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INSIDE

THURSDAY

APRIL 12, 2007

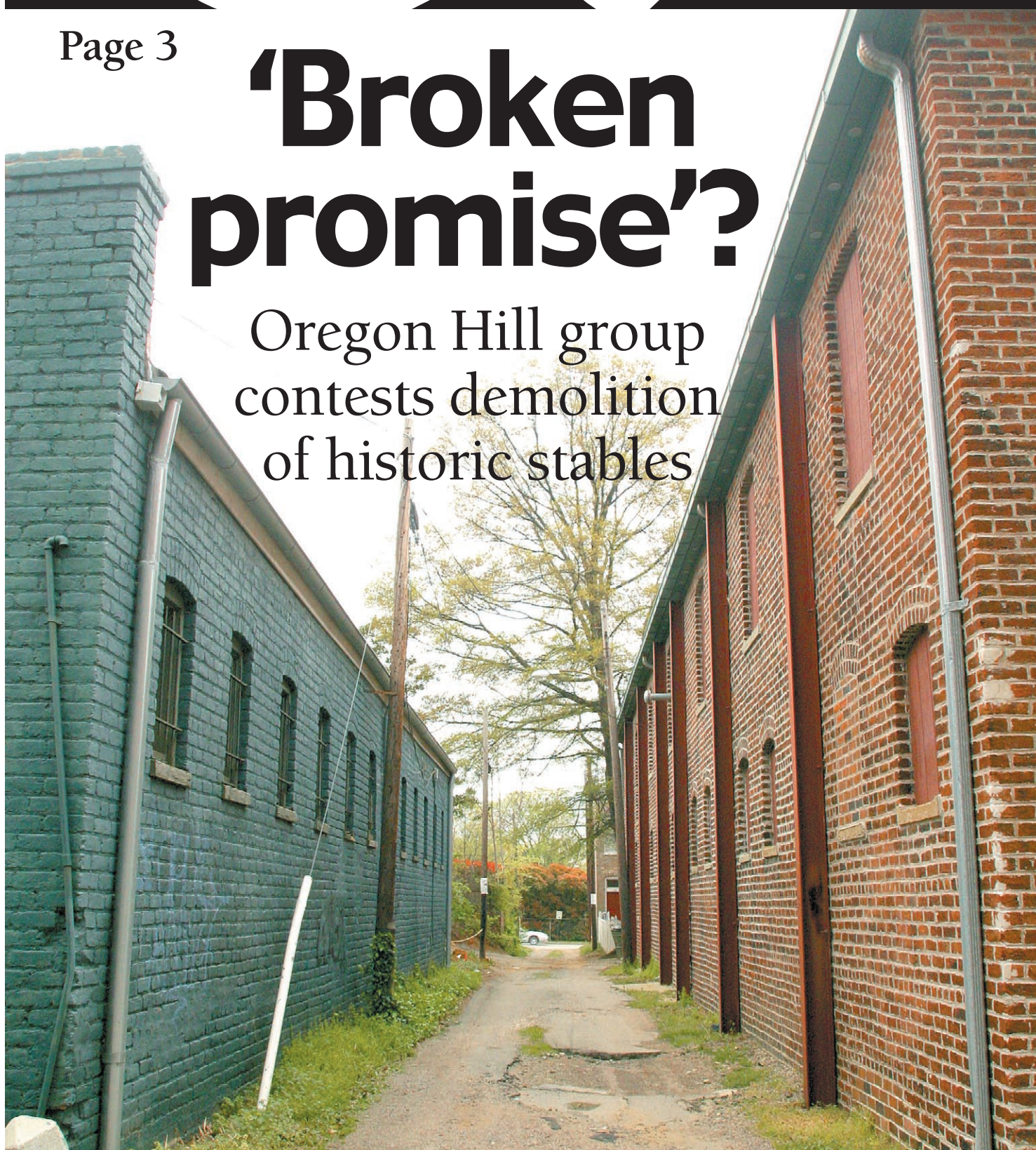
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Imus, AC
and GED

The independent student press of Virginia Commonwealth University



Briefs

The Commonwealth Times strives to be accurate in gathering news. If you believe we have made an error, please call Executive Editor Pat Kane at 828-4770 or e-mail him at editor@commonwealthtimes.com. Corrections will appear on this page.

WEATHER

THURSDAY



FRIDAY



SATURDAY



SUNDAY



Cover photo by
Cynthia K. Merchant

IN THE NEWS compiled from wire reports

WORLD

MEXICO CITY – Rising global temperatures could melt Latin America's glaciers within 15 years, cause food shortages affecting 130 million people across Asia by 2050 and wipe out Africa's wheat crop, according to a U.N. report released Tuesday.

The report, written and reviewed by hundreds of scientists, outlined dramatic effects of climate change, including rising sea levels, the disappearance of species and intensifying natural disasters. The report stated 30 percent of the world's coastlines could be lost by 2080.

Scientists with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change outlined details of the report in news conferences around the world Tuesday, four days after they released a written summary of their findings.

The report is the second of three being issued this year. The first dealt with the physical science of climate change and the third will deal with responses to climate change.

Scientists predicted that global warming could cost the Brazilian rain forest up to 30 percent of its species and turn large swaths into savannah. They said ocean levels are projected to rise 4.3 feet by 2080 and flood low-lying cities, including Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Polar ice caps will likely melt, opening a waterway at the North Pole and threatening to make the Panama Canal obsolete, IPCC member Edmundo de Alba said. Warmer waters will spawn bigger and more dangerous hurricanes that will threaten coastlines not traditionally affected by them, he said.

NATION

ANNAPOLIS, Md. – Maryland officially became the first state on Tuesday to approve a plan to give its electoral votes for president to the winner of the national popular vote instead of the candidate chosen by state voters.

Gov. Martin O'Malley, a Democrat, signed the measure into law one day after the state's General Assembly adjourned.

The measure would award Maryland's 10 electoral votes to the national popular vote winner. The plan would only take effect if states representing a majority of the nation's 538

electoral votes decided to make the same change.

State Sen. Jamie Raskin, a law professor and sponsor of the idea, said Maryland is largely ignored by presidential candidates during campaigns because they assume the Democratic state will vote for the Democratic candidate.

Raskin, a Democrat, said he hoped Maryland's support for the idea will start a national discussion and "kick off an insurrection among spectator states – the states that are completely bypassed and sidelined" during presidential campaigns.

STATE & LOCAL

VIRGINIA BEACH – Poop does not lie. And there was plenty of nutria poop to be side stepped last week at Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

"See, it looks like a burned hush puppy," said Todd Barnes, president of a local conservation group, as he pointed to a specimen. "But it certainly wouldn't taste as good."

The animal droppings are not good news to Barnes and others trying to preserve Back Bay, a shallow and stressed estuary along the Atlantic Ocean at the marshy southern tip of Virginia Beach.

The poop indicates the not-so-subtle presence of nutria, an orange-toothed rodent native to South America.

Resembling big muskrats, nutria were imported to the United States in the 1930s for their fur, and showed up in Virginia in the early 1950s.

When the fur-farming experiments went bust, most nutria were set free. They have since become notorious for tearing up and damaging marshes and wildlife habitat in more than a dozen states, from Oregon to Louisiana, and along the Chesapeake Bay.

Accompanying Barnes on a tour of several affected waterfowl ponds last week were officials from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's wildlife division, the Back Bay Restoration Foundation and the chief biologist at the federal refuge, John Gallegos.

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News



Cynthia K. Merchant photo

Oregon Hill group furious about proposed rec center

REBECCA LANDAU
News Co-Editor

The demolition of two 19th-century stables to make way for a \$50 million recreation center has revived longstanding tension between VCU and the Oregon Hill Neighborhood Association.

Reuban Rodriguez, dean of student affairs, said the construction scheduled to begin this fall is necessary to accommodate increasing student numbers.

"We have woefully inadequate space for our athletic programs," Rodriguez said. "We intend to move ahead with the project."

But Charles Pool, a member of the association, said the planned construction of the recreation center breaks a promise VCU President Eugene P. Trani made in the early '90s.

Trani promised VCU would not encroach on historic Richmond neighborhoods, Pool said, including the Fan and Oregon Hill.

Pool added that Oregon Hill residents would not be the only ones to suffer if the center is built as planned as an addition to Cary Street Gym.

