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INSIDE

MONDAY

SEPTEMBER 25, 2006
Vol. 45 No. 9

3 News
Honor
violations
decreased in
2005-2006

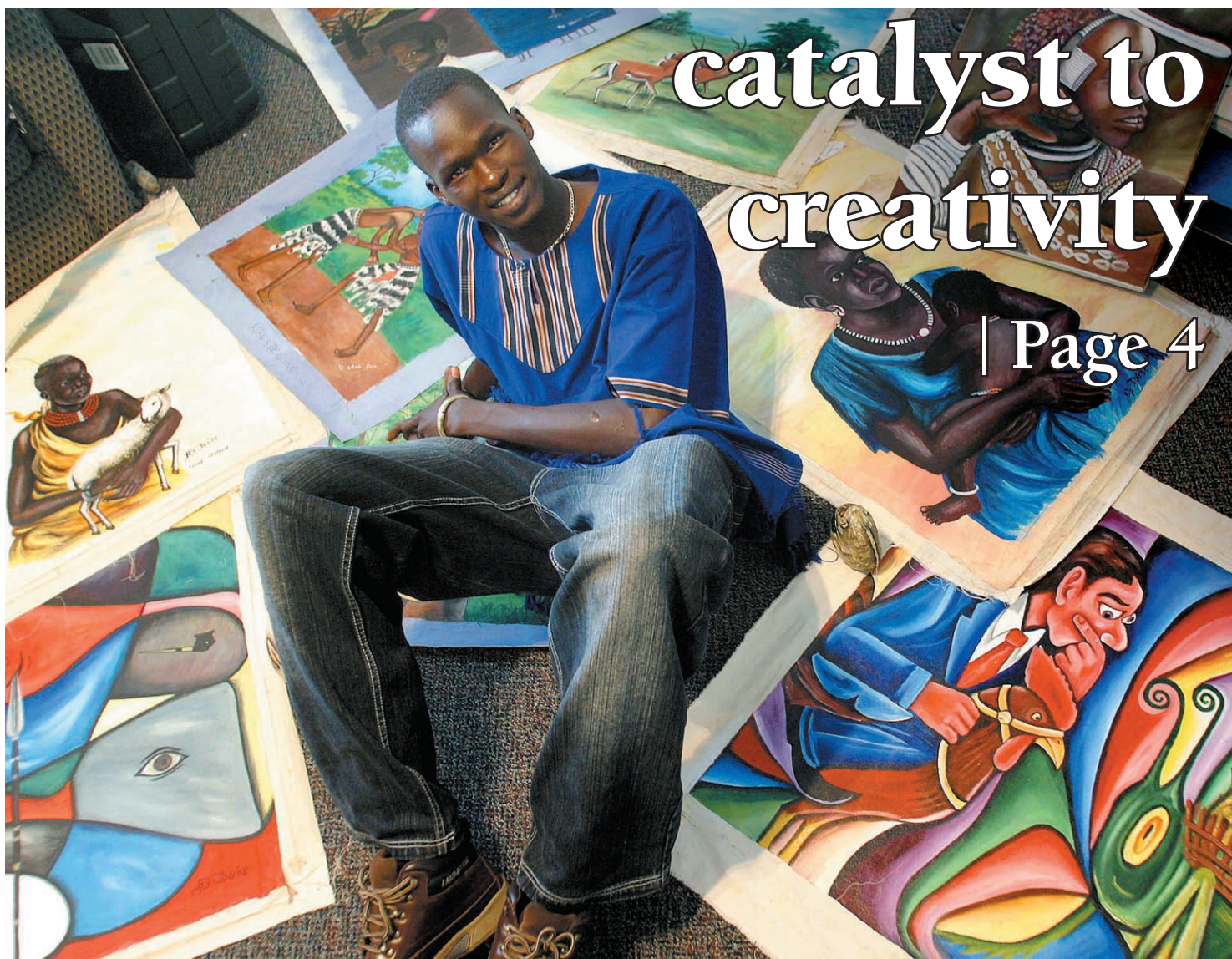
11 Sports
Men's soccer
brings down the
Seahawks

War in Sudan

Awer Bul's unique life experience becomes his

catalyst to
creativity

| Page 4



Spectrum

14 Students take to
the global streets

Opinion
27 Can you
spare \$8?

The independent student press of Virginia Commonwealth University

Briefs

WEATHER

MONDAY

78/52

TUESDAY

78/55

WEDNESDAY

78/55

THURSDAY

81/55

Looking ahead

In Thursday's Issue

In News

- **A different ranking**
How VCU stacks up against other universities in crime statistics.

Cover art: Cynthia K. Merchant, main photo, and Katy McDaniel, rail photo.

IN THE NEWS

compiled from wire reports

WORLD

PARIS – A leaked French intelligence document raises the possibility Osama bin Laden died of typhoid, but President Jacques Chirac said Saturday the report was “in no way whatsoever confirmed,” and officials from Kabul to Washington expressed skepticism about its accuracy.

There have been numerous reports over the years that bin Laden had been killed or that he was dangerously ill, but the al-Qaida leader has periodically released audiotapes appealing to followers and commenting on current news events.

The regional French newspaper l'Est Republicain printed what it described as a copy of a confidential document from the Direction Generale de la Securite Exterieur intelligence service citing an uncorroborated report from a “usually reliable source” who said Saudi secret services were convinced that bin Laden had died.

The document, dated Thursday, was sent to Chirac and other top French officials, the newspaper said.

Chirac said he had no comment about the document.

NATIONAL

WASHINGTON – The Iraq war has contributed to an increased threat of terrorism, according to an intelligence assessment that Democrats have seized, saying it was further evidence that Americans should choose new leadership in the November elections.

The classified assessment of the war's impact on terrorism came in a National Intelligence Estimate that represents a consensus view of the 16 disparate spy services inside government, an intelligence official said Sunday. The official, confirming accounts first published in Sunday's New York Times and Washington Post, spoke on condition of anonymity because the report is classified.

The report found that the war has helped create a new generation of Islamic radicalism and that overall terrorist threat has grown since the Sept. 11 attacks.

The White House issued a written rebuttal that argued administration officials have been making some of the same arguments as in the intelligence estimate. A White House strategy booklet released this month described the terrorists as more dispersed and less centralized and still a threat to the United States.

The president has said the United States is safer since the Sept. 11 attacks and that fighting the terrorists in Iraq keeps them from attacking America. He has said leaving Iraq would make the world less safe.

STATE & LOCAL

RICHMOND – If every American contributes \$8, the U.S. National Slavery Museum could open exhibits as early as next year, Bill Cosby, a key contributor to the project, said Friday.

Cosby joined Mayor L. Douglas Wilder in launching a new campaign to raise \$100 million toward the Fredericksburg museum's \$200 million cost by asking people to give up what Cosby termed “the price of two shots of Scotch.”

Cosby also encouraged parents to donate on their kids' behalf.

Cosby said he came up with the \$8 idea while brainstorming on what the average American could afford to give. Wilder said the number also has symbolic significance to what is touted as the first national museum dedicated solely to telling the story of American slavery.

“The figure 8, in shape, is both of the shackles, which is the symbol of slavery,” said Wilder. “If you turn it on its side, it's the symbol of infinite freedom.”

RICHMOND – This week, legislators will finally get around to talking about the issue of transportation in a scheduled four-day session that starts Wednesday, but substantive new state revenue for roads, rails and transit has effectively been ruled out.

About 100 bills ranging from transit funding for the Metro subway and bus system that serves Northern Virginia to a proposal to raise cash from an electronic horse race wagering device await the House and Senate.

Kaine's approach has been low-key in the run-up to this week's session, unlike his nonstop, high-profile – and ultimately unsuccessful – statewide advocacy last winter for the first comprehensive transportation funding plan since 1986.

Kaine still insists, however, that a new source of sustainable, statewide transportation funding is imperative, and he views bills the House and Senate can agree to as a starting point to achieve that.

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The application deadline to apply for a Senate seat in the Student Government Association has been extended to Tuesday.

Though 25 of 50 seats usually need to be filled in each election, this semester about

30 to 35 are available, said Derek Austin, chair of the Joint Elections Committee. About eight SGA members vacated their positions over the summer because of other commitments or scheduling conflicts, he added.

As of Friday — the original deadline — about 15 potential candidates turned in their applications.

Applications are available online at www.vcusga.com, and they are due 5 p.m. on Tuesday.

Honor system update: Report reveals decrease in violations in 2005-2006

GAYLAND HETHCOAT
News Co-Editor

Students saw the fliers everywhere in the School of Business building the first week of classes. In the men's bathrooms, for example, they were taped above every urinal. They covered most of the other advertisements on bulletin boards throughout the building and even water fountains.

These fliers did not promote an upcoming concert or student organization meeting. They warned against cheating and the sanctions that could result from committing it, such as an "F" in a course, a permanent transcript notation or expulsion.

"During the spring 2006 semester in the School of Business," the flier said, "21 students were charged with some form of cheating. After investigation 20 were FOUND GUILTY."

Colleen Androvich, professional student adviser of the School of Business, created the flier campaign, which she said was the first of its kind at VCU. She said she made the fliers because many students incorrectly think cheating is not a major campus issue. The 21 charges in the School of Business also were an increase of cases from the previous academic year, Androvich said.

But the School of Business was not alone in hearing more honor system cases during the 2005-2006 school year. According to the 2005-2006 annual report for the VCU Honor System, the Undergraduate Student Honor Council heard 24 cases during the year, an increase of 14 from the previous year. The Monroe Park Campus Graduate and Professional Student Honor Council heard 17 cases, an increase of 14. The MCV Campus Honor Council heard 12 cases, an increase of one.

The honor system faculty coordinators, who include Androvich and others in the undergraduate school who hear honor system cases before they send them to the Undergraduate Student Honor Council, heard 116 cases, a decrease of 46 from the previous year. Overall, despite what seemed like mostly increases, VCU heard 169 cases from 2005 to 2006, a decrease of 21.

The report revealed that honor system cases in both the undergraduate and graduate schools overwhelmingly involved plagiarism, followed by cheating. For those cases that did not end in a "not

guilty" verdict or were not pending at the time of the report's release, the most common sanctions were an "F" assigned to the course or an "F" or zero for an assignment. Although Androvich's flier warned about suspension or expulsion, there were no instances in which the university used them for punishment.

Reuban Rodriguez, associate vice provost and dean of student affairs, said the overall decrease of honor system cases pleased him. Hopefully, he said, the decrease means more students and faculty understand the honor system and therefore are adhering to it.

But it remains difficult to measure. Chris Saladino, a collateral instructor at the L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs who has served on the Undergraduate Student Honor Council for three years, said the report's conclusions only mean the number of

reported cases decreased, not necessarily the actual number of violations committed.

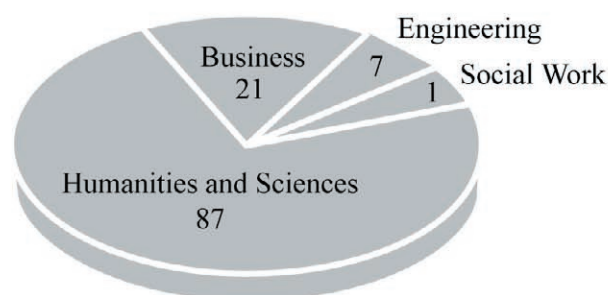
Saladino speculated that a stricter adherence could have caused the decrease or that fewer professors reported students who may have violated the honor system. He mentioned a pervasive hesitation among professors at the University of Virginia, where he attended graduate school, to report their students because of the university's policy of automatic expulsion for any honor violation.

