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“Metamorphoses” makes big splash opening night



Ovid's myths evoke love, greed, perserverence

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WEIRD NEWS

CALENDAR

FEB. 21 THROUGH FEB. 23

Monday, Feb. 21	Tuesday, Feb. 22	Friday, Feb. 23
Do you struggle with math and science classes? Make sure to attend the Student Affairs Counseling Services' Academic Success Workshop: Xtreme Fear: Handling Science and Math Anxiety in the University Student Commons noon to 1 p.m. The workshop is open to all students, but please register prior to attending at www.pubinfo.vcu.edu/academicsuccess . For more info, contact Darlene Pantaleo at 828-6200.	Looking for a fun and challenging way to exercise? Join Student Affairs Recreational Sports as they host the National Recreational Sports and Fitness Obstacle Course . The fun starts at 4:00 p.m. and runs until 7:00 p.m. in the Stuart C. Siegel Center. Call Constantine Alexakos at 827-0315 for more details.	Join the Humanities and Sciences Department as they welcome Dr. Bart D. Ehrman for a lecture on Truth and Fiction in "The Da Vinci Code." In this lecture, Ehrman will discuss what we really know about Jesus, Mary Magdalene and Constantine. The lecture is from 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. in the Engineering Building Auditorium. For more details, contact Kathleen Murphy at 828-1636.

CAMPUS FORECAST



Monday
67/38



Tuesday
59/35



Wednesday
52/33



Thursday
48/26

Compiled from wire reports

Kissing Couple Smashes Record

A German couple broke the world record for kissing after smooching for 31 hours without taking a break. The 19-year-old woman and 24-year-old man defeated an American couple's record of 30 hours, 59 minutes and 27 seconds. Although they are still waiting for Guinness officials to recognize their feat, they have already been crowned the king and queen of their local Bavarian Kissing Championship.

Chinese man is a gas at parties

Wei Mingtang, a 55-year-old Chinese man, has a strange talent. He can blow up balloons and extinguish candles with his ears. Mingtang realized that his ears leaked air more than 30 years ago, but only later did he think of using them to inflate balloons. Mingtang uses a pipe to help him concentrate the air to fill the balloon. At a recent party, he blew out a line of 20 candles in 20 seconds with the aid of a hose.

Bar cleans up its drinks

Greene King, a bar and restaurant chain, has banned sexy names for drinks in its bars and pubs. The chain has told workers in 750 of its locations to stop selling drinks with names such as Slippery Nipple and Sex on the Beach. This decision comes three years after the chain was criticized by the public for depicting a woman

having an orgasm in advertisements for one of the company's beers. A company spokeswoman said that Greene King has adopted a policy to advertise alcohol in a responsible manner rather than associate it with sex or raucous behavior.

Fainting officer disturbs robbery

A policeman in India fainted when he caught a burglar robbing his recently deceased friend's home. As the officer was returning home one night, he heard a noise that sounded like it was coming from the locked home of a former co-worker who was killed in a shoot out. As he investigated, the man saw a figure in the house, which he thought was empty, and thinking it was the ghost of his friend, fainted. A security guard found the officer the next morning still lying by the door of the house along with several bags of items the burglar left behind.

Just like in the movies

A Dutch tourist has finally made his way home after being stranded in an airport in Brazil for five months. Sheridan Gregorio spent all of his money while he was on vacation. He had a return ticket to fly home, but he did not realize that he had to pay an airport tax before boarding. After missing the flight because he could not afford to pay the tax, Gregorio was informed that he now had no ticket because it was non-refundable. Gregorio was forced to sleep in the airport and clean restaurants in exchange for food and enough money to live on. After finally

saving enough money for the airport tax, Brazilian authorities helped him negotiate a deal with the airline to let him use his old ticket.

Man jailed over pretending to be racecar

A street performer in England has been arrested for pretending to be a Formula 1 racecar. David Honan made passers-by laugh by wearing a red Ferrari uniform and running around holding a steering wheel while pretending to race. He was soon arrested for causing a traffic violation. After being searched and detained for more than two hours, Honan accepted a warning rather than go to court to fight the violation and face a fine. He is upset that he now has a criminal record over something so silly as pretending to be a car. Police maintained that Honan was arrested because they thought he might cause an accident because he ran into the roadway.

Romanian man ties one on

Vasile Barbulescu, a Romanian man, was taken to the hospital after he tied a string around his penis to avoid using the bathroom. Doctors are not sure whether they can repair the damage, and Barbulescu now faces several months of difficult surgeries to correct the damage the string caused.

Front cover photo by Pat Kane.

The Commonwealth TIMES

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NEWS

Alliance gives international students a voice

KATIE GANTT*News Co-Editor*

Last semester's members of the Interfraternity, Panhellenic and National PanHellenic councils voted to institute the Multicultural Greek Alliance on campus.

Even though two other international organizations exist on campus, Keri Danna-Link, assistant director of leadership and Greek life, said more groups have received permission to organize at VCU.

"There are two (organizations) established — a South Asian sorority and South Asian fraternity," Danna-Link said. "And then we have three (groups) that have been given permission by the Greek Council to come on (campus) — a Latino group, a Latina (group) and another south Asian sorority."

Before becoming a fraternity or sorority, groups must go through a colonization process to complete requirements specified by their national chapters. After completing the requirements, the colony becomes a Greek organization.

