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The **independent** student press of Virginia Commonwealth University

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CNS briefs

Capital News Service is an advanced mass communications journalism class in which VCU students write, edit and distribute stories about the General Assembly to newspapers throughout the commonwealth. CNS was established in 1994. Below is a taste of just some of the stories CNS reporters have written for the 2008 legislative session.

General Assembly wrap up

Coalition says House budget hurts schools

Members of the Fund Quality Schools Coalition said this past Tuesday that a budget proposal passed by the House threatens funding for local public education.

The coalition consists of groups such as the Virginia School Boards Association and the Virginia Education Association.

The House budget would change the way the commonwealth calculates its share of funding for local schools, including capping inflation rates and basing funding for salaries on older data. At a press conference, the coalition said the proposed changes would cost local school divisions about \$356 million during the 2010-2012 biennium.

Currently, Virginia ranks 31 in the nation in average teacher salaries and 33 in providing funds to local schools, the coalition said.

VEA President Princess Moss said those rankings are unacceptable, and the House proposal would make the situation worse.

"Virginia already shortchanges its schools and its teachers," Moss said. "How can the General Assembly even consider reducing its future

commitment to school funding and salaries?"

Tom Smith, the superintendent of Fluvanna County schools, said the proposed reduction could have a devastating effect.

"As a superintendent, the only way that we could make up this deficit would be ... to reduce services (including teacher positions); cut teacher salaries; or ask our localities to raise local revenue," Smith said.

Petersburg Mayor Annie M. Mickens said raising this money would be a problem for many localities.

Brief by Meredith Kight

Senate approves DEQ bills

Revamped requirements for members of the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality unanimously were approved by the Senate this past week.

If approved by Governor Timothy M. Kaine, House Bill 1332 would enforce standards of expertise for DEQ staff members, as well as for members of air- and water-control boards.

The bill was controversial when first proposed because it took the power to issue permits away from the environmental-citizen boards and gave that authority to the DEQ.

However, controversy subsided after the language of the bill was updated.

Both HB 1332 and a partner bill, Senate Bill 423, have been moving steadily through the legislature since.

Sen. Phillip P. Puckett, D-Tazewell, who proposed SB 423, said he is confident both bills will become law. He said the updated versions of the bills are a compromise between the environmental-citizen boards and the general public.

Brief by Julia Linden

Senate approves computer-recycling bill

Virginia computer manufacturers might have to establish recycling programs for their used products.

The Senate voted 37-3 Wednesday, Feb. 27 to approve House Bill 344, which would require the manufacturers of more than 500 pieces of computer equipment to collect, recycle and re-use items returned by consumers.

The bill's sponsor, Delegate Kenneth R. Plum, D-Reston, said the requirements only apply to monitors and central-processing units. Printers, keyboards and speakers are not

included.

Plum addressed some concerns – including waste volume in landfills, environmental hazards and material recovery – that were raised by those who opposed the bill.

"The lifetime of computer products seems to be relatively short, and there are a high number of them," Plum said. "There is a high likelihood that we're going to have a high volume of these products coming into landfills if we don't do something to divert that."

Between 2004 and 2006, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality received several grants from the computer company Dell to conduct electronic-waste collection in Russell, Buchanan, Dickenson, Page and Bedford counties. According to DEQ's Web site, almost 50 tons of electronics were collected for recycling in a measure to prevent them from being deposited in Virginia landfills.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Web site states that between 1.5 and 1.9 million tons of electronics waste were deposited in U.S. landfills in 2005, while between 345,000 and 379,000 tons were recycled.

Brief by Alex Bahr

Cover photo by Rachel Larue

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The Commonwealth Times strives to be accurate in gathering news. If you think we have made an error, please call Executive Editor Rebecca Landau at 828-4770 or e-mail her at editor@commonwealthtimes.com. Corrections will appear on the Opinion page.

news

Brandcenter opens bright new building as controversy dims

RYAN BROSMER
News Editor

VCU's nationally recognized advertising graduate school opened its doors this semester with a new name, a new building and a bit of controversy.

The VCU Adcenter has redefined its identity, taking on the name "VCU Brandcenter." The school's official grand-opening ceremony takes place today.

Last month, Karen Berndt, admissions coordinator for the Brandcenter, sent an e-mail to students stating that first-year graduate students would not be admitted to the grand opening.

"Unfortunately, we do not have the capacity or budget to have (first-year) students in attendance," Berndt stated in the e-mail.

VCU graduate student J.D. Humphreys posted Berndt's e-mail to his "VCU Brandcenter Student Blog," which Humphreys created before he began attending the school in fall 2007.

"We are all paying the same tuition," Humphreys stated beneath the posting of Berndt's e-mail. "I thought we moved into a new building so that we could have the capacity."

Humphreys said Berndt's e-mail followed announcements that the third floor of the Brandcenter would be off-limits daily to all students after 5 p.m. because of a broken window in a meeting room.

"We were told coming to Brandcenter that we would have access to many new rooms, resources and even showers," Humphreys stated in his post. "Instead, we are given a lab with an early closing time, locked classrooms and (a) noisy basement where work cannot get done."

Humphreys said the lockdowns were a surprise.

"After I thought it couldn't get any worse, the e-mail was sent out that they were now locking the (third) floor," Humphreys stated. "This is three weeks after being yelled at. ... It isn't like we burned the place down."

On Feb. 21, Brandcenter students received



BRANDCENTER continued to CT4

The VCU Brandcenter is at a new location at 103 S. Jefferson St.

Rachel Larue photo

Thursday, March 6, 2008

news · commonwealthtimes.com · CT3



BRANDCENTER continued from CT3

another e-mail about the grand opening—this time from Brandcenter director Rick Boyko.

“I would like to welcome all Brandcenter students to the grand opening,” Boyko stated in his e-mail, broadening the invitation to encompass both first- and second-year students.

“When we initially made the decision to limit attendance to (second-year) students, we were concerned about the maximum number of people that the building could accommodate. However, we realized that goes against the spirit of the school,” Boyko stated.

“We’ve had such a huge response of people who are coming,” Boyko said. “We decided to go with being more equitable.”

According to Humphreys, Boyko’s e-mail was appreciated.

“I immediately replied and thanked (Boyko) and let him know that it means a lot,” Humphreys stated.

Several Brandcenter students understand the choices Boyko and other faculty members had to make.

First-year Brandcenter student Tatia-

na Peck said she thinks the Brandcenter was trying to do the right thing.



Rachel Larue photo

An interior view of the Brandcenter

“I don’t think there was any malintent.”