"Professors are going to be a lot less willing to send you before the honor council if it means you're going to be thrown out of school forever," Saladino said. "It may be that there's the same amount of cheating but a lot less enforcement. It poses a bit of a conundrum."

Other professors, like many students,

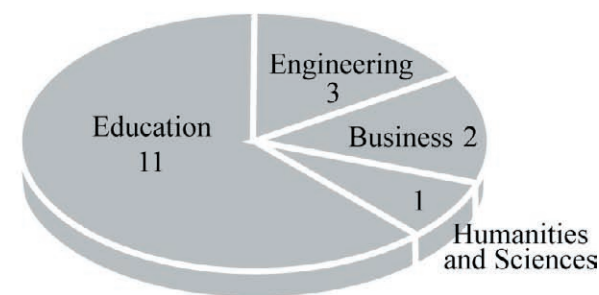
HONOR continued on Page CT 7

Honor system cases 2005-2006

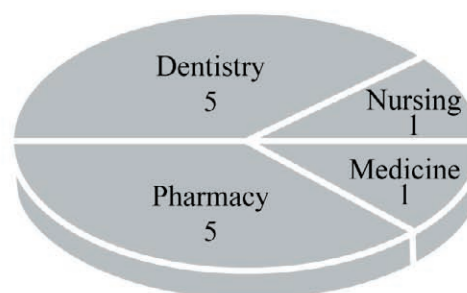


Undergraduate Violations (total: 116)

*The School of Education and the School of the Arts had no reported cases.
*The Undergraduate Student Honor Council heard 24 cases in 2005-2006, all of which were from the College of Humanities and Sciences.



Graduate Violations - Monroe Campus (total: 17)



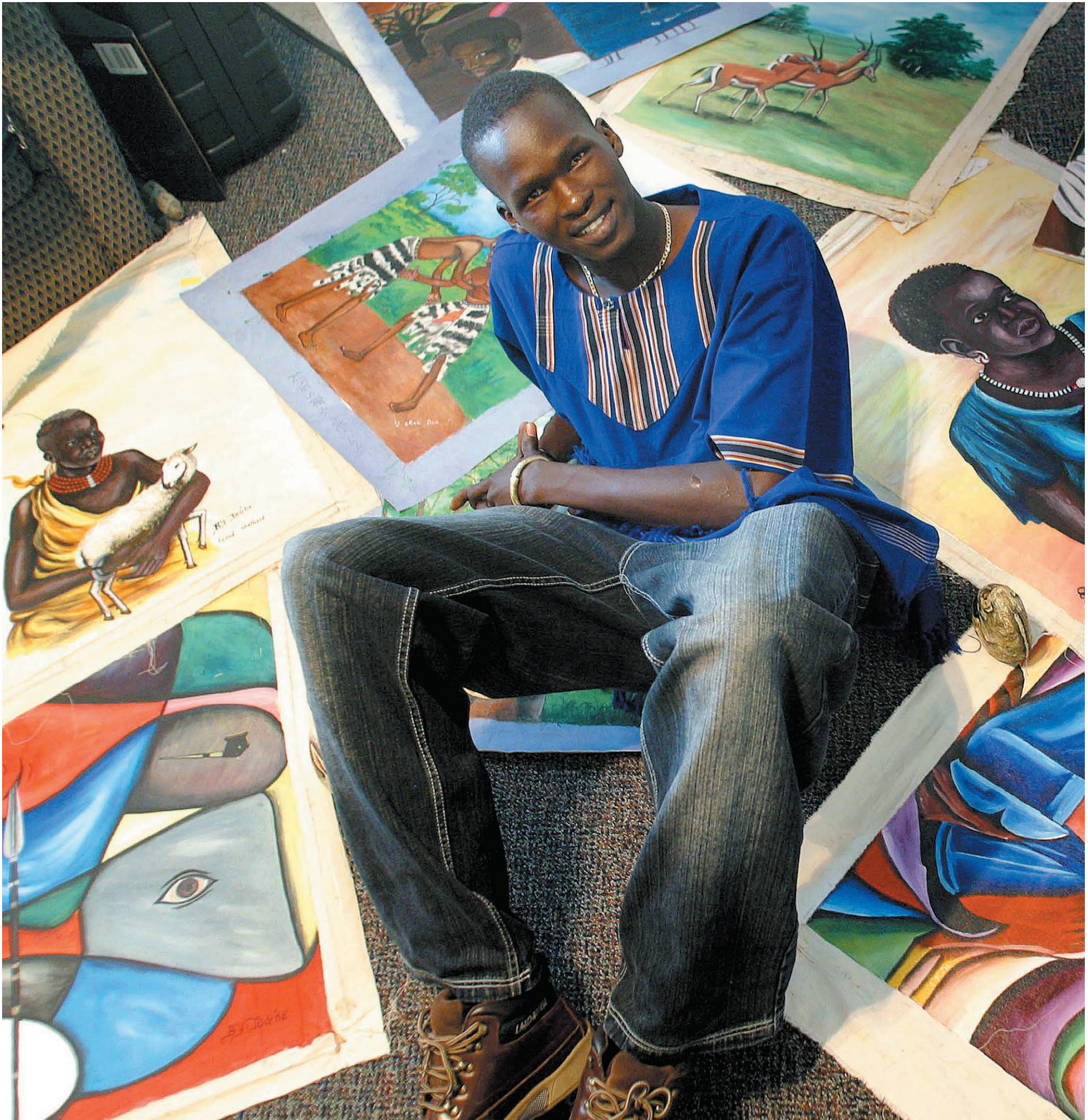
Graduate Violations - MCV Campus (total: 12)

*The College of Allied Health had no reported cases.

Karen Sagun illustration



News



Cynthia K. Merchant photo

CT4 • commonwealthtimes.com

Monday, September 25, 2006





From conflict to canvas

Born in the midst of Sudanese civil war, VCU student lets art tell his story

SHEENA JEFFERS
News Co-Editor

Awer Bul spent his childhood running from furious flames and raging bullets only years after he learned to walk.

Bul, a self-taught artist, is now a sophomore painting and printmaking major planning to double major in kinetic imaging. To Bul, who grew up in the midst of the Sudanese civil war, "there is no limit to school." He plans to teach art in America as well as return to Sudan throughout his life to teach art workshops.

The war tore Bul from his parents when he was 7 years old. Many different people raised him, which paved the road to his future in art.

"What brought this art to me was the war," Bul said. "I was not under a special training or anything. I just used it to express my ideas."

As a young child, Bul sat in refugee camps confused about the war but unable to ask about what was happening. He passed the time perfecting his art.

"It's a way for me to speak out," he said.

Bul used whatever art tools he could find to draw his point of view of the wartime suffering.

He drew "people in danger and war and tired," Bul said. "I started to draw my life story and tell people who I am by doing art."

Sudan was established as a British colony in 1899 and declared independence in 1956. The Sudanese were overjoyed, but the celebration was short-lived. After the British occupation ended, Sudan was left vulnerable and unprepared to brace itself for what happened next.

Arab Muslims moved in and "assassinated many people," Bul said, especially their tribal leaders. The Arab Muslim majority of northern Sudan, who wanted to enforce Islamic Sharia law, took over the country, Bul said.

"They took over the schools and tried to make us become Muslim," he said. "We didn't want that to happen."

The Sudanese rebelled against the government in 1983, and civil war between northern Islamic and southern Christian groups raged into action. That same year, Bul was born.

Bul lived four years untouched by the war. He passed the quiet days with his family in the self-sustaining Dinka tribe, embracing the traditional culture and beauty of Sudan.

But in 1987, the northern forces attacked Bul's village and the Dinka tribe scattered.

"People were just running from any direction to any

BUL continued to Page CT9

Don't miss..



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Third time the charm *Arabic Film Festival has record attendance*

RYAN FARR
News Writer

Moviegoers packed the Grace Street Theater to capacity on Friday and Saturday nights, with no popcorn in sight. Many attendants of the third annual VCU Arabic Film Festival instead munched on traditional Lebanese fatayers, which are bread wraps containing meat or spinach, as they enjoyed a diverse array of free movies, all from or about the Middle East.

The festival featured 10 short and feature-length films, both fictional and documentary. Subjects ranged from two Chadian children searching for their father in "Abouna" to the lives of the war-torn Sudanese in "All About Darfur."

Senior world studies major Clayton Klima said his favorite film was "Your Dark Hair Ihsan" because of its abstract, creepy cinematography. He enjoyed as well the other five movies he viewed.

"All of them have been eye-opening, revealing kind of films," he said.

The films represented diverse genres. "Comedy Middle Eastern Style" followed Arabic comedians living in New York City as they dealt with post-Sept. 11 prejudice by telling jokes.

"It was hilarious," Klima said. "There was also a comic that said he felt kind of guilty for using 9/11 as his main act. That was interesting, too."

The first movie made in Iraq after the fall of Saddam Hussein, "Turtles Can Fly," screened Saturday afternoon. Set in a Kurdish refugee camp on the Iraq-Turkey border in the days leading up to the 2003 U.S. invasion, the film follows a charismatic boy named Satellite, reminiscent of an Iraqi Corey Feldman, as he leads a group of children that collect landmines during the war.

Totaling more than 700 attendants, the AFF garnered an audience larger than those from its first two years. The theater filled to capacity on Friday night for "Paradise Now," the Golden Globe Award-winning tale of two Palestinian

friends training to be suicide bombers in Tel Aviv, Israel.

In between films, milling guests gathered in a reception area where a variety of Middle Eastern music played and paintings from VCU art students sat on display, several of which were inspired by Arabic architecture and typefaces. Local caterer and VCU student Fajir Amin sold fatayers and chocolate-chip cookies.

Question-and-answer sessions followed three films, "Paradise Now," "All About Darfur" and "Iraq in Fragments," a documentary about the effects of the Iraq war.

"We put them after three very political films," festival co-director Jaime Bennett Stansbury said. "We did that on purpose."

Most questions focused on concerns about U.S. involvement, or lack thereof,

FESTIVAL continued to Page CT8

VCU's Adcenter moves beyond pug debacle

PAT KANE
Managing Editor

An Adcenter student is alleged to have posted the MySpace Web page threatening to kill a dog that attracted international attention. Pam Lepley, director of University News Services, said the student will face charges through the university judicial system.

"The Adcenter students were asked to come forward if they had done it, and this student never came forward," Lepley said Friday.

If found guilty, the student could face expulsion or other penalties. An internal investigation traced the posting to a school computer, which is a violation of the VCU Computer and Network Resources Use Policy. The posting led to an investigation by the Richmond Police Department cyber crimes unit. Lepley said the Richmond Commonwealth's Attorney does not intend to press charges.

Despite the controversy, professor Mike Lear, who assigned his class to make his pug, Oscar, famous, said his students did a great job.

"Most of the kids ignored the negative side of it," Lear said after his Thursday class.

The idea was to help them with a different approach to marketing.

Instead of saying, 'How do I sell this to people?' say 'How do I make this famous?' Lear explained.

