



the ct

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

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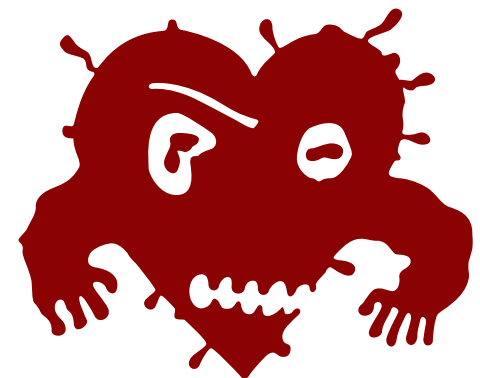
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commonwealthtimes.com



Power of love

**Play tackles
heartache,
conflict**

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free





briefs

Jake Cunningham
cover photo

Local and VCU

Richmond's unemployment rate jumps to 7.9 percent in February

The unemployment rate in the Richmond region rose to 7.9 percent on a seasonally unadjusted basis in February — more than double what it was a year ago and a whole percentage point higher than the 6.9 percent recorded for January.

In February 2008, Richmond area's unemployment rate stood at 3.7 percent, according to data released Wednesday by the Virginia Employment Commission.

Virginia's unemployment rate jumped to 7 percent on a seasonally unadjusted basis in February, up from 6.4 percent in January. It stood at 3.6 percent in February 2008.

Three of the state's 10 largest metropolitan areas — Danville, Winchester and Blacksburg-Christiansburg — had higher

unemployment than the Richmond area.

Brief by the Richmond Times-Dispatch

Gang leader faces sentencing today in Petersburg

The leader of a Bloods-affiliated gang is to be sentenced today in Petersburg Circuit Court.

Kalvin B. Kelley, 22, faces up to 25 years in prison.

Authorities say Kelley tried to arrange a gangland-style hit last April on the Petersburg police detective who had him arrested. Police said Kelley tapped two juvenile-age gang members to kill the detective, promising them \$7,000 up front and \$3,000 more after the hit.

Kelley was a so-called five-star general in the G-Shyne gang, a subset of the Bloods in New York.

Brief by the Richmond Times-Dispatch

Hanover warns of fraudulent fundraising calls

The Hanover County Sheriff's Office is warning of someone making fraudulent telephone calls soliciting donations for a bulletproof vest fund.

Col. V. Stuart Cook, the county's sheriff, said the office has not authorized anyone to collect donations on its behalf for such a fund.

"It is unfortunate that criminals manipulate the values of our citizens for monetary gain," Cook said. "While there may be legitimate organizations soliciting by phone, it has become necessary, and is my recommendation that our citizens provide no financial information or support over the phone in any case."

Brief by the Richmond Times-Dispatch

National and International

G-20 protesters break into Royal Bank of Scotland

G-20 protesters clashed with riot police in downtown London on Wednesday, breaking into the heavily guarded Royal Bank of Scotland and smashing its windows. Earlier, they tried to storm the Bank of England and pelted police with eggs and fruit.

At least 4,000 anarchists, anti-capitalists, environmentalists and others jammed into London's financial district for what they called "Financial Fool's Day." The protests were called ahead of Thursday's summit of world leaders, who hope to take concrete steps to resolve the global financial crisis that has lashed nations and workers worldwide.

Some protesters spray-painted the side of the RBS building with the phrases "class war" and "thieves." Others pushed against columns of riot police who swatted them away with batons.

Demonstrators shouted "Abolish money!" and clogged streets in the area known as "The City" even as Prime Minister Gordon Brown and President Barack Obama held a news conference elsewhere in the British capital.

At least eight people were arrested but there were no serious injuries reported.

Brief by The Associated Press

Suspected US missile kills 12 militants in Pakistan

A suspected U.S. drone fired two missiles Wednesday at an alleged hide-out connected to a Taliban leader who has threatened to attack Washington, killing 12 people and wounding several others, officials said.

The attack came a day after Pakistani Taliban leader Baitullah Mehsud claimed responsibility for a deadly attack on a police academy in the eastern city of Lahore, saying it was retaliation for U.S. missile strikes on militant strongholds along the Afghan border.

A local intelligence official told The Associated Press that the compound attacked Wednesday in a remote area of the Orakzai tribal region near the Afghan border belonged to one of Mehsud's commanders.

The strike is believed to be the first in Orakzai, another sign the United States

is expanding its attack zone.

Brief by The Associated Press

Republicans propose big tax cuts, spending curbs

Republicans in the House are pushing an alternative budget plan that would cut income tax rates and radically overhaul the Medicare program providing health care to the elderly.

The plan unveiled Wednesday by Wisconsin GOP Rep. Paul Ryan also freezes overall spending on domestic programs and repeals most of the spending in President Barack Obama's recently passed economic stimulus bill.

Despite the spending reductions, the plan projects permanent deficits exceeding \$500 billion into the future, fueled largely by big tax cuts.

The GOP plan would offer couples the option of a 10 percent rate on the first \$100,000 of income, with a 25 percent rate thereafter. On Medicare, workers under the age of 55 would receive premium subsidies equal to the average Medicare benefit when they retire.

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

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news

Scholarship funds don't make cents for VCU students

STACEY R. HAMMAN
Capital News Service

For students in VCU's Honors College who want to broaden their horizons next year, there are fewer choices on the table next year.

Honors students who rely on scholarship money to fund study-abroad experiences will be doing without, as will many students who rely on Honors College scholarship money in any capacity.

This year, students are feeling the effects of the national economic recession on their study plans. VCU international relations senior Madison Landa planned to travel to South Africa for the spring semester but the costs were too much to bear.

Landa said while her half-tuition dean's scholarship did not apply to that specific program, she saw two \$500 scholarships she would have applied for suspended because of a lack of funds.

These scholarships were the Volkmar Risch Memorial Scholarship for German majors, which

Landa, a German minor, won the previous year, and the Honors College study abroad scholarship, which has been suspended indefinitely.

