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

commonwealthtimes.com

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briefs



Local and VCU

John Warner applauds Obama's national security picks

Republican Sen. John Warner of Virginia says the three people President-elect Barack Obama is considering to lead his national security team would instill great confidence at home and abroad.

Democratic and transition officials have said Obama has picked or is considering picking Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton as secretary of state and retired Marine Gen. James Jones as national security adviser, and retaining Robert Gates as defense secretary.

In a statement issued Saturday, Warner said Obama's national security team further strengthens what he calls "the growing respect" for Obama's courage and ability to exercise sound judgment in selecting the best and the brightest to implement the nation's security policies.

Va man, daughter among Mumbai terror victims

A father and his teenage daughter from a Virginia community that promotes a form of meditation were among those killed in the terrorist attacks in India, a colleague said Friday.

Alan Scherr, 58, and daughter Naomi, 13, were in a café Wednesday night in Mumbai when they were killed, said Bobbie Garvey, a spokeswoman for the Synchronicity Foundation. The U.S. State Department confirmed their deaths on Friday morning.

The Scherrs were among 25 foundation participants in a spiritual program in Mumbai. Four others on the mission were injured in the cafe attack in the luxury Oberoi Hotel, Garvey said, including two women from Tennessee.

The Virginia father was a Maryland native and a former college professor who lived at the Synchronicity Sanctuary about 15 miles southwest of Charlottesville.

PETA claims of abused pigs fails to sway probe

An investigation concludes that pigs were humanely treated after a truck hauling them overturned on Virginia Route 10 in Suffolk in September.

The investigation was conducted by Suffolk Commonwealth's Attorney Phil Ferguson, who responded to a complaint by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals.

The animal rights group argued that Smithfield Foods and Murphy-Brown workers yanked pigs by their ears and prodded them with tools to get the dazed animals moving.

Ferguson said his investigation included an officer at the scene who reported no evidence of abuse.

The accident killed about 65 of 190 hogs on the truck.

PETA said it is disappointed by the conclusion of the investigation.

National and International

Police: Pakistani militants behind Mumbai attacks

The only gunman captured by police after a string of attacks on Mumbai told authorities he belonged to the Pakistani militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba, a senior police officer said Sunday.

Police said 10 gunmen terrorized Mumbai during a 60-hour siege, and all but one were shot dead.

Joint Police Commissioner Rakesh Maria said the assailant now in custody told police the group had intended to hit more targets during their attacks on India's financial capital that left at least 174 dead.

The group has long been seen as a creation of the Pakistani intelligence service to help wage its clandestine war against India in disputed Kashmir.

Police arrested the lone surviving militant, Ajmal Qasab, and Maria said he confessed his links to Lashkar during interrogation.

Wal-Mart shoppers who trampled NY worker sought

Police are reviewing surveillance videos of a post-Thanksgiving shopper stampede that trampled a suburban Wal-Mart worker to death, but they acknowledge it may be difficult to bring criminal charges.

Nassau County police and Wal-Mart Stores Inc. said no new information was available Saturday on the employee's brutal death, which rattled shoppers even as they flocked to the Valley Stream store a day later.

Police said the temporary worker, Jdimytai Damour, was mowed down as about 2,000 bargain-hunters surged into the store at Friday's 5 a.m. opening, leaving a metal portion of the door frame crumpled like an accordion.

Other workers were knocked to the ground as they tried to rescue Damour, and customers simply stepped over him and kept shopping even as the store announced it was closing because of the death, police and witnesses said.

At least four other people, including a woman eight months pregnant, were taken to hospitals for observation or treatment for minor injuries. The store, about 20 miles east of Manhattan, closed for several hours but reopened Friday afternoon.

150 stranded whales die in Australia

A group of 150 whales that became stranded on a remote coastline in southern Australia were battered to death on rocks before rescuers could save them.

Officials from Tasmania state's Parks and Wildlife Service rushed Sunday in four-wheel-drive vehicles to the remote site at Sandy Cape after the long-finned pilot whales were spotted by air a day earlier.

A helicopter crew arriving late Saturday found about a dozen of the whales injured but alive, said Warwick Brennan, a spokesman for the service.

Other officials and volunteers arrived by four-wheel-drive vehicle on Sunday and worked frantically to save those remaining, but the whales died, Brennan said.

The coastline is strewn with reefs and jagged rocks, making it much more dangerous for the stranded whales than if they had landed at a sandy beach, said Rosemary Gales, another wildlife service official.

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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.

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All briefs provided by The Associated Press

news

Holiday crime down near VCU, the Fan

According to crime incident data available on the Richmond Police Department Crime Incident Information Center Web site, several crimes have occurred during the time between the fall and spring semesters near VCU and in areas frequented by students.