Boyko stated Peck is correct, and the initial decision wasn’t based on budget or space but the Brandcenter’s tradition of allowing second-year students to attend cocktail parties with board members and others from the advertising field.

“It’s an opportunity for them to meet people and get one-on-one time,” Boyko stated.

Peck said she has heard the building lockdowns will be phased out after the grand opening.

“The rumor is once spring break is over, the rules will be more lax,” Peck said.

“(The new building) allows us to cooperate and work together,” said Oakie Chiraskamin, another first-year Brandcenter student.

Current Brandcenter students aren’t the only ones happy to see a new building.

“I talked to an alum last night who just graduated last year,” Chiraskamin said. “They are really excited about the

new building.”

The Brandcenter building, located at 103 S. Jefferson St., is part of the Monroe Park Annex.

Famed architect Clive Wilkinson designed the building.

Clive Wilkinson Architects designed the California Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising and Googleplex—the headquarters for search-engine giant Google.

“The space (for the Brandcenter) will provide all the tools to support strong, imaginative, creative thinking,” Wilkinson stated, according to the Brandcenter’s Web site. “There are numerous different places students can gather, and at the same time, there are many quiet spaces to concentrate individually.”

VCU President Eugene P. Trani said the grand opening is a credit to outstanding faculty and staff.

“The grand opening of the Brandcenter is a wonderful occasion to celebrate the success of VCU’s graduate advertising program as one of the best in the country,” Trani said.

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sports

BASEBALL

Errors, middle-inning rally doom Rams

JONATHAN HOWARD
Sports Editor

The VCU Rams have had to swallow a lot of tough losses to good teams early this season. Add the East Carolina Pirates to that list.

The Rams gave up four runs in the fifth inning and committed four total errors in a 7-4 loss to the Pirates Wednesday afternoon at The Diamond.

East Carolina got on the board first. Centerfielder Harrison Eldridge led off the inning with a walk. After forcing a pop fly to second base, VCU starting pitcher Brett Walker (Virginia Beach/Cox) threw the ball past first baseman Jared Bolden (Lynchburg/E.C. Glass) on a pick-off attempt. Eldridge hustled to third base, putting him in scoring position. He scored one batter later on a fly ball to right field by designated hitter Kyle Roller.

The Rams were able to get revenge in the bottom half of the inning, plating four runs. Shortstop Chris Jackson (Midlothian/Manchester) got the ball rolling with an RBI single that plated Richard Gonzalez (Caguas, Puerto Rico/PRBA). Designated hitter Michael Cheatham (Chesterfield/Matoaca) followed with a two-run double, scoring Bolden and Jackson. After a single by third baseman Joe Van Meter (Brooklyn/St. Dominic), Pirates starter Matt Cox was pulled and replaced by Zach Cooper. VCU catcher Nathan Furry (Salem/Salem) met the new pitcher with an RBI single that plated Cheatham and gave the Rams the run that would prove to be their last.

After holding the Pirates' bats silent in the second,



Third baseman Joe Van Meter throws to first.

Brett Tignor photo

VCU had a chance to strike, but were unable to convert. After leftfielder Matthew Leskiw (Plains, Pa./James) and Gonzalez walked to start the inning, Kwan Evans (Hampton/Bethel) singled to load the bases. Cooper then fired a wild pitch to Bolden, but catcher Corey Kemp was able to recover and throw out Leskiw, who was trying to score from third. Bolden followed by striking

out, and Cheatham grounded into a fielder's choice two batters later to end the threat.

VCU head coach Paul Keyes was unhappy with his team's inability to convert.

"The game should have been 10-0 by the second or

BASEBALL continued to CT8

THIS WEEK

BASEBALL

March 7-9, @ George Mason, Fairfax
Tue., March 11, @ East Carolina, Greenville, N.C., 3 p.m.
Wed., March 12, @ North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C., 3 p.m.
March 14-16, vs. Manhattan, The Diamond

MEN'S BASKETBALL

March 7-10, @ CAA Tournament, Richmond Coliseum

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Thu., March 6, @ William and Mary, Williamsburg, 7 p.m.
March 13-16, @ CAA Tournament, Newark, Del.

GOLF

March 10-11, @ Palmas Del Mar Intercollegiate, Puerto Rico, all day
March 16-18, @ Pinehurst Intercollegiate, Pinehurst, N.C., all day

MEN'S TENNIS

March 13-16, @ Blue-Gray Classic, Montgomery, Ala., TBA

WOMEN'S TENNIS

Sat., March 8, vs. Texas Christian, Thalhimer Tennis Center, 11 a.m.
Fri., March 14, @ UNLV, Las Vegas, 10 a.m.
Sun., March 16, vs. Pepperdine, Las Vegas, TBA

TRACK AND FIELD

Sat., March 8, @ Virginia Tech Last Chance, Blacksburg, TBA
March 14-15, @ NCAA Championships, Fayetteville, Ark., TBA

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





COMMENTARY

MATT DOYON

Associate Sports Editor

Ready to repeat

The VCU Rams men's basketball team is poised to defend its CAA Tournament championship this weekend at the Richmond Coliseum. Having won the conference by three games (15-3), the Rams are no doubt the top team in the field.

Two of the three teams they lost to are in the bottom half of the bracket (George Mason and James Madison), meaning VCU wouldn't face either before the championship game Monday night. Old Dominion would be VCU's opponent in Sunday's semifinal, and the Monarchs bested the Rams by just one point Feb. 16.

Friday's bye guarantees the Rams a spot in Day 2's action with a date against the Hofstra/Towson winner. The Rams were a combined 3-0 against those schools this season, winning by an average of 17 points. Antoine Agudio of Hofstra was neutralized in both matchups – mostly by Jamal Shuler (Jacksonville, N.C./Jacksonville). Neither the Pride nor the Tigers will have an answer for the

Rams' nation-leading 26.6 percent 3-point defense.

Should the Rams face Old Dominion again, revenge would be a driving factor. VCU dodged a bullet last year when George Mason knocked out the Monarchs and prevented VCU/Old Dominion III. That rivalry could very well be renewed Sunday and the Monarchs are always a handful, whether they're the fourth seed or the 12th seed.

VCU is the only CAA school with at-large potential for the NCAA Tournament. Every other school must win the championship and guarantee itself a bid. VCU's RPI stands at 43rd in the nation—30 spots ahead of George Mason, the next closest CAA team. Old Dominion is next at 120th and, well, you see the trend.



With quality wins against Maryland (RPI 63) and Houston (RPI 69) on neutral courts, and Akron (RPI 81) on the road, the Rams have a résumé that is respectable enough to be considered at least a bubble team if they lose in the conference championship game.