"The students are going to suffer because the university has this wrong-headed notion that they have to stick all of their recreational facilities in one spot," Pool said. "It is illogical to put your

"(The stables) speak to an earlier era in our history. When these things are lost, we lose a ... cultural and historical marker."

—Jennie Dotts

recreational facilities not where your dormitories are."

Rodriguez said the university presented the association with two options. The first option involved the closure of Linden Street, a side street that provides traffic access to the 1-195 exit ramp.

"The feedback we received from the residents of that area was that they believed that closing the street would impact them more than if we just had the structure on the current block where the facilities reside," Rodriguez said.

The Oregon Hill Neighborhood Association sent Trani a letter, Pool said, reportedly contesting the original plan. The university then switched to its current plan, which instead requires the demolition of the two stables.

"VCU had presented two options to us, which were equally as bad," Pool said.

Located on the 900 block of Green Alley, the

stables are registered on the Virginia Landmark Registry and the National Registrar for Historical Places, Pool said, and their inclusion on these lists should protect them from demolition.

When the association learned the stables were to be demolished, the group sent Trani a second letter emphasizing the stables' historical value.

Rodriguez said concerns about the stables were considered.

"You can have a historical neighborhood, but structures in that neighborhood aren't necessarily historical to that neighborhood," Rodriguez said. "We, of course, work with the City of Richmond, as well as various cities and advisory boards that look at historical structures, and what they add to the community."

The university is committed to preserving Richmond's historical value, Rodriguez said, and he referred to the recent reopening of Hunton Student Center as evidence of its resolve.

"Certainly the university is always very sensitive," Rodriguez said. "We, in fact, own and have renovated many older structures across both campuses."

One of the stables is currently used as an annex to the current gym. Since the stable has been

STABLES continued to Page CT4

STABLES continued from Page CT3

renovated, Rodriguez said, replacing the structure is not the same as replacing a building with its historical details intact.

Jennie Dotts, executive director of the Alliance to Conserve Old Richmond Neighborhoods, said even though she thinks VCU is a benefit to the community, its approach toward expansion needs to change.

Dotts said the university is continuously encroaching on historical districts to expand its facilities.

"Because VCU is a state agency, they're really not bound by many of the restrictions that would apply to private developers," Dotts said. "VCU apparently acquired them (the stables) for the purpose of demolition."

Pool said the university is attempting to sidestep key paperwork to quicken the construction process.

"VCU tries to circumvent the state code requiring an Environmental Impact Report for all new projects by inaccurately stating that the foot print for the new plan in Green Alley is the same as the plan building in Linden Street," Pool stated in an e-mail.

Dotts said even though her organization does not have a position on this issue, like many forgotten historical buildings, the stables are undoubtedly valuable.

"They speak to the development of our city," Dotts said. "They speak to an earlier era in our history. When these things are lost, we lose a ... cultural and historical marker."

A dialogue needs to take place about how the university can grow in a historical community, Dotts said.

"There are ways of growing and expanding that can compliment and not threaten the historical resources that make Richmond, Richmond," Dotts said. "I hope the students wake up and recognize the significance of the buildings and the neighborhoods around them."

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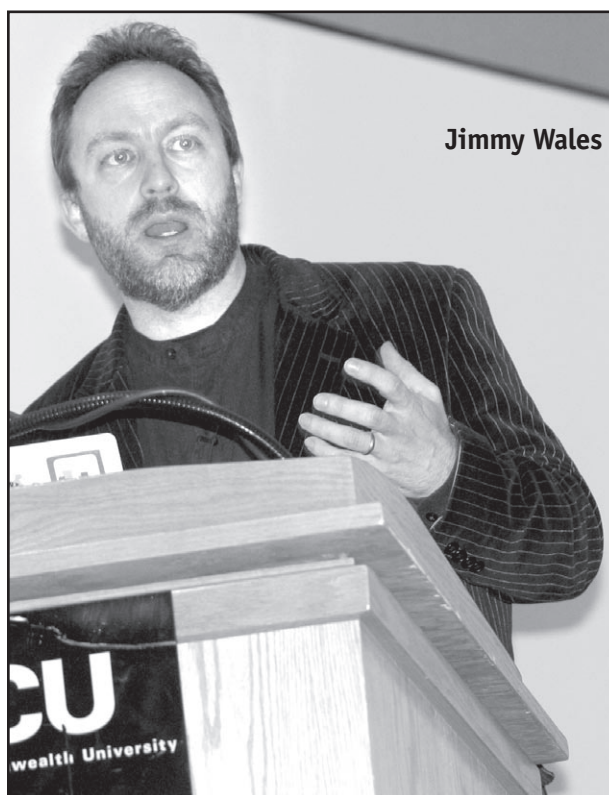
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Jimmy Wales

It's Wiki-time: co-founder speaks

M.K. LUTHER & RACHEL VAMANTA

Contributing Writers

The series, "Creating and Consuming Culture in the Digital Age," concluded Wednesday with the event, "A Conversation with Jimmy Wales," which featured the co-founder of the online encyclopedia, Wikipedia.

Wikipedia is inescapable in the digital age, said English professor Richard Fine at Monday night's roundtable discussion on the Wikipedia phenomenon.

"We thought it would be a great idea to hear about Wikipedia from the horse's mouth," Fine said.

Wednesday night, almost every hand in the room raised when Wales asked how many audience members were familiar with Wikipedia. Half the hands in the room remained up when he asked how many people had edited a Wikipedia article.

Cynthia K. Merchant photo

Wales said the open source encyclopedia was based on the principles of free access. People have the freedom to copy, modify and distribute existing work, commercially or non-commercially, he said.

"When talking about free software, we are talking about free as in speech, not as in beer," Wales said.

Wales' goal for the Wiki project is to have 250,000 articles in 347 languages within 15 to 20 years. Wales focused on the newest addition to the project, Wikia, and the development of WikiSearch, an online search engine.

Wales described Wikia as an extension of the Wikipedia that is modeled for the research community, comparing the expansion as the difference between a volume of an encyclopedia and an entire library.

Many colleges are debating Wikipedia's legitimacy

WALES continued to Page CT6

The rights of campus demonstrators

JORDAN RODERICKS

Contributing Writer

VCU's campus is an apex for demonstrators, from anti-war lobbyists covering the Commons Plaza with soldiers' shoes to anti-abortion activists distributing images of fetuses.

But the university has guidelines in place for addressing demonstrations on campus.

"Free inquiry and free expression are indispensable to the objectives of an institution of higher education," states the university's demonstration policy.

The policy defines demonstrations in four categories: orderly, inconvenience, disruption and destruction.

Jon Camp is a demonstrator for a Pittsburgh-based organization, Vegan Outreach, which falls in the "orderly" category. He spends time on campuses around the country promoting his organization and its mission.

Camp said he offers fliers to students who pass by the James Branch Cabell Library.

"Some people will ask philosophical or ethical questions, and we like that too — anything to encourage dialogue and discussion," Camp said. "On public campuses, it is usually acceptable if you are outside on the sidewalks or on what is generally considered public property."

Reuban Rodriguez is the associate vice provost and dean of student affairs.

"The university always seeks to balance the right of expression with the manner in which expression can be demonstrated on campus," Rodriguez stated in an e-mail.

For this purpose, campus officials retain some control as to when and where demonstrations may take place.

"The university has directed demonstrations to the Commons Plaza and Shafer Compass as 'free speech zones,' which generally allow for a demonstration to occur without impeding university activity or abridging the rights of the demonstrators," Rodriguez said.

Student Caitlin Latimer, 19, likes to see campus demonstrations.

Thursday, April 12, 2007

"(Demonstrators) are usually real extreme," Latimer said. "They won't listen if someone has a different opinion."

Michael Hartsough, 25, said he is indifferent about demonstrators' presence on campus.

"I wouldn't participate, but they are an important part of the campus experience," the urban planning graduate student said. "I feel that this is a great place to (demonstrate)."

Hartsough also said it is all right to disagree with protesters.

"I think that they (those who disagree) have a right to protest against the protest. It is the American democracy at work," Hartsough said.

Camp said his organization has researched free speech on public campuses and found the majority of cases favor demonstrators.

"I think that universities that do allow free speech are noble," Camp said, "and that universities that try to thwart (free speech) are not really giving students the full benefit of an experience considering new ideas and learning."



