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

commonwealthtimes.com

Safety in numbers?

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briefs



Local and VCU

VCU to dedicate new critical-care hospital

VCU is opening a 367,000-square-foot hospital, the state's only facility devoted solely to critical care.

The \$192 million, 232-bed hospital next to VCU Medical Center's main hospital was dedicated Wednesday. VCU officials say it's the largest capital construction project in the medical center's history.

The 15-level hospital has intensive care units for patients requiring neonatal, surgical trauma, burn center, neuroscience, medical respiratory and oncology services. It also features 10 new operating rooms and expanded emergency care services.

University President Eugene P. Trani said the state-of-the-art facility combines decades of experience and research with the newest technology.

Brief by The Associated Press

VCU computer glitch sends spam across the U.S.

A glitch in a VCU e-mail server is sending thousands of spam messages around the nation.

The e-mail about October events from the College of Humanities and

Sciences has been sent repeatedly to alumni. When recipients respond to the first message asking they be removed from the sender's list, their responses apparently are being sent to all addresses on the VCU server. The university is looking into the problem.

Brief by the Richmond Times-Dispatch

Gov. Kaine slashes office budget \$1.4 million

In a darkening global financial crisis, Gov. Timothy M. Kaine ordered \$1.4 million in cuts to his office and residence, part of what is expected to be billions of dollars in state government austerity moves.

Kaine plans to outline broader cuts Thursday to state programs and agencies as Virginia government braces for anticipated revenue shortages of \$2 billion to \$3 billion over the next two years.

The cuts he ordered to executive offices, including offices of his cabinet secretaries and the executive mansion, total \$900,000 in the current fiscal year, now in its fourth month, and an additional \$500,000 in the next budget year beginning July 1.

Kaine has cut his salary by 5 percent, and the total reductions to the executive

mansion budget amount to 10 percent. Last October and in February, he ordered spending cuts for his office totaling more than \$660,000, all of it in the fiscal year that ended in June.

Brief by The Associated Press

Gas prices fall in Virginia

Virginians are paying an average of 30 cents less for gas than they were two weeks ago.

AAA Mid-Atlantic says the average price is now \$3.42 for a gallon of regular gasoline. It likely will fall faster and further in the days ahead due to the recent sharp drop in the price of oil.

Virginia's prices were slightly below the national average of \$3.45 on Wednesday. That national average was down from \$3.66 last month, but up from \$2.77 last year.

In Virginia, the highest gas on Wednesday was in Charlottesville, where the average was \$3.61. The lowest average was in Richmond, at \$3.33.

AAA said improving gas inventories following the refinery and pipeline shutdowns because of Gulf region hurricanes was another reason for the decrease in gas prices.

Brief by The Associated Press

National and International

Fed, central banks cut rates to aid world economy

In a rare coordinated move, the Federal Reserve and other major central banks from around the world slashed interest rates Wednesday to prevent a mushrooming financial crisis from becoming a global economic meltdown.

The decision sent Wall Street on a roller coaster ride. The major indexes moved in and out of positive territory, with the Dow Jones industrials at times falling more than 200 points or rising more than 100.

Overseas markets tumbled on worries the move would not immediately help ease the pain from the financial crisis.

The Fed reduced its key rate from 2 percent to 1.5 percent. In Europe, which also has been hard hit by the financial crisis, the Bank of England cut its rate by half a point to 4.5 percent and the

European Central Bank sliced its rate by half a point to 3.75 percent.

The central banks of China, Canada, Sweden and Switzerland also cut rates. The Bank of Japan said it strongly supported the actions.

Brief by The Associated Press

Gates asks allies to send troops to Afghanistan

Defense Secretary Robert Gates on Wednesday urged southeastern European leaders to shift their military efforts from Iraq to Afghanistan, where their forces are more urgently needed.

Speaking at a meeting of the Southeast European Defense Ministerial, Gates said as the security situation in Iraq continues to improve, countries should consider filling the "urgent need" for trainers in Afghanistan.

Combined, the 11 members of

SEDM, not counting the United States, have nearly 5,100 troops already in Afghanistan. Just one of the member nations, Bosnia-Herzegovina, has no troops there.

In Iraq, all coalition forces combined, other than the U.S., contribute about 6,900 troops. Six of those countries are members of SEDM, and two others participate in the SEDM meetings but are not members. U.S. officials declined to say how many troops each country has in Iraq.

The U.S. has made it clear it will gradually shift more troops to Afghanistan, as force levels in Iraq go down in the coming months. Commanders in Afghanistan have said they need as many as 10,000 more troops, in addition to the contingent of Marines and the Army brigade that have already been ordered to go later this year and early next year.

Brief by The Associated Press

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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 Matt Doyon at 828-1058 or e-mail him at editor@commonwealthtimes.com. Corrections will appear on the Opinion page.

Natalie Allen cover illustration

817 W. Broad St., P.O. Box 842010
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Thursday, October 9, 2008





news

Victims' concern for safety heightened after attack



Natalie Allen illustration

CATHERINE MACDONALD
News Co-Editor

The bullet penetrated more than Robbie Berriz' upper torso; it pierced through his sense of security and heightened safety concerns for him and the campus community.

Berriz, a business administration and guitar performance major, and three other students were robbed at gunpoint Friday, Sept. 26. Berriz and 20-year-old student Brian Hill were shot during the attack. The incident changed how safe the students felt on and around campus.

"I think I'll be a little more cautious when going out," Berriz said. "(I now) know it's a possibility that (someone) could be out there to hurt you. Not that I want to think that way, but it's happened once, what's to say it won't happen again?"

Art foundation major Danielle Can-

field was one of the students assaulted. She said she felt safe walking with three other people the night of the attempted robbery, especially three men.

"I just thought I was safe and then that happened," Canfield said. "(The shooting) just changed everything."

Berriz said, "There's safety in numbers, but it doesn't count for much when he's got a gun."

Thomas Jackson, a J. Sargeant Reynolds student, was one of the victims. He said "it didn't matter" to the robber that the students were in a group.

"It was nothing to him, like he did it every night," Jackson said. "He wasn't scared, wasn't shaking. It was just like he knew what he was doing."

Jackson said he now plans to acquire a gun.

Ron Brown, a spokesperson for the Richmond Police Department, said it

SAFETY continued to CT4

Campus crime statistics subject to interpretation

ERIC BLACKSTOCK
Contributing Writer

The 2007 Uniform Crime Report statistics for colleges and universities were released by the FBI Sept. 15, but include data different from statistics released by VCU.

According to the FBI, VCU ranks 19th in regard to overall crime, with 580 total crimes in 2007. When ranked by violent crime, VCU tied for fifth place with Arizona State University's main campus. Both universities are reported as having 34 violent crimes in 2007.

The FBI defines violent crimes as murder or non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, aggravated assault or robbery. While no murders or incidents involving rape occurred in 2007 at VCU, 17 of the violent crimes reported were aggravated assault and 17 were robberies. The remaining 546 crimes in the report are property crimes.

Business major Aaron Post says he doesn't find the violent crime data for the university surprising.

"It seems accurate based off of my nights coming home from school. I'd see at least two or three police vehicles on campus with the lights on and constantly hear sirens," Post said.

This past week, VCU also released its annual Campus Safety Report and campus crime data, which is required by law under the Clery Act. The reports detailed campus and off-campus crimes in 2007, but numbers in both reports are different from statistics released by the FBI.

Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration John Bennett says he has asked VCU Police to look at the data differences and access it.

"(The crime rates) are significantly different than what the rates were the last time we analyzed them," Bennett stated in an e-mail.

By comparison, the FBI report listed 17 robberies on VCU's campus in 2007, while the crime and safety report released by VCU Police lists a total of two on-campus robberies between both the Monroe Park

CRIME STATS continued to CT4





SGA candidates debate student participation

NATALIE ALLEN & ASHLEIGH CARTER
Photography Editor & Contributing Writer

Increasing student participation was a prominent topic discussed during the Student Government Association's senatorial debate Monday night.

Twenty potential senators discussed issues they say have contributed to students' attitudes about SGA and other university activities and organizations.

"I think obviously we need to be more active in getting students informed, engaged and involved in what is going on," senatorial candidate Lee Vogler said. "I would certainly like to see more students involved."

Candidates discussed how to increase involvement in extracurricular activities and university events, such as Ram Spirit Fest. In addition to the debate, the SGA has worked on other projects to increase student involvement.

In the last weeks before Virginia's voting-registration deadline on Oct. 6., the SGA announced its goal of registering 5,000 students in the U.S. presidential election. They ended up registering several hundred students.

"It is definitely less than what we were shoot-



Thursday is the last day to vote:

www.vcusga.com

ing for," said SGA President Jibrán Muhammad. "We could have done better if we had planned carefully."