The data shows that between Dec. 19, 2007, and Jan. 13, 2008, a total of 138 crimes were reported in the Fan. Of the reported crimes, 25 were thefts, 14 assaults, 11 burglaries, three robberies and three incidents of vehicular theft. Also during this time, 24 crimes were reported in Carytown, 14 near VCU and 13 in Oregon Hill.

While the data show a decrease in December and January crimes over the past three years near VCU and the Fan, crimes have increased slightly in Carytown and Oregon Hill.

Crime incident data for specific Richmond neighborhoods is provided online by the Richmond Police Department at www.richmondgov.com/police/Crime_Incident_Info.aspx.

Sidebar by Eric Blackstock

Police remind residents of holiday crime precautions

ERIC BLACKSTOCK
Contributing Writer

With the holiday shopping season underway, area police departments are reminding residents of ways to avoid being targets of holiday-related crime.

Virginia State Police recently published a press release in conjunction with U.S. Cellular offering safety tips for shopping and driving during the holiday season. Many of the tips stress the importance of having a cell phone when shopping alone and having emergency contact information programmed into a phone should an emergency situation arise.

"Wireless phones have greatly enhanced the ability for emergency personnel to act quickly, but people should still be aware of their surroundings and take precautions during this holiday season,"

stated Dee Taylor, director of sales for U.S. Cellular in the mid-Atlantic, in the press release.

Virginia State Police also state people always should be aware of their surroundings and that persons overloaded with packages are easy targets for theft. Package overload also limits visibility and freedom of motion.

State Police recommend shoppers make multiple trips to their vehicles when shopping and conceal packages by placing them in the trunk or covering them with a blanket.

The Richmond Police Department also has published safety tips to help prevent crime during the holidays on their Web site. The department advises against shopping alone and carrying large amounts of cash. Police recommend parking in well-lit, high traffic areas and recoding and keeping on file serial or model numbers of major purchases.

Students who live off-campus and are going out of town during the holidays can also request Richmond Police make periodic checks on their residences. This can be done by filling out a house watch request form and returning it by mail or in person to their local precinct. Forms are only good for periods of up to three weeks; any additional time would require additional forms.

"I definitely did not know that the Richmond Police would watch your home during the break," biology major Greg Mullins said.

Mullins says he thinks the program is a good idea, but also says there should be more promotion of it so that more people are aware they have that option available to them.

House watch request forms can be downloaded from the Richmond Police Department's Web site at www.richmondgov.com/police/VacationWatch.aspx.

Butting Heads



Students talk about Black Friday

Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving, has become the traditional starting point for the retail Christmas season. Shoppers, on the look out for the best sales, are known to arrive early and wait in line for hours.

For many shoppers, Black Friday is a day-long event in which they go to as many stores as possible and search for the best deals of the shopping season. Others prefer to avoid the crowds and the mob mentality that sometimes leads to pushing, injuries and worse.

In New York this past Friday, a Wal-Mart employee was trampled to death as a crowd, which had begun to gather around 9 p.m. the night before, forced its way through the doors as the employees prepared to open the store. We asked VCU students what they thought about Black Friday shopping and the incident in New York.



"I know that my dad shopped at Circuit City this year, because we're from Richmond and that's a Richmond-based company, but he also read in the newspaper that there were 600 people in front of Best Buy in the morning and only about 200 in Circuit City ... I think people should be supporting the area companies a little more."

Dylan Holt, accounting major



"I went shopping with my wife in Wal-Mart. Not too many people (were there) but the prices (were) very good."

Chen Kai, art education major



"I think it's pretty stupid that something like that (the Wal-Mart employee's death) has to happen. I think there's ways to go about it where you can regulate the amount of people that come in your store at one time."

Alex Bailey, undeclared



"I worked at Toys 'R' Us. It was a little intense. (There were) a lot of people. (It was) really busy. It's kind of ridiculous that it comes to that (the Wal-Mart employee's death), that people can't just calm down a little bit. Everyone's going to get in, so it's sad."

Kyle Patton, psychology major



"I thought it was ridiculous, because people trampled a man for a DVD player or a TV when his life was more precious than those items and I felt like he lost his life over something so small. It makes me feel like people place more value on things than they should for the holidays, which should be more about spending time with your family, instead of seeing the cheapest thing you can buy."

Vnai Bell, finance major

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ANNAYATES & MARGARETWEIMER
News Co-Editor & Contributing Writer

Proposition 8 connects to Virginia

“There are many people who were not people of color who voted for equal rights,” Ryder said. “There are many people who would want to support this next stage of equal rights.”

According to the Web site SupportMarriage.com, 61 percent of Californians voted in 2000 to define marriage as occurring only between a man and a woman. However, the site states, judges changed the law.

“The Supreme Court’s decision to legalize same-sex marriage did not just overturn the will of California voters,” the site states. “It also redefined marriage for the rest of society, without ever asking the people themselves to accept this decision.”

The Web site states people should support Proposition 8 for the sake of California’s children.