"There will be virtually no distributions this year due to the dramatic declines in the stock market," said Jeff Wing, the national scholarship coordinator for the Honors College.

Landa found out about the Honors scholarship after deciding alternatively to travel to Vienna, Austria, this summer.

"I heard about the scholarships online and each time I went to advising, I was encouraged to sign up for them," Landa stated in an e-mail. "I assume the cuts are fairly recent, as they were still encouraging me to apply for them the end of last semester."

Glenda Bernhardt, the Honors College coordinator of recruitment and admissions, said the scholarship information no longer exists on the Web site.

"(We) are communicating this to anyone who asks about the scholarship," Bernhardt stated in an e-mail.

Wing said the dean of the Honors College, Timothy Hulsey, and the other staff members are committed to raising additional funds to allow the college to resume its study abroad program.

"That will undoubtedly take time given the current market situation," Wing said.

According to Wing, most of the college's scholarships are based on an endowment system, which maintains the base fund is left alone and scholarships are funded only by the interest earnings.

The Honors College staff is working to stretch any remaining interest funds into the 2009-2010 academic year.

"We have some money that was carried forward from previous years, so we will be able to make a few awards," Wing stated in an e-mail. "We are also in the process of contacting the donors to see if they would potentially make one-time contributions this year."

FUNDS continued to CT4

Hell Block cleanup this Saturday

FRANCES CORREA
News Co-Editor



Participants pose in front of collected trash during Green Unity's Hell Block cleanup March 21.

Photo courtesy of Green Unity

Green Unity for VCU is hosting a cleanup on the 1100 block of West Grace Street, commonly known as Hell Block, this Saturday at 2 p.m. This will be the last cleanup scheduled for this school year. Will Isenberg the president of Green Unity, said he expects about 40 people to attend.

While many people sit on their porches and watch the cleanup, Isenberg said many times people see them working and decide to stop and help.

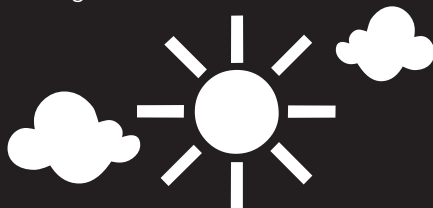
"It's really just a fun time," Isenberg said.

Nearly 42 people, including the VCU women's soccer team, attended the last Hell Block cleanup on March 21. The group collected 25 bags of trash. Seven of the bags were taken to recycling. The women's soccer team is expected to attend again

CLEANUP continued to CT4

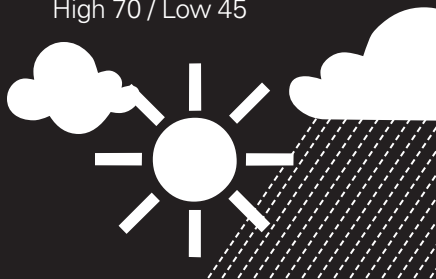
Thursday

Mostly cloudy with
a chance of rain
High 65 / Low 45



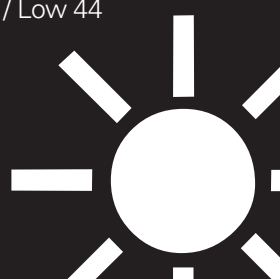
Friday

Mostly cloudy, rain likely
High 70 / Low 45



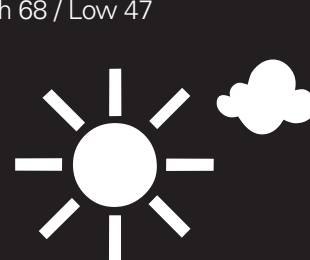
Saturday

Sunny
High 70 / Low 44



Sunday

Mostly sunny
High 68 / Low 47



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FUNDS continued from CT3

Wing stated that any contributions that come in would serve as partial scholarships for Honors students for next year, but bringing in donations still will be more difficult than in the past.

"We know that the donors have all suffered from the same drop in the stock market that our endowed funds have suffered," Wing said.

Reductions in the Honors College budget reflect the larger picture for VCU, which faces a \$30 million cut in general funds next year, according to VCU's Assistant Vice President for Finance Pam Currey.

Currey said VCU would have to deal with this budget reduction on top of a \$10 million budget cut – 5 percent of the budget – announced this past October and instituted in February.

Currey said the administration divided the cuts among each of VCU's major budget units. According to Bernhardt, the Honors College has made all of the requested budget reductions.

"These cuts have resulted in us needing to make some hard choices about programming and our curriculum, but we've been able to continue most of our initiatives," Bernhardt said.

CLEANUP continued from CT3

this weekend.

This is the fourth Hell Block cleanup the group has done, the minimum amount needed to adopt a block. After the fourth cleanup and official adoption of the block, the Clean City Commission would provide an Adopt-A-Block sign.

According to Isenberg, Green Unity plans to coordinate twice as many cleanups next year. Next semester, the group will choose another block to work on. Isenberg said the group is considering a block on Cary or Harrison streets.

news

THE SKINNY

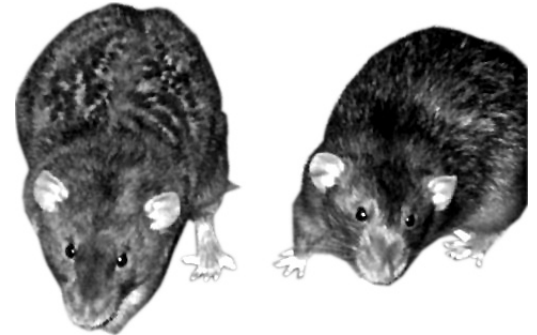


Photo illustration

Rodents battle out Final Four

JAY SCARBOROUGH
News Co-Editor

Watch out NCAA fans — March Madness has taken on new meaning in Richmond this year. The Science Museum of Virginia is having a rat basketball Final Four Thursday April 2.

