

The Commonwealth Times

Free

The Independent Student Press of Virginia Commonwealth University Vol. 42 No. 20 Thursday, April 7, 2005

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Potter leaves gallery for teaching

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Spectrum

Meet Micah Risk: "The Sexiest Female Vegetarian Alive" / **Page 9**

Editorials & Letters

Alcohol ABCs:
Alex Marra returns to the editorial pages with drinking basics. / **Page 15**

WEIRD NEWS

CALENDAR

APRIL 7 THROUGH APRIL 9

Thursday, April 7	Friday, April 8	Saturday, April 9
Student Affairs offers another Academic Success Workshop: Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking Skills from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the T. Edward Temple Building room 1169. This workshop is open to the public, but attendees must register prior to attending at www.pubinfo.vcu.edu/academic-success/ . For more information contact Darlene Pantaleo at 828-6200.	Stop by the W.E. Singleton Center for the Performing Arts' Sonia Vlahcevic Concert Hall for the Crossing Boundaries Toward Peace lecture. Nobel Peace Laureate Oscar Arias will address the crowd about issues such as human development, democracy and demilitarization from lessons he learned while president of Costa Rica. The event takes place from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m. For more information call Christina Turner at 827-7869.	The James River Film Festival presents "X: The Man with the X-Ray Eyes" at the Byrd Theatre. The movie will feature live accompaniment from Pere Ubu, an avant-rock band. The event starts at 9:30 p.m. and tickets range from \$12 to \$15. For more information call 232-7642.

CAMPUS FORECAST



Thursday
75/58



Friday
67/44



Saturday
61/40



Sunday
66/44

Correction: In the Commonwealth Times' April 4 issue, Annie McCallum's story titled "Forgot your parking decal?" should have ended with the parking and transportation office's phone number. It should have read "Students forgetting their decals should call 828-0501." We apologize for the error.

Compiled from wire reports

Burton spends millions on cracking nuts

Tim Burton, director of the remake of "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory," spent millions of dollars to train squirrels how to crack nuts. The squirrels were chosen at birth and sent to a training school for six months to learn how to perform the task.

Citizen's arrest

A 77-year-old grandmother tackled a 25-year-old man after she caught him jay walking. The woman made a citizen's arrest and sat on the offender until police arrived. After yelling at the man as he started to cross the street before the light turned green, the woman became enraged when he bumped her with his backpack as he walked by her. She then pulled his hair and wrestled him to the ground until the authorities arrived. The man later received a fine for jay walking.

Police mistake drunken bumbling for murder

In Germany, murder investigation was reopened after a woman discovered a pair of false teeth and reading glasses in her garden.

Police dug up the woman's entire garden looking for other signs of a body. The mystery was solved, though, when police found a man's wallet in the garden. All three items belong to a man who reported losing them after a day of heavy drinking. The man said he knew he had fallen over in a garden, but he could not remember which one.

Organ smuggler captured

Robert Mihaly, a Romanian thief, was charged with organ smuggling after a routine prison check showed the man was missing a kidney. Thirty-year-old Mihaly told prison officials the kidney had been removed due to a medical condition, but guards became suspicious after they were unable to find any hospital records verifying that fact. Authorities discovered that Mihaly sold his kidney in 2001 to a woman for almost \$19,000.

MP's stage protest in Ecuador

Military police in Ecuador threw water bottles and coins during a fight that disrupted parliament. The fight occurred during a debate over a potential candidate for general secretary. Police also made gun signs with their hands pretending to shoot the speakers. Parliament was

suspended in an attempt to restore order. Even though the MP's attempted to disrupt the meeting, the vote took place as scheduled.

Woman survives 40-foot fall

A woman fell 40 feet from her apartment window and survived after she landed on her feet. The woman fell from the fourth floor while attempting to clean the outside of the window. Although she did break both of her feet in the fall, she was lucky that she did not land on another part of her body. A local doctor said that people who fall from that height usually land on their back or head. The fact she landed on her feet may be the only thing that saved her.

Chinese man tries to break record

A 105-year-old man will challenge the current world record for the 100-meter dash among those over the age of 100. The man has been chosen to be a torch runner for the 10th National Games in China. The current record is held by a South African man named Philip Rabinowitz with a time of 30.86 seconds.

Front cover photo by Pat Kane.

The Commonwealth TIMES

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NEWS

SGA discusses successes at semester's final roundtable

ALYCE ROBINSON
Staff Writer

Before the Student Government Association ended its roundtable meetings for the year Monday, SGA's leaders, past and present, told the organization leaders farewell and discussed plans for next year.

SGA president Zmarak Khan and Kelly Carnes, the executive director of university relations, discussed the roundtable's success. SGA's newly elected officials introduced themselves along with vice president Eddie O'Leary who becomes SGA's president on April 25.

"I honestly feel that we were very successful and for that I would like to thank you," Khan said. "We're not perfect and if anybody tells you that SGA is perfect, they're lying. We have come a long way, and the roundtable has promoted SGA and gave you a way to communicate with each other and SGA. It helps bring a sense of community."

Many students attending the event agreed with Khan. Phillip Bowles, an art major, represented the Illustrators Club when he described the roundtable meetings.

"They let me know what is going on around school and what some of the other programs are working on," Bowles said. "They're informative so you know what's going on around campus. It's nice because they e-mail you and let you know what's going on."

But not all students found the meetings as informative as Bowles.

"I like to come and make fun of them a little bit, but they're fun to come chill with my friends, I admit," said Rachel Gee, a sociology

major representing Alpha Phi Omega's national service fraternity.

Since it was the final roundtable meeting of the year, Carnes who chaired the meetings, wrapped up its first year.

"I think they have been a huge success," Carnes said. "I definitely had my doubts in the beginning, and I was really scared of trying to control an agenda for a roomful of people who are obviously more experienced than any other students in the school. I was really afraid if they would come and if they would find the meetings informative and interesting and necessary and not just a waste of their time."

O'Leary discussed his plans for the next year saying he wants to make a better Web site for student organizations and for the SGA.

"I don't think it's very centralized or easy to understand," O'Leary said of the Web site. "That's one change that will really help you. I want to try and make things easier for you."

Carnes called the attendance at the meetings "fabulous."

"The very first meeting, I set up 40 chairs and 97 people showed up, so people were sitting on the floor and stages," Carnes said. "It really was a surprise. We didn't figure that many people would come to the very first meeting since it was brand new and they didn't know about it, but we've had a full house ever since."

Plans for next year's meetings are already in the works. Organization leaders will meet again in early September with SGA's executive director, Katherine Capocelli.

Carnes reminded students that their feedback can help SGA to plan more informative and entertaining meetings.

"I have been trying to work with Mayor Wilder, trying to get him to come," Carnes said. "I really would request more feedback from the students to get who you want in here."

Islamic professor leads coed prayer service

KATIE GANTT
News Editor

A VCU religious studies professor last month broke from Islamic tradition when she led a mixed gender Islamic prayer service at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City.

