



Monday, January 12, 2009 Vol. 48 No. 29

# the ct

## News

Buzz about Juicy Campus · 4

## Sports

The Rome Report  
BCS Mess · 7

## Spectrum ▶

Spot of tea? · 9

## Opinion

No peace in the  
Middle East · 11



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

[commonwealthtimes.com](http://commonwealthtimes.com)



# New year, new semester



free





# briefs

## Local and VCU

### Cuts span education system

Gov. Timothy M. Kaine proposed hundreds of millions of dollars in education cuts Dec. 17.

Virginia's four-year colleges and universities would see their 2010 base budgets cut 15 percent under the proposal, though Kaine's plan would add \$26 million for need-based financial aid for college students.

Under the 15 percent reduction, VCU faces a loss of about \$30.3 million; the University of Virginia, \$23 million; and the College of William and Mary, about \$7.3 million.

*Brief by the Richmond Times-Dispatch*

### Text glitches mar monthly VCU emergency test

VCU is checking into a problem that occurred during a Jan. 7 monthly test of its emergency communications system.

Some text messages that were sent out to alert members of the university community about the test were blank, the school said. The school said the correct message was sent to everyone, but some subscribers received blank messages in addition to the correct message.

The monthly exercises, which feature one-minute tests of the emergency siren systems on both of the downtown Richmond school's campuses, are designed to make sure VCU's emergency notification system is in working order.

*Brief by the Richmond Times-Dispatch*

### VCU business school dean to leave post

Michael Sesnowitz will step down as dean of VCU's School of Business. Sesnowitz, dean since July 2000, will remain at VCU as an economics professor.

In a note he sent to faculty at the start of the fall semester, Sesnowitz said he had intended to serve as dean for only about five years.

*Brief by the Richmond Times-Dispatch*

### VCU to offer new doctoral program

VCU will offer a new doctoral program in the fall that will focus on the social, biological and behavioral factors that affect health.

Student researchers will explore "classic public health issues" that help or inhibit people from maintaining their

health, said Laura Siminoff, chair of VCU's social and behavioral health department.

The State Council on Higher Education approved the doctorate in social and behavioral health this week for Virginia. It brings VCU a step closer to establishing its new School of Public Health. But for now, Siminoff's department is part of the School of Medicine.

The department has brought in \$8 million in research funding from the National Institutes of Health since it was established two years ago, Siminoff said.

*Brief by the Richmond Times-Dispatch*

### Teachers honored by VCU

Forty-three Richmond-area teachers were honored Jan. 6 by VCU for achieving certification from the National Board for Professional Teacher Standards.

The teachers received pins from their school superintendents to recognize their certification, a yearlong, voluntary professional-development process.

The Metropolitan Educational Training Alliance, the VCU School of Education and a partnership of Richmond-area schools sponsored the pinning ceremony at the Singleton Center for the Performing Arts.

*Brief by the Richmond Times-Dispatch*

### VCU professors honored by science association

Two VCU professors have been named fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Sarah Spiegel, chair of the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology in the VCU School of Medicine, was recognized for her discovery of a potent lipid mediator with important roles in cancer, inflammation and allergy.

Audrey Smedley, professor emeritus of anthropology with a joint appointment in African-American studies, was recognized for her contributions to anthropology and the history of race and race relations in the United States.

Spiegel and Smedley were among 486 individuals honored by the AAAS on the basis of their scientifically or socially distinguished efforts to advance science and its applications.

The new fellows, announced in the Dec. 19 issue of the journal *Science*, will be recognized in February during the AAAS annual meeting in Chicago.

*Brief by the Richmond Times-Dispatch*

the  
ct

817 W. Broad St., P.O. Box 842010  
Richmond, VA 23284-2010

MATT DOYON, Executive Editor  
editor@commonwealthtimes.com,  
828-6516

RICH GRISET, Managing Editor  
managing@commonwealthtimes.com,  
828-6516

CATHERINE MACDONALD  
News Editor  
news@commonwealthtimes.com,  
828-6056

JEROME FOSTER, Sports Editor  
TAYLOR HOWSMON,  
Associate Sports Editor  
sports@commonwealthtimes.com,  
828-2420

ROBERTO CURTIS, Spectrum Editor  
VERONICA GARABELLI,  
Associate Spectrum Editor  
spectrum@commonwealthtimes.com,  
828-5317

SARAH SONIES, Opinion Editor  
opinion@commonwealthtimes.com,  
828-7108

VACANT, Copy Editor

NATALIE ALLEN, Photography Editor  
photo@commonwealthtimes.com,  
828-4770

MARY FRANKE, Production Manager  
production@commonwealthtimes.com,  
828-7660

MELISSA TABLANTE, Graphic Designer  
graphics@commonwealthtimes.com,  
828-4770

GREG WEATHERFORD,  
Student Media Director  
gowweatherfor@vcu.edu, 827-1975

LAUREN GEERDES, Business Manager  
827-1642

VERONICA BLACK, Accounts Manager  
ctaccounts@gmail.com, 828-2544

ADAM GARDNER, Advertising Director  
ctadvertising@gmail.com, 828-5019

CHRISTINA DICK,  
Advertising Representative  
ctadvertising@gmail.com, 828-6629

RUCHI SHAH, Webmaster  
webmaster@commonwealthtimes.com

ANDREW BAINS, Circulation Director

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.





# Ink Magazine releases first issue

CATHERINE MACDONALD  
*News Editor*

For the staffers at Ink Magazine, the new year brings a sense of optimism and a drive to solidify themselves as a publication.