“It protects our children from being taught in public schools that same-sex marriage is the same as traditional marriage.”

Elisa Oliver is a Richmonder who works at an area YMCA. She is also a lesbian and says most people who are against same-sex marriage think it is a moral issue.

“I think that people see it as a break down of the morality in the United States,” Oliver said.

Oliver says people with this view are too focused on sexual imagery.

“Usually the people that are disgusted by it probably don’t know any gay people personally,” Oliver said. “People overlook the idea that people are connected on a human level and it’s not just a physical thing.”

Oliver says she doesn’t think it is necessary to call unions between same-sex couples marriages.

“I don’t need the state to tell me I can be with someone of the same sex,” Oliver said. “I think that same-sex couples should be able to share the same rights and amenities ... they should be universally available.”

Ryder says it’s important to pay attention to California in order to “set up a framework” for the legal battle the LGBT community is having in Virginia and the rest of the country.

“We are very much on the forefront of a civil rights

struggle,” Ryder said.

An article by Trudy Chun on the Concerned Women for America Web site expresses concern about the same kinds of legal framework Ryder is looking for.

“Once homosexuals have a test case, litigators will challenge the U.S. Constitution’s ‘full faith and credit’ clause,” Chun states.

According to Chun, these are moral issues, not civil rights issues, because, she says, homosexuality is a choice, not a legal minority.

Ryder said it is important for people to better understand the LGBT community because it would be harder to vote against measures favorable to them, if people had more knowledge.

“I feel that a community is not able to reach its full potential if it comes from a perspective of intolerance,” Ryder said.

Queer Action, a student organization, works to promote tolerance on campus.

Queer Action president Felicia Ryan O’Donnell said the group’s meetings and events are meant to promote understanding. Events include the Day of Silence, when participants put tapes over their mouths and hand out fliers around campus about unspoken difficulties in the LGBT community.

“Queer Action has over 300 members, with regular attendance of anywhere from 10 to 20 people who come to events,” O’Donnell said.

Officers of Queer Action sometimes are asked to speak in the dorms in efforts to increase awareness and enhance student connections.

“I’m still surprised that there are kids out there that aren’t accepting of the gay community,” said freshman Cameron Robinson. “I do feel like a lot of the problems stem from the previous generation.”

Many students are of a generation that has grown up exposed to LGBT culture, O’Donnell said, whether through television or even someone close to them.

“Our generation has the advantage of having grown up seeing Ellen DeGeneres be gay, ‘Will and Grace’ on TV and things like that,” O’Donnell said. “All those things help people be more aware at least that gay people are there.”

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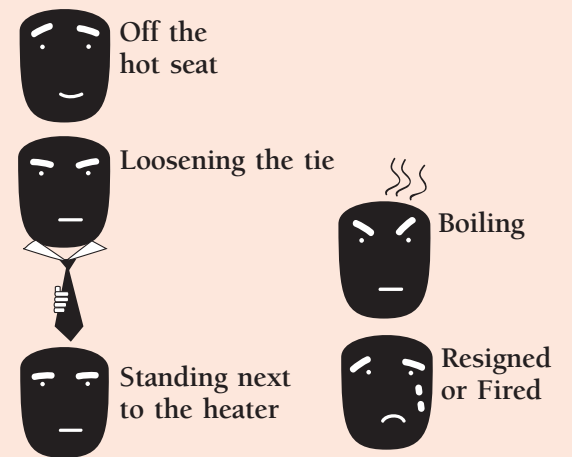
sports

Revisiting The Fire-O-Meter

JONATHAN HOWARD AND JEROME FOSTER
Sports Editor and Associate Sports Editor

About halfway through the college football regular season, we printed The Commonwealth Times Fire-O-Meter. The Fire-O-Meter (soon to receive a patent!)

rated a number of college coaches on where they stood in terms of job security with their current employer. Some of our outlooks proved to be spot on while others were dead wrong. We also forgot to add a coach who might have the hottest seat of all. Let's take a look back at each coach and where they now stand.



The coach: Tom O'Brien, N.C. State
Previous ranking: Loosening the tie. O'Brien's first season in Raleigh (5-7) wasn't great, and a slow start through the first half of this season (2-4) didn't help either—especially given the improvement of rivals North Carolina and Duke.

Current status: Off the hot seat. With freshman Russell Wilson leading the charge at quarterback, the finally healthy Wolfpack won four of their final six games, including matchups against the Tar Heels, Blue Devils and Wake Forest. N.C. State is bowl eligible for the first time since 2005.



The coach: Greg Schiano, Rutgers
Previous ranking: Loosening the tie. The Rutgers head coach has taken the team to an unprecedented level of success, but production has dropped off.