According to an e-mail sent by Public Relations Manager Nancy Tait, the Science Museum's most experienced players are playing for one of the Final Four NCAA teams—Luna is playing for Michigan State, Venus is playing for Connecticut, Twitch for Villanova and Comet for North Carolina.

"Our rats have their own little court," says Coach and Gallery Education Assistant Director Laura Kramer. "They have a small ball which they learn to shoot through a hoop."

Fans may have a new way to predict winners in the NCAA tournament. Last year in the rat games Kansas beat Memphis, days later Kansas went on to actually beat Memphis.

COMMONWEALTH TIMES ELECTIONS

The Commonwealth Times now formally announces elections for the following positions:

- Executive Editor
- Managing Editor

Nominees may apply by filling out an application at 817 W. Broad St. All applications must be submitted by April 9th.

Requirements:

1. Must have completed MASC 300, MASC 303 and MASC 305, or demonstrate equivalent experience.
2. Must have served as managing editor, section editor, associate editor, copy editor or in The CT's business department for at least one semester or demonstrate equivalent experience.



sports



Final Four Preview

JEROME FOSTER

Sports Editor

The Final Four is almost upon us. In one semifinal, Connecticut takes on Michigan State. In the other, North Carolina plays Villanova. Who will advance to play in the championship game Monday night? The CT sports editor will let you know.

Game 1

Who: Connecticut Huskies vs. Michigan State Spartans

When: Saturday at 6:07 p.m.

Where: Ford Field in Detroit

Analysis: Connecticut has been known this season for interior defense with center Hasheem Thabeet anchoring the middle. However, the Huskies blew through the West Regional on the strength of their offense. UConn averaged 78.5 points per game during regular season but increased their scoring output to 87.3 points per game. During the tournament, guard A.J. Price has been the catalyst for the spark, averaging 20 points per game, conversely, the Spartans used great defense to win the Midwest Regional. The Spartans have not allowed a tournament opponent to reach 70 points. Michigan State held Louisville, the top overall seed to just 52 points. The Spartans are not as explosive offensively as the Huskies and will need to play great defense once again to advance. The key to the game will be the matchup between the Huskies' Thabeet and Spartans center Goran Suton. Suton hit many outside shots against Louisville. Suton needs to hit outside shots to draw Thabeet out of the lane and open it up for penetration by the Spartan guards. If Suton hits his outside shots, he will make it easier for Michigan State to pull the upset. The Spartans will also have home-court advantage playing in Detroit.

Pick: Connecticut. The Huskies are the better team. Suton will not be able to hit enough shots to pull Thabeet out of the lane, allowing Connecticut to pack the lane and forcing Michigan State to knock down perimeter shots.

Game 2

Who: North Carolina Tar Heels vs. Villanova Wildcats

When: Saturday at 8:47 p.m.

Where: Ford Field in Detroit

Analysis: North Carolina used a high-octane offense to blow through the South Regional. Guard Ty Lawson has been the most important part of North Carolina's offense. While Lawson is not 100 percent healthy because of a toe injury, he remains North Carolina's best player. Lawson is averaging 20.3 points and 6.7 assists per game during the tournament. The Tar Heels also have forward Tyler Hansbrough, who was named a First Team All-American team earlier this week. Villanova used great guard play to take the East Regional. The Wildcats have been led by guard Scottie Reynolds. Reynolds hit the game-winning shot in the Regional Final against Big East rival, Pittsburgh. Wildcats' forward Dante Cunningham has also played great in the tournament. The Wildcats need their backcourt to continue their great play. Villanova only has Cunningham down low. North Carolina counters with Hansbrough and forwards Deon Thompson and Ed Davis in the post. Villanova also needs to find a way to slow down Lawson. If Villanova cannot slow down Lawson, the Wildcats have no chance.

Pick: North Carolina. No team in the tournament has stopped Lawson, and Villanova will be no different. Lawson will control the game on the perimeter which will make it easier for the Tar Heels to dominate the post, where they already have the advantage.

THIS WEEK

BASEBALL

Fri., April 3, Hofstra, The Diamond, 7 p.m.

Sat., April 4, Hofstra, The Diamond, 2 p.m.

Sun., April 5, Hofstra, The Diamond, 1 p.m.

GOLF

April 4-5, @ Augusta Intercollegiate, Augusta, Ga., all day

MEN'S SOCCER

Fri., April 3, Campbell University (exhibition), Sports Backers Stadium, 8 p.m.

WOMEN'S SOCCER

Thu., April 2, University of Richmond (exhibition), Sports Backers Stadium, 7 p.m.

MEN'S TENNIS

Fri., April 3, Louisville, Thalhimer Tennis Center, 10 a.m.

Sun., April 5, South Florida, Thalhimer Tennis Center, 10 a.m.

WOMEN'S TENNIS

Fri., April 3, Louisville, Thalhimer Tennis Center, 2 p.m.

Sun., April 5, Georgia State, Thalhimer Tennis Center, 2 p.m.

MEN'S TRACK AND FIELD

April 3-4, @ Duke Invitational, Durham, N.C., all day

April 3-4, @ Colonial Relays, Williamsburg, all day

WOMEN'S TRACK AND FIELD

April 3-4, @ Colonial Relays, Williamsburg, all day





sports

Let the carousel spin

TAYLOR HOWSMON
Associate Sports Editor

The college basketball season hasn't even ended and the coaching carousel has already begun to turn.

The three most notable moves thus far are Memphis coach John Calipari to Kentucky, Washington State coach Tony Bennett to UVA and of course VCU's Anthony Grant to Alabama.

I find it funny that these three moves have come under such scrutiny from the various fan bases represented.

Let's start with coach Grant heading to Alabama.

Ram Nation saw the entire story of this one play out. But even though Grant was one of the top candidates in the country, Bama fans still found ground for a complaint.

There were articles published and fans calling into radio shows saying Bama "waited too long for Grant's decision" they also wanted their team to go after Missouri coach Mike Anderson and other various candidates.