The magazine is a student-run publication that works within the Student Media Center.

“Out of the ashes of The Vine and Monument Ink,” as stated on the magazine’s Facebook group, Ink Magazine published its first issue this past December. This semester, the staff plans to publish three new issues.

Executive Editor Rich Grisct said he was disappointed the magazine did not meet its goal of publishing two issues last semester, but the problems they faced should not come up again.

"We had some red-tape problems," Griset said. "It took us a while to get the name changed ... and then making sure our funding was all together."

Pippa Curran, a former English major who no longer attends VCU, was a staff writer for the magazine last semester and said Griset handled the hurdles well.

"I was disappointed (the magazine did not meet its publishing goal). I think everybody was," Curran said.

Another problem the magazine dealt with after publication was copy-editing mistakes.

“(It’s) late at night and you’ve looked over something so many times that you can’t give it your best editing eyes,” Griset said.

Mass communications major Frances Correa, the magazine's senior reporter, said the typos were not a significant problem.

"There were some typos," Correa said. "But isn't that sort of the natural thing when something is printed, you want to go back and change everything?"

Correa said the lack of multiple issues last semester would strengthen the magazine this semester.

"We had everything we needed," Correa said. "But now we have enough material and all the funding and all the things we need to get three issues out."

Correa and Griset agreed that a larger staff would also bolster the quality of the publication.

"We're bringing in more photographers and illustrators and ... people to help out with layout," Griset said. "I just know a lot of people. I'm not the smartest guy in the room, but you know who they are and I bring them in."

Curran said, “The first issue looks awesome. It’s going to be really exciting to see how the future issues turn out.”

The second issue is scheduled to be released Feb. 4.





## Virtual Bathroom Walls

IVA RADMAN, ALONNA ARTIS  
*Contributing Writers*

To some students, JuicyCampus.com is a Web site that provides entertainment by allowing users to speak freely on a public forum. To others, it's a way to damage reputations.

The Web site was created in August 2007 by Mark Ivester, a Duke University alumnus. By March 2008, there were 59 different campuses with their own rumors and gossip. More recently, VCU was added to the site as it increased to more than 500 campuses nationwide.

Anyone can post and read content on the site

without providing personal information. Under Juicy Campus' terms and conditions, users agree not to post anything "unlawful, threatening, abusive, tortuous, defamatory, obscene, libelous, or invasive of another's privacy."

Psychology major Tom Wooldridge was mentioned in one of VCU's most recent roasts. A thread about Wooldridge was posted about two months ago stating he was one of the university's creepiest guys on campus.

"I laughed when my friends told me about it," Wooldridge said. "I heard the Web site was about Greeks. It's just a dumb hater Web site."

Keywords such as "STDs" and "freshmen" make searching for gossip on Juicy Campus very user-friendly.

Fraternities and sororities have been one of the main topics on Juicy Campus. There are multiple postings containing rumors and hearsay about VCU's Greek life.

Even some alumni are being targeted. Tommy Arnall, a 2007 VCU alumnus and member of Pi Lambda Phi Fraternity, had several threads written about him on the site. He said he was shocked when he heard he was on Juicy Campus.

"I'm not even in college anymore," Arnall

said. "(The site) is basically Greeks hating on Greeks."

Juicy Campus and similar Web sites are protected under Communications Decency Act of 1996. As passed by Congress, operators of Internet services are not to be construed as publishers, and thus not legally liable for the words of third parties who use their services.

If an individual wanted to file a civil lawsuit against an anonymous individual, a judge can issue a subpoena. Juicy Campus says it will respond to any "lawful subpoena," revealing a poster's IP address.

Tanisha Carter, 22, says she does not search or comment on the Web site but she does browse the homepage for VCU.

"I don't check it often because I don't know the people on it, but it's funny to read," Carter said. "I know one person that's on there, and what they wrote was pretty mean."

Mass communications major Kelsey Mejia says no good can come of this Web site.

"The site allows people to write things they would never say to a person's face," Mejia said. "It lets them feel brave on the Internet but it really just brings out the cowardice in people."

# OUTDOOR ADVENTURE

## JANUARY & FEBRUARY OUTDOOR ADVENTURE TRIPS



- WINTER BREAK SKI TRIP: **JAN 4-10**
- KAYAK ROLL CLINIC: **JAN 20**
- EVENING CLIMB AT PEAK EXPERIENCES: **JAN 29**
- CROSS COUNTRY SKING ON THE BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY: **JAN 31**
- KAYAK ROLL CLINIC: **FEB 3**
- EVENING CLIMB AT PEAK EXPERIENCES: **FEB 12**
- WEEKEND OF CAVES: **FEB 13-15**
- KAYAK PRACTICE (POOL SESSION): **FEB 17**
- EVENING CLIMB AT PEAK EXPERIENCES: **FEB 26**
- DAY DOWNHILL SKIING: **FEB 28**

**WWW.RECSPORTS.VCU.EDU | QUESTIONS? CALL 828.6004**

**VCU Recreational Sports**

Division of Student Affairs & Enrollment Services

**VCU is an AA/EOE institution.**

**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**







# sports

MEN'S BASKETBALL

## Rams finish off big week, beat Hofstra

TAYLOR HOWSMON

*Associate Sports Editor*

It has been an interesting week for the VCU men's basketball team. After a surprising loss at Delaware Jan. 3, the Rams have stormed back into the CAA picture after winning three in a row, and winning those games by an average of 22 points.

