

The Commonwealth Times

Free

The Independent Student Press of Virginia Commonwealth University Vol. 42 No. 18 Thursday, March 31, 2005

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A photograph of three young men lying on their backs on a light-colored tiled floor, looking up at the camera and pointing their index fingers directly at the viewer. The man on the left has long curly hair and glasses, wearing a white t-shirt. The man in the middle has a beard and glasses, wearing a grey t-shirt. The man on the right has dark hair and is wearing a red jacket. The text "April Fools!" is overlaid in large, bold, black letters across the top of the image.

April Fools!

Four pages of foolery start on Page 9

Sports

Intramural basketball prepares
to square off in the final /
Page 15

Editorials & Letters

Phil McKenney solves the problem of high gas prices /
Page 19

Spectrum

Culture festival mixes things
up; We don't know "Bleep" /
Pages 17-18

WEIRD NEWS

CALENDAR

MARCH 31 THROUGH April 2

Thursday, March 31	Friday, April 1	Saturday, April 2
Join student affairs counseling services as it presents an Academic Success Workshop: Strategies for Success: Coping with Academic Failure. The event takes place from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the University Student Commons Forum Room. Attendees are asked to register prior to attending by visiting www.pubinfo.vcu.edu/academicsuccess/ . For more information contact Darlene Pantaleo 828-6200.	The Department of Art History is sponsoring the 2005 Maurice Bonds Lecture in Art History. This lecture is titled “ How to write a history of Latin American Colonial Art: challenges and discoveries. ” The lecture takes place from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. in the Grace Street Theater. For more information call James Farmer at 828-2784.	Interested in the great outdoors? OAP is sponsoring a day of hiking — Falling-water Cascades Trail at the Blue Ridge Parkway. The trip costs \$19 for students and those wishing to attend should register by calling 828-6004. This all-day event begins at 8 a.m. and lunch is not included. For more information call Adriene Hall 828-7478.

CAMPUS FORECAST



Thursday
68/53



Friday
71/50



Saturday
61/39



Sunday
57/46

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Compiled from wire reports

Long-winded

Errol Muzawazi, a 20-year-old Zimbabwe native, broke his own record for the world's longest lecture after speaking non-stop for more than three days. Muzawazi's audience fell asleep for portions of the speech, which lasted for 88 hours and 4 seconds. The speech was delivered in Krakow, Poland, and the topic was democracy. Every eight hours the man was allowed the choice of a bathroom break, food or a quick nap. Guinness was onhand to monitor the event.

Albino kangaroos

An interesting animal has made its way into the world at Austria's Kernhof Zoo. A rare albino kangaroo was born to its albino mother. The zoo specializes in breeding these animals, and the mother and baby — along with a slightly older albino sibling — are the only ones of their kind in Europe. The three have become the main attraction for visiting animal lovers. Since the baby has not emerged from its mother's pouch yet, zookeepers have yet to determine the sex of the new joey.

Pet hair pillows

A taxidermist has found a new way to memorialize pets

that have passed on. Jeanette Hall uses the animal's fur to create decorative pillows and cushions. The pillows have the dead pet's fur on one side and the cloth of your own choice on the opposite side. Hall has sold hundreds of these items worldwide in the last few months. The 29-year-old woman said that although some people are shocked at the idea, pet lovers are usually thrilled at the chance to have a reminder of their departed animals.

Finger-licking good

A woman in San Jose, California found a human finger in her chili. The woman actually bit down on the finger tip which was almost an inch and a half long and came complete with a manicured fingernail. After biting down on the finger, the woman warned others around her to stop eating and vomited several times. Officials said the finger had been cooked at a temperature that would have killed any viruses that might have been present. The finger is believed to have been a woman's due to the manicured nail.

Blind mountain climber

A blind man will begin his journey to climb Mt. Everest on April Fool's Day. Although his friends

think he is playing an April fool's joke on them, Gerard Gosens said he will actually attempt this feat. The 35-year-old man was born without irises and also suffers from glaucoma, but even though he is blind, his climb will not be that much different from one a person with good vision would attempt. The man is part of a team led by two Everest veterans. The group will be accompanied by two sherpas. Gosens said he wants to show his daughter, who is slowly losing her vision to the same condition that claimed his sight, that she can still do anything.

Not your average model

A television program in Slovenia that tried to show that models were stupid was cancelled after Iris Mulej, the 2002 Miss Universe, was shown to have a higher IQ than a nuclear physicist. After taking a series of logic tests, Mulej was found to have an IQ of 156. The tests included questions about spatial awareness, math and problem solving. After the tests results were shown, the show was cancelled. The show's creator now has a show idea in which he will try to find the world's smartest model.

The Commonwealth TIMES

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News

Black Caucus lodges appeal with SGA

JULIE KINZER

Staff Writer

A disagreement between SGA and the Black Caucus finally came to a close at the end of Monday's Senate meeting.

Sesha Moon, president of the Black Caucus said she is very passionate about her organization and is committed to making it successful. In December, the Black Caucus requested \$8,807 from the SGA Appropriations Committee for the group's annual Black and Gold Ball. They received only \$4,790.

For the past two weeks, Moon has been appealing the Senate's decision.

What happened during the process of the appeal and the amount requested are two issues that the SGA has been investigating.

Any organization had the opportunity to file an appeal during the first two weeks of the spring semester.

One of the major issues in this appeal was whether the Black Caucus lodged its claims within the 14-day appeal time period.

"They didn't even consider my appeal before because Appropriations thought I didn't appeal within the 14-day period," Moon said. "I actually appealed within 4 days. That's my problem with the SGA. If you fund student organizations and don't double check on information, you could be ruining their events by denying them money. The SGA should be sure that it double checks things because it could be wrong."

After careful review for the past two weeks, the Appropriations Committee found that Moon was within the 14-day period. When she submitted the appeal Jan. 18 — a month and 10 days after the fiscal office notified her of the amount — there was confusion about whether she filed within the time frame.

Furthermore, Moon said she was angry because the SGA never explained why it denied Black Caucus their funds while other non-funded organizations were e-mailed explanations of the SGA's decision-making process.

Sen. Arman Amiri, chair of Appropriations Committee, defended SGA's policy.

"It is not in the Appropriations Guidelines to e-mail every organization and explain why they were denied," Amiri said. "But they do have to post a response outside the SGA office to each organization."

After the Black Caucus did not receive adequate funding for a pre-planned speaker, the group requested to use that money for the ball. The group's claim was denied.

Moon said she wants to have the group's event at the Omni Hotel. The SGA said that the ball should be held at the University Student Commons for traditional and expense reasons. The Black and Gold Ball has been held at the Commons for over 10 years. Amiri said the event should be held on campus.

"We think it would be better served on campus so students can have more access to

events," Amiri said. "Some students thought it should be held on-campus and others thought it would be better off-campus. The final decision was that it should be held on-campus as it always had been before."

Moon distributed 500 surveys to students across the VCU Monroe Park Campus last semester and said the majority of students wanted the Black and Gold Ball at a new location.

"Students don't want to get dressed up and go to the commons," she said. "I think it's nice to do something different."

The decision to vote on the Black Caucus appeal was postponed to Monday's Senate meeting because the Senate didn't feel that it had enough correct information to make a decision.

Matthew Haynes, chairman of the Senate, said Monday that voting for the Black Caucus' funds goes against the constitution, and it is an illegal process.