This to me was ridiculous because Anthony Grant was a better candidate than Anderson, who led Missouri to the Elite Eight this year, but struggled in previous seasons.

But the time idea is the most absurd. Wow, it took Grant three whole days to decide he wanted to be your head coach. Really Bama fan? Can't wait

three days?

This "6-year-old at Christmas" mentality was not only laughable, but also down right moronic.

As for the Bennett/Calipari movement, the reasoning for the scrutiny was exactly the same: Both fan bases wanted someone else.

I sort of understand Kentucky. As my CT sports colleague Jerome Foster wrote in Monday's Rome Report, the Kentucky fan base is one of the most delusional and unrealistic groups in the country.

Kentucky actually thought they could lure Tom Izzo away from Michigan State. And when they didn't, they had to "settle" for a coach who led a Conference USA team to the nation's longest winning streak and the doorstep of national title a season ago. That's like saying, "I can't have one million dollars, so I'm going to have to settle for \$999,999."

Big Blue needs to get over themselves and realize they are not royalty anymore. No matter what happened in the 50s, present-day Kentucky is merely another program that wants to win, and isn't.

But once again the UVA fan base has proven that they deserve the award for the most unrealistic group in collegiate athletics.

When Washington State head coach Tony Bennett agreed to be the coach of UVA, the announcement was met with cries of, "Why didn't we get Jeff Capel or Tubby Smith?"

Let's think about this one for a second.

Why couldn't Virginia, a sub-par team from a great conference, get two of the top coaches in the country?

Why would anyone want that job?

Not only do you have to come face-to-face with a fan base that has high expectations even though Virginia has never won anything, but you also have to play Carolina and Duke every year.

Doesn't exactly sound like a dream job to me.

So no matter which fan base you belong to, remember one thing: Be happy with what you got, not obsessed with what you want.

Calipari will win at UK, Bennett will win at UVA and Grant will win at Bama. They are all very talented coaches who deserve their new jobs. I just wish irrational, unrealistic fan bases could understand that, but I am not optimistic.



a T.O.
with T.H.

BRIEFS

BASEBALL

Dropped the series finale against Western Kentucky, 12-8, this past Sunday. Freshman Taylor Perkins (Dinwiddie/Dinwiddie) and junior Nathan Furry (Salem/Salem) led the Rams with three hits, including his first homerun of the season. Furry hit his first homerun of the season. Perkins led the Rams with three RBI. The Rams dropped to 10-10 with loss. VCU starts a home series against Hofstra Friday at 7 p.m. at The Diamond.

MEN'S TENNIS

Fell to 11-8 with a 5-1 loss to SMU this past Sunday. Freshman Filip Svensson (Angelholm, Sweden) won his seventh singles match of the season, 6-2, 6-2. With the loss, VCU falls to 11-8. The Rams host Louisville Friday at 10 a.m. at the Thalhimer Tennis Center.

WOMEN'S TENNIS

Lost a close match to Boston University, 4-3, this past Sunday. Junior Olena Leonchuk (Kiev, Ukraine) posted her tenth-straight singles victory, 6-2, 6-1. Freshman Mihaela Bunea (Bucharest, Romainia) and junior Laura Burns (Hertford, England) both won their 18th match of the season. This past Monday, the Rams defeated William and Mary, 4-3. Leonchuk increased her winning streak to 11 singles victories in a row by winning 7-6 (4), 6-0. Burns and Alex Bara (Oradea, Romania) won their singles matches. VCU's record stands at 15-6. The Rams host Louisville at the Thalhimer Tennis Center at 2 p.m. on Friday.

Also...

Burns was named CAA Co-Player of the Week. Burns went 2-0 in her singles matches last week. On March 29, Burns defeated Boston University's Petra Santini, 6-3, 6-2. On March 31, Burns beat Klaudyna Kasztelaniec of William and Mary, 3-6, 6-2, 6-3.

MEN'S TRACK AND FIELD

Junior Piotr Dybas (Jaslo, Poland) secured a spot in the NCAA East Regionals by winning the 3000-meter steeplechase with a time of 8:57.16 at the Fred Hardy Invitational this past weekend. Dybas' time was 10 seconds faster than his personal best and the qualifying time for the regionals. Sophomore Antonio Norvell (Portsmouth/I.C. Norcom) won the 200-meter dash with a time of 21.90 and finished second in the 100-meter dash with a time of 10.94. Norvell also teamed with sophomore Brandon Allen (Trenton, N.J.), sophomore Allan Moody (Woodbridge/Garfield) and Kyle Jones to win the 4x100-meter relay with a time of 41.83. Norvell along with sophomore Donnie Seward (Richmond/Huguenot), junior DeAngelo Wilson (Richmond, Prince Edward County) and Brice Matthews to finish second in the 4x400-meter relay with a time of 3:19.91. Wilson and junior Jamal Blyden (Virginia Beach/Landstown) finished second and third in the 200-meter dash with times of 21.95 and 22.24, respectively. Allen took third in the 100-meter dash (11.08) and long jump (6.70 meters). Sophomore Brian Wallace (Portsmouth/I.C. Norcom) finished second in the triple jump with a jump of 14.28 meters.

VCU finds Grant's successor

JEROME FOSTER
Sports Editor

VCU will name former University of Florida assistant Shaka Smart as the new men's basketball head coach. A press conference has been scheduled for 11 a.m. Thursday at the Stuart C. Siegel Center and is free to the public.

Smart played college basketball at Kenyon College. He then became an associate coach with the Akron Zips for three years. Smart served as an assistant coach for the Clemson Tigers in 2006 before becoming an assistant coach at Florida in 2008. More details will be in Monday's edition of The Commonwealth Times.



Rams return home to crush VMI

TAYLOR HOWSMON
Associate Sports Editor

The VCU baseball team returned to Richmond for their first home game since March 18 to face VMI Tuesday night.

