



the **cdt**

FREE

MONDAY
NOVEMBER 27, 2006
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Grad student follows the path to

| Page 3

Plath



The independent student press of Virginia Commonwealth University

INSIDE

News

No vaccination,
no registration

Sports

Local boy in bigs

Spectrum

Sean Ono Lennon's
sophomore effort

SEAN LENNON FRIENDLY FIRE



Opinion

Thanksgiving
at work



Briefs

WEATHER

MONDAY



TUESDAY



WEDNESDAY



THURSDAY



The Commonwealth Times strives to be accurate in gathering news. If you believe we have made an error, please call Executive Editor Karen Bolipata at 828-6056 or e-mail her at editor@commonwealthtimes.com. Corrections will appear on this page.

Cover graphic:
Katy McDaniel and Karen Sagun

IN THE NEWS compiled from wire reports

WORLD

LONDON – A rare radioactive substance killed an ex-KGB spy turned Kremlin critic, the British government said Friday. In a dramatic statement written before he died, Alexander Litvinenko called Russian President Vladimir Putin “barbaric and ruthless” and blamed him personally for the poisoning.

Putin, in Finland, offered his condolences for the death of Litvinenko and denied any involvement. He called the release of the deathbed statement a “political provocation” by his opponents.

Police said they were treating the case as an “unexplained death” – but not yet as a murder.

The 43-year-old Litvinenko, who fiercely criticized Putin’s government from

his refuge in London since 2000, told police he believed he was poisoned Nov. 1 while investigating the October slaying of Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya, another critic of Putin.

Litvinenko’s statement, read by his friend Alex Goldfarb to reporters outside the hospital, put the blame for his death squarely on Putin.

He accused Putin of having “no respect for life, liberty or any civilized value.”

The former spy, who sought asylum in Britain in 2000 and became a citizen, worked tirelessly to uncover corruption in Russia’s Federal Security Service, the successor agency to the Soviet-era KGB, and unmask Politkovskaya’s killers.

NATION

NEW YORK – The nation’s retailers had a strong start to the holiday shopping season, according to results announced Saturday by a national research group that tracks sales at mall-based stores. One big exception was Wal-Mart Stores Inc., which said it expects to report same-store sales in November below its already lackluster forecast.

According to ShopperTrak RCT Corp., which tracks total sales at more than 45,000 mall-based retail outlets, total sales rose 6 percent to \$8.96 billion on Friday, the start of the holiday shopping season, compared to the same day a year ago.

Wal-Mart, however, estimated it will post a 0.1 percent decline in same-store

sales, or sales at stores opened at least a year, in November. That’s slightly below its original projections for flat sales for the month, compared to the year-ago period. The results cover the four-week period that ended through Friday. Same-store sales are considered a key indicator of a retailer’s health.

While Black Friday – so named because it was traditionally when the surge of shopping made stores profitable – starts holiday shopping, it is not considered a bellwether for the season. However, merchants see Black Friday as setting an important tone to the overall season: what consumers see that day influences where they will shop for the rest of the year.

STATE & LOCAL

NORFOLK – Customs agents found more than 1,000 boxes of counterfeit Nike shoes worth \$1 million when they raided a refrigerated shipping container at the port. The faux Nikes were stashed behind boxes of salt kelp and jellyfish.

Nikes are second only to Louis Vuitton products in the amount of counterfeit apparel that enters the United States. They are part of a \$1 billion-a-year worldwide black market in counterfeit goods.

Four local retail stores have been caught in recent months selling phony merchandise, including Nike knockoffs and counterfeit NFL and NBA jerseys.

In U.S. District Court, Lawrence Pet-taway pleaded guilty Monday on behalf

of his corporation, N-Zone Sportswear Inc., to trafficking in counterfeit goods. He admitted that his store had for sale 617 pairs and 47 single fake Nike shoes.

Authorities determined that the counterfeit Nikes were purchased for \$37.50 a pair from Singapore and Chinese suppliers, well below the wholesale price.

The knockoffs are typically sold at flea markets, by small retailers and in consignment stores.

In Portsmouth last month, authorities seized 1,100 pairs of counterfeit shoes, including Nike and Timberland brands, as well as 192 knockoff NFL and NBA jerseys.

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An overlooked poem receives a VCU spotlight

SHEENA JEFFERS
News Co-Editor

Notes scribbled in the margins of textbooks, novels or books of poetry are not unusual findings for students reading their way through used textbooks. Most students overlook previous highlighted markings or scribbled side thoughts. But every once in a while, such notes lead to significant discoveries.

When Anna Journey found a side-margin note in a previously owned copy of "The Great Gatsby," it led to an unpublished poem by Sylvia Plath, one of America's prized poets.

Plath is recognized as one of America's most important poets of the 20th century. At the age of 8, Plath published her first poem and drawing in Boston newspapers. She continued to develop her writing throughout her education, leaving some of her writings hidden and unpublished.

Journey, a graduate student in VCU's creative writing program, discovered one of Plath's unpublished pieces after receiving a tip from Bryant Mangum in her literature course on F. Scott Fitzgerald. While she was

curious to learn more about Fitzgerald, her true passion was Plath.

Journey, who said she admires Plath's "practiced grace" and "well crafted sounds" in her poetry, told Mangum about her interest in studying Plath. Mangum, who studied Fitzgerald for his graduate work, knew Plath's personal copy of Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby" was available in the Matthew J. and Arlyn Bruccoli Collection at the University of South Carolina. He also knew the copy came with Plath's handwritten notes in the margins.

Mangum's news further piqued Journey's interest in Plath's work, and she began pursuing research.

Journal articles revealed Plath wrote "L'Ennui" next to a passage in "The Great Gatsby" where a character, Daisy Buchanan, complains, "I've been everywhere and seen everything and done everything."

Journey located a poem titled "Ennui" in

PLATH continued to Page CT4

Sylvia Plath Biography

- Born in Boston in 1932.
- Graduated Smith College in 1955.
- Won a Fulbright Scholarship to Cambridge University.
- Married English poet Ted Hughes.
- Mother of two children, Frieda and Nicholas Hughes.
- Committed suicide in London in 1963.
- Buried in the church yard at Heptonstall, West Yorkshire.
- Recognized as one of America's most important poets of the 20th century.

Biographical information from Blackbird.

ennui

Get the right vaccines, get the right classes

Students must meet immunization requirement to register on time

CORTNEY ANDERSON
Contributing Writer

When freshmen tried to register for classes last week, some were hit with a harsh reality about immunization: no vaccination, no registration.

VCU students are required to get vaccines for diseases such as the mumps and meningitis. If they do not, the university will put holds on their accounts, preventing them from registering for classes.

Recent outbreaks of the mumps at the College of William and Mary, University of Virginia and Virginia Polytechnic and State University have brought at-

tention to students' susceptibility to diseases and the importance of vaccinations. University Student Health Services is urging students to get the required vaccines so that they will be protected – and be able to register for classes on time.

"This generation, they don't remember measles, they don't know polio," said Jeannine Uzel, VCU's immunization coordinator. "The mumps outbreak kind of brings it back."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there were 5,783 reported cases of the mumps in the United States between Jan. 1 and Oct. 7.

Besides feeling miserable,

contracting the mumps means missing school for possibly nine days.

Virginia law requires all full-time college students at four-year institutions to get vaccinated for tetanus, hepatitis B, meningitis, tuberculosis and the mumps (a vaccination that also covers measles and rubella). If not vaccinated, students must sign a waiver saying they acknowledge the risks involved by not getting the vaccines.

College students are required to be vaccinated for meningitis because of close living quarters; it is transmitted through respira-

VACCINES continued to Page CT5

WHERE TO BE IMMUNIZED

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MCV Campus Clinic

Virginia Mechanics Institute Building, Room 305, 1000 E. Marshall St., 828-9220

Regular hours

8:30-11 a.m. Monday and Wednesday
1-3:30 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday

PLATH continued from Page CT3

an index of Plath's "Collected Poems," but she did not think much of it. She assumed the poem was previously published.

"For weeks I assumed that it was uncollected," she said.

But Journey was wrong. Plath's "Ennui" sat between overlooked pages of books in The Lilly Library at Indiana University unnoticed, hardly viewed and never published.

Still interested in the Petrarchan sonnet, she requested copies of the poem. It wasn't long before a large manila envelope containing two typescripts of Plath's drafts arrived in Journey's mailbox.

Wanting to cite the poem for a paper for Mangum, she asked the librarians where the poem had first appeared.

To Journey and the librarian's surprise, the poem had never appeared in any publication.

"My initial reaction was pleasure," Journey said. "I never dreamed that I was holding an unpublished sonnet by Sylvia Plath."

Though Plath never published the poem, scholars believe she meant to publish it one day. They found Plath's handwritten name and her address at Smith College in the upper right-hand corner of the paper. This is something Plath would do to her poems she deemed good enough for publication. Scholars, however, said it could have been her way of identifying the poem to a college professor.

Either way, all of Journey's graduate plans changed. She had a new mission and an opportunity to pursue an untouched area of study.

"I was delighted at the possibility of pursuing some original research. The idea of uncovering some new connection about her writing process thrilled me," she said.

Journey's joy was contagious. Mangum said Journey's discovery shone light on a relatively neglected area of study.

