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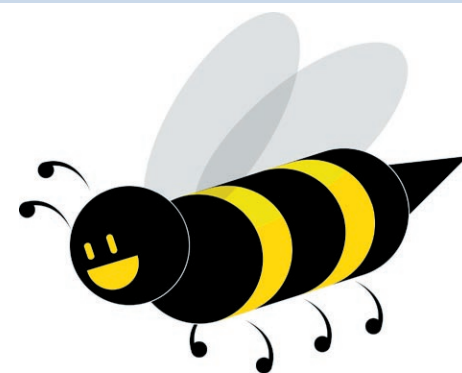
THURSDAY

OCTOBER 5, 2006
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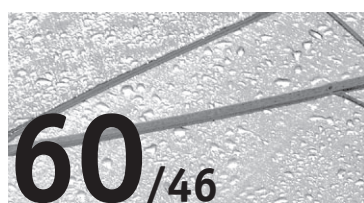
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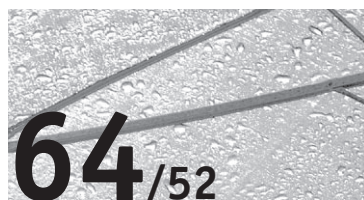
THURSDAY



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SATURDAY



SUNDAY



Looking ahead

In Monday's Issue

In Sports

- Can field hockey pull out a win to break their 9-game losing streak?

Cover photo:
Cynthia K. Merchant

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IN THE NEWS

compiled from wire reports

WORLD

SEOUL, South Korea – North Korea's neighbors issued stern warnings Wednesday against Pyongyang's threat to carry out an unprecedented nuclear test, but the isolated communist country insisted that such a move wouldn't be meant as a provocation.

South Korean officials said there was no sign a test was imminent and warned that such a test could prompt Japan to develop atomic weapons and threaten a regional arms race.

A newspaper in Japan, meanwhile, reported that two Japanese spy satellites had not observed any preparation activities at a suspected underground test site.

China – the North's main ally and key benefactor – called on Pyongyang to show calm and restraint, issuing an unusually pointed statement that referred to North

Korea by name. The statement contrasted with earlier Chinese responses, which have typically called for restraint from all sides in the dispute.

China, Japan and South Korea also announced a series of summits among their leaders next week, ratcheting up diplomacy over tensions caused by the North's announcement Tuesday that it intends to detonate a bomb.

Such a test would confirm the North's claim that it has atomic weapons and would severely undermine efforts to prevent an Asian nuclear arms race by getting Pyongyang to disarm.

The North often insists it needs nuclear weapons to deter a U.S. attack, although this was the first time that Pyongyang had publicly announced its intent to conduct a nuclear test.

NATION

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. – Former Rep. Mark Foley, under investigation for sending lurid Internet messages to young male Capitol Hill pages, issued a series of revelations from rehab, including a claim that he had been sexually abused as a teen.

Attorney David Roth, speaking on Foley's behalf at a news conference Tuesday, said Foley was molested between ages 13 and 15 by a clergyman. He declined to identify the clergyman or the church, but Foley is Roman Catholic.

"Mark does not blame the trauma he sustained as a young adolescent for his totally inappropriate" e-mails and instant messages, Roth said. "He continues to offer no excuse whatsoever for his conduct."

Roth, who spoke for Foley while the former legislator is in rehab for alcohol abuse and mental illness, said Foley denied having inappropriate sexual contact with minors and said he was under the influence of alcohol when he wrote the notes.

Foley, who is 52 and single, represented parts of Palm Beach County for 12 years until he abruptly resigned Friday. The FBI and Florida law enforcement officials are investigating whether he violated any laws.

The lurid communications were first reported last week by ABC News, which released more instant messages Tuesday that indicate Foley allegedly interrupted a vote on the House floor to chat online with a teen.

STATE & LOCAL

ALEXANDRIA – Sen. Hillary Clinton endorsed Democrat Jim Webb in Virginia's Senate race Tuesday, praising the former Republican as an independent voice against President Bush's Iraq policies and a pliant GOP Congress that supports them.

The former first lady and possible 2008 Democratic presidential contender brushed aside a magazine article Webb wrote in 1979 that said women can't lead men in battle and decrying their admission to military academies.

Clinton's appearance comes as Webb battles claims from Republican incumbent George Allen that Webb has demeaned women. An Allen campaign ad features

female U.S. Naval Academy graduates accusing Webb of creating hostility toward them when they were midshipmen in the early 1980s.

Allen, meanwhile, began his third statewide tour since kicking off his campaign in the spring, this time aimed at resuscitating his campaign after six disastrous weeks of developments that raised questions about his views on race.

Since calling a Webb volunteer of Indian descent "macaca," Allen has lost the 16 percentage-point lead he held over Webb in July in statewide polls conducted by Mason-Dixon Polling & Research Inc. A poll Friday showed the two men tied at 43 percent.

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Thursday, October 5, 2006



SGA voter registration day snags 275 students

RYAN FARR
News Writer

With Nov. 7 — this year's off-year Election Day — less than a month away, voter registration and pleas on its behalf have infiltrated campus. On Tuesday it became a team effort as the Student Government Association organized a voter registration day with other assorted student organizations.

Setting up a horseshoe of foldout tables in the Commons Plaza, volunteers helped about 175 students register to vote and another 100 mail requests for absentee ballots.

"It's been a pretty good day overall," said Stephanie Kinard, SGA legislative issues chair and organizer of the event.

Transfer student Kathleen Anderson moved to Richmond two years ago but had not registered in the city until Tuesday.

"It's about time I put down roots here and get my voting straightened out," she said.

Anderson said the registration process was easy enough.

"One page, basic info," she said.

Among the issues students care most about for this year's general elections, Kinard said the cost of education comes first.

Beyond that, Kinard said race issues are also on students' minds, particularly related to the Senate race between incumbent Republican Sen. George Allen and Democratic candidate Jim Webb.

In August, Allen referred to one of Webb's campaign workers, who was of Indian descent, as "macaca," a term many labeled racist. Since then, the race has received national attention, and Webb's ratings have increased in public opinion polls. As of Monday, the two were each tied at 43 percent, according to a poll of 625 registered Virginia voters by Mason-Dixon Polling & Research Inc.

Kinard said student concerns have not just been about Allen, however.

"There have been negative things said about Webb as well," she said. "So it's hard to say which way people



Ryan Farr photo

Students prepare for the Nov. 7 vote.

are going to sway their votes."

Webb has been criticized for, among other things, writing an article in 1979 titled "Women Can't Fight", in which he argued women cannot lead men in battle.

Regardless of the criticisms, Kinard said she expects high voter turnout.

"The negative energy, it's really catching peoples' eyes," she said.

Democrat Rep. Robert "Bobby" Scott is running unopposed for re-election in Virginia's 3rd Congressional District, which includes Richmond. All 440 of the House's seats are up for grabs.

A proposed amendment to the Virginia Constitution prohibiting same-sex marriage will appear on the ballot.

"Only a union between one man and one woman may be a marriage valid in or recognized by this Commonwealth and its political subdivisions," the amendment states.

Two other ballot questions also regard proposed state constitutional amendments. The first would allow churches to form legal corporations. The second would enable the General Assembly to partially exempt local real estate taxes from certain conservation, redevelopment and rehabilitation projects.

Even if students do not know how they will vote, SGA Senate Chair Jessica Lee said they should still register to vote.

"There's a deadline to register, October 10th," Lee said.

VOTING continued to Page CT4

Four years not enough for 'super seniors'

SARA HALL
VCU Campus News Service

Being a senior should mean you've endured four years of hard work and are getting ready to receive a diploma. But at VCU, being a senior means probably you've put in four years of hard work and you're going to put in a couple more.