Jonathan Ward, chair of the legislative affairs committee, was involved in the in-class registration drive. He says students need to be involved in the election.

"I think obviously we need to be more active in getting students informed, engaged and involved in what is going on."

— Lee Vogler
senatorial candidate

"We want to increase the voice of the student body," Ward said. "There are issues that are important to us (in the presidential election) as students."

At the SGA debate, candidates also advocated ideas such as combining similar student organizations. Most candidates agreed school spirit needs to be revamped and more measures need to be taken to incorporate the student body.

"The students aren't going to tell us what they want because ... they don't know we exist and they're apathetic. They don't care," candidate Robert Showah said.

The last day to vote in SGA senate elections is Oct. 9.

CRIME STATS continued from CT3

lists 134 instances of burglary between both campuses, while the FBI report lists only 18 burglary-related crimes.

Rebecca Duffy, a biomedical engineering major, says the data released by the FBI doesn't change her views on campus safety.

"Since I'm from the Richmond area, I was pretty aware of Richmond's reputation," Duffy said. "Generally when I'm on campus, I always feel safe. And once I get to the parts where VCU blends with the city, I know I have to pay attention to what is going on around me, especially at night."

Bennett distributed an e-mail to students and staff Oct. 1 informing the campus community of the release of the VCU data. He stated safety and security are VCU's top priorities and personal awareness and vigilance are the two most important tools in keeping safe.

While the rankings deal with raw data figures, the FBI does warn about making judgments on crime in a particular area.

"Geographic and demographic factors specific to each jurisdiction must be considered and applied if one is going to make an accurate and complete assessment of crime in that jurisdiction," the FBI Web site states.

The FBI's Uniform Crime Report is available online at <http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2007/>. VCU's Campus Safety Report is online at <http://www.vcu.edu/police/campusafetyreport2008.pdf> and data released under the Clery Act can be found at <http://www.vcu.edu/police/CleryHome.html>.

SAFETY continued from CT3

was difficult to say why the "safety in numbers" practice did not work in this case.

"Until we are able to talk to a suspect, we won't be able to get a better answer," Brown said. "We're going to do all we can to try to find the person or persons responsible."

Brown also said to avoid being the victim of an assault, students should be diligent and always comply with a robber.

"Be aware of your surroundings," Brown said. "Walk in groups and stay in well (lit) areas."

Brown said students should use the VCU Security Escort Service.

VCU alumnus Melissa Roberts works at a restaurant across the street from the shooting and was on the scene minutes after the assault. She said the fact that the students were walking in a group also raised safety concerns for her.

"People always say there's safety in numbers," Roberts said. "There were four of them, so it's a little confusing because ... I think I'm always safe because I don't go anywhere alone."

Roberts said she worries about VCU students.

"I feel that with the student body be-

ing larger, (students) are a little bit more careless," Roberts said. "I can just see the students are out more, partying more. I just worry that they're not being as responsible as they could be."

Roberts also said because the university has grown so much in size, students might forget they are still in a city and therefore take more risks.

"I think sometimes that line (between college campus and city) has been blurred to the (point) where the students don't recognize that it's still a city, and they're not told that it's still a city because VCU really wants to see itself as a campus," Roberts said.

Berriz said students sometimes see themselves as invincible. He wants students to know being assaulted was the last thing he expected and it could happen to them just as easily.

Jackson said he has not noticed an increase in safety precautions among students.

"The next night (after the attempted robbery), I saw girls walking down there by themselves," Jackson said. "It didn't seem like anyone was really aware that had happened. It was just something in the paper."





news

Butting Heads



"I transferred here from Norfolk, so it being a city college, I tried to prepare myself to attend school in a metropolitan area and try to limit how much time I'm outside by myself very late ... I use the escort service. It might take you awhile, but you'll get where you need to go."

*Jessica Danbruch,
communication arts major*



"I feel that campus is pretty safe if you're with friends but by yourself it's a little scary at night. So, my best advice is to have friends around you all the time."

*Anthony Nguyen, chemistry and
pre-pharmacy major*



"I hear some people got robbed a couple of weeks ago. I've kind of walked with a group of people instead of myself. Just be careful out there."

Omar Nasser, biology major

Thursday, October 9, 2008

Safety on, around campus

Safety is a hot topic on campus right now. The FBI recently released its 2007 Uniform Crime Report statistics with data about crimes on campuses throughout the country. VCU has released its annual Campus Safety Report. The assault of four students on Sept. 26 brought attention to student safety. We asked students how safe they feel on and around campus, especially at night.



"I feel very safe. Usually, I'm not worried at all. I feel like if you're smart about where you are and keeping a group around you and making good decisions about where you go, you stay pretty safe."

*Matt Leahy, communication
arts major*



"I feel safe. I don't really walk that much at night, but I know that if I do, I'll be fine. I'll be OK. The security around here – it's not tight, but it's enough to keep us safe ... The police (and) campus security will protect us. I'm really confident about that."

*Brittany Holloway, business
management major*



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sports

Man indicted in slaying of Broncos' Williams

P. SOLOMON BANDA
The Associated Press

A 25-year-old man was indicted Wednesday on first-degree murder charges in the drive-by shooting death of Denver Broncos cornerback Darrent Williams on New Year's Day 2007.

Willie D. Clark faces 39 counts, including murder, attempted murder, assault, crimes of violence and a weapons violation, Denver District Attorney Mitch Morrissey said.

Clark is in federal custody in a separate case. He was long considered a "person of interest" in Williams' slaying but is the first suspect to be indicted.

Williams, a former Oklahoma State stand-out, was shot and killed while riding in a rented limousine early on Jan. 1, 2007, after leaving the Safari Club, a Denver nightclub. He was 24.

The indictment said Williams and Clark were at the club with separate groups of friends and there was an altercation between the two groups. Quoting witnesses, the indictment said Clark got into an SUV, followed the rented limo carrying Williams and opened fire.

At least 15 shots were fired into the limo. Williams was shot in the neck, and two other passengers, Nicole Reindl and Brandon Flowers, were wounded, the indictment said.

Kansas City Chiefs spokesman Bob Moore said the Brandon Flowers injured in the attack is not the Chiefs' rookie cornerback of the same name.

Also in the limousine was then-Broncos wide receiver Javon Walker, who held the dying Williams in his arms. Walker, now with the Oakland Raiders, wasn't injured.

Clark does not yet have an attorney for the Williams indictment, said Denver district attorney's spokeswoman Lynn Kimbrough. A call after hours to his attorney on a separate federal case, Alaurice Tafoya-Modi, was not immediately returned.

Williams' mother, Rosalind Williams, of Fort Worth, Texas, couldn't immediately be reached by telephone Wednesday.

According to the indictment, taunts were exchanged between the groups inside the nightclub, and both groups went outside when the club closed. Witnesses testified that a "large" man from Williams' group then grabbed Clark "about the head."

Clark asked friends for "a heater," or gun, according to the indictment. Williams and his companions took off in the limo and Clark, driving the SUV, caught up and fired, a witness said. Two weapons — a .45-caliber handgun and a .40-caliber gun — were used, according to the indictment.

Clark was arrested on a parole violation four days after Williams was killed. He was charged with drug violations last year in an indictment that also named Brian Hicks, the registered owner of the SUV police say was used in the shooting.

Investigators have said Clark was part of Hicks' alleged drug operation. Hicks was in jail

at the time of Williams' shooting.

Morrissey emphasized at a news conference that the police investigation into the slaying was continuing. He described the lead-up to Williams' slaying as "something that wasn't even a good fist fight, but because weapons were involved it turned into a shooting . . . It's senseless."

Police expressed frustration at the "no snitch culture" they encountered during the investigation. A break in the case occurred Aug. 21 when Detective Michael Martinez authenticated a letter written by Clark allegedly admitting to the slaying. The letter was obtained by the Rocky Mountain News.

Nick Ferguson, a safety who played for the Broncos with Williams, said he hoped authorities have the right person.

"I trust the people investigating the case did their homework and they won't drag people into court on charges that won't stick," said Ferguson, now with the Houston Texans. "I've seen that happen too many times."

"I'm like a lot of people who knew Darrent. I just want the people responsible to pay their debt to society for taking such a young, vibrant man from his kids and his family. Not a moment goes by that I don't think about D-Will and his family after what happened that night."

Williams' death hung over the Broncos throughout the 2007 season, as did the death of backup running back Damien Nash, who collapsed after a charity basketball game in St. Louis in March 2007.

This week

FIELD HOCKEY

Sat., Oct. 11, @
Longwood, Farmville,
1 p.m.

MEN'S SOCCER

Sat., Oct. 11, @William &
Mary, Williamsburg,
7 p.m.

WOMEN'S SOCCER

Fri., Oct. 10, vs. Drexel,
SportsBackers Stadium,
7 p.m.