The third and final victory came on Saturday as VCU (11-5, 4-1) pulled away from Hofstra, winning 68-60.

"I'm very proud of our guys the way we responded in the course of this week. A week ago we needed to understand who we were as a basketball team ... and I'm very happy with the way these guys have responded," coach Anthony Grant said, after the win.

Senior Eric Maynor (Raeford, N.C./Westover) once again did what he has been able to do all season. The leading scorer in the conference scored 21 points and passed Gerald Henderson for ninth on the VCU all-time scoring list.

The two teams were even for most of the way. The Rams took a one point lead into halftime as Maynor hit a jumper at the buzzer.

VCU began to pull away with an 8-0 run at the 6:04 mark in the second half. This run pushed the VCU lead to 52-40, their largest of the afternoon.

Sophomore Larry Sanders (Fort Pierce, Fla./Port St. Lucie) continued his trend of strong performances in the week. Sanders finished the game with 16 points, and a game-high 13 rebounds.

Sophomore Joey Rodriguez (Oviedo, Fla./Lake Howell) and junior Krill Pishchalnikov (Maykop, Russia/MGGTK AGU) each added 10 points.

The Rams shot 40 percent from the field and were 23 of 32 from the free-throw line.

Defensively, the Rams held a physical Pride team to its third lowest point total of the season; and held Charles Jenkins, the CAA's third top scorer under his average (17.1 ppg).

Jenkins poured in 15 to lead the Hofstra scoring, and the Pride also got 10 from Greg Johnson.

"If we defend and rebound, we're going to have a chance every night. That's where we hang our hat and that allows us to be successful," Grant said.

With the win, the Rams are now sole possessors of second place in the CAA behind 5-0 Northeastern and George Mason.

The Rams will hit the road again, playing at Towson on Wednesday night. They will return to the Siegel Center on Saturday to take on their long time rival Old Dominion.



THE SCORE

VCU 68

HOFSTRA 60

### By the numbers:

**Hofstra (10-6, 2-3):** Washington 4, D Johnson 8, G. Johnson 10, Jenkins 15, Vines 6, Lester 8, Szabo 5, Dennison 4 Totals: 22 11-14 60 3-pointers: Lester 2, Szabo, Jenkins, Vines

**VCU (11-5, 4-1):** Sanders 16, Pishchalnikov 10, Maynor 21, Rodriguez 10, Burgess 2, Rozzell 5, Nixon 4 Totals: 22 23-32 68 3-pointers: Rozzell

## This week

### MEN'S BASKETBALL

Wed., Jan. 14 @ Towson,  
Towson, Md., 7 p.m.

Sat., Jan. 17 vs. Old Dominion,  
Siegel Center, 4 p.m.

### WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Thu., Jan. 15 vs. George Mason,  
Siegel Center, 7 p.m.

Sun., Jan. 18 vs. Delaware,  
Siegel Center, 2 p.m.

### MEN'S TRACK AND FIELD

Sat., Jan. 17 @ Terrapin  
Invitational, Prince George, Md.,  
all day

### WOMEN'S TRACK AND FIELD

Sat., Jan. 17 @ Navy Invitational,  
Annapolis, Md., all day

### MEN'S TENNIS

Jan. 16-18, VCU 4x1 Invitational,  
Thalhimer Tennis Center, all day





# Sports Briefs

## MEN'S BASKETBALL

VCU (11-5, 4-1) was 7-2 over the holiday break, with wins over Western Michigan, William and Mary, Richmond, Akron, Hampton, UNC Wilmington and Drexel.

VCU kicked off the holiday with a 79-62 win over Western Michigan at the Siegel Center. Senior Eric Maynor (Raeford, N.C./Westover) scored 29 points and had 8 assists. Sophomore Joey Rodriguez (Oviedo, Fla./Lake Howell) and junior Kirill Pishchalnikov (Maykop, Russia/MGGTK AGU) scored 17 and 15, respectively. Two days later, the Rams opened the conference schedule with a 66-50 victory over William and Mary, avenging last year's loss in the second round of the CAA tournament. Following their first conference win of the season, VCU recorded a 77-76 win at Richmond in the Black and Blue Classic, and a 73-69 home victory over Akron. On Dec. 20, VCU headed to Oklahoma City to face then fourth-ranked Oklahoma. Thanks to red-hot shooting the Sooners were able to down the Rams, 81-70. After the loss to Oklahoma, the Rams closed out 2008 with a 59-54 win over the Hampton Pirates at the Siegel Center. Unfortunately, 2009 would not start well for the Rams. In their second conference game of the season, they were upset by the Delaware Blue Hens, 81-79. After the disappointing loss the Rams returned to the hardwood with a flourish. It began with an 88-59 trouncing of UNC Wilmington and then a 75-46 win at Drexel. Maynor is averaging 22.0 points per game to lead the CAA. The Rams next game is Wednesday at Towson.

## WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Over the break, the women's basketball team went 7-1. On Dec. 7, the Rams beat Georgetown 71-61. In the game Kita Waller (Gainesville, Ga./Gainesville) scored 15 points and grabbed eight rebounds. On Dec. 15, the Rams beat Morgan State 71-43. Radoslava Bachvarova (Varna, Bulgaria/Daytona Beach C.C.) led all Rams with 20 points. On Dec. 19, VCU beat Radford 74-51. Quanitra Hollingsworth (Chesapeake/Great Bridge) and Waller combined for 41 points. Hollingsworth scored 21 points while Waller added 20. In a 80-44 victory over North Carolina Central on Dec. 21, Hollingsworth and D'Andra Moss (Atlanta/Norcross) tallied double-doubles. Hollingsworth had 19 points and 13 rebounds while Moss scored 15 points and grabbed 12 rebounds. On Dec. 28, the Rams beat Longwood 79-49. In the victory, Waller, Bachvarova, La'Tavia Rorie (Charlotte, N.C./Harding University HS) and Jessica Taylor (Northumberland/Woodbridge) all scored 10 points. On Dec. 30, the Rams squeaked by American, 67-63. Hollingsworth tallied another double-double, scoring 14 points and grabbing 14 rebounds. Rorie led all Rams with 17 points. The Rams lost their first game of the new year in a 69-68 loss at Old Dominion on Jan. 5. Hollingsworth led the Rams in points and rebounds as she scored 18 points and grabbed 10 rebounds in the loss. On Jan. 8, the Rams defeated George Mason 67-43. Rorie scored a game-high 17 points. The Rams next play at James Madison on Thursday.

## BASEBALL

Over the break, the baseball team landed five players during the early signing period. Pitchers Blake Hauser, Kyle Haynes, Ryan Farrar, Derrick

Raybon and infielder Nick Kime have committed to the Rams. Hauser, from Midlothian, batted .450 and earned four wins last season for Manchester. He also earned All-Metro Team, First Team All-District, First Team All-Region and Second Team All-State honors. Haynes, from Stafford, went 5-2 with a 2.07 ERA. Farrar, from Mechanicsville, won six games and posted a 1.13 ERA for Atlee High School. Raybon, from Cayce, S.C., won six games and recorded a save for his high school, USC Sumter. Kime, from Stafford, batted .355 while hitting 10 home runs for Mountain View High School.

## MEN'S SOCCER

Seniors Dirk Dittrich (Stuttgart, Germany/Quenstedt-Gymnasium) and Andrew Dykstra (Woodbridge/Osborn Park) earned spots on the NSCAA/Adidas Scholar All-East squad. Dittrich earned a place on the first team while Dykstra made the third team. Dittrich also was named to the NSCAA/Adidas All-South Atlantic Region Third Team.

## MEN'S TENNIS

Fourth-year assistant coach Romain Ambert won his third consecutive SMARTBOX Virginia State Indoor Championship at the Country Club of Virginia. Ambert defeated Carl Clark 6-0, 7-6 (7-4) to win the title and \$1,000.

## MEN'S TRACK AND FIELD

At the Navy Invitational on Dec. 5, Olympian Manuel Reynaert (Saint-Pol-sur-Mer, France) broke a 13-year old record in the 60-meter dash. The sophomore ran a 6.78, breaking the previous record of 6.82. Reynaert then followed that performance with a fourth-place showing in the 200-meter dash. Sophomore Brian Wallace (Portsmouth/I.C. Norcom) placed second in the long jump with a jump of 23-3 1/2 feet and triple jump with a jump of 46-2 feet. Sophomore Allan Moody (Woodbridge/Garfield) placed second in the high-jump with a jump of 6-3 3/4. Freshman Chris Kourlesis (Richmond/J.R. Tucker) placed third in the triple jump with a jump of 45-8 feet. The Rams are back in action on Saturday, Jan. 17 at the Terrapin Invitational.

## WOMEN'S TRACK AND FIELD

At the Christopher Newport Holiday Open on Dec. 6th, sophomore Quina Fortune (New Orleans, La./St. Mary's Academy) finished second in the 200 meters with a time of 25.28 seconds. Senior Vernice Johnson (Mineral/Louisa) finished third in the triple jump at 37-6 1/2 feet. Freshman Heather DelaCruz (Williamsburg/Lafayette) placed third in the 3,000 meters with a time of 11:05.78. Freshman Kristine Bethune (King George) finished the 600 meters in third place with a time of 1:46.41. Senior Natalie Duncan (Alexandria, West Potomac) set a personal best in the shot put with a toss of 42-5 1/20 feet, which earned her fourth place. The team competes again on Saturday, Jan. 17 at the Navy Invitational.



**WVCW NOW  
STREAMING  
ON ITUNES**

wvcw.org for info



*save me.  
recycle.*





# Once again, BCS title game solves nothing

JEROME FOSTER  
*Sports Editor*

After months of college football, I have the same question that I had before the season started: Who is the best team in the country? Fans of the Florida Gators will say they are and they have a 24-14 victory over the Oklahoma Sooners in the SCS title game to prove it. Fans of Southern Cal, Texas and Utah will argue their team is the best team in the country and they have strong arguments.

Southern Cal's fans argue that the Trojans were playing the best football at the end of the regular season. Their defense was dominating their opponents and the offense was heating up. Southern Cal's only loss was its Pac-10 opener at Oregon State. After that loss, the Trojans ran the table. They earned a trip to the Rose Bowl and smacked around the Penn State Nittany Lions, the Big Ten Champions.