Students extending their studies at VCU are called "super seniors." The term is slang for students who do not graduate after the traditional four years. At VCU there is an abundance of super seniors — serious academics who've either missed the four-year mark or are approaching their expected graduation dates without a way to fulfill the requirements needed to graduate.

Though VCU is known as a four-year university, the majority of its students will not graduate in four years.

The latest enrollment report, provided by the Center for Institutional Effectiveness, said an estimated 10,000 freshmen enrolled at VCU in the past three years. VCU graduation rates, available through the university's Web site, show only 41 percent eventually graduate.

Brenda Figueroa, 21, is a senior criminal justice major who is watching her academic clock tick.

"I meet with a graduate adviser offered through my department. I began meeting

SENIOR continued to Page CT4

X-ray exposure: What is the limit?

W.R. DRAPER
News Writer

As you get your chest X-ray, the technician scurries off to safety. Imagine getting this procedure done again. And again, 20, 50, 100 times in a row. You keep getting it — at least 290 times.

The point of this seemingly absurd vignette is that a computed tomography scan, or CT, of the chest is the equivalent of 290 to 400 chest X-rays, depending on the source.

But not to worry. It's all still below a limit for annual occupational exposure set by the International Commission of Radiological Protection, an advisory board. Some experts

X-RAY continued to Page CT6

CRIME LOG

Sept. 29

Six females were arrested at Ramz Hall for underage possession of alcohol.

Sept. 30

A male was arrested at Rhoads and Brandt courtyard for disorderly conduct and trespassing.

Oct. 3

A female was arrested at the 7-Eleven

on West Main Street for urinating in public.

A male was arrested at the 7-Eleven on West Main Street for underage possession of alcohol and possession of marijuana.

A male was arrested at the 7-Eleven on West Main Street for underage possession of alcohol and possession of marijuana.

A male was arrested at the 7-Eleven on West Main Street for underage consumption of alcohol.

VOTER continued from Page CT3

“And so if you don’t register and end up making up your mind later, you’re going to be screwed. So do it now.”

Lee said the SGA and the New Voters Project registered almost 1,000 people in 2005, and they are now building on these successes.

Virginia21, Libertarians at VCU, VCU Young Democrats and VCU Americans for Informed Democracy joined the SGA Tuesday to help students register. Each group handed out literature about candidates and the issues surrounding the elections.

The Libertarians at VCU even offered a political alignment test for students unsure if they were conservative, liberal, centrist, libertarian or some other political orientation.

Adam Gainer, a junior studying public relations, helped at the Libertarian table. He said all of the groups there had the same goal.

“We’re all here really just to make sure people are getting registered to vote. That’s more important than anything else,” Gainer said. “Democracy doesn’t work unless people make it work. I have no tolerance for voter apathy.”

Many volunteers said they observed some apathy, however.

“It’s kind of hard to get people to stop,” Kinard said. “Some people aren’t quite as interested as others as far as the elections. I’m not even sure if some people know that we’re in elections again, although I hate to say that.”

According to Lee, apathy was not the worst reaction from students that she encountered.

“I got kind of hurt today,” Lee said. “I

understand if people want to say ‘no,’ but some people were actually rude about it. Just the way they’d shake their heads or say, ‘Hell no, I’m not gonna do that.’ ”

“They ask if we have something to offer them,” said Sean Presley, a history major and member of VCU AID. “Somebody asked for a free T-shirt. I mean, you want a free T-shirt? You’re getting the right to vote.”

Among the reasons to register to vote, many are practical to VCU students, Lee said.

“The people who we elect appoint our Board of Visitors,” she said. “They fix our tuition. They build buildings here at VCU. They figure out how much taxes on food cost. Everything is tied into government.”

Others cited the history of U.S. citizens’ right to vote as reason enough.

“A lot of people have died for your right to vote, and a lot of people have suffered for your vote,” Gainer said. “People take their liberties for granted. If you don’t voice your opinion, nothing gets changed.”

In the end, though, Gainer said it is up to everyone to make that choice.

“You can’t force anyone to vote, they’ve got to choose to vote,” he said.

Forms for registration or requesting an absentee ballot can be found at the SGA office on the second floor of the University Student Commons, as well as at the Department of Motor Vehicles offices at 2300 W. Broad St. or 610 Johnston Willis Drive. Students can also register online at <http://www.ci.richmond.va.us/departments/registrar/>. The deadline for Virginia voter registration is Oct. 10.

SENIOR continued from Page CT3

with an adviser before each semester during my sophomore year,” said Figueroa, who hoped to graduate in May 2007, but it will not.

Figueroa said her parents would love not to have to pay for another semester and avoid the rising costs of tuition. But they would rather see Figueroa finish late instead of not finishing at all.

Kathleen Nash, a creative advertising major, also began her fourth year this fall. She is looking for a way to cram in all the required classes left for her to graduate in four years.

Nash said a May 2007 graduation date “seems possible, but not very probable.” Nash’s parents said they will pay for four years, but after that – finished or not – the financial assistance they have provided will no longer be available. Until then, Nash is trying to focus on passing the classes she needs to finish — whenever that might be.

As a creative advertising major, Nash is enrolled in the School of Mass Communications.

Carol Mawyer, the school’s student services coordinator, said the school’s programs are designed to allow students to graduate in four years, and a substantial number of students do succeed.

However, Mawyer said it is not uncommon for students to spend more than two years completing the general requirements, and students can’t begin

their upper-level classes until the general requirements are fulfilled. According to Mawyer, the upper-level program also is designed to be completed in four semesters.


Jonathan Armstrong, 23, is a transfer student from George Mason University. Armstrong, unlike many other students, invites the idea of a few extra years in college.

“It’s given me more freedom since I don’t have to work crazy hours,” he said. “My parents are helping me now, but after I graduate I’m going to have to take care of everything on my own. I feel lucky to an extent, but I definitely feel the pressure to finish.”


Armstrong said he thinks VCU faculty could have done more to guide him toward a timely graduation. Armstrong and many others find it tough to deal with prerequisites, and restrictions keep students from taking certain classes simultaneously. Many classes also fill quickly, and with a limited number of courses offered each semester, it’s not unusual for students to need more time to complete degree requirements.

One common aim among all of these students is that they plan to graduate. It might not be when they planned, but they are determined to continue the effort as super seniors, super-super seniors, or even super-super-super seniors.

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How to start your own bee colony

Step one: You can buy an already-functioning bee colony from a beekeeper for around \$150 to \$160.

Step two: Buy your equipment. You need: A bee suit, hide, smoker, bee brush.

Step three: You need a queen bee. Queen bees can be purchased and they are mailed through the U.S. Postal Service. Tending bees are sent with the queen to take care of her during her travels.

Step four: Buy a package of bees. Italian bees are suggested, because they are non-aggressive, easier to relate to and readily available.

Step five: Start in the right season. Late April through early May is a good time to start. Remember, however, you may not see a surplus your first year. It takes the bees a while to become comfortable and organized.

Step six: Join your local bee association. Here is the contact information for the one in Richmond: <http://richmondbeekeepers.org/>

Facts about bees and their colonies:

- Honey is sold at \$5 a pound.
- You can get 60 pounds of surplus from a strong, healthy colony.
- Starting cost for a colony is around \$300.
- It's best to have them in a rural setting.
- Bees have tasks. They clean cells, retrieve water, pollen or nectar, take care of the queen, feed a young larva. Then they graduate to a guard bee, where they protect the hide from predators.
- Females are the working force.
- The queen lays around 2,000 eggs a day. She is kept away from the other bees.
- A colony is between



VCU alumnus THE BUZZ of the state fair

SHEENA JEFFERS
News Co-Editor

Children licking candy apples walk past wide-eyed fish in rectangular glass tanks.

They stop and stare. The fish stare back.