After tough sets at Western Kentucky and UNC Wilmington, the Rams were in need of a win.

"Feels good to be home, we've been on the road for a really long time now," said sophomore third baseman Joe Van Meter (Oyster Bay, N.Y./St. Dominic). "We feel really comfortable at home. We showed that tonight."

The Rams did indeed show how comfortable they were, bashing the Keydets 17-8.

After VMI scored one in the opening inning, the Rams came back to score three in the bottom half of the first on a Justin Wright (Yorktown/Grafton) sacrifice fly, and Van Meter's RBI single and a Keydet error, which allowed junior Doug Otto (Jefferson City, Mo./Helias) to score.

After a great tone setter to open up the game, the Rams cruised as junior starter Robbie Andrews (Covington/Alleghany) continued to shut down the Keydets' hitting.

VCU held an 8-2 lead, until the bottom of the fifth.

The Rams got the first three hitters of the inning on base, and never looked back, scoring eight runs on six hits. In the inning, VMI aided VCU with three errors and three walks.

The big strike in the inning came on a Wright triple with the bases loaded. The base clearer helped Wright finish with four RBIs on the evening.

Van Meter finished 2-for-4 with three RBI. He also pitched two innings to close out the game. Otto also had a big game going 2-for-4 and scoring four runs.

After losing six of their last seven games, VCU was happy to get the win over their in-state nemesis.

"We've had a tough stretch on the road, so it was good to come out in front of a good crowd, put up some big offense and get a win," Wright said.

The Rams stay home this weekend for a three game series with in-conference foe Hofstra. The first home series in CAA play will be pivotal for VCU.

"It is good to have a stretch here at home and we've got to take advantage of it this weekend," VCU coach Paul Keyes said.

The Rams' CAA record currently stands at 1-2. They are 11-10 overall.

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Monroe Park Campus

Richmond Salons

University Student Commons

Thursday, April 2, 2009

9 A.M. to 2 P.M.

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for the Health Sciences

This event is sponsored annually by VCU Technology Services and the VCU Libraries.

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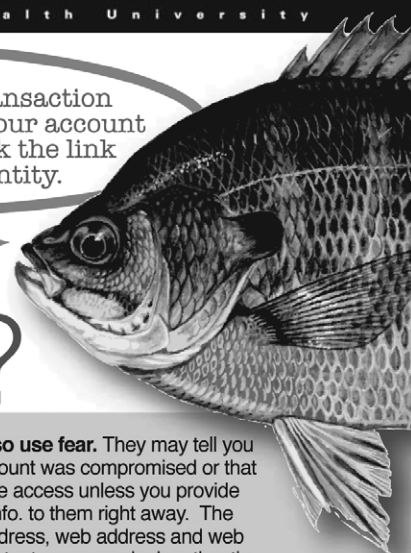


VCU

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What do they want? The phisher may ask for account credentials such as your password, username or account number. Or they may ask for personal information such as your date of birth, Social Security number or address.

Why? To gain access to your email account in order to send spam. To clean out your bank account. To get you to install software which will record every keystroke. To steal your identity.

How? Phishers are clever. They may pretend to be your bank...Facebook...the IRS...even VCU IT staff (this has happened and users have had their VCU eIDs compromised to send tons of spam).

They also use fear. They may tell you your account was compromised or that you'll lose access unless you provide certain info. to them right away. The email address, web address and web page content may even look authentic.

What can I do? Verify a request is authentic before sharing your personal information. For more information about phishing attacks and how to protect yourself, visit go.vcu.edu/phishing.

And remember, VCU and other reputable organizations will NEVER use email to request that you reply with your password, Social Security number or confidential personal information.



phishing

it's not some leisurely afternoon pastime

VCU Information Security keeps you informed of risks, best practices and incidents at <http://twitter.com/vcuinfosec>. To learn more about phishing, visit <http://go.vcu.edu/phishing>.

VCU



spectrum

THEATER PREVIEW

Love put to test in 'Beirut'



Jake Cunningham photos

Torch (right) played by Alex Gerber faces the strain of living with AIDS and distances himself from his lover (played by Katie Dingle) in order not to infect her with the disease in "Beirut," running at the Shafer Street Playhouse this weekend.

ROBERTO CURTIS
Managing Editor

Love is one of the most powerful motivators in the broad spectrum of human emotion. It provokes irrational, selfless behavior for the biological sake of protecting future generations. It is also the golden thread holding together Alan Bowne's characters Blue and Torch in his tragedy, "Beirut," which runs this Friday through Sunday at the Shafer Street Playhouse.

Directed by theatre pedagogy graduate student Jason Campbell and presented by the Shafer Alliance Laboratory Theatre, "Beirut" is not your traditional love story. In keeping with the focus of his dissertation – theater's response to the AIDS epidemic – Campbell's selection is an appropriate choice.

Manhattan's Lower East Side has been renamed Beirut, a quarantined zone for people infected with an unnamed disease. It is an unfair world where sexuality is strictly regulated and relationships are torn apart through oppressive conditions.

"It's governmental housing comparable to a concentration camp," Campbell said.

Caught in the cross hairs are Blue (Katie Dingle, senior, theater perfor-

mance) and Torch (Alex Gerber, senior, theater performance). Though the two share a deep love for each other, Torch has suddenly been transported to Beirut because of his infection. Unable to bear a life without her love, Blue risks her own life by infiltrating the infected area of Manhattan. Torch suddenly finds himself in a quandary in having to push away the girl he cares for most.

"On a base level, the whole play is really Blue trying to get Torch to have sex with her. It's really more about the love between the two of them," Campbell said. "He keeps pushing her away because he doesn't want to infect her with the disease."

Though the play primarily only features two people, Gerber and Dingle said it allowed them to delve deeper into the underpinnings of their character's emotions.

"A play with this subject matter is an obstacle in itself," Dingle said. "In this world, the conditions of love cannot be what we understand the conditions of love to be."

