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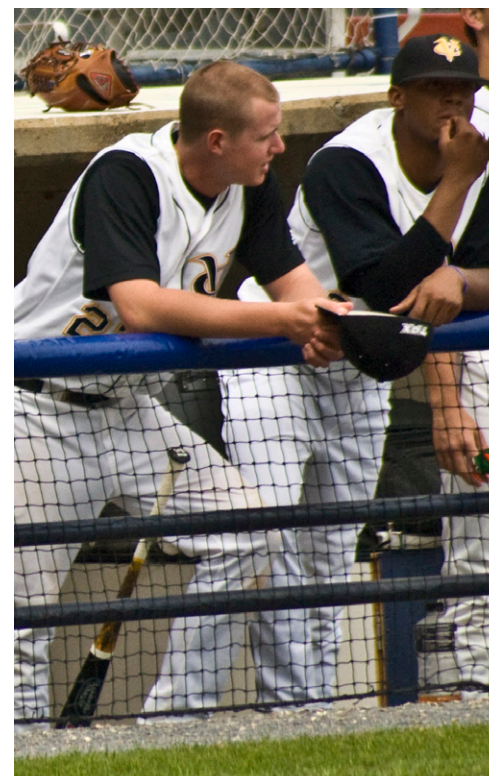
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The **independent** student press of Virginia Commonwealth University

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# 'Chicago'

## amps up noise, sass

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free





# briefs

Jake Cunningham  
cover photo

## Local and VCU

### Kaine heading to Morocco, Israel, Dubai

Gov. Timothy M. Kaine is on the road to Morocco—with stops in Israel and Dubai along the way.

The governor is traveling with Virginia Secretary of Commerce and Labor Patrick O. Gottschalk and Rick Richardson of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership. Kaine's wife, first lady Anne Holton, will also accompany him on the eight-day trip.

The Middle East mission is Kaine's fifth trip abroad as governor. Officials said the purpose of the mission is to promote Virginia to foreign business and government leaders.

"With the Port of Hampton Roads and Dulles (Airport), we have two assets that give us an enormous credibility in the global marketplace," Kaine said.

"There will be a bit of diplomacy and governmental discussion while I'm there, but the primary effort is to find new economic opportunities."

*Brief by the Richmond Times-Dispatch*

### Drug-related slayings on the rise in Richmond, authorities say

Drugs have played a significant role in about 67 percent of this year's homicides, with would-be customers carrying hundreds of dollars and getting killed for the money, authorities say.

"It's the No. 1 factor," said Richmond Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney Learned Barry. "You go buy drugs, you've got a good chance of getting killed."

Buying drugs has always carried some risk, but authorities started to notice a trend in the last three months of 2008, when four out of eight killings in Richmond were either drug robberies or otherwise drug-related.

So far in 2009, the city has seen fewer homicides overall than during the same period last year, but at least 10 of this year's 15 killings – or about 67 percent – appear to be drug-related, Barry said.

*Brief by the Richmond Times-Dispatch*

### Va. Museum of Fine Arts says new wing will open May 2010

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts announced Friday its new 165,000-square-foot wing will open May 1, 2010.

Museum officials also announced that existing galleries will be closed for more than 10 months during the final stages of construction and the re-installation of thousands of works of art. Safety and accessibility issues are the reason, officials said. The galleries will begin closing this month, and all will be closed by the end of June.

The museum itself will not close during that period, and programs such as 3rd Thursdays and Art After Hours will continue as will the VMFA Studio School. Its extensive statewide programs and exhibitions also will not be interrupted.

"No full-time state employees or VMFA Foundation jobs will be affected," said museum director Alex Nyerges.

*Brief by the Richmond Times-Dispatch*

## National and International

### Summit ending on hopeful note for President Obama

President Barack Obama wrapped up a summit with other leaders in the Western Hemisphere on Sunday the same way he began it; pledging to reshape the image of the United States as an equal partner in addressing problems throughout the region.