Current status: Off the hot seat. The Scarlet Knights started the season 1-5 with its only win coming against FCS opponent Morgan State, but have since won five in a row. It obviously took a while to get used to life without former standout Ray Rice, and now things appear to be on the up-and-up. However, Schiano will find himself right back on the list if the team starts slow again next season without quarterback Mike Teel.



The coach: Bill Stewart, West Virginia
Previous ranking: Loosening the tie. Early losses to East Carolina and Colorado made people wonder if Stewart was the right choice.

Current status: Off the hot seat. Stewart and the Mountaineers bounced back from those early losses to win five straight games. The only games the Mountaineers have lost since the losses to East Carolina and Colorado were to eventual conference champion Cincinnati and Pittsburgh. West Virginia lost those games by a combined seven points. The Mountaineers are currently 7-4 and can get their eighth win with a victory over South Florida. Stewart and his staff can't get complacent though. They need to find a replacement for senior quarterback Pat White.



The coach: Ralph Friedgen, Maryland
Previous ranking: Loosening the tie. Friedgen needs to get the Terrapins to be more consistent.

Current status: Same. Once again Maryland had an inconsistent season. The Terrapins looked great in demolishing Wake Forest 26-0. They beat North Carolina this season. But the Terps also had losses to Middle Tennessee State and were blown out by Virginia 31-0. It is obvious Friedgen has talent at Maryland, but he needs them to play every week. The ACC is down and has no powerhouse team. It would not be a surprise to see Friedgen lead the Terrapins to another ACC title—in the future.



The coach: Jeff Tedford, California
Previous ranking: Standing next to the heater. Tedford has been good, not great at California.

Current status: Loosening the tie. Tedford had a decent year this season. The Golden Bears are currently 7-4 and should get win No. 8 this Saturday against winless Washington. Tedford lost good players such as DeSean Jackson to the NFL. His team didn't suffer any embarrassing losses, and had a good win to open the season against Michigan State. The Golden Bears were also able to hang with USC, holding the Trojans to just 17 points.



The coach: Steve Spurrier, South Carolina
Previous ranking: Standing next to the heater. Spurrier has never reached the success that he had at Florida and his teams have never reached the top tier of the SEC.

Current status: Same. There are some rumors that Spurrier could be retiring soon, so the South Carolina administration can probably wait out a coaching change, but if he chooses to continue, the heat will be on to contend with the success of Alabama and Florida.

FIRE-O-METER REVISITED continued to CT8

This week

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Thu., Dec. 4, vs. Western Michigan, Siegel Center, 7:30 p.m.

Sat., Dec. 6, @William & Mary, Williamsburg, 7 p.m.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Wed., Dec. 3, @ Richmond, Robins Center, 7 p.m.

Sun., Dec. 7, vs. Georgetown, Siegel Center, 2 p.m.

MEN'S TRACK AND FIELD

Fri., Dec. 5, @ Navy Invitational, Annapolis, Md., all day

WOMEN'S TRACK AND FIELD

Sat., Dec. 6, @ CNU Holiday Open, Newport News, all day

There has to be a better way

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

The Big 12 South division has been the best division in all of college football this season. The play of Texas, Oklahoma and Texas Tech made people question whether the Big 12 was better than the SEC from top to bottom this year. The Big 12 has gotten more respect this year because of those schools and that is a good thing. But now, the conference has a problem. Texas, Oklahoma and Texas Tech are all 7-1 in the conference and have gone 1-1 against each other. Texas beat Oklahoma at the Cotton Bowl in Dallas but lost to Texas Tech on a last second touchdown pass. Oklahoma pounded Texas Tech but lost to Texas. Texas Tech beat Texas but got drilled by Oklahoma. You have three teams but only one can win the division and move onto the Big 12 title game. So how do you decide?

Big 12 tiebreaker rules state if you have three or more teams tied you follow these steps to determine the division winner.

1. The records of the three teams will be compared against each other. That doesn't help. All three teams are 11-1.

2. The records of the three teams will be compared within their division. That doesn't help either. All three teams are 7-1 in the Big 12.

3. The records of the three teams will be compared against the next highest placed teams in their division in order of finish (4, 5 and 6). We are still at a stalemate. All three teams beat the 4th (Oklahoma State), 5th (Baylor) and 6th-place (Texas A&M) teams in the Big 12 South.

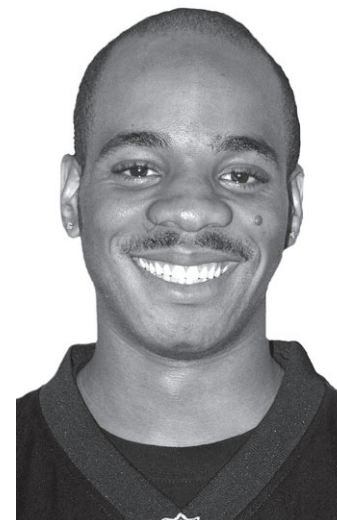
4. The records of the three teams will be compared against all common conference opponents. We still don't have a winner.