"She has made an invaluable contribution to Plath studies," he said.

After learning that Plath's poem had never crossed a publisher's desk, Journey told her English professors and members of Blackbird, VCU's online journal of literature and the arts. They shared Journey's excitement.

"I didn't consider the poem's unpublished status a secret," Journey said.

But she wanted to change the status of Plath's poem to share the work with others.

She wrote a letter to Frieda Hughes, Plath's daughter and the current executor of the estate of Plath, for first serial publication rights. It's not an easy process, Mangum said.

"It is difficult to get first serial rights," he said. "When copyright holders issue first serial publication rights, they are in fact wedding themselves to the journal that they grant these rights to."

If the rights were granted, they would remain throughout the duration of the copyright, which is typically more than a lifetime. This means every time "Ennui" appears in any other publication, the author would have to cite Blackbird as an indication of its first appearance.

Journey wrote to Hughes about every six months requesting the rights to publish the poem. Nearly two years later, Hughes agreed. VCU's Blackbird was the first to publish "Ennui."

Journey chose Blackbird for its "reputation for excellence," which enjoys a "large international readership." Blackbird receives over 30,000 visits a month, exceeding most literary journal readerships, Journey said.

"Ennui" is now permanently stored in Blackbird's archive for researchers accessing digital journals all over the world.

Journey could not be happier. She said the poem written during Plath's undergraduate years shows the evolution of her poetic genius.

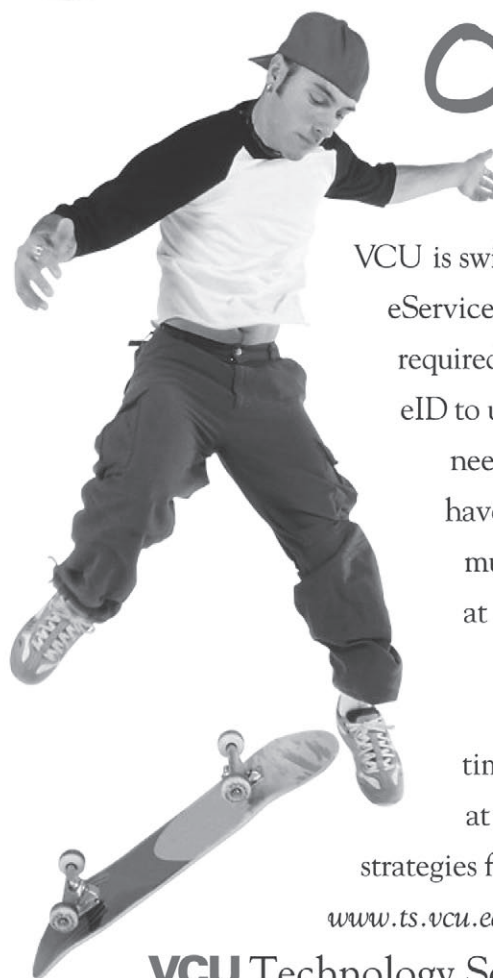
"I believe no poet ever worked harder to become a poet than Sylvia Plath," she said.

A poem brought from the quiet corners of a library now circulates in cyberspace for undergraduates, researchers, emerging scholars and for those who enjoy poetry—exactly where Journey wanted Plath's work to be.

*"Tea leaves
thwart those
who court
catastrophe,
designing
futures where
nothing will
occur."*

— first lines of
Sylvia Plath's
"Ennui"

GET A JUMP ON IT!



VCU is switching to a new system for Student eServices for Fall '07 registration. You'll be required to have a strong password for your eID to use this new system. Your password needs to contain 7-12 characters, must have both upper and lower case letters, must contain at least one number not at the beginning or end, and must use at least 4 different characters. You can change your password at any time by logging into the eID manager at eidmanager.vcu.edu. To learn more strategies for choosing a strong password, visit www.ts.vcu.edu/faq/security/strongpasswords.html.

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CRIME LOG

Nov. 17

A male was arrested at the Larrick Student Center for being drunk in public and trespassing.

Nov. 18

A male was arrested in Johnson Hall for possession of a controlled substance.

A female was arrested in Johnson Hall for possession of marijuana.

VACCINES continued from Page CT3

tory droplets. Meningitis is an infection of a person's spinal cord and fluid around the brain causing tissue to swell. There are five different groups of meningitis: A, B, C, W-135 and Y. The required meningitis vaccine protects against all strains except B.

On Sept. 9, a student at U.Va. died from meningitis. Shortly after the death, John Casteen, president of U.Va., sent an e-mail to students. He said precautions were taken to examine anyone with whom the student had close contact. The student, who did not live on campus, died from meningitis group B.

Uzel said meningitis is rare. But, she said, "It's serious because it is a severe disease. You can get it at noon and be dead by 8."

According to the National Meningitis Association, nearly 3,000 Americans contract the disease each year. Of those, 10 to 12 percent die. Survivors of the disease may live with permanent disabilities including brain damage, kidney disease, hearing loss or even lost limbs.

Uzel has a daughter going to college next fall. She said she wants to protect her daughter from whatever she can. "I can't make sure she wears a helmet when she rides her bike, or protect her from strain B (of meningitis). But at least I know she'll be protected from A and C."

Student Health Services offers all required vaccines. Uzel said most insurance companies cover the vaccines.

Virginia law allows students to waive two vaccinations – meningococcal vaccine and hepatitis B. Students may also waive vaccinations if they would be detrimental to their health or for religious reasons.

Freshmen must get immunized before the second semester to register for classes. Students can check eServices to see if there are holds on their accounts.

Symptoms of the mumps

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Tiredness
- Loss of appetite
- Swelling of salivary glands

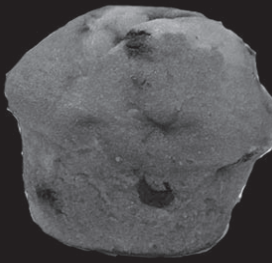
How to prevent the mumps

Two doses of the MMR (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccination is 95 percent effective in preventing mumps. Other prevention strategies include:

- Hand washing
- Using alcohol-based sanitizers
- Good respiratory hygiene (cover your mouth)

For more information on meningitis, the mumps or other diseases, log onto www.cdc.gov, the Web site of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. For more information about meningitis, visit the National Meningitis Association's Web site at www.nmaus.org.

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Underground library lab offers space, quiet

ALEX MAYO
Contributing Writer

Rhett Richardson paces the first floor of the James Branch Cabell Library, frantically looking for an open computer.

The 21-year-old senior needs to type a research paper that slipped his mind, and he needs to do it fast. His class starts in less than an hour. Without a single computer available, Richardson gives up hope on finishing the assignment on time – that is, until a passerby notices his dilemma and offers this advice:

“Try the computer lab in the basement.”

Like Richardson, many students are unaware of the computer lab located in the basement of Cabell Library. It offers nearly 100 computers for students with a valid VCU ID.

In fact, the basement computer lab is run especially for VCU students.

“This Cabell B-8 Lab was designed to provide a student-only service, whereas the VCU library first floor is open to the public,” said Vivian Pair, an analyst for Technology Services.

The service gives students exclusive access to 95 desktop computers – 86 Dell PCs and nine Power Macs.

The lab also offers more resources unavailable on the first floor. For instance, there are four pay-for-print printers, multiple scanners and an adaptive work station for people with disabilities. The computers also have additional programs installed.

“The computers contain standard Microsoft desktop suites as well as some specialty software as requested by

Humanities and Sciences,” Pair said.

She is referring to statistical analysis software such as SAS and SPSS and programs like Adobe PhotoShop.

The basement computer lab offers more than special equipment and software, however. It also provides students a quiet, more focused environment.

“Upstairs, it gets really crowded, and there are people walking around all the

time,” said Manasi Trivedi, the basement lab monitor. “Here, it is quite silent; you get your own little privacy.”

For an even quieter atmosphere, Manasi suggests working on a Sunday. “There are less people. It’s just the ambience. You can really focus.”

As a specialized service with so much to offer to students, it is a mystery that many aren’t even aware of the basement computer lab.

One of the reasons they may overlook the resource could be the nature of the library orientation tours. Although the library offers free tours at the beginning of each semester, the basement computer lab isn’t always one of the highlights.

“Most of the library staff members who lead the tours mention the basement computer lab. However, most tour groups are not taken into the basement,” said Donna Coghill, director of public relations and marketing for the library.

For Richardson, the knowledge of the B-8 computer lab couldn’t have come at a better time.

“The basement lab saved me on my assignment,” he said. “From now on, I’ll probably just come straight to the basement when I need to use a computer in the library.”

B8 Computer Lab Hours

The B-8 Computer Lab is on an extended/exam hours schedule through Dec. 19. Under that schedule:

Monday-Thursday – The lab is open 24 hours a day.