Meanwhile, the children's parents listen to vendors discuss new farming techniques that use nature-friendly chemicals.

Those are just some of the scenes at the State Fair of Virginia, which runs through Oct. 8. Besides the usual sights and smells, this year's fair has a special hum in the air. The incessant sound—zzzzzzzzzz—fills the center of the Virginia World Room, luring clusters of curious people who want to know what's behind the buzz.



Bob Stapleton

They discover 60,000 honey bees busy at work under the steady gaze of "Bob the Beekeeper," also known as Bob Stapleton of Henrico County. Stapleton sets up a bee display at the fair every year to sell his honey and educate the "young-ins" on apiculture, the study of beekeeping and the life and habits of bees.

Stapleton, a VCU alumnus, is the president of the Richmond Beekeepers Association, an organization of 85 members serving central Virginia. He said many of today's youth don't know much about bees or their relationship to nutrition.

"There seems to be a little bit of a disconnect between the honey bees and the young people nowadays," he said. "They can go to the local supermarket and get all the fruits and vegetables that they could want. Usually the apples are well rounded, juicy and well developed. They don't see the little knotty apples that don't receive the proper pollination."

The honey bee is directly responsible for about two-thirds of all food products, Stapleton said.

Honey bees' honey can also be used for healing purposes, he added.

"A lot of people take local honey for various allergy problems that may develop," he said.

A colony of bees uses its surrounding environment to produce honey. The result is tailored honey to a given area, which may help with allergic reactions to plants, trees or flowers.

Stapleton said honey produced within a 50-mile radius of an allergy sufferer provides the best results.

"A lot of people prefer taking a teaspoon of honey in their tea every morning instead of taking shots or pills," he said. "We refer to them as the angels of agriculture."

Bob and Barbara Platt, a married couple selling honey bee healing skin cream, agree with Stapleton. They have been working with the skin cream for 15 years.

The Platts, who make their cream in Or-

lando, Fla., say it is used for dozens of skin problems.

"It's the greatest thing in the world for dry skin," Platt said, noting that it is good for dry feet, cracked heels, dry elbows, face moisturizer and chapped lips.

Stapleton's interest in bees began as a child in the 1950s.

"I started working with bees with my dad," he said. "He would go out and cut a wild bee tree down and usually try and locate the queen and put it in a box."

During the 1970s, Stapleton took classes at VCU, worked a full-time job, raised a family and worked with bees — a hobby he loves.

"I enjoy this more than 60 or 70 hours of work, full-time, 8 to 6 each day, six to seven days a week," he said.

Stapleton now owns 60 colonies of bees in Henrico, Goochland and Rockville, just to name a few places.

The bees have stung him more than a few times.

"I really wouldn't try and count them," he said.

Stapleton stressed, however, that they don't deliberately sting.

"Normally when I get stung by bees I don't have my equipment on," he said. "I'm back taking a break at my truck, having a Coca-Cola and maybe a package of Nabs. The bees got frustrated. They didn't want me to be messing with them that particular day, and they seize the opportunity to come peck me on the nose or ear."

If you work with the bees with proper equipment, he said, you usually will not get stung.

"Bees are busy going out and doing tasks," he said. "They're not interested in stinging you."

He said the only way they would harm you is if you ran around the yard and stepped on one or if you got in front of the hive as they're going in and out. If the bee gets tangled in your hair and you start swatting at them, they'll get frustrated.

Stapleton said working with honey is relaxing and a form of therapy for him as well as a family get-together. A grandfather of seven grandchildren, he puts them to work bottling the honey and placing labels on the jars.

He said beekeepers talk to their bees, and "as long as the people in those little white suits don't pick us up and take us away, I reckon it's OK," he said.

Marvin Wynn, a 9-year-old who attended the fair, watched the bees swarm around in shock. He said, "I've never seen so many bees before."

Marvin's mother, Janice Wynn, said she's amazed how bees create honey and help pollinate the food people eat. Still, she stays away from them.

"I might fall down and cry if I saw this many bees at one time," she said, laughing.



Karen Sagun illustrations



X-RAY continued from Page CT3

even say that “low level” radiation is good for you.

The importance of X-rays to medicine from plain films to CT scans goes without saying. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration, however, has declared medical radiation a carcinogen. The question is, “How much is too much?”

What are patients to think, presuming they are fortunate enough to know anything about this in advance?

The leading theory of radiation safety is called “linear non-threshold,” which states in a nutshell that there is no safe dose. “In practice,” however, noted researchers in the British Journal of Radiology, there is a dose below which the risks are considered negligible. There are two competing theories, a “liberal” one and an “ultra-conservative” one.

Based on homeopathic medicine, the theory of hormesis says that although radiation is dangerous at high levels, it can be beneficial at low levels because there is an adaptive response to it. One of its proponents, Bernard Cohen of the University of Pittsburgh, published a well-known study on the safety of household radon that supports the theory. The implications, of course, are that current dosage protection standards can be safely relaxed. Despite some evidence for hormesis, it remains a minority position in physics and medicine.

Physician and medical physicist John Gofman leads the rival camp. Gofman isolated the first milligrams of plutonium. He counters with the assertion that regardless of whatever effects the adaptive response may produce, the radiogenic cancers eventually appear anyway.

Then, there is the bystander-effect model, which states that low-dose radiation may be even more harmful than proponents of linear non-threshold say. Although numerous recent studies support it, the bystander model also is in the minority.

In the May 26 issue of The Lancet medical journal, Richard Semelka, a radiologist at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine, wrote that “referring physicians in the emergency department are largely unaware that there are potential harmful effects from CT radiation exposure, with only 9 percent aware of increased cancer risk.” Nearly half of radiologists in the study were unaware of the nature of the risk, Semelka added.

Another physician survey, this one led by Howard Forman, vice chair of diagnostic radiology at Yale University, showed that only one in five of emergency room doctors could correctly estimate a CT dose. Almost half thought the dose was less than 10 times that of a standard chest X-ray.

“Providers’ ignorance of radiation dose may compromise their ability to assess CT’s risks and benefits and render them unable to communicate this information to their patients,” Forman said.

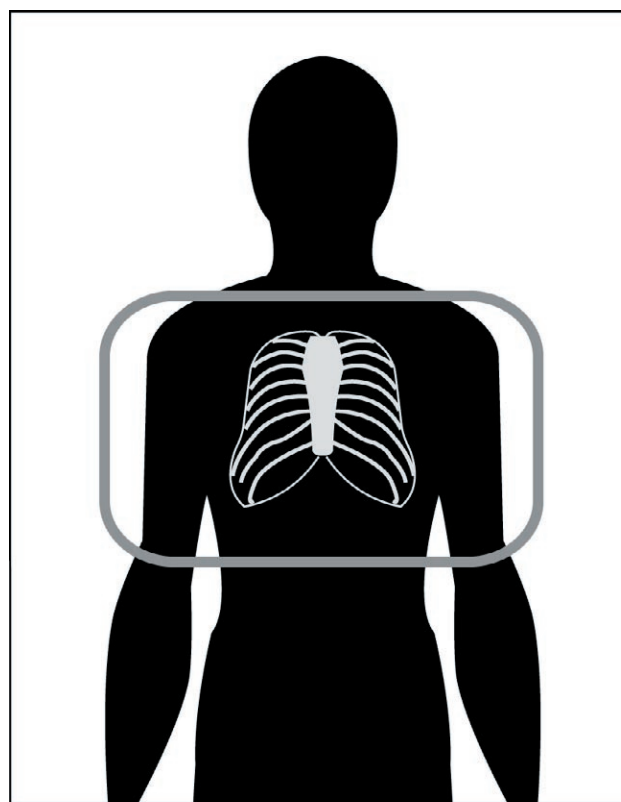
The concern is most acute in pediatrics. Five years ago, medical physicist David J. Brenner of Columbia University published findings that made the front page of USA Today. Unlike regular X-ray films, CT does not register overdosage on the image. Thus, wrote Lee F. Rogers, editor in chief of the American Journal of Roentgenology, “if a child has been overexposed when undergoing CT, it was most likely not done knowingly or intentionally; radiologists and radiologic technicians may simply be unaware of the potential for danger.”