"The three interest groups will be full-fledged colonies by the end of the semester," Danna-Link said.

With the probability of five international Greek organizations on campus, the governing bodies of VCU Greeks last semester saw the need to establish the Multicultural Greek Alliance to assist with the growing needs of these groups.

"The students were waiting for a critical mass of cultural organizations before the MGA is formed," Danna-Link said. "With three additional organizations slated to colonize, the existing organization thought it was time to form the governing body."

The alliance ranks as the fourth governing body for the Greek organizations on campus. Chandni Desai, a junior business administration major and vice president of the group, said the alliance will act as a mouthpiece for VCU's growing international Greek population.

"We just govern over the multicultural ones (fraternities and sororities)," Desai said. "The Greek Council as a whole will govern over all of them."

The alliance, Desai said, has given new power to the international groups on campus.

"There were a lot of things we couldn't participate in before — even though we were welcome — because we were just affiliates," Desai said. "It kind of gives us a home."

Although many who participate in international Greek organizations are of minority ethnicity, Danna-Link said being of ethnic origin is not a prerequisite for joining one of these groups.

"Historically... they just saw a need from the populations on campuses where they founded that wasn't being met with a typical Greek population, so they established those," Danna-Link said. "On our campus, the two that are established already have different ethnicities in them."

Association anticipates successful future

MICHAEL THORNTON*Staff Writer*

The South Asian Student Association — one of three Asian student groups at VCU — has high hopes for this semester.

Amit Bhatnagar, sophomore psychology major and co-president of SASA, suggested that better student participation would help his group's future plans.

"Our goals are to get people to come out to events," he said. "We haven't been as organized as we all would like it to be, so we strive to make it more organized and well-planned so people will come to our events."

Started in 2002 for students of Bangladeshi, Indian, Bhutan, Nepalese, Pakistani and Sri Lankan cultures, the group encourages students of all backgrounds to participate and interact with South Asian students on campus.

Even though many haven't heard much from them, Bhatnagar was confident in December about a successful future for the SASA program.

"This program has helped me get to know more people around campus, and it has brought unity within the South Asian community," he said. "It hasn't put that much stress on us, but this semester with all the planned events I'm sure it will keep us busy."

For more information about SASA, students can visit its web site at www.freewebs.com/kalyptic/SASAintro.html for a list of activities and events.

Workshop to answer off-campus housing questions

JESSICA CHAPIN*Staff Writer*

Off-Campus Housing Services is offering a special "Moving on Moving out" workshop series to help VCU students learn the pluses and minuses of living in apartments and in other off-campus housing.

Kirsten Hirsch, assistant director for public relations and student activities who organized the series, said students attending the program should gain an overview of what to expect.

"Getting your first apartment is really kind of a right of passage, and it's something that you (students) need a little help with," said Hirsch, who has conducted the workshop every February for several years. Although the first workshop was last Wednesday, students can attend others on Feb. 22, 24 and March 24.

"What a student can expect if they attend this year would be an overview of everything you need to know from finding an apartment, legal issues and leases to how to move out and how to deal with roommates," she said, adding that she and her staff are trying to make this year's workshops a little more interactive than in previous years.

Students such as James King, a double-major in biology and

history, have concerns about legal issues when dealing with landlords.

"I guess next time I look for a place I'm not going to apply as a student... because it seems to be a lot easier," King said, suggesting that landlords are biased against students.

At the first workshop, Hirsch provided information about budgeting, leasing, subleasing and what students might expect when searching for an apartment in her PowerPoint and video presentations, as well as through questions and answers.

Officer Rebecca Shaw of the university police addressed safety issues at the first program, while a representative from Housing Opportunities Made Equal will talk about legal issues at the second.

Young Ji Cha, a first-year undeclared major searching for her first apartment, attended the first workshop.

"I really don't have any knowledge of renting, so this is a really good seminar," Cha said. "It answered most of my questions."

Cha further complimented the university's efforts in offering such workshops to help students find off-campus housing.

"Considering the fact that they don't have enough apartments for us I'm glad that they have something like this for us," she said after the first meeting.

Moving On Moving Out

- 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 22 and Thursday, Feb. 24 at the Student Commons Forum Room
- 10:30 a.m. Thursday, March 24 at the Student Commons Virginia Rooms A-B

CRIME LOG



Feb. 14

- Female employee advised sexual assault occurred by a known person in the Emergency Room of North Hospital.

Feb. 15

- Male advised unknown person(s) damaged his vehicle in a hit and run in the S Deck.
- Male arrested for drunk in public and possession of

cocaine; male arrested for drunk in public; male arrested for drunk in public and identity fraud on the 1200 block of W. Marshall St.

Feb. 16

- Male arrested for trespassing at North Hospital.

Feb. 17

- Male student arrested for littering, possession of marijuana and underage possession of alcohol; four male students arrested for underage possession of alcohol on the 300 block of N. Harrison St.



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NEWS

Continuing education aids students

Students and faculty discuss need for master's degrees

KAREN BOLIPATA
Staff Writer

Franklin Wallace spent his undergraduate years at VCU majoring in fine arts. Specializing in painting and printmaking, Wallace said his daily routine consisted of sleeping until noon, painting for a few hours and “hanging out”—all while hoping to graduate.