Amina Wadud, a female professor who teaches a class on women and Islam, angered some members of the Muslim community in the United States and abroad.

Although Wadud's prayer has created a heightened situation on campus, VCU President Eugene P. Trani maintains that the university supports the First Amendment:

"I want to emphasize that VCU respects the academic freedom and rights of free speech and religious expression of all our faculty and students," he wrote in a March 24 e-mail to the VCU community.

Trani also said that there will be continued interest in this situation in the media both nationally and internationally.

"The safety of our students, faculty and staff is our highest priority, and we are taking appropriate measures to safeguard our campuses," Trani wrote.

Security has been heightened on campus, and Wadud now conducts her class via video conference for the rest of the semester.

Jonathan Waybright, a VCU religious studies professor and Wadud's colleague, said he and other staff members have had some informal contact with her.

"She counts herself as secure," he said. "It has placed her and the university in an interesting position."

Waybright also said the university has cautioned faculty members regarding this issue, asking them not to discuss information concerning Wadud or her classes.

"The university is keenly aware of the situation," he said.

VCU gallery director to become professor

JOSEPH GAVIN
Staff Writer

After eight years as director of the Anderson Gallery Museum of the Arts, Ted Potter on July 1 will become a collateral associate professor in the VCU School of the Arts.

A painter and art advocate, Potter directed the Anderson Gallery through 255 exhibitions since his arrival in 1997.

Amy Moorefield, the gallery's assistant director and curator of collections, cites the more than 250 diverse exhibitions Potter attracted to the gallery and to Richmond as one of the director's greatest accomplishments.

"What Ted has done is commendable," Moorefield said sitting her in office adjacent to Potter's. "He has been able to bring in significant artists with established exhibition careers to the gallery."

Tim Carroll, senior painting and printmaking major employed by the gallery, said exhibitions such as that of Gregory Barsamian, a kinetic sculptor who displayed his works at the gallery in winter 2003, represent some of the best examples of the diversity that Potter secured for exhibiton.

With Potter leaving for a teaching job Moorefield said it becomes the end of an era for the Anderson Gallery.

"He is a good model as a director," she said. "He has given us lots of leeway and freedom, which has allowed the gallery to

flourish."

Working with Potter was like watching the Anderson Gallery return to its roots, the assistant director said, because Potter focused mainly on local and national artists rather than international artists.

Though Potter will no longer sit in the director's chair at the Anderson Gallery, he will continue assisting the gallery as the first director emeritus, which Moorefield said reflects positively on her former boss.

"It's a significant post," she said, "and in a small way it still aligns him with the gallery."

Potter, too, views the director emeritus position as a chance to stay involved. Nonetheless he said he's now ready for his new position and he's eager to begin teaching at VCU. But before he moves to the art school Potter plans to accomplish some goals for the gallery.

"We need more space to adequately respond to the needs of student and professional exhibitions," Potter said, "and more funding to be able to show exhibits that include the use of computers, televisions and projectors."

As director at several galleries around the nation since the mid-'60s, including the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art in Winston-Salem, N.C., the Atlantic Center for the Arts in Daytona Beach, Fla., and the Contemporary Arts Center in New Orleans, Potter said he finds himself wanting

do something different that's more involved with art students.

"Buzzwords like 'diversity,' are usually used to describe most schools," he said, "but here it's true. The student body is extremely diverse; it's a model of what America is rapidly becoming."

Moreover, Moorefield said Potter has been interested in teaching for some time.

"We are excited to see Ted moving over to the School of Arts," she said. "He has wanted to teach for a while."

Potter leaves his gallery position June 30. Although the gallery has yet to begin looking for a replacement, Moorefield expressed her idea about the type of person she would like to see in the position.

"It's got to be someone who has a hand in what's going on," she said. "They have to have the ability to anticipate trends in contemporary art."

For Carroll, who for four years has worked alongside Potter as a work-study student in the gallery, the person selected should be a director as well as an artist.

"Someone who is still practicing their art would be good, so they can participate as an artist as well as a director," he said.

Until July 1, Potter will continue to sit in his seat at the Anderson Gallery as an accomplished, well-respected director.

"We want to wish Ted the best of luck in fulfilling his vision of becoming a teacher," Moorefield said. "We'll miss him."

NEWS

Professor takes part in Black History Month special

CHRIS WILLIAMS
Staff Writer

After more than 4,000 interviews with people concerning civil rights history, Clarence Thomas, associate professor in the School of Mass Communications, recognizes the impact of his work for the Library of Congress.

"I became part of the project when it was switched over to the Library of Congress," Thomas said. "I'm working through the Library of Congress in doing this. There's been a television program about the interviews and the process on the History Channel that aired during Black History Month."

As an oral history of the Civil Rights Movement told by people directly connected to the movement, Thomas said his study of the Slave Narratives provided the directions to begin the project. This oral history contains the faces and voices many people have never seen or heard, because the Civil Rights Movement affected all different cultures – not only African-Americans.

The concept for this historical project started through AARP, but now the Library of Congress serves as its national repository.

Henry Rhone, vice provost for student affairs and enrollment services, remembers when the Civil Rights Movement played a critical role in helping African-Americans progress in American society.

"Obviously I've been around to experience both the segregated society as well as the integrated society," he said. "As a result I've seen great opportunities become available in this country for African-Americans through civil rights."

"I've also seen some losses with regard to community strength as a result of the advances that we've made through integration."

Napoleon L. Peoples, director of the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs, also has observed the effects left by the Civil Rights Movement and how people in power sometimes try to erase its work.

"There's something I see coming down the line, and that is the erosion of affirmative action, an erosion of the programs that were created by civil rights and the erosion of some of the policies put in place."

"That's why it's an interesting time," he said, adding that he doesn't know what's going to happen in the future, but people are attacking affirmative action programs. "They're attacking multicultural programs. They're attacking diversity. They're attacking the whole concept and structure of what civil rights is based on," he said.

This might make Thomas' work all the more significant. But the project will be preserved through new technology. Thus, 100 years from now the people still can learn about the Civil Rights Movement.

"The thing many people ask me is, 'Do white people talk in this or do you interview white people?'" The answer is yes. The Civil Rights Movement didn't just include African-Americans," Thomas said. "Although African-Americans were victims and suffering, many whites were killed during the Civil Rights Movement and the march with Dr. King and so forth."

"So, if a white person has a story to tell about being a leader or a participant in the movement, then yes, we're interviewing whites, Asians, anyone who has a story to tell about the movement."

Thomas said one obstacle in obtaining information sometimes has been difficult, because individuals are in their 70s and 80s and others have died.

"Our people are getting old and dying off," he said. "I've interviewed many people who are not here anymore,

and I have their stories down. I've interviewed most of Dr. King's inner-circle for other projects I've done before. I can say at least half of the people I've interviewed have died."