Long live Brett Favre's retirement

After 17 seasons in the NFL, Brett Favre finally decided to call it quits Tuesday. Don't be ashamed if you breathed a sigh of relief upon hearing that.

Let the five years of Brett Favre's pre-Hall of Fame shelf life begin before the all-time passing leader gets inducted into Canton. It's not that Brett Favre doesn't deserve accolades, it just tends to get excessive ... every week during the season. Turning on SportsCenter

Wednesday morning, it was impossible to avoid half the show being filled by Brett Favre talk. Is Brett Favre the best quarterback in history? More than 12 percent of the voting participants on an ESPN poll think so.

Perhaps you've heard comedian Frank Caliendo's impression of NBC commentator John Madden gushing over Brett Favre. It usually goes like this: "If only humans were allowed to play football, Brett Favre would not be allowed to play football."

Although that's clearly an exaggeration of how Brett Favre is viewed in the football world, it's only a slight one. In the eyes of guys like Madden, Chris Berman and others, Brett Favre can do no wrong. It's just that "child-like" love for the game.

One can only hope that Brett Favre stays in retirement and lives a happy life cutting ribbons at department store grand openings and maybe open a couple used car dealerships a la John Elway. No disrespect to the achievements Brett Favre has posted, it's just that too many people buy in to his "heroics" and don't pay enough attention to Brett Favre's five-interception games.

BASEBALL continued from CT7

third inning," Keyes said. "I told the guys I felt really bad for them because they really should have put the game away by the third inning."

Had the Rams been able to convert, they might have been able to avoid the oncoming rally by East Carolina. After holding the Pirates scoreless in the third and fourth, Walker gave up a single to Trent Whitehead and hit Eldridge. After another single to load the bases, Jackson threw the ball away on a routine grounder that allowed both runners to score and Ryan Wood to move to third. Wood scored when the next batter, Stephen Batts, reached on another error. After giving up another hit, Walker was pulled

in favor of Robbie Andrews (Covington/Alleghany). Andrews forced a fly out to right, but Kemp stepped up to the plate and knocked a sacrifice fly to center, plating Batts and giving ECU the lead for good.

East Carolina was able to tack on two more runs in the sixth inning while VCU was unable to touch relief pitcher Brad Mincey. Mincey retired 19 of the final 23 batters he faced. With two outs in the bottom of the ninth, Jackson and Cheatham reached first on errors, but Van Meter grounded out to third to end the game. Coach Keyes was unhappy with his team's overall effort in the loss.

"When you have someone down that's a good team

like East Carolina, you've got to put them away, and we didn't do it," Keyes said.

The Rams are back in action this weekend in a three-game series against George Mason in Fairfax.

By the numbers

ECU (5-4) 100 042 000 7 7 4

VCU (2-7) 400 000 000 4 7 4

Cox, Cooper (1), Mincey (2) and Kemp; Walker, Andrews (5), Morgan (8) and Furry, Rodriguez (9). W: Mincey (1-0). L: Walker (0-1).

SPORTS BRIEFS

BASEBALL

The Rams overcame a ninth-inning rally with two runs in the bottom half of the inning to defeat Liberty 5-4 on Tuesday. The black and gold led 3-0 after three innings before giving up four runs in the ninth. Senior Kwan Evans (Hampton/Bethel) and junior Chris Jackson (Midlothian/Manchester) both hit RBI singles to give VCU the victory.

FIELD HOCKEY

The Rams announced four signings to the 2008 team Monday, adding to the first recruiting class by coach Kelly McQuade. Lyndsey Butler (Fairfax/W.T. Woodson) was an all-district, all-region and all-state defender with the Cavaliers. Erin Jablonski (Charlottesville/Albermarle) was

named first-team all-district as a senior and was team MVP her junior and senior years. Hannah Lyerly (Williamsburg/Lafayette) was recognized as an all-district forward for three consecutive seasons and was all-region and all-state for two years. In 2007, she was named player of the year for the Bay Rivers District. Meg Thaxton (Fairfax/W.T. Woodson) was a first-team all-district, all-region and all-state forward in high school. She was a member of the All-Northern Region tournament team her senior year.

GOLF

Rafael Campos (Guaynabo, Puerto Rico/Baldwin School) shot a 65 (-7) on the first day of the Ron Smith USF Invitational this past weekend in Dade City, Fla. The sophomore earned round-of-the-week honors from Golfweek

Magazine for his effort. VCU finished the three-day event eighth of 18 overall with a mark of 884 (+20). The team next takes the course Monday and Tuesday in the Palmas Del Mar Intercollegiate in Puerto Rico.

MEN'S TENNIS

The No. 21 Rams dropped Sunday's matchup with No. 9 Baylor 6-1. Junior Emil Lindgren (Stocksund, Sweden) took home the Rams' lone point, defeating Gwen Corches 7-5, 6-4. The 48th-ranked combo of Martin Schulhauser (Karvina, Czech Republic) and Thibaut Charron (Sens, France) won their doubles match 8-4. The loss drops the Rams to 10-3.

WOMEN'S TENNIS

The 25th-ranked Rams dropped a 4-3 decision to No. 60 Virginia Tech

Sunday afternoon. After winning the doubles point, the Rams won two of the first three singles matches, including a victory by No. 33 Tatsiana Uvarova (Minsk, Belarus) over Inga Beermann 7-5, 6-2. However, the Hokies won the last three singles matches to take victory. The Rams' record is now 13-1.

MEN'S TRACK AND FIELD

Sophomore Michael Garel (Stafford/Brooke Point) and freshman Mike Nkwanga (Haymarket/Battlefield) won the 55-meter hurdle and the 500-meter dash, respectively, to highlight the Rams' performance Sunday in the George Mason Last Chance Meet. Garel finished with a time of 7.67 seconds and Nkwanga with a time of 1:06.16. The Rams will participate Saturday in the Virginia Tech Last Chance Meet.



