



the **qt**

**MONDAY**  
OCTOBER 9, 2006  
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**FREE**

**commonwealthtimes.com**

# Against the odds



In the face of **HIV**,  
husband and wife  
**make marriage work**

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stinks up  
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The independent student press of Virginia Commonwealth University





# Briefs

## WEATHER

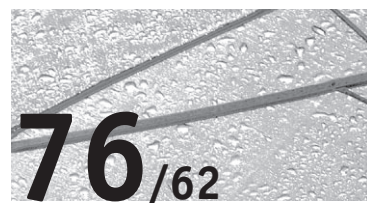
### MONDAY



### TUESDAY



### WEDNESDAY



### THURSDAY



## Correction

From Thursday's issue

### In News

- Our Oct. 5 story on Virginia's Oct. 10 voter registration deadline incorrectly listed Election Day, Nov. 7, as being "less than one month away." This should have read, "one month and two days."

Cover graphic:  
Karen Sagun

## IN THE NEWS

compiled from wire reports

### WORLD

**BEIJING** – North Korea's main ally, China, joined Japan in sending a strong message Sunday that a nuclear test by the North "cannot be tolerated." Pyongyang appeared to back down from its threat as an important anniversary passed without any sign of nuclear activity.

The estranged neighbors, holding their first summit in five years, put aside their differences over visits by the Japanese prime minister's predecessor to a Tokyo war shrine to issue a joint warning to North Korea.

The common ground Japan and China found over North Korea came as a South Korean politician said a North Korean nuclear test was not imminent and the North was ready to drop its plans if Washington engaged in direct talks.

The United States has refused to meet

with North Korea outside of stalled negotiations including the Koreans, the United States, Japan, China and Russia. Washington has said it would have bilateral talks with North Korea only in the context of those six-party talks.

North Korea announced last week that it would conduct a nuclear weapons test. Though the North has long claimed to have nuclear weapons, the test would be the first incontestable proof of its capabilities.

Analysts had speculated that North Korea might test as early as Sunday because it often uses anniversaries or other international events to stage provocations.

Sunday was the ninth anniversary of North Korean leader Kim Jong Il's appointment as head of the Korean Workers' Party. Tuesday will be the 61st anniversary of the party's founding.

### NATION

**WASHINGTON** – An Iowa company is recalling about 5,200 pounds of ground beef products distributed from seven states because they could be contaminated with a dangerous strain of E. coli, the government said Friday.

The meat is suspected of having the same E. coli strain responsible for three deaths in the recent outbreak of contaminated spinach. The government said no illnesses have been reported from consumption of the beef subject to the recall.

Jim's Market and Locker Inc. of Harlan, Iowa, produced the ground beef patties and packages Aug. 31 and Sept. 1 and sent them to distributors in Iowa, Geor-

gia, Massachusetts, Nebraska, New York, Texas and Wisconsin, and to one retail establishment in Iowa, said the U.S. Food Safety and Inspection Service.

Customers who bought the products affected by the voluntary recall should return them to the place of purchase, the service said.

E. coli lives in the intestines of cattle and other animals and typically is linked to contamination by fecal material. It's believed responsible for about 60 deaths and 73,000 infections a year in the United States. The potentially deadly strain can cause bloody diarrhea and dehydration.

Each package in the latest recall bears the establishment number "Est. 2424" inside the USDA mark of inspection.

### STATE & LOCAL

**RICHMOND** – For the past five years, Sen. George Allen has failed to tell Congress about stock options he got for his work as a director of a high-tech company. The Republican also asked the Army to help another business that gave him similar options.

Congressional rules require senators to disclose to the Senate all deferred compensation, such as stock options. The rules also urge senators to avoid taking any official action that could benefit them financially or appear to do so.

Those requirements exist so the public

can police lawmakers for possible conflicts of interest, especially involving companies with government business that lawmakers can influence.

Allen's stock options date to the period from January 1998 to January 2001 when Allen was between political jobs and had plunged into the corporate world.

In interviews, Allen and his staff sought to play down his corporate dealings, saying they were a good learning experience but did not lead to extraordinary riches—except for a quarter-million-dollar windfall from Com-Net Ericsson stock.

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## Stench slows Medical Center operations

**PAT KANE**  
Managing Editor

Several people at VCU Medical Center were sickened Friday morning by a strong odor. A chemical smell from an industrial operation in Shockoe Bottom spread across much of the downtown area by foul weather.

The hospitals canceled elective surgeries in the morning, said Anne Buckley of University News Service. Several staffers were treated and released for headaches and nausea. The emergency room and other operations were not affected, Buckley said.

Lt. Keith Vida, spokesman for Richmond Fire and Emergency Services, said the skunk-like smell was a byproduct of methyl mercaptan. RECO Biotechnology was incinerating several truckloads of sludge containing mercaptan, an additive whose strong smell makes natural gas leaks easier to detect. Wind and rain carried

the smell throughout the city.  
"A little bit goes a long way. Once it started



Karen Sagun illustration

spreading you could smell it all over the downtown area," Vida said.

There had been problems with the incineration before, but only in the immediate area of Hospital Street and Valley Road. It didn't pose a threat in the concentration released, he said.

"It's not harmful unless you're dealing with the pure chemical," Vida said. "All it was really was a smell. People react differently."

Vida said they received many calls for natural gas leaks. Only someone who worked with the chemical frequently could tell the slight difference in odor.

"For people that work with it on a daily basis, they said it had more of an oniony smell to it. For everyone else it smells like natural gas," he said.

The company sent the offending sludge to another facility in Chesterfield County and does not plan to incinerate more sludge in the downtown location, Vida said.

## VCU Career Fair paid off for former student

**PAUL GENTILE**  
Contributing Writer

Three years ago, Greg Moody walked into the University Student Commons looking for a job.

Moody was among hundreds of students seeking an internship at the VCU Career Fair, where dozens of potential employers eagerly awaited students armed with resumes and dressed their best.

Moody's visit to the fair resulted in an internship with Philip Morris USA working in chemical engineering.

Four years later, Moody is a senior business analyst with Philip Morris and on Oct. 11, when the career fair returns to VCU, Moody will be there. This time, however, he will be on the other side of the poster board and table. Moody will be an employer trying to help some eager student find his way into an internship.

Moody said his switch from student to employer was very rewarding.

"It's very self-fulfilling," he said. "When I was a student, the weight

of the entire world was lifted off my shoulders when I finally landed my first internship. Now, I get to help another student feel the same way."

Moody said grabbing his first internship was crucial because it finally gave him experience employers seek in students after graduation.

"Companies and businesses see you have initiative, and that will take you a long way," he said.

Haley Sims, a VCU career counselor, agrees that an internship or a co-op are important during a student's college career.

"The career fair is a great way for students to get experience now and put it on their resume so that it will help them in the future," Sims said.

Sims said she and other career counselors have been helping students prepare for the fair through workshops that include resume-builders, an alumni panel and how to prepare and dress for an interview.

Moody said one of the most important things to do is get background information about a company.

"If you read the mission statement,

then say, 'I read your mission statement, and my values run with yours,' then the company knows that you are interested in just them and not just interested in getting a job anywhere," he said. "Employers will be impressed and like you more."

Vishal Kumar, a junior finance major, said he attended last year's career fair without preparation. He regrets doing so.

"I wasn't ready to network with anyone," he recalls. "I didn't have a good quality resume, and I wasn't dressed right. I didn't research anyone, so employers seemed to look down on that."

Kumar said he will attend some of the workshops so that he can find an internship.

He stressed the value of the career fair. He said a lot of students have a "safety net" mentality of always having their futures set out for them. He said once they graduate, however, they do not know what to do.

"This is the only way for most students to get their first foot in the door," Kumar said.

### VCU Fall 2006 Career Fair

Wednesday, Oct. 11,  
10 a.m. - 3 p.m. in the  
University Student Commons,  
Commonwealth Ballroom

More information about  
workshops can be found at:

[www.students.vcu.edu/careers/documents/Fa112006programsfinal1.pdf](http://www.students.vcu.edu/careers/documents/Fa112006programsfinal1.pdf)

Students may register for  
the career fair at the Career  
Connections Web page at:

[www.students.vcu.edulcareers](http://www.students.vcu.edulcareers)





# A boy, a girl, a virus

...and the relationship  
that happened anyway



**GAYLAND HETHCOAT**  
News Co-Editor

At age 11 in the 1980s, Waynesboro native Shawn Decker was expelled from school not because of something he had done but because of who he was: a carrier of HIV, the precursor to AIDS.