Cynthia K. Merchant file photo

A 2006 demonstration outside the Hibbs Building.

Demonstration categories with descriptions

1. **Orderly** - There is no impact on normal university operations and classes.

2. **Inconvenience** - There is some inconvenience caused to normal university operations and classes as a result of the presence of the demonstration on the campus; however, operations and classes are able to continue.

3. **Disruption** - Normal operations and classes are disrupted by the demonstration to the extent that some operations or classes may cease or be cancelled.

4. **Destruction** - Persons participating in the demonstration are responsible for damage or injury to university property or the property of university students, faculty or staff members, or cause injury to university students, faculty, staff or visitors to the university.

commonwealthtimes.com • CT5

Imus comments strike VCU nerve

ALISHA WARD
Contributing Writer

Radio and TV show host Don Imus is facing heavy criticism both nationally and here at VCU following his recent comments about the Rutgers University women's basketball team.

Imus, host of the nationally syndicated radio and TV show, "Imus in the Morning," referred to the Rutgers University team as "nappy-headed hos" after their loss to the University of Tennessee.

King Salim Khalfani, executive director of the NAACP Virginia State Conference, held a press conference Wednesday, which VCU's NAACP President Corey Boone attended.

Boone said he is concerned about how Imus characterized black women.

"Don Imus' statement was degrading to black women. His comments were immoral, and there were no grounds for them," Boone said.

The comments struck a nerve with freshman Essence Jackson, who felt attacked personally. Jackson said the statement about the team was directed toward all black women.

"It (the comment) goes to all black women, not just those women," Jackson

said. "I was highly upset that he was downing these women. I want him to be fired."

Both CBS and MSNBC broadcast Imus' show on TV and radio. While CBS has suspended Imus for two weeks, MSNBC announced late Wednesday it planned to cancel his simulcast. In a previous statement, MSNBC said his future depended on how he conducted himself.

"In addition, his dedication – in his words – to change the discourse on his program moving forward, has confirmed for us that this action is appropriate," the release stated. "Our future relationship with Imus is contingent on his ability to live up to his word."

Lynn Owens, assistant professor in the School of Mass Communications, said Imus' punishment has less to do with his comments and more to do with the bottom line – money.

"I think a lot of what happens to him is going to be based on the company looking to see if what he said is enough to make any kind of impression on the bottom line," Owens said. "Are people no longer going to listen him? Because if they are not going to listen to him, then there's no need to have him on the air any longer."

WALES continued from Page CT5

as a source. Wales likened his creation to an encyclopedia, which he said should not be used as a primary source in research.

"This is not the kind of thing to be cited in an academic paper," Wales said, adding that students should double-check and verify their sources.

A study group found the Encyclopedia Britannica contained an average of three errors, whereas Wikipedia contained an average of four errors, Wales said.

Any errors in Wikipedia articles, however, can be corrected in a matter of minutes. Articles can also be edited to show both sides of an issue. For entries to be widely accepted, Wales said, they have to be accurate.

Wiki, which comes from a Hawaiian word meaning "quick," is a culture of creativity not based on market exchange but intellectual exchange, Wales said.

Marcel Cornis-Pope, director of Ph.D programs in the English department, said he often uses Wikipedia as a resource because the information is adaptable and readily available.

Most of the major encyclopedia information is static, said Cornis-Pope, whose research centers on media art and text.

Some members, like freshman economics major Chris Horohoe, go beyond using Wikipedia for research and become active participants and editors.

"Getting into the (Wikipedia) community can be hard," Horohoe said. "But it's surprisingly addictive."

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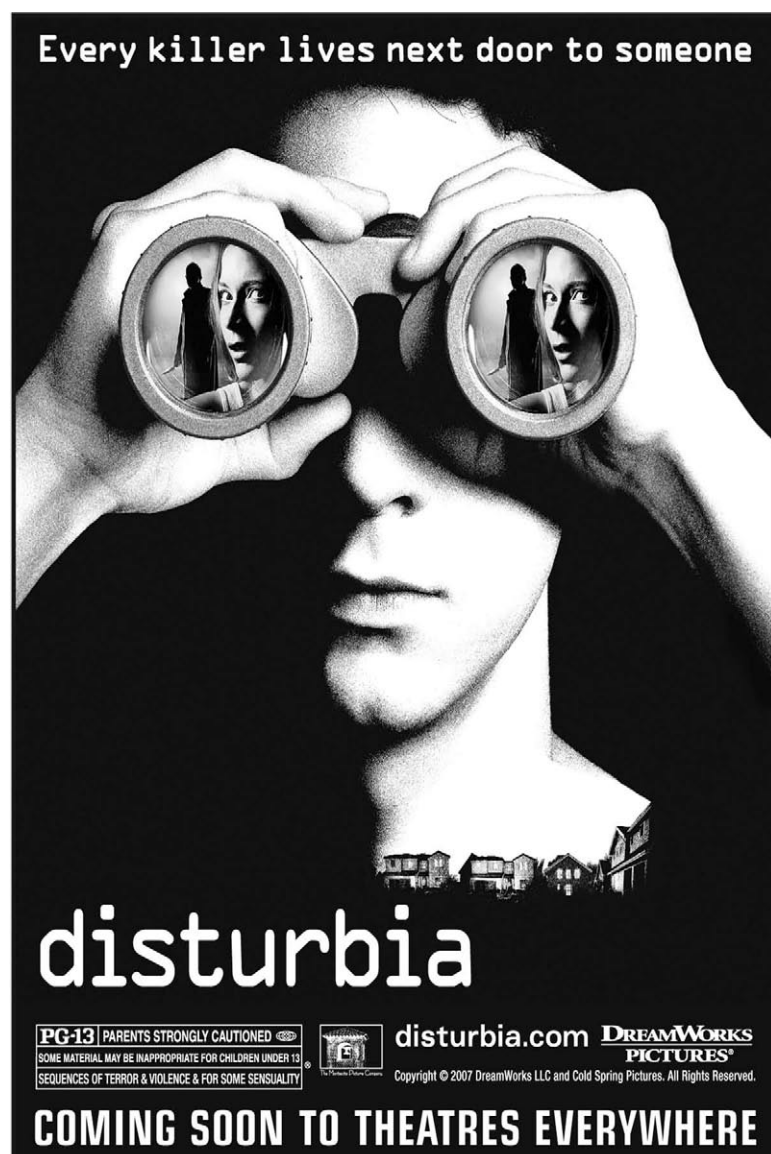
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Sports

BASEBALL

VCU baseball falls to U.Va.

ALEX DYNAN

Co-host "The Aftermath" on WVCW

The VCU Rams could not find any relief Tuesday night against the fifth-ranked University of Virginia Cavaliers, falling 8-1. The loss came in front of a record crowd of 2,237 at The Diamond.

VCU had its chance to put runs on the board in the first, but after loading the bases with only one out, the Rams would only drive in one run off a Chris Jackson (Midlothian, Va./Manchester) single to left field to make it 1-0 VCU.

The Score

U.Va. 8
VCU 1

In the third, U.Va.'s Tyler Cannon led off the inning with a line drive double down the third base line. After a sacrifice bunt to advance Canon to third base, Greg Miclat drove Cannon in with a perfectly placed bunt to tie the game 1-1.

U.Va. took its first lead of the game in the top of fourth as Cannon hit a sacrifice fly to centerfield to score David Adams, who reached on a single, to give the Cavaliers a 2-1 lead.

The game would remain close until the sixth inning, when VCU's starting pitcher, Phillip Deane (Richmond, Va./Varina), started to wear down. After leading off the inning with a walk, Deane hit four out of the next five batters and force in two unearned runs, making the score 4-1 U.Va.

U.Va. added three more runs in the seventh to extend the lead to 7-1. VCU relievers Bill Wieland (Marlton, N.J./Okaloosa Walton CC), Mick Mat-taliano (Pottstown, Pa./Saint Pius X) and Robbie Andrews (Covington, Va./Alleghany) allowed four runs off of five hits and three walks. That combined with two errors by second baseman Richard Gonzalez

(Puerto Rico) and one error by shortstop Sergio Miranda (Bayamon, Puerto Rico) doomed the Rams in the late innings.

The relief pitching for both teams was the difference in this game. U.Va. pitchers Michael Schwimer, Alex Smith and Casey Lambert were too much for the VCU batters to handle. Schwimer was the standout of the group, retiring all seven batters he

faced with three strikeouts.