The biggest paradox in the play is the manner in which Torch responds to Blue's advances and the resilience of their love in such trying conditions.

BEIRUT continued to CT9





Moncia Bill Barnes (left) and Anna Bass duet in Grace Street Theater "Suddenly Summer Somewhere" this weekend.

David Wilson photo

Former faculty member returns for performance

DEAN CHRISTENSEN

Contributing Writer

Humor is an often-neglected element in art. For dancer and choreographer Monica Bill Barnes, however, it is an integral part of keeping audiences interested. In her duet "Suddenly Summer Somewhere," which she will perform with Anna Bass on Friday and Saturday evening at the Grace Street Theater, humor and quirk are widely utilized to express how time can affect the relationship between two people.

The New York City-based dancer is in residence this week at VCU's department of dance and choreography, teaching modern dance technique, workshops and a class for the non-VCU community, culminating in the performances at the end of the week.

In the spring of 2007, Barnes was in residence at VCU for seven weeks, making this week an opportunity to catch up with the faculty and the students she then taught.

"I had a really wonderful time," Barnes said. "I'm just so looking forward to coming back to VCU."

Dance and choreography department producer Lea Marshall said she is enthusiastic about the dancer's return, noting Barnes' broad appeal as a choreographer and the large amount of publicity she has received for her quirky and theatrical style.

"We appreciated her work and wanted her back," Marshall said.

Barnes developed "Suddenly Summer Somewhere" with the freshmen she taught in 2007 and premiered it in New York in 2008. Quirkiness is ever-present in the work, and its unpredictability is what Barnes considers one of the piece's most exciting characteristics.

"Keeping the audience on their toes keeps them engaged," Barnes said. "Unexpected elements help to continue to invite the audience into the experience."

Barnes said she hopes her work can have different meanings for different people. A sense of theatricality and the use of familiar elements make the work relatable to audiences. The pair's costumes, for example, are simple robes, to provide a blank palette for each viewer's unique interpretation.

Freshman dance and choreography major Tessa Anton is attending a class taught by Barnes every day this week. For Anton, the experience is not only an opportunity to improve her dance technique but also to observe a different teaching perspective.

"Everyone has a different viewpoint," Anton said after her first class with Barnes on Monday. "She approaches class a different way."

Barnes' fresh teaching style parallels her unique style of dance, Anton said.

It was a very different way of approaching movement," Anton said. "It was very visually appealing."

BEIRUT PREVIEW continued from CT8

"The challenge for me is seeing how terribly (Torch) treats (Blue) and trying to understand why she doesn't just leave him," Gerber said. "You have to find the subtext, which is love, and understand that."

The Shafer Alliance Laboratory Theatre presents "Beirut," written by Alan Bowne and directed by Jason Campbell, this Friday, Saturday and Sunday at 8 p.m. and Saturday at midnight at the Shafer Street Playhouse's Newdick Theater. Admission is free to those 18 and over as "Beirut" contains adult content, strong language and nudity.

Thursday, April 2, 2009

first friday calendar

"A Lifetime of Travel" Paintings by William Fletcher Jones. 5:30 p.m. Free. Through May 1. Ginger Levit Gallery. 1519 W. Main St. 740-1471.

"Virginia Landscapes and Cows" Work by Greg Osterhaus. 5:30 p.m. Free. Through May 2. Gallery 5800. 5800 Grove Ave. 285-0774.

"Adapt or Perish" Mixed media combined with screen prints and lithographs by Amy Chan, Andrew Kozlowski and Anthony Meloro. "The C Word," featuring work from Virginia Commonwealth University's craft and material studies candidacy exhibition. 6 p.m. Free. Through April 25. Metro Space Gallery. 117 W. Broad St. 643-7125.

"Some Sh*t" Work by Genevieve Castree. 6 p.m. Free. Through April 24. Thanky Space. 407 Brook Road. 814-3585.

"Turning Wood Into Art: The Jane and Arthur Mason Collection" More than 60 pieces of contemporary wood sculpture. 6 p.m. Free. Through June 14. Visual Arts Center. 1812 W. Main St. 353-0094.

"Whirlaway Tales" Work by David Febland. 6 p.m. Free. Through May 1. Glave Kocen Gallery. 1620 W. Main St. 358-1990.

"Adventures in the Skin Trade Revisited" art by Michelle Lopez. 7 p.m. Free. Through May 1. The Henry Gallery. 212 W. Broad St. 344-5390.

"An Exhibition" Work by William Wylie, Thomas Hager and Corey Drieth. 7 p.m. Through April 25. Page Bond Gallery. 1625 W. Main St. 359-3633.

"Blacksburg Reflects: Artistic Journeys of Healing Following the Virginia Tech Tragedy" Curated by Shannon Turner. 7 p.m. Free. Through April 24. "Due Process," an exhibit on printmaking. 7 p.m. Free. Through April 28. Gallery5. 200 W. Marshall St. 644-0005.

"Invasive Species" Work by stencil and graffiti artist Klutch. 7 p.m. Free. Through April 25. Ghostprint Gallery. 220 W. Broad St. 344-1557.

"New Work" Art by Don Crow. 7 p.m. Free. Through April 26. Main Art Gallery. 1537 W. Main St. 355-6151.

"Out of the Shadows" Paintings by Chris Semtner. 7 p.m. Free. Through May 29. Visual Art Studio. 208 W. Broad St. 644-1368.



Utopian alternative pop dominates album

spectrum



VERONICA GARABELLI

Spectrum Editor

In this fast-paced high-tech world we live in, it was not startling when Yeah Yeah Yeahs' long-awaited third studio album, "It's Blitz!," dropped into fans' laps early because of an Internet leak. Thankfully, the Yeah Yeah Yeahs were hiding some marvelous tunes that managed not only to bring new dimensions to their music, but further distinguish their inimitable sound.