Like more than 10,000 others in the U.S., Decker was infected with the virus by contaminated blood products he used as a hemophiliac, a person whose body cannot adequately control bleeding.

"One treatment was the equivalent in the early '80s of having unprotected sex with thousands of people at one time," 31-year-old Decker, who was later readmitted to school, told an audience Thursday at the School of Business Auditorium.

As part of his "A Boy, a Girl, a Virus, and the Relationship That Happened Anyway" presentation, which Student Affairs and Enrollment Services sponsored, Decker and his wife, Gwenn Barringer, also 31, shared intimate details about their personal life experiences and their experiences as a married couple. Since becoming infected with HIV, Decker contracted AIDS in 1999, while Barringer remains HIV-negative.

They spent most of their presentation enlightening students how they function

as a normal couple in a society that always questions why they are together.

"What would you do if you fell in love with someone who was HIV-positive?" asked Barringer, an HIV educator who met Shawn while she was researching HIV prevention as a graduate student at James Madison University. "I think a lot of people can imagine having a friend who's HIV-positive or having a family member who's HIV-positive, but not a lot of people can understand what's it's like to date someone who's HIV-positive."

She said she was "definitely in that camp," adding that she never thought she would marry someone with HIV.

Decker, on the other hand, said he wondered when he was younger if he would marry at all.

"I remember asking my mom, 'Am I going to be able to get married? Am I going to be able to have kids?'" he said.

Decker said puberty and adolescence were especially challenging

with HIV. As his peers around him began to develop physical relationships, he struggled telling others about his condition, he said. The struggle consumed so much of him, he said, that he preferred not to date in high school, although he did date some.

"I realized that I was going to have to learn how to be able to talk about HIV," Decker said. "I owed it to who I was with to be able to do that."

Decker was finally able to talk about HIV when he met Barringer, he said, because she was so knowledgeable about HIV and AIDS from her educational and occupational background.

Barringer said she became interested in

*VIRUS continued to Page CT5*



Katy  
McDaniel  
photos

# Low attendance a problem at VCU concerts

**SARA KYLE**  
Contributing Writer

Kelli Lemon, assistant director for programs and events at VCU, works hard to bring concerts to students.

VCU has seen John Legend, the Roots, Twista, Jim Jones, Juelz Santana, TI, Yung Joc, Gavin DeGraw, Carbon Leaf and will soon see the All-American Rejects.

But Lemon said students seem to be uninterested.

"We are here to bring quality entertainment to our students," she said. "But the complaints about the who, the price and the location just don't make it worth it."

Keith Rafter, director for marketing and promotions, said VCU brings bands at the peak of their popularity, but for whatever reason they have not garnered enough student interest.

Students pay an activity fee to make sure there is a balance between activities and class work in their student life. The Activities Programming Board works to create the even balance.

Lemon and Rafter said students just don't show up.

Lemon said many students complain that VCU only brings hip-hop shows. But those shows sell, she said.

"Hip hop is very popular right now amongst all the students, no matter what race," she said.

The numbers showed at last year's homecoming when about 5,500 people saw John Legend and the Roots. This year's homecoming drew 5,000 people to

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## VIRUS continued from Page CT4

learning more about the virus after she heard a compelling HIV-positive speaker in college.

"I remember listening to her speak, and I was so struck by the fact that she was just like me, and if she could be affected by this, maybe I could be affected by this, or maybe my friends could be affected by this," Barringer said.

Although much of society disagreed with her, Barringer said she knew she could carry on a healthy relationship—a relationship that included sex—with Decker.

Barringer explained to curious audience members that she and Decker stay safe by always using a condom during sexual activity. If the condom were to break, Barringer has access to post-exposure, prophylactic HIV drugs that would significantly decrease the chances of her contracting the virus, Decker said.

"Any phrase with the word 'sex' attached to it, a condom is involved, in terms of Gwenn and I," Decker responded to a question about oral sex from an audience member.

"The mint ones aren't that bad," Barringer added, sending the crowd into a roar of laughter.

In fact, laughter permeated the entire presentation, despite the sensitivity of some of the subject material.

"I think one of the ways I've been able to deal with it and cope with it has been the ability to laugh at myself," Decker said of HIV during his introduction. "So please, if you hear something that sounds kind of funny tonight, don't feel like, 'Oh, we can't laugh at the guy with HIV. That's not right.'"

Decker made several jokes, referencing, for example, his astrological sign, cancer, and its accompanying symbol, a crab.

"So astrologically, not only am I a disease, I'm also a sexually transmitted little critter," he said. "On top of that, my parents decided to name me Shawn Timothy Decker. They didn't jot down those initials."

During Q-and-A, students focused on the physical aspects of Decker and Barringer's relationship. One student asked if the couple had plans to have or adopt children.

"The good thing is that we could have kids actually naturally if we wanted to," Barringer answered. "There's a process called sperm washing, and it's a pretty

## Check out Decker and Barringer's YouTube video at [aboyagirlvirus.com](http://aboyagirlvirus.com)

simple process that basically separates sperm from semen and tests the sperm to make sure there is no HIV present. Generally, HIV is present in the semen. It's not really present in sperm."

More than 400 children have been born healthy and HIV-negative through the process, Barringer said.

Other audience members directed questions specifically to Barringer. They asked her how often she worries about contracting HIV.

Barringer said she gets tested about every nine months to a year. But HIV testing can be a troublesome topic, she said.

"What concerns me sometimes is I think people sometimes equate testing with prevention," she said. "I hear people say sometimes, 'Well, I get tested every month, so I know I'm good.' It kind of scares me when someone says

they get tested every month because I feel like they're doing something in their life that they feel at risk for HIV and they need to get tested that often."

Decker, who only started taking HIV drugs after he contracted AIDS, said the hardest part of the relationship is that so many people question Barringer's rationale.

"That's the hardest thing now, people thinking Gwenn is crazy, even though we explain we have a safe, healthy relationship," he said. "People with HIV just want to work, provide for their family, find a relationship. It's difficult because there's so much ignorance about how the virus is transmitted."

Decker and Barringer said they hope they can decrease ignorance about HIV with the human-interest angle of their presentation. They are currently traveling to colleges and universities across the country to promote Decker's memoir, "My Pet Virus: The True Story of a Rebel Without a Cure," which hit stands Sept. 21. When they are not traveling, the couple resides in Charlottesville.

## Students Fly Cheaper

Sample Fares from **Richmond** to:

<b>Charleston, SC</b>	<b>\$151</b>
<b>Memphis</b>	<b>\$202</b>
<b>San Francisco</b>	<b>\$278</b>

Sample Fares from **Washington DC** to:

<b>Paris</b>	<b>\$309</b>
<b>Sao Paulo</b>	<b>\$586</b>
<b>Seoul</b>	<b>\$786</b>

Terms: All fares are based on roundtrip travel and include a StudentUniverse service fee of \$5. Domestic fares include a 7.5% US transportation tax. Other taxes and fees vary, depending on the itinerary and are not included. Fares are subject to availability and change without notice. Domestic flights valid Mon-Thu with an 8 day advance purchase. 2 day min stay including a Sat night required and max stay is 30 days. International flights valid Mon-Wed with a 7 day advance purchase. Europe/Asia fares valid for departures between Nov 1 and Dec 9. Latin America fares valid for departures through Dec 9. Australia fares valid for departures between Oct 1 and Dec 5. 7 day min stay required and max stay is 180 days. Blackout dates and other restrictions may apply.

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# News

THIS JUST IN

## Apple introduces remastered Nanos

**SHEENA JEFFERS**  
*News Co-Editor*

Apple never sleeps. Since the release of the iPod in 2001, Apple has worked to improve the look, technical ability and appeal of the iPod.

Apple sold the original iPod with the marketing campaign of putting "1,000 songs in your pocket." Today, the iPod Nano campaign is aiming to put up to "2,000 songs in your pocket."

Except for its new aluminum exterior, the redesign consists mostly of internal



changes. It's thinner and available in five colors and has a 40 percent brighter screen and 24 hours of battery life.

According to Consumersearch.com, "The iPod dominates the market among hard-drive players, though it's beginning to feel the heat from new competitors like the Toshiba Gigabeat S."

Toshiba's Gigabeat S plays more music formats than an iPod.

For now, the iPod continues to be the big player on top with the most sales, and with the release of their newly redesigned Nano, Apple does not plan on going anywhere.