Sun., Oct. 12, vs.
Delaware, SportsBackers
Stadium, 1 p.m.

TENNIS

Oct. 10-12, @ Hampton
Roads Collegiate
Invitational, Newport
News, all day

VOLLEYBALL

Fri., Oct. 10, vs.
Northeastern, Stuart C.
Siegel Center, 7 p.m.

Sat., Oct. 11, vs. Hofstra,
Stuart C. Siegel Center,
7 p.m.





Jonathan
SAYS

The CT Sports Editor sounds off

JONATHAN HOWARD
Sports Editor

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

When putting University of Maryland head coach Ralph Friedgen on the CT Fire-O-Meter a couple of weeks ago, I did it knowing that it would take a lot for his alma mater to show him the door. After all, Friedgen has taken the Terrapins to heights they had not reached since Bobby Ross ran the team (the 1980s).

Well, Maryland has had it's ups this year (defeating Clemson) and has certainly had its downs (losing to Middle Tennessee State)—but nothing can be lower than getting blown out 31-0 by a hapless Virginia team.

To put this in perspective, Duke beat the Cavaliers by four touchdowns. I'm not saying that this loss is going to cost Friedgen his job (it's not), but it's this sort of loss that makes me think his seat is only getting warmer. There is a chance that Al Groh's team has finally come together despite

inexperience and lack of depth, but that just seems unlikely to me.

What is more likely is that Friedgen got the Terrapins as high as he could, but hasn't done a good job maximizing winning seasons.

Wake Forest's Jim Grobe was hired around the same time as the Maryland coach and while he didn't have the same success early on, he is certainly reaping the benefits of getting solid recruits and running a solid game plan.

If losses like the one to Virginia continue to occur, expect Friedgen to face the same fate as John Bunting and Chuck Amato, who were fired by their alma maters (North Carolina and North Carolina State) for their lack of success.

NBA

The leaves are changing color outside. The nights are becoming crisp. This can only mean one thing—football ... err ... NBA preseason!

Seriously, is there anything more anticli-

mactic and unanticipated than the preseason? Major League Baseball's spring training gets a lot of press, as does the NFL preseason. However, there is something about the NBA's version that turns me (and I think the majority of basketball fans) off.

If you ask me, the culprit here is the NBA Summer League. I never understood why there is a league during the summer that accomplishes the exact same things as the preseason. Teams get to sign players and try them out, rookies get their feet wet in pro action and coaches get to implement different offensive and defensive strategies.

So why do we have both? The preseason just adds more games until the actual season starts and realistically adds more chances for players to get injured (A toast to you, Antawn Jamison).

So what's my point?

Either make the summer league the official preseason, or get rid of it all together. This way, injuries will be more easily avoidable and the start of basketball season will be a little bit more exciting.

Sports briefs

MEN'S CROSS COUNTRY

Five runners set personal bests at the 35th annual Lehigh University Brooks Paul Short Run this past Friday. The top Ram was junior Piotr Dybas (Jaslo, Poland). He finished with a time of 24:56, almost a minute better than his previous best. Senior Jay Wyss (Richmond/J.R. Tucker), senior Joey Wingo (Richmond/Lee-Davis), freshman Tyler Simmons (Woodbridge/Osbourne Park) and sophomore John Vial (Glen Allen/Hermitage) also ran personal bests. Wyss ran a 25:02. Wingo ran a 25:50, Simmons ran a 26:48 and Vial finished with a time of 28:30. The Rams' next meet will be the William and Mary Invitational on Oct. 18.

GOLF

VCU finished tied for seventh with Iowa at the Fighting Irish Gridiron Classic this past Tuesday. The Rams finished with a 52-over-par 892. Arkansas won the event with a 23-over-par 863. Junior Rafael Campos (Guaynabo, Puerto Rico/Baldwin School of PR) shot the best score for the Rams. He finished tied for fifth with a 5-over-par 215. Juniors Vincent Nadeau (Penhook/Purdue University) and Lanto Griffin (Blacksburg/Blacksburg) finished tied for 27th at 13-over-par. The Rams' next competition will be the Landfall Intercollegiate starting Oct. 31 and ending Nov. 2.

MEN'S SOCCER

Junior Forsan Asad-Radwan (Amman, Jordan/James River) was named to the TopDrawSoccer.com National Team of the Week this past Monday. Asad-Radwan earned the recognition after scoring two goals in the 3-0 win over Hofstra this past Saturday. Asad-Radwan chipped in the Rams' only goal in a 1-0 win Wednesday at JMU.

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This study will be conducted in McGuire Hall on VCU's
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Principal Investigator: Thomas Eissenberg, Ph.D.



Pick'em Week Seven

It was yet another rough week for our gurus as the bunch combined to pick only 48 percent correctly. Executive Editor Matt Doyon and Alex Dynan still lead after 10-10 efforts while Associate Sports Editor Jerome Foster is still three games back after achieving the same record. As for Sports Editor Jonathan Howard, he's just happy that his graduation application has been processed, because after an 8-12 record, he fell even farther into last place.



THIS WEEK'S GAMES	JONATHAN HOWARD Sports Editor (58-50)	JEROME FOSTER Associate Sports Editor (62-46)	MATT DOYON Executive Editor (65-43)	ALEX DYNAN Co-host "The Aftermath" (65-43)
COLLEGE	COLLEGE	COLLEGE	COLLEGE	COLLEGE
Clemson at Wake Forest	Clemson	Wake Forest	Wake Forest	Wake Forest
Texas at Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Oklahoma	Oklahoma
Minnesota at Illinois	Illinois	Illinois	Illinois	Illinois
South Carolina at Kentucky	Kentucky	Kentucky	Kentucky	South Carolina
Michigan State at Northwestern	Michigan State	Michigan State	Michigan State	Michigan State
Notre Dame at North Carolina	North Carolina	North Carolina	North Carolina	North Carolina
LSU at Florida	Florida	Florida	LSU	Florida
Oklahoma State at Missouri	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri	Missouri
Penn State at Wisconsin	Penn State	Penn State	Penn State	Penn State
UCLA at Oregon	Oregon	Oregon	Oregon	Oregon
NFL	NFL	NFL	NFL	NFL
Baltimore at Indianapolis	Indianapolis	Indianapolis	Indianapolis	Indianapolis
Chicago at Atlanta	Chicago	Chicago	Chicago	Chicago
Carolina at Tampa Bay	Carolina	Carolina	Carolina	Tampa Bay
Miami at Houston	Miami	Miami	Miami	Miami
Jacksonville at Denver	Denver	Jacksonville	Denver	Jacksonville
Philadelphia at San Francisco	Philadelphia	Philadelphia	Philadelphia	Philadelphia
Green Bay at Seattle	Seattle	Green Bay	Green Bay	Green Bay
Dallas at Arizona	Dallas	Dallas	Dallas	Dallas
New England at San Diego	San Diego	San Diego	San Diego	San Diego
N.Y. Giants at Cleveland	N.Y. Giants	N.Y. Giants	N.Y. Giants	N.Y. Giants





spectrum

PREVIEW

Starr Foster's 'Submerged' to stir the soul

ROBERTO CURTIS
Spectrum Editor

Starr Foster built a name for herself in the Richmond dance community years ago. As an adjunct faculty member, Foster welcomes any opportunity to perform.

This Thursday through Saturday, the Starr Foster Dance Project will be performing "Submerged," a concert including three world premieres, eight professional dancers and a slightly smaller special guest at the Grace Street Theater.

The Commonwealth Times: Can you tell me about the new pieces we'll be seeing this weekend in "Submerged"?

SF: One piece I'm super excited about is called "Half-empty." I choreographed it when I was a student at VCU back in 1995. I was more interested in making dances than graduating at the time. It was actually selected to open the theater following its previous role as a porno theater. We haven't done it since, so I dusted the cobwebs off of it. It's a nice piece but since it's 13 years old, it needed to be reworked. I certainly make different art today. I also have more talented dancers.

CT: How has your choreography or the meaning of the piece changed since 1995?

SF: I still make dances about general, real-life things. It's not necessarily about

a story. Most of my dances seem to be really light and quirky – almost silly with an edge of dark humor – or really dark. I think I always make my dances about real emotion. It's pretty much more cut and dry than most people think. The cool thing about modern dance is people can interpret it anyway that they want.

We used to do a lot of lecture demonstrations and I would present a dance and tell the audience that it didn't have a title. I've gotten some great titles from some second graders. It's interesting what other people see.

The only literal dance we're doing in this show is "Bridge," which is basically about a game of bridge gone wrong—four women at a card table and four chairs.

CT: My mom would probably be very interested.

SF: We performed it in Rocky Mount, North Carolina and there were these four women in the audience that were bridge partners. They got into an argument and began saying, 'Marge, that one behaves like you!' And we ended up talking to them at the reception after the show. It was interesting to see people get so into it. I mean, our dancers are slapping each other around, throwing each other across the table.