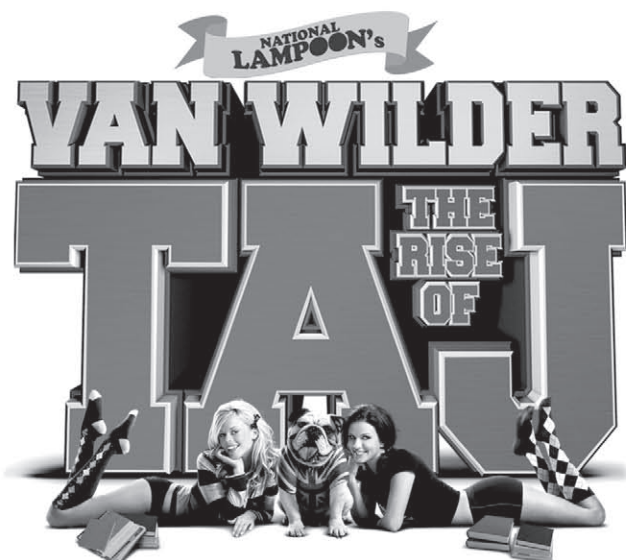
Friday – The lab closes at 8:30 p.m.

Saturday – The lab is open 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Sunday – The lab opens at 11 a.m. and stays open until 8:30 p.m. Friday.

For more information on the basement computer lab, visit www.ts.vcu.edu/faq/labs/b8.html or call the Technology Services Help Desk at (804) 828-2227.

www.commonwealthtimes.com



Riding with strangers, with help from VCU

ERIN ANTILL

Contributing Writer

Would you take a ride from a complete stranger? Some students are doing just that, with help from VCU.

They are using the VCU RideBoard, which helps students find rides with other students to school, back home and just about anywhere else.

The board is located in the basement of the University Student Commons. Students can write their names, phone numbers and destinations on a ticket and post it on the RideBoard for others to see.

But how safe is it to get in the car with a total stranger?

Martha Harper, head of Off Campus Student Services, said as long as students are safe and smart in getting rides, the board is a great benefit. Safety is the main push around campus right now, and the RideBoard is no exception.

"Question your ride; make sure they go to VCU. Meet them beforehand, and if they make you uncomfortable, don't go. Don't make yourself a victim," Harper said.

The university is not responsible for students, she said. Harper compares the RideBoard to the Trading

Post or other classified ads. It is a student's job to make sure everything is on the up and up.

Recently, freshman Jackie Barta needed a ride to James Madison University to see a football game and catch up with friends. So, Barta used the RideBoard.

"I feel safe putting my information out there. If I felt weird, I wouldn't get in the car. I ask why they're going to JMU and definitely check to make sure they're a student," Barta said.

This is not the first time she's tried to use the RideBoard. But even her offer to pay for gas didn't get her a ride. She is hopeful she will find a ride next time.

Many students have a difficult time finding rides this way. One look at the board, and you can see that far more students are looking for rides than are offering rides.

Some students aren't open to sharing a ride with a stranger.

Jennifer Wishart, a former VCU student, lived on or around campus for five years. During her first years here, she commuted to Northern Virginia to see her parents at least once a month. Two years ago, they moved to West Virginia, and she has been

driving there since then to see them. She has never considered using the RideBoard to find someone to ride with.

"Sure, it would help save on gas and probably make the ride shorter, but I don't know these people. Like, why do I want to spend five hours in my car with a perfect stranger? I'd rather not take any chances. They could be weird or just annoying, and I don't need that," Wishart said.

From early childhood, many students are taught not to take rides from strangers. As young adults, some students are still following that advice. Harper said she thinks those lessons make it easier for students to stay safe.

"You have to hope parents taught their students how to be safe," Harper said.

Harper has a 16-year-old daughter and said she would be comfortable knowing her daughter was using the RideBoard because they have talked about safety. But would Harper be willing to use the RideBoard herself?

"I would at 18; I'm not so sure now," she said. "Then I would have assumed they were good people. I would be very cautious now."

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Sports

In Brief

Men's Basketball

Pirates	26	25	-	51
Rams	38	36	-	74

VCU, led by senior guard Jesse Pelot-Rosa's career-high 20 points, beat Hampton University, 74-51, Saturday night in the Rams' home opener at the Alltel Pavilion at the Stuart C. Siegel Center.

The Rams (3-2), who were held scoreless through the first four minutes of the game, went on a 10-0 run over the next two minutes to take an early 10-4 advantage.

Hampton fought back and pulled within two points with eight minutes remaining but VCU closed the half with a 16-6 run.

The Rams began the second half with a 17-5 run, pushing their lead to 24 points.

"I'm very pleased with the energy we came out with on the defensive end," said VCU head coach Anthony Grant. "We limited the opportunities for them. Coming in, they were averaging 28 three-point attempts per game. The key with the press was not to give up 3's. We put together two good halves. We have to improve offensively. We did a good job in maintaining our focus for the full game."

Sophomore guard Eric Maynor finished with a season-high 17 points for the Rams, while senior guard B.A. Walker and junior forward Wil Fameni added 14 points and 12 points, respectively.

Rockets	29	31	-	60
Rams	21	38	-	59

ST. THOMAS, Virgin Islands – For the fourth time this season, VCU had at least four players score in double figures, but fell to Toledo 60-59 victory in the third round of the Paradise Jam.

The Rams had 32 rebounds, 11 turnovers, eight steals and 20 fouls.

"I thought Toledo came out tonight and showed more aggression and passion early in the game," said VCU head coach Anthony Grant.

"We showed the marks of a young basketball team. We still need to understand that we have to play for 40 minutes. We are showing signs of becoming a team that can do that. I

See **BRIEFS**, Page CT9

CT8 • commonwealthtimes.com

Big relief

VCU alumnus pitches for Padres

Cla Meredith was traded to the Padres in 2005.

Image courtesy San Diego Padres

COLIN SEMLER

Contributing Writer

The first big league appearance for former VCU star Cla Meredith was hardly what one would call a promising start.

Called on to replace a struggling Boston middle reliever in the top of the seventh inning, Meredith walked into a tied game with one out and a man on second base. Two outs were all he needed.

Meredith walked the first batter. Not the best start for the rookie.

Now with men on first and second base, a groundball to the infield could get him out of trouble and out of the inning.

Meredith walked the next batter.

The pressure mounted. The bases were loaded. The game was still tied. A groundball in the infield would still end the inning. No harm done.

The next batter put the ball 325-feet over the fence and put the Red Sox out of the game.

Shortly after, Meredith was shipped down to the minor leagues, and he had a disappointing finish to the 2005 season. He was traded to the San Diego Padres' organization.

The trade was a blessing in disguise.

"When I was traded to San Diego, it was sort of a motivation for me. I had something to prove," Meredith said in a recent postseason interview. And he wasted little time in 2006 proving himself.

Meredith was a regular in the Padres bullpen in early July, becoming a solid set-up man for closer Trevor Hoffman. He finished the season with a 1.07 ERA while posting a 5-1 record.

As the 2006 season closed, many

hometown heroes made postseason appearances. The World Series-bound Detroit Tigers featured three such players: Justin Verlander (Goochland), Brandon Inge (VCU) and Sean Casey (University of Richmond).

But central Virginia should be proud of Meredith too for his tenacious comeback and for what some fans hailed as perhaps the most memorable streak of the season.

"I get paid to go out there and get guys out," Meredith said. "I made some good pitches, had some good defense behind me and just kept getting guys out."

And getting them out. And getting them out.

Meredith became virtually unhittable for a span of nearly two months, pitching 34 consecutive scoreless innings – a franchise record.

See **PADRES**, Page CT11

THIS WEEK

Men's Basketball

Tue. Nov. 28
@ Elon, 7 p.m.
Elon, N.C.

Sat. Dec. 2
vs. Houston, 7:30 p.m.

Women's Basketball

Wed. Nov. 29
@ Norfolk State, 7 p.m.
Norfolk, Va.

Sun. Dec. 3
@ James Madison,
2 p.m.
Harrisonburg, Va.

Track and Field

Fri. Dec. 1
Navy Invitational
Annapolis, Md.

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



NFL

Redskins outlast Panthers 17-13

JOSEPH WHITE
Associated Press

LANDOVER, Md. – Jason Campbell more than doubled his day’s production with a single pass to Chris Cooley.

The Washington Redskins tight end caught the ball at midfield, escaped two tackles and ran down the sideline to finish off a career-long 66-yard reception, the winning touchdown in Sunday’s 17-13 victory over the Carolina Panthers.

For a while, the only interesting highlights were two blocked punts and an incredible catch by Carolina’s Steve Smith at the back of the end zone.

The victory broke a two-game losing streak for the Redskins (4-7) and gave Campbell his first win in his second NFL start. The team responded well to coach Joe Gibbs’ call to return to his principles of running the ball and stopping the run, but it took the big play to Cooley with 4:26 remaining to beat the Panthers (6-5) in a game dominated by defense.

Campbell had only 52 yards passing when he hit Cooley on a third-and-8

at the Washington 34. Campbell finished 11-for-23 for 118 yards with two touchdowns and one interception. Ladell Betts, the Redskins featured running back now that Clinton Portis is out for the year, ran for 104 yards on 24 carries.

The Redskins defense had its first good game of the season, and it was a gem. The Panthers were held to 264 total yards, and the much maligned secondary limited Smith to 34 yards on five catches. Safety Sean Taylor made a tackle on fourth down to stop Carolina’s next-to-last drive, and he intercepted Jake Delhomme in the end zone to end the Panthers’ last possession.

