of time) and draw a sketch of you and them together. If you don't have much artistic skill, then take a photo and frame it. It makes a good gift - especially for the artistically inclined.

## 11. Make breakfast

Start the day out with hot waffles or pancakes - or head down to one of the cafes in the area, like the Strawberry Street Café (421 North Strawberry Street, opens at 11 a.m. on Valentine's Day). Show them that you know how they like their eggs in the morning.



Chris Powell

## 2. Give them flowers

On this Valentine's Day, most of the supermarkets near campus sell flowers. If you forget, you still have a chance to pick them up without having to skip classes to do it. Remember to pick up red roses - I've been told that each color rose has different meanings and you wouldn't want to accidentally give the one for platonic friendship to your girlfriend.

## 4. Take them out to a movie

Nothing's quite as cliché as dinner and a movie - but there's a reason it's a cliché, and that's because it also a good idea. If you can't find anything in theaters, then don't be afraid to rent a movie. If you have to huddle next to each other in a dark room just to see *Casablanca* on a 15-inch screen, so much the better.

## 6. Know what they like

Even if you can't do anything else on this list, try to take the time to show your girlfriend or boyfriend that you know what their interests and likes are. Just showing them that you've remembered can be enough. Give them a call, send them a text message - just show them you know and you care.

## 8. Get a tattoo

Nothing says "commitment" like permanent body modification. Find one of the local tattoo parlors (make sure they use sterilized needles and follow health codes) and get something pierced or permanent inscribed in honor of your beloved. But make sure you can live with the consequences, and that your SO is into that - because nothing quite says "crazy stalker" like permanent body modification, either.

## 10. Buy dinner

If you don't feel confident cooking, take a walk up Main Street. Past campus, there are a number of places in walking distance that have nice outdoor seating and good menus. Sven Shine Inn, Mulligans, Baja Bean Co. and many others are just in the first few blocks.

If you're up for a longer walk or a short drive, there are other places offering a good meal for two deeper in the Bottom and farther up in Cary Town.



Chris Powell

## 12. Visit a clinic for STD screening

Trust us, if really care for your SO, get screened for STDs. Go together to ease your mind - or get treatment. Student Health offers same-day appointments. So do yourself and your lover a favor - because if you don't do anything about it, it's not just going to go away.

# COMICS

## Dog Dayz

Drew



## Cul-de-sac

Chris Powell



**THE COMMONWEALTH TIMES  
NEEDS YOUR SKILLS!**

**IF YOU DRAW COMICS, SUBMIT THEM  
TO US OR WE'LL SEND NINJAS!**

The Commonwealth Times is looking to expand our comics page. If you would like to contribute, drop by Temple Room 1149 or email [andrew@toolatetorun.com](mailto:andrew@toolatetorun.com)

We print comics at 200 dpi.

# EDITORIALS & LETTERS

## Opinion In Brief

### Shining example

The election results are in and a potential flashpoint for ethnic violence has been averted – no one political party won the majority in Iraq. That means the Shiites – who got the most votes, but not more than 50 percent – will have to work with one of the minority parties to form a coalition government.

Working with the minority party, hmm... could it happen here?

### Freedumb

Is our children learning? A recent study found that nearly one-third of high school students believe that the freedom of speech and press go “too far,” along with a majority of high school students who believe that it is illegal to burn an American flag and that the government should be able to censor the press.

Part of the problem – according to one professor – is that student journalism has been on the decline. When there is no school paper to practice fundamental freedoms such as those of speech and the press, students have a harder time learning about what they really mean.

The reason school papers have been on the decline is due to lack of funding while schools have been struggling to meet the demands of the federally imposed No Child Left Behind’s standardized testing. Public education was designed to teach students how to function in a free and democratic society. It may be failing on that basis alone.

### Home run proposal

A new home for the R-Braves in Shockoe Bottom, and it won’t cost the city a dime. What more could you ask for? The business community is behind it and providing the funds, and in exchange Shockoe receives a much-needed facelift, an infusion of new development and a boon to Richmond’s quality of life.

VCU will benefit too – the Diamond will become the Rams’ new home stadium, and the area will be a focus for future development of our athletics program, and possible economic revitalization for the area.

Overall, the positioning of the new stadium just north of the Farmer’s Market in the heart of Richmond makes sense by focusing economic growth inward and providing the infrastructure for future public transportation. The streetcar might even return to Broad Street. Now that



BY LYZ HOLDER

## Your Turn *Letters to the Editor*

### To the Editor:

I read the statement in the Commonwealth Times regarding musings on Vice President Edward O’Leary’s comments, which dealt with the style of our recently drafted Constitution.\* With all due respect, I must disagree with these comments on O’Leary’s description.