The teams were 4-0 against all common conference opponents (Oklahoma State, Baylor, Texas A&M and Kansas).

The fifth tiebreaker is where the conference is going to have a problem. That's because the fifth tiebreaker is BCS ranking at the end of the Big 12 regular season. The reason this is a problem is because the BCS rankings are subjective. The BCS rankings are determined by polls. Basically, human and computer polls will determine who will win the Big 12 South instead of it being decided on the field.

The reason this is going to be a problem because while it seems most people believe Texas should win the division, most people are projecting Oklahoma will win it (at the time of writing this piece, the polls have not come out). Texas' supporters think the Longhorns should go over Oklahoma because they beat the Sooners head-to-head. But if you use that logic, Texas Tech's supporters could use the same argument. Oklahoma supporters think they should go because they are the hottest team right now. But should they go ahead of a team they lost to?

No matter what happens, someone will be unhappy. I think all three teams have good arguments on why they deserve to win the division. If I had to choose, I would take Texas. The reason I would take the Longhorns is because they beat Oklahoma and barely lost to Texas Tech. I eliminate Texas Tech because they lost so late in the season and losing late in the season hurts you more in the eyes of the voters. I don't agree with that, but that's how college football works. My advice to the Big 12: don't use BCS rankings to determine tiebreakers. Try using point differential between common conference opponents. At least that's determined on the field.



the
ROME
report

Sports Briefs

MEN'S BASKETBALL

The Rams suffered consecutive regular-season losses for the first time since losses to Miami and Arkansas in the 2007 Puerto Rico Tip-Off after falling to East Carolina 93-90 in overtime last Tuesday. Senior Eric Maynor (Raeford N.C./Westover) scored 35 points. Maynor's 35 points were the most by a VCU player since 2005. Sophomore Larry Sanders (Fort Pierce, Fla./Port St. Lucie) scored 16 points while grabbing 14 rebounds and blocking four shots. Sophomore Joey Rodriguez (Oviedo, Fla./Lake Howell) added 11 points and eight assists. VCU was able to get back on track with a 67-55 win over New Mexico Saturday night in the Cancun Challenge in Cancun, Mexico. Maynor scored 18 points to lead all scorers. Rodriguez added 12 points on four 3-pointers. Sophomore Lance Kearse (Fort Myers, Fla./Fort Myers) scored 11 points and grabbed five rebounds. The final game of the Cancun Challenge, against Vanderbilt, ended after deadlines on Sunday night.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Junior La'Tavia Rorie (Charlotte, N.C./Harding University) and senior Quanitra Hollingsworth (Chesapeake/Great Bridge) led the Rams to a 78-67 win over East Carolina last Tuesday. Rorie scored a career-high 24 points. Hollingsworth

added 15 points and 11 rebounds. Junior Kita Waller (Gainesville, Ga./Gainesville) scored 13 points while senior Radoslava Bachvarova (Varna, Bulgaria/Daytona Beach C.C.) scored 12 points. On Saturday night, the Rams defeated Albany 67-53. Hollingsworth scored 18 points and grabbed 15 rebounds. It was her 39th double-double of her career. Rorie, Waller and sophomore Jessica Taylor (Northumberland/Woodbridge) each scored 11 points. Taylor scored all of her points in the second half. The two wins improved VCU's record to 4-1. The Rams next game is at Richmond, Dec. 3 at 7 p.m.

VOLLEYBALL

The Rams lost to Delaware in the CAA Tournament semifinal, 3-1 (15-25, 25-16, 25-22, 25-16), Nov. 23. Sophomore Ariel Newman (Greensboro, N.C./Southern Guilford) had nine kills and seven digs. Senior Elisa Kuehnel (Dresden, Germany/Sportsgymnasium) had 10 kills and 11 digs while senior Jessica Ojukwu (Sao Paulo, Brazil/Colegio Dourado) added 11 kills in the loss. On Thanksgiving Day, the Rams fell to 25th-ranked New Mexico State, 3-0 (25-18, 25-16, 25-22). Ojukwu had eight kills and four blocks. Kelsie Clegg (Boise, Idaho/Boise Senior) finished with four kills and six blocks. Ivana Rich (Cumberland/Cumberland) added five blocks while Alyssa Foster (Richmond/

Mills Godwin) had 13 digs, a personal best. In the season finale, VCU lost to New Mexico, 3-0 (25-12, 25-18, 25-14), on Saturday night. Freshman Marketa Janeckova (Olomouc, Czech Republic/Gymnasium Cajkovskeho Olomouc) had seven kills. Clegg finished with four blocks and three kills while Rich added five kills and two blocks. Ojukwu added three more blocks. The Rams finished the season 19-13. The 19 wins were seven more than they had last season.

GOLF

Blacksburg High School senior Brian Langley has signed a letter of intent to play at VCU. Blacksburg High is the two-time defending state Group AA champion.