These articles came to the attention of the FDA, which issued a “warning” to radiologists about the hazard. The journalism was hyperbolic, but two eminent pediatric radiologists commented that “although much of this initial fallout from the press coverage was negative... the public attention has had a positive effect” of reducing the dosage to children undergoing tests.

Since then, most scanner manufacturers have incorporated automatic procedures for reducing dose in smaller patients. Many older scanners, however, may still be in use, in which case a technician needs to know how to manually reduce the dosage.

“You can’t educate the patients if the physicians who are ordering the studies and the physicians who are performing the studies do not know the risks themselves.”

— Dr. Howard Forman,
Yale University School of Medicine



Karen Sagun illustration

But whether a child or an adult is the patient, carelessness in ordering the test remains a problem. S.C. Bushong’s textbook Radiologic Science for Technologists noted, “many X-ray examinations are knowingly requested when the yield of helpful information may be extremely low or non-existent. When such an examination is performed, the benefit in the patient in no way compensates for the radiation dose.”

In general, doses have increased with the newest technology, spiral or helical CT, which continuously moves the patients through a scanner that rotates around them. They result “in doses up to four times higher than that for a conventional CT scan,” notes the Web site for the Health Physics Society. “To achieve such a detailed and expansive feat, it is necessary to expose the entire thickness of the patient to a greater quantity of X-ray photons.”

The dosage from CT scans overlaps with the amount of radiation that increased cancer in atomic-bomb survivors, Brenner wrote. Other writers, though, have suggested that some of these survivors have outlasted peers who were not exposed. In an interview several years ago, the late Alice Stewart, a prominent radiation researcher, criticized these reports, saying, “Our paper also shows that the A-bomb survivors were not a normal, homogeneous population. They were the best athletes—the top 10 percent—and did not include the young and the old. This means that we cannot base standards of radiation safety on such an elite cohort.”

“There is a problem with the way CT is being practiced,” wrote Dr. Donald Frush of Duke University in the October 2003 Radiology.

“I do not think that we, as radiologists, have reached a sufficient consensus on what the risks and benefits are. How long do we believe the patient is at risk after CT? What constitutes low-level radiation imaging? There are, to date, very few answers.”

A recent study by Dr. Mannudeep Kalra of Massachusetts General Hospital showed that CT doses can, in many cases, be cut in half without sacrificing the diagnostic quality of the images.

“The greater the radiation exposure to the subjects, the more the likelihood of radiation-induced risk, such as cancer. If we can reduce radiation dose in even a quarter of these exams, we will benefit society immensely,” Kalra said.

The FDA also recommends reducing the number of multiple scans with contrast material and eliminating inappropriate referrals for CT.

“There is no mystery about how to reduce doses, technically. What is lacking is leadership,” Gofman wrote in a patient guide to X-rays. “If just a few thousand American radiologists would openly endorse the goal, their leadership... could reduce the average dose-level administered by other radiologists overnight.”

In The Journal of Korean Medical Science, Kalra wrote that “the aim of CT scanning is to obtain diagnostic-quality images with the lowest possible radiation exposure and not ‘pretty pictures’ at the cost of greater radiation than actually needed for the study.”

But in a telephone interview, a radiation safety officer at a university hospital stated radiologists want “nice pictures.” Just as one can take a photo from twenty or more feet away and recognize the person’s face, he said, one can take it from a foot or two away and get a more pleasing image. A radiologist can take a picture with less radiation and visualize a tumor, for example, but it is not as pleasing as the shot of it that requires more radiation. When asked if he thought this might be ethically questionable, he replied, “It may be, but who’s going to do anything about it?”

Minneapolis scientist J. Thomas Payne said we are at another crossroads.

“Radiologists, referring physicians, medical physicists, CT technologists, CT equipment manufacturers and regulators collectively need to evaluate the appropriateness of the radiation dose for different CT studies and get the word out to all facilities,” he wrote in Radiologic Clinics of North America.

What, then, are patients to conclude from all of this ignorance, apathy and controversy? On a practical level, they could do worse than to take Dr. Semelka’s advice regarding CT scans: “Think twice about getting two. Think three times about getting three.”

Thursday, October 5, 2006



Sports

Meredith Schram joins Rams aquatics programs

TRAYER MAYFIELD

Sports Writer

VCU has superb aquatic facilities and programs on campus, but Meredith Schram is now at the helm and plans to make it better.

The newly appointed aquatics coordinator is responsible for supervising lifeguards, coordinating swim lessons and scheduling recreational events like inner tube water polo and movie pool night.

Her position at VCU is her first job out of college.

Schram is the coordinator of activities on both campuses. She is adamant that students take advantage of the many recreational opportunities.

One of Schram's goals, she said, is to make sure students learn about and take advantage of these cool events.

"Students are bombarded with so many things offered to them that I think they sometimes overlook the (recreational) sports and aquatic program," said Schram. "My goal is to increase awareness about all the things we have to offer."

The Michigan native has always valued sports in general, even though recreational sports and aquatics were not always her top priority.

She graduated from Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo with a degree in sports marketing.

The degree was something she

enjoyed, and she even got an internship with a minor league ice hockey team. But it was not until Schram got a job with her school's recreational sports program as a graduate student she would ultimately change her outlook.

It was there that she found she liked the recreational sports coordinator lifestyle more than sports marketing.

"I enjoyed the excitement of sports marketing very much," Schram said. "But the hours were very long and there was very little interaction with other people because you were too busy running around getting things done."

"With the job I have now I am able to work more with people face to face."

After discovering what she likes, Schram pursued and received a graduate degree in recreation from Illinois State University.

From swim lessons to master stroke programs and inner tube water polo to movie pool night, many programs are offered at both the MCV Recreation and Aquatics Center and the Franklin Street Gym pool.

One day Schram would like to go back to school—students can only hope that "one day" is not any day soon.

Visit www.recsports.vcu.edu to find information and schedules about the programs offered.

COMMENTARY

Good guys going the way of the buffalo

MICHAEL DE SOTO

Associate Sports Editor

I grew up thinking the feel-good world of sports was here to distract us from the ugliness in a world at war. There is a kind of peace in this, I thought, watching children and those that never grow-up run around in homemade jerseys pretending to be Tom Brady, Ken Griffey Jr., Kobe, Michael, Shaq or Dr. J.

These are the good guys after all. In this world the weak and virtuous triumph and all are created equal—even if they don't start out that way in real life.

I remember prancing around in my Superman pajamas pretending to be a superstar mix of Mark Rypien, Darrell Green and Art Monk. It was Washington's tour de force, my good guys. I would run the backyard—and the living room when the parents were not home—with number 23 as my cape.

At some point, I can't remember when, that bright world of goodness simply imploded.

What happened? Where are the days that sportsmanship trumped the outcome, and battles were fought on frozen tundra? When did all that change?

Sure, it's naive to think that things were always good and happy. One of my first football cards was a 1988 Topps Dexter Manley and I remember my dad carefully explaining that football players were people just like the rest of us. They had problems just like us too. Manley's was a drug problem. But his struggles were rare it seemed. And if he wasn't the only one, he was a rare one.

And then I woke up.

Dallas Cowboy Nate Newton was caught attempting for moving weed. Twice actually, for a grand total nearly

388 pounds all up. Teammate Michael Irving got sent up for cocaine and solicitation a couple times. Dallas Cowboys are notorious for these sorts of misdeeds so this should not be a shock to anyone.