Students were allowed to present idea boards or actual materials, Lear said. The only stipulation was that they couldn't harm or threaten to harm the dog. Projects included videos, music and flier campaigns. About 25 percent of students turned to the Internet, using viral marketing to spread the word about Oscar, Lear said.

Students convinced Internet celebrity Lara Simms to write a song medley about Oscar, which had over 1,000 hits on YouTube.com. Also uploaded to YouTube is the video "Pug Life," an illustrated story of Oscar's life in

PUG continued to Page CT8

'Rejects' kick off national tour here

SHEENA JEFFERS
News Co-Editor

The group that caught the attention of music lovers everywhere in 2003 with the release of "Swing, Swing" is headed to VCU. The concert is the start of the band's national headline tour.

AAR recently released their album "Move Along" with Interscope Records.

The band members of AAR — Tyson Ritter (vocalist/bass player), Nick Wheeler (guitar/programming), Mike Kennerty (drums) and Chris Gaylor (drums) — will join Under the Influence of Giants, Ima Robot and Demone.

The Activities Planning Board Uncommon Live Committee and Verizon Wireless are sponsoring the concert.

When: Tuesday, Oct. 11

Time: Doors open at 7 p.m. Show starts at 8 p.m.

Where: Greater Richmond Convention Center

How much: \$14 for VCU students with a valid VCU ID. \$16 for other college students with a valid college ID.

How to buy tickets: Go to the VCU Student Commons Programs Office, Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Need more? Call (804) 828-4554

THIS JUST IN

PUG continued from Page CT7

Kingston, Jamaica.

One student outlined why Oscar should replace Rodney as VCU's mascot, while another founded a lost dog charity with Oscar as the spokesman. There were also Oscar-branded snore strips. In the assignment, Lear told his classes that his dog snores.

Jacob Lake, a first-year student at the Adcenter, created bacon-scented air fresheners.

He planned to plant them in parks to "get the dogs interested."

"Hopefully the owner would query what they were looking at and find a bacon air freshener with Oscar's picture on it," Lake said.

The concept impressed Lear.

"The idea to stop people with dogs with something that smells like bacon is incredible," he said.

Rick Boyko, Adcenter managing director, said the page at MySpace.com/jasonlives88 would be used as an example of bad work.

"The VCU Adcenter is very upset about this incident and will use Oscar as an example of what not to do for classes in the future," Boyko said Thursday in a press release.



Adcenter student Jacob Lake shows off his bacon-scented air fresheners.

Pat Kane photo

FESTIVAL continued from Page CT7

in crises in Israel, Darfur and Iraq.

While part of the festival's mission was to bring up relevant political issues in the Middle East, co-director Hanan Abed said eliminating unfair stereotypes was equally important.

"There's the classic stereotype that all Arabs are terrorists, all Arab women are oppressed, all families are violent, all Arabs don't value education," she said. "All of these are completely erroneous and really malicious stereotypes that unfortunately a lot of the media just continues to perpetuate. And it's not just the news. We see it everyday, in movies, in TV commercials, children's cartoons."

Last year's festival featured a short film called "Planet of the Arabs," a montage of clips from American popular culture featuring negative Arab depictions in such works as the "Popeye" cartoon and the "Back to the Future" series.

There have been some changes, however, in the past 50 years in the American media's portrayal of Arabs, Abed said.

"We can't come out right and call someone a 'dirty Arab' anymore. That, the populace won't stand for," she said. "But we can show in a movie like Aladdin where all the good Arabs, like Aladdin and Jasmine, speak with American accents and all the bad Arabs, like Jafar and his henchmen, have Arab accents."

"So I don't think it's gotten any better. It's just gotten more subtle," Abed said.

Stansbury said one major recent change has been a rise in Americans' interest in Middle Eastern culture, mostly because of the Iraq war.

"I hope that people are realizing that it's just not enough to see what you're seeing on the news," Stansbury said. "It either builds your stereotypes stronger, or it increases your desire to want to know more. I think it goes both ways."

Stereotypes in movies, however, have also proven to exist in the Middle East. The Turkish film "Kurtlar Vadisi Irak," or "Valley of the Wolves Iraq," stirred controversy because of several scenes critics decried as anti-American and anti-Semitic.

In one scene, American troops in Iraq open fire on an Arab wedding. Afterward, they take captives and ship them to the Abu Ghraib prison in a large sealed container. When one soldier complains that the prisoners cannot breathe, another soldier fires several shots to open up air holes, in the process killing several Iraqis inside. When the first soldier threatens to report the incident, another soldier fatally shoots him.

American actor Gary Busey plays a doctor who takes organs from Iraqi prisoners to sell to rich customers in New York.

Adeb said such stereotypes are not common in Middle Eastern popular culture, however.

"With us, you watch a movie, and it's 'Find the Arab in the movie, and that's the bad guy,'" Adeb said. "Whereas with them, you find that the bad guy in the

movie's not necessarily American."

Many of the attendants at the AFF expressed a desire to get beyond stereotypes and learn about Arab cultures. Freshman art major Savannah Bader came to see "Iraq In Fragments" to learn more about the country but also for more personal reasons.

"One of my good friends was born in Baghdad, so I try to understand some of the background that she comes from," Bader said. "I want to know the issues that are going on over there so I can talk intelligently with her."

The Office of International Education, the School of World Studies, the Honors College and the School of Social Work sponsored the festival, which was free to the public. The free admission made the AFF accessible to VCU students and the larger public.

"Film is an incredible vehicle for communication," said Richmond resident Robin Jones. "You don't have to be very educated. You don't have to be wealthy. As opposed to literature, for instance, where you have to have the time and inclination to read and the understanding to process it all."

Saying the VCU French Film Festival first lured her to the local film scene, Jones has attended the Arabic Film Festival every year since the first one.

The AFF originated three years ago after Stansbury returned from a three-year stay in the Middle East.

She took off a year between high school and college to work in Lebanon as an "au pair," or nanny. Stansbury said she enjoyed her experience so much that she entered a language program in Jordan for two more years.

"When I came back from the Middle East, people's questions always revolved around 'Were you safe?' 'Was it terrible?'" Stansbury said. "And that's what motivated all of this, was that my time there was absolutely wonderful."

With help from the French Film Festival organizer Peter and Francois Kirkpatrick, the Office of International Education, and Abed, Stansbury founded the festival in 2004.

"I loved the people I met and the culture that I experienced," Stansbury said of her time in the Middle East. "So I personally enjoy bringing that to Richmond, whether it's through the art, films, music or food. It's bringing a piece of Middle East culture to this part of the world that doesn't often get to see it."

This year's AFF has been a long time in the making.

"It's taken months and months and months of screening movies," Abed said.

"We really try to pick a variety of different countries, different genres and ones that will appeal to different audiences," Stansbury said.

The two will begin to plan the 2007 Arabic Film Festival in the spring, which is their last semester before graduating. Stansbury hopes more VCU students will get involved, especially as directors of next year's festival.

Interested in being a part of next year's Arabic Film Festival? E-mail the Arabic Film Festival at aff@vcu.edu.

BUL continued from Page CT5

direction,” Bul said.

The entire village was burned to the ground.

Bul, only 4 years old, stayed with his parents while his older brother, Abraham, fled to Ethiopia.

He and his parents hid behind the safety of bushes and “tried to establish a new life,” Bul said. They started farming and lived in a mud house. When Bul was 7 years old, Arabs found them and shot at them.

“Animals were killed,” Bul said. “People were getting killed.”

The family left what little they owned in their mud hut and didn’t look back.

“People just kept on running, and I just kept following them barefoot,” Bul said. “I didn’t have any shoes or clothes. I just kept on running, running, running.”

Once again, everything was burned.

Bul was separated from his parents in the rush. He walked through flooded areas night and day with strangers. There were no clothes to protect his skin from the sun and no shoes to protect his feet while running over sharp rocks and through muddy water.

The only thing he knew was to stay with people who looked like him and to keep moving. He ate wild foods, not knowing if they were safe, but he had to eat to keep running, he said.

Bul and his fellow refugees, which included many young children, headed to Uganda, which is south of Sudan. There they found a refugee camp congested with thousands of shattered and starving people sitting and waiting.

After days of running, Bul thought he could disappear in the mass of people and rest. But as the sun slipped below the horizon, anti-government rebel groups attacked the camp.

“They come at night and run into the camp,” Bul said. “They shoot people and take away our food.”

Exhausted, Bul ran from the camp back to Sudan in hopes of finding his parents.

“I didn’t know where my parents were,” he said. “I kept thinking I would see them one day, but it never happened.”

When he arrived in Sudan he saw his country still overwhelmed with war, so he continued on to Kenya.

Bul arrived in Kenya in 1994. Another camp, similar to the one in Uganda, welcomed him.

“The life was the same,” he said of the camp. “They didn’t have anywhere to go but just sit in the camp. It wasn’t happy.”

One day Bul was sitting with thousands of other refugees when a group of them recognized him. They found a strange boy and brought him to Bul.

The boy was his brother, Abraham.

“I didn’t even recognize him,” Bul said. “People recognized us as brothers, and I was excited because I had forgotten him for most of my time.”

Together the brothers would share what Bul called “silent moments” and think, “Where is my father and mother? And the rest of the children?” The brothers waited for someone to recognize their parents among the thousands of people in the camp. No one did. They waited for a letter, but none came.

“We kept on praying that someone would come to

us and say, ‘We have seen your parents back in Sudan, and they are here,’” Bul said. “It never happened.”

The boys passed their days by attending school in the morning. But the schooling was poor and inconsistent, Bul said.

“In the camp was a boring life,” he said. “There was nothing to do.” So the boys helped find food, dropped from United Nations airplanes, for those in the camp.

“They would drop food anywhere,” Bul said. “Then we’d go and find some food in the bushes.”

“The food was not enough for the people,” he said. “We used to support ourselves as a group. If I ran out of food, somebody may just give me a little bit of his food so I could wait for when the food would come.”

The camp was located in one of the most arid parts of Kenya, meaning they also went without water. During the rare times it rained, the harsh wind blew dust into refugees’ eyes and lungs.

But more severe problems brewed.

A Kenyan tribe claimed the land on which the camp was located. They used the

*“When I was in Sudan,
all I used to do is just look
up to Heaven.”*



Photo: Cynthia K. Merchant

trees for charcoal to sell, but with so many people cluttering the land, the resources were unreachable.

The frustrated Kenyans began attacking the camp at nightfall, to which the defenseless refugees could not respond.

“They would come at night and shoot people,” Bul said. “And we didn’t have a choice to go anywhere, so we just sit there and wait for your day to come and see what will happen.”

One day Americans came to the camp to offer aid. Language, however, created a barrier between the refugees and the Americans, so the refugees had to pantomime their pains.

“We had to show we’re here in the camp. We don’t have parents; there’s no good life,” he said. “And we proved to them that we didn’t have any good life.”

After witnessing the lives of the refugees, the U.S. government labeled them “the lost boys of Sudan.”

There were no young girls in the group, as they were sold into slavery and prostitution, Bul said. Men were killed by the northern forces, which feared reprisal.

“The Arab people think we may come back later to them, and we may establish another government or kill them,” he said. “So mostly guys ran away.”

Bul and his brother decided to go to America after

American volunteers proposed the idea to them.

“We didn’t have a dream of what America looked like or a good place looked like,” he said. “Coming to America was only for the rich people.”