First, the new constitution is a very significant improvement on the old constitution, in that this particular one provides more efficiency within the Student Government Association, a problem that we had intended to fix.

O’Leary was speaking in general terms when comparing the VCU Constitution to the Constitution of the United States. My reasoning for this holding is simply based on the fact that there are three branches of the Student Government Association: a senate that legislates, a president that executes and a judicial that interprets.

The committees of the SGA might be described as our bureaucracies (the bureaucracy is sometimes referred to as the fourth branch of the United States government). It must be kept in mind, however, that the nation’s needs are different than those of the Student Government Association of VCU. For example, we do not need a military and do not form international treaties or alliances. So, in fact, the provisions made by our Constitution

for three branches resemble the United States Constitution, whereas you said that it did not at all.

The broad picture painted by our Constitution does resemble the United States Constitution. The three branches are an integral part of both – as is the provision of the Vice President presiding over the Senate, in addition to the veto power. Those who question the Vice President presiding over the Senate should attend a Senate meeting and see first hand how the Senate runs more efficiently than it used to.

Vice President O’Leary is a man of integrity, which is demonstrated in his character, not to mention in his role of presiding over the Senate. He cognized these provisions included in our Constitution as being similar to that of the United States, and I believe he is right in saying so.

Cordially,

**Robert J. Smith III**  
Deputy Chief of Staff  
Monroe Park Campus SGA

\*Editor’s note: The comments in question were quoted in a Feb. 7 news article dealing with criticism of the new SGA constitution. They were the opinion of

LETTERS, page 15

## The Commonwealth TIMES

The independent student press of  
Virginia Commonwealth University

**DEVON MARROW**  
Executive Editor

**OMAR YACOUBI**  
Editor of the Editorial Pages

**WRITERS**  
Michael Dickinson • Lyz Holder

Opinions expressed are those of individual writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Commonwealth Times or VCU. Unsigned editorials represent the institutional opinion of The Commonwealth Times.

### Add Your Voice

The opinion section of The Commonwealth Times is open to the public. Please send letters to CTeditor03@yahoo.com, mailing address: P.O. Box 842010, Richmond, VA 23238-2010. Drop box location: Room 1149, T. Edward Temple Building. We reserve the right to edit all letters for grammar, style and space. Letters should not exceed one single-spaced typed page. Letters must be signed and must include daytime and evening phone numbers.

## Op/Ed

# Absolute power

## House Republicans use majority rule to protect their own

**OMAR YACOUBI**  
*Op/Ed Editor*

Since winning both houses of Congress and the White House in November, Republicans could be forgiven for being a little eager to flex their political muscle. After the election, the media attention winds down and the subject of politics leaves the dinner table for the dustbin of memory. Until the next presidential election comes along to remind us— it is easy to forget— that we do, in fact, decide the leader of the free world.

It is this distance of time, then, that Congressional Republicans must have been counting on when they decided to sack the chairman of the House Ethics Committee and replace two of its members with those less likely to cause trouble.

The controversy centers on House Majority Leader Tom DeLay (R-Tx.), who was reprimanded by the same ethics committee three times before last year's election. He is also currently the target of a grand jury investigation in Texas involving charges that he may have used illegal campaign contributions to win re-election.

Before public outcry caused them to reverse their decision, Republicans tried to change the rules so that a grand jury indictment against DeLay would not require him

to resign his position as leader (surprise, surprise, a similar bill has been introduced in the Texas legislature to try to end the investigation against DeLay altogether).

Another rules change that was left standing makes it harder to launch an ethics inquiry to begin with and changes the committee's bipartisan nature. The ethics committee has an equal number of Republicans and Democrats. In the past, when an ethics complaint was before the committee and it was deadlocked for whatever reason an investigation would proceed regardless.

Now that is no longer the case—a majority vote is required. In other words, if a party doesn't like what's being investigated, the investigation ends. Where an investigation could once proceed in spite of partisan gridlock it can now end because of it, leaving ethical questions unanswered.

And get this: the two committee members slated to replace the ones who were dismissed were actual contributors to DeLay's legal defense fund, according to the Washington Post, putting them in a direct conflict of interest. The official excuse is that the original members' terms were set to expire, but the Speaker of the House can and does easily and regularly extend their tenure. He did not extend this courtesy to the dismissed committee members and chairman.