"This is pretty much an ongoing process until there's no one left to tell the story. So, I'll be doing this for a very long time. It's one of those projects that's just going to go and go and go."

As VCU's multicultural affairs director, Peoples has observed attacks on diversity, affirmative action and other civil rights issues.

"It's nothing scary. It's nothing magical," he said. "It's something that's helpful when you offer people civil rights or human rights. You're just being fair. You're just being a part of the sphere of human development and human growth. But I see it right now as being eroded to some extent, because they're starting to talk about even turning back the Voting Rights Act. So, it's just a very interesting time."

Right now, Shirley R. Thomas, head of access services for VCU libraries, assists Thomas with his work, but he's looking for some more help, preferably students who want to become a part of the historical project.

"I would like for students to get involved as well," he said. "I'd like to build a whole core of students, so that the Library of Congress really knows VCU is doing this project the right way."

Calling the project important, Thomas reiterated the fact that many people of the civil rights era have died, which makes the need for collecting this information now even more important.

"So, I mean it's important to get this information down. It's really exciting when you stop and think about what you're doing and the significance of it. It's more than just now — it is for the future."



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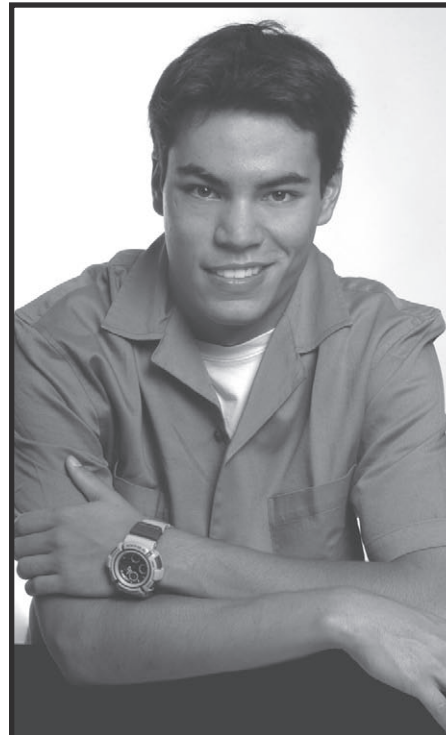
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NEWS

CRIME LOG

March 16

- A female was arrested for possession of marijuana on North 8th Street.

March 20

- A female advised that an unknown person damaged personal property valued at \$200 at the SE Lot.

March 21

- A male and female were arrested for possession of marijuana at Gladding Residence Center.

March 22

- An unknown person removed personal property valued at \$88 from a secured location at Ramz Hall.

March 23

- An unknown person tampered with computer equipment at Oliver Hall.

March 24

- A male was arrested for urinating in public on West Grace Street.
- A male was arrested for felony hit and run with injury, felony assault of a police officer, fleeing from law enforcement, driving while intoxicated, operating a vehicle with inspection rejection and operating a vehicle with improper tread at Main and Floyd.
- An unknown person removed personal prop-

erty valued at \$290 from a secured location at Monroe Park.

- An unknown person removed personal property valued at \$270 from a secured location at the School of Business.
- Four males were arrested for underage possession of alcohol in Cabaniss Hall.
- A male was arrested for trespassing at the Gateway Building.
- A female was arrested for driving with a suspended license and possession of marijuana at the corner of Belvidere and Broad streets.
- A female was arrested for petty larceny at the Massey Cancer Center.
- An unknown person pulled a fire alarm without reason at North Hospital.

March 25

- A male was arrested for purchasing alcohol for an unauthorized person, a male was arrested for possession of alcohol by a minor and a male was arrested for driving the wrong way on a one way street at the LL Lot.
- A male was arrested for possession of marijuana with intent to sell within 1000 feet of a school and possession of a false ID, and a male was arrested for underage possession of alcohol and possession of marijuana at Rhoads Hall.
- A male was arrested for 2 counts of indecent exposure in the 900 block of West Franklin Street.
- A male was arrested for DUI on West Main Street.
- A male advised that between 3/24 and 3/25 an unknown person removed personal property valued at \$440 from a secured location at the Monroe Park bike racks.
- A male was arrested for underage possession of alcohol at Cabell Library.
- A female was arrested for driving under the influence on West Grace Street.

Students volunteer with Habitat for Humanity

COREY W. BOONE

Staff Writer

Thanks to Ashley Hall and nine other VCU medical and nursing students, another Habitat for Humanity house stands ready for completion in Henrico.

Hall, co-vice president of philanthropy for the MCV-SGA, and nine VCU students assisted the Richmond Metropolitan Habitat for Humanity organization in building a one-story, four-bedroom home in the Edgelawn neighborhood of Eastern Henrico County.

"Habitat is one of my favorites because you get to work with different people," Hall said, explaining that she enjoys volunteering in such events as Habitat for Humanity because she values the time she spends working with new people and feels connected to the Richmond community.

"Volunteering gives (me) a sense of accomplishment and involvement in the community."

Hall says she hopes to continue this event, as she will compete for the MCV-SGA presidential position next year. The 24-year-old said she likes participating in the SGA and being involved in activities on VCU's Medical Center Campus and in the Richmond community.

Richmond's Habitat for Humanity, which began in 1986 as a nonprofit organization, builds affordable homes for low-income families living or working in Richmond, Henrico or Chesterfield counties.

"Our main goal is to take people out of subsidiary housing," said Leigh Herring, community relations director of the organization, who explained that Habitat for Humanity works with applicants needing shelter and better housing.

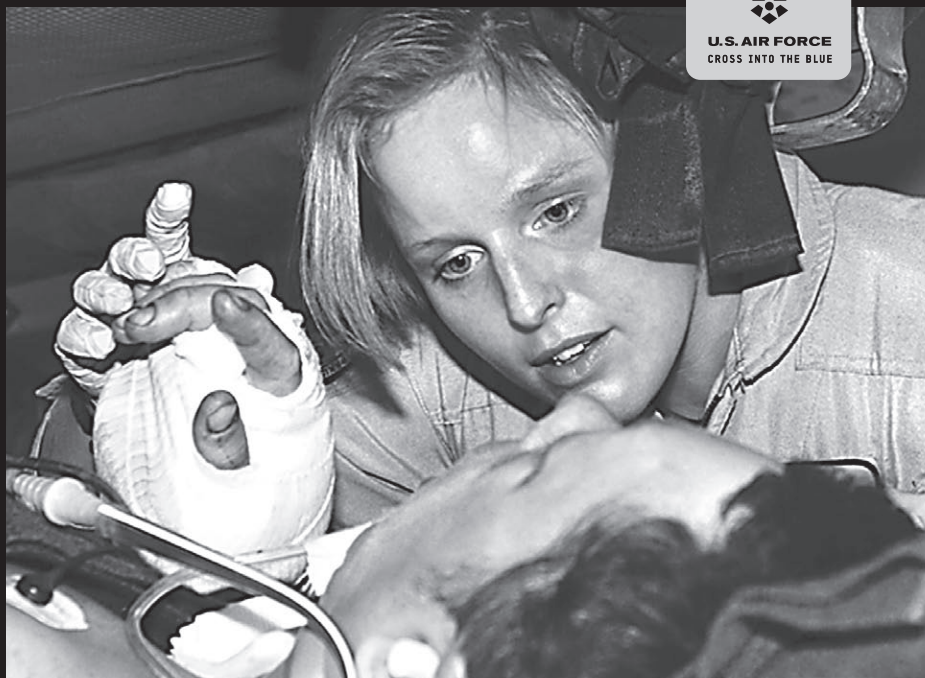
Cathryne Callaway, volunteer coordinator for the organization, said its members so far have overseen 200 homes built with the help of its 25 yearly participants and many volunteers.