Deane took the loss on the mound for the Rams, dropping his record to 3-2, while Schwimer improved to 2-0.

The Rams record falls to 19-14 while the Cavaliers improve to 30-7.

VCU will be back in action tomorrow night against CAA rival Georgia State in Atlanta.



Brad Bonney lands safely on first base.

Jason Gareau photo

THIS WEEK

Baseball

April 13-15, @ Georgia State, Atlanta, Ga
Tues., April 17, @ Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va., 7 p.m.

Men's Soccer

Fri., April 13, American, Sports Backers Stadium, 2 p.m.

Men's Tennis

Sat., April 14, @ William & Mary, Williamsburg, Va., 12 p.m.

Women's Tennis

Fri., April 13, @ Old Dominion, Norfolk, Va., 3 p.m.

Men's Track & Field

Sat., April 14, @ Lou Onesty/Milton Abramson Invitational, Charlottesville, Va.

Women's Track & Field

April 14-15, @ Lou Onesty/Milton Abramson Invitational, Charlottesville, Va.

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 makes an example of Pacman, Henry

DAVE GOLDBERG
AP Football Writer

NEW YORK - The punishment was aimed squarely at Adam "Pacman" Jones and Chris Henry. The message went far beyond them, to all NFL players.

In suspending Jones for the 2007 season and Henry for eight games, Commissioner Roger Goodell not only cracked down on two of the league's most troublesome players on Tuesday; he also sent a warning to everyone:

Mess with the law and your job's on the line.

"I must emphasize to you that this is your last opportunity to salvage your NFL career," Goodell wrote to the two players, emphasizing they must end their wayward behavior to have a chance to play in the league again.

He also hit them where it hurts - their wallets. Jones, who plays for Tennessee, will forfeit his \$1,292,500 salary; Henry, who plays for Cincinnati, will lose \$217,500.

Jones and Henry, former teammates at West Virginia, were suspended under the old disciplinary policy.

While he was meting out penalties,

Goodell also announced the league's new, tougher personal conduct policy that will allow longer fines and suspensions for players and also could penalize teams, perhaps by taking away draft picks.

"It is a privilege to represent the NFL, not a right," Goodell said. "These players and all members of our league have to make the right choices and decisions in their conduct on a consistent basis."

Jones' off-field conduct has included 10 instances in which he was interviewed by police. The most recent took place during the NBA All-Star weekend in Las Vegas. Police there recommended felony and misdemeanor charges against Jones after a fight and shooting at a strip club that paralyzed one man. Police are still investigating.

Henry, one of nine Bengals arrested last season, was arrested four times in a 14-month span, resulting in two benchings by Bengals coach Marvin Lewis and a two-game league suspension.

"The message, I think, is that the league office is very, very serious about conduct in the league, and that it's important for us," said Indianapolis coach Tony Dungy, who spends at least one day a week counseling his players

on staying out of trouble.

"I think it's a good message to send to everyone, not just the players but everyone around the team."

Jones' suspension could be longer or shorter depending on developments in the Las Vegas case, an official with knowledge of the details of the suspension said. The official requested anonymity because the Las Vegas case is pending. It could be as short as 10 games, if Jones meets the conditions set by the NFL and is cleared in a pending case in Georgia, as well in Las Vegas, where he hasn't been charged.

Jones' attorney, Manny Arora, declined comment. Jones' mother, Deborah Jones, said, "I just pray that this can be changed. This is not fair for him. It's just not fair."

Goodell's hard line could be trouble for Chicago's Tank Johnson, currently serving four months in jail for violating probation after police raided his home and found six unregistered firearms. League officials said Goodell plans to meet with Johnson when he's released from jail.

While stiff, Jones' punishment is not unprecedented. Approximately two dozen players have been suspended for a year or longer, going back to 1963. That's when Paul Hornung and Alex Karras were suspended for one season by Pete Rozelle for gambling.

Last season, Miami's Ricky Williams sat out the year for violating the NFL's substance abuse policy and Cincinnati's Odell Thurman was suspended for four games for skipping a drug test and then was banned for the entire season after pleading no contest following a drunken driving arrest.

The Titans and Bengals supported the latest suspensions.

"While we regret the circumstances

that called for it, it's good for both Chris and the Bengals to have the matter resolved," Lewis said. "Our team will move forward, and now it is up to Chris to acquire a more mature understanding of his responsibilities as a player for the Bengals and a representative of the NFL."

Goodell and Gene Upshaw, executive director of the NFL Players Association, met with a group of players in February and again last week and agreed the league needed a stronger disciplinary policy.

"The NFL Players Association and the Player Advisory Council believe that these are steps that the commissioner needs to take, and we support the policy," Upshaw said. "It is important that players in violation of the policy will have the opportunity and the support to change their conduct and earn their way back."

That includes Jones, the sixth overall pick in the 2005 draft.

Despite his problems off the field during two seasons with the Titans, he could be reinstated before season's end if he adheres to conditions set by the NFL. These include no further involvement with law enforcement; counseling, education and treatment under league and court-ordered programs; following restrictions on his activities agreed to with the Titans; and a community-service program submitted to the league for review and approval.

"We respect this decision and are confident this is in the best interest of the league and the team," Titans owner Bud Adams said. "We are hopeful that it will achieve the goals of disciplining the player and eventually enabling him to return to the field of play."

But Jones still has cases pending in Las Vegas and Georgia, as well as a tough commissioner.

MARTHA MITCHELL, STUDENT, CITIZEN, AND SECOND LIEUTENANT, U.S. ARMY.



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Sports

In Brief

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Seniors B.A. Walker (Onancock, Va./Nandua) and Jesse Pellot-Rosa (Richmond, Va./George Wythe) will participate in the Commonwealth Collegiate Challenge on Saturday, April 21 at Benedictine High School in Richmond. The game matches seniors from the CAA against seniors from the ACC. Tickets cost \$12 and go on sale Wednesday, April 18 in the school's main office. Tip off is at 6:30 p.m.

In recruiting news, head coach announced the addition of two members to the 2006-2007 recruiting class. Shooting guards Brandon Rozzell (Richmond, Va./Highland Springs) and Ed Nixon (St. Petersburg, Fla./Lakewood) both signed during the NCAA spring signing period earlier this month. Rozzell averaged 20.6 points and 4.0 rebounds per game in leading Highland Springs to the Virginia AAA state title. He was also named AAA state player of the year. Nixon averaged 17.8 points, 4.8 assists, 4.2 steals, and 5.0 rebounds per game, helping Lakewood win the Florida 5A state championship. He was named Pinellas County player of the year and first team all-state.

BASEBALL

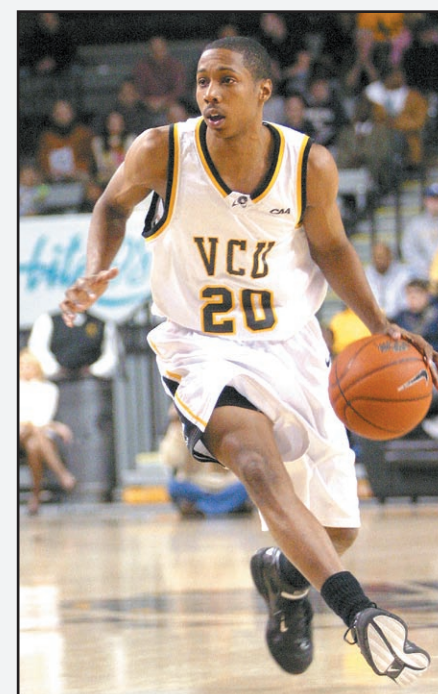
First baseman Jared Bolden (Lynchburg, Va./E.C. Glass) and pitcher Phillip Deane (Richmond, Va./Varina) were honored for their outstanding play in last week's games. Bolden was named CAA co-player of the week after batting .800 in four games with Old Dominion and Richmond. He finished the week with two doubles, two triples, a home run and six runs scored. Deane was named CAA rookie of the week after a solid outing against Richmond. The freshman pitched 7.1 innings and struck out seven while only giving up one hit – a solo homer in the top of the eighth.