“That was about it,” he said. “(I sold) paintings, (and) kind of lived off that.”

After graduating with a bachelor's degree in fine arts, Wallace said he first worked as a corporate bondsman. Then played a role in the inception of Hook Ups Inc., a nonprofit organization that he said was a small business incubator for children and adults.

“I had no intention,” Wallace said, “no interest in returning to VCU in any capacity.”

But now — while acting as the director of VCU's Americorps and America Reads programs and pursuing a master's degree in public administration, Wallace said he hopes to become a better administrator.

Just how important is a master's degree in pursuing a desired career?

With the increasing competitiveness of the job industry, Blue Wooldridge and other VCU professors predicted that those without a master's degree could become obsolete in the business world.

“I think it's basically essential. And not only essential, but also highly desirable,” said Wooldridge, an associate professor of public administration.

“Obviously (obtaining a bachelor's

degree) is a big milestone in (a person's) life,” he said. “But unfortunately the world keeps on spinning and things keep changing and (people) have to develop — all of us have to.”

Wooldridge said his graduate students have bachelor's degrees in various fields, such as mass communications, political science and history. While he teaches in the doctoral program, he said most of his students work toward their master's degrees in public administration.

“Sometimes people want the knowledge for knowledge's sake,” Wooldridge said. “Others want new skills. Other times they think it's going to help them in promotion.... and sometimes all three together.”

Edward Howard, coordinator of Off-campus Academic Programs, said continuing education can help workers in many ways.

“Continuing education serves such a wide variety of purposes,” Howard said, “whether it's educating the work force — to keep their skills up-to-date or it's keeping teachers recertified.

“If (people) want to be competitive in the work force, then (they) have to keep updating (their) skills.”

He cited the Summer Science Workshops for teachers that offer a series of residential programs having titles such as Virginia Woods, Waters and Wildlife, DNA, Drugs and the Law, as well as Bugs, Bones and Botany.

“The teachers loved to come in for a week,” Howard said. “They were able to get three credits for recertification. At the same time (they) learn something new that

basically makes science more fun to learn for their students.”

VCU faculty — some full-time and some adjunct — teach the courses.

Off-campus classes, Howard said, continue to grow because of the work force's growing dependency on technology.

“My biggest advice is to understand and take advantage of all the resources that are available to you as an undergraduate, but if you don't pursue these things they're not going to come and knock on your door and tell you about it.”

— Franklin Wallace

VCU student Demetrios Melis, who is pursuing a master's degree in public administration, said he hopes eventually to secure a law-enforcement-management position. Therefore, he said, he plans to enter the law enforcement at the lowest level so he can have a better understanding of the field.

Richard Huff, coordinator of the doctoral

program in public policy and administration, said the master's degree is important, but not necessarily to receive a higher salary.

“(It will give you) a sense of accomplishment primarily,” Huff said. “You may or may not get a higher salary. Improve your skills, understanding, broaden your horizons — that's what's really important.”

Huff said he knows the difficulty some graduate students experience with earning their master's degrees — many balance full-time or part-time jobs and care for their families on top of their school loads.

“My advice would be just tough it out because it's worth it in the long run,” Huff advised students. “If you really want to succeed, if you really want a master's degree, if you really want a Ph.D — just work hard because you can do it.”

For students still pursuing their bachelor's degrees, Huff recommended they broaden their horizons beyond their main interests.

“The more broad your background and education is the better you can write about it,” he said.

Wallace said Hook Ups Inc., his nonprofit program, and Snaps, a for-profit business, allowed him the opportunity to utilize his bachelor's degree in fine arts and his interest in working with children, teaching them positive ways to be successful.

“My biggest advice is to understand and take advantage of all the resources that are available to you as an undergraduate,” he said. “But if you don't pursue these things they're not going to come and knock on your door and tell you about it.”

SGA charity drive to benefit victims

KATIE GANTT
News Co-Editor

VCU's Student Government Association is hosting its charity drive finale to make students aware of domestic violence and sexual assault crimes Wednesday Feb. 23 from noon to 1 p.m. in the Commons Plaza.

The event, which will feature speakers and singers from the Richmond community, will discuss how to break the cycle of sexual and domestic abuse.

Students are encouraged to bring broken or unwanted cell phones to donate for refurbishment. Once fixed, these phones will become tracking devices for victims across the country — allowing them to feel safe.

Monetary donations will also be accepted, and all proceeds will go the YWCA, a center for sexual assault and domestic violence victims.

We want to hear from you!



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

SPORTS

Upcoming Sports EVENTS

Men's basketball

Feb. 23: William & Mary, at the Stuart C. Siegel Center at 7:30 p.m.

Feb. 26: VCU vs. UNC WILMINGTON at the Stuart C. Siegel Center, 7:30 p.m.

Women's basketball

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

Feb. 24: VCU at William & Mary, Williamsburg, Va., 7 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. 25: vs. Clemson at the Thalhimer Tennis Center, 1:30 p.m.

Feb. 27: vs. Virginia at the Thalhimer Tennis Center, 2 p.m.

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. 27: George Mason University in Fairfax, Va.

Baseball

Feb. 26: Sacred Heart (Doubleheader), Petersburg, Va., 1 p.m.

Feb. 27: Sacred Heart, Petersburg, Va., 1 p.m.