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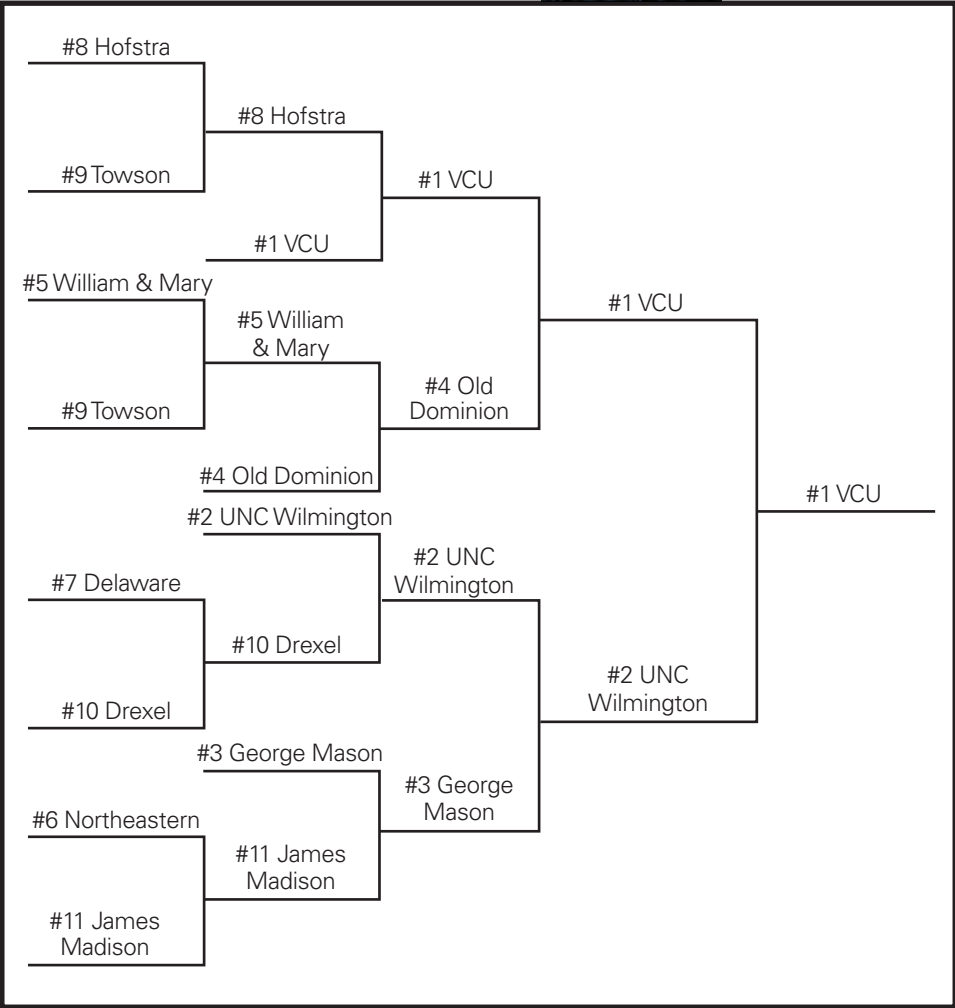
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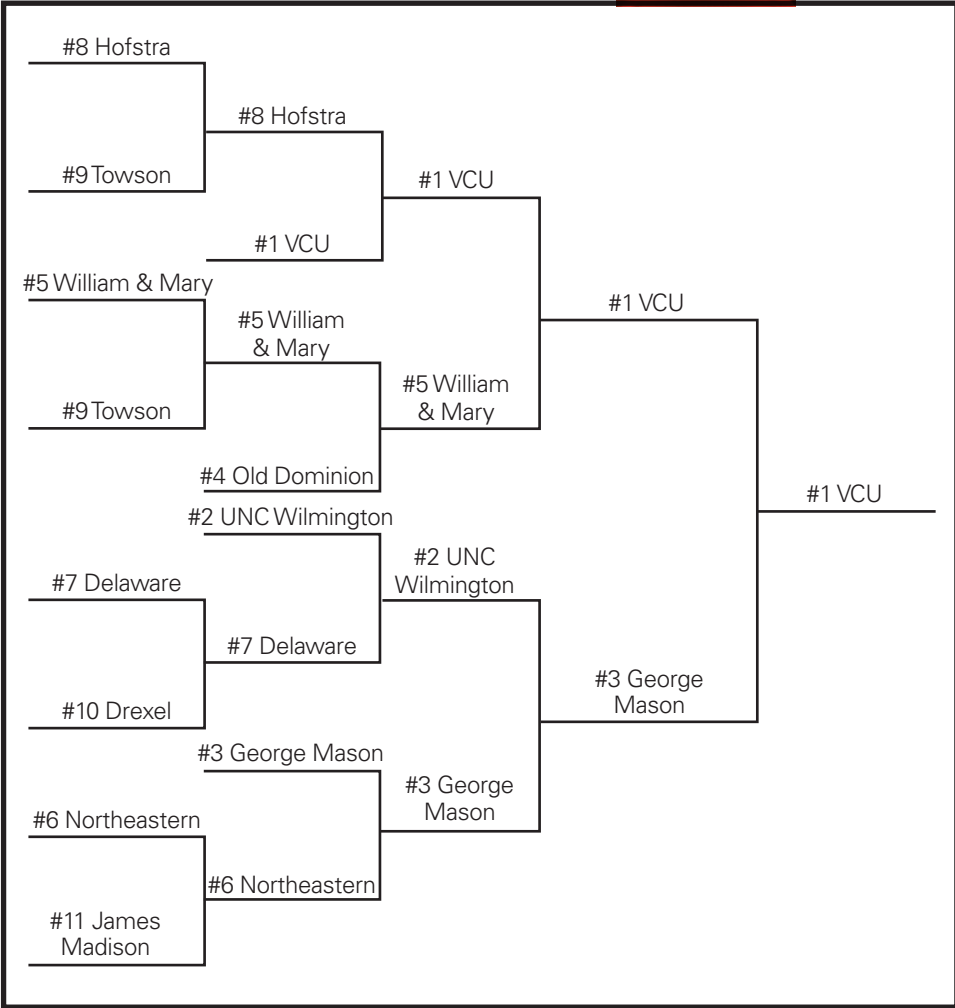


CAA Tournament predictions

Jonathan Howard, Sports Editor



Matt Doyon, Associate Sports Editor



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spectrum

Regina Spektor receives enthusiastic Richmond welcome

ROBERTO CURTIS
Spectrum Editor

After postponing her sold-out show twice—and damaging her rapport with many fans—Regina Spektor finally managed to improve her health enough to perform an adorably sincere show at Toad's Place this past Sunday.

Spektor postponed her Richmond show to the dismay of many fans after collapsing at a sound check in Nashville, Tenn., this past year. Spektor had been suffering from vertigo, a balance disorder that causes uncontrollable dizziness.

"It was disappointing, because I have great respect for her, but she's a flake," sculpture major Rebecca Witt said.

With Spektor's prior postponements only slightly hampering the attendance, Toad's Place was more packed than I had seen it in six previous concerts. As if the many months that had elapsed weren't enough, Spektor gave her audience plenty of time to marinate, too—more than 40 minutes elapsed between the opening act, Only Son, and Spektor's first appearance.