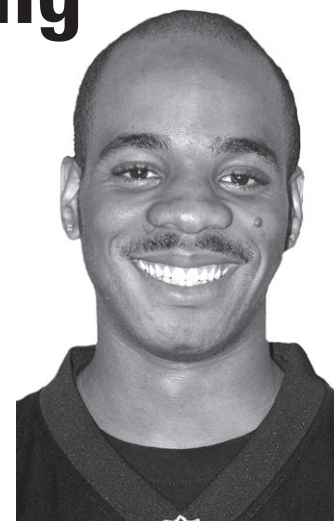
Texas' fans would argue that their team should have been in the title game to begin with. After all, they did beat the Sooners, 45-35 earlier this season. Despite the win over the Sooners, the Longhorns were left out of the Big 12 title game in favor of Oklahoma. Many people, myself included, did not think that the Sooners deserved the nod over the Longhorns. Longhorn fans would also argue that Texas had

the best loss out of the one-loss teams. Texas lost on the final play at Texas Tech, the seventh-ranked team in the country at the time.

Utah fans would argue that their Utes didn't lose one game this season. The Utes went 13-0 and won the Mountain West Conference, a conference that many people argued was better from top-to-bottom than the Atlantic Coast and Big Ten conferences. The Utes also beat Alabama and the Crimson Tide was ranked number one in the country for a good portion of the season.

Any way you slice it, the way the title game is decided not the way it should be. I am not sure who the best team in the country is. I personally believe its Southern Cal. Their defense could hold any offense in the country in check and I think the athletes they have on offense would score points on any defense. If Florida and Southern Cal played on a neutral field, I would take Southern Cal but would not I be surprised if the Gators won. I also can't say that Utah or Texas wouldn't beat the Trojans or the Gators.

The fact is, we need a playoff. There is no other way to put it. I know that there would still be teams that argue they were left out of the playoff but when four teams have a legitimate claim to the crown, there is something wrong. We won't see one for awhile but we need a playoff.



the  
**ROME**  
report

## Do you use a waterpipe (also known as a hookah or shisha) to smoke tobacco?

You may be eligible to earn \$175 in a research study. Men and women who smoke tobacco in a waterpipe and are between the ages of 18-50 are needed to participate in a research study that requires two 2-hour laboratory visits.

**CALL 827-3562**

Monday - Friday, 8am to 4pm  
For more detailed information about this and other studies for tobacco users

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



911 1/2 W. Grace St.  
Richmond, VA 23220  
TEL: (804) 355-1567  
FAX: (804) 257-9853

OPEN  
Mon-Fri 11-9  
& Sat 12-9

**Richmond's Finest  
Authentic Vietnamese Cuisine**

Come and experience "A TASTE OF THE FAR EAST" to enjoy Authentic Vietnamese Cuisine such as our famous Beef Noodle "PHO", Spring Rolls, Egg Rolls, and Grilled Vermicelli noodle. Not only that we also have "Stir fry Singapore style noodle" and Pad That, etc....

Our atmosphere is cozy along with authentic Vietnamese arts that will allow you to feel as if you are there and our servers are ready to provide you with the best service.



# spectrum



WEEKLY ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

## Acting without borders

### Grad student keeps busy here and abroad

ROBERTO CURTIS

*Spectrum Editor*

Joseph Carlson has been involved with Theatre VCU for the better part of the decade. Now entering his second semester as a graduate student majoring in acting and directing pedagogy, Carlson, 24, appears to be acting his way to the top of Richmond's theater community.

**The Commonwealth Times: Joe, you're a busy guy. Tell me about your big plans this semester.**

Joseph Carlson: Next weekend, Jan 22-25, I am performing in two plays as part of the New American Playwright's Festival at the Firehouse Theatre. Then, I'm headed to D.C. to work with the Synetic Theater. I'll be performing at the Rosslyn Spectrum, outside of Georgetown. I was cast in Lysistrata, which is being done in association with Georgetown University. It's a performance study—half students from Georgetown University and half professional actors. I'll be working with them and receiving professional research and internship credit as part of this adventure for my work towards my masters in acting and directing pedagogy, utilizing the methods of ritual poetic drama.

**CT: Why did you decide to stay at VCU for your graduate degree?**

JC: I stayed at VCU to study under Dr. Tawnya Pettiford-Wates who has her Ph.D. in methodology of actor training. She's the bestest. Her first year teaching was my first year as a student in the drama department.

**CT: Was the Shafer Alliance Laboratory Theatre around then?**

JC: S.A.L.T. came about my sophomore year when my dear friend, Tony Santiago, and I both shared our dreams and wishes of operating our own theater someday. He really took the initiative. Together with some grad students and undergraduate students at the time, we began the initial track of S.A.L.T. Over several years, it has been refined into this board of individuals who help facilitate student theater by selecting and promoting a season, aiding in the production of whatever shows are being worked on, and maintaining the space of the (Richard) Newdick Theater.

Students felt that the only real thing to do was act on the main stage at VCU, which is totally valid and helps develop your training as an actor. It's a bigger production and they stress operating under professional standards.

**CT: How have you seen S.A.L.T. change since its inception?**

JC: It's blossoming nicely. We have to turn down plays because we get so many proposals. Last fall, we had 15 productions and the "No Shame Variety Show" every other Friday night, which was always sold out. We'd also like to get some cameras in there to get it up on the Web. The works show a real high level of craftsmanship. It's hilarious and we get a great turnout.

**CT: Where do you want your acting to take you? New York? Los Angeles? Europe maybe?**

JC: My dream is to be able to travel doing theater and all its many incarnations. I've been fortunate to go to Belgrade and work in Eastern Europe with Dah Theatre. I got a whole new perspective on the role of the artist during times of crisis or war and what kinds of responsibilities they have to the community, their own country and the global community. The work I've been doing with The Conciliation Project ties in with that. We work to promote honest and open dialogue about the history of racism in order to repair its damaging legacy through active and challenging dramatic works. That ended up spawning six plays. "Uncle Tom: Deconstructed" – the flagship piece of the company was the first one and the series ended with the "Prison Industrial Complex," which was completed last year. "Uncle Tom: Deconstructed" was performed in the First Annual New Orleans Fringe Theater Festival and Alternate ROOTS Annual Meeting in North Carolina. We've been invited back for an encore performance in April and for the festival in November.