In 2000, Bul and his brother came to America under the care of Catholic charities. Bul lived in the Virginia Home for Boys in Richmond for three months and attended J.R. Tucker High School. The charities put his brother, 18, in an apartment and supported him for six months until he found a job to support himself. While his brother searched for a job, Bul struggled through high school.

“I couldn’t really speak any English,” Bul said. “The first test I did, I didn’t do well.”

Though his limited English made classes difficult, he was determined to finish high school. He worked for hours every day on math, English, history and science until he graduated in 2004 at the age of 21.

Then, with the help of volunteering churches and his friends, Bul applied and was accepted into VCU’s School of the Arts as a painting and printmaking major.

Five years have passed since Bul lived in the camp. In the summer, he returned to Sudan to meet his father, whom he could hardly remember after 12 years. He no longer has contact with his father, but hopes one day his father will travel to Kenya where he can access a phone.

After arriving in the United States, Bul learned that his mother was alive, but other family members had been killed in the fighting, he said.

His mother came to America in July with his two younger brothers and sister. Another sister lives in Australia. Bul and his family are saving money to bring her here.

The Rev. Dr. Fred Skaggs, a minister at County Line Baptist Church in Ruther Glen who Bul considers a hero, said Americans know little about the problems facing Sudan.

“So much of what’s gone on in Sudan, we have not known about,” he said. “We knew about Afghanistan. We knew about Iraq and Somalia, but we’ve not really known a lot about what’s gone on in southern Sudan.”

Skaggs’ church and others helped raise funds for Bul to attend summer school and for his recent travels to his Kenyan camp to hold an art workshop.

Bul used money from selling his paintings to purchase art tools for people in the camp. His goal was to teach the people still suffering how to express their feelings and communicate, he said. He wishes for them to see what they have never seen before.

“These people are blind,” he said. “They have never had a chance to do what they want to do.”

Bul continues to paint his feelings and observations to complete his studies at VCU.

“Everything you see around you is all art,” he said.

HONORS continued from Page CT3

“Our current system looks like it’s one system, but there’s actually different procedures for undergraduate and graduate and professional students. Quite frankly, that’s becoming too confusing and too cumbersome.”

— Reuban Rodriguez, associate vice provost and dean of student affairs

may not understand the technical wording of the honor system.

“You’ll find that some faculty don’t know what to do when somebody cheats,” Androvich said, adding that some professors may be “kind of afraid to point it out.”

Upon closer look, the annual report shows that some of the honor system cases were appeals. Of the 116 cases undergraduate faculty coordinators heard, for example, 16 were appealed or sent to the Undergraduate Student Honor Council.

More students appealed their verdicts from 2005 to 2006 than the previous year, Rodriguez said.

Saladino said, among other factors, the increase of appeals has caused what he called a “backlogging” in the council in which he serves. As a result, many cases remain pending, which he said is troublesome for students who want to resolve their cases as quickly as possible.

Another factor contributing to the backlog is scheduling conflicts among faculty and students on the councils, Saladino said.

To resolve this issue, the revised honor system designates three students and two faculty to represent the Undergraduate Student Honor Council. Four students and three faculty currently make up the

council.

“The reduction of the total number of members needed for a hearing would reduce the amount of time needed to adjudicate a case,” the draft says.

The draft also recommends a more cohesive system between the undergraduate and graduate and professional honor councils.

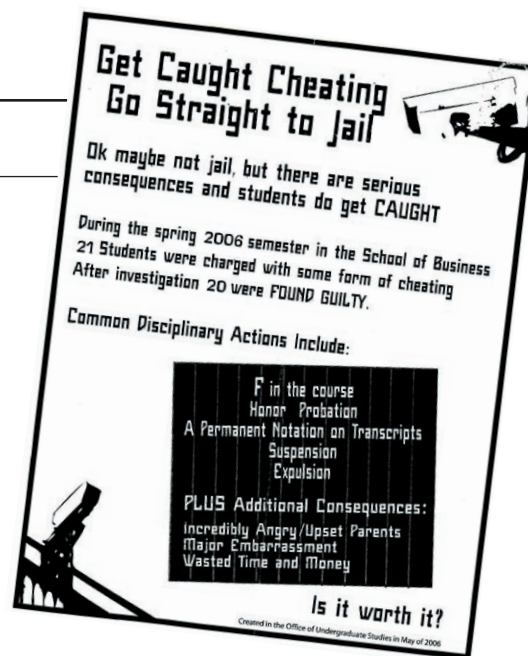
“In this current draft, what we’re hoping is that it’s truly one system for the entire university,” Rodriguez said. “Our current system looks like it’s one system, but there’s actually different procedures for undergraduate and graduate and

professional students. Quite frankly, that’s becoming too confusing and too cumbersome.”

Amanda Rezba, co-chair of the MCV Campus Honor Council, said she and other graduate and professional students are skeptical of a more unitary system.

“In terms of how we feel about that, MCV students totally understand that there should be one system, and we support that,” she said. “But our concern is we don’t want our honor cases to include undergraduates. Our greatest concern is that really an 18-year-old honor council rep might not be the person best geared towards judging a future doctor or future dentist—somebody whose career is on the line.”

The University Council and the Board of Visitors have already approved the revised draft of the honor system, which will go into effect in fall 2007. The honor system mandates that every three years, the provost and vice president for academic affairs establish a committee to review the system and make recommended changes as needed.



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Sports

MEN'S SOCCER

Rams defeat UNCW in 1-0 shutout

JAMES K. GALLOWAY

Sports Editor

VCU scored the only point in Friday night's home game against the UNC Wilmington Seahawks for the Rams' first Colonial Athletic Association victory.

In one stroke, VCU ended their four-game skid as they halted UNCW's five-game winning streak.

Both teams took 10 shots-on-goal, but Andrew Dykstra (Woodbridge/Osbourn Park HS) played a notable game, saving all six of the Seahawks' shots-on-goal throughout the night. It was his seventh career shutout and second shutout of the season.

Seahawks goalie Brad Knighton saved two shots, and a teammate obstructed VCU's third shot-on-goal.

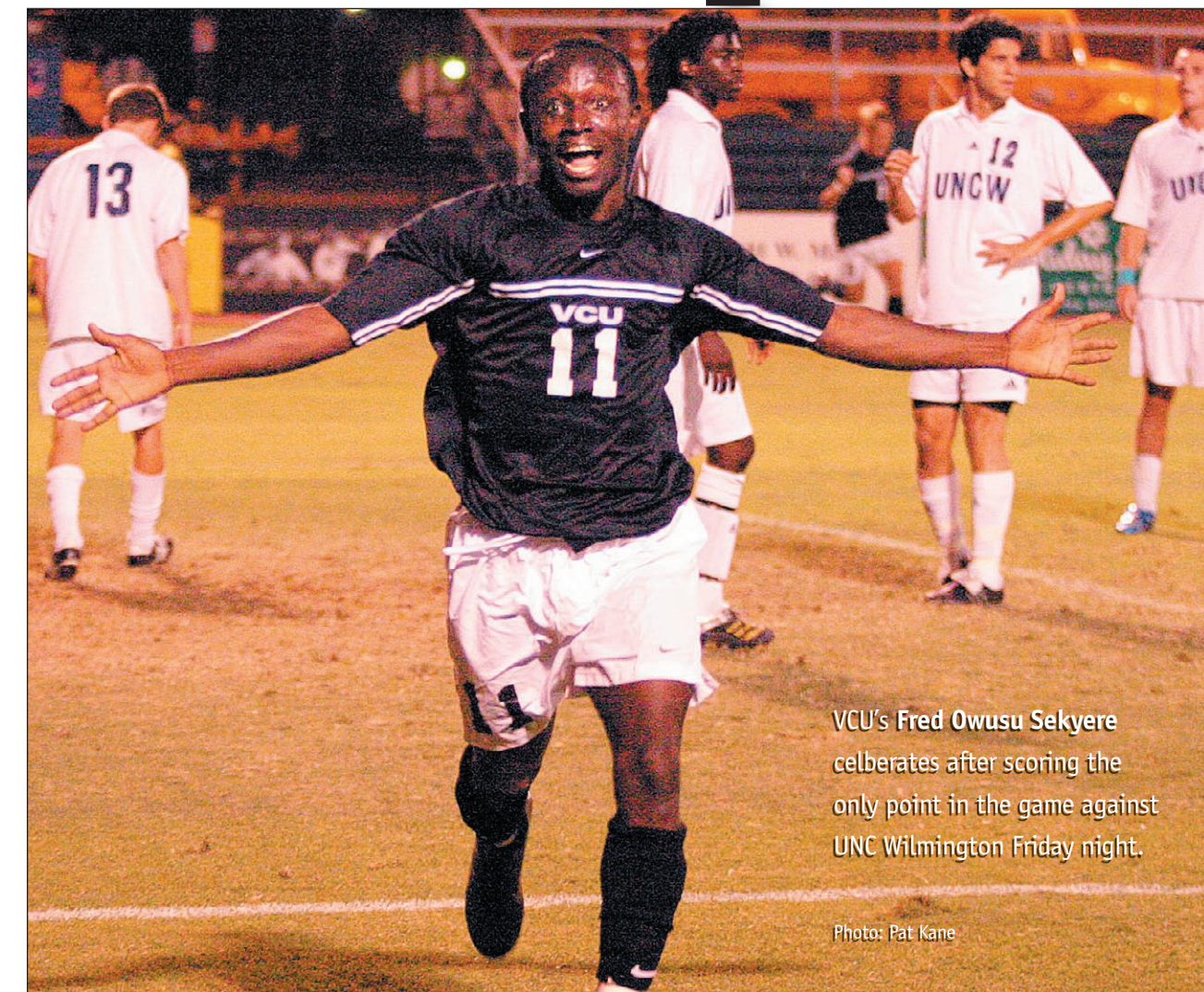
One of VCU's own players was in the way of a shot-on-goal in the 38th minute of play when the ball was powerfully kicked through the crowd of players near the net.

In the 12th minute of the match, UNCW's Tim Masters kicked a hard shot and nailed the goal post, almost scoring an early point for the Seahawks.

With less than fifteen minutes left in the scoreless first half, Fred Owusu Sekyere (Suame-Kusami, Ghana) was knocked to the ground while the game went on. He was injured but in the heat of the game, the players continued playing until the ball got worked to the middle of UNCW's side of the field where he lay.

He was almost trampled but when the three players grappling over the ball got up against him, play stopped while a manager ran out onto the field to help Sekyere out.

Not even the referee noticed Sekyere could not lift himself off the turf until he reached his hand up to



VCU's Fred Owusu Sekyere
celebrates after scoring the
only point in the game against
UNC Wilmington Friday night.

Photo: Pat Kane

tap him.

A healed Sekyere returned in the second half to score the sole point of the match. The ball was first set in motion during the 71st minute by Thomas Weingartner (Munich, Germany) with a corner kick, then picked up by Sekyere who forced his shot into the goal at point-blank.

The team had strict control of the field Friday night, letting little get by from the Seahawks, but UNC Wilmington matched VCU's abilities until the second half.

The Rams' head coach Tim O'Sullivan said the

reasons for Friday's results were that the game "was so competitive. The level of competitiveness along with their training allowed them to open up on the field."

He said it was the training leading up to this game which allowed VCU to manage the field, but attributes the competitiveness against UNCW which pushed the team forward to their win.