As fans shrieked, brandished cell-phone cameras and reached toward the ceiling, Spektor bashfully emerged from stage right with an enormous smile.

Reminiscent of her performance at Bonnaroo Music Festival, Spektor opened the show with an a cappella version of "Ain't No Cover" while she tapped the microphone on the offbeat, invoking a Southern blues feel reminiscent of negro spirituals of the 19th century.

Spektor spent most of the evening behind a microphone and grand piano, making sure the audience got what they wanted. Complaints that she was too hard to see from parts of the crowd were allayed early in the show when Spektor politely asked for her image to appear on the large movie screens in the venue.

"You can't see me? Can you help them see me? Thank you," Spektor said.

Her voice was startling and inspirational to hear—it was cute, reminiscent of Tori Amos with a smidgen of Ani DiFranco's raw attitude.

Fans could tell she was having as much fun performing as the audience was listening. Her random whispers and percussive sounds between notes added a particular flair to her music à la Ben Folds or Bobby McFerrin.

Perhaps Spektor's concert was so special because she had no other musicians on stage with her until the second-to-last song—Only Son came out to beat box and accompany his girlfriend on the upbeat "Hotel Song." Spektor's honesty



Regina Spektor in her element.

Roberto Curtis photo

and talent in no way could be clouded by a band of superstars dying to play with the young singer.

"She was so great. I mean, you can't deny how awesome the expression is," said a fan following the encore.

Spektor closed her four-song encore with her

popular "Samson." Judging by the volume of the sing-along, it's safe to say the audience knew this song best out of all the numbers of the evening.

"Thank you very much, Richmond. I hope I see you again," Spektor said as she elegantly curtsied for both sides of the cheering room.





CHECK THIS OUT:



The National will host local and national acts.

Rachel Larue photo

311 breathes life into new venue

KEMI OWENS-HART
Associate Spectrum Editor

For those who need their live-music fix and are looking for a little more than Bogart's Back Room to whet their musical appetite, help is on the way—in fact, it's already here.

The National, which now calls 708 E. Broad St. its home, is Downtown Richmond's latest mid-size music venue since the Carpenter Center for the Performing Arts, scheduled to reopen next year under the new moniker "Richmond CenterStage," closed for expansion.

The National's edifice was formerly known as Virginia's National Theater, which opened in November of 1923 and was popular in its heyday. The theater hosted throngs of showings for live theater, silent films – which proved an adequate source of entertainment for the influx of non-English speaking immigrants into the city – and vaudeville acts.

Today, after undergoing a complete makeover,

The National is striving to put its best face forward. Tuesday night's 311 show helped this process along. The 300 stadium seats inside the structure are filled on a "first-come, first-serve" basis. The building has a maximum capacity of 1,500 people and boasts a state-of-the-art sound system. The V-DOSC system is one of three in use on the East Coast and the sixth installed in the country, according to the venue's Web site.

The system more than validated its claims to fame throughout 311's entire show. The vocal stylings of Nick Hexum and Douglas Martinez – "SA" as he's commonly known – were consistently clear, permeating above the powerful roar of the crowd.

Although there is an understood rapport associated with venue attitudes and crowd control, I found – in my attempts to solicit help from a few staff members – I was met occasionally with an unfriendly attitude and an inadequate ability to assist me. There were, however, a few knowledgeable staff

members who, with refreshing wit and amicable dispositions, made my initial encounter pleasant. The general-admission section of the sold-out 311 show only provided standing room. The graduated floor in front of the stage allowed for visibility from virtually all parts of the area.

If a low-key concert experience is more your style and you can swing it, the most advantageous vantage point is on the second-floor balcony. The only caveat is that the section is VIP-accessible only. The bi-level, roped-off segment contains a row of padded stadium seats along with an area of tables and chairs and has an excellent view of the stage.

The National possesses an inherent intimacy, allowing each attendee – whether he or she prefers to be in the mosh pit at the feet of the performers or in the farthest section of the second floor – to have an optimal experience.

The alternative-rap fusion of the opening act,

311 continued to CT15



311 continued from CT14

Primo Gomez, was upbeat with an air of positivity. Later conversations with members of the band exemplified an unaffected optimism throughout; each person in the ensemble – down to the backup singers – seemed to have an air of what could only be described as laid-back cheer.

The headliner for the night, 311, began in the early '90s and is showing no signs of slowing down. With a sampling of songs from the entire scope of the band's prolific career, the night's show could be enjoyed by the recently acquired fan or the die-hard fan who listened to "Down" on his or her Walkman in middle school.

The energy of the five-piece group was phenomenal. The liveliness of each song passed from performer to audience and back again, creating a sense of infectious elation. Electricity seemed to saturate the air.

The highlight of the show was 311's mid-set percussion interlude. The lights dimmed as all members of the band exited the stage, save drummer Chad Sexton, who remained illuminated on center stage. Sexton then proceeded to perform a five-minute, virtuosic drum solo, which concluded with a well-choreographed percussive quintet—each member of the band armed with a drum and cymbal, proving their multifaceted musical talent.

The entire experience was enjoyable. As spring approaches and The National makes its finishing touches, this venue undoubtedly will prove to be a major player in the Richmond music scene.

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Thursday, March 6, 2008



weekend calendar

→Thursday 3/6

Craft/Material Studies Visiting Artist Lecture: Graham Campbell. Fine Arts Building, Rm. 238. 11 a.m.-Noon. Free. 827-0981.

VCU Music Guest Artist Series: Viento Sur Trombone Quartet. W.E. Singleton Center for the Performing Arts, Sonia Vlahcevic Concert Hall. 8 p.m. Free. 828-1169.

Infuzion: Gypsy Roots. Weekly, 8 p.m. Free. 249-2665.

Mars Bar: Pop '80s Dance Night. Weekly, 10 p.m.-2 a.m. Free. 644-6277.

→First Fridays galleries:

1708 Gallery: "3D Multiples: The Object of Production," a printmaking exhibition. Reception at 7 p.m. 319 W. Broad St. 643-1708.

ADA Gallery: Sculpture by Stephen Hendee. Paintings and drawings by D. Dominick Lombardi. Works by Josh Spahr and Ryan O'Malley. Through March 31. Reception at 7 p.m. 228 W. Broad St. 644-0100.