## CRIME LOG

**Sept. 22**

A female student advised that she received harassing phone calls in Johnson Hall.

**Oct. 1**

A male was arrested at the Hyperlink Cafe for disorderly conduct.

**Sept. 27**

A male student advised that an unknown person removed \$330.75 of personal property from Brandt Hall.

**Oct. 4**

A male student advised that an unknown person removed \$100 of personal property from Shafer Court Dining Center.

**Sept. 30**

A male was arrested at Brandt Hall for obstruction of justice.

A male was arrested at Kemper and Lady streets for felony attempt to elude, driving under the influence of drugs and driving while license revoked.

### CONCERTS continued from Page CT5

see Trey Songz, Twista, Jim Jones and Juelz Santana. During Welcome Week 2006, 4,500 people saw TI and Yung Joc.

In comparison, the APB's Uncommon Live has brought non-hip-hop acts such as Gavin DeGraw, Carbon Leaf and the All-American Rejects to VCU. Approximately 700 people attended the DeGraw concert and 100 people attended the Carbon Leaf one. The All-American Rejects concert scheduled for Oct. 10 has sold barely more than 150 tickets.

"The All-American Rejects are a pretty well-known band, but the tickets are just not moving," Lemon said.

Uncommon Live also tried holding non hip-hop shows every month last year in the University Student Commons. These independent rock and alternative bands averaged about 50 to 100 people.

VCU chooses the bands by surveys inquiring about students' interests which the APB distributes. Students choose the top 10 bands they would be interested to see.

If the bands brought to VCU are a result of student input and interest, why is there such low attendance? Lemon said she thinks it may be VCU's location.

"We are not a typical college town," Lemon said. "There are plenty of other things for students to do within the Richmond community."

This makes Lemon's job difficult. She must find sponsors to help bring the bands so students don't have to pay as much for tickets. VCU must then pay for a venue to have a concert.

Attendance still dwindles.

"We cannot continue to waste money on concerts," Lemon said. "I think students need to know and understand that without their support, we will not bring mid-major to major bands to VCU."

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favorite newspaper  
on the Internet.

[www.commonwealthtimes.com](http://www.commonwealthtimes.com)







# Sports

## In Brief

### Men's Tennis

TULSA, Okla. – VCU's Arnaud Le Cloerec (Plouhinec, France) dropped out of the Polo Ralph Lauren All American Tennis Championships in the first round, losing to Oklahoma's Marek Velicka, then lost the consolation first round to Andreas Siljestrom of Middle Tennessee State.

### Volleyball

RICHMOND – The Rams split a pair of matches at the Siegel Center's Alltel Pavilion this weekend, first winning 3-2 over Delaware on Friday, then losing Saturday's game to Towson 2-3.

At Friday's win against Delaware (30-17, 30-26, 25-30, 26-30, 15-10), Cat Juson (Long Beach, Calif.) set a CAA season-high record with 71 assists, 12 digs and three blocks.

For the match, the Rams hit for .288 against the Fightin' Blue Hens' .207.

During Saturday's loss against

**BRIEFS** continued to Page CT9



VCU's **Cat Juson** sets up an assist in Friday's game against Delaware



**Gilbert Arenas** (above left) goes for the rim, and **Etan Thomas** (below right) fires a shot over **Brendan Haywood** during the 2005 Wizards scrimmage at the Siegel Center's Alltel Pavilion.

File photos: Pat Kane



## Wizards 'go all in' at Siegel Center

**TRAVER MAYFIELD**  
Sports Writer

After five days of training at the Stuart C. Siegel Center, the Washington Wizards ended training camp with an open to the public intrasquad scrimmage on Saturday. The "Black" team defeated the "White" team 53-49.

This is the third year the Wizards have held preseason training at VCU.

"The Siegel Center is a great facility," said Wizards head coach Eddie Jordan. "We enjoy having training camp and working with the tremendous staff here at VCU."

Prior to beginning camp, the Wizards had the court and hoops from the Verizon Center in Washington, D.C., shipped down to Richmond and installed in the Siegel Center. Jordan said that the players were "more familiar and comfortable" with their own court. A laughing Gilbert Arenas added, "Your floor was kind of hard so we had to bring our own."

Even in the dreary weather this weekend, fans could be seen walking up and down Broad Street decked in Wizards regalia. They filled an anxious queue outside the Siegel Center for up to an hour.

"Living in Richmond, it's hard to follow the Wizards," Will Chan said after getting in. "It's really cool to be able to see the Wizards play at VCU and all the exposure they are giving our school."

**WIZARDS** continued to Page CT9

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Women's cross country

Sat. Oct. 14  
William & Mary Invitational  
Williamsburg

### Men's cross country

Sat. Oct. 14  
Delaware Invitational,  
10:30 a.m.  
Newark, Del.

### Field hockey

Fri. Oct. 13 †  
vs. Radford, 6 p.m.

### Volleyball

Fri. Oct. 13  
vs. Georgia State, 5 p.m.  
Sat. Oct. 14  
vs. UNC Wilmington,  
7 p.m.

### Women's soccer

Tue. Oct. 10  
at Old Dominion, 7 p.m.  
Fri. Oct. 13  
vs. Northeastern, 7 p.m.

### Tennis (Men's & Women's)

Fri. Oct. 13-Sun. Oct. 15  
Old Dominion Invitational  
Newport News

### Men's soccer

Mon. Oct. 10  
vs. Old Dominion, 7 p.m.  
Fri. Oct. 13  
at Northeastern, 6 p.m.

VCU sporting events are free to students with a valid student ID. For more info visit [vcurams.vcu.edu](http://vcurams.vcu.edu) or call VCU Sports Line, 828-3440.

† non-CAA match



## BRIEFS continued from Page CT8

Towson (22-30, 30-22, 30-27, 29-31, 12-15), Ludmila Francescatto (Fraiburga, Brazil) set a career record with 27 kills and gave the Rams 15 digs.

Saturday's loss put the Rams at 10-9 in the regular season and 4-5 in the CAA.

### Men's cross country

GREENSBORO, N.C. – VCU finished first out of 16 teams Saturday in the Hagan Stone Park Cross Country Classic.

The Rams accumulated 49 points, nine points ahead of Duke, who placed second.

Cary Chaffee (Richmond/Hermitage HS) came in third overall, finishing the eight kilometer course in 25:23.3. Jay Wyss (Richmond/J.R. Tucker HS) placed sixth in 25:54.6, two seconds ahead of seventh-place Lukasz Matusiewicz (Warsaw, Poland) who finished in 25:56.7.

### Men's Soccer

RICHMOND – Friday's game against ODU has been postponed, but the Rams lost Sunday to William & Mary 1-2 at SportsBackers Stadium.

Matthijs Maruanaya (Alkmaar, Netherlands) picked up Pat Viray's (Reston/South Lakes HS) assist in the first half to put a header into the lower right corner of the goal.

In the second half, William & Mary's Andrew Hoxie scored on a penalty kick to send the game into overtime with a 1-1 tie.

Hoxie scored the game point when he fired a loose ball from 15 yards out six minutes into overtime.

VCU collected twice as many fouls as William & Mary, 18-9, while William & Mary outshot VCU 8-12.

## FIELD HOCKEY

# VCU breaks 10-game losing streak with win against Dragons

**JAMES K. GALLOWAY**  
*Sports Editor*

PHILADELPHIA, Pa. – Shattering a burdensome 10-game losing streak Sunday, VCU defeated Drexel University 4-3 in overtime.

The scores were balanced in each half, with VCU scoring 1-2 in the first half, then 2-1 in the second.

The long-awaited victory is owed to the combined efforts of the players on the field and to goalkeeper Brittany LoVullo (Williamsville, N.Y.) who saved a career-high 15 shots on goal.

In the first half, the Dragons gained a sudden 2-0 lead within 14 minutes of the game's start, with goals from Karie Walton and Catherine Chiara.

In the middle of the 17th minute of play, Nikki Lloyd put VCU's only point in the half on the board after penetrating the Dragon's defenses and scoring an unassisted goal.

Seizing the field, Emily Guerra (Yorktown/Seton Hall HS) converted Rebecca Sullivan's (Fredericksburg/

Stafford HS) pass in the first two minutes of the second half to even the scores out to 2-2.

After 20 minutes of scoreless play, Lloyd took a penalty stroke on the Dragon's goalie to set the scores at 3-2, in VCU's favor.

Drexel's Amanda Kicera tied the scores back up three minutes later to push the match into overtime.