"It's Blitz!" flows elegantly through upbeat alternative pop. Kicking off with "Zero," the Yeah Yeah Yeahs intensify its synthesizers and link them with Karen O's breathy signature vocals. "Heads Will Roll," is a remarkable combination of echoic dance music with not-so-shy

amplified guitars. The Yeah Yeah Yeahs' even manage to bring a funky 70s jam in the mix, "Dragon Queen," without becoming crazily obscure.

It's not all ludicrous production work, however. The band has a tight grip on its indie roots with "Skeletons" and "Hysteric," which thrive on hazy vocal melodies. The closing track "Little Shadow" ends the perfection that is "It's Blitz!" with a calm farewell to a lover.

A band's third album release can notoriously make or break them. If "It's Blitz!" is any indication, the Yeah Yeah Yeahs are here to stay without compromising what made them famous in the first place.

Download (don't steal): "Hysteric" by the Yeah Yeah Yeahs.

weekend calendar

Thursday 04/02

"Detaining Suspected Terrorists: Past, Present and Future" Six legal scholars, including two who practiced law at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, present their symposium discussion. 4-7 p.m. Free. The Jepson Alumni Center. The University of Richmond. 28 Westhampton Way. 289-8000.

Black Kids, Mates of State, Sunbears!: 7 p.m. \$16-\$19. The National 708 E. Broad St. 612-1900.

Buildings and Death: Readings of new fiction, creative nonfiction and poetry by Ann Archer, Kathryn DiPasqua, Foust, Henry McLaughlin, Gayla Mills and Liz Sheehan. 7 p.m. Free. Chop Suey Tuey. 2913 W. Cary St. 591-7934.

Audible View, Frail Humanity, Capital 7: 7-11 p.m., \$7. Alley Katz. 10 Walnut Alley. 643-2816.

"Altar Boyz" Musical comedy about a religiously bent boy-band, Matthew, Mark, Luke, Juan and Abraham. Performances run through May 30. \$35-\$50. 8 p.m. Swift Creek Mill Theatre. 17401 Jefferson Davis Highway. 748-5203.

Southside Funk: 10 p.m. \$5. Emilio's Tapas Bar. 1847 W. Broad St. 359-1224.

Friday 04/03

Bizarre Bazaar: More than 200 vendors sell food, clothing, toys, crafts, artwork and accessories. Through April 5. 10 a.m.-7 p.m. \$7. The Richmond Raceway Complex. 600 E. Laburnum Ave. 673-6280.

Book Signing: Author and VCU professor Cliff Edwards signs copies of his third Van Gogh title, "The Mystery of the Night Café, New Light on the Spirituality of Vincent Van Gogh." 6-8 p.m. Free. Book People. 536 Granite Ave. 288-4346.

Ronny Jordan: Jazz concert presented by Cool Guitars and the Southside Virginia Council of the Arts. Petersburg Regional Arts Center. 7 p.m. \$40. Petersburg Regional Arts Center. 132 N. Sycamore St. 733-8200.

Southside Funk, Silo Effect: 8 p.m. Free.

"Suddenly Summer Somewhere" Presented by the VCU Department of Dance and Choreography. A special performance by the New York-based Monica Bill Barnes and Company. 8 p.m. \$10-\$20. Repeat

performance on April 4. The Grace Street Theater. 934 W. Grace St. 828-2020.

Bart Chucker Band, John Walker: 9 p.m. Free. Home Team Grill. 1630 W. Main St. 254-7360.

Saturday 04/04

Spring Fling Grafton: A private, nonprofit behavioral health organization offers comprehensive services for students and adults with developmental disorders hosts its first annual benefit. Featuring an arts and crafts fair, bake sale, food, raffles, face painting and live music, proceeds benefit the group's Special Arts Therapy Program. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Free. Grafton School Inc. 4100 Price Club Blvd. 674-8888.

Food Tasting: Sponsored by the Women's Committee for the Petersburg Symphony Orchestra to benefit the orchestra and provide scholarships to music students, the Petersburg Regional Art Center. An international array of Petersburg's finest food. 1-4 p.m. \$30. Petersburg Regional Arts Center. 132 N. Sycamore St. 733-8200.

"Endless Forms Most Wonderful" The Carpenter Science Theatre presents a stage

dramatization depicting the life and works of evolutionary theorist Charles Darwin. 3 p.m. \$3. Through May 10 with performances every Saturday and Sunday at 3 p.m. and Wednesday-Friday at 10 and 11:30 a.m. The Science Museum of Virginia. 2500 W. Broad St. 864-1400.

Cursed to Black, Say Your Prayers, Trees Above Mandalay, Your Princess is Dead, the Bride Wore Black, Crunk Butter, Daniel Tomlinson: 5 p.m., \$6-\$8. Alley Katz. 10 Walnut Alley. 643-2816.

Us and Them: 7 p.m. \$10-\$13. The National. 708 E. Broad St. 612-1900.

Sunday 04/05

"27 Dirt Cheap Money Dances" A performance by the Bread and Puppet Theater with a volunteer based performance where anyone willing to learn the act can do so. 2-5 p.m. Performance for the public at 8 p.m. \$10. Gallery5. 200 W. Marshall St. 644-0005.

Book Swap: Meet other book lovers and possibly exchange favorites. 3-5 p.m. Free. Book People. 536 Granite Ave. 288-4346.

opinion

Letter to the Editor.

Dear Editor,

Thank you for your attendance and coverage of the STRUT Planning Committee's STRUT Karneval show. However, we must express our extreme disappointment in the article that was featured in the March 30 edition of The CT.

To say that the "back stage was less organized; 20 minutes before the show half the models were running around with their hair and makeup undone, half-dressed and wearing no makeup" is a complete falsity. Even though our show started at 7 p.m., we began hair and makeup on our models at 9 a.m. We had 48 models in the show. Please tell me how 24 people could have had their hair and makeup completed in just twenty minutes? There were close to 100 people backstage, and Ms. Peters would not have had any way of knowing who were models and who were not without speaking with one of the 20 people in charge, which she did not.