WOMEN'S TENNIS

The 26th-ranked Rams failed to put together two straight wins and lost to No. 16 William & Mary 4-3 on Tuesday afternoon. The Tribe looked to have early momentum when they swept the doubles matches, but wins by Olena Leonchuck (Kiev, Ukraine), Olga Borisova (Minsk, Belarus) and Marianna Yuferova (St. Petersburg, Russia) gave VCU a 3-2 lead with two singles matches to play. However, William & Mary won the final two matches to take the win. VCU drops to 18-7 with the loss.

VCU SPORTS FACT OF THE DAY

Over the last five years the men's basketball team has accumulated the most Division I wins in Virginia.



Cynthia K. Merchant photo

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Spectrum

Art students perfect their craft

DOMINIQUE N. HICKS
Spectrum Writer

A small, hollow ring with a unique shape that resembles an eagle's talon sits on her petite finger.

Tracey Herman, a junior crafts major, smiles proudly as she glances at the creation that took her a month and a half to finish.

"The whole thing is made out of sterling silver," said Herman. "I had to make a copper model first so that I wouldn't screw up with the silver."

Herman and other crafts majors make several projects like this in their classes throughout the semester. The School of the Arts crafts department has programs for students in the areas of fiber, metals, glass, wood and clay.

Aside from the bracelets, papier-mâché projects or clay pots students may remember making as kids, these students construct projects with much more skill — sometimes under dangerous conditions.

"What I do now is much more complicated and time consuming," said Herman. "There's definitely an element of danger with just about anything we work with. It is still fun, but you have to know what you're doing because

accidents happen all the time."

Before getting into a program, students must go through the Art Foundation program for two years before applying to most of the departments in the School of the Arts.

"The program wasn't terribly hard," said Herman. "The process they use when they go through your Art Foundation portfolio is a total mystery to me."

Determination and focus have to go into coursework. The studio classes are usually three hours long, but the students do not always get a chance to do their work during class time. Every student is expected to contribute at least 10 hours outside of the classroom to work on projects.

"It's a lot of work," Herman said. "There have been times where I'd spend 10 to 12 hours in the studio just for one day."

Scarlett Colyer, a sophomore crafts major, currently takes studio courses in jewelry, intermediate lampworking and glass blowing. The classes are enjoyable, she said, but the workload and some of the teachers are sometimes difficult.

"The classes are really intense as far

as the workload goes," said Colyer. "The only problem I have is that there are a lot of teachers who aren't really good teachers. I have had two so far that have made me not want to do it anymore."

In the classes, students get a chance to

displayed around various buildings, art galleries and at many events that take place in the VCU area.

Recently, students taking the jewelry classes participated in the Radical Jewelry Makeover. Individuals in the community donated their old jewelry for the students to refurbish it into new pieces of jewelry.

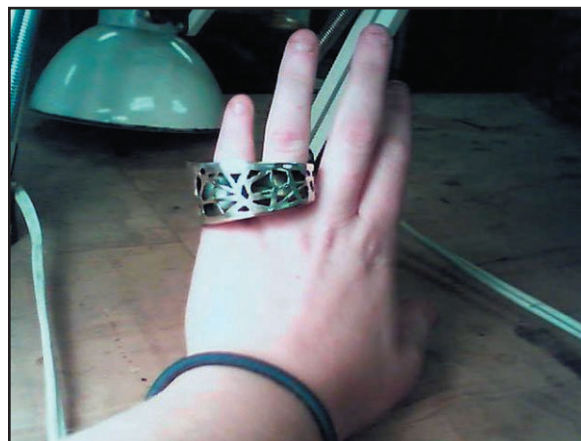
The event was sponsored by the Ethical Metalsmiths. This group tries to promote awareness about how mining is damaging the earth and informing people to be aware of the areas where you get your jewelry.

Colyer and Herman participated in the event, and their work was displayed in the Quirk Gallery at 311 W. Broad St.

"The event was awesome," said Colyer. "Those people who donated got a certain number of points and with those they could go and buy a new piece of jewelry."

"I was just so ridiculously excited about the event and the work being displayed in Quirk," said Herman.

Aside from getting to participate in the events and art displays, the students get to interact with professors from various backgrounds in art and many visiting professional artists, curators and critics in their classes.



Dominique Hicks photo

critique each other's work. In the critique sessions, students and teachers gather around the works and give them advice on how to improve their work.

"The critiques are a big deal," said Herman. "It is a good chance to get feedback, not only from your teacher, but your classmates."

Many students get to have their work

'Grindhouse' grinds its way into the heart of ... feminists?

REBECCA LANDAU
News Co-Editor

Promoted as a violent, over-the-top, silly, irreverent romp with a slightly misogynistic twist, "Grindhouse" — the collaborative effort between fanboy idols Robbie Rodriguez and Quentin Tarantino — has finally hit theaters nationwide.

And while it turns out "Grindhouse" is a violent, over-the-top, silly, irreverent romp, its two films share an undeniable and surprising feminist theme. Between Rose McGowan blowing away zombies with her semi-automatic rifled leg

and Rosario Dawson beating the crap out of a deranged Kurt Russell, girl power plays a significant role in this three-hour double feature.

Of course, the two films that make up "Grindhouse" — "Planet Terror" and "Deathproof" — boast typical male heroes, as well as moments of gratuitous, female objectification. For the most part, however, the films' stirring moments occur when women are sick and tired of being bossed around.

The movies aside, a series of crazy and often hilarious made-up movie trailers are spliced before and between

GRINDHOUSE continued to Page CT12



Karen Sagun
illustration

My time as an extra in 'Evan Almighty'

PHILLIP RANALLO
Spectrum Writer

Neighbor, cameraman, reporter, college student, car driver and congressional staffer: Those are just some of the roles I played last summer as an extra in "Evan Almighty," the sequel to 2003's "Bruce Almighty." The movie stars actors Steve Carell, Lauren Graham and Morgan Freeman, and is directed by Tom Shadyac, who also directed "Bruce Almighty," "Liar Liar" and "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective."

The role I enjoyed the most was being the reporter because it's something I've always wanted to do in real life. It was pretty cool being able to act it out on screen.

The movie is about Evan Baxter (Carell), who is newly elected to Congress and called upon by God (Freeman) to build an ark, much like Noah did in the biblical days. We all know Evan Baxter as Bruce Nolan's rival reporter in "Bruce Almighty."

Being an extra in this film was probably the most exciting experience of my life. For 40 days I was treated like a star, especially when I was a

stand-in for Carell's son. I stood on top of the ark and read my lines. My scenes were filmed in Charlottesville, Crozet, Waynesboro and Richmond.

Each day I woke up at around 3:30 a.m. or 4 a.m., as call times were generally 6 a.m. When filming the scenes in Charlottesville and Crozet, I had to allow time for driving from Richmond. It got pretty expensive having to fill my gas tank every day we filmed, but it was worth it when I got to set.

When we arrived at the set, we received our extra's vouchers (used to get paid), lined up for extras check-in and ate breakfast. After filling our bellies, the extras formed a line for costume checkout. Next came hair, makeup and tons of sunscreen that was necessary for the summer's high temperatures. The film's production assistants were awesome, bringing us water, sun screen, towels and even smoothies on unbearably hot days.

The extras served as onlookers while



Photos courtesy of Phillip Ranallo

Evan Baxter and his children building the ark as animals walked two by two, assisting him in the process. I also appeared in congressional scenes filmed in Richmond.

Filming usually lasted 12 hours each day, and extras took lots of breaks that included gourmet snacks and catered meals. The movie snacks were called craft service, but some of the extras dubbed them "crafty."

During the filming I met Carell, Graham, John Goodman, Wanda Sykes, Jonah Hill and John Michael Higgins. Every actor was nice and easy to work

with.

Working with these actors showed me the real world of Hollywood. It's waking up at 4 a.m., being at work at 6 a.m. and working 12-hour days. It's wearing tons of sunscreen, not to mention makeup, amid summer's sweltering temperatures.

Would I trade it? Not on your life.

"Evan Almighty" is scheduled to be released June 22, just in time for the run of summer blockbusters. I can't wait to see myself on the big screen in what is sure to be one of the funniest movies of the year.

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The CT will hold elections for executive and managing editor. Applications for the positions can be obtained at the Student Media Center at 817 W. Broad St. from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Applications are due by April 20. Candidates will present platform speeches at the Student Media Center Sunday, April 22 at 1 p.m. Voting will take place Monday, April 23 through Wednesday, April 25 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For more information, contact Pat Kane at 828-4770 or editor@commonwealthtimes.com.