"I look forward to hearing more about how the United States can be an effective partner," Obama said before discussing the economic crisis, trade, security and immigration with leaders from Central American nations.

At the Summit of the Americas on the twin-island nation of Trinidad and Tobago, the president was hopeful that he'd boosted the image of the United States among its allies in the region – and perhaps even made some new ones.

Among those seemingly charmed by the president's promise of a new partnership was Venezuela's Hugo Chavez, the fiery leftist who famously

likened former President George W. Bush to the devil.

"I think President Obama is an intelligent man, compared to the previous U.S. president," Chavez told reporters during the summit of 34 nations.

*Brief by The Associated Press*

### Oklahoma City bombing anniversary commemorated

The names of 168 people killed in the bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building have been read in a solemn ceremony on the 14th anniversary of the nation's worst domestic terrorist attack.

More than 300 people gathered Sunday in cold, windy weather at the Oklahoma City National Memorial to observe the anniversary of the April 19, 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building.

Survivors of the bombing and families of some of the 168 people killed read the names at the memorial where the building once stood.

*Brief by The Associated Press*

### Couple, their 3 kids found dead in Maryland home

A Maryland man who killed his wife and three children before fatally shooting himself left behind five notes, including an apology to family members and hints that he suffered from psychiatric problems, authorities said.

The local sheriff said there were also signs that the family had financial problems.

"We're all in shock and trying to come to terms," said Kevin Farmer, the pastor of Holy Family Catholic Community Church.

Christopher Alan Wood killed his wife and children, then himself, in their northwest Maryland home, leaving a gruesome scene that authorities said was found Saturday by the children's grandfather.

*Brief by The Associated Press*

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*Limit one CT per person. Additional copies may be purchased through the Student Media Center for \$1 a copy.*

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# news

## VCU students support Relay for Life

Participation in this year's Relay for Life raised \$12,998.16 for the American Cancer Society.

Erica Terrini photo

**ERIC TERRINI**  
*Assistant Spectrum Editor*

The fourth annual American Cancer Society's Relay for Life attracted hundreds of runners and walkers on Saturday to the Cary Street Field.

There were 48 teams and 436 people registered, which raised \$12,998.16 for the cause. The fundraising will continue until July 2009 and the estimated total is \$29,000, based on last year's earnings. The three event co-chairs, Laura Elkovich, Jaleesa Mayo and Jung Kim, organized the event with the help of student adviser Scott Beasley, faculty adviser John Butt and ACS sponsor Sharon Pierce. Pierce was the first contact who worked with Beasley, who was attempting to bring Relay for Life to VCU.

"It's great to see the students do a great job," Pierce said. "They're dedicated and they have a strong passion to help."

Various student organizations and other teams from the Richmond community set up booths to continue raising funds. Teams sold food, henna tattoos and some conducted games to raise money.

During the relay, teams are to have one or several members taking shifts walking the track for the duration of the event.

Relay for Life is primarily a fundraising event, which requires participating teams to raise funds before and during the day of the event. Many of the student organizations on campus choose to get involved, but Relay for Life is open to the entire Richmond community.

The student organization that oversees Relay for Life was recently inducted as a part of the program commission, which benefits the fundraising efforts because VCU covers the expenses for the actual event. The proceeds then go directly to ACS.

Relay for Life came to VCU in 2005 with the help of former student Beasley. The relay has raised nearly

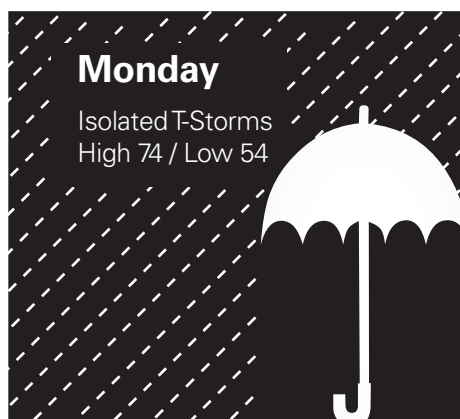
\$100,000 at VCU since the first year. Beasley said the Relay for Life group at VCU has increased since VCU became involved.