Perhaps if any of the executive board of the STRUT committee had been interviewed for this piece, the information in the article would have been correct. However, none of the members were ever spoken to for this article by The CT. Laura Peters showed up less than an hour before the show and had to scavenge to get information, which lead to the wrong information. I appreciate the coverage, but in the future when speaking about STRUT and any other organization from VCU, please make a better effort to obtain and print the truth.

Thank you,
Tiffany Williams
STRUT Director of Production
Jerrica Washington
STRUT Director of Marketing and Fashion
Leah Rullman
STRUT Logistic Manager and Budget Analyst

Public displays of annoyance

SARAH SONIES

Opinion Editor

I was walking from Extreme Pizza to the library the other day and although the sun was shining and all was well on both sides of me were couples sucking face.

I was minding my own business, flipping through the songs on my playlist, however, I could hear the sounds of slurping and smacking lips over The Format—oh and did I mention that the couples might as well have detached their jaws and swallowed each other whole? I bet they were freshman.

I'd like to point out that making out like this with your significant other in public does not make him or her any less likely to cheat on you. In fact, it makes me wish they would. You can find these couples not only on campus, but at parties and even on a First Fridays Artwalk. They are also everywhere. It's spring ... flowers bloom, new love blossoms, but there's a difference between being a cute couple, and being a couple from Dante's fifth circle of hell.

I get it, I sound bitter, but we have all been there. I have been that freshman with the new boyfriend who always wants to hang out with him. But I got over it. Fast.

New relationships are fun, especially because you haven't gotten annoyed with the person yet—but couples should realize that they should have friends outside of the relationship. Especially if you move into a one-bedroom apartment, and a few months later your partner suddenly needs "space." Gotta have a place to crash, right?

Remember those friends you had BEFORE you got involved with the love of your life whom you are destined to marry—because it is obvious that after two months of

dating that this is forever.

Every group of friends has that one couple who they have to tolerate, that couple that constantly makes the rest of the group uncomfortable—even nauseous. Please avoid being this couple at all costs.

Here are some helpful tips to avoid being a plague to your friends and society in general.

- If you have been holding onto your partner for more than 10 minutes at a party, chances are you have started to annoy people. Hold on to them for 20 minutes, while making out and take off articles of clothing? You probably won't be invited back to that humble abode.

- If when you see your significant other talking to a person of the opposite sex you have to go over and metaphorically pee all over them, then you might be a little insecure and maybe you should look at the women's empowerment section of Cosmopolitan.

- Your relationship is beautiful, and if it is truly forever, then you will be more like Donna and Eric on "That 70's Show," instead of Jackie and Kelso.

- If you are paranoid that your partner is cheating on you—get a life. Let's be honest, if they are cheating on you, it'll come out eventually and it's better that you not come off as a paranoid nutcase.

- If you spend 24 hours a day with your significant other, it is time to get a hobby. We are in college and maybe you should learn how to be independent and exist as your own person. This goes for long-distance couples too. If your partner only lives as far as Northern Virginia there is no reason for them to be in Richmond Wednesday through Sunday every week. You shouldn't need anybody that badly.

the
ct

RICH
GRISET
Executive Editor

SARAH
SONIES
Opinion Editor

The opinions and views in the comics are those of individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Commonwealth Times or Virginia Commonwealth University. Unsigned editorials represent the institutional opinion of The CT.

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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.

comics

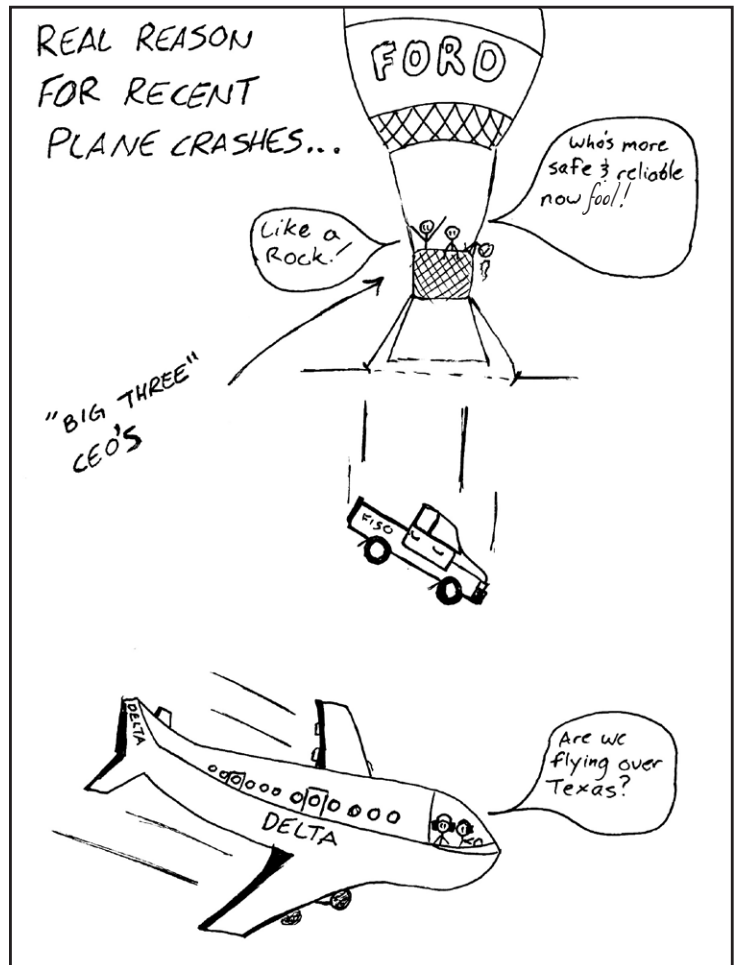
Permission to Drop



Olumide Akanni

Slurpee Town

Eric Hill



Bill Lemmond



Pizza from Scratch