"Even if she is right and she wasn't given a proper appeal — for us to vote would be violating the constitution," Haynes said. "We are stepping over our power and she should go to the judicial board. She needs the money quickly — and I feel that — but we should not step over our bounds. I think it's illegal, and at this point I don't know if anyone knows what's right or wrong. This could be an illegal process."

SGA President Zmarak Khan wants to change the appropriation guidelines and told

senators Monday that every organization needs to submit an annual budget.

"The reason we're having some trouble with issues like the Black Caucus is because of our guidelines," he said. "My proposal is that we need to have every organization have an annual budget. There's nothing wrong with line-item changes or appeals, but we need to require every organization to submit an annual budget."

Sen. Bruce Vann said the Black Caucus should get its money and told the Senate that the organization has been through a lot.

"This organization as a whole has jumped through a lot of hoops," Vann said. "We should just give them the money."

Sen. Emad Maghsoudi also said that it was a lot of money for one night and the funds should be used for other purposes.

"I believe that it's better to the student body as a whole to fund well-known speakers than well-known balls and parties."

Moon said she was angry about the appeal process and the amount of funding given.

"I feel like I'm the Joan of Ark for student organizations," she said. "I've had so many student organizations come up to me and ask me for advice on similar situations. Someone needs to know that these are the issues that SGA has created and this will need to be changed."

The Senate voted 17-11 for the Black Caucus, the Black and Gold Ball will go forward as scheduled Friday, April 22.

Students learn interview skills

AMANDA L DES ROCHES

Staff Writer

This year marked the University Career Center's highest attendance at its behavioral mock interview workshop.

"This is our fifth year doing the mock interviews," said Darlene Ward, assistant director of the center. "And each year we are doing something better than the last."

Thirty-one representatives from 22 Richmond-area employers conducted mock interviews with 143 students.

"We had a lot of great feedback," Ward said. "Employers had good things to say about our students."

Molly Sergio, a bioinformatics major interviewed with employers at the event. Having never previously participated in a behavioral interview, Sergio said she really didn't know what to expect.

"I was pretty unfamiliar with the concept," she said. "The questions were actually pretty tough. They didn't want you to list your strengths and weaknesses. They wanted you to talk about situations you've dealt with and how they were resolved."

According to Quintessential Careers.com's Web site, behavioral interviewing rates as the preferred form of interviewing for many companies because it provides a more objective set of facts to assist in making employment decisions. It also helps employees learn to excel in this process that has become what many call a crucial job-hunting skill.

"Students need to practice this," Ward said. "The purpose

truly is to make sure students have the rare and real experience of actually spending an hour with a real employer."

Along with their responses, employers critiqued students on their professional attires and resumes.

"I was told my suit was nice," Sergio said. "But I was wearing dangling earrings and was told it would be more professional to wear pearls instead. She was big on my looking conservative."

Genevieve Roberts, managing principal for the Titan Group, interviewed Sergio. This was Titan's third year to interview students at the event.

"It's a great way to give back to the community and it's great for the students to get this experience," Roberts said. "Molly was great, and she even sent me a thank you note. That was a nice touch."

While Sergio was intimidated at the start of her interview, she appreciated the constructive criticism.

"I was afraid I would get someone who was just going to fluff it up for me regarding my responses and everything, but Ms. Roberts didn't let you get away with anything. She's one tough cookie."

John Lawrence, vice president of McKesson Medical-Surgical Corporation, served as this year's guest speaker.

"He was very good," 23-year-old Douglas Mensah said. "One thing he pointed out was to never be late to an interview. It's better to just call and reschedule instead of showing up late. I think the workshop definitely helped. I felt prepared."

About 80 students attended the preparatory workshop, which Roberts said makes a significant difference.

"The students who attend the training ahead of time generally perform better in these interviews than those students who do not," she said.

While Mensah said his interview went well, Capital One representative Melani Frank still offered him a few tips.

"She said when you're asked a question it's OK to just take a minute and ponder the question instead of jumping in and giving a quick answer," Mensah said. "She also said I should get more volunteering experience to put on my resume."

According to the center's evaluation surveys, most employers agreed that students need to be more involved with clubs and organizations and volunteer more often.

"The feedback is very important," Mensah said, "especially coming from a big company. It was a great opportunity to experience this and know how to compose yourself in these interviews."

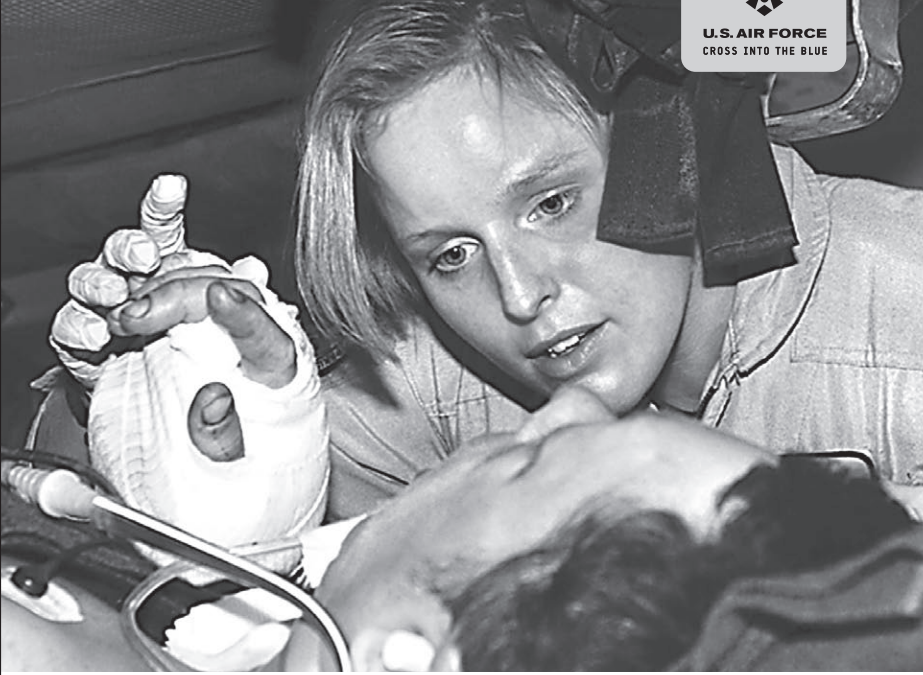
Sergio said she feels much more confident about going into an interview now:

"Learning how to dress and what to expect was a very valuable experience. I was very impressed with it."

Ward described VCU as a "feeder" school.

"Employers love to participate in these events, and typically they will hire numerous VCU students," she said. "I'm just very pleased to do this every year. It's great for employers. It's great for students. It's great for everyone."

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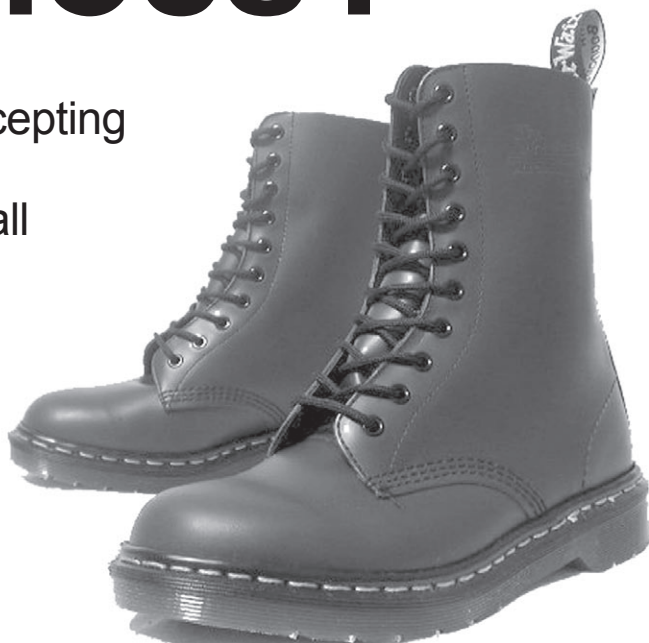
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Can you fill these shoes?