Smith gave the Panthers a 13-10 lead with 7:55 to play when he reached high for the ball at the back of the end zone and managed to have both feet hit the ground inches from the white line for an 8-yard touchdown catch.

The Panthers defense would usually take over from there. Carolina entered the game having allowed 10 points in two games since its week off, and the Redskins’ only touchdown through three quarters Sunday was set up by a

blocked punt by rookie Rocky McIntosh. That led to Campbell’s 4-yard TD pass to Antwaan Randle El.

The game’s other blocked punt came near the end of the first half. Adam Seward got a hand on Derrick Frost’s attempt, and the ball settled at the Redskins 44. Three plays later, John Kasay kicked a 51-yard field goal on the last play of the half to give Carolina a 6-3 lead.

Delhomme finished 23-for-38 for 168 yards with one touchdown and two interceptions. Rookie running back DeAngelo Williams, starting for DeShaun Foster (elbow), ran for 63 yards on 17 carries.

No one will mistake either team for an offensive juggernaut anytime soon, and those reputations were kept safe in a first half that included nine punts, no touchdowns and only 91 combined passing yards. The punting duel left the Redskins with good field position for much of the half, but they had to settle for two field goal attempts by Nick Novak. He missed from 37 yards, then converted from 42.

Hey, sports guys!

Sports Guys:
I am a fan of The CT and read it regularly.

There was one issue in particular that concerns me. This is the issue of women’s basketball sophomore Quanitra Hollingsworth. I am aware of the great accomplishments she makes, and they are literally visible to me when I attend each game.

What I am most concerned with is that the game’s focus always ends up on her and usually, only her. Although, I see that Krystal Vaughn is mentioned as well as Brittany Pinkney and Michele Cosel in the most recent article.

There are about 11 or 12 other players on the team that contribute and shine just as well as she does and I think that they should be highlighted more often. It’s possible that senior positions are overlooked because of this one player and again, I agree with her recognition but feel that there is no “I” in team...

– Ashley Tipton

Ms. Tipton: Point taken.

BRIEFS, from Page CT8

hope we will be able to learn from this experience.”

The rams finished 1-2 in the tournament.

Rams	28	43	-	71
Cougars	30	29	-	59

ST. THOMAS, Virgin Islands – Senior guard B.A. Walker became VCU’s career three-point leader and the 25th 1,000-point scorer as the Rams beat Charleston 71-59 in the second round of the Paradise Jam.

Charleston led through most of the first half. VCU had its first lead of the game with six minutes left in the period, but the Cougars pushed ended the half with a 30-28 advantage.

“Our effort was great tonight,” said senior guard Jesse Pellot-Rosa. “In the second half, we picked up our defensive intensity. We knocked down some shots in the second half. We rebounded better tonight.”

Pellot-Rosa led the Rams with 18 points. Junior forward Wil Fameni and sophomore guard Eric Maynor each had 12 points for VCU. Walker finished with 10 points, five assists and five rebounds.

“It was a hard-fought game at both ends,” said Walker. “Charleston fought hard throughout the game. We stuck together and were the better team tonight.”

Women’s Basketball				
Pirates	31	42	-	73
Rams	38	40	-	78

Junior forward Krystal Vaughn erupted for 24 points and seven rebounds as VCU held off East Carolina, 78-73, and moved to 5-0 for the first time in program history Friday night at the Alltel Pavilion at the Stuart C. Siegel Center.

Vaughn, who missed her career high point total by one, dropped 9-of-16 shots from the floor, and 6-of-7 from the free throw line. Freshman forward D’Andra Moss added a career-high 17 points and seven rebounds, while sophomore center Quanitra Hollingsworth had 13 points.

The Rams never trailed after halftime and led by as many as nine points in the second half, but East Carolina didn’t give up without a fight.

VCU shot a season-high 49 percent (27-of-55) from the field in the game,

including 52 percent (12-of-23) in the second half. They forced 23 turnovers.

Great Danes	19	36	-	55
Rams	39	28	-	67

Sophomore center Quanitra Hollingsworth had a game-high 22 points on the way to a 67-55 VCU win against Albany Tuesday at the Alltel Pavilion at the Stuart C. Siegel Center.

The Rams built a 39-19 halftime lead behind suffocating pressure defense. VCU forced 14 turnovers in the first 20 minutes and limited Albany to just eight field goals on 29 attempts.

Junior forward Krystal Vaughn added 16 points and senior guard Michele Cosel had 11 points four assists, four rebounds and two steals.

Volleyball						
Rams	26	22	28	-	-	0
Broncos	30	30	30	-	-	3

Rams	30	29	24	22	-	1
Anteaters	26	31	30	30	-	3

LONG BEACH, Calif. – VCU sophomore setter Cat Juson had a total of 77 assists in two Saturday matches, establishing a new school single-season record of 1,390. The Rams dropped both matches.

Juson set the record in VCU’s first match of the day with 32 assists in a 3-0 loss to the Western Michigan. She surpassed Suzanne Dawson’s mark of 1,314 assists, established in 1995.

Senior Ludmila Francescatto added 12 kills against the Broncos.

Later, Juson had 45 more assists against UC Irvine, which beat VCU 3-1.

Francescatto had 16 kills against the Anteaters, while Rams’ sophomore Elisa Kuehnel led VCU with 18 kills.

Rams	16	21	18	-	-	0
49ers	30	30	30	-	-	3

LONG BEACH, Calif. – VCU senior outside hitter Ludmila Francescatto had 11 kills and broke the school’s 16-year-old single-season record, but Long Beach State won 3-0 Friday at the Walter Pyramid.

VCU slipped to 16-16 this season.

OPINION

The reasons we write

JAMES K. GALLOWAY
Sports Editor

When I first got into journalism, I never paid much attention to sportswriters. It's probably because I have more interest in current events, politics and stories about NASA.

Sports and all the talk around sports was not something I ever concerned myself with. I wasn't interested in learning about the new Redskins' kicker, and I had a better appreciation for Dennis Rodman's ability to shock a crowd rather than his rebound performance.

I wasn't just some pasty little shut-in though – I played basketball, soccer and even two years of baseball despite a complete lack of ability (my stepdad cheered like I hit a home run during batting practice because I finally managed to make contact with the ball, sending it down center field), but people play sports because there's something that playing a sport does for a person that no writer can capture on paper.

So, why do sports writers do it?

From the perspective of someone who used to play sports regularly, I would say it's probably a bunch of old folks with bad knees who want to live through their words in some deprived attempt to get a mental taste of the past. It's true that when you put yourself in the mindset of the athlete you once were – that is, when you think of making the play, the shape of the defense and that feeling you once had of making eye contact with a teammate just long enough to send the signal that you're going wide open – the tingly smell of freshly cut grass infiltrates your senses, bringing a tear to the cheek if it catches you off guard.

That's powerful stuff if you place any real value in it, but such an outlook can only account for a small percentage of writers who cover sports.

In other cases, there are the types who want to write,

perhaps because it's the only thing they can see themselves doing but either don't know what to write about or have no other way of putting food on the table. These are the minds who were given overbearing spells of encouragement by their teachers and parents to do something with their talent but were never given so much as a clue into what they ought to be writing about. Will it be presidential campaigns? Concert reviews? Cockfighting? Sports?

Typically, questions are not something adults like to extend to a developing mind because it exposes the notion that maybe they don't know everything. So,

people either go idle or write sports. In any case, it's a chance to break into the industry and engage in some belated contemplation in the meantime.

So, can you tell which type I am by now? Did I just fall into the position or is there something deeper behind all this? Sports editor – it's just a simple title I didn't ask for but I've

learned to love it. The nature of the job is very basic; like with any job, there are responsibilities I must tend to. There are some I may neglect, and others I can't but do anyway. For better or for worse, this will possibly be my leg up so I can move onto the good stuff – cockfighting and bear-trapping. Drive-by shootings and protest rallies. Reporting the figures that anger the gods and beating the competition at their own game.

For all the wrong reasons I'll do the right thing, writing sports and bringing you box scores.

The most important thing I've learned from writing sports for myself is that like anything, if you find a passion to do it, the end result is better. And your results will define the integrity of all the work you did leading up to it. Just like water flows downhill, niche writers will find their places or die trying.

In all likelihood, a career sportswriter writes in his office for the same reason the athletes are out there playing on the field – love of the game (or of the money).

"The most important thing I've learned from writing sports for myself is that like anything, if you find a passion to do it, the end result is better."

Section Pool: Week 12

One might think that we Sports Guys would look ahead a couple of days, see that the last day before Thanksgiving break landed on a production day, and as such, print our picks for the week a little earlier than usual. Let me tell you: we just don't have that sort of foresight.

So again, and I blame James Galloway, we were caught with our pants down. It's not unusual for this duo.

Last week's tardy picks saw Galloway gain three games on De Soto. There were many upsets (think Dallas over Indianapolis) and quite honestly, De Soto could very well have picked up a few games on Galloway if things were a little different.

This week has a few good "could go either way" games. Most, however, are turkey games. Battles between teams nobody cares much about and the like.