VCU now stands 1-0 in the conference and 3-5 for the season and will be traveling to Newark, Del., Friday, Sept. 29 to play their third CAA match of the season against University of Delaware.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Field Hockey

Fri. Sept. 29
at Delaware, 7 p.m.

Women's Soccer

Fri. Sept. 29
vs. Delaware, 7 p.m.

Men's Soccer

Fri. Sept. 29
at Delaware, 7 p.m.

Men's Cross Country

Fri. Sept. 29
Paul Short Invitational, TBA
Maymont Cross Country Festival,
5 p.m.

Women's Cross Country

Fri. Sept. 29
Maymont Cross Country Festival,
4:30 p.m.

Golf

Fri. Sept. 25 – Sat. Sept. 26
VCU Mattaponi Springs
Intercollegiate

Volleyball

Wed. Sept. 27
vs. William & Mary, 7 p.m.

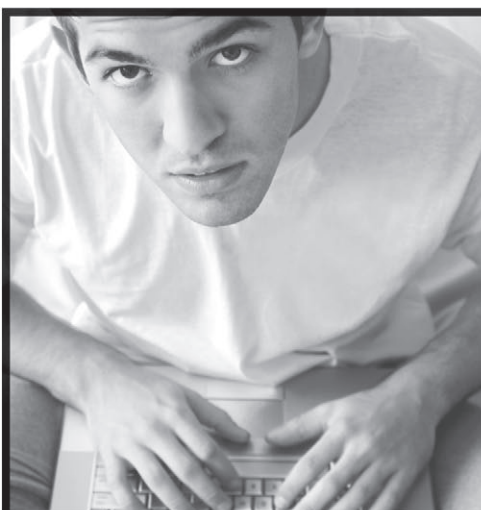
Men's Tennis

Fri. Sept. 29 – Sun. Oct. 1
U.Va. Men's Open

Women's Tennis

Fri. Sept. 29 – Sun. Oct. 1
N.C. State Wolfpack Invitational

VCU sporting events are free to students with a valid student ID. For more information visit vcurams.vcu.edu or call the VCU Sports Line at 828-3440.



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FIELD HOCKEY

Rams pierced by Lancers, bitten by Spiders

JAMES K. GALLOWAY

Sports Editor

The VCU Rams dropped their seventh straight game Sunday, when they lost to the William & Mary Tribe 2-4 at Cary Street Field.

Friday, VCU was shutout by cross-town rival University of Richmond 0-7.

The weekend's losses moved the Rams to 1-8 in the season and 0-1 in the conference.

After the match Sunday head coach Shelly Behrens said, "We're better than the results." She has confidence that the team can find a way to salvage the rest of the season.

The Rams' next game is Friday, 7 p.m. at the University of Delaware.

VCU experienced a rough week after losing a close 2-3 match to the Longwood Lancers on Sunday, Sept. 17 and another confidence-crusher during Friday's shutout by the University of Richmond Spiders.

The game played in Farmville revealed glimmers of strength in the Rams. Despite a heavy Longwood offense in the beginning of the match, VCU managed to tie the game a minute later.

The field hockey team has only one win so far but Behrens has faith that the Rams will improve.

"Lots of games have been close. We've been struggling a little bit here, but we're a better team (than the scores suggest)," Behrens said.

"We made some errors," she said. "When we had a chance to score we made



Jenna Harris (#15) advances down the field as she escapes William and Mary defense Photo: Katy McDaniel

mistakes and weren't able to do so."

Behrens likens non-conference matchups to skill-honing sessions. To her, the most important games are those against

conference foes.

The Rams are going to Delaware Friday for the second CAA match of the season.

Katie Lundberg contributed to this report. Read a full story about Sunday's game and a profile of Coach Behrens in Thursday's Commonwealth Times.

In Brief

Women's soccer

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — The VCU Rams extended their winning streak Friday night with a 1-0 shutout over the UNC Wilmington Seahawks.

Last night was the team's 14th consecutive win in regular season conference play dating back to 2004, moving the team to 5-2-2 on the season, and 1-0 in the CAA this year.

The only score of the game came off the foot of junior captain Hayley Moorwood (Auckland, New Zealand) in the 69th minute. Moorwood rebounded a shot off the goal and easily tapped it past Seahawks goalkeeper Jamie Balzarini.

This was the fourth shutout of the season for the Rams junior goalkeeper

Lauren Hardison (Midlothian/Clover Hill HS).

The Rams finished the night with 15 shots on goal to the Seahawks' eight.

The next game is Friday at 7 p.m. in Sports Backers Stadium where they will face University of Delaware.

Volleyball

FAIRFAX — The VCU Rams extended their losing streak to three games, dropping a 3-1 (30-28, 30-27, 26-30, 30-28) contest to the George Mason Patriots in Linn Gymnasium on Friday.

The loss moved the Rams to 6-6 on the season and to 2-3 in the conference.

Seniors Ludmila Francescatto (Frai-

burga, Brazil), Melissa Peterson (Ganado, Arizona), and Renata Salvatori (Londrina, Brazil) had the kind of game that reminded fans of last year's 1st place finish in the CAA conference tournament.

The Rams play a conference game against William & Mary at 7 p.m. on Wednesday at the Siegel Center's Alltel Pavilion before heading to Brooklyn, N.Y. this weekend to play in the Long Island Blackbird Challenge.

Golf

The VCU Rams varsity golf team will begin their second tournament of the fall season today in Ruther Glen.

The VCU Mattaponi Springs Intercollegiate shootout runs Sept. 25 and 26.

The team placed fourth in the Sept. 11 Mid Pines Intercollegiate tournament, with a team score of 859. The Rams fell ten points short of Old Dominion University and Wichita State University, who tied for second place.

University of Wisconsin won the tournament with 247 points.

VCU's Lanto Griffin (Blacksburg/Blacksburg HS), who had 209 points, was tied with two other players for fourth place in the final top 20 players of the tournament.

The next tournament, the Ping/Golf-week Preview, is October 2-4 in Williamsburg.

Spectrum

Fashion VCU learns Italian: food, culture and Ferragamo

VIRGINIA TA
Associate Spectrum Editor

For fashion students, classroom instruction just may not cut it when it comes to landing their first job and being amply prepared for what lies ahead.

With this in mind, the Department of Fashion Design and Merchandising at VCU has been taking their students out of the classrooms and onto the streets of

Paris, London, Rome, Hong Kong and Spain to find inspiration and gain experience for a more fashionable future.

Though the program started its first trip in Paris, this year students will have the opportunity to spend eight days in the fashion capitals of Florence and Milan, Italy. The trips are designed not only to immerse students into the fashion and style of the city, but also to expose and introduce students to a new culture, said Karen Guthrie, chair of the fashion design and merchandising department.

Traveling abroad, she said, is an invaluable experience for students looking to someday work within the fashion industry.

"Fashion is no longer within the borders of your country," Guthrie said. "It's extremely global, and (the trip) prepares them for that first job out when your boss says, 'You need to go to Hong Kong next week,' and you go, 'Okay,' because you know how to travel internationally or even maybe you've been there before."



Students watch intently as a Guatemalan woman weaves.



A colorful assortment of traditional Guatemalan weavings from Fashion VCU's summer 2006 trip to Guatemala.

Megan Braithwaite photos

Justin Castonguay, a senior fashion merchandising major who went on last year's spring break trip to Paris, agreed. "To be in fashion, you have to be worldly," he said. "If you want to move up (in the fashion industry), you have to really think global and how something going on in China is going to have a huge impact on American fashion." Castonguay also added that his experience on the trip taught him that "just because you don't necessarily speak the other language doesn't mean you can't work with all these other areas of the world."

The annual trips, which have been coordinated and led by Guthrie for the past 12 years, run internationally during spring break and summer, as well as domestically to New York and various trade shows during the school year. The trip to Italy, however, runs during spring break, which means that students will be unable to receive credit for the trip. However, Guthrie pointed out, this has a positive effect on the trip's itinerary.

"Because (the trip is not for credit), we can combine the things that are a little

ITALY continued to Page CT15

Katy McDaniel photo



Students revisit a summer spent in Peru

ANDREW PERKINSON
Contributing Writer

VCU students got a chance to experience the sights, sounds and tastes of Peru last week at a celebration of Peruvian culture in the University Student Commons.

The event was held so that students who participated in VCU's annual summer-abroad program could display their work and share their experiences from a month spent in Peru.

"It's amazing – one of the best trips I've been on," said Erik Gonzalez, an art student who spent four weeks in Peru during the summer semester. "And I've traveled a lot."

The study-abroad program in Peru is a joint operation conducted by the Office of International Education, the Department of English and the School of the Arts. Students fly to Lima, where they can take courses from a number of disciplines and immerse themselves in Peruvian culture. Last summer, 19 students from VCU took the journey.

The trip costs about \$2,600, not including tuition

and airfare, and is offered every summer semester.

Students who participated in this summer's program flew to Lima on May 26, and from there traveled to the ancient Incan capital of Cuzco. From their base in Cuzco, students got a chance to explore Peru's rich cultural heritage and many important historical sights. Most of the students participated in a four-day hike along the Inca Trail to Machu Picchu, an ancient Incan city that was rediscovered in 1911.

"When you travel, you expose yourself to all kinds of questions," said Javier Tapia, an associate professor of the Department of Painting and Printmaking. Tapia, who has been leading students on study-abroad trips to his native country of Peru since 1996, said that bringing up these questions is important to the artistic growth of students.

Students who studied abroad got to showcase their work Wednesday in Virginia rooms C and D of the Commons. Oscar Contreras, a photography major who traveled to Peru last spring, organized the event.

PERU continued to Page CT15



ITALY continued from Page CT14

more touristy. So if we go to Paris, we go to the Eiffel Tower," Guthrie explained. "If you're in Florence, how can you not go to some of the best museums in the world?"

However, this doesn't mean that the Italy 2007 trip will be loaded with plenty of idle time to roam. Guthrie said she's already scheduled visits to the Santa Croce Leather School, the Palazzo Pitti, the Salvatore Ferragamo Shoe Museum, as well as a day trip to Lake Como's Silk Factory and Museum, and a designer appointment in Milan, among several other scheduled places.

Though this year's Italy 2007 trip's itinerary is still a work in progress, Guthrie said she already knows where they'll be globe-trotting to next spring break.

"We're batting around the idea of London," Guthrie shared. "It's not great weather, but London is such a fabulous city for fashion."

While the trips only allow for 20 participants, it usually books up within a few weeks, she said. The reason for smaller trips, Guthrie said, is to help students more easily adjust themselves

to the idea of traveling abroad, so that the idea of one day going to Paris alone is not "too scary to think."

For Castonguay, the smaller trip dynamic worked. Though he had previous traveling experience prior to going to Paris, Castonguay noticed a positive effect on his fellow "very American" classmates who had never been out of the country.

"I remember I had had escargot before, but a lot hadn't, and this one girl said, 'I'm going to close my eyes and ask me if I want to have a bite of this chicken, then stick the escargot in my mouth, and it'll be okay,'" Castonguay shared. "(The faculty) really wanted us to try to speak French, try all the new things, try all the French cuisine."

More importantly, it seems, is for students to be able to understand and appreciate other cultures.

"If you've grown up in Richmond, Va., (and) if you leave Richmond, Va., even if it's only for a week, you learn to value and appreciate the way other people see the world," Guthrie said. "My idea is to go ahead and talk with people and find commonalities you share, as well as the differences."