The Commonwealth Times is accepting applications for the executive and managing editor positions for the fall 2005 semester.

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NEWS

Interdisciplinary studies allow students to create their own major

SHANTICE BATES
Staff Writer

"It's not a quick way out," said Linda Spinelli, the academic adviser and coordinator for the Interdisciplinary Studies Program designed for students wanting careers other degree programs cannot offer.

"It is for students who have a career goal," Spinelli said. "There are students who combine dance with psychology called dance therapy."

Interdisciplinary studies initially was started for adults, Spinelli said, emphasizing that first-year students are ineligible because students need at least 30 earned credit hours to enroll in the program.

In the past, a typical interdisciplinary studies student would be a person employed by a company or other entity who wanted to return to college to earn a degree. For instance, Philip Morris USA once hosted a special workers' program at the company's facility to help its employees obtain degrees needed for their jobs.

"We would offer the class after 5 p.m. in another room at the plant," Spinelli said, explaining the need to go off-campus for some classes.

This semester, however, interdisciplinary studies majors study in classes offered by existing VCU programs and departments.

There is no separate group of classes for interdisciplinary studies majors, Spinelli said.

Shirley McDaniel, director of external relations for the College of Humanities and Sciences, majored in interdisciplinary studies, and she said the coursework she took was different than it is now.

"You didn't get to bond with your classmates because the coursework is different," she said, explaining that interdisciplinary studies students tended to connect with fellow interdisciplinary majors at receptions or graduation. The reason for this, she said, was because those events group students by major and focus area.

Thelma Stockton, a VCU alumna, who majored in interdisciplinary studies with a focus in human resources now works in VCU's human resources department. She still remembers submitting her application for the program.

"It was turned down the first time because I didn't define it enough," Stockton said, "until I went into more detail by using my work experience." In the end, her courses included religious studies, psychology, sociology and

human resources.

Spinelli said applicants must have clearly stated goals so the admissions committee knows exactly why the student wants to major in interdisciplinary studies and what he or she plans to do with an interdisciplinary degree.

Students, Spinelli said, have been rejected from the program or asked to resubmit their applications because they did not clearly state their goals.

Therefore, she suggested at least one tip for future interdisciplinary students.

"Sit down with the bulletin and look through the courses," she said, advising students to narrow their focus area before applying for the program.

Similar to other bachelor degree programs, students must earn at least 120 credits to graduate, and many need more than four years to complete the courses for their degrees.

As with students in other programs, they also often have a job and take care of one or more family members.


"People can really get what they want," Spinelli said, reiterating that the program's design complements people in the workforce who want a degree, which can open new doors – and new jobs — for some degree seekers.



VCU Student Organizations:

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Happenings

Thursday, March 24

Learn how to transition from a student organization, job or life event with Transitioning to Success, 7 p.m. Richmond Salon IV in the Commons. Free.

Listen to Richmond's rock bands at Local X-posture, presented by New Rock 102.1 the "X," 8 p.m. The Canal Club, Free, 1545 E. Cary St. 642-C1113.

Friday, March 11, 2011

Women's History Mo
features Encircle, Lucy We
gone Rising. All proceeds t
go to the Bartered Women
p.m. Commonwealth Ballroom
\$3 for VCU students with valid
non-VCU students.

Sunday, March 27

Easter on Parade takes place on Monument Avenue between Davis Street and Allen Avenue, 1-5 p.m. The festival features The Mama Bales Band, and salsa, jazz, acoustic rock, pop and gospel music.

FOOL NEWS

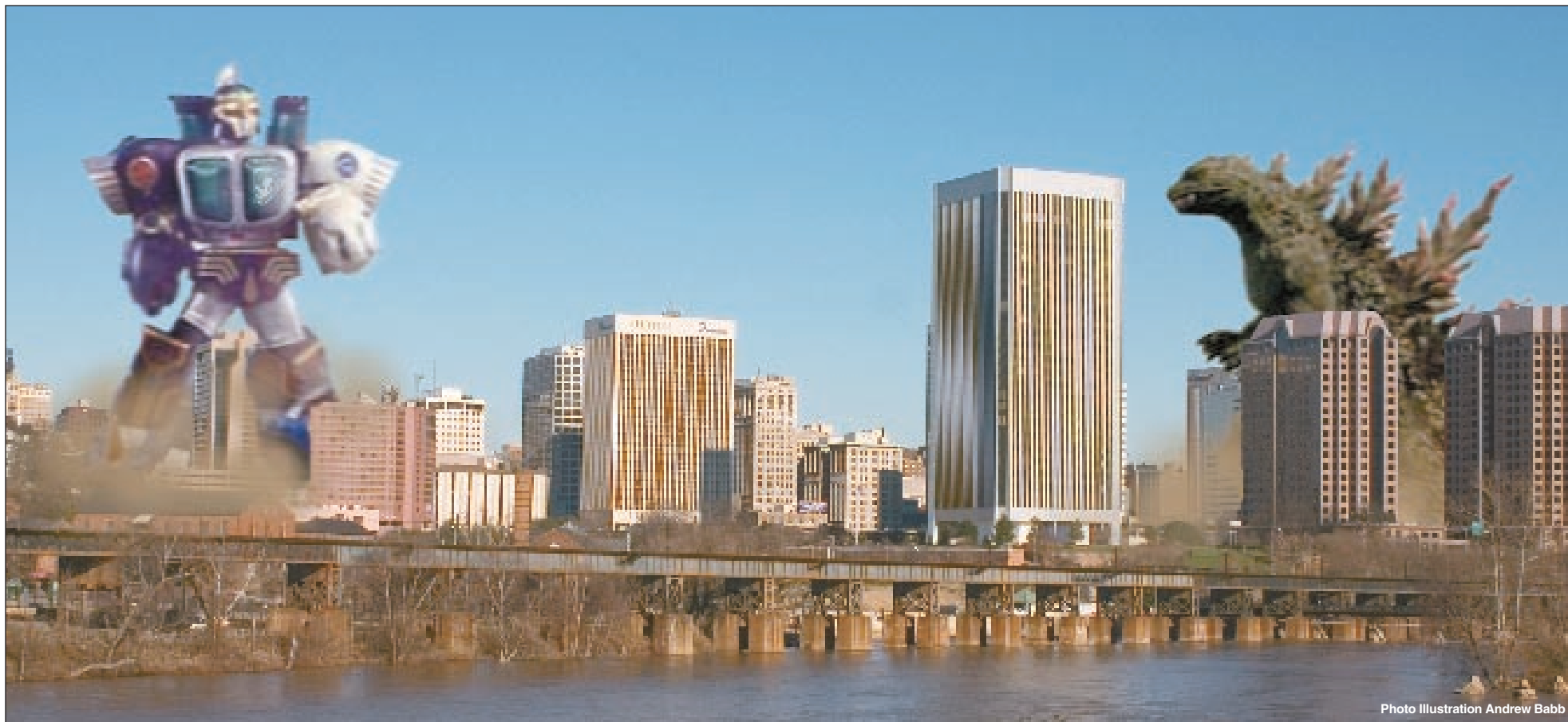


Photo Illustration Andrew Babb

RodneyZord and Godzilla during Wednesday's dramatic confrontation.