As the game went into overtime, LoVullo saved the Rams from five shots on goal and three penalty corners.

The Rams had one opportunity to score in the overtime period and they took it – Jenna Harris (Aurora, Colo.) scored her penalty corner shot to put the Rams ahead 4-3.

This victory comes after a painful 0-10 defeat by Old Dominion University Friday, which counted the Rams' 10th straight loss of the season. During that rainy game, LoVullo got her practice gathering 12 saves, which she would use Sunday against the Dragons.

VCU's record is now 2-11 for the season and 1-4 in the CAA.



**VCU's win puts their record at 2-11 for the season and 1-4 in the CAA.**

(File photo: Katy McDaniel)

## WIZARDS continued from Page CT8

Sitting in his seat before the action began, KJ Hermosa said, "I'm excited to see an NBA team come to VCU to play. For the most part I am a Wizards fan and I'm ready to see what they can do."

After going through some basic shooting, three-man weave drills and a pep talk from Jordan and his assistants, forward Andray Blatche took the microphone. He thanked VCU and let everyone know that they were ready to "go all in," citing the Wizards new marketing slogan for this year.

Two-time NBA All Star and USA international point guard Arenas garnered the loudest cheers from the 2,300 fans in attendance at Siegel during player introductions. The Wizards were split into two squads; the white, which included Antawn Jamison, Caron Butler, and Antonio Daniels, and the black, which included Arenas, DeShawn Stevenson, and Peter John Ramos.

VCU students were in for a treat as the Wizards showed the fruits of their labor from the past five days of practice. Arenas was at the center of several big plays as he scored the first points of

the game with a nice fadeaway jumper from 20 feet. Five minutes later, Arenas would throw a behind the back pass to rookie Mike Hall for a slam dunk that brought the crowd to life.

Another player who stood out was Stevenson, an offseason free agent signing from the Orlando Magic. Stevenson seemed to not miss a beat with his new team and in one play did his best. And One impression when he beat his man off the dribble at the three-point line, penetrated while blowing past two more defenders, and layed the ball in eliciting a huge ovation from the fans.

Michael "Beast" Ruffin and Antonio Daniels also contributed greatly, ending the scrimmage as the leading rebounder and scorer respectively.

But in the end the afternoon belonged to the fans and VCU students who were obviously having a blast.

"It was a cool experience to watch an actual NBA practice and to see how they play," said Sunny Singh. His brother Karas Singh added, "I liked how the players gave back to the community by throwing out T-shirts after the game."

The Wizards players also left with a positive experience at VCU.

"It's been great here; the people have been really nice," said forward Mike Hall, "For a college this is a nice facility."

Center Etan Thomas added, "It was really comfortable down here. It was nice to be treated so well especially while we were working hard during two-a-days."

The support that the VCU students offered was also greatly appreciated.

"We always appreciate the fans coming out," Arenas said. "That's why we hold these scrimmages, so the fans can come and see the players before we begin the season."

Butler commented that fans were "unbelievable" and that they made him feel "right at home."

The Wizards are now back in D.C. where tonight they will host the Toronto Raptors in their first preseason game.

Basketball fans who missed the game or just want to see more hoops action can make their way to the Siegel Center on Friday for Ram Madness.

**Write for  
the sports  
section.**

**E-mail sports  
@commonwealthtimes.com**

# Spectrum

Minds of literature  
and horror meld for  
**James River Writers Conference**



**KATIE PUGH**  
*Spectrum Editor*

Schmucks, schmendricks and schlemiels: that was how founding member and proctor David Robbins described the myriad of rough-and-tumble writers as they congregated Friday and Saturday at the Library of Virginia for the fourth annual James River Writers Conference. The conference was set up with hour-long panels addressing different topics that are important to writers, from story ideas to sex to poetry, in addition to journalism, freelance writing and working with publishers.

The conference was set up with individual panels in which professionals of the given field discussed topics with moderators and took questions from those in attendance. It was a great opportunity for writers to approach experienced authors and agents on issues that were important in their writing.

On Saturday, some of the more interesting and popular panels included “The Book of Your Life: The Difficult and Courageous Art of the Memoir,” “Screamwriting,” “We’re Not in Kansas Anymore: How to Build a Fantasy World” and “Taking the ‘Free’ Out of Freelance.”

In the first session, author Jeannette Walls, writer of “The Glass Castle” and an established MSNBC columnist, shared her experiences of growing up in poverty with an alcoholic father.

"I was lucky to have a really hard childhood," she joked.

"Truth is stranger than fiction," she went on. "People like reading a good story of survival."

“Screamwriting” actually took a different turn on writing; Richmond writer Clay Chapman interviewed Don Mancini, the creator of all five “Child’s Play” movies. Chapman, known for his disturbing and controversial writing, saw the panel as a great opportunity.

"I will fight you tooth and nail if you try and say you are a bigger fan of the 'Child's Play' series

than I am," he said, pointing an accusing finger at the audience.

Chapman's mother, Sue, had also come to the panel to watch her son work. She recalled how Chapman used to go see horror films in theaters as a youngster and how they became a great inspiration to him as a horror-centric writer.

"He would analyze the films. It wasn't for entertainment. As a mother, there's always concern that that kind of thing is on your son's mind, but writing about it is a great way to discuss those issues. And there's always a great moral at the end," she said.

*“I’m very proud of that. But it’s very easy to condescend to this stuff. It’s the collision of art and trash.”*

— Don Mancini, creator of the “Child’s Play” movies, on being the “daddy of Chucky”

Mancini was very relaxed throughout the panel and bounced off Chapman's enthusiasm well. He shared how his early interest in the dark side of children and consumerism fueled inspiration for the movies about a psychopath's soul trapped in a doll and the ensuing murders. He did divulge, however, how out of place he felt in the convention with so many esteemed novelists and journalists.

When asked about being the “daddy of Chucky,” Mancini explained, “I’m very proud of that. But it’s very easy to condescend to this stuff. It’s the collision of art and trash.”

Mancini also had appeared at VCU the night before for a discussion with film critic Daniel Neman of the Richmond Times-Dispatch.

The panel about creating alternate fantastical universes featured Fantasy/Sci-Fi writers C.S. Friedman and Dave Kuzminski. They discussed at length the difficulties of creating new worlds for their characters.

"I didn't want it to look like a D&D (Dungeons and Dragons) game," Friedman explained, pulling together the hardships of finding settings for her books such as "Feast of Souls," a novel that was given out to all those present for the discussion. The book will not be out until January.

Both writers encouraged learning about the world and developing from it. “I use cultures that did exist or do exist,” Kuzminski said, “merging two together and three religions with a fourth one emerging.”

“What happens when you take our society and throw magic in the mix?” Friedman said. “All science fiction, at its root, asks the question, ‘What if?’ ”

Afterward, professional freelance writer Phaedra Hise tried to control a room full of aspiring magazine writers as she was bombarded with question after question about the best way to make a living off selling essays and articles. Her answers were well planned, and she did remarkably under the pressure.

The last session of the conference was a Q-and-A panel for many of the renowned authors who had come together to make the event happen. They shared their different viewpoints on writings and things they had learned along the way. Each personality and perspective was unique, making the sit-down a great way to conclude the weekend.

"You have to catch lightning in a jar," Martin Clark said. He had spoken in the "Sex and Sensibility" discussion Friday.

Hampton Sides, historical and wilderness writer, shared, "I wish I had known how unglamorous this life really is."

Dramatic writer Alex Kershaw added, "We're being privileged enough in being able to do this until we die. It's a long haul."





Jay Paul photo/Courtesy Theatre IV

Guilty? Tony Foley and Angela Shipley in Agatha Christie's "The Mousetrap."

## 'The Mousetrap' captures its audience at the Hanover Tavern

**BEN GIBSON**  
Staff Writer

A good playwright makes every character seem guilty, except the true murderer. This was the case at the Hanover Tavern with Agatha Christie's "Mousetrap." Angela Shipley and Tony Foley play Mollie and Giles Ralston. They live in a sleepy London suburb where they rent out rooms to other characters that are forced to share the night after a horrible murder. All have a dark past due to a nearby farm where an evil event had happened to three orphans.

During the play, the audience begins to wonder what the Ralstons' secret is; the only description of the crook was a dark overcoat, a felt hat and a scarf that disguised his (or her) whispering voice, the exact same description of Mr. Ralston's clothing which Mollie quickly puts away. Is he the murderer? With accusations thrown at all the boarders at the house, will the murderer be uncovered?