PERU continued from Page CT14

Photographs from the trip were projected on one wall of the room, and in another corner, Peruvian music played softly. Around the perimeter of the room, booths were set up for students to display their photos, paintings, drawings and other works created during the trip. A traditional Peruvian dance was performed, Peruvian food was offered and poetry inspired by experiences in

the South American country was read.

A poster at the entrance of Virginia room C summed up the group's experience: "The learning curve? Tremendous. For some, the first ride on a plane. For others, the first time outside the United States. For all: a four-week immersion in the culture ... with the shared goal of experiencing and distilling the essence of Peru."

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1 2 3 4 5

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1 2 3 4 5

I buy new instead of used books

1 2 3 4 5

total score

use this number and flip to the next ad to find your perfect phone

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Factotum: noun, 1. A person employed to do a variety of jobs. 2. A book by Charles Bukowski made into a movie starring Matt Dillon about "a man who never had a job he liked or kept a job he had."

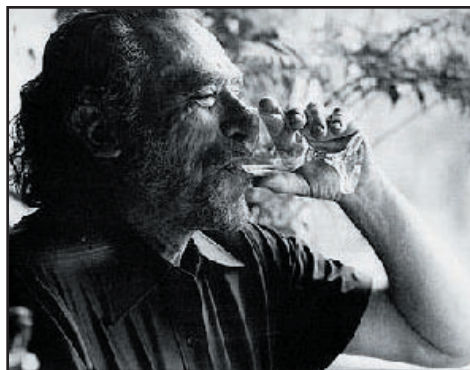
'Factotum' tells it like it is

KATIE PUGH
Spectrum Editor

"Factotum" is an edgy, independent film based on the novel of the same name by anti-Beat writer, Charles Bukowski. Matt Dillon stars as Henry Chinaski, Bukowski's fictional alter ego. The audience follows Chinaski through countless jobs, women, bottles of liquor and pages of writing as he tries to capture each moment of his seemingly aimless life.

When I first came into the movie theater, I was worried. I could not see Dillon playing Chinaski convincingly. In each of Bukowski's books, Chinaski is noted for his ugly physical features and even uglier personality. However, Dillon pulls off the character with surprising skill. He captures the dichotomy of charm and misanthropy, of charisma and complete disregard, which is inherent in Chinaski. Whether working in a pickle factory or having sex, he approaches everything with the same pondering nonchalance.

The simplicity of the movie and the vignette-style events within it are very reminiscent of Bukowski's writing. It is a story about life, and there is no attempt at making some bigger event out of it. Each story within the scope of the movie stands alone. The characters are tangible in their brevity. Like those who walk in and out of paths of real life, they are appreciated for the moment they are in before disappearing again. Even Jan, Chinaski's primary love interest in the film, is largely unremarkable, an entity that comes and goes with the fling of



Charles Bukowski

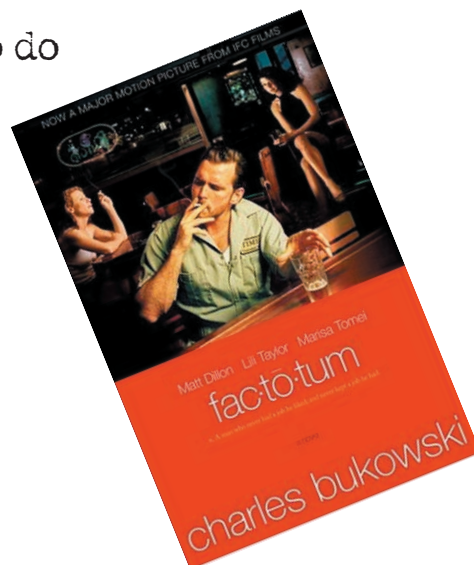
their relationship.

This can, however, prove to be a negative aspect of the film, especially for viewers not previously familiar with Bukowski's work. Given that, the film can be seen as slow or aimless. One may even say that they begin to care little for the characters; Chinaski is hardly a protagonist or even a tragic hero. His fatalistic responses to every job he throws away or every woman he leaves shows a complete disregard for responsibility or emotion. We like the character and yet don't understand why.

However, it is the almost nihilistic emptiness of the character and settings combined with Chinaski's broken-down romanticism that shapes the moviescape. The elements of the movie – from the cinematography to the minimalist musical score – place the characters both in their own surroundings and in those that show their stark contrast from the norm. What can at one moment be a dingy street can suddenly blind the viewer as the camera comes to a pristine office building; no matter where the audience is taken, Chinaski remains the same.

Perhaps one of the driving forces of the movie is the narration pulled from Bukowski's writings. "Factotum" borrows not only from the book but also from several other anthologies of poetry by the author. Dillon's voice is nostalgic of the poet's dry readings and does justice to one of the modern literature's most infamous contemporary writers.

By the end of the movie, audiences get a real feel for why "Factotum" proves itself to be a caustic rendering of a life less ordinary.



"If you're going to try, go all the way. Otherwise don't even start. This could mean losing girlfriends, wives, relatives, jobs. And maybe your mind. It could mean not eating for three or four days. It could mean freezing on a park bench. It could mean jail. It could mean derision. It could mean mockery, isolation. Isolation is the gift. All the others are a test of your endurance. Of how much you really want to do it. And you'll do it, despite rejection in the worst odds. And it will be better than anything else you can imagine. If you're going to try, go all the way. There is no other feeling like that. You will be alone with the gods. And the nights will flame with fire. You will ride life straight to perfect laughter. It's the only good fight there is."

– Henry Chinaski

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Katy McDaniel photos

So you think you can step?

Greek organizations 'Too hot for TV' step off at Stuart C. Siegel Center

SHEENA JEFFERS
News Co-Editor

Feet are throbbing and palms are stinging after last night's Fall Block Step Show. All nine of the National Pan-Hellenic Council sororities and fraternities brought creativity, discipline and intensity to their performances for the 16th consecutive year.



ABOVE: Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. step blindfolded.
TOP: Manchester High School Lance Steppers started the show.

Before the show, brothers and sisters of different Greek organizations mingled and hugged, wishing everyone the best. But when the lights dimmed around 6 p.m., niceness subsided, teams polarized and the competition began.

The Manchester High School Lance Steppers kick-started the show. Then the event's host, Arvin Mitchell from BET's "Comic View," turned over the show to VCU's steppers.

The theme of the evening, "Too hot for TV,"

could be spotted throughout the performances. And commercials using members of the Greek organizations, edited by VCU graduate Keylon Mayo, were shown between each performance.

The Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority took the stage in heels, blue collared shirts, black vests and yellow ties. Their theme was "The Apprentice." A cane was dropped in their performance, drawing "Oohs" throughout the Stuart C. Siegel Center.

After the competitors left the stage, the host commented on how he "didn't know they couldn't mess up."

Beyoncé's "Ring the Alarm" blared over the Siegel Center's speakers during the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority's routine. The steppers came out in pink shirts, brown vests, tan shorts, boots and long-haired wigs. Their television theme was "Charlie's Angels." After a few high kicks, splits and shooting a man who fell off the stage, the steppers ran off the stage.

During the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority's routine, Beyoncé's "Ring the Alarm" came on again, and the audience looked slightly worried at the repetitive use of the song. But the steppers' television theme was "Flavor of Dove," and one stepper said, "I am a chocolate dove." Competitors came out in black pants, black collared shirts with their Greek letters sparkling. They also pulled out glow-in-the-dark jewelry.

The judges stared, intently watching each performance. Some threw their hands in the air, nodded their heads to the beats and sipped on water bottles.

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority followed with their "Making the Band" theme. In black short jackets over apple-red shirts, black skin-tight pants, and black boots complete with red laces, these competi-

tors used the dance break from Beyoncé's "Ring the Alarm" performance during MTV's Video Music Awards.

A 15-minute intermission gave time to "go to the bathroom," as the host advised. A dancing group called 4theStreetz Dance Choreography performed a combination of hip-hop dances during the break.

After the intermission, it was time for the men.

Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity started with their "Top Chef" theme, saying they were the "cream of the crop" and that "viewer discretion is advised." Wearing black pants, black collared shirts, white suspenders and white ties, these competitors were shot by the "armed and dangerous killer," which a voice-over referred to as William Morva, who shot a police officer and security guard, closing down the first day of classes at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity was next up with "Making a Fraternity" as its theme. Red and white canes were placed on stage as brothers and supporters rushed to the front and sat on the floor by the stage. The steppers entered with crossed arms, picked up their canes and stared the audience down as "You Can Hate Me Now" played. In red and white collared shirts, with black T-shirts pulled over top, and jeans, the competitors posed for pictures, threw canes and thrust their hips, causing squeals from the female audience.

Omega Psi Phi Fraternity rushed the stage and the DJ, a member of Omega Psi Phi, told those not stepping to leave the stage. The brothers ripped the purple shirts off each other and smacked each

STEP continued to Page CT19

Monday, September 25, 2006

Katy McDaniel photos



Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority went home as the 2006 winners.

STEP continued from Page CT18

other with enough strength that the audience sitting a good distance away winced in pain. Sticks were placed on stage, and the brothers snapped them over their knees and threw them at the audience, almost hitting those sitting in the front row. Throwing out insults to the other fraternities, some parts of their performance were booed.

Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity brought the night to a close with their "Law and Order" theme. In black dress pants, white collared shirts and blue ties, these competitors brought out women dressed in black lingerie. "Censored" signs across their breasts and lower-halves promoted mystery for a few seconds, because the brothers ripped the signs off and proceeded to lick the women lying onstage.

This year's step show brought in around \$29,500 and 1,001 VCU students, 683 other college students, and 460 people from the general public. Tremell Jeffries, performance coordinator and co-chair for the event and a member of Kappa Alpha Psi, said attendance was slightly low and not as many people showed up as he would have liked.

"Greek life is dying," Jeffries said. "We need to try harder to get people to come out to our events, and make more people aware that we still do participate."

Kaidiatu Fahnbulleh, a psychology major with a minor in sociology, enjoyed last night's show. She has been a loyal Fall Block attendee since she started at VCU.

"This is my third time attending Fall Block," Fahnbulleh said. "Every year, it's good. It brings a lot of people out for a common cause to support the Greeks, and that's

important."

Jill Wilson, a step-show attendee majoring in English education, agreed.

"It's fun to get everyone in to see the sororities and fraternities step it out," she said.

But Wilson did not understand nor enjoy the price increase of \$5.

"It's was a little extreme considering we're VCU students," Wilson said.

The winners of the night were Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity.

The official afterparty was held at the Greater Richmond Convention Center with DJ Rayvon.



Delta Sigma Theta sorority replay Beyoncé's "Ring the Alarm" dance break.

5-11



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What's happening

Around town

Unearth – Presented by Hot Topic
Sept. 26 at the Norva, 6 p.m.
317 Monticello Ave
\$18.50 in advance / \$21 at the door

Women in Public Policy Forum
Featuring Vanessa Kerry, Virginia Secretary of Administration
Viola Baskerville, Sen. Mary Margaret Whipple, Richmond delegates
Jennifer McClellan and Katherine Waddell
Sept. 28 at the Singleton Center, 7 p.m.