New York Yankees Darrell Strawberry and Doc Gooden, two good guys of the game, went to jail for similar cocaine-related offenses.

There is the Latrell Sprewell choke, and the Ron Artest fan brawl. Then there's Hall of Fame running back OJ Simpson and scum-sucker Rae Carruth. Only one of these two double-murderers got locked up. Where's the justice in that?

Did Lance Armstrong cheat? We know 2006 Tour De France "winner" Floyd Landis did.

Good guy Sammy Sosa corked his bat and allegedly used steroids. Good guy Raphael Palmeiro was tossed out of baseball for testing positive. Good guy Mark McGuire never was caught. But that good guy never said he didn't. In fact, that good guy made himself look like a fool in front of Congress earlier this year by refusing to answer questions one way or the other. I suppose McGuire could have taken the easy way out and lied like Palmeiro. It does not matter. He still cheated.

Barry Bonds—what about Bonds? Folks, let's get real here. Bonds was never a good guy and he never pretended that he was. But Bonds is a cheat too. Just like Jose Canseco. Just like Albert Belle.

Bonds should take a clue from those two hotshots and make a quick exit. Don't look back.

But who knows what will happen to Bonds? He could pull a Pete Rose and write a book. We have not heard the last from him, that I assure you.

Just recently five Duquesne basketball players were shot, one in the head, outside a dance because they talked to the wrong girl. What a world!

There was the father on the sideline that clotheslined a kid playing pee-wee football. We'll never know the reason for that. And every year a handful of little league level umpires are attacked for making a bad call.

In the pro ranks, Tennessee Titan Albert Haynesworth was suspended only five games for kicking an opponent's helmet off during a game last week, then stomping down on his face with metal cleats.

His bloodied opponent, Dallas Cowboy Andre Gurode, needed nearly 30 stitches for his face to get put back together.

Good guy skipper Frank Robinson is out in Washington. Narcissistic Terrell Owens is back in Dallas. He's back to doing what it is that Terrell Owens does best: Loving Terrell Owens.

It is much too much. There is only so much "blah" one can digest. I want graceful losers and athletes that don't whine. No more training camp holdouts, no more negotiating contracts in the media.

I want teams that play to win, but also play for the kids in the stands.

Twenty million American kids register to play sports every year according to the National Alliance for Sports. Of those, 70 percent quit by the time they turn 13 years old.

I'm not saying that these good guys turned bad are responsible for kids dropping out. I'm saying that we have a limited time to make the right kind of impression on them.

Where have all the good guys gone?



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Sports In Brief

Field Hockey

VCU's field hockey team has had it rough lately.

They have dropped nine straight season games including all three of their Colonial Athletic Association games to date.

There is still a chance for the Rams to resurrect their season, but they need the help of a boisterous audience to get them going.

Friday, the team faces conference foe Old Dominion University at 6 p.m. at Cary Street Field.

VCU students are admitted free with a valid student ID.

Golf

On Wednesday, VCU finished last place out of 15 at the end of the Ping/Golfweek Preview they hosted.

They ended 46 over par, behind Minnesota who finished 14th at 34 over par.

VCU's Jens Fahrbring (Sollentuna, Sweden) led the Rams with eight over 218 and just barely got into the upper half of the scores, placing 34th.

Sunday, October 8th VCU is going to Durham, N.C. for the Coca-Cola Duke Golf Classic.

News & Notes

Wizards to play Siegel Saturday

The Washington Wizards arrived in Richmond Tuesday morning to begin a weeklong training camp at the Siegel Center.

Camp will break following a scrimmage Saturday night. Admission to the 4 p.m. scrimmage is free and open to the public. The team will meet with fans after the game.

This is the third straight

year the Wizards have held training camp on campus.

The team appears ready to bounce back from last year's first-round playoff series lost to the Cleveland Cavaliers. The Wizards' three best players, Gilbert Arenas, Caron Butler and Antawn Jamison each took individual steps in the off-season to boost their performance this season.

Starting guard Arenas spent most of the summer in a self-imposed boot camp, working

out with a military trainer in San Francisco. Forward Butler changed his diet, shedding 10 pounds from last season's playing weight, and forward Jamison told the Washington Post he was determined to correct his "bad performance" a year ago.

"Last year we lost a lot of close basketball games," Jamison said. "That's not acceptable. We have what it takes to win a lot of basketball games if we do the right

things. To me, anything less than 50 wins would be a disappointment."

The Wizards begin their eight-game preseason schedule after they depart VCU Sunday. The preseason begins at home Oct. 9 against the Toronto Raptors in the Verizon Center, and they start the regular season Nov. 1 at Cleveland.

The Wizards' home opener is Nov. 4 against the Boston Celtics.

Alumni First: two in MLB postseason

Two VCU standouts are one step closer to the big league dream of a World Series title this week, as Major League Baseball plays the opening round of the postseason.

Brandon Inge, the Detroit Tigers starting third baseman, batted .253 this season with a .463 slugging percentage with 27 home runs.

Inge went 1-4, hitting .250 in the first game of the

American League Divisional Series against the New York Yankees, scoring on a fifth-inning Placido Polanco double to right.

Detroit is down 0-1 in the best of five series against the New York Yankees.

Game two is at 8 p.m. Friday in Detroit.

Cla Meredith, the San Diego Padres' middle reliever and setup-man, went 5-1 this year. The side-armed right-hander set a team record by pitching 35 1/3 consecutive scoreless innings this season

in what some fans call one of the greatest seasons ever for a San Diego pitcher.

Opponents hit just .207 against Meredith this year and he struck out 37 in 50.2 innings of work. He had an impressive 1.07 earned run average, the lowest ERA among pitchers with at least 50 innings on the mound.

Meredith didn't even begin the season on San Diego's roster, making his performance this year even more impressive.

He was briefly recalled in

May from Triple-A affiliate Portland to fill a spot left by injured Woody Williams before being placed on the Padres' permanent 25-man roster in July.

Because set-up men do not typically pitch in lopsided games, Meredith did not pitch in San Diego's 5-1 loss to the Saint Louis Cardinals in the first game National League Divisional Series on Tuesday.

Game two of the NLDS begins tonight at 4 p.m. in Saint Louis.

Barkley and friends boost VCU coffers

For 12-years Charles Barkley has held a Celebrity Golf tournament to raise money for the VCU SportCenter and athletics scholarship fund.

This year, the 11-time NBA All-Star and aspiring politico raised \$41,000 for the school, the largest in the tournament's history.

The tournament was played as

classes began this fall and featured notable personalities including Virginia born hall-of-fame center Moses Malone, former Washington Wizard and ESPN commentator Tim Legler, sports reporter David Aldridge, Super Bowl champions Mark Collins and Toi Cook and Virginia graduate and retired Denver Nugget guard Bryant Stith.

The annual tournament is held at Hunting Hawk Golf Course in Glen Allen.

Local skipper to pilot big league club

MIAMI, Fla. – The Florida Marlins fired manager Joe Girardi Tuesday. Five hours later the team introduced Fredi Gonzalez, former manager of the Richmond Braves, as their new skipper.

Gonzalez lead the R-Braves to a 75-67 record in 2002, before spending the past four seasons as third-base coach for the Atlanta Braves.

The Cuban-born 42 year old had

interviewed with the Marlins a year ago, but finished runner-up to Girardi.

He inherits a club that finished a disappointing 78-84 this season and is just three years removed from a World Series title.

Gonzalez joins Grady Little, the Los Angeles Dodgers manager, as the only R-Braves alums to be at the helm of a big league ball club.

He has spent a majority of his 20-year baseball career playing and coaching in the minor leagues.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Field Hockey

Fri. Oct. 6
vs. Old Dominion, 6 p.m.

Sun. Oct. 8
at Drexel, 12 p.m.