With odd colloquialisms, special effects and dramatized expression, the drama becomes very poignant. Furthermore, the acting, choreography and commentary among characters really make the performance. Chris Burbach called it "outstandingly excellent because of the timing."

The use of lighting was masterful; the performance opened in pitch blackness, and the radio came on informing listeners of a recent murder. The set appeared realistic; one could imagine feeling the bitter cold snow and could even smell the players' cigarettes.

John Dimiceli commented on "how it was enjoyable over 50 years in part because of the slower character development. It's not fast action, nor will it keep you up at night like the 'Texas Chainsaw Massacre.'"

Shipley is a recent graduate of Theatre VCU, and player Matthew Costello, dialect director Amanda Durst, and Heather Hogg, who designed the costumes for the show and works as an adjunct VCU theater professor, are all alumni.

**Check out "The Mousetrap" at Hanover Tavern through Oct. 29**

# Flex your mental muscles, win an iPod

**CORTNEY ANDERSON**  
Contributing Writer

What percentage of VCU students doesn't smoke cigarettes? If you know the answer, you could win a free iPod.

Student Health Services is sponsoring a raffle for a video iPod as part of its "Party Smart" campaign. To enter, students must answer four fill-in-the-blank questions at [www.yourstrategy.org](http://www.yourstrategy.org).

The Party Smart campaign's mission is to promote strategies for partying safely and to correct misperceptions about students' health habits. For example, many people think the vast majority of students smoke. In fact, almost three-fourths don't.

"We're a model program for alcohol and drug abuse prevention, one of seven college programs nationally," said Linda Hancock, assistant director of the Office of Health Promotion.

The money for the iPod comes from a \$75,000 grant awarded to VCU by the U.S. Department of Education. The grant also funds media such as posters for health promotions and the Party Smart strategy Web site. The site has information on how the statistics are gathered and strategies for staying safe when going out.

Hancock said her office gathered the statistics to get people to understand reality. She said she wants people to realize that it's fun to go out, but it's fun to stay safe, too. Hancock said the iPod giveaway in the spring semester was such a success that the Office of Health Promotion decided to do it again.

Sophomore Kriston Proffitt was surprised by some of the information. When VCU students party, most have four or fewer drinks, and only 28 percent smoke, the surveys show.

"It was kind of shocking to read that," Proffitt said. She said she might enter the raffle because the answers would be right at her fingertips: They're online.

The Office of Health Promotion has collected data about student health since spring 2002. The statistics are the answers to the questions on the raffle's online entry form.

The numbers also can be found on the back of the Fifth Pocket, the winning idea in a Party Smart strategy contest. It is a waterproof, virtually indestructible envelope that can fit into your jeans but is big enough for a valid ID and a little cash for a cab ride home.

Campus residents received the Fifth Pockets in their school mailboxes, but anyone can pick one up at the

Commons Information Desk or at Student Health.

The Commons Information Desk went through a basketful of Fifth Pockets quickly at the beginning of the school year, said Annie Wright, a desk employee.

The deadline for entering the raffle is midnight on Nov. 7. The winner will be notified by e-mail and presented with the iPod on Nov. 8 at 7 p.m. in the Commonwealth Ballroom.

The presentation will be followed by a performance by comedian René Hicks. Hicks, a nonsmoker, intertwines her comedy with her experience as a victim of lung cancer.



Katy McDaniel photo illustration

**Answer these questions at [www.yourstrategy.org](http://www.yourstrategy.org) to enter the raffle!**

- Most students have \_\_\_ to \_\_\_ drinks when they party.
- Most students drink alcohol on \_\_\_ or fewer days per month.
- Most students have \_\_\_ to \_\_\_ sex partners per year.
- Most students (\_\_\_%) don't smoke cigarettes.







Jessica Wright demonstrates a move for the dancers at a rehearsal for the Salon.

Cynthia K. Merchant photo

## Salon presents works-in-progress

**SHEENA JEFFERS**  
News Editor

Several students hoist bags on their shoulders, walking into a studio with a wooden floor and lined with mirrors. Their muscular bodies, midriff tops, cut-off pants and bare feet spell d-a-n-c-e-r-s.

Jessica Wright, a junior dance major, is ready to rehearse. Five other dancers stretch and talk until Wright gets their attention.

"We're really close to being done," she says. "Go back to pose one."

The dancers find their poses and Wright fixes any glitches of the image before saying, "Begin when you're ready."

So goes another day of rehearsals for a piece in the Salon, an educational performance enabling students to create their own choreography, show their work and receive feedback from students and dance department faculty.

On Oct. 13, the Department of Dance and Choreography, which normally presents performances amid carefully planned lighting and costumes to audiences that tend to dress up, will strip its formalities and play host to students wearing jeans and T-shirts.

"It's an informal showing," said Lea Marshall, producer of the Salon. "It's done in the dance studio, in our main studio upstairs. There's not a lot of tech. The lights come on and that's it."

Wright is one of the students who liked what she describes as the Salon's

"raw" appeal. She had an idea, asked five dancers if they wanted to be involved, "and we said 'yes,'" recalls Megan Harrold, a junior.

Wright gave her time to rehearsals, planning and the idea for nothing but experience, enjoyment and the opportunity for feedback.

"The feedback and short viewing distance between audience and dancers is my favorite thing about the Salon," she said.

### Want to go?

**October 13, 2006**

**1 – 2 p.m.**

**Dance Center, 10 N. Brunswick - Studio 203 Monroe Park Campus**

**Open to public at no charge.**

Wright's piece, "Words Not Mandatory," is about manipulating the body. It involves relaxing the face and uninhibited movement of the body and knowledge of its parts.

"The idea came from relaxing your jaw and your body," she said. "The concept was to work with body parts."

Harrold, one of the performers in Wright's piece, said she enjoys this different point of view on life.

"I think about having a very internal focus and not think about what people are seeing," she said. "I think about how I feel on the inside."

Samantha Crawford, a junior dance

major and performer in Wright's piece, said, "The movement is very different for me. It feels like manipulation of myself."

The Salon is a different approach to performing and a different experience for audience members.

"The close quarters of the studio gives a whole different atmosphere to dance," Wright said.

Crawford likes the unfinished aspect of the Salon. "The focus of the Salon is more of a works-in-progress," Crawford said.

This year the dance department opened the Salon to non-dance majors.

Vanessa Fassie, a second-year graduate student in Photo/Film, also will present a piece.

She said she doesn't know what to expect but wanted to be involved. She said the Salon is a great experience for feedback on art.

"It's the only way to really shape and mold your work," she said.

Her piece, "Reunion," was rehearsed in the Pollack Building. "It's a little different from dance majors as I cannot rehearse in the dance building," she said.

That hasn't hindered her excitement or preparation for the Salon.

Wright and Fassie feverishly are working to finish their pieces. They are just as eager to show their work.

"You never know what's going to happen," Wright said. "That's why it's so exciting."

## The Shafer Alliance Theatre encourages dramatic solidarity

**OLIVIA BEATTY**  
Staff Writer

A black Abraham Lincoln impersonator lies dying on the edge of the stage. His brother has just assassinated him in a heated brawl over money. This is the final scene of "Topdog/Underdog," a show about race, brotherhood and the struggle to break free from a destructive past.

On the show's fourth and final night, the theater was finally nearing capacity. The Sept. 7 to 10 showing of the play marked the start of the first official season for The Shafer Alliance Theatre group.

"We recognized a need in the student population for a group that could support student theater and help promote it, to provide students with an opportunity to do their own work, as opposed to being so reliant on the main stage for opportunities," said Boone Hopkins, executive producer of the SAT and second-year theater graduate student.

Gone are the days of VCU theater students presenting shows in small



classrooms attended only by a small crowd of friends and classmates. Thanks to the SAT, student theater may thrive instead of barely surviving.

The group SAT was formed last spring and is based in the Shafer Street Playhouse's Richard Newdick Theatre. It is run by a board of directors, which consists of two graduate students, four undergraduate students and one faculty member.

"This is the first time in a long time that this space has been given a facilitator, a group of students who want to do the right thing with the space," said Tony Santiago, SAT co-president and a junior theater performance major.

The SAT strives to present a diverse

*THEATRE continued to Page CT12*





## THEATRE continued from Page CT11

repertoire of different types of theater projects. If students rely solely on the main-stage shows for performance opportunities, it's possible they could never appear onstage, Santiago said.