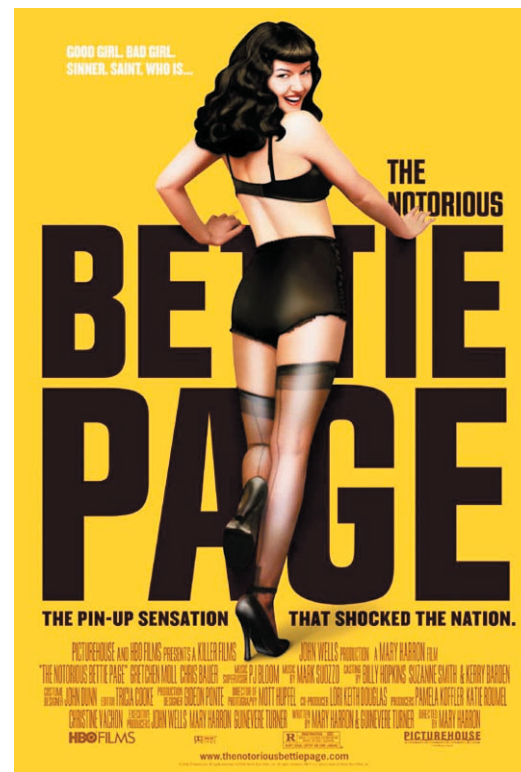
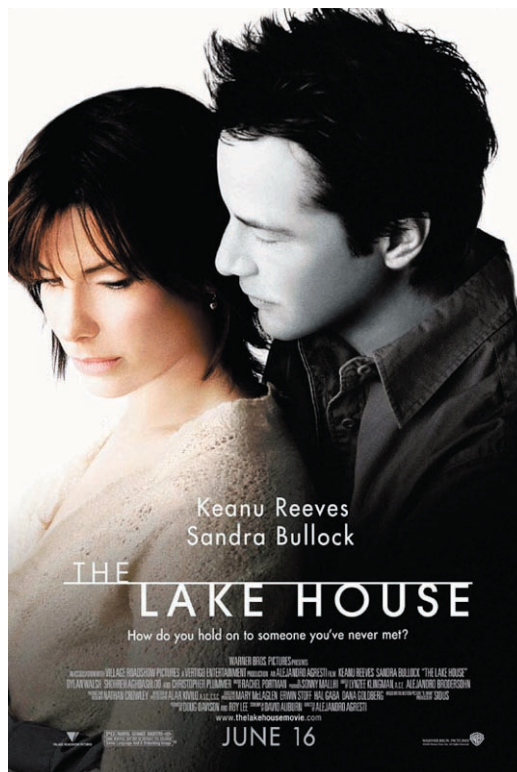
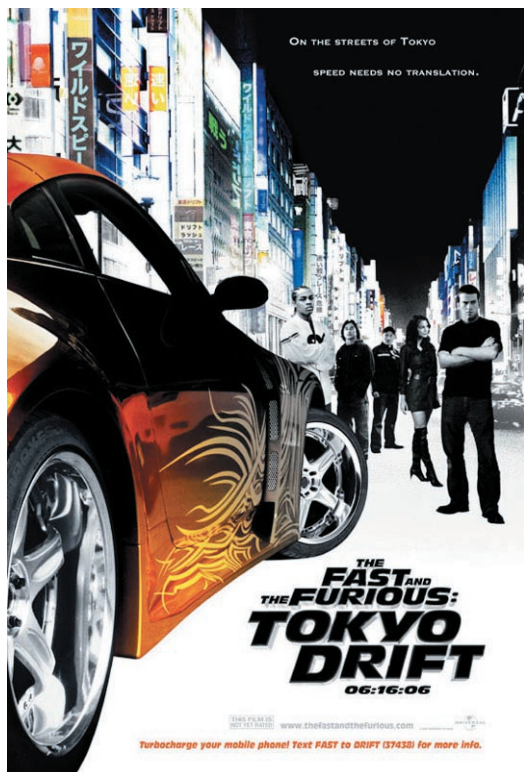
Creating and Consuming Culture in the Digital Age
Presented by Richard Fine of the Department of English in
collaboration with the School of Mass Communications and the
School of the Arts
Sept. 25, 8 p.m. - 10 p.m.

Take Steps with a Purpose
Eric Latham will speak of his trip across the country to raise
money for cancer research
Sept. 26, noon - 1 p.m.



Unearth

Out in stores Tuesday



Weird News

A foot-lickin' good time at Wal-Mart

In Perry, Ga., Wal-Mart workers recently encountered a strange incident when a man claiming to be performing a religious ritual sat in the middle of one of the aisles of the store. When an elderly woman encountered him, he asked her to assist him in his ritual, making the woman stand on his hands and spit. He then proceeded to lick her feet. After a Wal-Mart employee approached the man, he quickly fled. Though police suspect that the man is responsible for similar bizarre stunts at other Wal-Mart locations in Georgia, they are still attempting to find a law that covers the crime.



Ex-med student takes things into his own hands

Last week, Ahmed Rashed, 26, turned himself into the South Plainfield, N.J., Police Department for severing and stealing the left hand from a cadaver in 2002. While a medical student at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, Rashed had allegedly given the severed hand to 31-year-old Linda E. Kay, an exotic dancer. Though police had not



discovered the hand until they were called to Kay's home for other reasons, upon searching they found the hand preserved in a Mason jar in the basement, along with six human skulls in a bedroom. Kay has also been charged with improperly disposing of human remains and could face up to five years in prison if convicted.

Postal worker's urine surprise sends him to court

In Akron, Ohio, postal worker Thomas Shaheen recently admitted to putting urine in the break room coffee pot at the Wolf Ledges post office where he worked.

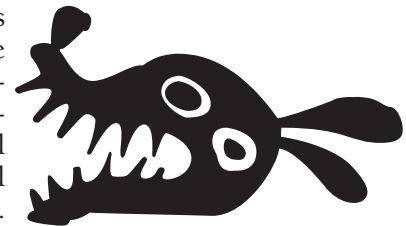
According to his former co-workers, who rented a video camera to catch him in the act, Shaheen was jealous of some of the other employees about work privileges that he did not have. It is suspected that Shaheen continually poured urine in the coffee pot over a four- to six-month period, for which he has been sentenced to six months in a jail work-release program.



McDonald's: We love to see you bleed

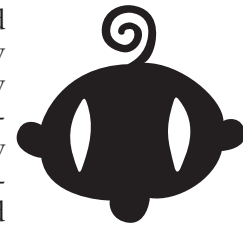
In Branford, Conn., a woman stopping by a rest area's McDonald's was attacked last week by a coyote as her and her boyfriend approached the

restaurant. Maria Gicana, a nurse from New York City, claims that she was attacked from behind, suffering from bites to the back of the knee. McDonald's employees are now confessing to feeding the animal upon several occasions. Paul Rego, a wildlife biologist at the state Department of Environmental Protection, says though coyote attacks on humans are rare, by feeding the coyote, employees had essentially trained it not to fear humans.



Police discover backyard baby

New homeowner Mic Sweeney, had a strange surprise in his backyard. Lakeland, Fla., police were on the search for the remains of Tracy McHugh's baby buried eight years ago. They were first tipped off by McHugh's daughters. After a full confession by McHugh, who is currently being held on child abuse charges in the Polk County Jail, the woman led them to the baby's body. McHugh claims that the baby had stopped breathing shortly after birth and "she panicked." Though McHugh has not been charged yet, new charges are pending upon results from the medical examiner.



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The successful candidate may be promoted to Account Manager after Dec. 2006. Please apply in person at the Student Media Center at 817 W. Broad St. The applicant pool will be closed Sept. 30.

****We now accept submissions all year!***

Amendment

Journal

Pick up the 2006-07 edition
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Comics

Blue and Blond

Chris Malone

BLUE AND BLOND BY CHRIS MALONE

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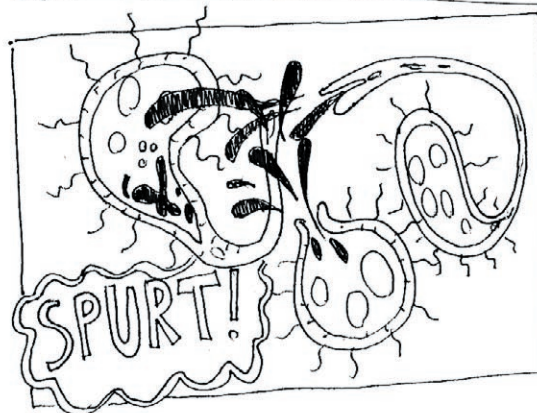
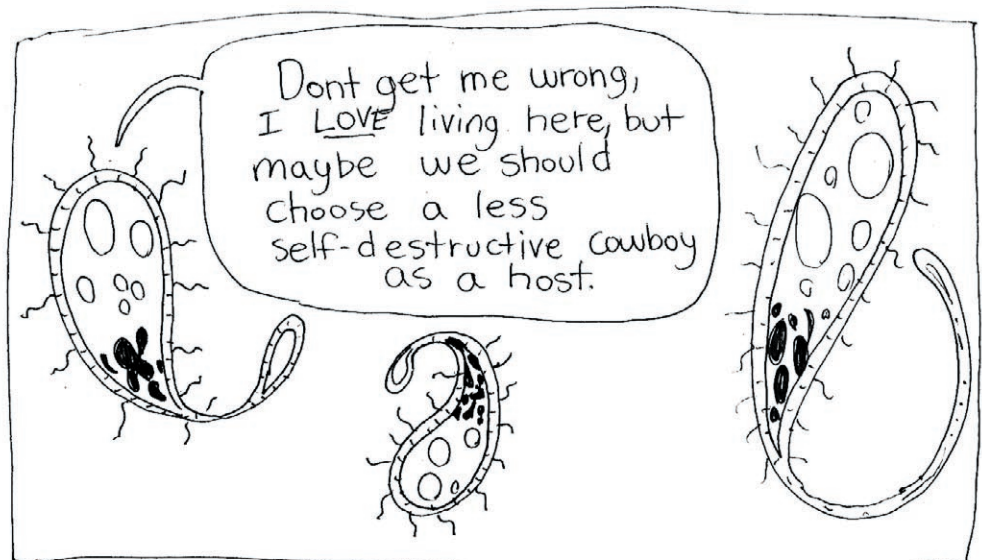