TENNIS

Anime Boustani will be joining the men's and women's tennis team as an assistant coach. Boustani spent the last 14 seasons as the head coach of the men's team at Drury, a Division II school. At Drury, Boustani led the Panthers to a 271-62 record. He also won two National Coach of the Year awards. In Morocco, Boustani's native country, he was a four-time national champion and he also played on the country's Davis Cup team.

FIRE-O-METER REVISITED continued from CT6



The coach: Mike Stoops, Arizona

Previous ranking: Standing next to the heater. Stoops hasn't led the Wildcats to any bowl appearances since being named coach in 2003.

Current status: Same. Stoops is having one of his better seasons. The Wildcats are currently 6-5 and can pick up their seventh win if they can defeat Arizona State on Saturday. The Wildcats are bowl eligible, but a win over the Sun Devils would improve their bowl standings since a couple of those wins are against Idaho and Toledo. Stoops needs to get to a bowl this season to make sure he remains the coach for next season. There hasn't been many rumblings of his firing, but you have to wonder how much time he has left if the Wildcats aren't invited to a bowl.



The coach: Al Groh, Virginia

Previous ranking: Boiling. Groh's teams have been disappointing and have lacked discipline. Blowout losses to Duke, Southern Cal and Connecticut didn't help either.

Current status: Same. A change in offensive strategy seemed to turn the Cavaliers' season around, leading to four straight wins—three over ACC opponents—and the keys to the Coastal Division title. However, Virginia then dropped its final four games, including a 17-14 heartbreaker to Virginia Tech. The team showed improvement during the season and had to deal with a lot of adversity at the quarterback position. Groh may have bought himself another year using that excuse, but his leash will now be shorter than before.



The coach: Philip Fulmer, Tennessee

Previous ranking: Boiling. Tennessee has gone from national title contender to a mess in a very short time.

Current status: Fired, or resigned under pressure, take your pick. It was time for Fulmer to go. Even though he had played for Tennessee and had coached there for years, a change needed to be made. Tennessee has not been a national or SEC contender for several years now. The Volunteers went 5-7 this season. To be fair to Fulmer, the SEC is tough but there is no excuse to lose to Wyoming on homecoming weekend as the Volunteers did this season. It is also hard for the administration to be patient when conference foes like Georgia, Florida and Alabama are having success and Tennessee is not. Tennessee wasn't even the best team in the state of Tennessee this year as that honor went to Vanderbilt. When that happens, it's time to go.



The coach: Sylvester Croom, Mississippi State

Previous ranking: Boiling. Croom wasn't putting together a consistent winner in Starkville. Houston Nutt's revamping of Mississippi's program didn't help either.

Current status: Resigned. Croom stepped down as Bulldogs' head coach after a 45-0 loss to rival Mississippi in the "Egg Bowl." Croom's team finished the season with a 4-8 record, including a 34-3 loss to hapless Tennessee.



The coach: Greg Robinson, Syracuse

Previous ranking: Boiling. Eight wins since 2005 says it all.

Current status: Fired. The Orange went 3-9 this season. The fact that the 3-9 campaign this year was Robinson's second best season says it all. Syracuse was not improving but they showed a lot of heart in a win at Notre Dame after Robinson's firing was announced. The administration at the school and alumni such as Jim Brown said things had to change. When the administration and alumni start talking about change, they are usually talking about the head coach and Robinson got the ax.

The coach: Tyrone Willingham, Washington

Previous ranking: Boiling. You can't argue with 11 wins in four seasons.

Current status: Fired, but will finish out season. Washington is 0-11 this season and will probably lose to California on Saturday to finish the season winless. Willingham had sympathy when he was let go by Notre Dame but he did not have the same sympathy when Washington decided to fire him. Willingham wanted to stay on as coach, but the administration had other ideas. After his stint at Washington, you have to wonder if and when another school will give him a chance.



The coach: Tommy Bowden, Clemson

Previous ranking: Standing next to the heater. Bowden's past teams were notorious under-performers, and the 2008 version was shaping up to be no different.

Current Status: Resigned/fired. Some questions remain if Bowden decided to step away from the program or the university administration forced his hand, but even Bowden's players said he couldn't motivate them anymore after a 12-7 loss to Wake Forest that dropped the Tigers to 3-3. Interim head coach Dabo Swinney was able to hold the team together, leading the team to four wins over the final six games—including a win over heated rival South Carolina.



The one we missed

The coach: Charlie Weiss

Status before the season: If anything, Weiss may have been loosening his tie a little bit, but not much. The former New England Patriots assistant has put together a good string of recruiting classes and was given a hefty raise and contract extension to match his stomach, but with few exceptions, on-field results weren't much better than either of the previous coaching staffs.