Golf

Sun.-Mon. Oct. 8-9
Coca Cola Duke Golf
Classic
Durham, N.C.

Women's soccer

Fri. Oct. 6
at Old Dominion, 7 p.m.

Sun. Oct. 8
at William & Mary, 12:30
p.m.

Women's tennis

Thu.-Sun. Oct. 5-8
ITA All-American
Pacific Palisades, Calif.

Men's soccer

Fri. Oct. 6
vs. Old Dominion, 7 p.m.

Sun. Oct. 8
vs. William & Mary, 2
p.m.

Men's tennis

Thu. Oct. 5-Mon. Oct. 8
ITA All-American
Tulsa, Ok.

Volleyball

Fri. Oct. 6
vs. Delaware, 7 p.m.

Sat. Oct. 7
vs. Towson, 7 p.m.

Cross country

Sat. Oct. 7
Greensboro Invitational
Greensboro, N.C.

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Spectrum

David Sedaris takes the stand at the Landmark

KATIE PUGH

Spectrum Editor

The Landmark Theater was filled with the young and old as folks from Richmond and beyond came to see David Sedaris on his lecture tour Tuesday night. Sedaris was being presented by the University of Richmond's Modlin Center for the Arts and was sponsored by the Steven Barclay Agency.

Sedaris, a rather inoffensive-looking man with a high, almost nasally voice, did not look intimidating or overly academic as he took to the stage in front of the almost packed theater. This is one of the first of Sedaris' lecture tour, which he started Saturday and will reach about 35 states.

"They call it a lecture series, but all I do is read out loud," he joked to the audience.

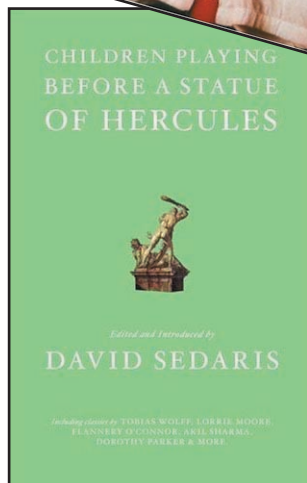
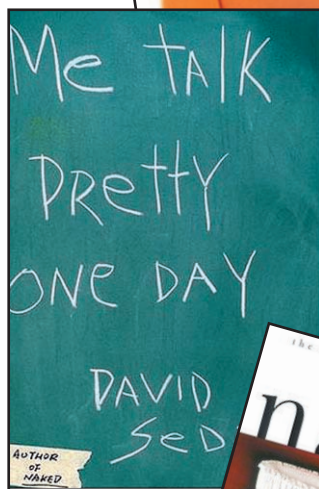
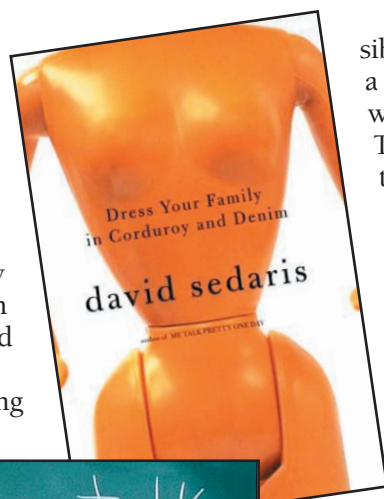
With a command of the English language that was almost dauntingly equipped with wit and casual turns of phrase, Sedaris captured the audience with three stories he had written specifically for the tour.

The first story was one in which he recounted becoming enamored with bringing up stories he had read in newspapers during conversations.

One particular story that he brought up in different company was about a man whose house was infested with mice and the untimely end of his property when one of the mice that was chased into a pile of leaves and set on fire ran back inside. The story was absolutely fantastic for him...until he realized that for several conversations he had been convoluting the facts.

The story, while very simple, was profound as Sedaris commented on how everyone makes stories somehow their own, even when they are as simple as things read in the paper.

The next story was about when he was a child growing up with his many



siblings and having to deal with Mrs. Peacock, a horrendous sitter the children had to deal with during their mother's trip out of town. The bulbous Southern woman, with "hair the color of margarine" and skin a Vaseline hue broken only by the rather precarious black hairs between her shoulders – which she argued against their disgust, saying, "Ya'll's got the same damn things; they just ain't poked out yet" – is the bane of seven long days.

The last story, "All the Beauty You Will Ever Need," was a piece in which Sedaris talks at length about his life as a homosexual. Again, his caustic humor came out as he recounted a conversation with

an ignorant woman during a drug deal.

"So, this boyfriend," she had said, alluding to the man he was with at the time. "Which one of you is the woman?"

"Well, neither of us is," he said in a slow, condescending voice. "That's why it's a homosexual couple."

He thanked the audience after a strong round of applause following the stories.

"You never know if these things will work," he said, describing the never-before-released pieces. "So that's nice."

After about half an hour of talking about random things like his travels around the world to such places like Tokyo and Thailand (where the writer was arrested for throwing his cigarette butt in the street), Sedaris opened up the floor to a few questions regarding his life and opinions, even in politics.

"I would never trust a candidate who runs on a campaign to 'protect our children.' I mean, who is for slaughtering them?"

When the show finished, there were at least four lines looping through the Landmark of people getting ready for signings. Whoever thought a man who never learned to drive a car, never had a computer for use beyond a typewriter and could only type with one finger would ever make it so far as an experienced and well-loved writer and speaker?

Black.White. lacks color

PAUL RADABAUGH

Staff Writer

I swear, John Howard Griffin would be spinning in his grave if he saw what was released on DVD just last month.

Don't know who John Howard Griffin was? He was the journalist who wrote the internationally-renowned book "Black like me", which was published in the early '60s. The book follows his experiences as a black man traveling through the South in 1959. Did I mention that he was white? Yes, with judicious use of dyes, a drug normally used to treat vitiligo (Michael Jackson's skin affliction) and a UV lamp, he managed to effectively transform himself into a black man. He thought that becoming black would be the only way that a white person could understand what it was to be black. And we're talking about the Deep South at a time when racial relations were not exactly at their healthiest.

Now, fast forward a little over 40 years later and move to a nice part of Los Angeles and you'll find the show "Black.White." which premiered on FX last March. The brainchild of R.J. Cutler and Ice Cube (an authority on race relations if I've ever seen one), "Black.White." is supposed to examine racial relations between white and black people by slathering two families in mediocre makeup, setting them up to clash, milking every conflict for all it's worth, misrepresenting what actual racism is and equating idiocy with enlightenment. At least, that's what comes out of it.

It can be hard to tell what was intended, aside from some shallow attempt to deliver "edutainment." The show was hyped on Oprah before its release. It was built up

BLACK.WHITE. continued to Page CT14

An evening with Chucky & Don



Friday, October 6th

VCU Temple Building Auditorium
901 West Main Street, Room 1164

7:30 pm - writer/director Don Mancini speaking

8:00 pm - **Bride of Chucky**

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Spectrum

Cellist and keyboardist Heather McIntosh lends her vocal contribution (above) while frontman Andrew Rieger rocks out (below.)

Cynthia K. Merchant photos

Richmond experiences a little Elf Power

VIRGINIA TA

Associate Spectrum Editor

On Tuesday night, Richmond welcomed back the psychedelic sounds of folk rock band Elf Power. Making their first appearance in Richmond in 10 years, Elf Power took to the stage at the Hyperlink Café where a large crowd came out to support the Georgia native rockers.

The band, whose lineup has changed over the years, currently features seven members that play everything from the guitar to the clarinet to the accordion, with frontman Andrew Rieger leading with vocals.

Elf Power, who recently released its seventh album "Back To The Web," opened up their show in Richmond with several of their new songs, including "Come Lie Down With Me," whose haunting melody showcases Rieger's resonating lyrics and vocals.