Godzilla, Trani battle for Richmond

VCU President unveils 'Monroe Park Giant Robot Expansion'

JONATHAN ROBBINS

Managing Editor

Some Richmond residents were shocked Wednesday when Godzilla emerged from the James River and started stomping his way uptown toward the VCU campus.

Many speculated on the purpose of the monster's visit to Richmond. Too much Kepone still lingering in the riverbanks? Anger at the ghost fleet that sits just down the river near Williamsburg? Were the levels of nitrogen and phosphorus in the Chesapeake Bay too high?

All worthy speculations, but ultimately all were wrong. As the ferocious creature lumbered closer to Founder's Hall residents from a Carver-Oregon Hill collective watched with satisfaction.

Jessie Potts, president of a Carver-Oregon Hill Response Network, explained the presence of the behemoth.

"We here at ACOHRN have grown weary of VCU's expansion into Richmond," he said. "We understand the need for quality higher education in Virginia, and certainly sympathize with VCU's need for space – but we also felt it was time to teach (VCU President Eugene) Trani a lesson."

Students watched as the beast made its way up through the financial district, its giant tail swiping away cars like bits of plastic. It

looked like the end for the university.

"I really thought, 'Oh my God, this is the end,'" Janice Awkward, a senior biology major said. "I called my mom to tell her I loved her and just watched from the balcony of my overpriced apartment in the Fan."

Jeremy Keene, a junior resident assistant in Johnson Hall, said the view from his 12th floor room was perfect.

"I could count the scales on his snubby snout," Keene said. "I never believed something like this could happen here – all I could do was watch with terror and hope it didn't come this way."

Before Godzilla could even reach the 6th Street construction VCU was already responding to the attack.

Running down Broad Street came Eugene Trani, VCU's president, and caught the monster with a right hook that gave the monster pause.

The physics departments' Gigantatronization Beam enhanced Trani's height and strength and the fashion design program provided the battle gear for the 350-foot president.

While Godzilla was still stunned from the blow, VCU's RodneyZord fell down from above and caught the giant lizard with a left foot to the right eye, sending him tumbling back down toward the Bottom.

The RodneyZord is the result of a joint program between the mechanical and electri-

cal engineering programs with the inception of the School of Engineering in 1996.

Paul Timmreck, VCU's senior vice president for finance and administration and acting provost for monster affairs, said the university administration had prepared vigorously for this eventuality.

"Over the past 10 years the administration has run countless drills, exercises, weekend retreats and models detailing what we as a university could expect in the event of a monster attack and what steps we could take to prevent harm from befalling our students," Timmreck said.

"We understand that the city can be a dangerous place to live, so naturally the safety of our students comes first. Be it hurricane, blizzard, fire, earthquake or the attack of a 400-foot lizard – we want the community to know we're prepared."

The battle between the three forces waged for over an hour, but never made its way past Third Street Diner.

When all was said and done, Richmond's financial district laid almost entirely in ruins and many people suffered talking out of sync with their mouths for days afterward – but there were no deaths.

Godzilla was subdued and carried down Interstate 64 to be returned to the ocean by an elite squad of soldiers and scientists.

Potts said he thought VCU's reaction to the attack was unnecessary and harmful to



Photo Illustration Andrew Babb

Trani in battle suit.

the Richmond aesthetic.

"Look at all the ruin their response has caused the city. Great buildings lay in waste because of them," he proclaimed while in police captivity.

"If they had just let Godzilla attack VCU, punch a few holes in the Temple Building, maybe spit a fireball at the Life Sciences Building, everything would have been okay. Instead, they come out with guns blazing and the city suffers."

Potts is being held in policy custody on counts of malicious assault, terrorist activity and raising a gigantic monster for the purpose of destruction.

Trani said he has not yet decided what legal action to take against ACOHRN.

"At this point the first thing we want is an apology," he said. "And the second thing we want is permission to expand down to the James River. Barring that, our lawyers are looking into legal recourse."

Fool News

CT HITS THE STREETS

Q1: *Do you think that there is a parking problem on campus?*

Q2: *Is there difficulty acquiring housing for students near campus?*

Q3: *What do you think of the new Engineering campus expansion?*



El Festivo
Reigning Champion, Criminal Justice

It's no secret the Chupacabra wants my belt! But he has no honor! If he has within him the true spirit of Lucha Libre, I will fight him tonight, and show him just how far away from wearing this belt he is!



Doctor Z0D
Graduate Student

Q1: It can be solved... with SCIENCE!
Q2: I find that the proper application of heat rays and particle beams ensure low rents.
Q3: I don't see why we have to purchase anything. SUBJUGATE IT BY FORCE OF ARMS!!



Anya Destrovnnya
First-year, Undeclared

Q1: My family couldn't afford to send me to school with a car.
Q2: I don't see what the problem is! You can't complain about housing until you've had to huddle in a shack for months with people that get on your nerves.
Q3: In Soviet Russia, campus expanded you!



I can't hear you!
I've got headphones on!

Q1: See these?
Q2: I can't hear what you're saying! I've got headphones on!
Q3: You see these? I'm jamming! Go away!



Buttery Nougat
Normal Student with Strange Name

Q1: I haven't had a problem with parking this year.
Q2: People who complain about not being able to find housing just aren't looking hard enough.
Q3: I think it's good for city.



Dan "Raven" Darling
Second-year, Interior Design

Q1: There have been plenty of places to idle in my van.
Q2: I'm not allowed to leave my home during certain hours.
Q3: Hey kid, I've got some candy back in my van. It's near the Engineering campus.



Chupacabra
Challenger, Fashion Design

The ring will run red with the blood of El Festivo tonight! I will remove his mask and dishonor him in the ring, where there will be no dispute over who is the true spirit of lucha!



Greg Kinnery
First-year, fast runner

Q1: Hey, don't take a picture of me! Put that camera away!
Q2: ...
Q3: ... (Unintelligible)



Don't hate because I'm beautiful, hate me because my copy isn't

JULIAN BENBOW
Sports Editor

Lauren Hogan hates me, I think. It wasn't always like that. It happened after the women's basketball team lost to Richmond 76-67 late last semester. She was mad because the story "praised" Richmond's Kate Flavin, and made Hogan look bad. Sure, the lead paragraph did say something about Flavin scoring back-to-back layups over Hogan, which she denies like O.J. and Johnnie Cochran (rest in peace).

But still, she shouldn't be mad at the section for mentioning that she gave up four of Flavin's game-high 27 points. She did.

Be mad if the section makes a true mistake, and believe me, we make enough of those to fuel a life-long temper tantrum.

For example, Hogan should be mad at the fact that in the process of writing the story, I debated between the phrases "both layups over VCU's senior forward Lauren Hogan" and "both layups in the first half of Sunday's game against VCU."

Instead of picking one, I went with both, which in that case was grammatically impossible even by presidential standards.

She should also be mad at the fact that I called UC Santa Barbara's soccer team the Gauchos, considering they'd rather be called by their correct title, the Gauchos.