"Without the help of our many volunteers, we would not be able to build the many homes we do," Callaway said. "It is the volunteers who participate who build houses."

Hall, a third-year-medical student, and other volunteers not only helped cut and move wood, but they also placed hurricane ties between the frame and the roof of the house. Habitat for Humanity plans for the house, with a living room, a dining room, a front porch and a shed finished and ready for a family by the end of April.

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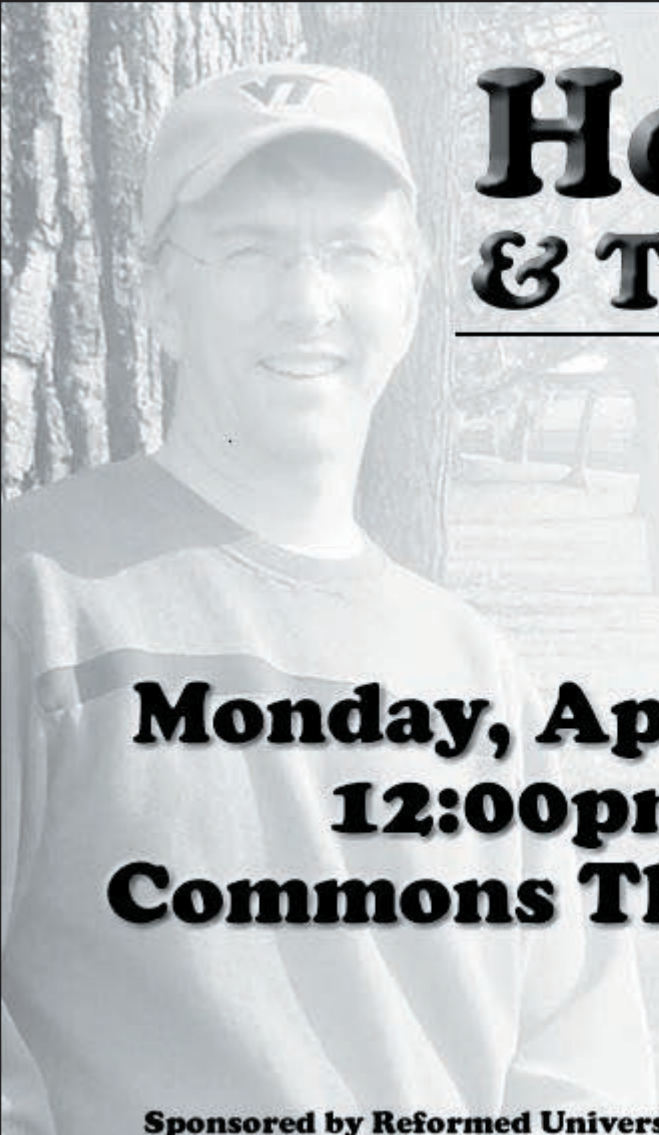


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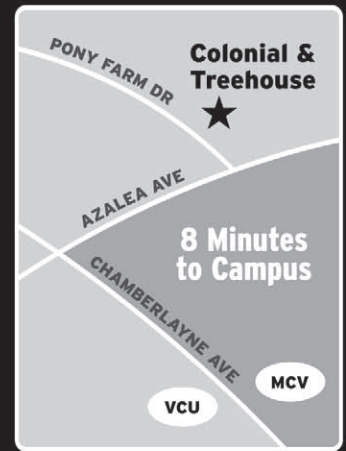
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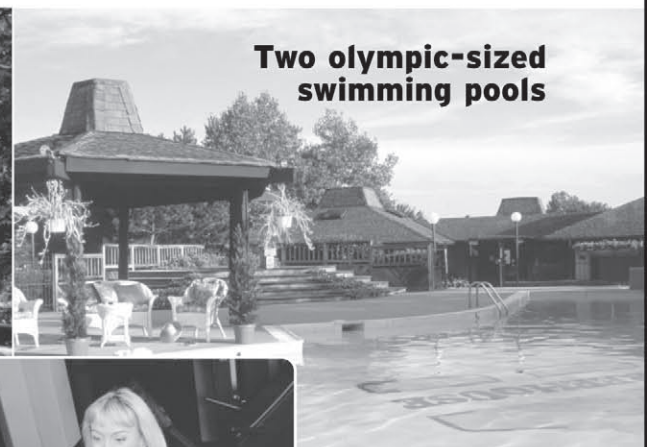
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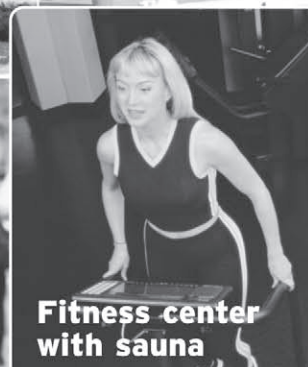
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Spectrum

VCU student crowned PETA's 'Sexiest Vegetarian Alive'

LOUIE CORBO

Spectrum Writer

Name: Micah E. Risk
Hometown: Charlotte, N.C.

Profile: The 20-year-old sophomore health sciences major transferred to VCU from Guilford College in Greensboro, N.C., and says her career goal is to be a nutritionist. She counts animals, sports and a passion for issues among her likes and meat, raw onions and ignorance among her dislikes. A vegan, Risk last month won PETA's "Sexiest Female Vegetarian Alive" contest.

Louie Corbo: When did you become a vegan?

Micah Risk: Three years ago I got into it for animal rights reasons. It grew to health and environmental reasons.

LC: How did you find out about the contest?

MR: I heard about it from a friend who is active in PETA. She mentioned the website. (Goveg.com)

LC: Why did you choose to enter?

MR: I thought it would be fun. Being vegan and an animal rights activist is serious and sometimes stressful. I felt it would be fun, lighten the vegan image.



Pat Kane

LC: Did you think you'd win?

MR: No, and I didn't believe them when they said I won.

LC: How do you think vegans are viewed? Is their a stereotype?

MR: Some people respect it, some people think is strange. Many people think we're

radical but I don't think we are.