Generally the dances are just about loss, which I know is a dark subject, but people really get into it because we've all had some kind of pain.

SUBMERGED continued to CT15

Tiffany Brooks performs the choreography of Starr Foster this Thursday through Saturday at the Grace Street Theater.

Roberto Curtis photo





com

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■ GENSWORTH FOUNDATION FAMILY PARAWING

■ RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH STAGE

■ NEW MARKET STAGE

■ DOMINION STAGE

■ COMCAST STAGE

Friday 10/10

Tezcatlipoca Voladores
Mayan sundance.
6:50 p.m.- 7:10 p.m.

Opening Remarks
7:10 p.m.-7:30 p.m.

Vieux Farka Touré
Saharan blues.
7:30 p.m.- 8:15 p.m.

BeauSoleil avec Michael Doucet
Cajun. 8:00 p.m.-9:15 p.m.

San Jose Taiko
Japanese Ritual Drumming.
8:15 p.m.-9:30 p.m.

The Dan Tyminski Band
Bluegrass. 8:30 p.m.-9:15 p.m.

Howard Tate
Soul/R&B. 9:30 p.m.-10:30 p.m.

Inuit Throat Singing.
1:30 p.m.-2:00 p.m.

The Dan Tyminski Band
Bluegrass. 1:45 p.m.- 2:30 p.m.

Lee Sexton Band
Old-time. 1:45 p.m.- 2:30 p.m.

Cellicion Traditional Zumi Dancers
Native American.
2:00 p.m.-2:45 p.m.

Vieux Farka Touré
Saharan Blues.
2:00 p.m.-2:45 p.m.

Ganga
Bengali song & music.
2:00 p.m.-2:45 p.m.

Sea Chanteys with Bob Zentz
2:00 p.m.-2:45 p.m.

James Cheechoo
Cree Fiddle. 2:15 p.m.-2:45 p.m.

Howard Tate
Soul/R&B. 2:45 p.m.-3:45 p.m.

Grupo Cimarron
Columbian joropo.
2:45 p.m.-3:30 p.m.

E.U.
Go-Go. 2:45 p.m.-4:00 p.m.

Picking Partners: Guitar Duos
3:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.

The Itals
Raggae. 3:00 p.m.-3:45 p.m.

Foodways Traditions
3:00 p.m.-3:45 p.m.

Drums No Guns
youth percussion ensemble.
3:00 p.m.-3:45 p.m.

Family Belly Dance with Nadira
Lampert
3:00 p.m.-3:30 p.m.

Countryside Songs Session
3:45 p.m.- 4:45 p.m.

Harmonia
Eastern European.
4:00 p.m.- 5:00 p.m.

Nukariik
Inuit Throat Singing.
4:00 p.m.-4:30 p.m.

Solazo
Latin American Song.
4:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.

Tamara & the Shadow Puppets
of Java
4:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.

Fiddle Traditions
4:15 p.m.-5:15 p.m.

Howard Tate
Soul/R&B. 4:30 p.m.- 5:30 p.m.

Chris Fuller & FrankColeman
JAM inc. 4:30 p.m.-5:15 p.m.

Glass Harmonica with Dean
Shostak
4:30 p.m.-5:15 p.m.

Nadeem Dlaikan & Friends
Arabic. 4:45 p.m.-5:30 p.m.

Ledward Kaapana &
Mike Kaawa
Hawaiian.
5:00 p.m.- 6:00 p.m.

Plena Libre
Salsa/Bomba y Plena.
5:15 p.m.- 6:00 p.m.

River Nile Band
Sudanese popular music.
5:15 p.m.-6:00 p.m.

Robin Kessinger & Todd Hallawell
Guitar Duo. 5:15 p.m.- 6:00 p.m.

San Jose Taiko
Japanese Ritual Drumming.
5:30 p.m.-6:15 p.m.

Sea Chanteys with Bob Zentz
5:30 p.m.- 6:00 p.m.

Vieux Farka Touré
Saharan Blues.
5:45 p.m.- 6:30 p.m.

Eddie & Alonzo Pennington
Kentucky Thumb picking.
6:15 p.m.- 7:00 p.m.

Sharde Thomas & Rising Star
Fife & Drum
African fife & drum.
6:45 p.m.- 7:15 p.m.

Salsa Leson with Eileen Torres
6:45 p.m.- 7:30 p.m.

Tezcatlipoca Voladores
Mayan sundance.
7:00 p.m.- 7:30 p.m.

Dale Watson
Honky Tonk Country.
7:30 p.m.- 8:15 p.m.

Plena Libre
Salsa/Bomba y Plena.
7:30 p.m.- 8:30 p.m.

Harmonia
Eastern European.
7:45 p.m.- 8:30 p.m.

BeauSoleil avec Michael Doucet
Cajun. 8:00 p.m.-9:15 p.m.

Sharde Thomas & Rising Star
Fife & Drum
African fife & drum.
8:30 p.m.- 8:50 p.m.

Líadan
Irish. 8:45 p.m.-9:30 p.m.

E.U.
Go-Go. 9:10 p.m.-10:30 p.m.

The Itals
Raggae. 9:30 p.m.-10:30 p.m.

The Dan Tyminski Band
Bluegrass. 9:45 p.m.- 10:30 p.m.

Sunday 10/12

Tezcatlipoca Voladores
Mayan sundance.
12:00 p.m.- 12:30 p.m.

Robin Kessinger & Todd Hallawell
Guitar Duo.12:00 p.m.- 12:45 p.m.

Tamara & the Shadow Puppets
of Java
Javanese shadow puppetry.
12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m.

Rumah Gandang Group
West Sumatran music & dance.
12:00 p.m.-12:45 p.m.

Sea Chanteys with Bob Zentz
12:00 PM- 12:45 PM

Mark Halata & Texavia
Texas/Czech polka.
12:15 p.m.- 1:15 p.m.

Sharde Thomas & Rising Star
Fife & Drum. African fife & drum.
12:30 p.m.-1:00 p.m.

Lee Sexton Band
Old time.12:30 p.m.-1:15 p.m.

World Voices
12:30 p.m.-1:30 p.m.

World Strings traditions
1:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m.

Dhol Drumming
1:00 p.m.-1:15 p.m.

Glass Harmonica with Dean
Shostak
1:00 PM-1:45 PM

Eddie & Alonzo Pennington
Kentucky Thumb picking.
1:15 p.m.-2:00 p.m.

Drums No Guns
Youth Percussion Ensemble.
1:15 p.m.-2:00 p.m.

Hushnu Aydogdu Group
Turkish. 1:15 p.m.- 2:00 p.m.

E.U.
Go-Go. 1:30 p.m.-2:15 p.m.

Salsa Leson with Eileen Torres
1:30 p.m.-2:00 p.m.

World Flute Traditions
1:45 p.m.-2:45 p.m.

Plena Libre
Salsa/Bomba y Plena.
2:00 p.m.- 3:15 p.m.

Sea Chanteys with Bob Zentz
2:00 PM- 2:45 PM

Larry Bland & the Volunteer Choir
Gospel. 2:15 p.m.-3:30 p.m.

James Cheechoo
Cree Fiddle. 2:15 p.m.- 2:45 p.m.

Edelweiss Band
German Accordion trio.
2:15 p.m.-3:15 p.m.

Tamara & the Shadow Puppets of Java.
2:15 p.m.-3:15 p.m.

Mark Halata & Texavia
Texas/Czech polka. 2:30 p.m.- 3:15 p.m.

Grupo Cimarron
Clumbian joropo. 3:00 p.m.-3:45 p.m.

Nukariik
Inuit Throat Singing
3:00 p.m.-3:30 p.m.

Dhol Drumming
3:00 p.m.-3:15 p.m.

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JAM inc. 3:15 p.m.-3:45 p.m.

Cellicion Traditional Zuni Dancers
Native American. 3:30 p.m.-4:15 p.m.

Dale Watson
Honky Tonk Country. 3:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m.

Thongtahn Souvannaphanh
Laotian. 3:30 p.m.-4:15 p.m.

Sharde Thomas & Rising Star Fife &
Drum
African fife & drum. 3:30 p.m.- 4:00 p.m.

Ledward Kaapana & Mike Kaawa
Hawaiian. 3:45 p.m.- 4:30 p.m.

Lee Sexton Band
Old time. 3:45 p.m.-4:30 p.m.

Líadan
Irish. 4:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.

Drums No Guns
Youth Percussion Ensemble.
4:00 p.m.- 4:45 p.m.

Eddie & Alonzo Pennington
Kentucky Thumb picking.
4:15 p.m.-5:00 p.m.