"Once we made the connection with VCU, it's grown leaps and bounds," Beasley said. "We started out barely a student organization on campus and now we're a part of one of the main student organizations."

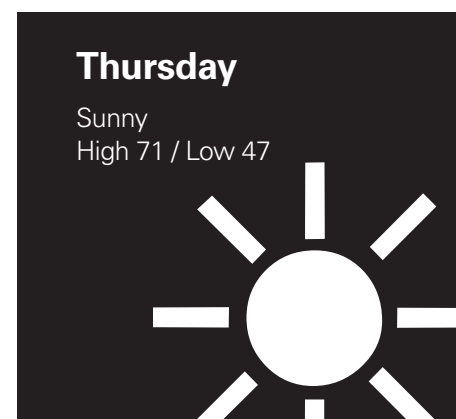
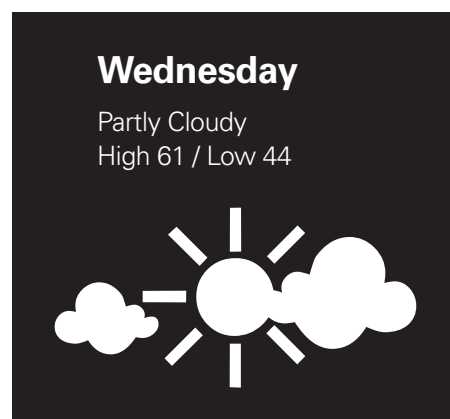
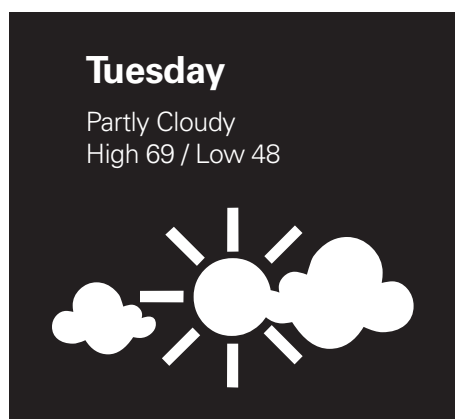
According to Kim, Relay for Life attracts all kinds of volunteers from the VCU and Richmond community each year.

"Everyone has given the helping hand to make this a success and help us continue to do this," Kim said. "You don't have to be directly affected by cancer to want to make a difference."

In addition to fundraising, Relay for Life at VCU is an event focused on raising cancer awareness. The student organization is now supported by VCU's University Student Commons and Activities and plans to continue to coordinate the annual charity event.



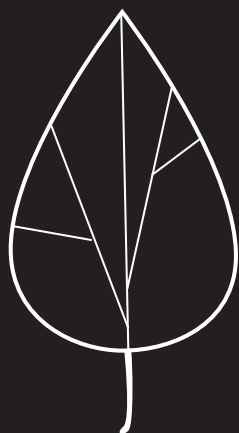
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## Tech healing on massacre anniversary



RICH GRISET  
*Capital News Service*

It was a sunny day on the Virginia Tech campus. Students lounged in the grass, lobbed Frisbees and played guitar. It was hard to believe that just two years earlier in this very place, Seung-Hui Cho went on a shooting rampage, killing 32 people before turning the gun on himself.

On the second anniversary of the massacre, Virginia Tech held a commemoration and illustrated how the university has healed since.

A 3.2-mile "Run in Remembrance" was held on Thursday morning. The distance represented a 10th of a mile for each of the 32 slain Hokies. According to Virginia Tech's Collegiate Times student newspaper, the run drew more than 4,000 participants.