**CT: How do you like living in Richmond and how has it prepared you to establish yourself as an actor here and abroad?**

JC: Richmond is a really thriving, burgeoning community for artists of all mediums and disciplines. Theater is not as widely respected here as other art forms and I'd like to see that change. I'd like to see theatrical artists have more of an important role in the community at-large



Roberto Curtis photo

through the works being done. I'm going to Africa for six months beginning in January 2010 to assist Dr. T at Durban University in South Africa as part of my thesis and to teach the process of ritual poetic drama. I need to go because it's the root of all civilization and the origin of theater. Being someone who comes from several different forms of immigrants, my own history and legacy is non-existent—I don't know where my roots are. I would love to be a traveling vagabond, going on tour, taking crazy theatrical pieces that challenge the audience as well as the ensemble, starting dialogue about whatever themes you're dealing with ... exploring the beautiful and grotesque aspects of all humanity. I love the big questions.

**CT: How many companies are you involved with right now?**

JC: In Richmond, I've worked with the Firehouse Theatre and Richmond Shakespeare. I received a nomination for best actor in a supporting role. I did the fight choreography and played about seven different roles in "Henry IV" in Richmond Shakespeare. I played Laertes in "Hamlet." I've worked down at Sycamore Rouge in Petersburg with the Conciliation Project. I've worked with Theatre of the Streets. We created a play called "Spades: A Book with No Cover," about dealing with the homeless population and the problems inherent therein. It came from hearing

Carlson continued to CT9

Monday, January 12, 2009

CT8 · commonwealthtimes.com · spectrum





# Cuppa more, please

## Teahouse provides cheap eats and charm

VERONICA GARABELLI  
*Associate Spectrum Editor*

Fine china and Victorian décor encompassed the charm of Southern Virginia as I walked into Cuppa Tea Company—a tearoom located on Main and Morris Streets. A lovely alternative to a run-of-the-mill Richmond coffee shop, my sister and I found ourselves savoring delectable desserts and sipping aromatic tea on a rainy Friday afternoon. The relaxing warm ambience was the perfect shelter from the dreary weather.

Though visitors are asked to make reservations, we were lucky enough to call a mere five minutes prior to arriving and have owner Allen Wagner personally accommodate us. Escorted to the main dining area, we sat down by the window on intricately decorated chairs, surrounding a wooden coffee table with an abundant supply of magazines neatly placed on the bottom shelf.

After contemplating what to order, we finally decided on our own personal pots of teas (about three cups each). The price of \$4.50 for a small pot of tea was reasonable, and worth it to be served on a beautiful pink pot with adorning flowers. The spicy chai tea I ordered proved to be a delicate blend of spices, complimented with the slightest bit of sugar.

Alongside our tea, we ate a moist croissant with Nutella in the middle, topped with the right amount of honey as well as a chocolate mousse cake that (as an avid chocolate lover) got my nod of approval.

The best part of stepping into this beautiful tearoom was the privacy that we were afforded, allowing for some much needed catching up and constant chatter. Unlike most corporate restaurants, we were not being interrupted every five minutes asking how we were doing—a courtesy that was much appreciated by visitors like us who were just looking for calm, luxurious surroundings, a savory snack and some therapeutic tea. This undoubtedly unique experience came to a total of \$20 for two people, including tip—a low price to pay for such a delightful afternoon.

Grade: A+

## CD/DVD REVIEW



John Abbott photos

# McCoy Tyner: 70 and kickin'

ROBERTO CURTIS  
*Spectrum Editor*

Legendary jazz pianist and composer McCoy Tyner released his 82nd album as a bandleader last month. Titled “Guitars,” the album teems with unparalleled talent and ingenuity.

Backed up by the monumental rhythm section of Ron Carter on bass and Jack DeJohnette on drums, one would think the personnel couldn't get any better—think again.

Each track features the heady shredding of master guitarists, Marc Ribot, John Scofield, Derek Trucks, Bill Frisell or banjoist Bela Fleck.

The album runs the gamut of emotions; from the joyful shuffle “Blues on the Corner” featuring John Scofield, to the angular violence of “Improvisation 2” featuring Marc Ribot.

Tyner harkens back to his days with the legendary John Coltrane Quartet by playing a superbly dreamy version of “My Favorite Things,” which the

saxophonist helped to popularize and Coltrane's “Mr. P.C.” on which Scofield simply slays with his thoughtful, melodic lines.

Tyner, who rarely brings in guitars for his studio albums, does well to diversify with five very different types of players. While all are undoubted masters, Frisell's playing on “Boubacar” shows a nearly divine understanding of how to make a guitar gently weep.

As if the music wasn't enough, the album is neatly bundled with an accompanying DVD complete with multiple angles, dialogue and outtakes.

Tyner's thunderous arpeggios and witty solos are abundant throughout the album, reassuring considering his age. Having already surpassed his age in albums, Tyner has certainly commanded a lifetime of respect in the jazz world.

Grade: A+  
Download (don't steal):  
“Contemplation” by McCoy Tyner.