Here are our yawn – picks for the week:

Galloway (86-66): Miami, Tampa Bay, Denver, Arizona, Washington, Cincinnati, N.Y. Jets, Buffalo, Atlanta, Baltimore, San Francisco, Oakland, Chicago, N.Y. Giants, Philadelphia, Green Bay. **De Soto (80-72):** Miami, Tampa Bay, Arizona, Minnesota, Washington, Cincinnati, N.Y. Jets, Buffalo, Atlanta, Baltimore, San Francisco, San Diego, New England, Tennessee, Indianapolis, Seattle.



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VCU Dining Services invites you to participate in the VCU Starbucks Art Commission Contest

VCU Dining Services is seeking to commission interested artists to create permanent art work for the Starbucks Coffee Store located on the first floor of the James Branch Cabell Library at 901 Park Avenue.

A general information session for interested artists will be held on **Wednesday, December 6, 2006 at 3:30 pm** at the VCU Business Services Large Conference Room located on the first floor of the West Broad Street Parking Deck, 1111 West Broad Street.

The general information session will provide interested artists with information about the commission and a tour of the location. Proposals will be due by the close of business **Tuesday, January 16, 2006.**

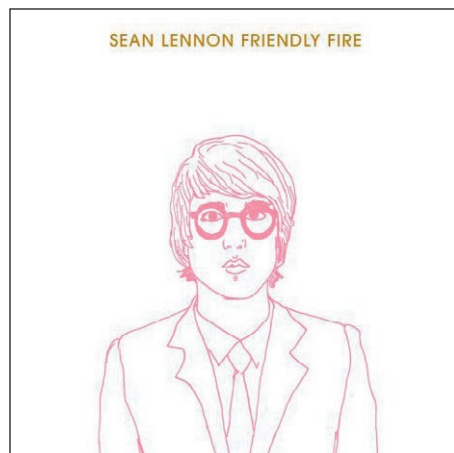


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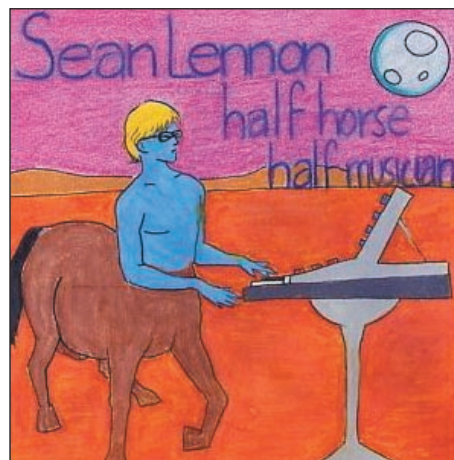


Friendly Fire (2006)



Into the Sun (1998)

EP's



Half Horse, Half Musician (1999)

IT AIN'T ALL ROCK'N'ROLL

But Sean Ono Lennon isn't 'Dead Meat' just yet

VIRGINIA TA

Associate Spectrum Editor

Growing up in the limelight is hard enough for a Hollywood young blood, but how do you follow in the footsteps of your father when your father is an iconic rock 'n' roll legend?

For Sean Ono Lennon, the only son of Beatles founding member John Lennon and avant-garde artist Yoko Ono, you don't.

Since birth, Sean Ono Lennon, 31, has grown up in the afterglow of his father's celebrity. Despite being held up to soaring standards as one of two of John Lennon's offspring, the Lennon son has attempted to make a name for himself, apart from his father's name, in none other than the music industry.

Perhaps taking a cue from older half-brother Julian Lennon, 43, who attempted to break into the pop music scene in the '80s with a few hit songs but was ultimately met with mixed reviews from listeners who either praised the Beatle-esque similarity or frowned upon the striking musical style resemblance, Sean Ono Lennon decided to take baby steps throughout his career in an attempt to find his own true voice.

"I'm not some kind of fringe Beatles celebrity," he said in an interview with Parade Magazine in 1999. "I'm actually a human being with my own art." Seemingly intent on not riding the coattails of his family's name, Sean Ono Lennon has remained

insistent on his art being his—and only his—vision. Though his first appearances on record were on mother Ono's albums "Season of Glass" and "Every Man Has A Woman," he didn't really start his musical career until much later, experimenting with other artists. In 1991, Sean Ono Lennon appeared on Lenny Kravitz's album "Mama Said" and later joined New York-based Japanese duo Cibo Matto as a bass guitarist.

After signing with the Beastie Boys' record label, Grand Royal Records, which he has praised as "the only label on the planet who doesn't care" who his parents are and what his name is, Sean Ono Lennon released his first solo album "Into the Sun" in 1998, which despite being praised by fans as "surprisingly eclectic," was met with mixed reviews.

However, after signing with Capitol Records following the demise of Grand Royal Records, he remained mum in the music scene after "Into the Sun," leaving no word on his anticipated sophomore endeavors.

An explanation for Sean Ono Lennon's almost 10-year hiatus might be that practice makes perfect. "Music does not come easily to me," he said in the interview with Parade Magazine. "I'm definitely one of those people who's got to work hard. I play the same song over and over to get it right."

And if his fans have anything to say about his recently released sophomore album, "Friendly Fire," which was released last month, then Sean Ono Lennon is definitely getting it right. Though his album has garnered mixed reviews from the music press, "Dead Meat," the first single off "Friendly Fire," has quickly become a fan favorite. "Friendly Fire" is a lush 10-song, two-disc multimedia set that includes a short film for every song, which Sean Ono Lennon admitted was "the hardest thing" he's ever done but worth the strife when it comes to creating art.

"In the end, if something is beautiful, I like it," Sean Ono Lennon said in a 2006 interview with Venus magazine. "If it's not beautiful, I don't like it. I feel like you just have to be quiet and listen. There's melodies being whispered all the time. You just have to listen to them."

Badfish hits Richmond with the Sublime style

MARK CRAIG
Staff Writer

Badfish, a tribute to the band Sublime, entered Richmond's Canal Club on Thursday night. Attracting the biggest crowd they've yielded in Richmond, according to bassist Joel Hanks, concertgoers charged to the stage at the first note of the show.

The band opened their set with the song "Badfish," which, coincidentally, spawned the name of the tribute band.

"Who's ready to party tonight?" said Dave Linden, lead singer and guitarist for the tribute band, raising cups to the crowd.

Badfish proceeded to string through Sublime's catalog, including performances of songs from all three of Sublime's studio albums and the infamous cover of the theme song to the cartoon, "Hong Kong Phooey."

During the show, moshing, skanking and the nodding of heads made the show seem more like a party with good friends than a concert.

The crowd consisted of many who have been listening to Sublime for more than a decade, but were unable to catch them live due to the death of Bradley Nowell, Sublime's lead singer and guitarist.

"I never got to see Sublime, and this is the first time I've seen Badfish. I really liked it," said Jen Heilborn, a fan of Sublime for 12 years.

Adam Miller, a fan of Sublime for over a decade, said he would like to have heard more of Badfish's



original music, rather than a set compiled of strictly Sublime tunes.

Badfish's drummer, Scott Begin, said in an interview before the show that they do have their own original songs, but only play them every once in awhile.

The band ended their set with "Bro Hymn Tribute," one of the few songs they play that isn't part of Sublime's catalog. The song, originally performed by Pennywise, is a tribute to the death of their bandmate Jason Thrisk.

"We like to play that song because it's a great sing-along song and incorporates the sentiment of a lost friend," Begin said.

The band started at the University of Rhode Island around 2001, not as a tribute band. The group decided

to play a tribute set at a show around their school and said people went wild.

"It's like leading a sing-along when we play," Linden said.

Linden said that Sublime's music is timeless and that he wants people to continue listening to keep the spirit of Sublime alive. Linden, like most of the concertgoers, never saw the band live.

Begin said that the most rewarding aspect of touring as Badfish is getting up onstage and playing for the crowd, and, of course, the "chicks."

"As soon as I get up on stage, it's the best feeling," Begin said.

The band started touring around Rhode Island, New Jersey and New York at first. But for the last two years, the band has taken on a full-time touring schedule, encompassing all of the East Coast, the South and Las Vegas.

"We had to make a decision; either keep our jobs, or quit our jobs and...make things happen," Begin said.

Badfish toured through the Richmond club Alley Katz before but, according to Hanks, not a lot of people showed up.

"It was always kind of an off night, like a Sunday, when we played Richmond. So, not a lot of people would come out," Begin said.

After the show, the band said they would tour through Richmond again on their next tour.

"I'm definitely coming to see them again," Miller said after the show.

'Clerks II' hits the counters

KATIE PUGH
Spectrum Editor

On Tuesday, Kevin Smith's newest hit "Clerks II" will hit shelves on DVD. This chapter of the View Askew saga follows Dante and Randal after the infamous Quick Stop Groceries store of the first movie – and seen through many subsequent films – burns down, and the duo are forced to become employed at Mooby's, a horrible family-oriented fast-food franchise.