At a noon ceremony, three wreaths were placed on the April 16 Memorial at the Drillfield, a grassy field in the center of campus.

"One wreath will be in memory of those who lost their lives that day, a second will honor survivors, and a third will recognize members of the Hokie family that have passed away since April 2007," states the memorial Web site.

The April 16 Memorial consists of a half-circle with 32 stone markers bearing the names of the slain.

Omar Samaha, a 2006 Virginia Tech graduate, lost his sister Reema two years ago.

"It's always hard for me to come back here. Obviously I get choked up at the memorial service and stuff. But it's good, because I come back here and I remember my sister," Samaha said. "I remember that day. I remember the other victims and survivors, and I take with me a renewed sense of energy."

Samaha now works with Americans United for Safe Streets. The group is seeking to close Virginia's so-called gun show loophole, which allows independent vendors to sell firearms at gun shows without conducting background checks on buyers.

Samaha recently appeared on the television newsmagazines "60 Minutes" and "20/20," explaining his cause.

The killing spree at Tech on April 16, 2007, was the deadliest school shooting by a single gunman in U.S. history. Cho, who had a history of mental illness, killed two students at a dormitory and then gunned down 30 in the classrooms at Norris Hall.

Norris Hall has been converted into the Center for Peace Studies and Violence Prevention. The center is located on the remodeled second floor where slain instructors Christopher James Bishop and Jocelyne Couture-Nowak were conducting class when the shooting occurred.

Norris Hall, which reopened in 2007, houses College of Engineering offices and laboratories but no classrooms to date. The center is headed by professor Jerzy Nowak, who lost his wife in the attack.

Jill Casten, an agriculture and extended education graduate student, works for the Center for Peace studies and Violence Prevention.

"With the new space, we're just hoping to provide something positive here in Norris Hall," Casten said. "We've got a lot of goals for the center, mainly all student focused. We already have a student organization, Students for Non-Violence, that we've already started. We're pretty excited about getting students from across campus involved in that and different projects we're doing."

The center, which was established on July 1, 2008 will officially move into Norris Hall this week.

"The mass of people there, the community aspect of it, is really nice, and there's just kind of a calm mood on campus today," said Nicole Motylinski, a Virginia Tech hospitality and tourism management major.

"It's not as loud as it usually can be ... more somber and more calm. People just want to relax. People just want to be around friends and family. It's nice," Motylinski said.



Jay Scarborough photo

**'Push More,' by Kristin Totoritis is  
made from recycled skateboards  
and wheels.**

## Green organization celebrates Earth Day

JAY SCARBOROUGH  
*News Co-Editor*

Environmental organization Green Unity is sponsoring an Earth Day celebration Wednesday, April 22 in an effort to promote eco-friendly ideas and practices. The event will take place in the University Student Commons plaza from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Also coinciding with this celebration is Green Unity's Recycle and Reuse Student Art Show, in the Student Commons Gallery. Works of art made from, or containing found and recycled materials are the focus of the show, which opened April 13 and will be viewable through April 24.

The Earth Day Celebration's events include a screening of the film "FernGully: The Last Rainforest" on Tuesday, April 21 at 7 p.m. in the T. Edward Temple Building, room 1169. Wednesday's main event will include musical performances, arts and crafts, giveaways and a special presentation by Virginia Delegate Joseph F. Bouchard, D-Virginia Beach.

Numerous groups and organizations including Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, the Sierra Club and the William Byrd Community House will have tables set up during the event for attendees to view.

More information is available on Green Unity's Web site at [www.greenunityforvcu.com](http://www.greenunityforvcu.com).

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# sports



## Patriots take third game, series from Rams

Justin Wright drives in two runs for the Rams.

Natalie Allen photo

### JEROME FOSTER

*Sports Editor*

George Mason defeated VCU this past Sunday, 9-2, to take two of three from the Rams.