Special Events

Feb. 26: Nicole Megaloudis 5k Run at Byrd Park

Registration starts at 12:30 p.m. on Traf-ford Avenue. For information on ways to donate call VCU Sports Information at 828-7000

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

Rams tie Verloop's club team in exhibition

Harris battles elements and Gooische Hockey to score three goals

JULIAN BENBOW

Sports Editor

The 40-degree weather and the frequent wind gusts weren't quite typical of a field hockey game, but VCU played through it.

Besides, the Rams' opponent did come all the way from the Netherlands.

Along with battling the elements, VCU also took on Gooische Hockey Club, the Dutch club team of current VCU standout Carlot Verloop. The teams played to a 3-3 tie last Friday in front of a few dozen fans at Cary Street Field.

Third-year head coach Shelly Behrens said the team doesn't normally play in the middle of the winter, but it was able to take a lot from the new experience.

"It's cold. It's miserable. It's all the conditions that we play in when it's really bad weather and the girls played well," said Behrens. "They competed, and I'm really impressed with them. The one thing I learned about them is that they continue to surprise me."

Freshman Jenna Harris scored all of the Rams' goals, beating Gooische goalkeeper Valerie Claushuis for the only goal of the first half, hitting again on a penalty corner with 23:11 on the clock and connecting for the last time with less than two minutes remaining in the game to put the Rams up 3-2.

The 5-foot-1 striker, who scored only one goal in 19 games last season, credited her hat trick to the Rams' all-around performance.

"It's all about working as a team and just being at the right place at the right time (and) to practice working with each other," Harris said.

The team took the field for the first time since finishing the 2004 season with its first winning record (10-9 overall). The game gave several younger players a chance to get game experience.

"I think we came out here ready to play," Harris said. "We were playing together. I think we constantly kept moving to each other and playing for each other."

Behrens, who is 27-31 in her three seasons as head coach, said playing Gooische was a great way to expose her team to some of the toughest competition in the world. Gooische developed Verloop, who lit up the Colonial Athletic Association in her first season, setting single-season records for points (44) and goals (20).

"The advantage is that it's unusual competition and probably competition that's even better than we'll see in this country," Behrens

FIELD HOCKEY

VCU	3
Gooische	3



Pat Kane

Freshman Jenna Harris (15) scored all three of the Rams goals in last Friday's tie with Gooische Hockey Club of the Netherlands.

said. "Our players will really get better by that, and I really love that our kids embraced such a positive attitude and embraced such a great love for each other to come out here and compete."

Gooische is currently touring the United States, and has played the field hockey teams at Old Dominion, William & Mary and Richmond during its stay.

The timing of the visit was awkward, Behrens said, "Obviously it's very cold. It's like playing in November."

But Behrens also said that she wants to see her team get used to playing in this kind of weather.

"We want to play in November," Behrens said. "That's championship time. So having that experience now is something that I can call back on."

Pat Kane contributed to this story.

Rams host first 5k in teammate's honor

JULIAN BENBOW

Sports Editor

The VCU women's soccer team gathered at Sports Backers Stadium more than a week ago and held a vigil to remember their teammate and friend Nicole Megaloudis, who died last February from injuries sustained in a car crash.

Coach Chris Brown said the team expressed how sad the loss is to them still, but that night they made a pact.

"We agreed that everything we do from now on would be to celebrate Nicole and not to mourn her," Brown said.

The women's soccer team has set up an event this Saturday in honor of Megaloudis. The team will run 5 kilometers at Byrd Park at 1 p.m. in order to raise money for the Nicole Megaloudis foundation, which was founded last year by Nicole's mother, Gail Rongen.

The foundation has spent the past year going through processes to get itself off the

ground. The money from this event will go to a scholarship for female high school seniors aspiring to attend college who can also show financial need.

Brown said each of VCU's soccer players had to raise \$150 by being sponsored by friends and family. While other runners will make donations, it is possible to give to the Foundation without participating in the run.

Groups from all over the state will join the women's team in the 5k.

Along with VCU's women's soccer team, the women's teams from William & Mary and Liberty will participate. VCU's men's soccer team will run along with the men's team from UVa. The girls team from Potomac Falls, Megaloudis' high school, will make the trip from Northern Virginia to participate.

D.C. United forward and former Cavalier Alecko Eskandarian will also attend the event. The 22-year-old New Jersey native roomed with the brother of Nicole Megaloudis while he played soccer for UVa.

Eskandarian now oversees the foundation, Brown said. He will be donating and raffling off a jersey to raise money for the foundation.

The event, Brown said, started off as a small idea and turned into something bigger. Brown said the team would like to be able to make the 5k an annual event in order to help out the foundation.

In their first season since losing their teammate, VCU's women won their first Colonial Athletic Association championship in school history. The title, however, was an afterthought for a team that often credited Megaloudis for being with them in spirit throughout the season.

The team wore armbands to symbolize Megaloudis and painted her number, 21, on the field at Sports Backers stadium. Saturday's run is just another way for the team to keep Nicole's memory alive.

So instead of being saddened, Brown said, "I think they're finally getting to the point where the focus is on honoring Nicole."

SPORTS

Mitchell's 21 help Cougars fend off Rams' late surge

MELANIE RAZEEQ
Staff Writer

VCU's only lead in Saturday's ESPN Bracket Buster game against the College of Charleston came when they scored the very first basket of the game.