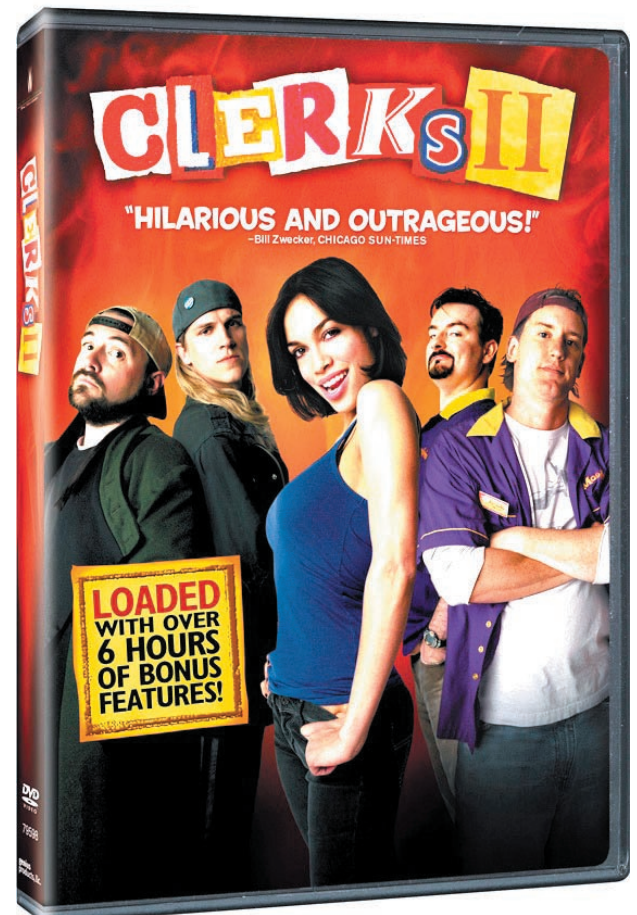
Now, as a returning fan of the movies that made characters like Jay and Silent Bob household names, I really did think it unfair that once again many reviewers and movie critics were holding "Clerks II" to the same torch that "Clerks" built more than 10 years ago. "Clerks" was a masterpiece in and of itself, and to watch every movie Kevin Smith directs get blown out of the water because they don't hold to the same style of cinematography or quality is more than disappointing.

"Clerks II" did well to combine certain thematic elements that made both "Clerks" and some of its

follow-up films like "Chasing Amy" and "Jay and Silent Bob Strike Back" successful. There are all at once witty cuts, slapstick comedy and more puerile humor laid out upon some very serious questions of self-realization and friendship. It brought together some of the both dry and vibrant comedy that made the rest of the Jersey movies so successful.

Once again, many favorite characters and actors are brought into the mix. Jason Lee returns as another minor character, playing Dante and Randal's more successful old high school pal. Jason Mewes and Smith once more take their places as Jay and Silent Bob, who are recovering from rehab yet still dealing drugs outside of the Mooby's establishment. Cameos include other actors such as Wanda Sykes, Ben Affleck and even Kevin Smith's daughter, Harley Quinn Smith.

Overall, I was very pleased with "Clerks II." Although it still pushes some of the same boundaries that made chocolate-covered pretzels a feared confectionary, the underlying message and the medal of the movie is what makes it a keeper.



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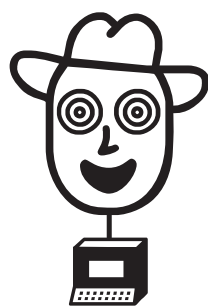
VCU Dining Services



Weird News

Scientists give robots a little life

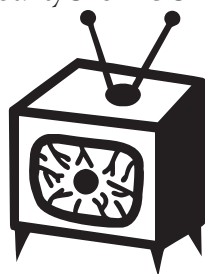
Scientists are making new developments on robots, in an attempt to humanize them just a little bit more. The latest breakthrough in humanized robots is George, a robot reprogrammed at the Navy Center for Applied Research in Artificial Intelligence. Though scientists are still working on giving George more capabilities, he is currently able



to play hide-and-seek. Alan Schultz, a scientist assisting in the development of George, said that though George “doesn’t hide very well, and it takes him longer to find Schultz than vice versa,” the fact that he can play the game at all makes him different than any other robots made before. Scientists also predict that 10 years from now, robots will “roam the health care system,” as well as assist in our homes, making such chores as cleaning a cinch.

Missing woman’s body found behind bookcase

In New Port Richey, Fla., a woman’s body was found wedged upside-down behind a bookcase in the home she shared with relatives after she went missing Nov. 9. Officials from the Pasco County Sheriff’s Office said Mariesa Weber’s death



was “not suspicious.” Weber’s sister found the woman’s body after searching her bedroom and catching sight of the woman’s foot behind the bookshelf. Her family members believe that Weber, 38, who was 5 feet 3 inches tall and 100 pounds, may have fallen headfirst while trying to adjust the television plug behind the 6-foot-tall shelf. The sheriff’s office said that Weber “appeared to have died because she was unable to breathe in the position she was in.”

Man is assaulted with a gumball machine

A 27-year-old man was knocked unconscious Friday night when he was struck with a gumball machine during a fight at a Salinas, Calif., restaurant. According to the Salinas Police Department, numerous gang members got into a fight around 11:13 p.m. Friday during a birthday party being held at Taquitos Mexican Restaurant on Main Street. Authorities said that several people began beating the victim before one of the suspects hit the victim on the head with a gumball machine. The victim was flown to South Valley Medical Center for treatment of head injuries but police say that none of the victim’s injuries are life-threatening.



Events Calendar

Monday, Nov. 27

Deftones with Deadsy

8 p.m. at The Norva, 317 Monticello Ave.

\$25 general admission

VCU Music—Junior Recital: Mi Yeon Choi, piano

5 p.m. at the Singleton Center Vlahcevic Concert Hall, 922 Park Ave.

FREE

Tuesday, Nov. 28

Silent Night: Small Works Invitational 2006

11-5 p.m. at the 1708 Gallery, 319 W. Broad St.

FREE

Wednesday, Nov. 29

Humpnight Comedy

7 p.m. at the Canal Club, 1545 East Cary St.

FREE

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Spring 2007 elections for CT executive editor and managing editor. Think you got what it takes to be a student media leader? Then run for a position.* If you were published in the CT during Fall 2006, then you have the chance to vote!

Applications are due Friday, Dec. 1.

*Relevant experience in the journalism field required. E-mail Executive Editor Karen Bolipata at editor@commonwealthtimes.com for more information.

Want to be a journalist but don't know where to start?

Work for the CT! We're looking for staff members for spring semester. Positions include section editors and writers. Pick up an application at the Student Media Center at 817 W. Broad or e-mail Executive Editor Karen Bolipata at editor@commonwealthtimes.com for more information.