Harmonia
Eastern European. 4:30 p.m.- 5:15 p.m.

“Chino” Terrones Dance Company
Peruvian Marinera Dance.
4:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.

Grupo Cimarron
Columbian joropo. 4:45 p.m.- 5:30 p.m.

Nadeem Dlaikan & Friends
Arabic. 4:45 p.m.-5:30 p.m.

E.U.
Go-Go. 4:45 p.m.-6:00 p.m.

Glass Harmonica with Dean Shostak
5:00 p.m.-5:30 p.m.

Cellicion Traditional Zuni Dancers
Native American. 5:15 p.m.-6:00 p.m.

Ledward Kaapana & Mike Kaawa
Hawaiian. 5:30 p.m.- 6:15 p.m.

Plena Libre
Salsa/Bomba y Plena.
5:45 p.m.- 6:30 p.m.

Nukariik
Inuit Throat Singing. 5:15 p.m.-5:45 p.m.

Thursday, October 9, 2008

commonwealthtimes.com · CT11





Black Awakening Choir performs at 2nd Street Festival



Natalie Allen photo

MARKIA GORE
Contributing Writer

VCU's Black Awakening Choir closed out Richmond's 19th annual 2nd Street Festival.

The festival, which celebrates the culture of historic Jackson Ward, took place this past weekend.

This was not only the choir's first performance of the year but also its first performance with new conductor, James Johnson, who wants to bring an authentic element to the choir.

"We want to step out and challenge ourselves to become more sincere in our music so that it doesn't look like a routine," Johnson said.

Lindsey Murph, president of the choir and a biology and chemistry major, said Venture Richmond's Events Coordinator Sharon Bassard invited them to perform. According to Murph, Bassard was impressed by The Black Awakening Choir's professional sound and dedication.

Murph said it was a privilege to be asked to be part of the 2nd Street Festival since it celebrated African-American accomplishments.

"I think this festival correlates with the choir and vice versa," Murph said. "The festival celebrates the history of 2nd Street and the accomplishments of blacks in the city of Richmond."

Once the roughly 50-person tan-and-brown-clad choir began to sing, the audience grew with a mixture of ages and races, clapping along with the music.

music.

By the choir's third song, some audience members were standing and waving their hands along with the music. Audience member Jackie Cowan was familiar with the choir's sound.

"I have seen them sing before," Cowan said. "And I am always impressed."

Maria Halton, a graduate student in social work, attended the past five festivals. This was her first time seeing the soulful choir.

"I really enjoyed their performance a lot," Halton said. "Choirs like Black Awakening make this festival significant, because it's an opportunity for greater Richmond to get together and celebrate different talents."

Spectrum Beat

Musicians picked for
VCU's anniversary

JILL COMSTOCK
Contributing Writer

Planners have found the five local bands that will perform at the Monroe Park Festival this fall.

The top five bands — picked by VCU's 40th Anniversary Entertainment Committee — beat out 268 other bands. The committee received 90,000 votes from the public.

The winners are The Taters, a '60s-style rock and roll band; Becky Taylor and Open Fire, a local bluegrass quartet; Antero, a reggae group from Richmond; Unheard Concept, a hard rock band; and Earthtone, an acoustic hip/hop group comprised of

students.

Although it's the first time VCU has ever had an entertainment festival in Monroe Park, Bryan Brown, the lead member of the festival's entertainment, is expecting a high turnout.

"The voting was open to the public, and luckily, they chose some really great music," Brown said.

The bands will perform Oct. 25 at Monroe Park between noon and 5 p.m.

Capoeira Club to host in-
demand living legend

ROBERTO CURTIS
Spectrum Editor

The "most in-demand Capoeira

master in the world," Master Suassuna, arrived in Richmond Wednesday to grace the Siegel Center on Thursday from 7 to 8 p.m. He is scheduled to oversee a class sponsored by the VCU Capoeira Club. The year-old club forms the VCU chapter of the Richmond-based organization, Capoeira Resistência, which practices the 400-year-old Brazilian martial art/dance hybrid called Capoeira.

Club president Matt Daniel said Suassuna's presence in Richmond shows how hard Capoeira Resistência's Master Panão works to spread the message of the martial art he has practiced for more than 30 years.

"Panão must be doing something right," Daniel said. "To bring Suassuna to our event would really put us on the map in the world of Capoeira."

The thriving organization looks ahead to its busiest week with its annual "Batizado," or student graduate

ceremony, and a full Saturday of workshops. Capoeiristas and masters from all over the world will be converging at Martin Luther King Middle School for classes on samba, Capoeira, Afro-Brazilian dance and other traditional Brazilian song and dance forms.

Suassuna, who runs some of the largest Capoeira events in the world, is likely to encounter a much smaller group at the Siegel Center on Thursday.

Thursday and Friday will feature open "rodas," or dance circles, for anyone to attend. Friday's event goes from 7 to 10 p.m.

"It makes this such an honor ... I can barely fathom it," Daniel said.

The club members' enthusiasm will surely keep them dancing.

For some information on Capoeira Resistencia, visit www.capoeirava.com.

BEAT continued to CT13



BEAT continued from CT12

Clothesline Project: Shirts speak for domestic violence

VERONICA GARABELLI

Associate Spectrum Editor

The VCU Sexual Assault and Dating Violence Education by Students (S.A.V.E.S.) displayed the Clothesline Project at the Commons Plaza on Wednesday and Thursday.

The project exhibits shirts made by victims of

sexual assault or intimate partner violence. The T-shirts come in different colors, each representing a type of violence suffered by victims.

S.A.V.E.S. Coordinator Tammy McKeown said on a sunny day, they have a minimum of 250 to 300 students view the display. The shirts inspire some students to speak about their sexual assault or domestic violence experiences.

"People come up and say they've been victims of domestic violence," McKeown said.

Caitlyn Samuel, an undeclared freshman,

was drawn to the display because of its bright colors.

"It's really cool for people to come and know what other people go through," Samuel said.

S.A.V.E.S. will host domestic violence awareness tables in the Commons lobby Oct. 14-23 from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. in honor of Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

For more information on S.A.V.E.S., visit www.studentorg.vcu.edu/saves/

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

weekend calendar

Thursday 10/9

Jules De Balincourt: Lecture Artist.
11 a.m. Free. Student Commons
Theater. 907 Floyd Ave. 828-1981.

VCU Fall Jazz Festival: Jazz
Orchestras I and II with Trumpeter
Allen Vizzutti and the Faculty Jazz
Septet perform three sets. W.E.
Singleton Center for the Performing
Arts. 8 p.m. \$5. 922 Park Ave.
828-6776.

Starr Foster Dance Project:
"Submerged." Night of modern
dance. Grace Street Theater.
Continues Oct. 10-11. 8 p.m. \$15.
934 W. Grace St. 828-2020.

Friday 10/10

Fashion Show: Directed by Bolaji
Oyengunle. Interpretation of unique
Richmond style by designers and
boutiques. 7 p.m. Free. Student
Commons, Commonwealth
Ballroom. 907 Floyd Ave. 828-1981.

Art 180: "Change for a Ten."
Artistically rendered ten dollar
bills designed by members of the
Richmond community. 7 p.m. Free.
VCU Brandcenter. 103 S. Jefferson
St. 233-4180.

Eric Schindler Gallery: "Devices
of Rapture." Art by Lisa Taranto.
7-9 p.m. Free. 2305 E. Broad St.
Through Nov. 11. 644-5005.

Gallery 5800: "Cool Colors."
Featuring works by Mehmet Sahin
Altug. Opening reception from
5:30-8 p.m. Free. Through Nov. 4.
5800 Grove Ave. 285-0774.

Glave Kocen Gallery: "Public
Hearing." Paintings by Heidi Fowler
and recordings by Steve Fowler.
6-9 p.m. Free. Through Nov. 7. 1620
W. Main St. 358-1990.

The Richmond Convention Center:
Young Jeezy. 7 p.m. \$40-\$100. 403
N. 3rd St. 771-9901.

Saturday 10/11

Richmond Raceway Complex:
Display of sterling silver, loose
stones, beads, pearls, and other
handmade works. 10 a.m.-7 p.m.
\$4. Continues Sun. 11 a.m.-5 p.m.
600 E. Laburnum Ave. 228-7500.

YMCA's Fall Festival: Pony rides,
games, arts and crafts, food,
and prizes. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Free.
Manchester YMCA. 7540 Hull
Street Road. 276-9622.

Rappahannock Tribe Pow-Wow:
Native dances, crafts and food.
10 a.m.-5 p.m. \$3-\$5. Off Route
623 on Indian Neck Road in King
and Queen County. 769-0260.

Sunday 10/12

Richmond Zine Fest: Gathering of
underground publications.
11 a.m.-5 p.m. Free. Gay
Community Center of Richmond.
1407 Sherwood Ave. 353-8890.