Art6 Gallery: "Serial Witness: Sequential Prints of Mitzi Humphrey." "Books, Broadides, et alia," print works, curated by Mitzi Humphrey. "International Prints From Virginia Collections," curated by Henrietta Near and Mitzi Humphrey. Reception at 6 p.m. Through March 30. 6 E. Broad St. 343-1406.

Artemis Gallery: "La Nicaraguense, The Spirit of Nicaragua," work by the Pueblo Potters. Reception at 5 p.m. 1601 W. Main St. 254-1755.

Brazier Fine Art: "Wet Paint," new works from gallery artists. Through March 29. 3401 W. Cary St. 359-2787.

Gallery5: "Repressed III: An exhibition dedicated to socially conscious works," a multimedia installation—live music, theatrical performances, film and video. Reception at 7 p.m. Through March 28. 200 W. Marshall St. 644-0005.

Ghostprint Gallery: Street art and handprints by Klutch, Josh MacPhee, Barrett Gordon and Matthew Anderson. Reception at 7 p.m. 220 W. Broad St. 344-1557.

Glave Kocen Gallery: "Layers," paintings by Beverly Ryan and Jeremy Satterlund. Reception at 6 p.m. Through March 29. 1620 W. Main St. 358-1990.

Main Art Gallery: "5 Printmakers 44 x 60," work by Janet DeCover, Joan Gaustad, Mary Holland, Dawn Latané and Christopher Palmer. Reception at 7 p.m. Through April 30. 1537 W. Main St. 355-6151.

Transmission: "Transmission Introduces Studio 23," prints by Ashley Hawkins, Sarah Watson, Beth Noe and Cindy Eide. Reception at 7 p.m. 312 Brook Road. 200-9985.

Visual Art Studio: "Encounter," printmaking of Lakeside by Julia Hebner. Photography of Richmond by Lloyd Chaser. Photography of Guatemala by Anne Hart Chay. Reception at 7 p.m. 208 W. Broad St. 644-1368.

→Friday 3/7

A Cure Collective Art Event: Art from Andre Shank, Jim Burnett, John Fishback, Mike Moses and Will Jones; music by DJ A+. The Camel. 5 p.m. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the CURE Foundation for Cancer Research. 353-4901.

Virginia International Auto Exhibition: Concept and exotic cars; European and vintage vehicles. The Greater Richmond Convention Center. 10 a.m. Event continues Saturday, 10 a.m.-10 p.m.; Sunday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. 403 N. Third St. 343-6721.

→Saturday 3/8

Richmond Rocks for Lindsay: Teachers from the Richmond Music Center perform a benefit concert for Lindsay Ess. Canal Club. 2 p.m. A reception with The No BS Brass Band starts at 1 p.m. \$20-\$40. 1545 E. Cary St. 643-2582.

The Camel: Hudost, Rattlemouth and Balkanize. 9 p.m. \$10-\$12. 353-4901.

→Sunday 3/9

Art6 Gallery: The Garth Newel Piano Quartet. 3 p.m. 6 E. Broad St. 343-1406.

Stretchin' at Barksdale: Sheryl Warner and the Southside Homewreckers. Barksdale Theatre. 6 p.m. \$5. 1601 Willow Lawn Drive. 358-1990.

The Camel: The Bowmans, Special Ed and the Shortbus. 8 p.m. \$7. 353-4901.

Toad's Place: Cross Canadian Ragweed and Sons of Bill. 8 p.m. \$15-\$17. 648-8623.



opinion

Roe v. VA

RICH GRISET
Opinion Editor

The Virginia Senate voted Feb. 27 to cut state funding to Planned Parenthood. The vote was 20-20, with Lt. Gov. Bill Bolling's vote breaking the tie. Unless Gov. Timothy M. Kaine removes the amendment from the final Virginia budget in the next month, Planned Parenthood will suffer major cutbacks.

The vote is the latest attack by a pro-life movement aiming to eliminate abortions throughout the commonwealth.

According to Washington Post reports, Sen. Janet D. Howell, D-Fairfax, stated Planned Parenthood provides contraception planning—which prevents abortions.

“The irony is, Planned Parenthood probably prevents more abortions than any other organization in the country,” Howell stated.

If state funding is cut, that does not mean abortions will come to an end. It is this line of narrow thinking that justifies abstinence-only sexual-education classes. The states that have abstinence-only sexual-education programs have

much higher birthrates than those that teach about contraceptives.

This amendment is not intended to save money. It is a way for lawmakers to get around Roe v. Wade, the Supreme Court case that made abortions legal in the United States, without directly confronting the constitutionality of the decision.

To reduce state funding from Planned Parenthood because clinics provide abortions completely ignores all the other services this organization provides. Planned Parenthood provides health care to low-income women, distributes and educates about contraceptives, runs programs to help prevent HIV, tests for cancer, offers pregnancy counseling and much more.

In a report published in The Commonwealth Times this past year, Karen Raschke, who represented the Virginia League of Planned Parenthood, stated less than 9 percent of what Planned

Parenthood does is perform abortions.

During the same week the bill to decrease funding was passed, another bill, which would require abortion clinics to be licensed by the Board of Health, failed.

Although at first this failed legislation might seem like a way to improve to these clinics, it is actually just another way for pro-life activists to attack Planned Parenthood. If Planned Parenthood is forced to meet the standards of the Board of Health, it will cost the clinics money, which might impair the clinics' ability to function, especially if state funding is cut.

A similar bill was proposed in February 2007. The Virginia bill would have shut down all medical centers that did not meet ambulatory medical standards—which would have shut down all but one Planned Parenthood in Virginia, according to Raschke's estimates last year. These ambulatory standards would have enforced unnecessary requirements, such as wider hallways, regulating airflow



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Imagine!

The idea must precede the action. The future of VCU is in your hands. Vote for a vision!

Imagine VCU populated by students and faculty members with positive attitudes, and an energetic, courageous Student Government Association moving toward achieving some of the following:

An academic community that embraces everyone and is unafraid of ideas, different people and charges!

A university that concentrates on the whole person – physical, social and aesthetic development – in addition to intellectual development!

Women's and men's basketball teams playing in the NCAA Final Four in the same year.

A student body actively engaged in community outreach, making a positive difference in the Richmond High School drop-out rate!

A football team and a marching band playing our newly designated alma mater!

A student community where every deserving student

receives academic and financial assistance based on real needs!

A more socially and politically active campus, energized by the social fraternities, sororities, and residence halls; a campus where everyone votes!

A more-beautiful campus that taps into its enormous artistic-talent reserve with sculptures, art exhibits and a Museum of Fine Arts!

A more-supportive community where students and faculty members reach out to “make others’ conditions their own” and where everyone is engaged and excited about their personal and creative growth!