The Rams (15-11) missed offensive opportunities by turning the ball over seven times in the first ten minutes of the game. VCU found itself down by as much as 23 in the first half, a hole too deep to climb out of as the College of Charleston cruised to an 85-75 win at home.

"We didn't come out with the sense of urgency that we needed in order to win," VCU head coach Jeff Capel said in a statement.

The Cougars (16-9), who had only two turnovers during in the first half, built a 38-15 lead with a little more than seven minutes to go before halftime.

Coming off shooting a season-best 59.6 percent from the floor in last week's victory against Delaware, the Rams dropped to shooting only 45.0 percent from the floor against the Cougars.

They didn't receive any help from beyond the arc either, missing all of their 10 3-point attempts in the first half.

VCU was kept in the game with Herculean first-half efforts from sophomore guard Jesse Pellot-Rosa with 10 points and four rebounds, and senior forward Michael Doles with 12 points.

Pellot-Rosa was one rebound short of a double-double. Doles finished with a team-high 16 points on 6-of-11 shooting.

Tony Mitchell led all scorers with 21 points on 7-of 13 shooting for College of Charleston, which received scoring contributions from all starters in the first half.

After taking a 46-31 lead to the locker room, the Cougars maintained their double-figure advantage for most of the second half.

VCU received help on the offensive end by junior forward Nick George, who scored 11 of his team-high 16 points in the second half.

Sophomore guard B.A. Walker scored all of his 10 points after the break, and freshman guard Jamal Shuler added a career-high 13 points off the bench for the Rams.

The Rams also picked up some much needed energy in the second half, earning 12 points from second chance shots and 19 points from the bench.

VCU was able to cut the lead down to 8 points with :49 left on the clock, and they immediately went into foul mode forcing the Cougars to connect from the free-throw line.

"They made pressurized free throws down the stretch. That is what good teams do," explained head coach Jeff Capel of the six points the Cougars scored on free throws in the final seconds of the game.

The Rams return to the Stuart C. Siegel Center for the final two games of the regular season facing William & Mary Wednesday at 7:30 p.m., and UNC Wilmington Saturday 7:30 p.m.

MEN'S BASKETBALL	
C of C	85
VCU	75

Rams fall 74-60 to Dukes on the road

From news sources

James Madison used a 12-0 second-half run to pull away from Virginia Commonwealth yesterday and pick up a 74-60 win in front of 747 fans at the Patriot Center.

Five players reached double figures in scoring for the Dukes (9-6 CAA, 16-8), who handed VCU its 12th loss by 10 points or more.

Sophomore Lesley Dickinson led the onslaught with 16 points on 4-of-10 shooting, including a pair of 3-pointers. Rams forward Lauren Hogan matched Dickenson with 16 points, but she was the only player to reach double digits for VCU (4-11, 8-16).

Hogan was one rebound shy of her 10th double-double of the season, the senior finished with three boards on the offensive end and six on defense.

Krystal Vaughn and Miranda Smith each scored 8 points and grabbed two rebounds off the bench for the Rams.

VCU led for most of the first half and led 31-28 at the half. But after going back and forth to start the second half, the Dukes converted on 10 straight free throws, sparking their second-half run.

The loss is VCU's fifth in its past six games. The Rams have three games left before the CAA tournament. They travel to William & Mary on Thursday and then return to the Stuart C. Siegel Center on Sunday to face George Mason at 3 p.m.

Rams reversal: Auburn sweeps three-game series



Rams starter Marcus Davis threw three innings in the Rams 6-4 loss to Auburn on Saturday.

Pat Kane

RAJ SETHI
Staff Writer

What a difference a week makes.

One week after sweeping St. Joseph's to start the season, VCU found themselves on the other side of the win column, getting swept in a three-game series by the Auburn Tigers, culminating with a 6-4 loss on Sunday.

The loss drops the Rams to 3-3 overall. The Tigers improved to 8-2 and improve their record against VCU to 23-2 since the teams first played in 1996.

VCU's problems began literally from the first inning.

The Rams surrendered a run in each of the first four innings of Friday's game, and the Tigers held on for 4-3 win. VCU's early-inning struggles continued on Saturday, with Auburn going off for seven runs in the first three innings while holding the Rams to just four total hits in an 11-0 shutout.

Auburn's pitching staff held the VCU offense in check, limiting the Rams to just seven total runs over the weekend, just one week after VCU totaled 34 runs in a three game sweep of St. Joe's.

As well as the Tigers' starters pitched, it was

BASEBALL	
Auburn	4-11-6
VCU	3-0-4

their bullpen that was the difference.

The Auburn relievers combined to hold VCU to one run over 10 1-3 innings, never giving the Rams an opportunity to rally in any of the three contests.

Junior closer Michael Nix recorded two saves to push his season total to three and junior Josh Sullivan, a former quarterback on the Auburn football team, pitched seven scoreless innings on Saturday in recording the first win of his career. Sullivan, who just a year earlier started 36 games as a position player, has yielded just three runs over 16 innings since becoming a full-time pitcher.

Auburn head coach Tom Slater has been impressed with Sullivan's progress so far.

"That's Josh's second real good outing in a row," Tom Slater said in a statement Saturday. "The kid has very good stuff and he's starting to get a feel for the mound. Auburn fans are starting to see how good he can be."