Art Works: "Men at Work." Silent
auction of paintings, photography
and sculptures. Performance by the
Richmond Men's Chorus. 7 p.m.
\$25-\$30. 320 Hull St. 241-0446.

The Greater Richmond Chorus:
"Hawaiian Holiday." 3 p.m. \$10-\$15.
Scottish Rite Auditorium. 4204
Hermitage Road. 282-7464.

Gallery5: MegazHz Noise Festival.
5-11 p.m. \$5. 200 W. Marshall St.
644-0005.

Second Sunday Café: Van Driver
Band, Rachel Leyco Band. 6 p.m.
\$5. Parham Pavilion. 501 N.
Parham Road. 272-2992.

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SUBMERGED continued from CT9

CT: What can you tell me about the overall theme of “Invisible”?

SF: It’s a premiere and we have a film set behind it. Doug Hayes, our film director, has been filming the sunrise and sunsets in Richmond for four weeks now. I got this e-mail, “I got a meteorite on film!” He was pretty excited.

The documentary called “Bridge” can be viewed online. Not to be confused with the piece I wrote, this one was done by an independent film maker who filmed the Golden Gate Bridge from two different locations and documented two dozen suicides, actually stopping a few. It’s a really intriguing, not-for-the-squeamish documentary. It basically focuses on how these people are standing on the edge of the bridge with all these people walking by since it’s such a tourist-infested area and no one is doing anything. Haunting, really.

So, “Invisible” is basically about how troubled people go unnoticed because we’re so busy with our everyday lives. You get caught up in your own world and forget about those that are important to you. I’m really excited about the

giant projection screen, which we’ll be using to go with the dance.

CT: Tell me about more dances!

SF: Unlike my last piece, “Heroine,” which featured around twenty extra dancers, I’ve been feeling pretty relaxed about the days leading up to the first showing and I think that’s due in large part to the fact that we have so much less to worry about—costumes, dancers, communication. It’s a pure company show. The only non-company member we have is a 9-year-old little girl who we feature in one dance.

CT: As far as your company goes, how long have you been with the newest member of the company?

SF: I’m doing a piece called “Crushed” for Melanie Cash who just started working with me in May. She’s lovely in this short little number.

CT: Is it about being crushed by a love interest or a refrigirator?

SF: Not literally crushed. It’s about

being heart-broken. I try to not do marathon dance concerts. It’s difficult for me at least, to sit for an hour and a half or two hours watching dance. I don’t want to give the audience too much information, especially when I’m doing a concert with more than one idea.

CT: I’m pretty A.D.D. myself. Thanks for that. You’re doing another older piece as well, correct?

SF: We’re doing “1943” again. My grandma, who is a Holocaust survivor, shared a wealth of stories about her experience. It was choreographed all from memory of her stories. It can be hard to connect the dots because her age. She’ll talk about this situation or that and I’ve only recently been able to put together a time line. She was one of seven kids and they all survived. She used to make ply wood as a 16-year-old girl in the camps and was sent from one place to another. It’s amazing they all survived. The dance is mainly about family and the treatment and shipment of the prisoners.

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literary and arts journal is now accepting fiction, creative

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Listen, Damnit. WVCW.ORG

Thursday, October 9, 2008

spectrum commonwealthtimes.com · CT15

comics

Pizza From Scratch presents Dismal Science Swamp

Bill Lemmond

MORE ON LIMITS OF "GOING PRIVATE": THE SOME-YES-SOME-NO STUFF



Slippin' in the Tub

Jonathan Scheer and Nate Waggoner



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Do you work as a professional exotic dancer and take classes at VCU? We're interested in talking to you. A student-led magazine at VCU is doing a feature on students who dance for private parties and in adult clubs. Serious inquiries only. Contact us at vcuink@gmail.com. Anonymous sources are welcome.

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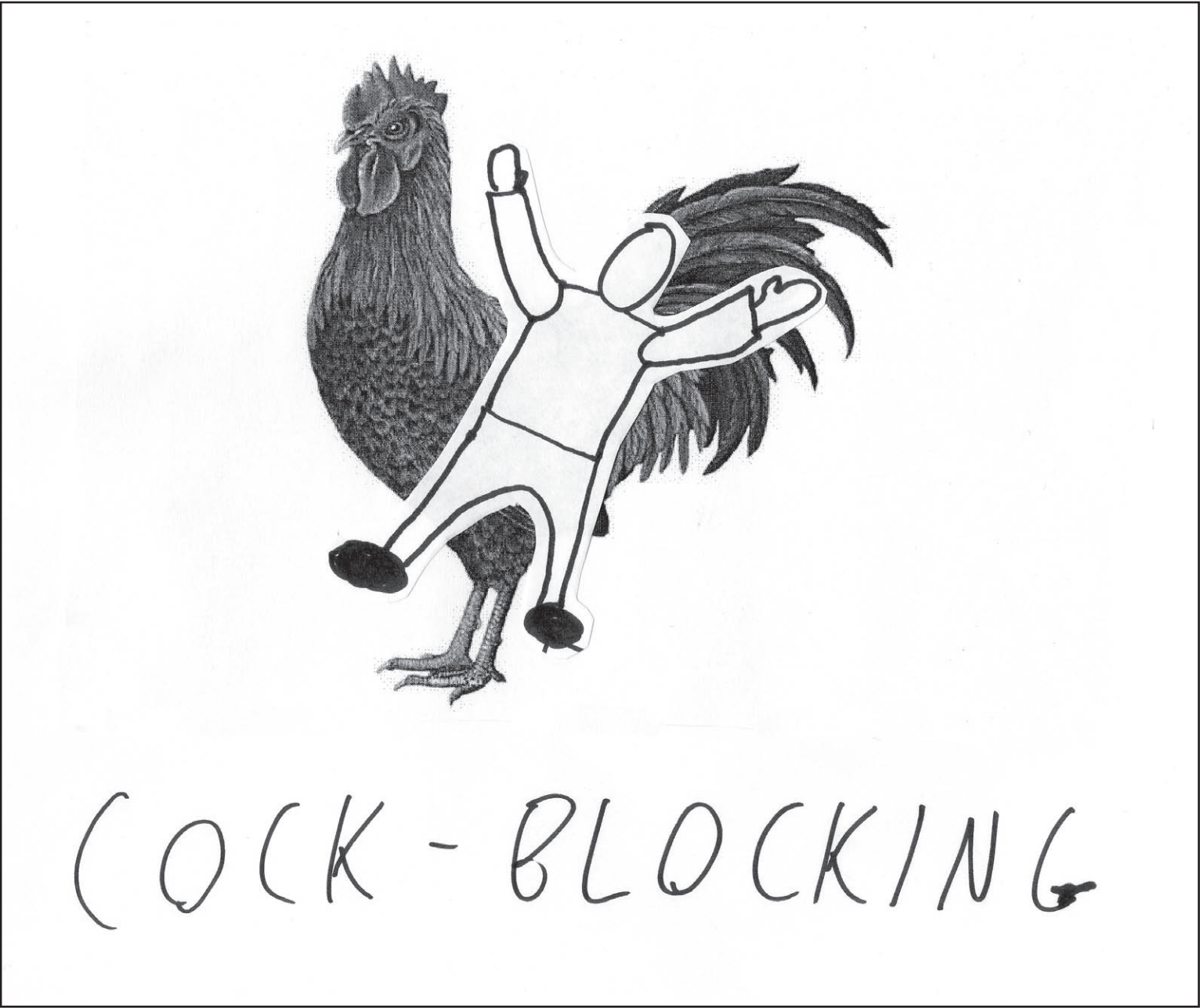
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The Bum Diary

Rich Rose





opinion

Dear SGA; an open letter

SARAH SONIES

Opinion Editor

Dear SGA,

Here are some things I have been thinking about lately. However, this time they are not only about me and they are important. Enjoy.

First of all, I am sick of being pressured to vote in any type of election—really. I tolerated getting the Facebook messages every day from the same people. Facebook is nothing besides “stalker-net,” and a big, fat marketing tool. In fact, I even voted in the elections because I believe in voting and I believe that SGA helps students tremendously.

However, the pressure some members of the SGA put on people to vote in the elections this week was completely inappropriate. I say this because when I checked my e-mail Tuesday evening, I found a message e-mailed from a Blackboard account that

was sent out from a student in my literature class titled “SGA Senate elections are today!”

This e-mail not only told me that I absolutely had to vote in the Senate elections, but also told me exactly who to vote for, with a list of people the candidate endorsed. After reading this message, I simply stared at my computer screen in disbelief because I could not grasp the fact that somebody had the gall to send out an e-mail about SGA elections over Blackboard—a site that is supposed to be used for academic reasons only.