GRINDHOUSE continued from Page CT10

the two films, enhancing their retro and self-consciously silly appeal.

In many ways, the trailers are more potentially offensive to women and the thin-skinned than the films, as they flash more breasts and gratuitous violence in three minutes than either of the main features does in an hour. "Thanksgiving," a preview so hilarious and nasty it almost seems plausible, stands out as one of the best.

The first act of the double feature, "Planet Terror," stars McGowan as a go-go dancer who, alongside her ex-boyfriend (Freddy Rodriguez), struggles to survive in the midst of a zombie outbreak.

TV star Naveen Andrews ("Lost") plays a scientist who keeps the testes of the men he kills in a jar. Bruce Willis makes an appearance as a military leader with his own agenda, not to mention a serious skin problem.

Even Fergie, Black Eyed Peas singer and solo artist, makes a brief cameo in the beginning of the zombie flick, boasting the prerequisite cleavage required to fill the role of the zombies' first kill. (From the looks of it, the zombies thought she was D-to the-E-to the-L-I-C-I-O-U-S.)

"Planet Terror," which was directed by Rodriguez, is a take-no-prisoners, sometimes ridiculous voyage into the world of camp. Though it might be a bit gory or a bit too conceptually dumb for some, most B-movie fans will appreciate this remarkably solid homage.

The second half of "Grindhouse" – "Deathproof" – takes a different approach to re-imagining '70s, low-budget, exploitation films. Directed by Quentin Tarantino, the film stars Russell as "Stuntman Mike."

Russell's villainous character uses an intimidating car and his skills as a former stuntman to kill groups of young women. A minor character hints that Mike kills to satisfy a deranged sexual frustration, though Mike's psychology is not important enough to merit real discussion. What is important, however, is that Mike is twisted and sadistic, and he's killing innocent women.

At first, Tarantino's talk-heavy dialogue and character-driven approach seem strange, especially since it follows the over-the-top bombast of "Planet Terror." Once the film gets to its halfway mark, however, it picks up steam with the introduction of a new set of young, female targets.

"Deathproof" boasts a lengthy car chase sequence, which is notable, Tarantino said, because it is accomplished without special effects, like computer-generated imagery. Midway through the car sequence, the plot, up to this point formulaic, takes a surprising turn when the female heroines start hunting the hunter. This shift is notable for the guiltless glee the avenging heroines display as they dispose of the mass murderer.

The women's unabashedly joyous revenge reflects the changing times, and its brilliance lies in its recognition that women today are fed up with being portrayed and treated like victims.

As much as Tarantino might be perceived as a guy's guy who loves T & A and a lot of violence, he's managing to become one of the biggest feminists in Hollywood, as his previous films, "Kill Bill" and "Jackie Brown," showcase strong women, as well.

That said, while the films are separately strong, and while they express very different aesthetics and ideas, "Planet Terror" stands as a slightly more entertaining movie, though it is certainly less artsy and inventive than "Deathproof."

Tarantino's quieter and quirkier tale of a crazed killer stalking women seems odd alongside Rodriguez's epic zombie-fest. As a follow-up, it can be hard to pay attention to, and often Tarantino's trademark talky dialogue doesn't quite fit with the exploitation film prototype, which these films are aiming to celebrate.

Nonetheless, by the time the credits role on "Grindhouse," viewers have enjoyed a movie experience that manages to celebrate sex, violence, horror and female empowerment, while at the same time basking in the joys of unapologetically pulpy filmmaking. What's not to love?

Grades:

'Planet Terror:' A

'Deathproof:' A-

Overall for "Grindhouse:" A

It's your turn.



Do you have questions or comments about VCU sports? Have an opinion on professional sports? Send in your thoughts to the sports mailbag by e-mail, sports@commonwealthtimes.com, or by dropping them off in the sports box at The Commonwealth Times office at 817 W. Broad St.

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Spectrum

the Ctube



Don't go nuts for doughnuts - go nuts for muffins!

SARAH SONIES
Spectrum Writer

For those snobs who are no longer concerned about the once thriving business of Cunningham Muffins, and for those who feel that a grandma who has an uncanny resemblance to Andy Dick is old news, look away.

This article is a tribute to one of the few good things left in the cutthroat world of the muffin industry. All the Facebook groups can't possibly be wrong.

Cunningham Muffins is the emporium of muffin suppliers. However, buried underneath a veneer of normalcy and a variety of what seems to be delicious baked goods, lay muffins of suspicion and whimsy.

We are eased in with promises of raspberry, blueberry, orange and banana. But you don't want these flavors. They're more boring and lame than New Year's Eve at grandma's.

As a Cunningham connoisseur, I recommend asbestos, Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the imaginary flavors. All of them are a joyride for the tongue.

Few people are more hilariously creepy than the people in this video. It has just the right element of weirdness to be considered a cult classic.

Just because Donny has lost his appetite doesn't mean you should. Just be sure to stay away from the blood muffin because that one was just downright strange.

Looking for an entertaining video on YouTube can be like searching for a needle in a haystack.

With users uploading at least 65,000 new videos a day, it's hard to know what to look for and where to find it. That's why the CT has created The CTube. Issue to issue, we'll weed through all the good, bad and ugly that YouTube has to offer to find what we think, at the least, will hold your attention. No need to spend more time than necessary on YouTube when Facebook already consumes half of your day, right?