The Students for Positive Change party is that dynamic, proactive, enthusiastic group of servant leaders with such a vision for the VCU of tomorrow. The choice is yours. The time is now! Make it happen! Vote March 25, 26 and 27! Actions Count at VCU!

LETTERS continued to CT17

the
ct

REBECCA LANDAU
Executive Editor

RICH GRISET
Opinion Editor

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.

LETTERS continued from CT16

Dear Editor, Commonwealth Times:

It is time for a “reality check” of sorts concerning the continual deterioration of the Student Government Association. Under the current SGA leadership, student involvement in student government has fallen year after year. Two years ago, 3,000 students voted in the SGA presidential election. Last year, turnout was a paltry 1,800 out of a student body of more than 20,000.

Fewer students have felt compelled to run for Student Senate every year, viewing it as an ineffective body in truly addressing the concerns and needs of the students. At what point will the SGA become relevant and actually communicate with the students and fight for their interests on issues that matter?

It is time for real change for VCU. In the last two years, VCU students have seen their tuition increase by more than 10 percent, yet, at no point has the SGA spoken up for the students to demand an explanation. Instead, we get the same talk about party patrols and a football team.

Real issues face the students of VCU, and real changes are not going to come from a new social or health awareness by the student body but by solid leadership that understands that the purpose of student government is to develop a conversation between the student body, the administration and the city of Richmond.

When is the last time the student body had a truly representative voice at that table?

The student body of VCU is divided. As the school continues to expand, it finds itself segregating into departments: business on one side, art and music on another; engineering here, life sciences there. What is bringing this varied body together? More importantly, who is representing its varied interests?

Actions count. But those actions must be real action on real issues that truly matter to the students of VCU—not the rehashing of the same unresolved issues the current leadership of the SGA has presented year after year.

Real change is about creating an environment that students want to be a part of, not something they have to be begged to join. Ours is a campaign of transparency and engagement, a student government that is open to ideas, that is truly fighting for the issues that matter to every student at VCU and laying the foundation of a school that we are all proud to call our own.

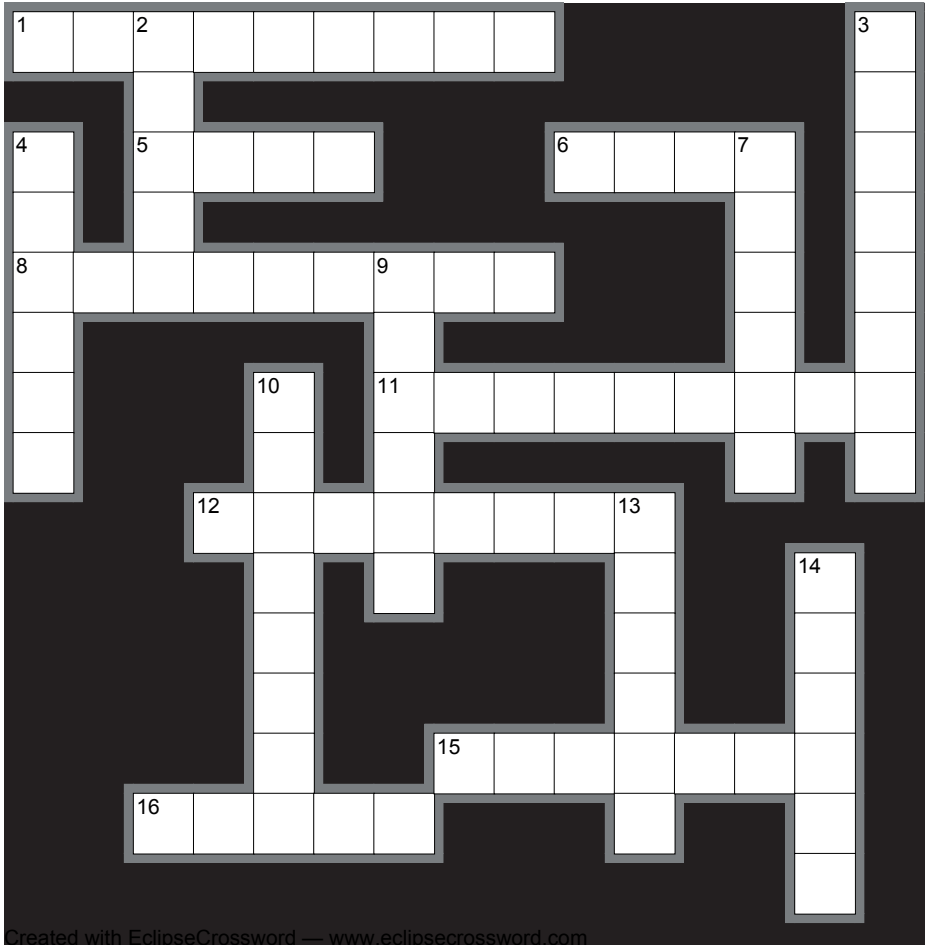
This change will not come with fancy words or empty promises, but real representative leadership that seeks out real action on real issues. For change that matters, for actions that truly count, the Latimer-Aida-Ronk ticket will provide that real leadership.

Sincerely,
Steven Latimer
Gonzalo Aida
Joshua Ronk
www.realchangevcu.com



Thursday, March 6, 2008

Important women through history



Across

- 1. Interpreter for Lewis and Clark during the U.S. government's first exploration of the Northwest.
- 5. The first American woman in space was also the youngest American astronaut ever to orbit Earth.
- 6. With her novels about American and Asian culture, she became the first American woman to win the Nobel Prize for Fiction.
- 8. Egypt's last pharaoh.
- 11. First American woman awarded a medical degree by a college.
- 12. Won track-and-field gold medals at the 1932 Olympics, played professional basketball and was a founding member of the Ladies Professional Golf Association.
- 15. The first woman to fly across the Atlantic Ocean alone.
- 16. She set in motion the Montgomery Bus Boycott, a cornerstone of the civil-rights movement.

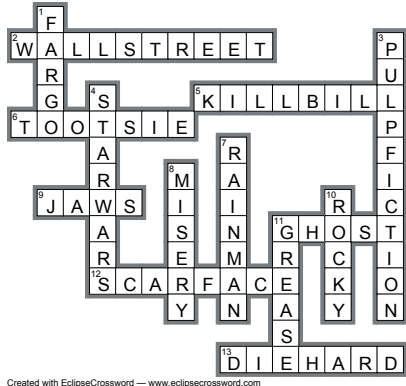
Down

- 2. Her investigations led to the discovery of radioactivity as well as the element radium.
- 3. First woman to be nominated and to campaign for the U.S.

presidency.