"We're not looking to compete with the main stage, but we're definitely looking to enhance the experience of students here through providing more professional opportunities," Hopkins said. "We want to raise the bar in production quality and hold ourselves accountable for higher standards."

The SAT is registered as a student organization and will soon receive funding from the Student Government Association. Previously, the directors and actors funded the shows with their own money. Admission to the shows is free.

Playbills for the shows appear on theater department callboards, as well as Facebook event invitations and word of mouth. To gain more publicity prior to events, the SAT plans to advertise on the radio with Artsline.

To get onstage, a show proposal must be submitted to the board explaining the importance of the work to being shown in Richmond. Undergraduates, graduates and faculty have submitted proposals. The SAT meets monthly and chooses the shows each semester.

"We're excited to see where it goes and how people receive it, not only theater students but the general VCU and Richmond population," Santiago said.

## See what else is coming up, presented by the SAT group

### Freshman Discovery Project

Class of 2010

Through Oct. 17

### Gut Girls

Directed by Tawnya Pettiford-Wates

Oct. 27-30

### Kicking District

Directed by Caitlin Stafford

Through Nov. 5

### The Complete Works of Shakespeare Abridged

Directed by Zach Jesse

Through Nov. 12

### None of the Above

Directed by Chanelle Vigue

Nov. 16-19

### All My Sons

Directed by Boone J. Hopkins

## Weird News

### Thieves go nuts

Earlier this week, thieves, coined "nut-nappers," broke into Scott Phippen's almond farm in Central Valley, Calif., making off with 88,000 pounds of nuts, which have a street value at around \$260,000. Along with Phippen, authorities have reported a recent rush of "almond heists," with farm officials estimating the total losses from all robberies at \$1.5 million, making it the "costliest case of crop larceny." Authorities also suspect that they are dealing with a sophisticated network of thieves, who are utilizing a combination of computer skills, escape plans and advance buyer information to steal the almonds.



### Animals says "Amen"

Though the idea of man and animal sitting side by side in church would have sounded crazy a decade ago, several churches are now following in the new religious trend of recognizing the human-animal bond. Among them, St. Francis Episcopal Church in Stamford, Conn., has joined

the growing movement of joint pet and pet owner prayer time. The church now encourages pet owners to bring their cats and dogs to the pews, for the church's half-hour pet service that focuses on the special relationships owners have with their animals.

Other churches now embracing this new spin on worship time offer pet owner support and services, including special blessings, private pet memorials or burials and counseling for pet owners whose pets have died.



### Australian boy gets bitten by octopus

In Queensland, Australia, a 3-year-old boy was taken to intensive care Saturday after being bitten by an octopus at Suttons Beach in Redcliffe. The boy, Anthony Moss, was playing with a blue-ringed octopus in the shallows when it bit him.



It was not until minutes after releasing the creature back into the ocean that Moss started to feel any symptoms. After telling his mother that he couldn't walk, Moss was rushed to the hospital where he started to suffer from respiratory problems and was put on life support. He is currently still in intensive care but should be able to leave as early as today.

### Technology soon to allow cows to milk themselves

Based on new technological advances, cows may soon be able to milk themselves. The Swedish-made robotic milking system, which is currently on display at the World Dairy Expo in Madison, Wis., uses lasers, video cameras, and a computer to control the milking process. All the cow has to do is walk into the milking machine. Though the self-service milker costs \$250,000, it is estimated that using the self-service milker could save farmers thousands a year in labor costs.

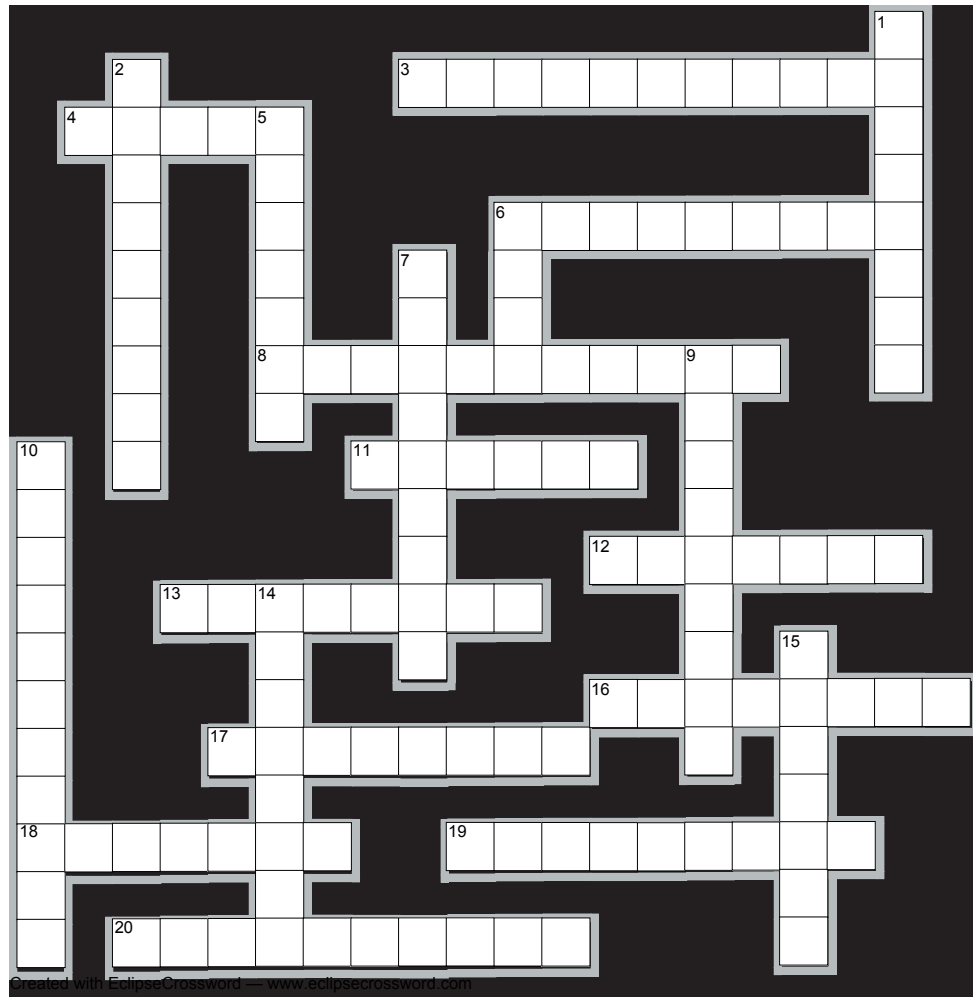


# Crossword

## Richmond Attractions

### Across

3. Botanical Garden on Lakeside Avenue.
4. Our river's name.
6. Park on James River.
8. Museum of the \_\_\_\_\_. On 1201 E. Clay St.
11. Restaurant on 2527 W. Main St., serves Asian and European dishes.
12. Chimborazo \_\_\_\_\_ Museum.
13. The capitol.
16. VMFA = Virginia Museum of \_\_\_\_\_.
17. Park with summertime paddle boats by Maymount Park.
18. The Bottom.
19. \_\_\_\_\_ Cemetery. Presidents James Monroe, John Tyler and Jefferson Davis are buried here.
20. \_\_\_\_\_ Episcopal Church. 2401 E. Broad St.



### Down

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Iron Works. Nearby Richmond National Battlefield Park.
2. 12th and Canal Streets.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Museum of Virginia on 2500 W. Broad St. Biology, chemistry, physics.
6. Cary Street theater.
7. Hotel on Franklin and Adams streets. Also, the name of third president.
9. The \_\_\_\_\_ Museum of Richmond on 2626 W. Broad St. Ages 1 - 12.
10. 20th and Cary streets. It is a building no longer standing.
14. Shops on Cary Street.
15. Park with Italian gardens, Japanese gardens and zoo.