## Carlson continued from CT8

stories about people who were homeless and how organizations in Richmond like the Daily Planet are helping them get back on their feet. It was fascinating to see the progress of people who had never been on stage. It was performed at the Kennedy Center and opened up a lot of dialogue about homelessness and showing the human side of it. I think when we see one another, we just see each other at face value and forget that there's a whole history that has brought that person here. It's fascinating to learn that history and what has gotten them to that point. You see that it could happen to anyone.

**CT:** Do you have any idea what your thesis will be?

JC: (laughs) It still has to be locked down at some point, but it has something to do with the ritual poetic drama within the African continuum—community and ensemble building. I'm very interested in the actor's role as a citizen of the community. Back in Ancient Greece, it was a civic duty to go to the theater. Every Greek city had a gymnasium, an amphitheater and a center of commerce for thousands of people. Aristotle's poetics talked about how theater and tragedy taught citizens about their role in society. If you engage in that process, in building an ensemble in the community, you learn how to be a member of it. Actors learn to empathize without judgment. I can step into someone else's shoes and can walk a little and see what it's like in that perspective, thus changing your own perspective and the way you look at people and yourself. If we can all learn to be a little more empathetic, we might have a little more beauty in the community.

*Each week, the Spectrum Section selects a talented student from the School of the Arts (music, dance, theater and visual) and showcases his or her achievements both in and around the VCU community. Do you want your name and work in the CT? E-mail [spectrum@commonwealthtimes.com](mailto:spectrum@commonwealthtimes.com) for consideration.*

# comics

xkcd

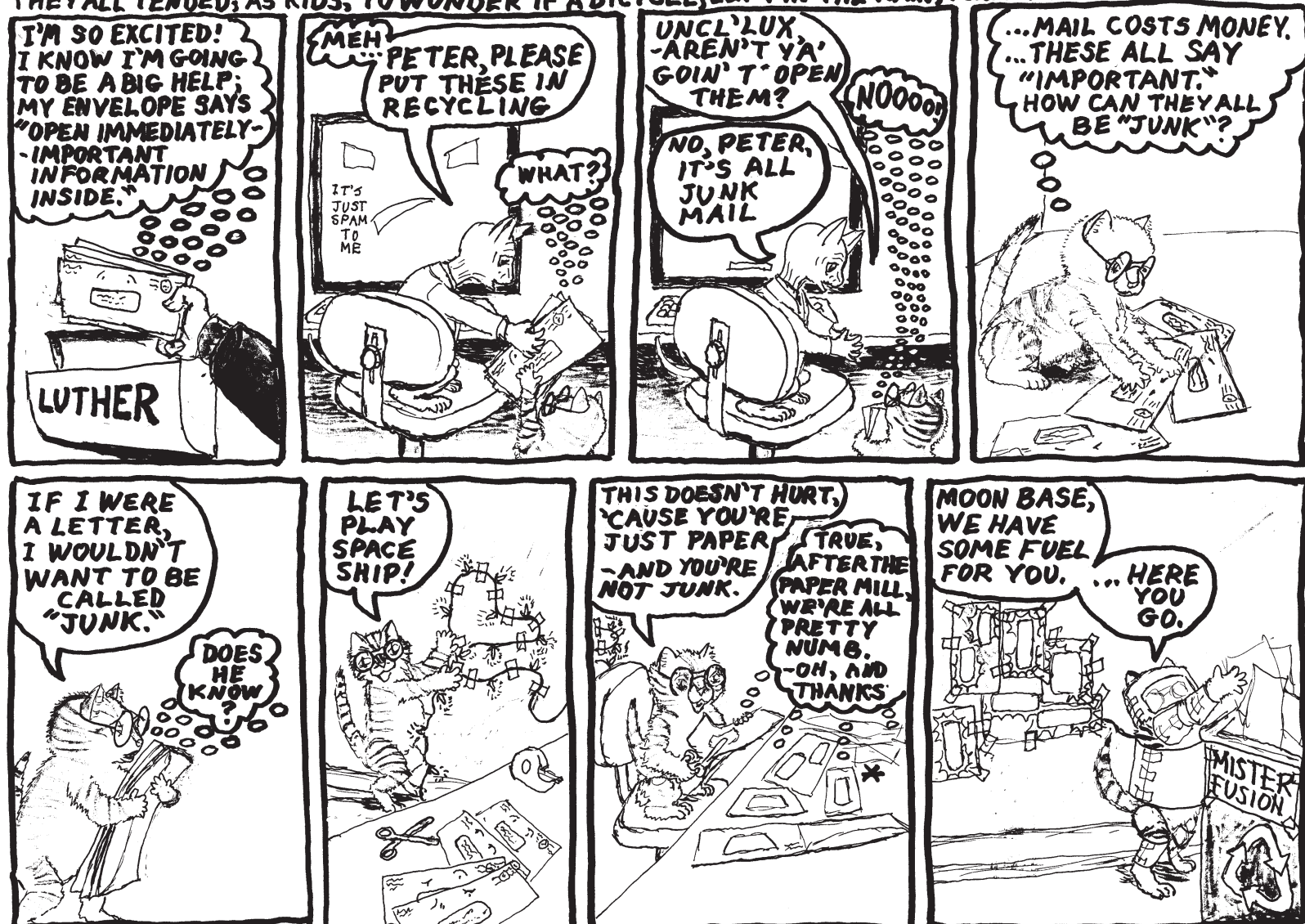
Randall Munroe



Pizza from Scratch

Bill Lemmond

I HEARD, ON NPR, AN ANIMATOR SAY THAT WHEN HE GOT TO ANIMATION SCHOOL, HE FOUND OUT THEY ALL TENDED, AS KIDS, TO WONDER IF A BICYCLE, LEFT IN THE RAIN, FELT WET.