"They did a good job of playing well and we played as hard as we could," VCU coach Paul Keyes said.

The Patriots got things started in the second inning. The first two batters hit singles and then scored on the strength of junior starter Robbie Andrews' (Covington/Alleghany) wild pitch and a Brent Weiss double into left centerfield.

The Rams struck back with two runs in the bottom of the third. After junior Richard Gonzalez (Caguas, Puerto Rico/PRBA) grounded out to second, juniors Andrew Dimino (Greenwood, Ind./Greenwood) and M.L. Morgan

(Petersburg/Dinwiddie) both singled. Morgan and Dimino stole second and third, respectively, on a double steal. Junior Doug Otto (Jefferson City, Mo./Helias) was hit by a pitch to load the bases. Senior Justin Wright (Yorktown/Grafton) came up and hit a single to score Dimino and Morgan to tie the game at 2-2 after three innings.

Morgan and Dimino each finished the game 3 for 5.

Neither team scored another run until the fifth inning.

In the top of the fifth, an Andrews throwing error on a sacrifice bunt attempt allowed the Patriots to have runners on first and second with no outs. Those base runners scored on a single up the middle later in the inning to give the Patriots a 4-2 lead.

George Mason extended its lead to 5-2 in the top of the sixth after Ryan

Soars crushed the first pitch of the inning over the left field fence for a solo homerun.

It looked as if the Rams tied the game in the bottom of the seventh.

VCU had runners on first and second with one out. Wright smacked a ball over the right field fence that the whole stadium thought was fair. The first base umpire called it foul and the stadium went into an uproar. Wright grounded into a double play to end the inning.

"From my angle I really couldn't tell, I was at the end of the dugout," Keyes said. "I was hoping it would hit the foul pole."

That would be the last time VCU threatened to score.

"I think that led to the four runs on the backside," Keyes said. "I think we lost a little momentum."

George Mason added another run in

the top of the eighth. The Patriots led off the inning with a triple and then got an RBI single from Justin Bour to increase the lead to 6-2 after seven innings.

The Patriots tacked on three more runs in the top of the ninth thanks to a sacrifice fly and a two-run double to give George Mason a 9-2 victory.

The difference in the game proved to be the quality and timing of the hits. While the Rams and Patriots both had 11 hits, the Rams managed only two runs.

"We seemed to bunch a lot of hits with two outs, but not the one to drive guys in," Keyes said. "We didn't get a ball up into the gap and they did."

The loss dropped the Rams to 6-6 in the CAA and 18-14 overall. The Rams host the Virginia Cavaliers April 21 at 7 p.m.

## This week

### BASEBALL

Tue., April 21, Virginia, The Diamond, 7 p.m.

Fri., April 24 @ Northeastern, Boston, 2 p.m.

Sat., April 25 @ Northeastern, Boston, Noon

Sun., April 26 @ Northeastern, Boston, 1 p.m.

### MEN'S TENNIS

Sat., April 25, Virginia Tech, Thalhimer Tennis Center, 11 a.m.

### MEN'S TRACK AND FIELD

April 23-25 @ Penn Relays, Philadelphia, all day

### WOMEN'S TRACK AND FIELD

April 23-25 @ Penn Relays, Philadelphia, all day





# De La Hoya's retirement bittersweet for boxing

JEROME FOSTER

*Sports Editor*

While boxing has declined in popularity over the past couple of decades, "The Golden Boy" Oscar De La Hoya was the most popular boxer on the planet.

That changed last Wednesday when De La Hoya retired. For the sport of boxing, this was both a good thing and a bad thing.

Let's start with the bad.

Boxing has struggled in popularity since the mid-1990s. Corrupt judges and promoters, high Pay-Per-View prices and a lack of fights between top boxers has contributed to the decline of boxing.

When other boxers fought, no matter how talented they were, boxing still had few viewers. This wasn't the case when "The Golden Boy" fought.

No boxer will match the popularity of De La Hoya.