"This (album) is a little folkier and a little more textured and orchestral," Rieger said about their new album. "The couple albums before it were more straight ahead rock records but this one is like an orchestrated folk album."

Elf Power, who conceived its name as simply as its music is complex—"I saw it written in the concrete of a restaurant in Athens and I just liked the way it sounded," Rieger shared. Elf Power takes new and uncharted chances with "Back To The Web," definitely adopting a more folk rock sound. Rieger, who is an avid record collector, said that the band draws upon a lot of the music of the late '60s to mid '70s for inspiration, though he admits that he's "a big fan of different kinds of music."

When asked about current musical influences, Rieger immediately mentioned the three-piece Japanese band Boris and British folk band The 18thday of May, proving that Elf Power,



who has toured through Europe and Japan, isn't just your typical Southern bred band.

At their show Tuesday night, Elf Power seemed excited to share their new evolved style, with Rieger thanking the crowd for coming out to see them before the show commenced. For the packed audience of both new and old fans, everyone seemed just as anxious to experience a little Elf Power.

Unlike other current day bands, for the members of Elf Power, who formed in 1994 and has spent the last 12 years making music and building a cult-like fan base all over the world, money is the last thing on their minds when it comes to how they define success.

"We're not making a million dollars but we make a living off of playing music, people like to hear our albums, and we get to tour all over the world," Reiger said. "I consider that to be success."

Thursday, October 5, 2006

commonwealthtimes.com • CT13



Unearth rocks hard at the NORVA

SIMI ABROL
Staff Writer

Metal enthusiasts lined up in front of the NORVA last week to see the freshest hardcore band to hit the scene: Unearth, who was on the Sanctity of Brothers Tour. This was the first tour the Massachusetts natives are headlining with bands such as Animosity, Bleeding Through, and Through the Eyes of the Dead. Trevor Phipps, 29 and lead singer of Unearth, was excited to be in Norfolk. After more than 13 years, the band had been waiting for moments like these.

When Unearth came out to play at the NORVA, the audience went crazy. Drummer Mike Justari had so much energy from start to finish, while guitarists Ken Susi and Buz McGrath were like art in motion. The intricate bass lines played by John Maggard set the beat for some major thrashing. Unearth's hardcore sound is innovative and is going to live among their legendary influences, such as Pantera and Naglfar.

Signed on with Metal Blade Records, Unearth had been touring with its new album "III: In the Eyes of Fire" with the hit single, "Giles," inspired by the brutal story of a Puritan farmer who was crushed under rocks in order to save his son from being killed. Meanwhile, the new album is different from Unearth's previous releases. III is pure metal instrumental.

With such tiny living conditions in their tour bus, it's easy to see how difficult life with the band must be.

"With all the guys on here all the time, I need time to myself, too," Phipps said.

The band members also have to be grateful to their fans and the support they've gotten. The MySpace revolution has brought them a wider range of listeners and helps them keep in touch with their fans and fellow metal heads.

For aspiring musicians, Phipps said they should "keep trucking."



BLACK.WHITE. continued from Page CT11

as if it would be some sort of grand sociological experiment that would foster positive race relations in America for years to come. Step into someone else's shoes, greater love through empathy, et cetera. Sure, in the previews the dad looked more like he was from Calcutta than Harlem, but come on—Oprah!

As noble as the basic idea might be, "Black.White." bombs at educating and, for the most part, at entertaining. The racial switcheroo yields something of interest, but the show can't be sustained by that gimmick alone.

As for really learning what it's like to be a member of another race? You might learn that sometimes people make debatably racist comments, that some people don't know the difference between innate and learned behavior or that a fake white guy might be treated differently than a real black man

when buying shoes (although we can't be sure), but you won't see the point of view. Instead, you'll walk smack dab into racial stereotypes that are validated by the members of those races as racial habit. So much for education.

Speaking of education, VCU had the black father, Brian Sparks, and the white father, Bruno Marcotulli, speak before the students on "issues of race," because being a low-grade celebrity from a TV miniseries entitles you to enter the lecture circuit as an authority on whatever subject the show was about.

At the end of the day, however, there's only one thing that can be said about the "Black.White." DVD: It'll set you back about 30 bucks. If you do end up spending the money, you can at least be comforted in knowing that the university probably paid a bit more to have Sparks and Marcotulli speak.

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The Dour Daoist



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Some people were not pleased with their horoscopes last week. You nasty people, you. So, this week, we're going to play a game of chance and see what your horoscope ends up being. Just grab a d6 (that's a normal game dice, for those of you who aren't complete dorks) and give it a whirl! Amaze your friends! Be a tool and post them on your blog of choice!

A. Find your Zodiac:

LIBRA | Sept. 23- Oct. 22

SCORPIO | Oct. 23- Nov. 21

SAGITTARIUS | Nov. 22-Dec. 21

CAPRICORN | Dec. 22-Jan. 19

AQUARIUS | Jan. 20-Feb 18

PISCES | Feb. 19-March 20

ARIES | March 21-April 19

TAURUS | April 20-May 20

GEMINI | May 21-June 20

CANCER | June 21-July 22

LEO | July 23- Aug. 22

VIRGO | Aug. 23-Sept. 22

B. Okay, down to the hard parts. You feel like you are in a _____ period, presently.

1. Stupid
2. Translucent
3. Contemplative
4. Ridiculous
5. Infuriating
6. ADD

C. But don't worry! Good things are ahead in the form of a(n) _____.

1. Dollar you forgot was in that pocket
2. Extra packet of ramen
3. Cheap horoscope in the Independent Student Press of Virginia Commonwealth University
4. Exam you didn't see coming (you lucked out!)
5. CD in the \$10 bin
6. All-American Rejects Tour next Tuesday

D. Careful, though. Pushing too hard for what you want will result in _____.

1. Second-degree burns
2. An untimely visit from the parents, who are not bringing you money
3. A leaky can of soda in your bag
4. The flu
5. Your car/bike/transportation of choice breaking down
6. A backed-up toilet

E. Just to be safe, you should probably avoid _____ until the next real issue of Dour Daoist.

1. Sugar packets
2. Elderly people
3. Envelopes
4. Alouette spreadable cheese
5. Frogs
6. Underpants



Classifieds

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Comics

Pizza From Scratch

Bill Lemmond

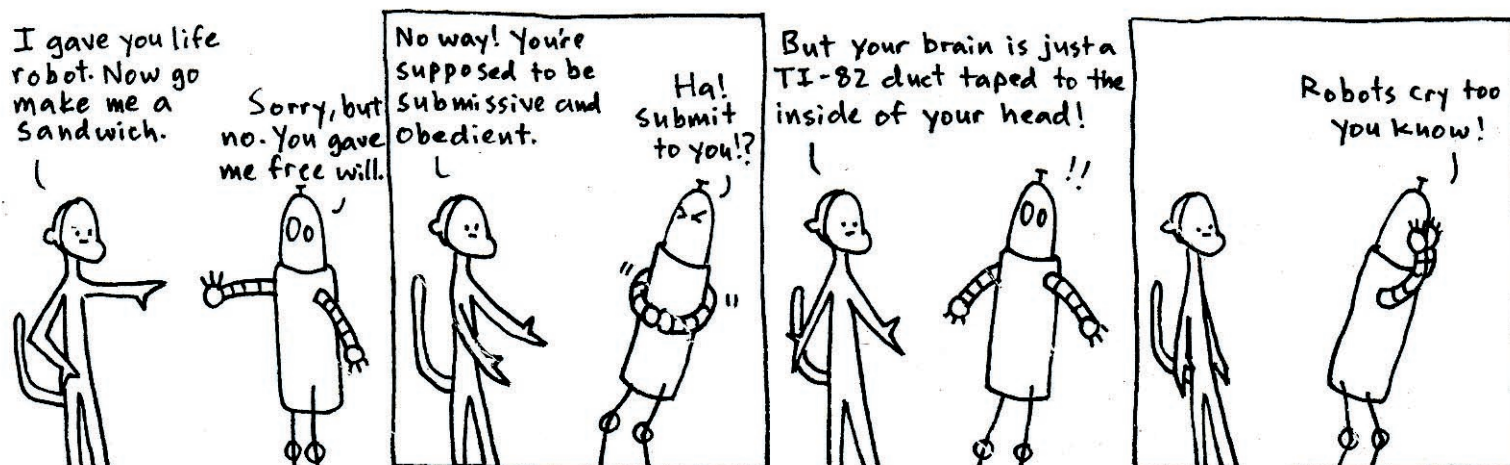
THINK ABOUT IT! GIVEN HOW THEY DEFEND THEMSELVES, WHY'D OTHERS BE FLEEING FROM A SHOWDOWN BETWEEN MONKEYS IN ASSLESS CHAPS?