There are plenty of screw-ups on the CT sports pages. Instead of goofing on everybody else for April Fools' Day, we'll reflect on our own brain farts. Enjoy.

March 24: In talking about Chris Paul and balls, we apparently left out the right one (or the left one depending on how you look at it). I'm talking about Ls, of course, we misspelled balls in the outline and also wrote "that" instead of "than."

March 21: Just said fit. It was Spring Break.

March 10: Oh yeah, this just in ... VCU lost the CAA championship. Don't believe the scoreboard from this issue, which said the Rams won 76-73.

March 6: A certain sports editor

the ATM with me." To help ease the transition VCU added VCU 103: Surviving the City to the list of courses.

Joshua Copeland signed up to teach the course because he thought many U of R students might feel overwhelmed by life downtown.

"A lot of the students approached me after the first class with additional questions," Copeland said. "They would ask me things like, 'Is it okay to ask a bum if he can break a \$100 bill?' or 'I've heard the train station in Shockoe Bottom is beautiful at night, what's the quickest foot path down there after 10 p.m.?' and it's been great for me to help them."

The transportation situation received a revamp with the merger.

In an effort to save money, the transit buses will now only run from Monday to Thursday. From Friday to Sunday students will be allowed to drive any vehicle with a license plate from a New England state that fits 5 or more students.

While not perfect, the results have been positive. "I always wanted to do my part to help the environment," James McCallister, a pre-law student, said. "Now I can. Half of the week I can ride the bus and for the other half my Excursion becomes a high-occupancy vehicle!"

Andrew Cain, a history major, said the best part of the deal has been all of the new experiences.

"I'd never driven a Suburban before," Cain said. "Now I know that not only can it fit 8 people comfortably, but it absorbs most of the impact when you hit a tree!"

The university is currently in talks with Richmond city officials to absorb the property between the Monroe Park and Medical Center campuses.

JONATHAN ROBBINS & KATIE GANTZ
Managing Editor & News Editor

Eugene P. Trani has done it again. Making it his personal mission to clean up the streets of downtown Richmond, Trani has purchased the University of Richmond campus and merged it with the VCU campuses.

VCU, which was already the largest urban university in the state of Virginia, is now able more majors to its diverse student body.

Although VCU students resisted the change at first, they are now coming to grips with what has become reality.

Kitty McDaniel, a junior majoring in underwater Japanese basket weaving said she is slowly adjusting to the change.

"At first I felt awash in sea of popped collars. I almost bought a pair of khakis," she said.

U of R students are also settling into life between merged campuses.

Christopher Macgregor IV, a first-year law student from the former U of R campus, said he wasn't sure if he liked the newly merged curriculums.

"On the way to class the other day, I noticed a man peeing on a dumpster," Macgregor said. "I'm pretty sure he wasn't a student."

Unfortunately, the transition has produced a rise in crime, most notably robberies.

Jim Shakey, a self-identified street prophet who recently received robbery charges, explained the rise in crime.

"Ya know, VCU students have a certain level of respect for those of us who are disadvantaged, but these Richmond kids – I had one tell me I needed to pull myself up by my bootstraps. Well that's kinda hard when I ain't got no boots, so I took his!"

Buffy Vanderbilt, a business major from Connecticut, said adjusting to the level of panhandling has been hard for her.

"It's so hard seeing the economically disabled washing themselves in the Monroe Park Fountain, but sometimes I just don't have any money," she explained. "I once had a man follow me for two blocks asking me to write him a check for \$2. Later that week I looked in my bank account and I was missing \$2,000!! Needless to say I'm a little more skeptical now – I just take them to



U of R Student Pretorius Aimes seeks refuge in refuse during the merger transition.

Pat Kane

April Fools' Day Disclaimer

All articles under the banner "Fool News" are fictitious and all photos and photo illustrations staged. The staff at The Commonwealth Times hopes no one was offended, this supplement was meant to give

the reader a break from the norm and a source of amusement this April Fools' Day (and April Fools' Day Eve). We hope you enjoyed reading it as much as we enjoyed putting it together.



FOOL NEWS



**THE COMMONWEALTH TIMES
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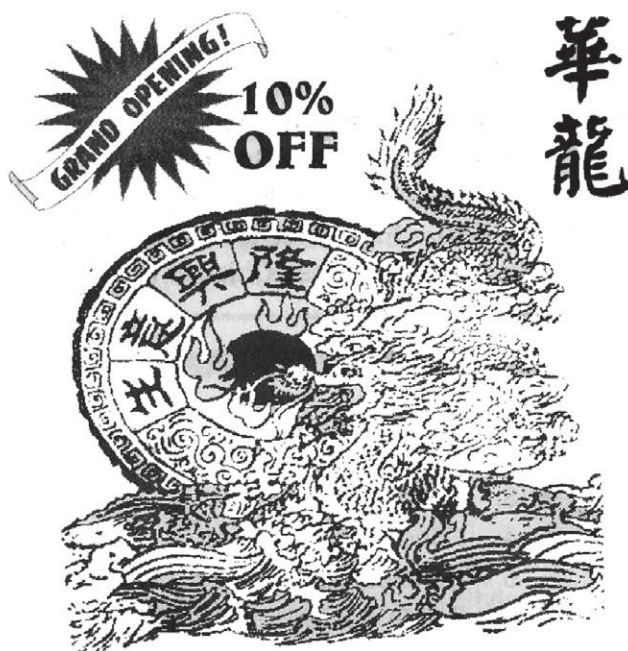


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SPORTS

Upcoming Sports EVENTS

Baseball

April 1: at James Madison, Harrisonburg, Va., 2:30 p.m.
April 2: at James Madison, Harrisonburg, Va., 1 p.m.
April 3: at James Madison, Harrisonburg, Va., 1 p.m.

Men's Tennis

March 31: North Carolina, Thalhimer Tennis Center, 2 p.m.
April 3: at Old Dominion, Norfolk, Va., 1 p.m

Women's Tennis

March 30: at Old Dominion, Norfolk, Va., 3 p.m.
April 1: vs. Fresno State, Williamsburg, Va, 11 p.m.
April 3: vs. South Florida, Thalhimer Tennis Center, 10 p.m.

Women's Track and Field

April 1-2: University of South Florida, Tampa, Fla.