Students • Parents • Alumni • Faculty • Staff • Community

# fall fest

Building New Traditions

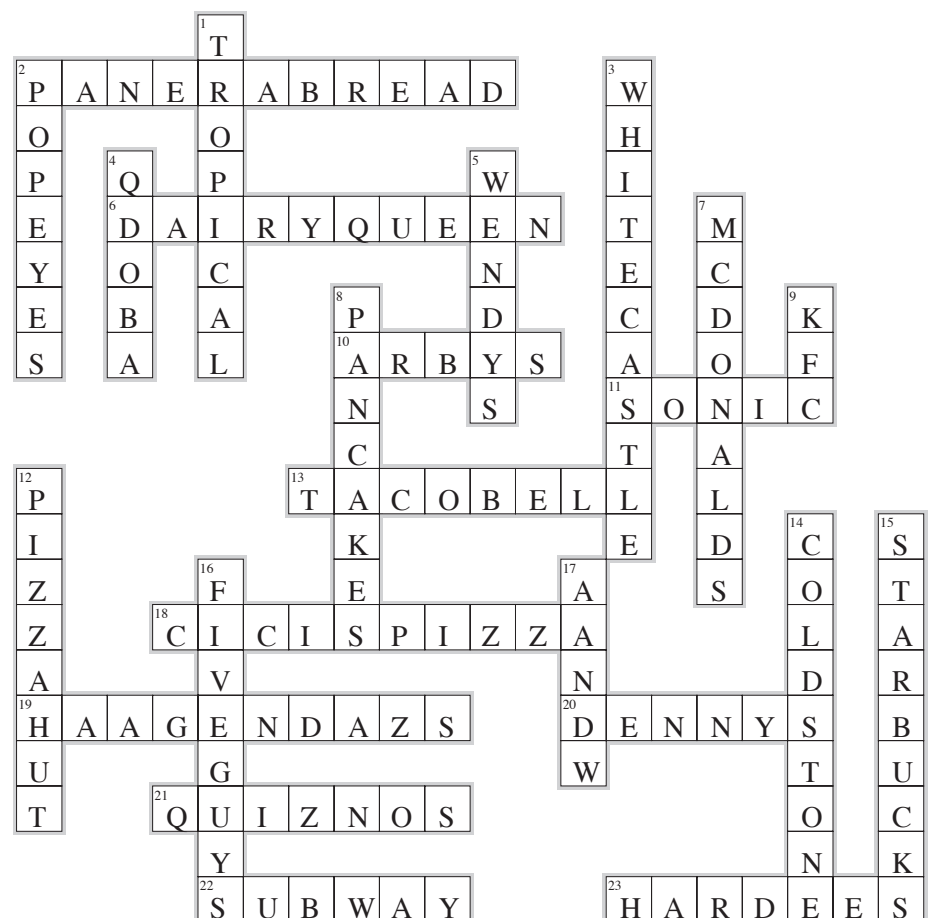
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**WWW.VCU.EDU/FALLFEST**

Virginia Commonwealth University

### Answers from Oct. 2 puzzle



Created with EclipseCrossword - www.eclipsecrossword.com



# Classifieds

## EMPLOYMENT

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**Journalist** – Looking for a journalism student to work with a national substance abuse facility to research material and write for new websites and other medical projects. We offer a generous compensation package including flexible hours and performance bonuses. We require experience in this field and previous work experience is a bonus. Applicants MUST have excellent journalism and research skills and the ability to work independently, communicate effectively with co-workers and management. Must be a self-starter and able to strategize with excellent organizational skills.

**Models Wanted** White males 18-25 y/o wanted for Internet modeling. No experience necessary. Earn \$50-300 for 1-4 hrs. work. E-mail [model@rwbstudios.com](mailto:model@rwbstudios.com) for further information.

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# Comics

Clockstoppers

Cobb Dixon



Blue and Blond

Chris Malone

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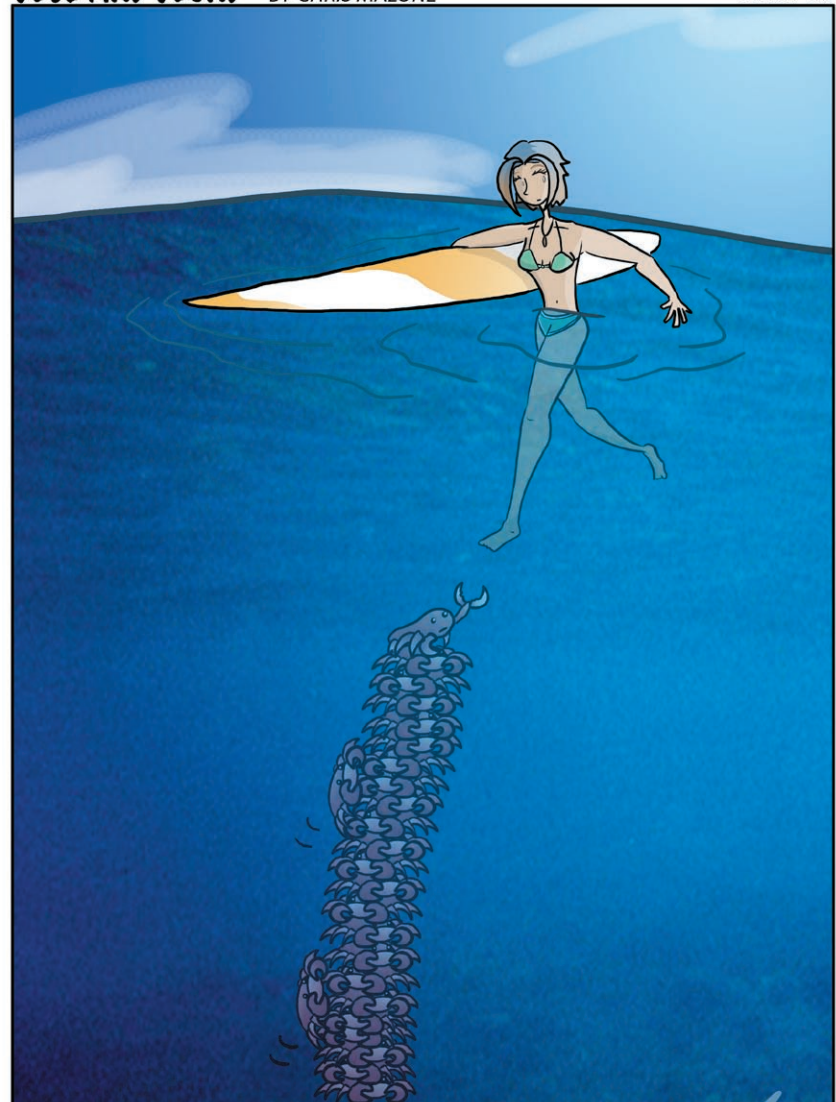
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# Comics

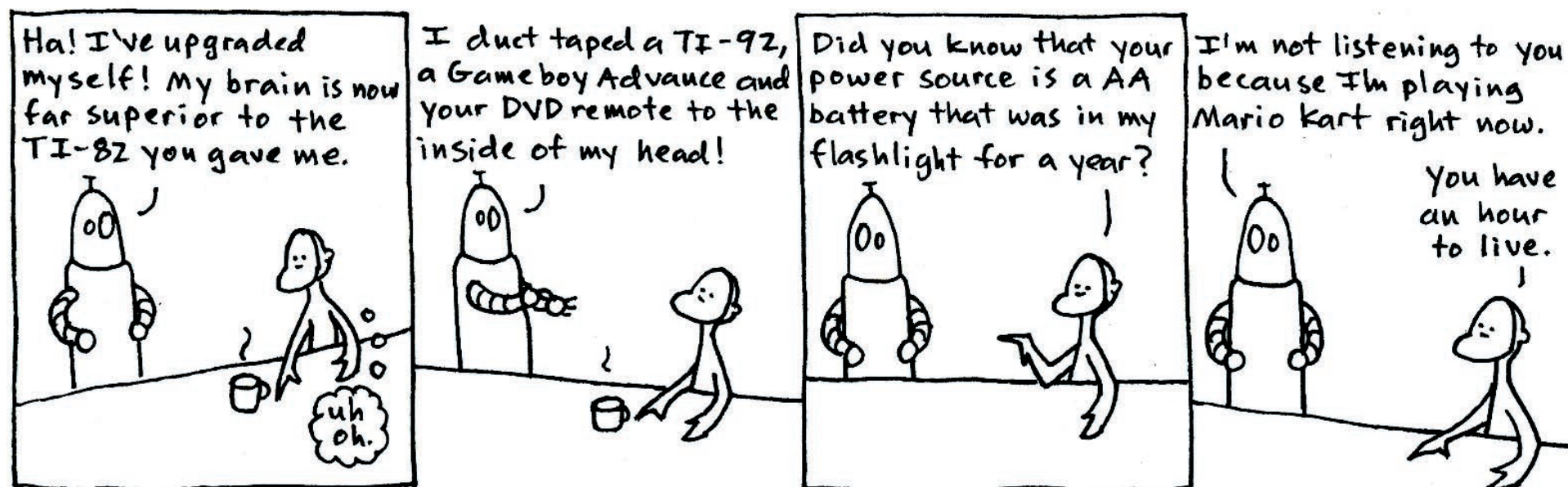
Pizza From Scratch

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# Opinion

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## Senate elections, bad advising

PETER MOODY

Special to the Commonwealth Times

The student Senate elections are currently underway. Voting will take place online at [www.vcusga.com](http://www.vcusga.com) starting 8 a.m. Oct. 10 and ending 5 p.m. Oct. 12. We encourage everyone to vote and wish the best of luck to all the candidates.