Reliever John Leonard was one of the few bright spots for the Rams over the weekend. The redshirt sophomore provided 4 2/3 innings of scoreless relief, allowing three hits while striking out two.

Offensively, reigning CAA rookie of the week Sergio Miranda recorded two RBI over the weekend, and second baseman Scott Sizemore reached base four times in 11 at-bats.

Spectrum

Strong cast, set, risqué topics add to “Metamorphoses” appeal

J. ADAM. WRIGHT

Spectrum Writer

To those seeking a romantic evening, don't drag your significant other to the movies to see “The Wedding Date” when there is a tale of love, lust, greed and redemption being performed live right here in VCU.

“Metamorphoses” opened last Thursday to a sold-out crowd. Eager theater-goers filled the Singleton Center with buzzing with anticipation for what promised to be an eventful night. While many in the audience were friends and relatives of cast members, there were also people that were there simply to see a good VCU play.

“Metamorphoses” tells several stories from the ancient Greek transformation myths of Ovid. These tales have modern elements to them and reach out to all types of people.

The tales include the story of Midas, the foolish king who wishes all that he touches to turn to gold, and the story of Narcissus, a man of such vanity that he drowns while looking at his own reflection in the water.

The element that the play inherently brings is an amazing set design, in the center of which is a large pool of water. The theater is built like a coliseum so rather than having an elevated stage where the actors must project their voices out in one direction, the theater also has seating on either side of the stage area.

This presents difficulties with voice projection, but makes for a more intimate and inclusive theater going experience. The craftsmanship of the set was also wonderful. While trying to maintain the minimalist set design of Greek theater, the use of moving floors, giant metal skeletons of classical pillars and a beautiful painted backdrop that incorporated sliding panels, did not make the set feel empty.

All actors, seasoned or not, can run into problems

when working in and around water. For the cast of “Metamorphoses” these problems did not visibly arise in any way. When in the water, the actors moved with as much fluidity as their surroundings. They made no hesitations in the transitions between land and water, as if they were engaged in an amphibious ballet.

While the actors' movements were beautiful, their



Jennifer Hakney (left), Ana Sosa (right) in scene from Metamorphoses.

voice was another matter. The set design hampered their ability to project towards the entire audience. In many cases the actors spoke with their backs towards a certain seating section. At those points, it was hard to hear what they were saying, especially when accompanied by sound effects over the speaker system.

The acting itself was quite good, conveying all of the emotion, humor, and excitement one would expect out of a night at the theater. Although no actor stood out from the cast, together they had a chemistry that could not be duplicated elsewhere.

The shortskit-style scenes and wide array of characters did not allow for one person to steal the show.

The use of modern stylistic elements in the ancient Greek myths made the play fun to watch. Classical language mixed with modern dress and culture played off one another to create something new.

When Phaeton, son of the god Apollo, describes his father allowing him to carry the Sun across the sky, he does so by speaking to a psychiatrist with a teenager's animosity toward parental figures.

Ceyx and his crew meet their watery doom at the hands of the god, Poseidon when a sudden storm throws them off their ship. This is cleverly actualized by the storm waves being personified by swimmers clad in racing suits, goggles and caps, warming up for a race and then repeatedly tossing about the poor crew members.

Those wishing to take children to the play may want to reconsider. Although tastefully done, a few scenes of adult material may have younger viewers asking more questions than you are willing to answer. Even though Greek myth is inherently sexual, incestuous bumping and grinding may offend some viewers. Consider yourself warned.

All of the elements of this play come together to make a quite enjoyable experience.

Students salsa toward cultural awareness

ALI BRESLIN

Spectrum Writer

Latin flavor filled the Commonwealth Ballrooms in the University's Student Commons Wednesday night at Second Rhythms Y Movimientos: African Rhythms Through Latin Dance, sponsored by VCU's own Latin Student Association.

The program consisted of a background history on Latin dances including salsa, merengue, bachata and capoeira, followed by a performance of each dance.

Jahnissi Tirado, president of LSA, said that the evening was an “opportunity to show what we're [LSA] about.”

Adell Barrow and Ernesto Obando hosted the night's program. The dancers this year were both old and new — some alumni and some current students, all of whom

were eager to help with the participation of such a growing event. Each dance was performed on the spot to present a more social dancing atmosphere.

Amberlyn Sasser, part of the night's salsa duo and also a student, said, “We kinda made it up on the stage!” She and her partner, Edwin, practice ballroom dancing everyday. For them, spreading salsa up on stage was no sweat.

Tirado is aiming high for next year's crowd. This year's crowd was larger than he expected. Next year, LSA hopes to attract more students with fun, information, and a dance party with music afterwards. Of course no party would be complete without refreshments — the event provided some of that too!

The Latin organization's upcoming events in March include a women's history month event which will pay tribute to influential Latinas from the 1950's to the present, a Latin dance workshop and a How to Survive in a Spanish-Speaking Country event.

Black History Happenings

Feb. 21 through Feb. 23

Monday Feb. 21

Hear best-selling author and activist Sister Soulja speak, 7-9 p.m. Commonwealth ballrooms A & B. Sponsored by NAACP.