- 4. Author who produced the first literature for the mass market of juvenile girls in the 19th century. Her most popular, “Little Women,” was just one of more than 270 works that she produced.
- 7. A childhood disease left her deaf, mute and blind. She became an expert author and lecturer, educating nationally on behalf of others with similar disabilities.
- 9. “Conductor” on the Underground Railroad who led more than 300 slaves to freedom.
- 10. First woman in European history to be elected prime minister.
- 13. Greek poet who created the Sapphic stanza and invented the 21-string lyre.
- 14. The founder and first president of the American Red Cross.

Answers from March 3



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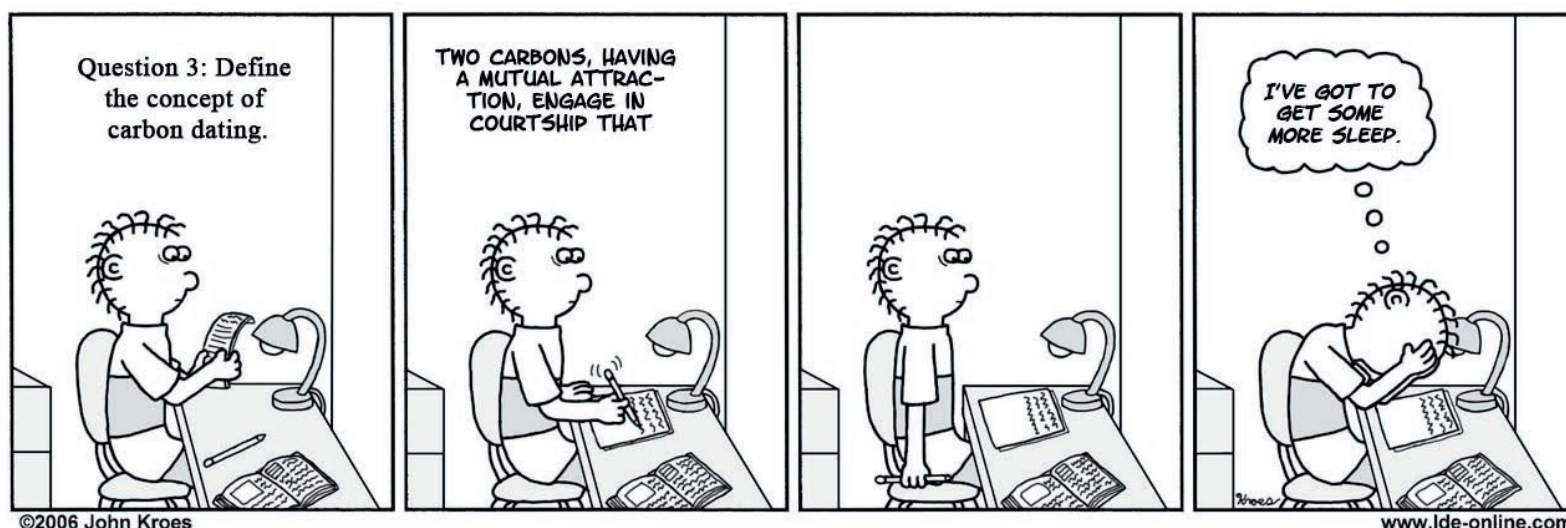
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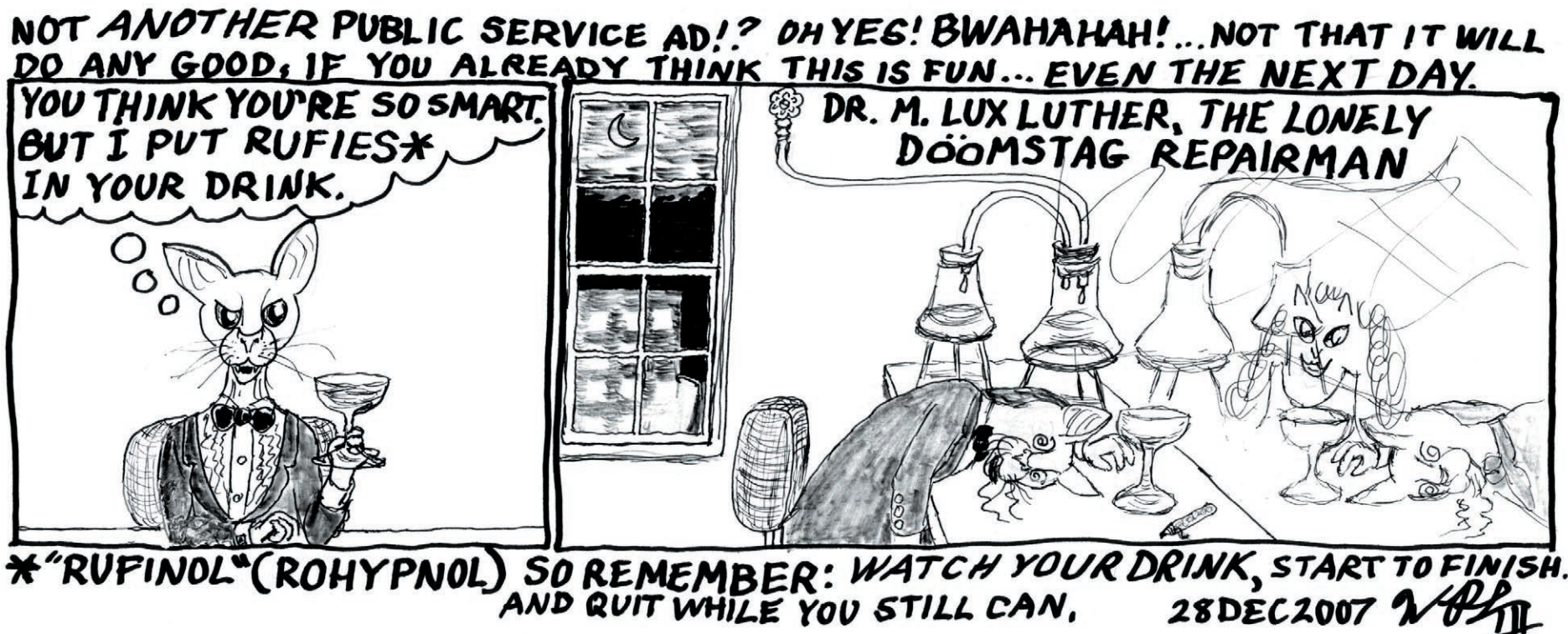
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xkcd — "Writer's Strike"

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