A GAME OF (KUNG-POO) CHICKEN? NO ONE BUT FM WANTS TO RISK A WIDE THROW. *W. III*

Digits

Geoffrey Cook



Comics

Clockstoppers

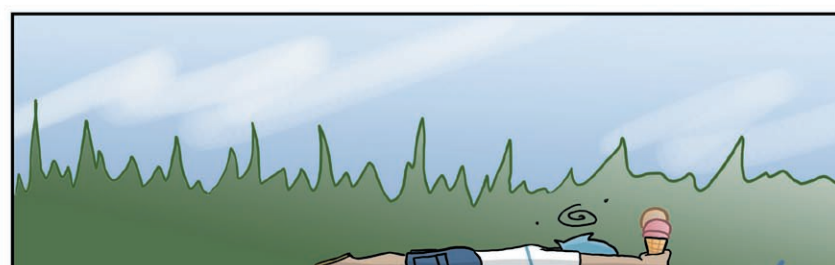
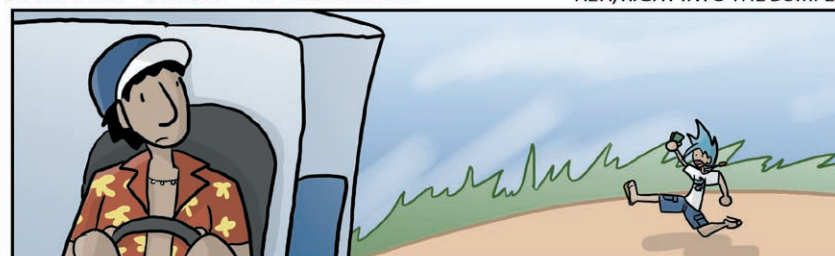
Cobb Dixon



Blue and Blond

Chris Malone

BLUE AND BLOND BY CHRIS MALONE HEH, RIGHT INTO THE BUMPER



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Chris Malone

Thursday, October 5, 2006

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Opinion

In Brief

Quitters

The Virginia General Assembly ended its special session last week without a solution for Virginia's transportation needs. In refusing to compromise, the House of Delegates blocked any chance of progress until the next statewide elections are held in 2007.

The debate centered over the ideologically charged debate of whether to raise taxes. While there is an argument for fiscal responsibility, it is not responsible to ignore an aging transportation funding regime that hasn't been overhauled since the 1980s.

Among the projects awaiting funding are high-speed rail between Washington and Newport News, as well as the widening of I-64 from Richmond to Hampton Roads – infrastructure improvements that would have been ideal to have in place for the influx of tourists expected for the 400th anniversary of the Jamestown settlement next year.

Who knows how bad traffic will have to get before the problem becomes painfully obvious? Let's hope anti-progress legislators are forced to quit the General Assembly altogether Election Day next year.

Hastert should resign

STEPHEN HICKS

Opinion writer

The Republicans are experiencing a mighty stroke of bad luck lately.

According to intelligence reports, the Iraqi conflict is not making the world safer. Sen. George Allen, once a presidential prospect, is fighting for his incumbency. Now, to make things worse, a Florida representative is under investigation after being accused of engaging in explicit communications with an underage page. On top of that, Speaker of the House Rep. Dennis Hastert, R-Illinois, allegedly ignored his fellow Republicans' deeds until now.

The Congressman under investigation, Rep. Mark Foley, R-Florida,

has resigned from his seat. Now, Hastert should follow. The resignation is needed to restore integrity to the Republican Party. These two men seemed to have exercised bad judgment. Foley allegedly sent explicit instant messages to an underage page, and Hastert allegedly knew and did nothing.

Foley's lawyer, David Roth, said in a news conference that Foley was molested as a child and is gay. Somehow that is used for justification, yet when did homosexuality equate to pedophilia? There's no doubt Foley needs help.

It's obvious this scandal can very well jeopardize the outcome of the November elections, yet the American people need to depend on their politicians to be

held accountable.

Hastert should suck it up. Resigning is nothing new when such a blunder is made. The same thing happened in 2002 when Sen. Trent Lott, R-Mississippi, made a statement honoring former segregationist Strom Thurmond while somehow implying if Thurmond was president "we wouldn't have had all these problems over all these years."

Lott stepped down as Senate majority leader amid the controversy and Tennessee Sen. Bill Frist took his place.

Taking note from history, Hastert, the honorable speaker, needs to promptly step down. This is another event marked as a bad time for Republicans. Each day that passes, more and more Americans will lose faith in Republicans as being the honest party of this nation that exemplifies family values.

Your Turn *Letters to the Editor*



MySpace safety

In concern over the recent controversies over the online community MySpace, there is some evidence showing that the site itself is not fully responsible for dangerous happenings orchestrated online. MySpace advertises as a "place for friends" and also features safety tips for users and their parents. These guidelines suggest safety procedures that include being truthful, keeping in mind that the domain is viewable to the public and reporting any misuse of the site.

Members also have the option to hide their profile and pictures so that only approved visitors may view them. It even goes as far as to say profiles with untrue information will be removed.

Simply put, these instructions result in a safer Web site. If they were followed, members would not meet their strictly online "buddies" and would not be put into a dangerous situation.

The fact that some girls – including the ones raped in Chicago, or the one who flew to Jordan to meet her online boyfriend – use the site to meet men is

just an unlucky blemish for the online community. If MySpace were not available for these individuals, they would find another method to meet people. There have been similar incidents for many years, but the victim and predator met through different means.

Myspace cannot monitor all dodgy communications, so it is inevitable that there are going to be some slip-ups in the system. There are millions of people registered with MySpace, and most of them operate in a safe manner and therefore have a safe experience. The user is the one who determines what level of security they want to put to use.

Due to the suggestions and the best efforts the monitors can provide, the site has great potential to be safe. But because there are users who do not abide by these rules, they themselves make it unsafe.

As long as a member practices the recommended safety procedures – mainly not to meet other members face-to-face – the site operates on a very safe level.

– Bailey Alder

Dining dilemma

The newly remodeled Shafer Court Dining Center catches the eye with state-of-the-art interior design that is supposed to emphasize the quality of the various foods it has to offer.

But recently, people have been complaining about the quality of the food at Shafer, saying that the food has been the cause of stomachaches and viruses. A number of students also say that the food is sometimes cold and undercooked and that the dishes are not clean. One student in particular even found a maggot in her salad. What could be more repulsive than that?

The dining meal plans for students living on campus range reach up to \$1,600 per semester. The amount of dining dollars and meal swipes vary depending on the meal plan that you choose. Most students end up using all of their dining dollars because they don't enjoy eating the food at Shafer.

Students are paying too much money for such low-quality food.

– Timala Stewart

the commonwealthtimes

The independent student press of VCU

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Interim Opinion Editor



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