Why haven't you heard about all this in the news? Part of the problem, according to a Feb. 5 article in the Washington Post, is that Republicans regularly wait until after 8 p.m. to release the information, so that by the time it makes it in the next day's newspaper it's old news. They use the news cycle against the press to keep unpopular information from becoming too exposed.

Apparently House Republicans want to use their power to protect their majority leader at all costs. They must not want a repeat of the demise of Senator Trent Lott (R-Miss.), who was Senate Majority Leader until he expressed regret at Strom Thurmond's 100th birthday party in 2002 that Thurmond was never elected president — which would have been fine, except he ran on a pro-segregation, states' rights platform.

Changing the makeup of the House Ethics Committee to protect the majority leader is an attack on the principles of good government. We rely on the integrity of our elected officials to represent us while in office, and a strongly independent and bipartisan ethics committee is the best way to ensure that integrity. Changing the rules for the convenience of the moment can only set a dangerous precedent. Making it harder to pursue ethics inquiries now can hinder future efforts to keep our politicians accountable.

The irony of all this is that Republicans were themselves the ones who created the ethics committee in the first place upon taking power in 1994 in the name of rooting out government corruption.

How times have changed.

*Omar Yacoubi may be reached at  
yacoubioa@vcu.edu*

### LETTERS, from page 14

*of VCU graduate law professor Robert Dying, who disagreed with O'Leary's assertion that the new constitution was modeled after that of the U.S. We believe the contrast made was necessary to provide the balance any news article demands.*

### To the Editor:

This letter is in response to Mike Dickinson's Feb. 7 article on campus intellectual freedom. Teachers, much like parents, have a powerful influence on developing minds. It is important that we do in fact hear various opinions, but the question remains whether the professors are actually indoctrinating students by providing only one point of view.

When a professor feels strongly about an issue— and voices it— are those who feel differently able to voice their opinions without the fear of being unfairly graded? Perhaps the students who are trying to establish their positions on various issues are only hearing one side. If the teacher plays devil's advocate and always attempts to show various views rather than their own it provides for the open and free environment of the exchange of ideas which academia is meant to be.

In our academic careers, we should question all opinions — even those with which we agree, as that is the way to enrich our own arguments and views.

Sincerely,  
**Demetrios J. Melis**

# Money for nothing; education for free

## Open admission to state universities would level racial, economic divides

**MIKE DICKINSON**  
*Op/Ed Writer*

Sometimes a news worthy event happens that is so ridiculously absurd you'd think it was made up. That was the case recently when a white family from New York filed a federal complaint of discrimination against the University of Virginia for allegedly discriminating against their son and denying him admission because he is white.

This family thinks that if their son had been a minority — or a woman — he would have gained admission to the university with no problem. As the father was quoted as saying, "Minorities with far less qualifications were granted admission." While individual admission records are confidential, if this were actually the case it would be a good thing.

Anyone who has ever been on "the lawn" at UVa knows it is an overwhelmingly white school made up mainly of the sons and daughters of the wealthy. It is by no means the common man's place to learn, and it really is not the true "university" of Virginia

because most of Virginia's residents could never afford to send their kids there.

This is an issue that has bothered me for a long time as I grew up here in Richmond and I have seen a tale of two cities. In some of the poorest areas of town, which are predominantly African-American, you have high schools where students' going to college is the exception, not the rule.



We talk about wanting to fix society and enabling those families who are poor an opportunity to get better, but we continue with patchwork fixes to a larger problem.

Instead of putting a band-aid on something that requires major surgery, I think we should fix it once and for all.

The only way to break the cycle is to force state universities to eliminate discriminatory admission criteria and open their doors to everyone—not just those who have made good grades in high school. It is a fact that environment plays a role in how students learn, test and socialize, so those who come from a rich, protected background are naturally going to have better test scores than those who grew up poor.

Allowing children from all walks of life a chance to get a degree would also help stop the rampant racism and discrimination against the poor that still exists. It is a sad fact that even though we live years removed from the Civil War and the official end of slavery the battle for racial equality still rages on everyday.

This can't be fixed, though, without a total restructuring of the higher education system. I know those from out of state pay the bills for most universities — including those here at Virginia Commonwealth University — because their tuition rates are much higher, but we need to allow all state high school graduates guaranteed admission first.

For a long time I have said that Virginia needs to follow the example of the great state of California and have an open door admission policy to state universities, being that if you graduate from a state high school, then you automatically gain admission to any state university you choose to go to.