LC: What would you say to people who think this vegetarian beauty contest objectifies you?

MC: I think their missing the point.

LC: What do you think the point is?

MR: The point is to show how this is a healthy lifestyle. Eating meat leads to obesity, heart disease and cancer. Lots of studies show that animal fat is hard for the body to digest. Veganism keeps you fit.

LC: Has your diet ever caused you any health problems?

MR: Nope, not at all. I've noticed that my immune system has actually gotten better. This is the first winter that I didn't get any type of flu or cold virus since I've been alive, probably. (laughs)

LC: What is the hardest part of being a vegan?

MR: At one time eating out was difficult...

but now I'm a little bit more familiar with places to eat, what to eat, and the questions to ask, so now that I know more about it overall... I don't think there is anything hard about being vegan. It's just frustrating not being able to go out and get soft-serve ice cream. (smiles)

LC: Does your family support your choice in dieting?

Yes! My parents have been so wonderful, my mom took me shopping at the local natural foods store right away... she started incorporating tofu and other substitutes in her cooking.. and eventually went vegetarian herself!

Where to eat vegetarian

J&K's Mobile Munchies
Main Street & Linden Court
Nile Ethiopian Restaurant & Café
309 N. Laurel St.
Sticky Rice
2322 W. Main St.
Ipanema
917 W. Grace St.
Ellwood Thompson's Natural Market
4 N. Thompson Street

Peter Jennings diagnosed with lung cancer

DAVID BAUDER

AP Television Writer

NEW YORK (AP) - Some regular ABC viewers suspected something was amiss when Peter Jennings didn't report to work over the weekend when the pope died, just the kind of important international story he loves to cover.

Now they've learned the sad reason why: Jennings has lung cancer.

Jennings broke the news in an e-mail to colleagues Tuesday and, in a taped message because his husky voice wouldn't permit him to anchor "World News Tonight" in the evening, to his viewers.

"Almost 10 million Americans are already living with cancer, and I have a lot to learn from them," he said. "And living is the key word."

Jennings, who begins chemotherapy treatment next week, said he intends to keep anchoring the evening news. But he acknowledged there will be days when

he's not up to it.

For two decades Jennings, NBC's Tom Brokaw and CBS's Dan Rather were the anchors who were always there, telling Americans about the Reagan administration, the fall of communism, the O.J. Simpson trial, the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and countless other stories.

Now, with almost blinding speed, that era is over. Brokaw left last November, replaced by Brian Williams. Embattled Dan Rather said goodbye to the evening news last month. And Jennings, who had looked forward to a period as the business' elder statesman, is fighting for his health.

Lung cancer is the leading cancer killer in the United States, and roughly four of five people diagnosed with the disease die within five years, said Dr. Cliff Connery, chief of thoracic surgery at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital in Manhattan.

Doctors said most lung cancer patients can continue to work throughout treatment, but need flexibility to take it easy on days they are not feeling well.

There are effective ways to treat lung cancer, but its mortality rate is so high because so many patients aren't diagnosed until their disease is in an advanced stage, Connery said.

"Yes, I was a smoker until about 20 years ago," Jennings said, "and I was weak and I smoked over 9/11. But whatever the reason, the news does slow you down a bit."

Still, he ended his message to viewers with a bit of humor.

"I wonder if other men and women ask their doctors right away: 'OK, doc, when does the hair go?'" he said.

Elizabeth Vargas subbed for Jennings on "World News Tonight" on Tuesday. She and Charles Gibson, who is in Rome for coverage of the pope's funeral, will spell him regularly, ABC News President David Westin said.

"He's already bringing to this new challenge the courage and strength we've seen so often in his reporting from the field and in anchoring ABC News," Westin told ABC staffers. "I know that all of us will give him every bit of support that he needs and asks for."

Happenings

April 7 through April 10

Thursday, April 7

It's opening night of Theatre VCU's presentation of musical "Civil War." The play features more than 36 gospel, rock, R&B, country and pop songs. Free for VCU students. Tickets cost \$15 for general admission, \$12 for seniors and VCU faculty/staff. 7:30 p.m. in the W.E. Singleton Center for the Performing Arts. 922 Park Ave. 828-6026.

Friday, April 8

Tonight's music scene: 2 Live Crew plays Nanci Raygun. 9 p.m. \$12; Hank III and Assjack rock Alley Katz. 9 p.m. \$15 in advance, \$18 at door; X-Ray Rex Tet jazz up Bogart's. 9 p.m. \$7

Saturday, April 9

Discover the definition of style at the STRUT. fashion show, 8 p.m. Alltel Pavilion, Siegel Center. Tickets cost \$5 for VCU students w/ valid ID, \$10 for non-VCU college students, \$15 for the general public. To buy tickets visit or call the Programs Office in the Commons (828-4554) or Siegel Center Box Office (827-7267).

Sunday, April 10

Watch movies on a budget. Missed "The Phantom of the Opera" on the big screens? Watch it on Byrd Theatre's big screen at 7:15 p.m. \$1.99. At Café Gutenberg's Sunday Film Classics, watch "Thin Man," an old-fashioned blend of comedy, murder and mystery. 9 p.m. Free.

COMICS

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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.

This is an elected position and includes two weeks paid training. Applicants must campaign and present a platform before the April election.

If interested, contact Jonathan Robbins at 828-1058 or stop by Temple Room 1149 for an application.