I could have understood if it was an e-mail addressed to all VCU students, such as the one that SGA President Jibran Muhammad sent out at the beginning of the voting period on Oct. 6, which encouraged all students to vote in the elections. But Blackboard and all communication through Blackboard should not be used to encourage people to vote because a potential senator deems a certain

election “important.”

I had to restrain myself from sending an e-mail that would have been a little less than courteous with a few “Anchorman” references thrown in for my own personal amusement.

It is natural that SGA wants the student body to be active and use its voices by voting in their elections. However when pressure to vote becomes excessive, it makes the entire organization look unprofessional.

Speaking of which, I cannot help but wonder and remain befuddled as to why members of the SGA, many of whom aspire to have careers in politics, do not have any idea how to deal with the media. The CT cannot print libelous e-mails or letters accusing assorted people in the SGA of doing things of which people have no proof. Just

SGA continued to CT19

Have an opinion to share? Some guidelines for op/ed submissions

The CT loves submissions, especially editorial submissions. However, there are some things we cannot print so we decided to compile a short list of rules. Attached are our style guidelines for editorials put into our own words from “Inside Reporting: A Practical Guide to the Craft of Journalism,” by Tim Harrower. If you have any questions, feel free to e-mail us at opinion@commonwealthtimes.com or editor@commonwealthtimes.com.

If you want to send us a letter to the editor or an editorial piece, please e-mail it to opinion@commonwealthtimes.com or drop it off at the Student Media Center at 817 W. Broad St. For snail mail, use the VCU address: Student Media Center, P.O. Box 842010, Richmond, Va., 23284-2010.

Thanks,
Sarah Sonies
Opinion Editor

- The range of topics to choose from is endless. There can be social, political, religious and personal commentary. Take a stand on something important to

you and create a strong thesis statement about that topic.

- Editorial pieces, which will have a headline and a byline, usually run from 300-500 words but can be longer. Keep your piece tight and to the point. Rambling is not your friend. Recap important facts and summarize your case, the more visual the language the better.
- Attack issues, not personalities. Avoid name-calling and mudslinging. If a person's actions are a problem, then criticize the actions and not the person. Especially if there is no proof to back up your accusations. If a person says something that you think is wrong, then disagree with what is said and do not attack the person saying it,
- Control your anger and don't be a bully. Editorials should encourage an open dialogue.
- For future reference, slander is spoken and libel is written, therefore—base your opinion on facts. We cannot print libel.

GUIDELINES continued to CT19

the
ct

MATT DOYON
Executive Editor

SARAH SONIES
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 CT.

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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You vote. You decide.

**Your favorite shops, restaurants, and hangouts.
This December have your voices heard in the first annual Best of VCU issue.
Check the CT for updates and information on how you can vote.**

SGA continued from CT18

because something is written does not make it true.

Furthermore, when messages are sent bashing other people in an organization, it gives very little incentive to delve deeper into a situation. The CT welcomes submissions and encourages them, but not submissions that insult and make accusations of people.

I am not blaming anybody personally for any gripes I have, but that e-mail, even if it was a joke, it was something that should never have seen the light of day.

SGA is here to serve the student body, not to use VCU as one's

personal playground to gossip and blatantly pressure people to vote.

At the end of the day, the only really important election coming up is the one on Nov. 4. I am tired of being told what a big deal SGA elections are every semester. It is great to see people so spirited about their organization, but maybe we should all just take a few steps back and take 10 deep breaths and remind each other not to take ourselves so seriously. Come on guys, it's college.

I can smell the angry letters that are about to come my way. Like I said before, The CT welcomes submissions.

GUIDELINES continued from CT18

The exact definitions of the two terms are as follows:

Libel – a written or oral defamatory statement or representation that conveys an unjustly unfavorable impression (Webster.com).

Slander – an untruthful oral (spoken) statement about a person that harms the person's reputation or standing in the community (Nolo.com).

- Attribute your sources. Always attribute your sources. This point cannot be made enough. It is not the reader's job to fact check to make sure something they read is true. If there is a quote or statistical facts, they must be attributed.

The terms "opinion article," "commentary" and "op-ed" are synonymous and used interchangeably; they refer to guest submissions written by people who are not members of a newspaper's editorial staff and that are published on a newspaper's op-ed page. The term "letter to the editor" refers to shorter submissions of 150 or fewer words that are less rigorously documented and composed than an editorial piece or column. This does not mean that you should not research your letters to the editor—because you always should be accurate in journalism. (This last point had facts and points that came from the website "Publish Your Opinions" at http://www.publishyouropinions.com/newspaper_opinion_FAQ.html#QNews2)





VCU|USC&A October Events

University Student Commons & Activities :: Division of Student Affairs & Enrollment Services