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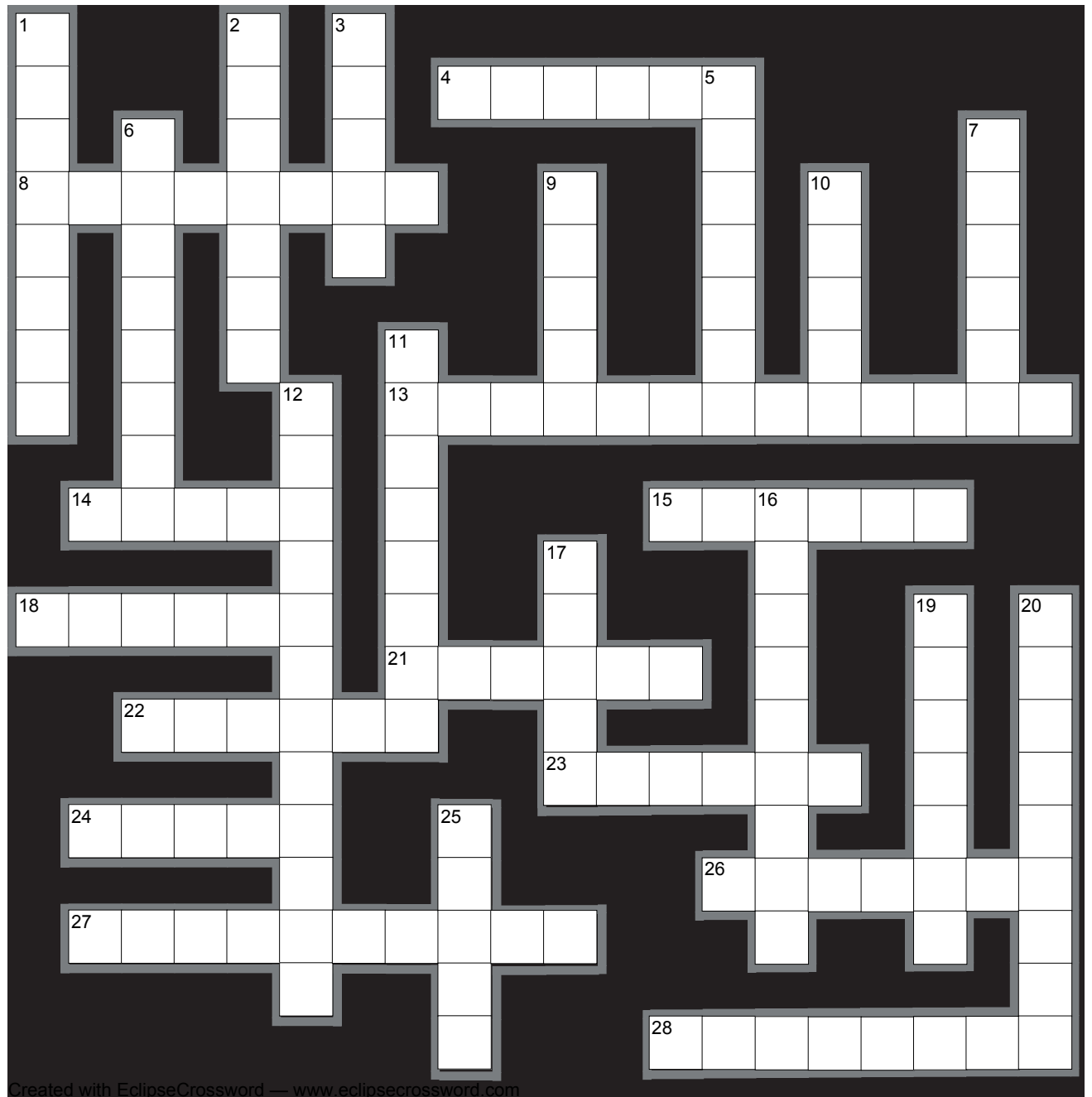
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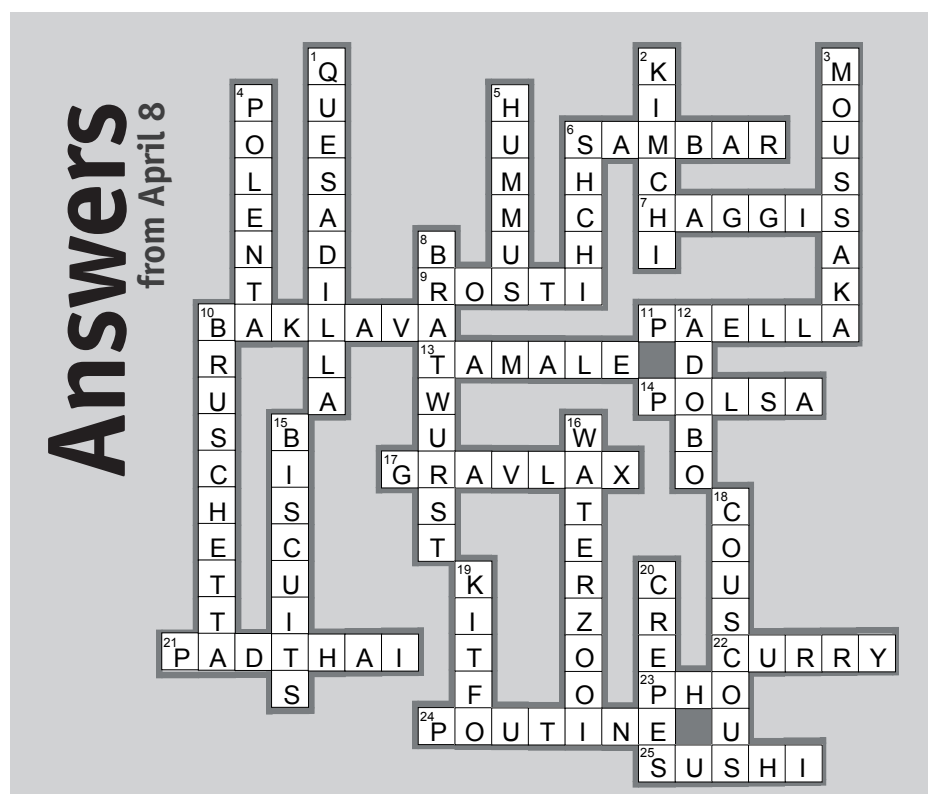
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Thursday, April 12, 2007



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Opinion

"The words didn't originate in the black community. I am willing to bet, Thomas Jefferson used the term 'nappy-headed hos' after his late-night slave quarter visits."

—Stephen Hicks

Imus owes more than apologies

STEPHEN HICKS
Opinion Writer

Apologies are growing old, even expressing "profound regret" means very little.

The racist and insensitive comments by radio host Don Imus were definitely uncalled for.

Where did the thought emerge that it was OK to call the Rutgers University basketball team "nappy-headed hos"?

Racism is alive and well, whether or not Imus considers himself to be racist.

The basketball coach, C. Vivian Stringer, said Imus' words were "racist and sexist remarks that are deplorable, despicable and unconscionable."

I agree.

But now, since the statements have caused a storm of media attention, where do we go from here?

He said he meant his words as a joke, but it's not funny to imagine who would chuckle at such an insult.

Imus has apologized on almost every medium,

from "The Al Sharpton Show" to the "Today" show. He plans to meet privately with the basketball team and apologize to them directly.

But I repeat: Where do we go from here?

Imus made one statement in his explanation that struck a nerve. He said the word "originated in the black community." He went on to say, "I know that these young women and young black women all through that society are demeaned and degraded by their own black men and that they are called that name."

And yes, Imus is correct . . . partly. He also is wrong.

The words didn't originate in the black community. I am willing to bet, Thomas Jefferson used the term "nappy-headed hos" after his late-night slave quarter visits. Today, the face of the speaker has changed. Now, it's the top-selling rap artists that have run with the derogatory label and have made millions by flinging this poison toward black women.

Willie Lynch syndrome is flourishing and so is the confusion that follows.

It's hypocritical for some (I emphasis "some") African-Americans to yell "resignation," when some of those same people sit silently, while musicians, actors and comedians spew the word on an around-the-clock basis.

Where are the protests?

On both fronts, these words, these labels, must be combated.

However, we must not shift accountability. Imus needs to deal with the consequences, yet both black and white men must bare the burden for disrespecting black women.

This is also an issue concerning freedom of speech. Most people seem to defend this freedom when it aligns with their politics but bash it when it does not.

Let Imus lose his sponsorship. Let the advertising firms have their way. I never really watched Imus' show. Why start now?

NBC suspended Imus for two weeks. Imus called the suspension "appropriate."

The Rev. Al Sharpton said the suspension was "not nearly enough . . . too little, too late."

I call the suspension ineffective if the outcome does not include sincere dialogue about the racist and patriarchal country that would tolerant Imus making the comments in the first place.

Your letters

Dear student editor,

I am writing this letter in hopes to better and further my education through your school.

As you can see, I am currently serving time for my crime in society. Upon serving this sentence I dedicated myself to teaching myself GED and discovered writing is a talent I never knew I had. Due to the penal system, after you obtain your GED the system does not allow inmates to further their education to a collegiate level. I am self-teaching because of the overcrowding, and because of the need for schooling the penal system is short on staff. I choose not to let this discourage me in obtaining my GED or stop me from expanding my writing. I have a strong will to succeed but no family or friends to share my new change and outlook on life because of this time I'm serving.

"Out of sight, out of mind" is what I've become. I spend my time studying and writing my third novel. I have no one in society to help push me forward with my writing, in my studies and trying to become college material, or just to say, "hello, we care." I don't ever plan on coming back to prison or following the wrong path I once chose. I am a young man with a strong will to progress, but I am in need of someone willing to help me. I hope you could find it in your heart to publish this letter in the campus paper so I can grab hold of a helping hand. I know the students can help me in furthering my education and writing. I know they wouldn't mind helping the unfortunate. I hope to hear from the students or campus; I need someone to reach out to help me fulfill my dream.

I thank you for your time in this matter.

—Arron A. McClain, Clinton Correctional Facility, P.O. Box 20001, Dannemora, NY 12929

Rodney and the Spartan AC

RICH GRISET
Opinion Writer

Thank you, Rodney the Ram. Though some may try to pass off credit for your brilliant scheme onto some other soul, I know the truth. You're so modest at times. Only a genius like you could devise such a wonderful heat and air conditioning system.

As a person who has classes in the lecture halls of Temple can attest to, in some places on campus there has been no AC for the past few weeks. In most cases it was hotter inside Temple than it was outside. Though some might blame this on some sort of way for VCU to save money on their AC bill, I know better. It was actually amusing to see some of our professors sweat it out.

If you used this reasoning, then VCU either was just too cheap to turn on their AC, or they still had their heat on. The answer revealed itself last Friday when it dropped into the thirties outside and actually snowed. Instead of still having heat in the dorms, the units were in some sort of AC/heat limbo where it was virtually impossible to get warm enough. At the time of

this writing, the author is buried underneath three thick horsehair blankets and has covered himself in clubbed baby seal blubber in an effort to keep warm.