Current status: Boiling, and deservedly so. Notre Dame has caught heat all year for the extension Weiss got after his teams performances weren't significantly better than those of Tyrone Willingham's and Bob Davie's. While it first appeared that Weiss would have support of the school, it now seems that his buyout is not a problem and the school isn't completely averse to making a move. After ending the season with an embarrassing loss to Syracuse and a blowout at the hands of Southern Cal, something will more than likely be done more so sooner than later.

spectrum

CD REVIEW

Alum Jason Arce's 'Simplicity' anything but



ROBERTO CURTIS
Spectrum Editor

Saxophonist and jazz studies alum Jason Arce brings this year to quite a successful close. Whether playing alongside Weezer at Madison Square Garden or relishing in his position as a grad student and soon-to-be adjunct faculty at New York University, the burgeoning bandleader has created a stir in the VCU jazz community. His first CD as a leader, "Simplicity," is equally as exciting as his other recent accolades.

While the album's title might lead one to expect a sophomore effort catering to a mainstream audience, those who know of Arce's previous creative endeavors with Glows In The Dark, No BS! Brass Band or Fight the Big Bull would be quick to see the irony in the name.

Arce has assembled a team of young, adventurous locals to bring his ideas to fruition: Bob Miller (trumpet, Bio-Ritmo), Sam Savage (trombone, No BS! Brass Band), Kelli Strawbridge (drums, the Soul Army) and Matt Hall (bass, aP Connect 4) add their own sophisticated flavor to the locally grown goodness.

Tunes like "New Relationship" and "Patiently Waiting" show an innovative Arce perspective full of complex polyrhythms, adventurous melodies and sweet chord changes. Arce's solo (like many throughout) reflects obvious

influences of saxophone giants like Joe Lovano and Chris Potter; climactic, abrasive and angular yet mellifluous and soothing.

Aside from Arce's investigations in jazz improvisation, other heavy cats slay on this record including Strawbridge and the young drummer and pianist Devonne Harris whose age is merely a number when compared to his prolific playing.

Trumpeter Bob Miller's and guitarist Alan Parker's solos on "Break the Wall" are equally as twisted and explosive as the bandleader's on the same track. The vigor is abundant and simplicity is out the window as the soloists make exciting explorations in space and time.

The ballad "End of the Night" heads into the groove from a soulful saxophone, drum and Wurlitzer piano conversation rich with soul, quirkiness, and a healthy blend of beauty and strength. The R&B vibe certainly sets a melancholy mood with superb dialogue between Miller and Arce in the latter half of the tune.

It would behoove any supporter of the arts in Richmond to check out this record, not merely for the sake of patronizing a young up-and-comer, but because often enough, local music unfortunately doesn't sound this sweet.

Grade: B

Download (don't steal): "Forward Progress" by Jason Arce.

B.R.M.C. shows its dark side

VERONICA GARABELLI
Associate Spectrum Editor

After seeing Black Rebel Motorcycle Club last summer, I was not only impressed with its dedication to fans (taking numerous song requests throughout the night), but with its mega-packed two hour set list as well. That tour brought B.R.M.C. – in light of the politically-charged album “Baby 81” – back to the rock roots it had strayed from during 2005’s folksy “Howl.”

B.R.M.C.’s ability to reform its sound time after time left me to wonder—what would come next? Would we have B.R.M.C. at what in my opinion is its best, plucking guitar strings softly, or muted guitars dominating instead?

When I found out two weeks ago that B.R.M.C. had released a new instrumental album, I was more curious than ever. Thank goodness the album – “The Effects Of 333” – was only a click away. This rare gem was only available through its official Web site and marks B.R.M.C.’s first release on its independent Abstract Dragon record label. Upon a

first listen, the group’s hush-hush mentality about the album (with the only announcement being four days before the Nov. 1 release) made sense. “The Effects Of 333” – unlike its previous four albums – was certainly not commercial, nor did it want to be.

The opening track, also entitled “The Effects Of 333,” sets the eerie mood that is apparent throughout most of the album. It’s a medley of ambiguous noise that sounds like a plane is about to land then cuts off, leading into the next track “Still No Answer.” The song sounds much like “The Effects Of 333,” successfully scaring the listener with echoes that are better suited for a scary movie soundtrack than a B.R.M.C. album.

Though I can tell it is trying to be unconventional, the album’s dark electronic reverberations get to be too much at times. It made me feel like a schizophrenic listening to random sound bites of middle-aged men talking throughout the song. If its goal is to make listeners get a little too far inside their heads, it has certainly been achieved.

Still I find my ear being drawn to the B.R.M.C.

I love. “And With This Comes,” is a breath of fresh air in the midst of all the chaos, strumming soothing chords on top of a familiar riff that I can’t quite place my finger on. This song achieves an indefectible blend of the spacey supernatural sounds B.R.M.C. is trying to create, teamed with its pre-existing day-dreamy sound. If the entire “The Effects Of 333,” was like “And With This Comes,” I would be in heaven. This was a small taste of what I imagined the entire album to be, but was proven wrong.