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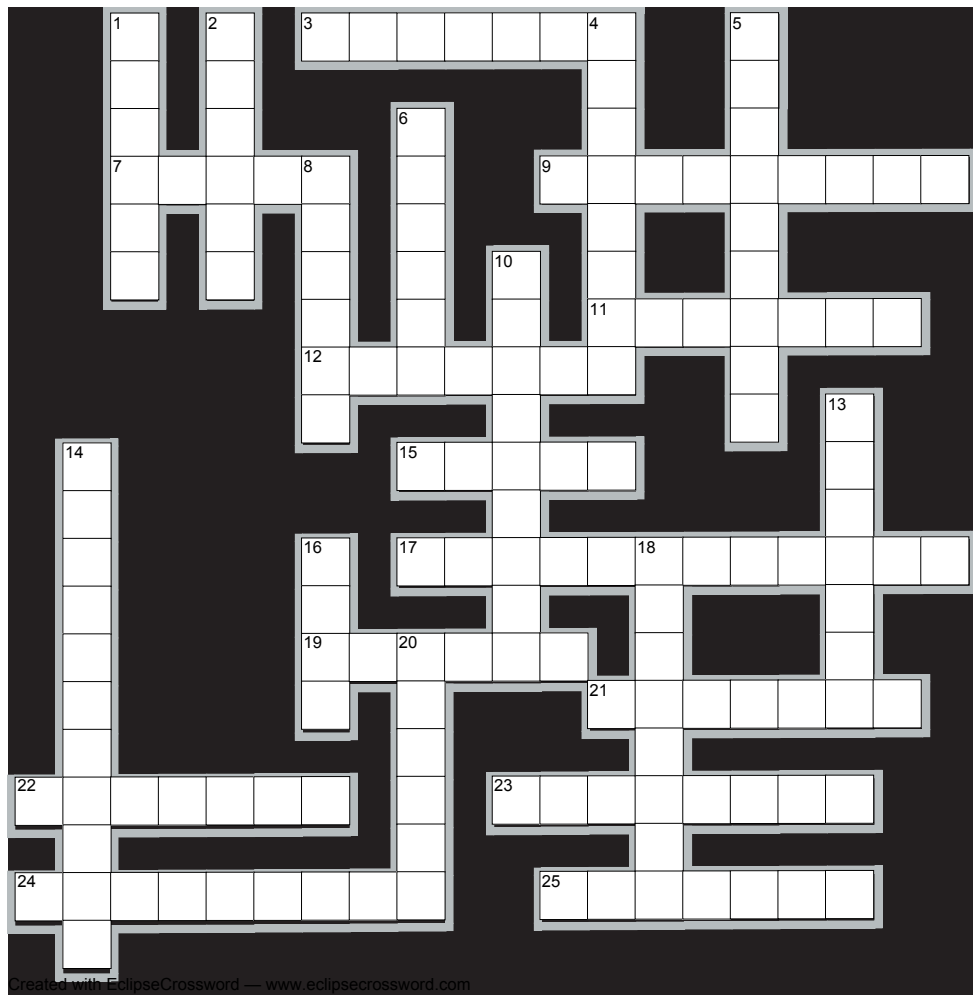
graphics@commonwealthtimes.com

Crossword

Autumn

Across

3. Used for jack-o-lanterns.
7. New seasons of TV ____ begin.
9. This month.
11. The Sun crosses the equator and day and night are equal in length.
12. Halloween month.
15. The begin to fly south.
17. Fall holiday with turkey dinner.
19. Tree ____ turn colors.
21. It gets colder.
22. Landed on Plymouth.
23. Fall sport typically watched on Thanksgiving Day.
24. "Trick of treat."
25. To gather crops.



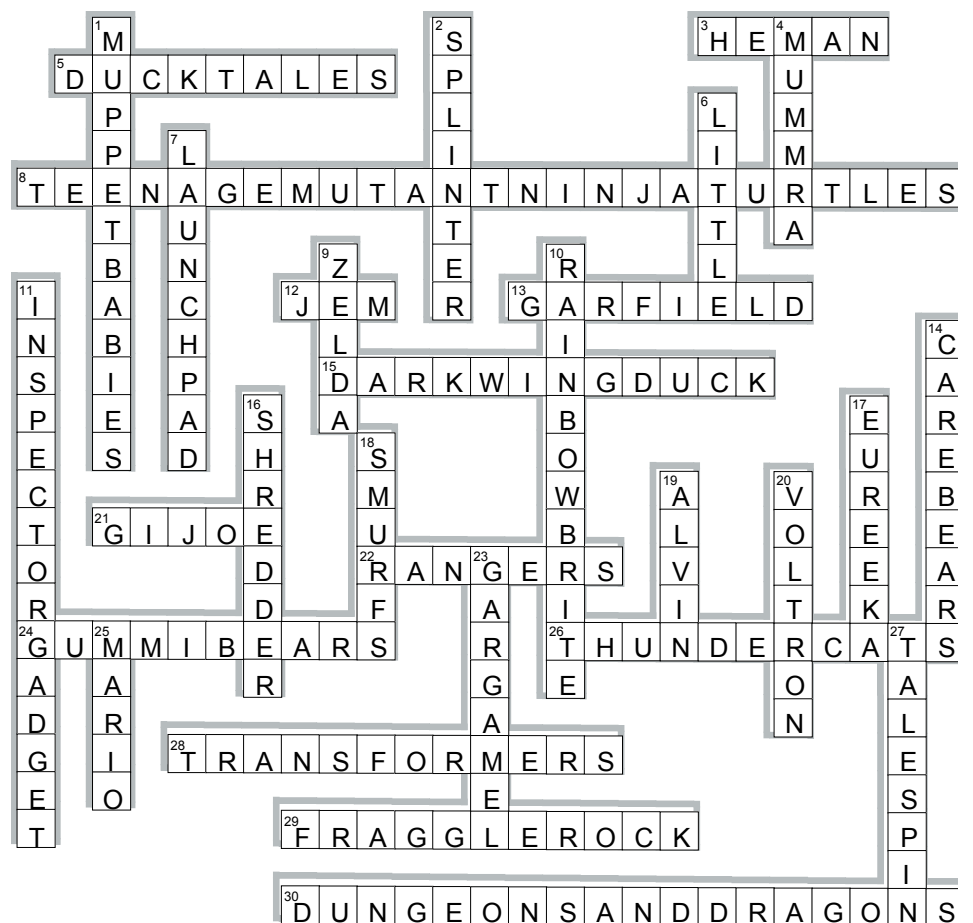
Down

1. It has just changed from summer to autumn.
2. Fall leaf ____ tend to be red, gold, brown, etc.
4. Last month of Autumn.
5. Season my trigger this.
6. Additional article of clothing to wear before leaving the house.
8. Summer vacation ends and this begins.
10. Animals begin to withdraw and sleep for the winter.
13. Another word for leaves.
14. Huge shopping day.
16. The season right now.
18. Fall School ____ 2006.
20. Between summer and winter.

**Write for
the sports
section.**

E-mail sports@
commonwealthtimes.com

Answers from Sept. 21





Opinion

Building a legacy *National Slavery Museum needs your help*

STEPHEN HICKS

Opinion Writer

Bill Cosby came to Richmond Friday in the hopes of encouraging each American to donate \$8 to a national slavery museum. The comedian and philanthropist was in town supporting the museum's founder, Mayor L. Douglas Wilder.

Each American, not just African-American, should donate to this effort.

Somehow, slavery in America has been simplified to an African-American experience, yet this is not only African-American history. This is American history.

In a teleconference Friday, Wilder explained the significance of the \$8 donation.

"The figure eight, in shape, is both of the shackles, which is the symbol of

slavery," he said. "If you turn it on its side, it's the symbol of infinite freedom."

Slavery museums are in cities including Baltimore, Detroit and Charleston. Still, there could never be enough museums about this very American topic. Everyone would benefit from the depth of research put into the exhibits. A textbook can only tell so much. A building such as the U.S. National Slavery Museum provides tangible, interactive insight into our turbulent past.

You may ask why another museum on slavery is necessary. Well, it's very similar to the U.S. Holocaust Museum that tells the story of many European Jews being persecuted. The museum plays the role of the headquarters that gathers the resources in order to bring the story of enslaved Africans in this country to life. It offers options.

Not everyone can tour a plantation

nowadays. Some plantations are private and don't permit trespassing. Many plantations have removed traces of slave life from their premises. We need a central place to learn. The U.S. National Slavery Museum claims to do exactly this.

There is no telling if one of your ancestors was a slave, slave trader or someone who helped on the Underground Railroad. You would serve justice to their legacies in learning from their experiences.

Besides, what is \$8 to you? You probably spend that amount every day on frivolous items such as your Starbucks coffee or your Chik-fil-A lunch combo.

The U.S. National Slavery Museum that Wilder founded is to be built in Fredericksburg. The 100,000-square-foot building will sit alongside the Rappahannock River. A national museum dedicated to slavery in America would better serve its purpose of exposing more people near one of the nation's major tourist attractions – Washington, D.C.

And perhaps even more fitting, the museum will be in Virginia, the birthplace of eight U.S. Presidents, of which the first five were slaveholders.

Nevertheless, the U.S. National Slavery Museum is imperative in preserving precious antebellum artifacts. The slavery museum needs to be on the same level as the U.S. Holocaust Museum in Washington. Monetary donations will assist in that effort.

Cosby said he was donating \$1 million. Wilder stated the museum had already raised \$50 million. The museum's campaign goal is to reach \$100 million, and the total cost of the museum will be \$200 million.

There are about 300 million people in the country – \$8 from each person would place the museum's goal within its grasp. Your \$8 is just a simple down payment in studying America's past so we can move on to greater achievements.

But first, the story must be told in full.

For more information, visit www.usnationalslaverymuseum.org.

From the president

ALI FARUK

*President, Monroe Park Campus SGA
Special to The Commonwealth Times*

New judicial appointment: This week we began interviewing students for the position of associate justice on the Student Judicial Board. The process was very competitive, and unfortunately we had only a single vacancy. However, we eventually had to come to a decision. Of the eight applicants, there was one who stood out.

Jibran Muhammad has been able to overcome a countless number of obstacles in his life. He brings with him a unique set of skills and experiences that make him more than qualified for the position of associate justice.

These qualifications not only illustrate Jibran's dedication and work ethic, but they also demonstrate his maturity and intelligence. Jibran's extensive real-life experience has endowed him with a strong sense of fairness, objectivity and open-mindedness.

For a full bio of Jibran, please visit www.vcusga.com.

Advising: For the past month, the student Senate has been working with

the University College to improve the effectiveness of the university's academic advising system. In this effort the graduation worksheet has been updated and revamped. This is a very reasonable goal and potentially would entail the implementation of checklists for students at 30, 60 and 90 credits. This checklist could include:

- Ensuring that all students are acquainted with their respective faculty advisers and have their contact information available;
- Reviewing students' progress toward fulfilling obligatory general education requirements and looking for courses that can fill both gen-eds as well as the specific requirements for their majors;
- Recommending courses students should consider taking over the next two semesters;
- Helping students determine the best options for deciding on a concentration within their major;
- Discussing areas of overall concern for students such as the usefulness of certain prerequisites;
- Ensuring that all students are aware of the various resources that VCU has to offer, including the Campus

Learning Center, counseling and financial aid (the latter for which some people don't know that everyone is qualified);

- Encouraging things like study abroad, professional organizations, service learning, volunteering and whatever activities can be taken advantage of to help students become thriving individuals and get a handle on their own education.

This checklist will help to reduce any potential barriers to a student's academic success. I welcome any comments, questions or feedback. Please e-mail me at sgapresident@vcu.edu.

Continuing with the topic of student organizations, the **Presidential Roundtable** is getting into gear with its first meeting of the year 7:00 tonight. It is important to keep in mind that attendance at two of the three semester meetings is mandatory in order to secure funding for the following semester. If you would like to have some questions answered regarding the Presidential Roundtable, please direct them to Kaitlin Bowles at SGAExecdir@vcu.edu or take a look at the VCU SGA Web site at www.vcusga.com.

President Faruk's column appears every Monday in CT Opinion.

the commonwealthtimes

The independent student press of VCU

KAREN BOLIPATA

Executive Editor



OMAR YACOUBI

Interim Opinion Editor



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Letters must be sent from a valid VCU e-mail address or signed with daytime and evening telephone contact. We reserve the right to edit for grammar, style and space.





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