ct
commonwealthtimes.com

Comics

Digits

Geoffrey Cook



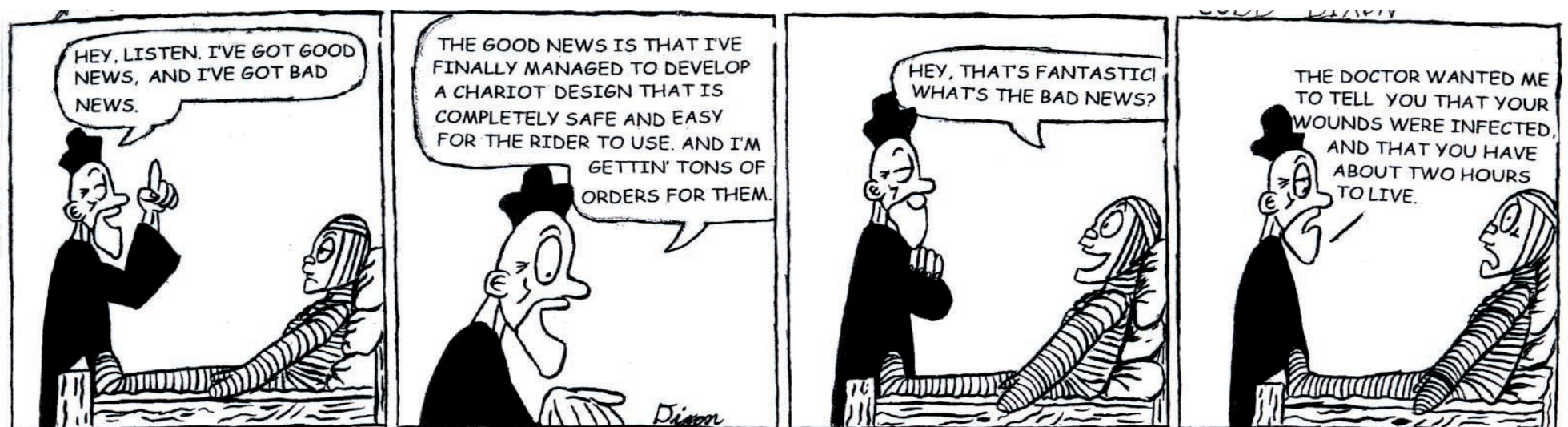
Gordon's Super-Awesome Cartoon Grab Bag

Brian Bear



Clockstoppers

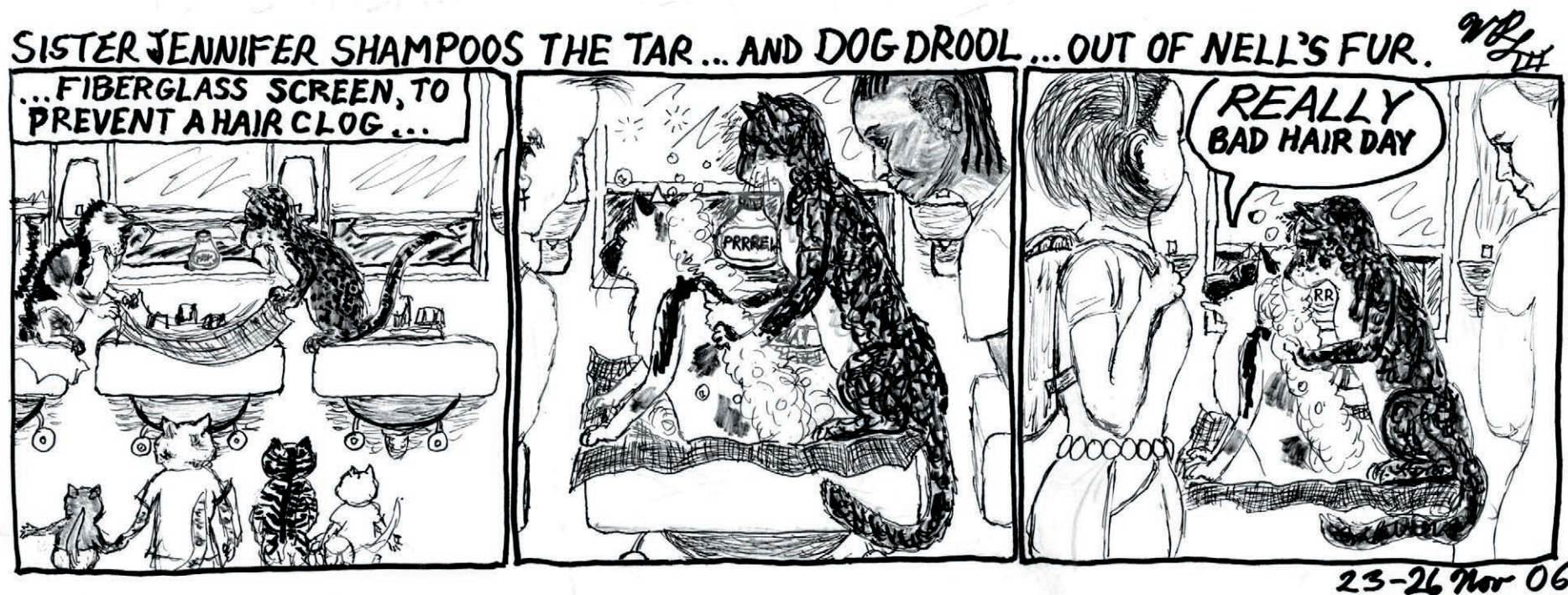
Cobb Dixon



Comics

Pizza from Scratch

Bill Lemmond



VCU Libraries Library Life All Nite

24/5*
Nov. 26-Dec. 19, 2006
at Cabell Library

* At the end of the semester, make use of the library 24 hours a day, five days a week — Library Life All Nite.

an equal opportunity/affirmative action university 061013-02

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Nov. 26 24/5 begins at 11 a.m.	Nov. 27 24/5	Nov. 28 24/5	Nov. 29 24/5	Nov. 30 24/5	Dec. 1 Library closes at 9 p.m.	Dec. 2 Hours 10 a.m.- 9 p.m.
Dec. 3 24/5 resumes at 11 a.m.	Dec. 4 24/5	Dec. 5 24/5	Dec. 6 24/5	Dec. 7 24/5	Dec. 8 Library closes at 9 p.m.	Dec. 9 Hours 10 a.m.- 9 p.m.
Dec. 10 24/5 resumes at 11 a.m.	Dec. 11 24/5	Dec. 12 24/5	Dec. 13 24/5	Dec. 14 24/5	Dec. 15 Library closes at 9 p.m.	Dec. 16 Hours 10 a.m.- 9 p.m.
Dec. 17 24/5 resumes at 11 a.m.	Dec. 18 24/5	Dec. 19 Library closes at 7 p.m.	Dec. 20 Hours 7:30 a.m.- 7 p.m.	Dec. 21 Hours 7:30 a.m.- 7 p.m.	Dec. 22 Hours 7:30 a.m.- 6 p.m.	Dec. 23 Library closed

24-hour services to include:

Circulation and Information Services • Individual study on the 3rd and 4th floors • Group study in study rooms on the 1st and 3rd floors, and group study area on the 2nd Floor • Online resources including the catalog, databases and the Internet • B-8, the Basement Computer Lab

Why "Life"?

These areas will observe their regular hours during Library Life All Nite: Research and Reference Services, Media and Reserves Services, Special Collections and Archives, Technology Services Help Desk and Java 901. (View specific hours at www.library.vcu.edu/jbc/hours.)

For more information, visit: www.library.vcu.edu/jbc/hours/24x5.html

V i r g i n i a C o m m o n w e a l t h U n i v e r s i t y



Crossword

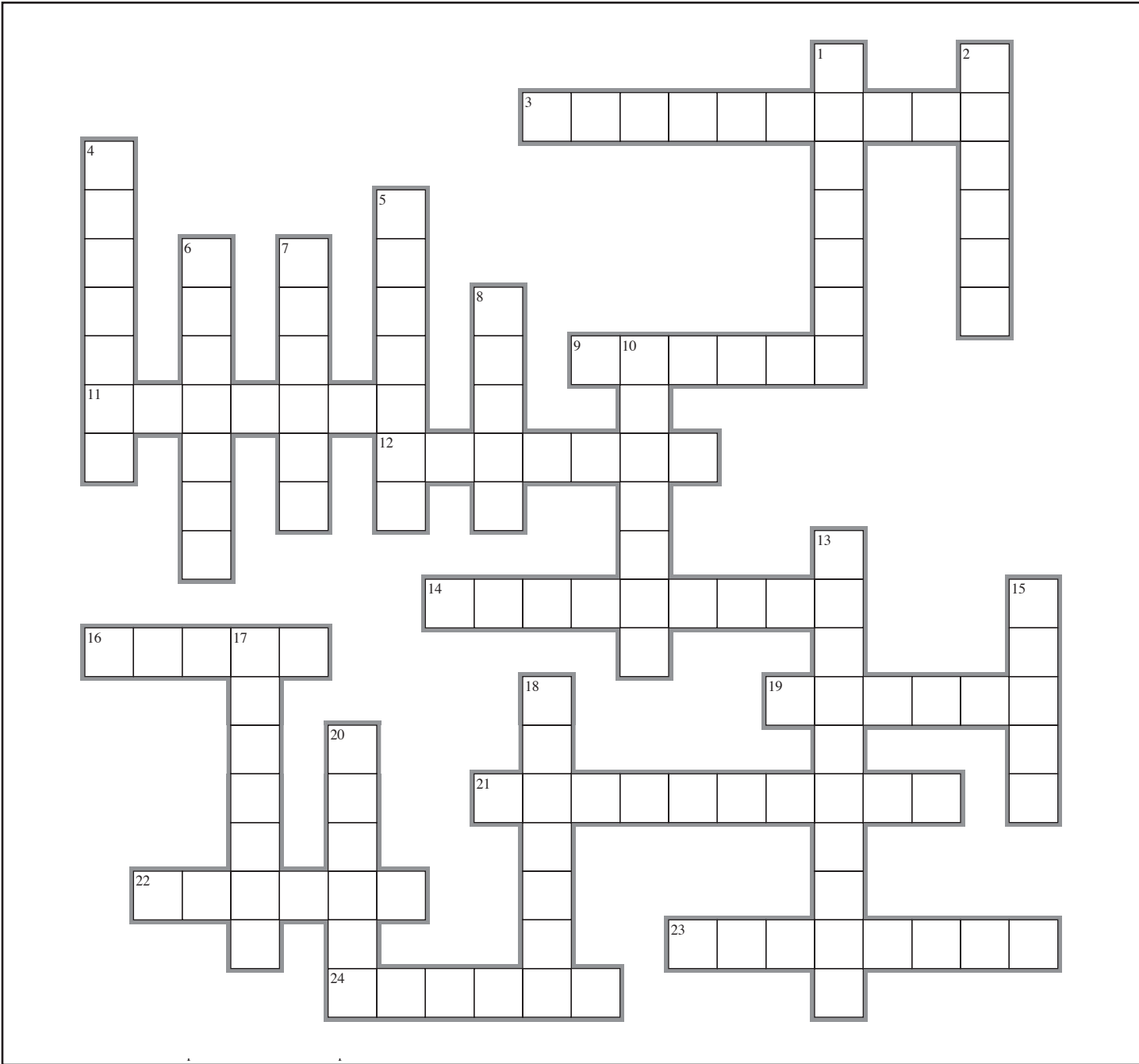
Small world

Across

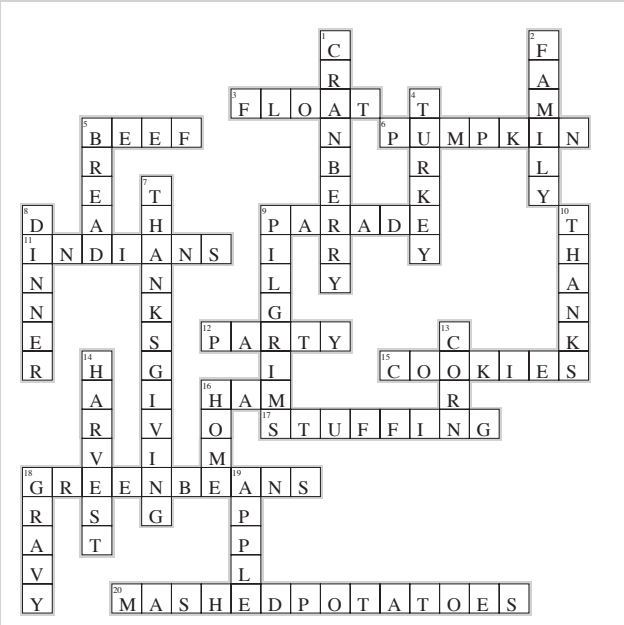
- 3. Ola
- 9. Bonjour
- 11. Jambo
- 12. Hej
- 14. Jó napot kívánok
- 16. Salve
- 19. Anyung-ha shimnika
- 21. Chao
- 22. Salaam
- 23. Konichiwa
- 24. Shalom