Tuesday, Feb. 22

The Soul Food Café features soulful music provided by Chicken Grease Band, food catered by Croaker's Spot and special guest Komplex. 7-9 p.m. Commonwealth ballrooms A & B. Sponsored by the NAACP, APB and African Student Union.

Wednesday, Feb. 23

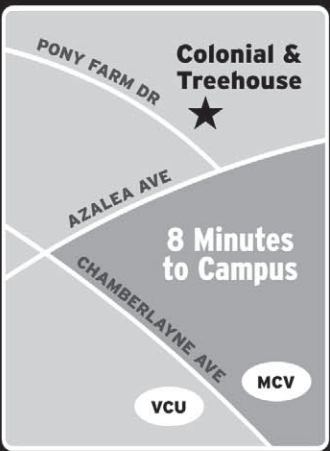
The ladies of Delta Sigma Theta present a Black History Forum, 7-9 p.m. in Virginia rooms C and D.



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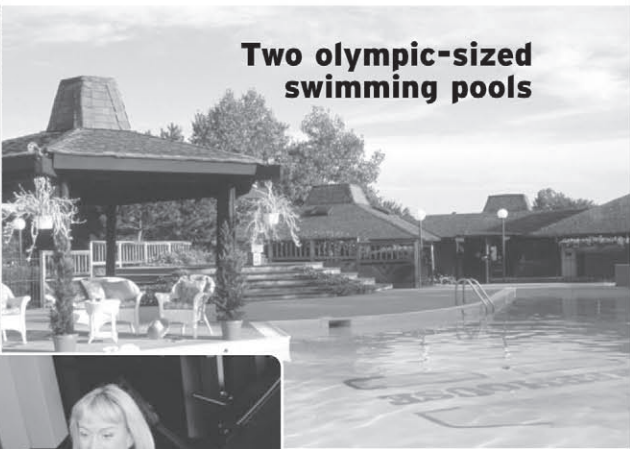


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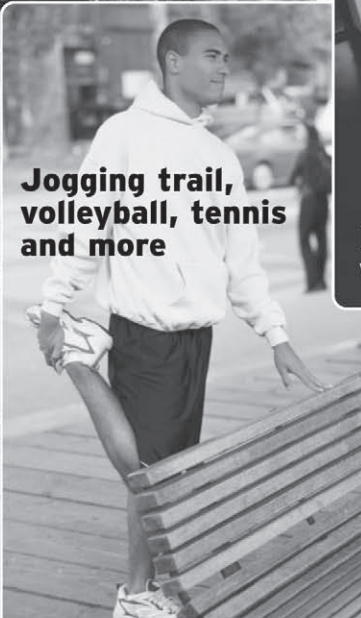


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EDITORIALS & LETTERS

Opinion In Brief

How free is free?

On the heels of a study released earlier this month that high school students increasingly believe that the freedoms of speech and of the press guaranteed by the First Amendment go “too far,” those freedoms are once again under fire.

For their opinions, Harvard president Lawrence H. Summers and University of Colorado Professor Ward Churchill are being pressured to resign their positions for making some unpopular suggestions.

Granted, their opinions are highly controversial, but as the Washington Post said in its editorial pages on Saturday, “a primary function of universities is to ask questions and to advance knowledge, popular or otherwise.”

If Summers and Churchill are punished for their opinions, the intellectual freedom needed to bring fresh perspectives on the topical subjects of our day may be in jeopardy – not just on college campuses, but in government and anywhere else people have the power to do something about them.

Your Turn

Letters to the Editor



To the Editor:

I don't know if you have noticed that Lyz Holder's Feb. 17 cartoon – in which American flag is drenched in blood – is anti-American.

Now, I don't care if you blast Bush administration in every issue (which you do). Frankly, I just might agree with what you have to say about Bush.

But you must realize that the American flag represents more than Bush or corporate greed in America.

To me, the flag represents an opportunity to do better in my life. In addition, it's very hypocritical of you to disrespect the flag when you publish your work under its protection.

You must apologize.

Sincerely,
Monty Kahlon

Editor's reply: You are correct that the flag stands for more than corporate greed – and that's exactly why cartoons like Holder's are there to remind us. Controversial ideas are protected by freedom of speech so that informed citizens of a functioning democracy can draw from a full range of ideas when making decisions. Our Constitution – not the flag – provides this protection through the First Amendment. We hope you'll take advantage by writing in the future.

Crime and punishment

13 years after Rodney King, police misconduct slips under radar

MIKE DICKINSON
Op/Ed Writer

Sitting here today, we want to think that if we were accused of a crime and the police came to arrest us, we would be treated with respect and our civil liberties upheld. While it is a nice thought, the reality is that this does not happen — the police regularly frown upon those they arrest and misconduct is more frequent than we think.

To many, the epitome of police misconduct is the beating of Rodney King that took place over a decade ago. While that story burned through the pages of the American press then, those kinds of events happen today and barely get mentioned in the news. That was the case last week when two Petersburg police officers were convicted of beating a suspect they were arresting and putting him into a coma.

Ten years ago, this would have been on



every major news station. After all, the police cannot beat a suspect, regardless of how much they are verbally provoked, and certainly not into a coma. Sadly, the Petersburg incident is not the first case of overzealous police action in this area in the last year, as last summer a Richmond police detective shot and killed an unarmed suspect. The detective was acquitted in court.