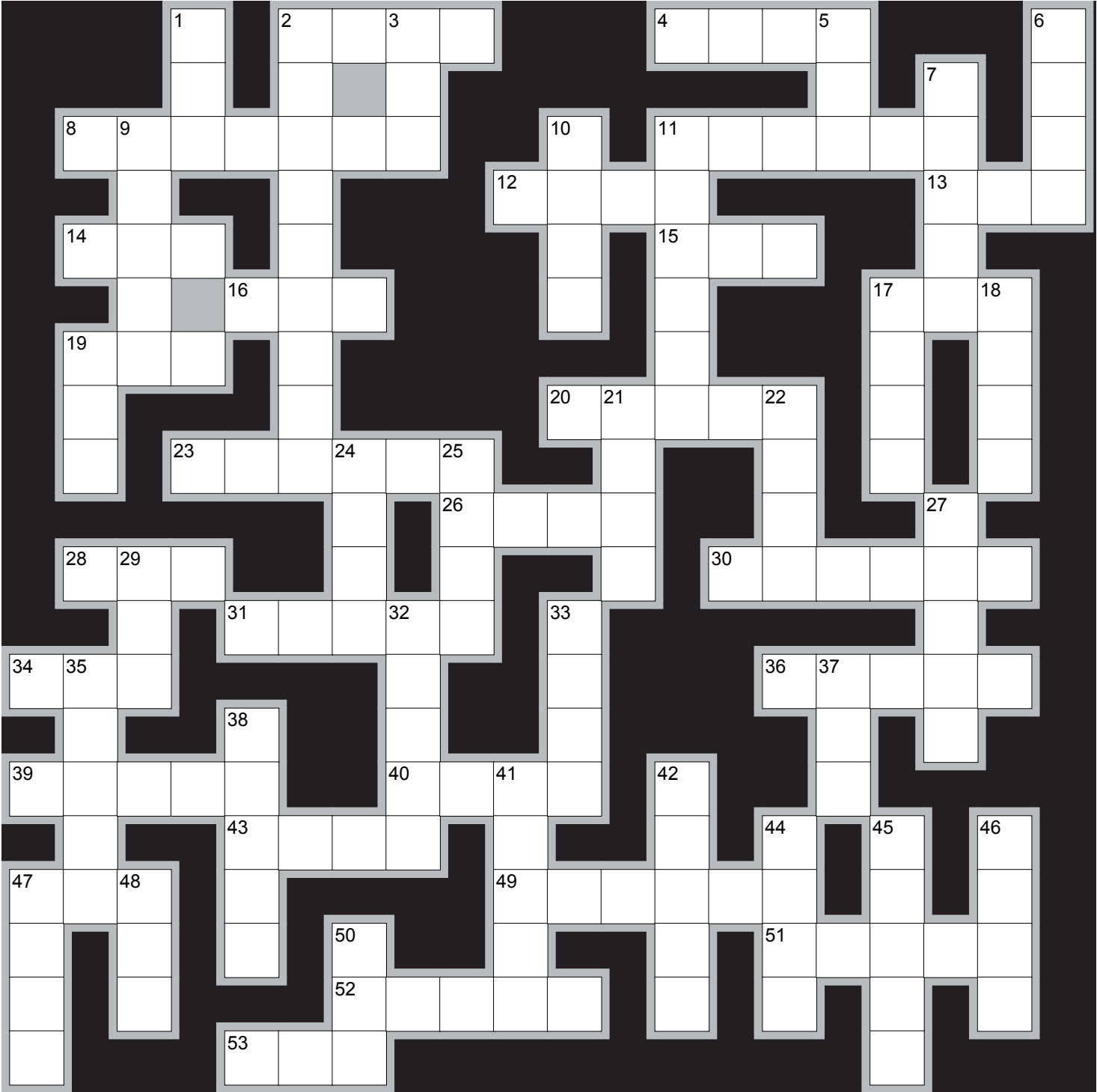
COMMONWEALTH TIMES CROSSWORD: NO THEME

Across

- 2. Kinko, Xerox...
- 4. Not a star-fish, but a sea ____.
- 8. Tiny canned fish.
- 11. If ravioli isn't filled with meat, then it's probably stuffed with this.
- 12. Round roof
- 13. Born Cassius Clay.
- 14. Hoover, water.
- 15. Demonic alcoholic beverage.
- 16. Bang! Bang!
- 17. Low island, reef.
- 19. Writing utensil that uses ink.
- 20. Proper, correct.
- 23. Villians of this summer's Will Smith movie.
- 26. Professional tennis player. Born on July 10, 1943, in Richmond, Virginia
- 28. The demon weed, wacky-tobaccy, MJ.
- 30. Once likened the Soviet Union to the Empire of "Star Wars," encouraged a missle-defense program of the same name.
- 31. Large aquatic mammal.
- 34. He's in every Final Fantasy.
- 36. Boy wonder.
- 39. Decline, deteriorate.
- 40. The norse chief of the gods.
- 43. vcu mascot
- 47. Caspian, Baltic.
- 49. To cause or bring on.
- 51. Snow versions of this apparel sometimes look like large tennis rackets.
- 52. The emotive part of "Dies Irae."
- 53. You can process this to make petrol products.

Down

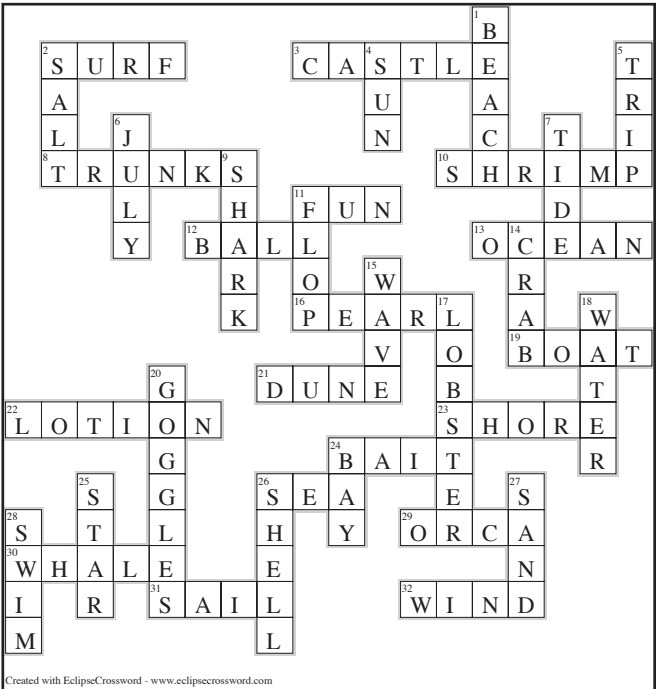
- 1. To be wrong, human, usually both.
- 2. Yucatan crater from a suspected dinosaur killer
- 3. Cherry, apple, mincemeat...
- 5. Regret
- 6. Meat market.
- 7. One of the original Black Panthers.
- 9. Proverb
- 10. A sound explosions make.
- 11. Dry versions of this are commonly mixed with milk.
- 17. Cattle.
- 18. Lawn
- 19. A domesticated animal kept as a companion.
- 21. Tried to eat the sun boat of Ra, sometimes managed to do it.
- 22. Sand hills.
- 24. "Killer" whale.
- 25. Satisfy
- 27. Quick
- 29. Ancient



Created with EclipseCrossword — www.eclipsecrossword.com

- 32. The creature that ends the world in "Chrono Trigger."
- 33. ____ mower.
- 35. Created by creators who wanted to own their creations.
- 37. How many punches did it take Batman to knock Guy Gardner out?
- 38. He is considered among the most influential figures in the development of rock and roll music.
- 41. Stupid fool.
- 42. a volcanic action.
- 44. A net, to become interlocked.
- 45. Combination fork and spoon.
- 46. To suddenly flow
- 47. Someplace you sit.
- 48. Covered cars miles away from Mount St. Helens in 1980.
- 50. Who? Who?