Of course this would hurt the budget and run the state into the red. But that always happens, as the state almost never has a balanced budget. Instead of overrunning the budget to give people a ten-dollar car-tax relief check,

I would rather overrun the budget to ensure each and every child born here and graduated from a Virginia high school a chance to get a higher education.

Ask yourself: who loses? Not the children and the leaders of tomorrow, as they each will have a chance to go to any state university they want. Not the children who would not have a chance to a better life without it. We hear so often of the downward cycle and how those who are poor are born into poverty, and they're already in such a big hole they can't dig themselves out of it. This would break that cycle!

Kids from the manufacturing communities of Southside Virginia who cannot afford to go to college now because their parents are laid off would have a chance. Children of coal miners in Appalachia would have a chance. It would be truly universal, as those with college degrees have more opportunity. More people with more degrees would force companies to play fair when it comes to their employment and payment practices.

It is sad and very real that the only people who lose are the families of the rich, white majority who currently hold a monopoly on the powers that be. Maybe that is why they are so against this.

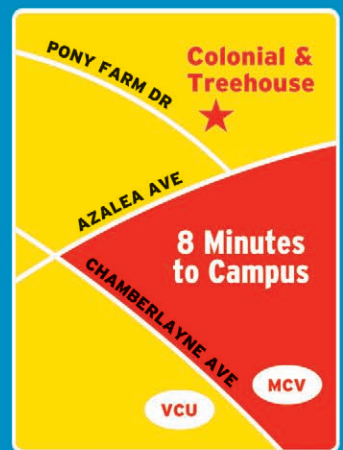
*Michael Dickinson may be reached at  
mdickinson2112@aol.com*



Now pre-leasing for summer and fall.  
Reserve early for the best deal!

STUDENT HOUSING

@the nice price!



FREE parking & FREE gas heat

2 MONTHS  
FREE RENT!

LIMITED AVAILABILITY. SUBJECT TO NORMAL LEASING POLICIES.

Rents from ~~\$599.~~  
Ample free parking! **\$499**

Standard package includes 2 MONTHS FREE RENT, gas heat, water/sewer and trash.  
Deluxe Package includes furniture, electricity, gas heat & utilities, water, sewer, trash and EXPRESS BUS TO CAMPUS.

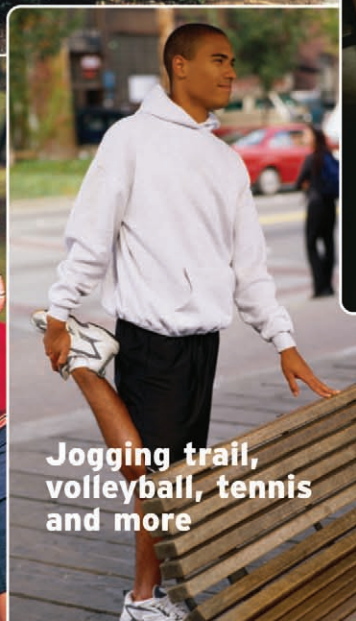


### Freedom & Space

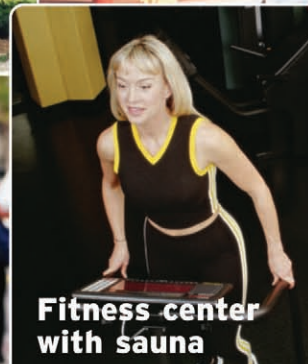
Large apartments with fully-equipped kitchens, dishwasher and disposal, separate dining areas, large vanity baths, mini-blinds, wall-to-wall carpeting, central air, private patio/balcony, canteen, laundry facilities open 24/7



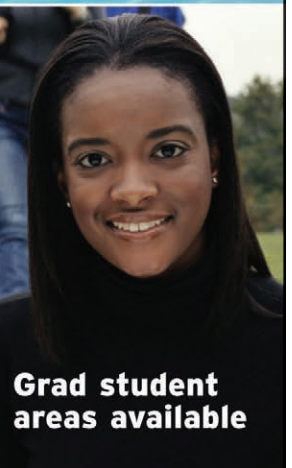
Spacious grounds with picnic tables & grills



Jogging trail, volleyball, tennis and more



Fitness center with sauna



Grad student areas available

Express bus to campus  
No parking hassle!

**Colonial**  
**321-4840**

1-800-542-6753  
colonial@gsc-apt.com

**Treehouse**  
**321-3509**

1-800-849-5509  
treehouse@gsc-apt.com

**Or call**  
**329-6666**

1-800-368-7669  
apartmentlocator@gsc-apt.com