When we hear about these incidents it is often difficult for many to grasp the concept that at times the police can and do act badly. It really all goes back to the King videotape. For years, many suspected that police misconduct did happen, but it was never fully realized until those vivid images of a circle of police officers beating a helpless subject brought the suspicion to life.

Worse than that, was when the police officers involved were acquitted, and Los Angeles rioted. While I disagree with rioting to make your point, I can understand

why they did it – if you were at the short end of a police beatdown, you would be mad too. Many feel like that will never happen to them because they know the right people, drive the right car – or are the right color.

That dismissive attitude is the problem all too many of us have. Anytime a police officer abuses their authority, it is a crime not just against the individual, but also against society, and that should offend you.

While police officers are not perfect – nobody in any profession is – they hold a higher position than most of us because they have the authority to arrest, and carry a firearm. Because of this, they need to be held to a higher standard, and when an officer that is supposed to deliver justice perverts and molests that, he should have justice delivered back to him.

Here in Richmond, this has persisted and developed into a major problem where the citizens don't trust the police. Police chiefs have been fired, reorganization has occurred, and the new administration has pledged to clean up the city.

A zero-tolerance policy should be put into place regarding any police force used against unarmed citizens. The police have a tough job, but the badge

DICKINSON continued on page 11

From the SGA Executive Director

Student government, VCU Police take aim at crime

New partnership will enhance campus security; student involvement needed

KELLY CARNES
Special to the Commonwealth Times

On Feb. 1, 2005, the leadership of the Monroe Park Campus Student Government Association met with VCU Police Chief Willie B. Fuller to discuss issues of concern to students on campus. As a result of that meeting, and at Chief Fuller's request, the SGA has agreed to appoint a student to act as the SGA/VCUPD liaison.

I am a student majoring in anthropology, and as the Executive Director of University Relations, I was selected as the Monroe Park Campus liaison for the current semester. I am being aided by the Special Assistant for Student Affairs, Justin Greene, who sits on the executive cabinet, and from the Senate side, Director Arman Amiri and the two directors of the SGA Ad-Hoc Security and Escort Committee, Senators Emad Maghsoudi and Emeka Eni.

I met with Chief Fuller last semester when we invited him to speak to VCU's student organizations at the Presidential

Roundtable, and I was surprised to learn that VCU is a relatively safe campus. The majority of crime going on around campus is theft in the libraries and in the dorms, as well as drug and alcohol violations.

Not only is most of the crime student-on-student, but so are the solutions. The people calling the police department to report crimes are in fact students. VCU students don't want to live in an environment that makes them uncomfortable, and they are willing to be involved in stopping a negative environment from thriving on their campus.

Based on that information, the Security and Escort Committee is concentrating on a “collective security” front that will encourage students to continue holding each other personally responsible for their happiness and well-being. Mr. Greene and I will concentrate on contacting the students in the dormitories as well as reuniting the criminal justice department students with

CARNES continued on page 11

The Commonwealth
TIMES

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Virginia Commonwealth University*

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Op/Ed

DICKINSON *continued from page 10*

tis there to be respected, not feared.

Officers have to be able to restrain themselves from physical behavior, and if this is a problem, then they should leave the profession of policing and go into professional wrestling.

Officers should and do have the right to defend themselves. If a suspect throws a punch or pulls a gun where the officer can see it, then they absolutely have the right to defend themselves. However, when a suspect calls the officer a name or runs from them, they must also resist this temptation, turn the other cheek and tell themselves that this is part of their job.

We as citizens must cast a suspicious eye toward anything coming from the police department and remember that what they say is not gold. They are there to sell the case they make, and it stays that way until a jury or judge says so.

Wishful thinking would tell us that we have come far from the turbulent times of the mid-eighties song "911 is a Joke" by Public Enemy. Incidents like the ones above have to make us wonder if we really have.

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

CARNES *continued from page 10*

the Police Department.

Chief Fuller described to us a former relationship that allowed for students to have the opportunity to work with the Police Department at both paid positions and internships during the summer as well as during the academic terms. We would like to see that relationship thrive once again, as well as see more communication and involvement between the VCUPD and the student body.

Monroe Park Campus President Zmarak Khan and Vice President Eddie O'Leary agree with and support this concept. According to Khan, "Safety and security issues are one of the most important areas of concern when we talk to students. While we feel that we have an excellent police department, we welcome the ability to discuss issues directly with the police chief."

Said Fuller, "In my view, there is no more critical relationship on a college campus than the one that students have with their police department. We are charged with the safety and security of almost 29,000 students on a daily basis. We take that role very seri-

ously, and I feel that an open line of cooperation and communication with the elected leaders representing our students is essential."

The VCUPD even provides opportunities such as ride-along programs, where any student can apply to ride along with a police officer for a night to witness firsthand what the VCU Police experiences on a daily basis.

The SGA will continue to work hand-in-hand with the VCU Police Department in the hope that our relationship will expand to include a stronger relationship between the students and their police department. Students need to rely on each other and on the police department in order to improve the quality of life on our campus in terms of security.

If you have any questions or concerns about the VCU Police Department and/or the safety of your campus, please feel free to contact me at the e-mail address below. Thank you.

Kelly Carnes is Executive Director of University Relations for the Monroe Park Campus SGA. She may be reached at carneskm@vcu.edu.

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