Answers to March Beach Edition



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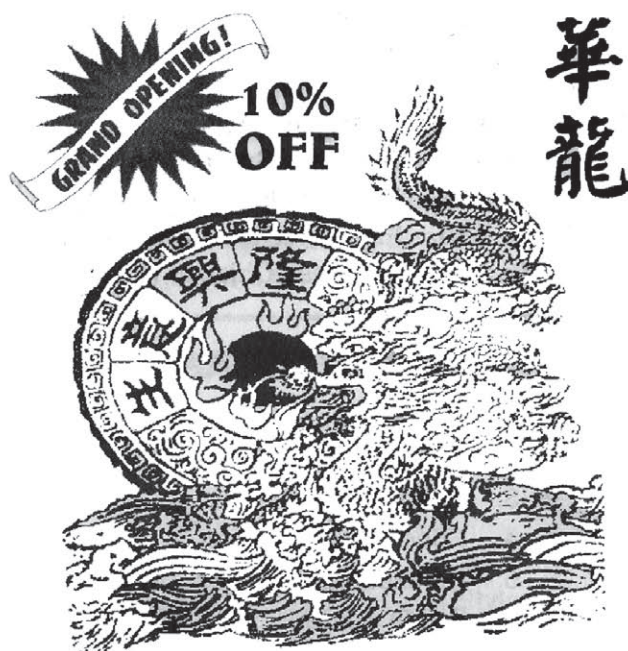
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EDITORIALS & LETTERS

Opinion In Brief

Coke or Pepsi?

Coca-Cola lovers take note: the Subway on West Broad Street recently switched from Pepsi to Coca-Cola, making it the first place you might be able to call “on campus” (in the Ackell Residence Center building) where you can get a Coke instead of a Pepsi.

Why so much Pepsi? Thank VCU, which signed a projected \$8.5 million, 10-year deal in 1994 to make Pepsi the exclusive soft drink provider on campus to help raise funds for the Alltel Pavilion at the Siegel Center, and to “support university recreational facilities and programs.”

A copy of VCU’s February 2002 monthly financial report obtained by the Commonwealth Times revealed that \$805,000 was raised for VCU Athletics programs that month alone—and February’s the short month of the year.

VCU is certainly not alone among educational institutions in signing exclusive contracts with soft drink companies in return for financial gain, but other universities like U. Va. offer their students a choice of soft drinks while on campus. Coke or Pepsi? In most cases, the university’s choice is more valuable than your own.



Editorial Cartoon | By Phil McKenney

The titillation of sex

Industry exploits Americans' Puritanical view of love and relationships

LYZ HOLDER

Op/Ed Writer

It is hard to find an article in the entertainment section that is of more substantial content than what kind of trouble Michael Jackson is in, or how Hilary Swank had a run-in with New Zealand authorities for “bearing forbidden fruit,” but an article from CNN.com while I was searching the Internet caught my eye.

This article articulated what I had been aware of for quite a while – America’s entertainment industry is such where nearly everything that is bought and sold is pushed through the titillation of sex.

I remember watching a commercial for Uncle Ben’s microwavable rice and wondering why it had anything to do with two young adults making out in a kitchen. However, confronted with the true intimacy and reality of sex, it is made clear how shallow – or backwards – Americans’ views on sexual intimacy really are.

The CNN article started by naming a few of the movies which dealt seriously with sexual intimacy in regard to relationships, and all of them proved to be “box-office casualties.” It is also ironic that the NC-17 rated documentary, “Inside Deep Throat,” has only made \$500,000 to date, while the pornography that has been influenced and inspired by the original 1972 porn film is available to the public and is consumed wholeheartedly in its multi-billion dollar industry.

I believe writer-director Bill Condon said it best in the article when he said, “the actual idea of talking about sex makes a lot of people nervous, no question.”

How could this have happened? Was not America supposed to be the leader of not only the free world, but also the leader in modern Western forward thinking? Have the 1970s taught us nothing? America has always been

Was not America supposed to be the leader of not only the free world, but also the leader in modern Western forward thinking? Have the 1970s taught us nothing?

at the forefront of innovativeness, whether it is in economy, technology or sociology.

There was a time when the British snuffed their noses at us for being too “vulgar” in our views on sexuality. Now it seems the tides have turned – it is not America who is at the forefront of progressive sexuality, but the European nations. Yes, even Britain is more promiscuous in their ideas about sexuality and intimacy than America.

It is as if Americans have begun to hide from the prospect of talking seriously about sexuality. They hide from it by reducing it to mere slapstick humor, crude jokes and wet tee-shirts

in entertainment and the media. Popular movies with this theme include “There’s Something About Mary,” “American Pie” and “Road Trip.” Spike TV also comes to mind.

Don’t get me wrong; sexual humor can actually raise my spirits when I need a break or when I am down. Producer Peter Guber says in the article, “If you spell fun, it sells. Sex inside a comedy candy-coats sex and allows the audience to feel comfortable. Laughter covers up insecurity.”

However, to view sex only in terms of shallow vulgarity damages an individual in the long run. How can someone who only attributes candy-coated insecurity to sexuality truly take sex and intimacy seriously? If films can be sexy but – again from the article – “can’t portray the sexual intimacy most people crave,” what kind of distressing social disorder are we brewing for ourselves?

I see this tendency to shy away from sexual topics everyday. Even when friends get together and live up the good times by joking around, everyone has that awkward silence moment when they wonder if they should actually mention something sexually-related, not to mention intimacy-related. You might call it manners, but they are a far cry away from what we’d like to talk about judging by the entertainment we watch.

I would call it a discrepancy between what

See **HOLDER**, Page 15

The Commonwealth Times

*The independent student press of
Virginia Commonwealth University*

DEVON MARROW

Executive Editor

OMAR YACOUBI

Editor of the Editorial Pages

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*Michael Dickinson
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Alexander Marra*

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We reserve the right to edit all letters for grammar, style and space. Letters should be no longer than one single-spaced typed page, must be signed and must include daytime and evening phone numbers.

Op/Ed

'B' is for Booze

Virginia's alphabet liquor system is one of Prohibition's last bastions

ALEX MARRA
Op/Ed Columnist

"What kinda store is that? ABC? They don't have to sell me the alphabet, I already know it."

My dad sometimes tells the story of his first encounter with the ABC stores when he and my ma first came to the Old Dominion from the Bronx back in the eighties. Such sarcastic, pun-riddled remarks are common from my dad, but at the time of its original saying, this pathetic one-liner was actually saturated with a little honesty.

Hereally didn't know what the heck a store with the letters "ABC" plastered bright and big on the roof could possibly sell. A good guess would indeed be the alphabet — after all, who would ever think that a state (or *commonwealth*, as the great V-A prefers to be called) would be caught up in the liquor racket?

Apparently Prohibition didn't really end in the late 1920s with the slow demise of America's greatest gangsters. While the nation's constitution was fixed to remedy America's biggest mistake, not everyone was happy with the change.

Some states, like Virginia, thought that while banning alcohol outright was a little over the top (or impossible to enforce) we can still aim for the next best thing: complete and utter control over when and where alcohol is sold, to whom it can be sold and even when and where it can be consumed.

In this sense, prohibition is still alive and well in our very own backyard today.

Prohibition can also be found in the crazy "midnight rule," whereby every college kid on this side of Cary Street better rush to the Ghetto-Eleven at Main and Harrison before it's too late to get tonight's cartload of 40s and PBRs.