www.usca.vcu.edu

1	APB SNACK DAY 2 – 3:30 p.m., University Student Commons, Virginia Rooms A & B Stop in for a mid-day treat brought to you by the Extras Committee of the Activities Programming Board. For more information on this event please contact Krista Carson at 828-4554 or apbcodirect@vcu.edu.
	WHAT IS STRUT? 7 – 9 p.m., University Student Commons, Commonwealth Ballroom Want to be part of the GREATEST fashion experience in Virginia? All are invited to STRUT’s information session to find out how they can become models, designers, dressers, PR street team members, fashion week planners, and more! The entire STRUT Fashion Show Planning Committee will be available to answer any questions you may have and to help you get involved! This event is sponsored by the STRUT Planning Committee and for more information please contact Justin Castonguay at 828-4554 or castonguayjb@vcu.edu.
	NEW OFFICER TRAINING FOR STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS University Student Commons, Virginia Room A New officers are invited to attend this training session designed to enhance their leadership skills and to provide information on university rules and policies. The training is provided by the USC&A Office of Student Organization Development and for any questions, please contact John Butt at jbutt@vcu.edu.
2	CRAFT NIGHT: TRICKIN’ OUT YOUR TRANSFER 4 – 5:30 p.m., University Student Commons, Forum Room Pillows, canvas bags, and your favorite pop culture icons come together in this quirky craft night. We supply the tools, you supply the creativity. This event is open to all students and is sponsored by the USC&A Programs Office. For more information please contact Justin Castonguay at 828-4554 or castonguayjb@vcu.edu.
	MCV CAMPUS SHORT COURSE: GENEALOGY 5 – 7 p.m., Hunton Student Center, Conference Room, 3rd floor Have you ever wanted to trace your family ties? Attend this Short Course and learn how it’s done! The course is \$5 to attend and class size is limited so register early! This event is sponsored by the USC&A MCV Campus Programs Office and to register or for more information, contact Yolanda Jackson 828-2754 or yjackson@vcu.edu.
	NEW OFFICER TRAINING FOR STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS MCV CAMPUS Dean’s Conference Room New officers are invited to attend this training session designed to enhance their leadership skills and to provide information on university rules and policies. The training is provided by the USC&A Office of Student Organization Development and for any questions, please contact John Butt at jbutt@vcu.edu.
3	THE MIND GUY: ALAIN NU 6 p.m., University Student Commons Plaza You’ve seen him on TLC — part mind magician, part dynamic speaker! Alain Nu is your tour guide through the mind and all of it’s mysteries. Alain creates a “magic show” of the mind, in which the magic is as close to REAL MAGIC as it gets. Hypnotic suggestion, intense mental focus, and a touch of clever wit join forces in this spectacular show wherein ordinary people learn to predict the future, read each other’s minds, and witness first hand as spoons and metal objects melt like butter! Come see it and believe it! This event is sponsored by the USC&A Programs Office. For more information please contact Justin Castonguay at 828-4554 or castonguayjb@vcu.edu.
	APB LIVE PRESENTS: NEW SKOOL CONCERT 7 – 11 p.m., The Landmark Theatre This concert will feature the following performers: Swayze, Tyga, Ryan Leslie & The Cool Kids! VCU Students can receive discounted tickets – \$12 from 9/22 – 10/3. Tickets for the general public are \$17 and will be available beginning 9/22. Tickets can be purchased at the Landmark Theatre Box Office: 646-4214. For more information about this event, contact the Activities Programming Board at 828-4554.
8, 15, 22	SHORT COURSE, BLOCK 2: “CULTURAL EXPLOSION” 5:30 – 7 p.m., Office of Multicultural Student Affairs (OMSA) & Richmond Salons Kitchen This Short Course block: “Cultural Explosion,” is focused around Hispanic Heritage Month and will explore Hispanic dance and FOOD! VCU’s student organization “Caribso” will be teaching everyone’s favorite subject: FOOD! The series costs \$5 and registration begins September 15, 2008 at Break Point Games Room. This event is sponsored by the USC&A Programs Office & OMSA and is open to all VCU students, faculty, and staff. By signing up and paying for this course one agrees to attend all three sessions; one may not sign up for a single session. For more information please contact Justin Castonguay at 828-4554 or castonguayjb@vcu.edu.
8	COMMUTER COFFEEBRAKE 8:45 – 10:45 a.m., University Student Commons Lobby Off-campus students should visit the Commons Lobby for a BRAKE! Grab a hot cup of Joe and a breakfast treat while you find out what’s happening on-campus. This event is sponsored by USC&A Off-Campus Student Services with the USC&A Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life and USC&A Volunteer Opportunities. Contact Martha Harper with any questions at harperma@vcu.edu or call Off-Campus Student Services at 828-7205.
9	VOLUNTEER INPUT (VIP) GROUP 4 – 5 p.m., University Student Commons, Virginia Room D All are invited to provide input and help shape the future of volunteer programs at VCU. Enhance your résumé, make a difference, and meet like-minded people. Snacks will be served. This event is sponsored by USC&A Volunteer Opportunities, and for more information contact Beth Ward at 828-3648 or bhward@vcu.edu.
	COMMONS BOOK CLUB 7 p.m., Harris Hall, room 2108 Read a book! Students are welcome to converse with their peers on the topic of modern literature in an open, judgment-free setting. Each month The Commons Book Club chooses a book to read, which is provided FREE to students, and discussions are lead by Liz Canfield. Sign up in the USC&A Programs Office, room 229 of the Student Commons. This event is sponsored by the USC&A Programs Office and for more information please contact Justin Castonguay at 828-4554 or castonguayjb@vcu.edu.
	APB PRESENTS: OPEN MIC NIGHT 7 – 10 p.m., University Student Commons, Commonwealth Ballroom Make sure to sign-up for your chance to showcase your talents. Calling all singers, musicians, poets, etc.! Sign-up at the USC&A Programs Office in room 229 of the Student Commons. This event is sponsored by the Activities Programming Board, and for more information please contact Krista Carson at 828-4554 or apbcodirect@vcu.edu.
11	APB PRESENTS: PARTY IN THE COMMONS! 9 p.m. – 12:30 a.m., University Student Commons, Commonwealth Ballroom Show off your sweet dance moves at this APB signature party in the Student Commons! All VCU students are invited, so we hope to see you there! 250 tickets will be given away for free to VCU students (ID required) starting September 29th in the Programs & Events Office in room 229 of the Student Commons. Tickets are first come, first served as there will be a limited quantity available. This event is sponsored by the Activities Programming Board, and for more information please contact Krista Carson at 828-4554 or apbcodirect@vcu.edu.
13	APB PRESENTS: BINGO NIGHT 7 – 9 p.m., University Student Commons, Commonwealth Ballroom A & B Test the fates for a chance to win an assortment of awesome prizes. All VCU students are welcome. For more information on this event, please contact Krista Carson at 828-4554 or apbcodirect@vcu.edu.
15	SHORT COURSE, BLOCK 2: “CULTURAL EXPLOSION” – SESSION #2 See description on Oct. 8
16 – 19	READING DAYS
20 & 21	GRAD FINALE – MONROE PARK CAMPUS 11 a.m. – 7 p.m., University Student Commons, Commonwealth Ballroom & James River Terrace ATTENTION DECEMBER GRADUATES! VCU, in conjunction with Jostens will be providing each graduate with a cap and gown along with the opportunity to purchase invitations, portraits, class rings and other VCU merchandise. If you are planning to attend the VCU commencement ceremony or graduation, you must attend the Grad Finale to receive all necessary items and information. This event is sponsored by the USC&A Programs Office and Jostens. For more information please contact Justin Castonguay at 828-4554 or castonguayjb@vcu.edu.
21	COMMUTER COFFEEBRAKE 4:45 – 6:45 p.m., University Student Commons Lobby Off-campus students should visit the Commons Lobby for a BRAKE! Grab a drink and a snack while you find out what’s happening on-campus. This event is sponsored by USC&A Off-Campus Student Services and VCU’s Career Center. Contact Martha Harper with any questions at harperma@vcu.edu or call Off-Campus Student Services at 828-7205.
	STRUT MODEL WORKSHOP 7 – 9:30 p.m., University Student Commons, Richmond Salons Ever wanted to be a model, but didn’t know if you had what it takes to work the runway? This course is for amateurs, pros, and everyone in between! Learn what the STRUT planning committee is looking for when they pick models and also how to perfect your walk. STRUT does not discriminate on size, race, disability, or age. Females are required to wear 3 inch heels during the workshops — no exceptions. This event is sponsored by the STRUT Planning Committee. For more information please contact Justin Castonguay at 828-4554 or castonguayjb@vcu.edu.
22	SHORT COURSE, BLOCK 2: “CULTURAL EXPLOSION” – SESSION #3 See description on Oct. 8
23	MCV CAMPUS WINE AND CHEESE NIGHT 5 p.m., Valentine Richmond History Center Spend an evening tasting fine wine and getting to know fellow MCV Campus students, faculty and staff. (Must have valid student ID and proof of legal drinking age.) This event is sponsored by the USC&A MCV Campus Programs Office and MCV Campus Student Government Association and is open to MCV Campus students, faculty and staff. Contact Yolanda Jackson for additional information at 828-2754 or yjackson@vcu.edu.
	APB PRESENTS: COMEDY SHOW 7 – 9:30 p.m., University Student Commons, Commonwealth Ballroom Don’t miss your chance to catch Roz G, Rip Michael and Jon Laster at APB’s annual fall Comedy Show. Tickets will be sold at the door. VCU students: \$3; College ID: \$5. This event is sponsored by the Activities Programming Board, and for more information please contact Krista Carson at 828-4554 or apbcodirect@vcu.edu.
24 – 26	VCU FALL FEST AND 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION For complete event listing and details, please visit www.fallfest.vcu.edu and www.40th.vcu.edu.
27	GRAD FINALE – MCV CAMPUS 11 a.m. – 7 p.m., Kontos Medical Sciences Building ATTENTION DECEMBER GRADUATES! In conjunction with Jostens, VCU will be providing each graduate with a cap and gown along with the opportunity to purchase invitations, portraits, class rings and other VCU merchandise. If you are planning to attend the VCU commencement ceremony or graduation, you must attend the Grad Finale to receive all necessary items and information. This event is sponsored by the USC&A Programs Office and Jostens. For more information please contact Justin Castonguay at 828-4554 or castonguayjb@vcu.edu.
29	SHORT COURSE, BLOCK 3: TO THE KITCHEN! 5:30 – 7 p.m., Locations TBA at Sign-Up Food, food, glorious food, without it we could not survive! “To the Kitchen!” is a four week course that explores the culinary arts: cultural food, cake decorating, and quick tips will be the focus of these sessions. The series costs \$5 and registration begins October 20, 2008 at Break Point Games Room. By signing up and paying for this course one agrees to attend all four sessions; one may not sign up for a single session. The sessions will be held on 10/29, 11/5, 11/12 and 11/19. This event is open to all VCU students, faculty, and staff. This event is sponsored by the USC&A Programs Office and for more information please contact Justin Castonguay at 828-4554 or castonguayjb@vcu.edu.
	APB PRESENTS: IDEAS LECTURE WITH MICHAEL USLAN- ORIGINATOR OF BATMAN MOVIE SERIES AND PRODUCER, WRITER AND COMIC BOOK HISTORIAN 6 – 7:30 p.m., University Student Commons, Commonwealth Ballroom This lecture is titled, “From Fan to Filmmaker: The Journey to Bring Batman to the Silver Screen.” Don’t miss out on this once in a lifetime opportunity! Stay tuned for more information on how you can win an opportunity to meet Michael Uslan in person! This event is sponsored by the Activities Programming Board, and for more information please contact Krista Carson at 828-4554 or apbcodirect@vcu.edu.
30	COMMUTER COOLDOWN Noon – 1 p.m., University Student Commons Underground Come enjoy live music from your favorite local bands as you Cool Down in the Commons Underground. FREE food for VCU Students. This event is sponsored by the USC&A Programs Office. For more information please contact Justin Castonguay at 828-4554 or castonguayjb@vcu.edu.
	APB PRESENTS: SNACK DAY 1 – 3 p.m., University Student Commons, Commonwealth Ballroom B FREE food and refreshments for all VCU students! This event is sponsored by the Activities Programming Board. For more information, please e-mail apbcodirect@vcu.edu or call 828-4554.
31	APB PRESENTS: HALLOWEEN FESTIVAL Noon – 3 p.m., University Student Commons, Commonwealth Ballroom & the Virginia Rooms Get in the spirit of Halloween at APB Extra’s second annual Halloween Festival! There will be Halloween-inspired novelties, food, entertainment and giveaways. Feel free to show up in your best costume! This event is sponsored by the Activities Programming Board, and for more information please contact Krista Carson at 828-4554 or apbcodirect@vcu.edu.
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