The other acoustic track, “A Twisted State,” doesn’t seem to impress me with its repeating almost-boring arpeggio, but I still prefer it over the other spooky tracks.

In the end I must admit this album did not completely fulfill my expectations, but I do applaud its efforts to stray from its comfort zone. Something tells me B.R.M.C. was not really working on anyone’s agenda but its own.

Grade: C-

Download (don’t steal): “And With This Comes” by B.R.M.C.

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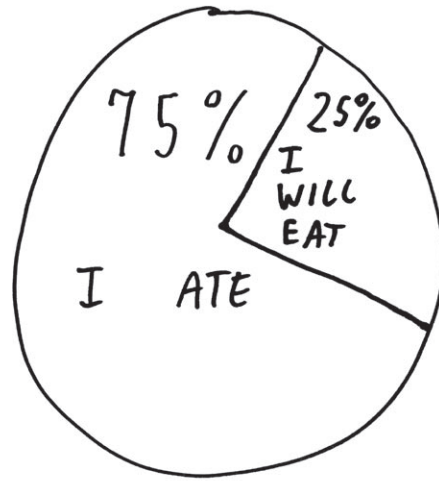
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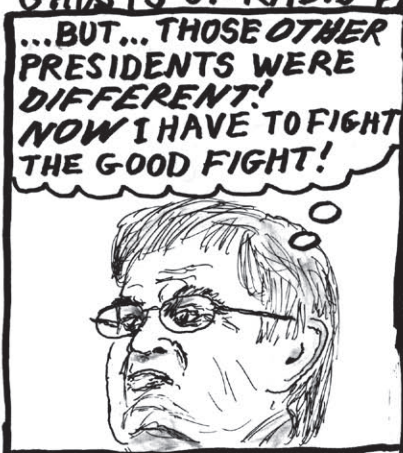
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Bill Lemmond

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30 NOV 2008

opinion

StOp Dis aWFULness AKA: tacky typing

SARAH SONIES

Opinion Editor

Ahhh, the week after Thanksgiving—that time when everybody is either hitting the gym to apologize for punishing their body for four days or vowing to start working out sometime before Christmas.

The holidays are a time for reflection and to look at oneself deeply. Most importantly, to reflect upon horrid habits that need shedding—such as typing “WoRdZ LIkE dis.”

Mostly found in text and instant messaging, this sort of typing is a cross between “AIM speak” – where “LOL” and “BRB” are abundantly found – and blatantly bad grammar and capitalization usage. Call me a librarian or an English teacher, but this is my biggest pet peeve. And believe me; I have a lot of pet peeves.

Most of us are not 14 anymore, and it is never OK to type like that—unless it is with “LOLcats”. “LOLcats” are basically pictures of cats doing mildly amusing things with grammatically incorrect captions. The home of “LOLcats,” icanhascheezburger.com, is the only place where I embrace grammatically bad typing.

“Text speak” is also creeping up in a new and scary place—Facebook. Every time I scroll down my list of Facebook friends, I see someone’s status saying things like: “girlZ NITE 2nite!” This is not OK. How hard is it to type out full words? It takes longer to type out the shortened, slang versions of words than it takes to actually type out

the real words.

Typing like that does not make you cool – it makes people want to throw dictionaries in your general direction. If you think it adds flavor or makes what you are doing more interesting, you are incorrect.

“Text speak” is a huge problem and no one seems to be doing anything about it. True, if it is really bothersome, you could delete all your offending “friends” on Facebook, but that’s childish and besides—how would you keep tabs on people? It is just not logical. I cannot say I can provide a solution to the epidemic of “Text speak,” but, awareness should be spread.

Typing anything in “Text speak” is like not looking at what you are typing while using your T9Word program to send a text. T9Word is the program where you hit selected keys only once to spell out a word, or words. When carelessly typed, usually the message makes little to no sense—like decoding the Rosetta Stone with no historical value or reward. It has already been scientifically proven that the American people are lazy and almost completely technology dependent, so really, why not perpetuate the stereotype that we cannot bother spelling or capitalizing words correctly.

On the whole, it is much simpler to actually spell out what you want to type or text. “Text speak” was only cool in high school, and now that people still do it after leaving their teenage years is ridiculous. We took grammar classes for a reason.

Melissa Tablante illustration

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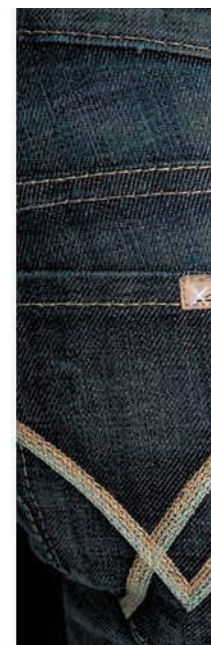
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