It can also be found in Richmond's Penny Lane Pub, where at 2 a.m. every night, no matter how much the English chap behind the bar doesn't want to, he has to call out in that London cockney accent, "*Awlrlhyt mates, put those pints down ye gullets and finish up, lads — not one bloke betta not leave a drop.*"

And indeed Prohibition shows its ugly hide in the very preposterous idea that on a beautiful spring day like today a guy can't lie down on some of

Richmond's finest green grass and sip on his Corona without fear of harassment from law enforcement agents. For some strange reason a brown bag covering the wee bottle seems to fool them, though.

Finally, Prohibition hits us hardest when we are forced to buy our Tequila from the very same jerk who prohibits us from enjoying all these would-be freedoms. I speak, of course, of none other than our friendly state government and its minions, the ABC stores.

It really is a conflict of interest, don't you think? I mean, how can the same people who claim to want to prevent drunk driving and other alcohol-related problems be the same dudes who try to push the stuff down our throats?



STEP
OUT
SIDE
WITH
ME

This is the place of Bill Gates and Chef Boyardee, where hard work and a good idea are supposed to pay off. But how can it be that place when the government corners a specific marketplace?

Let's face it, the ABC stores are businesses like all others. The point of all business is to make a profit. Therefore, the state finds itself in the strange position of trying to sell hard booze as much as possible and at the same time it is trying to prevent us from enjoying the fruits of that hard booze. They tell us "don't drink and drive," but they are the ones who supply the drink! That's pretty messed up, man. It's like a Catch-22 or something.

More importantly, the last time I checked, we live in a free-market society. What happened to classic American entrepreneurship and all that good stuff? What happened to 40 acres and a mule — wait, that's something else. But really, America is supposed to be the land of the self-made businessman.

This is the place of Bill Gates and Chef Boyardee (yeah, that's right, the guy who comes up with the idea of canned spaghetti is, after all, an American genius). This is the place where hard work and a good idea are supposed to pay off. But how can it be that place when the government corners a specific marketplace? How can it be that place when the government acts like a communist one and controls an entire industry? How can it be that place when the very government who claims to break up evil monopolies is itself a monopoly?

I've asked too many questions, and now I'm too dizzy to answer them, but I'm sure the point is made.

My proposal, then, is this: That the ABC stores of the world shut down and that the people of America, and especially of Virginia, and *especially of VCU* and its surrounding neighborhoods (especially Oregon Hill) are

finally allowed to shop around for their liquor purchases.

That's right. Is it too much to ask that I want good ol' American business competition in the liquor market? Is it too much to ask that I want to be able to buy my Jose Cuevo from Kroger for a full 10 pesos cheaper? I don't think it is too much to ask that I can find a place that will actually sell my mother country's beloved alcoholic beverage grappa that will mess you up quicker than a swift kick in the face, but tastes like jet fuel and is better left for cleaning the toes. If I want to buy that stuff, I should have the option. This is America.

I'm Alex Marra, and that's my alphabet song.

Alex Marra may be reached at
marraam@vcu.edu

HOLDER, from page 14

we say and what we really are thinking because — let's face it — unless those researchers are wrong, we have sex on the brain almost nonstop.

These same researches have said that men on average think about sex nearly once every 6-15 seconds. Women, on the other hand, think about sex less, but with more time duration. So why this constant involuntary need to think about the one thing we'd dare not discuss, nor indulge our vulnerable sides in other than humor or in shallow regard? Why are Americans so uncomfortable to be confronted with sexuality? Is it the current resurgence in religious moral obligation? Have our Puritanical roots taken effect?

The CNN article stated that sex these days is in the home. "In the privacy of your own home, you can see all the racy material you want in 'Sex in the City,' 'The L Word,' 'Queer as Folk,' 'Deadwood' and 'Desperate Housewives.'"

From this it is easy to gather that most of the public aren't comfortable with being seen at a movie with serious adult themes. There is a fear of running into the people who make an influence in your life: children, neighbors, and co-workers. How embarrassing would it

be to run into your boss when you are at the movie complex to see "Inside Deep Throat?" Or even worse, to run into that "nice old neighbor lady" at the complex?

This is why most movie audiences shy away from that possibility and why most films of that same genre do poorly economically. In addition, much of the business in movie audiences is the 13-28 demographic who are regulars on the weekends. R-rated and NC-17 rated movies would never get the needed exposure from the coveted teen and young adult group.

It is interesting to contrast the amount of violence that is permitted in entertainment in comparison to sex. I remember seeing XXX and being shocked at the amount of violence in that action-adventure flick, especially since it was a PG-13 movie. There is much dialogue about how violent media is affecting the young American generation, but nothing gets more fervent discussion than the issue of sex and its effect on young children and teenagers.

It reminds me of the South Park episode where the main characters found martial arts weapons and spent the entire episode playing with them, slicing off appendages and eventually killing some people. At the end it was all fun and games until Cartman, who through some freak accident thought he was

a Taiwanese prostitute, showed up on a stage naked in front of an audience of adults. The ending line to the episode went something along the lines of "it's all fine until children and sex get involved."

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, movies were abound with sexual liaisons. Today, we are lucky to get an entire sex scene. The most recent movie I can think of that actually had a well-developed sex scene was in "The Matrix: Reloaded" between Neo and Trinity. In "Team America," the marionette-filled movie abound with political satire, was almost given an NC-17 rating when the creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone wanted to put a puppet sex scene in.

This causes me to wonder, "What are people thinking? They're puppets, for crying out loud! They have crotches like Barbie dolls!" Is the association between dolls and children too close to home? I don't know, but today's views on sexuality sure are fickle. I would think in our Western progressive society we would take a hearty laugh at little string people doing sexual acts. It could be like a new Punch and Judy.

I do not see us getting our act together any time soon. It seems that all stand-up comics nowadays do is either talk about politics or crude sexual humor. Is the achievement of comedy today attributed to "Git 'er done?"

Must we get our thrills from college girls who "go wild" and show breasts which are socially accepted in Europe? Let's not start on the issue of other sexualities, such as homosexuality or bisexuality. It's like Kryptonite to America.

What is happening here is actually a progressive digression into a time when sex was considered dirty, even within the confines of socially accepted partnerships. There is still that residue that sex is thrilling; it is something that we all are entranced by because it seems so dangerous. The CNN article also states, "sex plays well within the thriller genre. ...director Adrian Lyne repeatedly has scored in this arena, with 'Fatal Attraction,' '9 1/2 Weeks,' 'Indecent Proposal,'" etc. Because it is so thrilling and dangerous to us, we must play it off with vulgar and dumb sex plays. However, all we are doing is postponing the inevitable: that we are suppressing something that is and has always been inherent in us. It is whether we feel uncomfortable about it is the difference. The DreamWorks Press says it bluntly: "We are a Puritan society. We'd rather watch it at home."

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