\* I DON'T KNOW IF ANYONE ELSE BOTHERS, BUT LOCAL RECYCLING USED TO ASK FOR US TO REMOVE THE ADDRESS WINDOW CELLOPHANE.

10-11 JAN 2009





# opinion

## Israel answers **violence with violence**



**Israeli Defense Forces during basic training and at Mt. Herzl, a national cemetery in Jerusalem.**

Sarah Sonies photo

**SARAH SONIES**

*Opinion Editor*

With the amount of missiles and gunfire hitting Israel and the Gaza Strip over the past month, it is hard to imagine why anyone would voluntarily take a trip there. However, most of Israel is a beautiful landscape far from war-torn, but seeing the country in person only makes it slightly easier to understand the endless territorial fighting.

According to CNN.com, Israel hit more than 50 targets in Gaza Thursday despite the United Nations' orders to cease fire. Hamas firing missiles in Southern Israel was responsible for Israel's Jan. 5 invasion of Gaza. Hamas' firing of the missiles was also a result of the end of a peace treaty with Israel. The argument could be made that Hamas started firing the missiles because Israel has been establishing settlements along Gaza. However, the setting up of settlements should not be a cause for violence.

It is now a common belief that there should be a two-state compromise between Israel and Palestine but that belief seems to be an almost unattainable dream because the fighting never seems to end. It should be easier to be able to come to some sort of compromise—but spend more than three days in Israel, with Israelis, and it can become a little more clear on why there has been no lasting peace.

In both Israel and Gaza, there are two sets of people who dearly love the land they came from and are willing to fight for it. Both sides believe they are completely justified in the violence. While there are people who can represent the issue from all sides of the situation, not enough people are willing to sacrifice enough for a lasting peace to be achieved. While violence in the name of religion is far from a new concept, it is more destructive now than it ever was before because Israel has much more to lose.

Israel has been fighting in Gaza for about two weeks and the destruction has reached a mind-blowing level. When

Israel invaded Gaza, there were protests from all over the world. However, if your homeland was being continuously fired at, despite a previous cease-fire, wouldn't you be inclined to fight back?

According to the Washington Post, Israel will stop the offensive on Gaza when Hamas stops firing missiles into Southern Israel. That is really all that should happen; Hamas should not have fired at Israel in the first place. While there have been more Palestinians killed thus far than Israelis, Israel invaded because of Hamas' unwillingness to stop the firing of missiles.

For everyone who is surprised that Israel invaded, be more surprised that it didn't happen sooner. Peace will never be an option if treaties and cease-fires cannot be honored. It should be clear that Israel invaded to get a point across and to stop the violence of Hamas.

It is very sad that violence was answered with violence, but the bottom line is that rockets were being fired into Israel on a daily basis. Israel should not have been expected simply to do nothing. However, according to The New York Times, the death toll in Gaza is at more than 820 in the last few weeks, with half of the dead being civilians. The violence will need to stop at some point and Israel should stop sooner rather than later—although if Israel stops, Hamas should stop as well.

The best thing to hope for is that a compromise and a cease-fire will be reached peacefully, with conditions that will be honored by both sides.

The New York Times stated that both Israel and Hamas rejected a United Nations Security Council resolution on Jan. 9 calling for a cease-fire. There has to be a point where the violence ends, because at the end of the day, the endless violence will have to stop. The longer Israel and Gaza keep fighting, the rockets will only become more powerful and the destruction of both Israel and Gaza will be irreparable. Only with a cease-fire will a two-state compromise ever be possible.

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](mailto: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.





# Better rates. Fewer fees.

- Free checking
- Free debit card, online banking and bill payer
- Great rates on savings and loans
- 9 area branches
- Hundreds of surcharge-free ATMs statewide and thousands nationwide
- 61 free ATMs at VACU and Wawa stores

Find out how you can save  
at Virginia Credit Union!



Ask about  
special discounts  
on car loans!



VIRGINIA CREDIT UNION

(804) 323-6800 • [www.vacu.org](http://www.vacu.org)

Virginia Credit Union is federally insured by the  
National Credit Union Administration.

## OUTDOOR ADVENTURE

### COSTA RICA



MAY 17<sup>TH</sup> THROUGH 26<sup>TH</sup>

8 DAYS AND 7 NIGHTS THROUGHOUT  
VARIOUS PARTS OF COSTA RICA.

SPEND YOUR TIME RAFTING, KAYAKING, HIKING,  
MOUNTAIN BIKING, EXPLORING THE RAINFOREST  
AND HANGING OUT ON THE BEACH!

PRICES INCLUDE FOOD & ACTIVITIES. AIRFARE NOT INCLUDED.  
STUDENTS: \$1200 | FACULTY/STAFF: \$1295 | +1/A/G: \$1395

QUESTIONS? CALL 828.6004  
[WWW.RECSPORTS.VCU.EDU](http://WWW.RECSPORTS.VCU.EDU)

**VCU Recreational  
sports**  
Division of Student Affairs & Enrollment Services

VCU is an AA/EOE institution.

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



celebrating the flavors of life.

**\$1.00 Tacos Every Monday Night!**

1328 West Cary Street Richmond, VA  
804.525.4216

## RESTAURANT