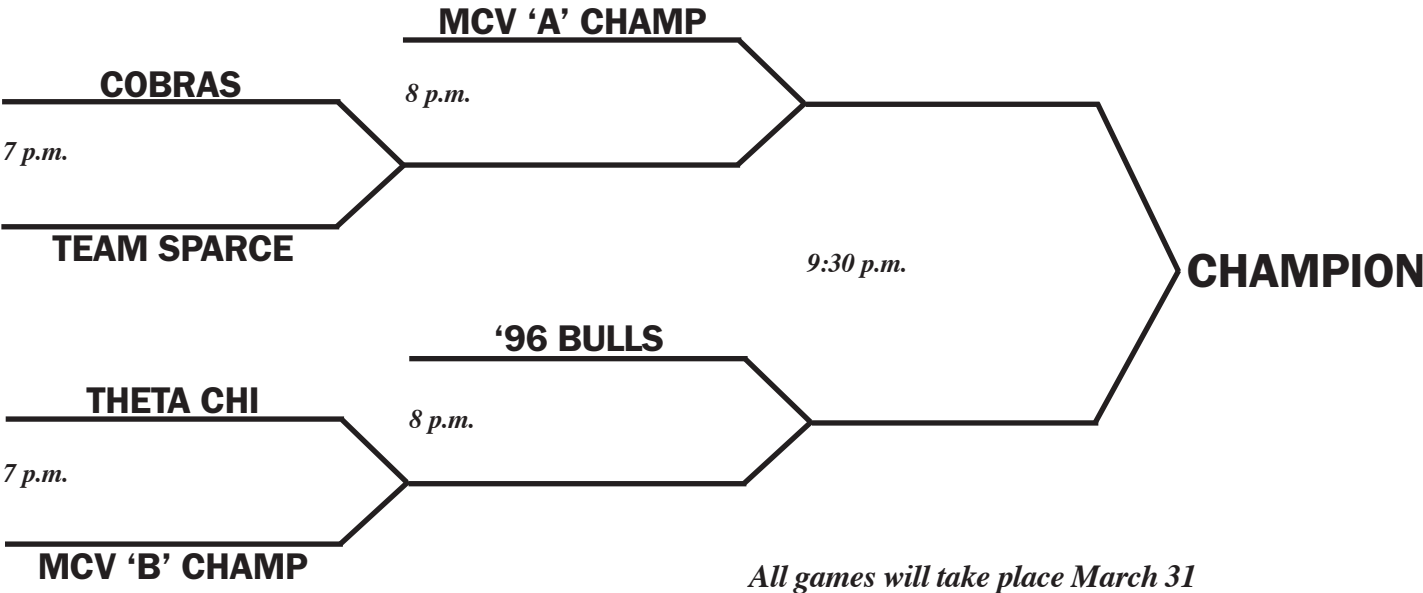
To post events on the sports calendar email benbowjj@yahoo.com. For more information contact the VCU sports line: 828-7000. VCU sporting events are free to students with a valid student ID.

Teams battle at Cary for all-campus bragging rights

JULIAN BENBOW
Sports Editor

Six teams. Four champions. Two campuses. One night.
The best squads from VCU's five intramural basketball leagues will battle in a three-round tournament tonight at Cary Street Gym to determine all-campus bragging rights.
A-League champ "96 Bulls" are the favorites, earning a first-round bye after beating "Team Sparce" in Tuesday night's title game. The run was tight up until the final six minutes of the second half when the Bulls broke it open to win 66-50.

For being the A-league runner-up, Sparce is scheduled to meet the winner of the B2 league, "Cobras", in opening round action. However, Sparce, who made it to the A-league championship after surviving an overtime game against "Cantholdem", may make the road to the all-campus title easier for the Cobras by possibly forfeiting Thursday's game.
The winner of Wednesday night's MCV A-League championship game earned a bye, while the winner of the medical campuses B league will face Greek League winner Theta Chi at 7 p.m.
Neither score from the medical campus was available at press time.



Crowded at the top: Rams flood CAA batting leaders

JULIAN BENBOW
Sports Editor

James Madison baseball coach Spanky MacFarland may have a hard time breaking this to his team as the Dukes prep for their weekend series against VCU, which starts on Friday.
MacFarland, who's written a couple of books on baseball in his nine years at JMU, will have to inform his players that about half the Rams' lineup accounts for about 40 percent of the CAA's best hitters so far this season.
VCU has staked claim on four of the CAA's top 10 spots in batting average.
Sophomore second baseman Scott Sizemore is hitting .472. Junior center fielder and newly crowned CAA Player

of the Week Joe Meador is right behind him, boosting his average up to .438 with a monster weekend at Towson.
Outfielders Trai Harris and Kwan Evans are tied for eighth with UNC Wilmington's Tim Preston, hitting .364. As a team, the Rams are hitting .331, tops in the conference.
"We've got a swagger right now," Harris said.
The Rams are 14-5 overall and 2-1 in the CAA. This weekend will be their second conference set of the season.
VCU won two of three games against James Madison last year at the Diamond. This weekend will be the first time Sizemore, Harris and Evans get a crack at Long Field.
"I heard they've got kind of a small yard," Harris said of JMU's home field. "That's bad news for them."

CAA batting leaders

	G	R	HR	RBI	AVG
Scott Sizemore, VCU	19	29	7	26	.472
Joe Meador, VCU	19	28	6	25	.438
Matt York, GMU	20	16	0	9	.418
Casper Wells, TOW	20	18	6	26	.405
Robby Jacobsen, GMU	21	27	4	20	.388
Will Rhymes, W&M	25	28	1	21	.382
Matt Cooksey, GMU	17	23	0	9	.375
Josh Stern, HOF	21	22	1	16	.373
Tim Preston, UNCW	27	22	2	15	.364
Trai Harris, VCU	17	15	0	11	.364
Kwan Evans, VCU	19	19	0	11	.364

SPORTS

Frierson says the secret's in the ingredients

JULIAN BENBOW
Sports Editor

What does a pork chop have to do with VCU sprinter James Frierson's performance at last weekend's Fred Hardy Invitational at the University of Richmond?

The sophomore sprinter ran the 100-meter dash in 11.06 seconds, just about half a second slower than the outdoor personal record he set as a freshman last year.

Going by the logic of a wise man, VCU track coach Julian Spooner, Frierson said it had everything to do with the disappointing performance.

That logic, Frierson explained, says the two are one in the same.

"Your muscles are just like a pork chop," Frierson said, quoting Spooner, "except you don't eat it."

How would you rather have your pork chop, Frierson asked, pulled straight from the refrigerator, frozen and rock solid. Or would you prefer that it be heated nice and warm so that everything was loose and ready for you to enjoy.

Two weekend's ago at the Ram Invitational, Frierson, who has been nursing an injured hamstring for more than a month now, had a chance to tenderize his muscles much like the pork chop in the second example, thoroughly applying heat to his

leg before edging out teammate Jackie Deshazo in the 100 by running a 10.60 (Frierson's personal best in the event outdoors is 10.57 seconds).

Last week at Richmond, he only had a chance to half heat the leg and essentially took the track running on a frozen pork chop that had only partially thawed. His muscles were tight, and he ended up finishing third behind Virginia's Reuben Jones and Pittsburgh's Chris Anderson.

Frierson said he hasn't clocked in at more than 11 seconds in the 100 since his competing in high school at Highland Springs, and he has no intentions to relive those days.

"That's the first and last time that will ever happen," Frierson said of last weekend's results.

He won't run the 100 this weekend when the Rams travel to Christopher Newport Saturday for the Captains Classic. Instead he'll enter the 400 for the first time since the Colonial Athletic Association championship last spring.

His goal: to qualify for NCAA Regionals, which would mean circling the track in 47 seconds.

Keep in mind this would be just his third meet since the hammy injury.

"I've got big dreams with a hurt leg," he said.



Pat Kane

VCU sophomore James Frierson ran an 11.06 in the 100-meter dash last Saturday, his worst time since competing in high school.

GET IN THE GAME

The Commonwealth Times

CT Sports is looking for student 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 or by phone at (804) 828-1058.

Spectrum

Passport around the world

Intercultural Fest gives Richmond a taste of its diversity

SUZANNE HOYLE
Spectrum Writer

This weekend VCU's Intercultural Festival gives students a passport around the world.

ICF, held to educate students and Richmonders about cultural and ethnic diversities, features people from diverse cultures, dance and music performances, a parade, family activities and cultural food vendors and merchandisers.

"It's fun and there is nowhere in Richmond that you can really experience and see different cultures come together and share cultures," said Yen Pham, co-director of the Intercultural Festival.