Down

- 1. Merhaba
- 2. Guten Tag
- 4. Hello
- 5. Hola
- 6. Kamusta
- 7. Czesc
- 8. Kalimera
- 10. Zdravstvuitye
- 13. Selamat pagi
- 15. Namaste
- 17. Buongiorno
- 18. Ni hao
- 20. God dag



Answers
from Nov. 20





Opinion

In Brief

The semester is nearly over, folks. We're entering the final stretch, and in only a few weeks we will be in the midst of our winter break! Best of luck to everyone on their term papers, final exams and class presentations. This is a stressful time of year, but the holiday season is always a perfect time to kick back and relax. Hang in there, we're almost through!

Your opinion here.

Submit articles
write a letter

E-mail opinion
@commonwealthtimes.com

Your Turn

Letters to the Editor



The claim made by College Republican Aine Murphy Lewis in last week's letter to the editor that conservative activism will begin on college campuses nationwide can best be summarized as ridiculous and absurd. She must have confused these hopes and dreams with the last sips of bubbly that fizzled and burst on election night. It is ludicrous and delusional for her to make a connection between students signing a petition in support of VCU recognizing Veterans Day as an official holiday (which would also mean no class)

and students taking yellow ribbons as conservative activism. Surely, what student wouldn't sign a petition that would give them another day off from class? And who wouldn't take a yellow ribbon in support of our troops? Liberals, Democrats, independents and others who don't call or label themselves as conservatives or Republicans support the troops, too. We support bringing them home, not sacrificing them in Bush's "War Of Terror"!

-Sara Duke,
VCU Women's Leadership
Forum

From the president

ALI FARUK

President, Monroe Park Campus SGA
Special to The Commonwealth Times

On Nov. 15, VCU's Board of Visitors held a meeting for students to attend and give input about how things are going at VCU. The Board of Visitors is the governing body of VCU and its members are appointed by the governor. Normally only about 10 students show up. This year, however, the SGA's aggressive outreach and activism paid off, and over 35 students attended the invitational BOV meeting and gave input on how VCU could be improved. Members of the board were delighted to hear from such a bright and diverse array of students. Topics discussed included the need for more academic study space and an extension to the library, better accommodations for students who are parents, safety concerns about lighting around campus and a possible campus-wide community service project.

On Nov. 13, the SGA held a lobbying training session to train SGA members and other VCU students on how to advocate for their issues at the General Assembly. The session was organized by SGA Political Affairs Director Maggie O'Brien and featured information on

General Assembly hearing schedules and procedures as well as interactive segments on various delegates and state senators. The SGA holds these training sessions to better equip VCU students to advocate for higher education issues at the General Assembly session, which begins in the spring semester. The SGA's goal is to create a rapid response team of around a dozen students who would be ready to lobby specific legislators or attend committee meetings within a 24 to 72-hour notice.

SGA members attended an open forum on Parking & Transportation Nov. 14. VCU's Office of Parking and Transportation holds open forums a couple of times a semester to hear student opinions on parking and transportation services at VCU. Some of the issues we discussed were the new parking decks coming online within the next five years, the VCU Campus Connector, the closing of certain streets and the loss of street parking. SGA members in attendance included myself, Executive Director Kaitlin Bowles and student senator Steven Latimer. If you have any questions or concerns, you can e-mail parking@vcu.edu.

The SGA is co-sponsoring a reception

to celebrate the culture and heritage of Africa on Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. in the Office of Multicultural and Student Affairs on Floyd Street. The reception will include free West African cuisine and live music. The guest speaker will be Craig Shealy, director of JMU's Beliefs & Values Institute. All students are welcome and encouraged to attend! This event is co-sponsored by the SGA and the Virginia Friends of Mali. For more information, please e-mail me at sgapresident@vcu.edu

The SGA Web site is under construction. It may be unavailable for a few days. We are updating our discussion forums, which were located online at www.vcusga.com/talk. This means that the SGA Book Trading Web site will also be unavailable for several days. The forums are being upgraded to make them more secure for students. Some of the upgrades include a provision for rolling security updates to the backend of the SGA Web site. We hope to complete these upgrades ASAP. For questions or concerns, please e-mail sgatech@vcu.edu.

As always, I want to hear what you think needs to be improved about VCU or how the SGA can help make your VCU experience better. We are your advocates. E-mail me anytime at sgapresident@vcu.edu and make sure to visit our Web site at www.vcusga.com.

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The independent student press of VCU

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Opinion Editor

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On how Thanksgiving was

WILLIAM HUSZAR
Editor

Unlike many other students at VCU, my Thanksgiving holiday was not one of relaxation and holiday cheer — I ended up being scheduled for a shift at my hotel to do a round of room service. In tandem with an already hectic work schedule and a full course load, I am also studying for my LSAT that takes place on Dec. 2. Needless to say I was exhausted, and the scheduling was done at the last minute, so having to call my family the day before Thanksgiving and telling them I wouldn't be home for the holiday was probably the hardest thing I've had to do this semester. Being told that you have singlehandedly "ruined Thanksgiving" is quite riveting.

The day started off rough. I had two papers due by next month, and I woke up to discover my car wouldn't even start due to moisture accumulating in my engine. I had no choice. I was the only person in my department scheduled for that day, and it would be quite noticeable if I didn't make it in. Pretty much everyone I knew was out of town for the day, so no luck in getting a ride to the airport where my job is located either. Dropping 23 bucks on a cab to go to work was certainly no treat. I later found out, after calling most cab services I could find in the Yellow Pages, that most weren't available either due to the holiday or the mass influx of passengers coming into the Richmond airport, with some cars wanting to charge grossly inflated fares just to make it home. "Great," I thought. I realized that I wouldn't have enough money to make it home since I just paid off all of my bills earlier this week.

I started my shift not being sure if I was even going home that night. I went about finishing up my usual opening duties and dutifully sat by the room service phone wondering if any guests in the hotel would even want anything that night. For the first four hours of that shift, nothing happened. I ended up sitting in the bar watching bad movies on HBO waiting for something to actually validate my not seeing my family for the holiday, and for missing the traditional Thanksgiving fare of turkey, stuffing and mashed potatoes. The building was

silent, save for the other few unfortunate employees that got stiffed into working that day, as well as a few unfortunate families that had a late or cancelled flight on account of the nasty weather we had this week.

Eventually I started receiving a few phone calls for food. Thanksgiving quesadillas and nachos, anyone? Not the most appropriate food for the holiday, but it's money in the pocket for me. I was delightfully treated, after being invited into the room, to a man wearing nothing but briefs, while my eye caught the sight of what was hopefully his wife's lingerie strewn about the room. People, please answer your door with pants and the expectation that no one wants to see you in your underwear. I was tempted to go and bleach out my eyes afterwards.

As the night dragged on, and whether I would be sleeping in a corner becoming more of a possibility, I was able to get in contact with a friend who told me she might be back in the city within a few hours. For the first time the entire day, I had a sliver of a possibility of something good happening that day. Later that night, my hopes were met when she called back, because I found out I

was actually going to see my apartment that night! No sleeping on the floor for me! I closed up and began to walk out. I ended up giving my friend some bad directions, which was a lot of fun trying to correct, but I still was thrilled that I was going home. I had yet another surprise awaiting: she took the time to save a plate of food from her family to give to me! I was going to have Thanksgiving after all! The food was great, too. Even though it was about 11 p.m. by the time I ate, it was still good for someone who had eaten chicken tenders all afternoon and tried to rationalize it as comparable to turkey.

All in all, what should've finished up a very lousy day ended up very good, with a last minute change. If there's anything I've learned, it's that you should stay optimistic when it comes to bad days - you never know when they are going to change. The holiday season is definitely a time when you can see who your friends are and what they mean to you. To my friend, who shall remain nameless, you definitely saved the day and it meant a lot to me. As many times as I have thanked you already, I still can't emphasize that enough. I hope everyone else ended up having as good a day as I did. This one ended up being one of my most memorable.

"The holiday season is definitely a time when you can see who your friends are and what they mean to you."

Editorial Cartoon | Tory Hendelman



Amendment

Our mission is to expand publishing
opportunity for emerging artists
and writers, while increasing
awareness on social and
political issues.

AS A MATTER OF FACT

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