Now let me pose a question: Have you ever felt like VCU took your money and then left you to wander around the bustling, academic labyrinth all alone? Or have you felt like someone was leading you but that person had a blindfold on or kept disappearing before your very eyes? If so, you may want to read further.

One of the leading concerns among students here at VCU is advising. Students have reported that the advising program falls short of their expectations, that they rarely get to see their advisers, and that their advisers have told them to sign up for courses that don't exist.

It is probably not an exaggeration to say that the advising program at VCU is in shambles.

This is why the SGA is pushing to reform the academic advising system for all students. Dr. Jon Steingass, dean of the University College, has outlined a list of proposals including mandatory checkups for students every 30 credit hours. The SGA is currently working on legislation that addresses his ideas. However, we want to hear from you, so we're having a speak-out event tonight at 8 p.m. in Richmond Salon 1 at the University Student Commons. Come to voice your concerns and share your experiences regarding advising. If you come for no other reason, come for the free pizza!

We are also working with VCU Technology Services to bring free music downloading to students! Currently the student Senate is scheduled to hear a proposal from a company called Ruckus. The presentation will be 4 p.m. Oct.

23 in the Forum Room of the Student Commons.

In other SGA news, last week SGA leadership interviewed Dr. Joseph Morolla, who is a candidate for the position of vice provost for instruction, a position in charge of the quality of teaching at VCU. Dr. Morolla started the Center of Teaching Excellence here at VCU and hopes to improve teaching by implementing a new "Focused Inquiry" class at VCU that will be required for all freshmen that will emphasize critical thinking, reading, writing and analytical skills.

Before closing I would like to mention that starting next week, the SGA Web site will feature a weekly radio address directly on the home page. Hopefully we will expand the address to the VCU radio station and WRIR 97.3 in the near future, so keep reading and stay tuned.

*Peter Moody is deputy assistant for communications for the Monroe Park Campus Student Government Association.*

## Your Turn *Letters to the Editor*



### Watch for red flags

This month, the Red Flag Campaign makes its debut on our campus. This campaign marks the first statewide public awareness effort aimed at stopping dating violence on college campuses in Virginia. While it's true that dating violence is a complex problem that cannot be solved by a poster campaign, the message of the campaign is that there are countless steps we can take in our daily lives to stop someone who is being abusive or to help someone who is being victimized.

Think about it. What is your responsibility as a friend? Is it to protect the "privacy" of your friend who is possibly being abused? Is it to defend another friend's behavior, even though it could be abusive or violent? Yes, sometimes we may feel pressure not to air a friend's "dirty laundry," or to minimize what's going on. But please consider that dating violence is not a "personal issue" and it is not something to be kept private. Dating violence is a community issue and sometimes a criminal one.

Our research indicates that in 21 percent of college relationships, one of

the partners is being abused. That's 1 in 5 relationships – so if you want to help a friend, here are some ideas. When it comes to dating violence, here's what it means to be a friend:

Don't assume that it doesn't happen on our campus. It does. Don't assume that men are always the perpetrators or women are always the victims. Don't assume that dating violence happens only in heterosexual relationships.

Don't assume that just because your friend doesn't ask for help, she or he doesn't want or need help.

Don't assume that just because you don't see evidence of physical abuse, what is happening in your friend's emotionally abusive relationship isn't damaging, whether it's spiritually, emotionally, physically or sexually.

Pay attention to red flags and trust your instincts. If you see something in your friend's relationship that makes you feel uneasy, something you can't quite put your finger on ... *say something*. Tell your friend what you've noticed, and ask if there's anything you can do to help. It shouldn't take your friend physically harming his or her intimate partner and/or self before you say something. It shouldn't take your

friend having to come to you for help before you say something.

Your responsibility as a friend – our responsibility as a community – is to ensure that students are able to reach their potential, and that patterns of healthy intimate relationships are able to take root. What we learn now about how to treat our partners will shape our commitments in the future. So, if you see a red flag in your friends' relationships, are you going to turn away? Or are you going to say something?

– Kiffy Johnson

### Less than a month away?

What does "With Nov. 7 – this year's off-year Election Day – less than a month away" mean on Oct. 5 – *more* than a month away from Election Day mean? Come on, people: do your math! That's just sloppy journalism. You cannot expect or receive respect with such a capricious attitude. I write this as a former executive editor of The Commonwealth Times (1984-86 ... look it up).

– Pam Kiely

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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.



# Tired of your poor

## A more pragmatic approach to immigration reform

**OMAR YACOUBI**  
Opinion Writer

"Give me your poor, your tired, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free."

These days it seems it is we who are tired of the influx of immigrants coming from the poorer countries south of our border.

Sure, I hate hearing "press 1 for English" as much as anyone else. And the quixotic mission of the Minutemen to guard what parts of the Mexican border they can is, in a word, adorable. But no matter how much we dislike it or how much we complain to our elected officials, the flow of migrants across the border is inexorable.

This became clear to me as I was reading a feature article in this month's Mother Jones magazine about the struggles faced by illegal immigrants as they make their way north ("Exodus: Border-Crossers Forge a New America," September/October 2006). Before you make any assumptions – even I did because Mother Jones is a liberal publication – the article I read was not a passionate defense of migrant rights. It was not full of rhetoric and propaganda.

Far from it – the article was a dispassionate analysis of both sides of the immigration struggle. The only purpose it served was to awaken me to the reality on the ground. It put together bits and pieces of information I've heard over the years into one complete portrait.

Basically, the situation as it now stands is something like this: originally coming only from Mexico, immigrants are increasingly coming from points farther south in Central and South America. They hitch rides on so-called "death trains," clinging to the tops of freight trains and sometimes falling to certain injury – or death. After taking whatever transportation they can to the border, they face a miles-long journey through searing desert and punishing landscape. Getting caught by the border patrol is the least of their worries. It is a matter of sheer survival.

What went through my mind after seeing what these people have to go through to get here is this: if they can travel thousands of miles from home and risk their lives in a barren landscape, what difference will a wall on the border make?

This is not to say that we shouldn't try to secure our border. I think it is a

worthwhile endeavor to do so. But I think despite even our best efforts, people will still find way to get through. In computer terminology, it is the ultimate firewall hack. You have a border thousands of miles long with millions of people trying to get through. It's like putting your finger in an open water spigot: some will still leak out on the sides.

So what do we do? We must face the reality that the immense economic opportunity afforded by American jobs compared to the poverty that exists south of the border is too powerful a lure to take an enforcement-only approach. Any immigration reform this nation undertakes must take this reality into account to be effective. While focusing on feel-good measures like walling off the border may be politically popular, we ignore this reality behind illegal immigration at our peril.

One of the primary complaints of those who oppose illegal immigration (a complaint I share) is that they don't learn to speak English. Unlike previous immigrants to our country, they are not assimilating; they are maintaining their native culture.

Many people who criticize the migrants' insistence on their own culture,

however, forget one key aspect about previous immigrants: they were forced to assimilate by "Americanization" classes, a predominant anti-immigrant atmosphere and – more recently under legal immigration – the requirement to learn English and American history to become U.S. citizens.

As a country that recognizes multiculturalism, I don't think we should necessarily "Americanize" immigrants, but it does seem that as long as we do nothing, these immigrants will continue to remain largely isolated and hold to themselves as a separate community.

In this light, the "path to citizenship" argument makes the most sense. By providing the incentive of achieving U.S. citizenship status, we will provide a way for people to choose to assimilate without discrimination or coercion. They will learn English; they will learn about our history as a nation. Otherwise, the problem of illegal immigration will continue unabated – not just the flow of migrants, but their de facto segregation here at home resulting from their sub-legal status.

It is neither practical nor humane to round up millions of migrants for deportation. It is not practical to rely on securing the border alone. It is practical, however, to provide migrants with an opportunity to participate in the American landscape as true Americans. This way we get to keep our country; English will continue to unify our nation; and migrants will get the economic opportunity they've been looking for.





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