ICF gives sororities, fraternities and other VCU students from various majors the opportunity to come together and meet, Pham said.

Although visitors can participate in the festivities without a passport, there are many benefits to having one. Once visitors have their passport stamped at various cultural areas, they may turn them in to win prizes.

The passport provides incentives to visitors who make an extra effort to learn and see the various cultures at the festival, Pham said.

The festivities kick off with Dr. Eugene Trani, president of VCU, speaking at the opening ceremony. VCU's homecoming king, Ronald Young and homecoming queen, Ashley Jones host the performance shows.

Dance performances include hula, hip hop, Thai classical, Irish, African and Arabian belly dance, with many of the performers offering dance lessons to audience members.

Musical performances, such as spoken word, reggae, Muslim singing and Chinese instrumental also take to

the stage.

The dance and musical performances expand to include students from local high schools and elementary schools, Pham said.

"We are advertising this all over Richmond and other locations outside of Richmond, hoping that we can get a larger crowd to this year's festival than last year," Pham said.

Last year approximately 3,500 people attended the Intercultural Festival and this year Pham expects that number to double.

"Our goal is to make this event the biggest cultural festival in the nation hosted by VCU students," said Pham. "We want to embrace the different contributions that VCU students bring and learn from each other's culture."

This year's ICF attractions include Chinese Acrobats, Crossroads Irish Dance Troupe, Latin Beat, fashion shows, The Rappahannock Tribe and an Olympic-style flag and float parade.

The parade, which takes place at the Commons Plaza and Linden Street, includes various student cultural organizations who will wave flags representing their country, and display their cultural floats.

Students also have a chance to play international sports and take part in other hands-on activities such as creating necklaces, piñatas and origami.

The Intercultural Festival is open to the public.

VCU Intercultural Festival takes place Sunday, April 3. 11 a.m.-6 p.m. VCU Commons Plaza. Free. For more information visit www.studentorg.vcu.edu/icf/contact.html



Sounds from around the world entertain the crowd at last year's ICF.



A young girl enjoys fun and game at last year's Intercultural Festival.

Photos courtesy of the Intercultural Festival

Happenings

March 31 through April 3

Thursday, March 31

"Amelie," a movie about a demure French girl who encounters love while helping others around her find it, shows at 7 p.m. in the Commons Theater. Free to VCU students with valid ID. Two guest limit per student.

Friday, April 1

VCU French Film Festival invades the Byrd Theater all weekend long. Not fluent in French? All films have subtitles. Student passes are \$35 or \$8 per film before showing. For the complete schedule visit www.frenchfilmfestival.vcu.edu. For more information call 827-FILM.

Saturday, April 2

Miss Liberia VA Pageant — a few VCU students are competing for the crown. Seating begins at 7:30 p.m. Commonwealth Ballroom B. Tickets for students are \$10. Advance purchase required. For more information or to buy tickets call 307-7694.

"Hotel Rwanda" shows 7 p.m. in the Commons Theater. Free to VCU students with valid ID. Two guests per student.

Sunday, April 3

Faculty and alumni perform in Guitars! Guitars!, a concert highlighting classical, flamenco and jazz guitar music. 4 p.m. Singleton Center for the Performing Arts. Free. 922 Park Ave. For more information call 828-6776.



Spectrum

Johnnie Cochran Jr., who won acquittal for O.J. Simpson, dies

LINDA DEUTSCH*AP Special Correspondent*

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Johnnie L. Cochran Jr.'s legal career representing both victims of police abuse and celebrities in peril converged under the media glare when he successfully defended O.J. Simpson from murder charges.

Cochran, who was diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor in December 2003, died Tuesday at his home in the Los Feliz area of Los Angeles. He was 67.

With his gift for courtroom oratory, Cochran became known for championing the causes of black defendants and for the iconic phrase, "If it doesn't fit, you must acquit," in Simpson's murder trial.

He proudly displayed copies in his office of the multimillion-dollar checks he won for ordinary citizens who said they were abused by police.

"The clients I've cared about the most are the No Js, the ones who nobody knows," he once said.

Over the years, Cochran represented

football great Jim Brown on rape and assault charges, actor Todd Bridges on attempted murder charges, rappers Tupac Shakur on a weapons charge, Snoop Dogg on a murder charge and Sean "P. Diddy" Combs on gun and bribery charges stemming from a nightclub shooting.

Cochran used the "if it doesn't fit" phrase in his closing argument at the Simpson trial, describing the moment when the former football player tried on bloodstained "murder gloves" to show jurors they did not fit. One glove was found at the murder scene; the defense said the other glove was planted at Simpson's home by racist police.

Jurors found Simpson not guilty of the 1994 slayings of his ex-wife Nicole Brown Simpson and her friend Ronald Goldman.

"I've got to say, I don't think I'd be home today without Johnnie," Simpson said Tuesday by telephone from Florida. "I always tell people, if your kids or your loved ones got in trouble, you would want Johnnie. Even his adversaries respected him."

After Simpson's acquittal, Cochran appeared on countless TV talk shows, was awarded his own show on cable's Court TV, traveled the world giving speeches, and was parodied in films and on such TV shows as "Seinfeld" and "South Park."

Cochran also represented former Black Panther Elmer "Geronimo" Pratt, who spent 27 years in prison for a murder he didn't commit. When Cochran helped Pratt win his freedom in 1997 he called the moment "the happiest day of my life practicing law."

He won a \$760,000 award in a wrongful death lawsuit filed by the family of Ron Settles, a black college football star who died in police custody in 1981. Cochran challenged police claims that Settles hanged himself in jail after a speeding arrest. The player's body was exhumed and an autopsy revealed that Settles had been choked.

His clients included the family of Tyisha Miller, a 19-year-old black woman shot to death by Riverside police who said she reached for a gun on her lap when

they broke her car window in an effort to disarm her.

"He was an inspiration to many, many young lawyers," said Harvard Law School professor Alan Dershowitz, a colleague on the Simpson case. "It's a sad, sad day."

Cochran was born Oct. 2, 1937, in Shreveport, La., the great-grandson of slaves, grandson of a sharecropper and son of an insurance salesman. He came to Los Angeles with his family in 1949, and became one of two dozen black students integrated into Los Angeles High School in the 1950s.

After graduating from UCLA, Cochran earned a law degree from Loyola Law School in Los Angeles. He spent two years in the Los Angeles city attorney's office before establishing his own practice, later building his firm into a personal injury giant with more than 100 lawyers and offices around the country.

Associated Press writer Greg Risling contributed to this report.

'Bleep' focuses on science of possibility

Surreal Docu-drama makes quantum physics easy to swallow

JOSEPH GAVIN*Spectrum Writer*

Quantum physics — the words paralyze most people. In the film, "What the Bleep Do We Know?!", an olive branch is extended to the layperson from physicists, neurologists, spiritual teachers and scholars.

The movie gives the audience a ramp, up which those with handicapped minds can easily reach a firm grasp on quantum physics, the science of possibilities.

"Bleep" is about planting seeds. It plants the idea that there are in fact an infinite number of possibilities and that nothing, from our deepest religious beliefs to our own eyes, should be trusted to give us any definite answers.

Marlee Matlin ("The Linguini Incident", "Children of a Lesser God") plays Amanda, a photographer coping with a failed marriage and the onset of a mid-life crisis.