So why? Unlike some, I have the ability to see your genius of thinking. Rodney, you're a man — uh, Ram — of the arts. There is no doubt in my mind that you have seen the movie "300." With a CAA Conference Championship under our belts and an appearance at the NCAA Championship, it has sparked the first of conquest. Finally, VCU will be famous for something other than the disappearance of Taylor Behl. What better way to become winners that to train like Spartans?

We will prepare ourselves to withstand the heat and cold like Spartans. We are already halfway there if we can stomach the weekend food at Shafer. We'll just kind of forget about that whole "Spartan pedersasty" relationship business. Enough frats already have toga parties. Just add washboard abs and leather Speedos and we're there.

This is no time to get sheepish, Rodney! Rams! Prepare for glory!

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Opinion Editor

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Opinions expressed are those of individual writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Commonwealth Times or Virginia Commonwealth University. Unsigned editorials represent the institutional opinion of The Commonwealth Times.

Add Your Voice

The opinion pages of The Commonwealth Times are a forum open to the public. Clear, concise and compelling contributions are welcome online at our Web site, by e-mail at opinion@commonwealthtimes.com, or by mail and in person at 817 W. Broad St., Richmond, Va. 23220-3806.

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

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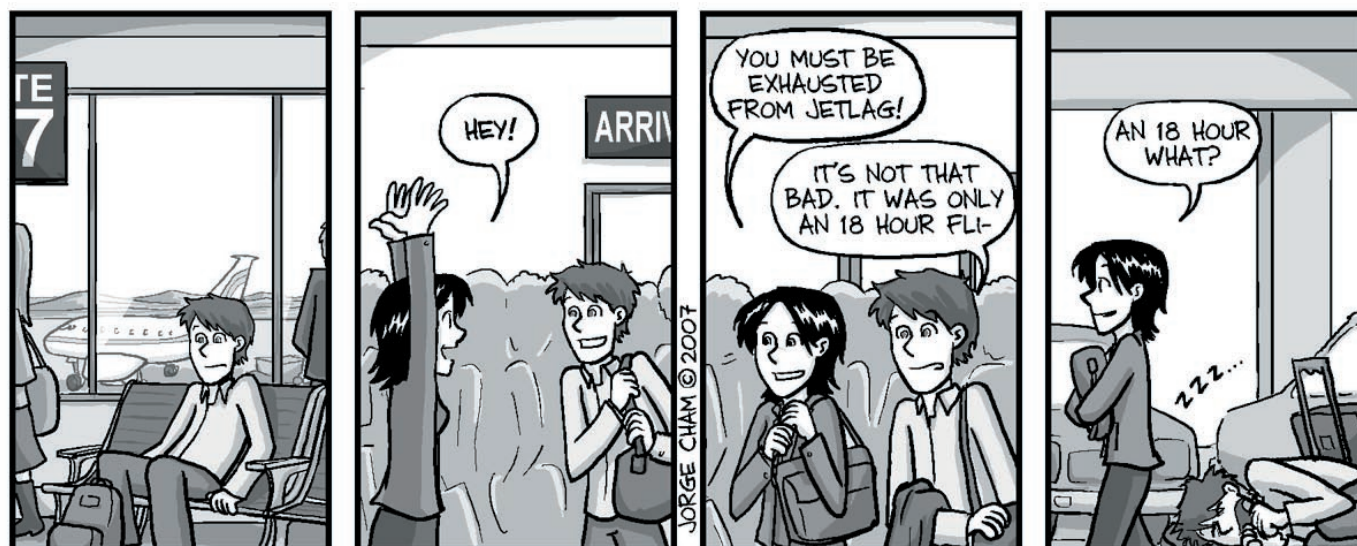
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I've Wasted My Life

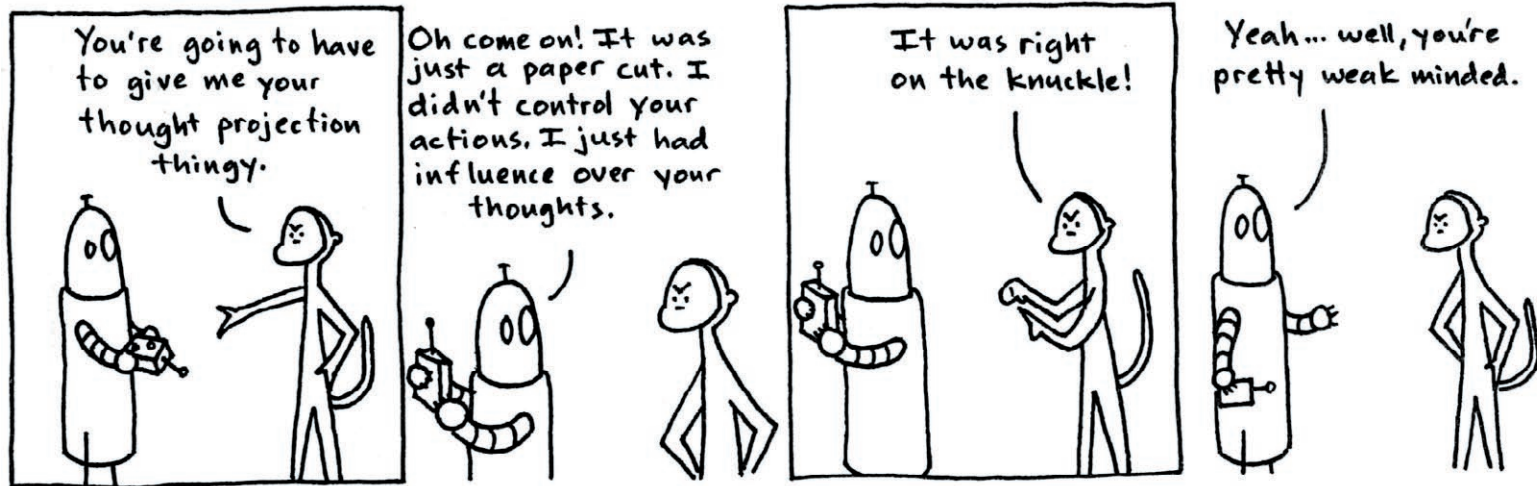
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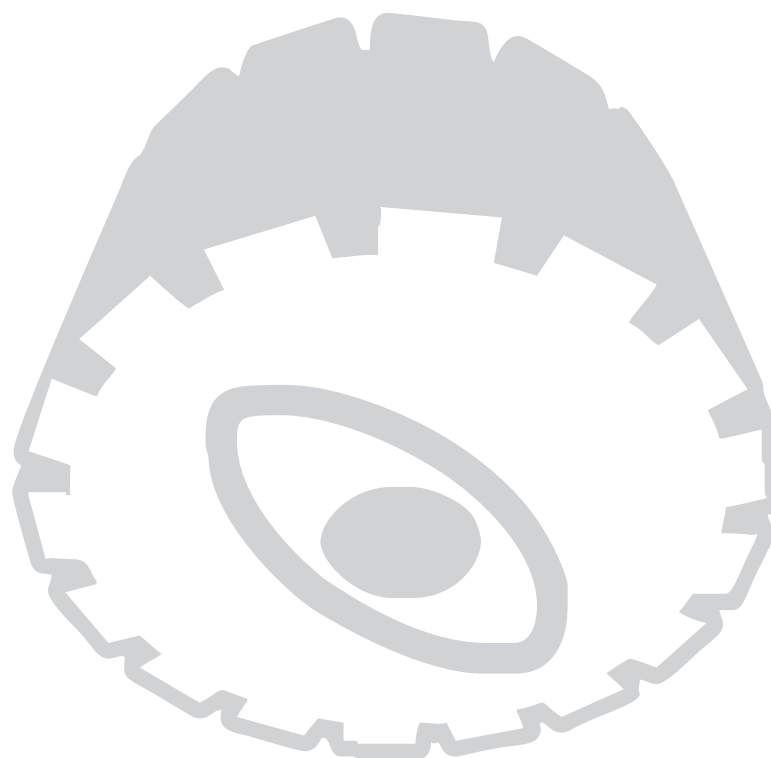


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The CT will hold elections for executive and managing editor.

Applications for the positions can be obtained at the Student Media Center at 817 W. Broad St. from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Applications are due by April 20. Candidates will present platform speeches at the Student Media Center Sunday, April 22 at 1 p.m. Voting will take place Monday, April 23 through Wednesday, April 25 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For more information, contact
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