Amanda's perceived view of herself begins to fall apart and life as she knows it changes around her. The movie uses the cusp Amanda is on to explore the possibilities that await her and draws parallels between Amanda's infinite choices and the possibilities of quantum physics.

Her story is seamlessly woven with the ideas of various authorities and scholars in the field of quantum physics. When a main point about quantum physics is explained "Bleep" cuts back to Amanda's life and watch as she tackles that idea.

"Bleep" moves through the layers of her consciousness from the brain and the chemicals it produces, which makes people feel sad, happy and bored, down to the smallest part of consciousness, the cell, which accepts and ultimately depends on those chemicals. Amanda's feelings are chemical reactions and thus the idea of addiction and chemical dependency are tackled.

Love and depression, "Bleep" points out, are chemical reactions with the potential for addiction. These intimate and self-destructive feelings are likened to street drugs and

prescribed mood enhancers, such as anxiety pills.

As anyone who has ever had to suffer separation from a loved one knows there is physical and mental pain. The film draws a parallel between that suffering and the detoxification and recovery of an addict.

What makes separation so painful, the film points out, is that we assume there is only one path for us. One way. When humans are knocked off that path, whether it be through a failed marriage and a mid-life crisis like Amanda's they lose their sense of self and then must go through the process of creating our own self image over again.

What quantum physics offers humans is a basic idea that few seem to prescribe to. There are infinite possibilities. To assume that one there is one way to move through life only leads to "deplorable results."

The movie takes on religion through the idea of infinite possibilities, calling religion a "poor description for life." The film is especially hard on Western religions, where there are only two "paths" instead of eastern religions, most of which have multiple possibilities.

As Amanda struggles with her realizations and begins to see that her life can go anyway at anytime, the viewer watches her fall further and further into her breakdown of self-loathing, confusion and dependency.

Through quantum physics and Bleep's scientists and scholars, which seem to be guiding Amanda through her breakdown like the Fates, viewers watch as someone who is desperately trying to hang on finally lets go only to realize she was on the ground the entire time.

If the movie has done its job, by the time the lights come up you should leave the theater with a profound, fresh outlook. You should be able to recognize that what you see in front of you is real, the uncomfortable chairs, patrons filing out, and smell of old popcorn. But just beyond the exit or even directly behind you, there is no telling what of the infinite number of possibilities awaits you.

Ving Rhames portrays different Kojak in new show

By The Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — Ving Rhames may have picked up a lollipop and stepped into Telly Savalas' shoes for a new version of "Kojak," but he wasn't a fan of the TV show as a child.

"'Kojak' wasn't on in my house. I grew up in Harlem one block away from the Apollo Theater, where a version of Kojak's show was happening every day in the neighborhood. There were thugs and criminals and detectives running around. Why would I want to watch a show about that?" he told the Boston Sunday Globe. "I think I've seen one rerun."

Rhames, 43, who is best known for his role as Marsellus Wallace in the 1994 film "Pulp Fiction" and the "Mission: Impossible" franchise, said his Kojak will be different.

"You'll see my Kojak being very human. He interprets the law of the streets differently than what's on the written page. It's not the law to beat up someone who molests a child. It's not the law to castrate someone who rapes a child.

"But if someone does that to your child, could you understand that kind of punishment? I'm not saying you like it, but can you understand it? I guess that sums up Kojak. He's a man who happens to be a detective. He finds his own way to deal with problems."

"Kojak," which premiered on the USA Network last week as a two-hour movie, will begin its regular weekly rotation on the network April 3.



Editorials & Letters

Opinion In Brief

Environmentally challenged

As we head into April, Earth Day is coming the 22nd of this month. Spring is a time for new beginnings, a time to think about nature, and the environment is on our mind.

It's amazing how much we affect the environment in our daily lives, and how our actions are multiplied many times over as our neighbors and fellow Americans engage in many of the same everyday activities.

Every time you throw a piece of paper or a plastic bottle in the trash, that's that much more space being taken up in a landfill somewhere instead of being used to make more paper and more bottles.

Every time you start your car, you're putting pounds of carbon dioxide pollution in the air, contributing to global warming, not to mention nitrogen and sulfur oxides that contribute to acid rain that is wearing away at our nation's stone monuments.

Try to recycle more this month – you'll be surprised how little you actually need to throw away. And instead of driving to the grocery store, try walking the few blocks instead, or get your old bike out of the garage. Things aren't as far away as you might think.



Editorial Cartoon | by Phil McKenney

Your Turn *Letters to the Editor*



Terri Schiavo & the right to die

The Terri Schiavo case has been a hot news story these last couple of weeks. For those who have not been keeping up with the news, Terri is a woman who suffered severe brain damage 15 years ago and has needed a feeding tube for nourishment ever since. On Friday, March 18, a Florida judge ordered that Terri's feeding tube be removed, at the request of Terri's husband. Terri's parents have desperately tried to have that decision overturned, but to no avail. It appears that legal options are running out for Terri's parents. In fact, Terri may very well have died before you read this.

Issues of death and dying are very difficult, not only because it is often hard to determine the right course of action, but also because such issues hit so close to home and can affect those we love most. In the issues of life, especially the difficult ones, it is vitally important that we learn to ask the right questions. Only then can we hope to determine the course of action that ought to be taken. The Terri Schiavo case is no exception.

Perhaps you have asked some questions of your own as you have sought to determine if you think Terri's feeding tube should be removed or not. Is she in pain? Might she eventually recover? Does she have a sufficient 'quality of life'? Or, as the two sides in this case are asking – What does Terri want?

Knowing the right question to ask, however, requires an awareness of who has the ultimate authority (and the rights) in our lives. The

simple, though unpopular, fact is that we are all under the authority of a King – and that King is Jesus. "But I am not a Christian," you may say. "I don't recognize Jesus as my King." I am aware, of course, that there are many who do not acknowledge Jesus as their King, and I do not pretend to be able to convince them otherwise here. I simply wish to proclaim what Jesus himself proclaimed after his death and resurrection: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." Those words,

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found at the end of Matthew's Gospel, mean that Jesus is your King, whether you were aware of it or not.

So the decisive question in every situation in life must be "What does my King require of me?" As we seek to answer this question, we must go to where the King has spoken – the Bible.

In Deuteronomy 32:39, the King says, "There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life." In this statement, God is claiming that he alone has the right to give and take life. When God says "I bring to life," this means that we do not have the right to take human life outside of what He has authorized.

When he says "I put to death," this means that when someone is dying (and there is no way to heal them) we must let them go.

So the relevant question becomes, Is Terri dying? If she is, and there is no way to heal her, we need to let her go. But if she is not dying, we have no right to take away the life that God has given. It is interesting to note that, while the two sides in this case are arguing over what Terri would want, neither side is claiming that she is dying. In fact, she clearly is not dying. Though she is severely brain damaged, her body is fine in terms of her ability to continue living. Her organs are not failing. She does not need machines to artificially keep her body alive. She just needs food, like you and me.

Since the King clearly states that we have no right to take the lives of those who are not dying (outside of what he has authorized), and since Terri is clearly not dying, the right course of action becomes clear. We must reinsert Terri's feeding tube and preserve her life.

Sincerely,

Rev. Christopher Daniel, M.Div.
Reformed University Fellowship

Chris is campus minister for the Reformed University Fellowship, which meets 7 p.m. Tuesdays in the Commons Theater. Visit www.vcu.ruf.org for more information.

The Commonwealth Times

*The dependent student press of
Virginia Commonwealth University*

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