Boxing fans fell in love with De La Hoya after he won a gold medal in the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona, Spain and they have followed his career ever since.

Every fight De La Hoya fought was a major event. People who weren't boxing fans tuned in to watch "The Golden Boy."

It didn't matter whether De La Hoya was fighting a career journeyman or a

world champion, people wanted to see him fight.

The numbers prove it.

De La Hoya is boxing's Pay-Per-View sales king. De La Hoya's 19 PPV fights sold over 14.1 million buys and over \$696 million in revenue. Evander Holyfield is second in buys with 12.6 million and Mike Tyson is second in revenue at \$545 million.

There is no current boxer who will put up those numbers.

Another reason De La Hoya's retirement hurts the sport is because "The Golden Boy" fought all of the top competition. He didn't always win, but he never hesitated to get into the ring with the best of the best.

De La Hoya fought boxing's most elite including, Floyd Mayweather Jr., Manny Pacquiao, Julio Cesar Chavez, Bernard Hopkins, Shane Mosley, Pernell Whitaker, Felix Trinidad and Hector Camacho Sr. One would be hard pressed to look at a boxer's record and see that many elite names. In a sport where the top fighters avoid one another, De La Hoya only wanted to fight the best.

But De La Hoya's retirement isn't all bad for the sport.

For the past five years, "The Golden Boy" was a part-time fighter. 2008 was the first year since 2004 where De La Hoya fought

more than once.

A reason De La Hoya's retirement is good for the sport is because "The Golden Boy" had a knack for holding the sport hostage.

Whenever De La Hoya came out of his mini-retirements, elite fighters in the 147, 154 and 160-pound weight classes avoided tough fights, hoping to get a crack at "The Golden Boy."

This was because boxers were guaranteed their largest payday if they fought De La Hoya. When a boxer was a potential opponent for De La Hoya, the last thing that boxer wanted to do was lose to someone else and blow the opportunity to fight him.

Potential opponents for De La Hoya fought against fighters they knew they would beat, keeping their shot at "The Golden Boy" intact and depriving the boxing fans of a good fight against a quality opponent.

De La Hoya's retirement will end this. Boxers know they don't have De La Hoya to fall back on to increase their exposure and bank accounts. They know they will need to fight quality opponents to do this.

The boxing fans and I will miss "The Golden Boy," but maybe his retirement is what the sport needs.



the  
**ROME**  
report

## SPORTS BRIEFS

### Baseball

Continued dominance over Richmond by winning their 10th consecutive game over the Spiders. The Rams were led by a five run seventh inning that included a two run single by Doug Otto (Jefferson City, Mo./ Helias). Then the Rams shifted to the weekend starting a three game set with nationally ranked George Mason. In Friday's game, the Rams used a breakout performance by sophomore pitcher Ian Thomas (Virginia Beach/Kellam) to upset the Patriots 4-3. Thomas went 8 1/3 innings only giving up nine hits and striking out seven. On Saturday, the Patriots proved too much for the Rams, beating VCU 8-2. After the three games, VCU held a record of 18-13 coming into the third game of the series against George Mason.

### Men's Tennis


Beat Georgia State 4-0 on Thursday and William and Mary 4-3 to advance to their 13th CAA finals since joining the league in 1996. They faced off with UNC Wilmington on Sunday in the championship match.

Nicolas Vinel (Metz, France) was named the CAA Rookie of the Year. Thibaut Charron (Sens, France) and Martin Schulhauser (Karvina, Czech Republic) were also named first team All-CAA.

### Women's Tennis

Beat Drexel 4-0 on Friday and William and Mary on Saturday, 4-1 to advance to the final on Sunday against top-seeded Georgia State.

Kateryna Yergina (Kiev, Ukraine) was named first team All-CAA. Alex Bara (Oraderra, Romania), Laura Burns (Hereford, England) and Olena Leonchuk (Kiev, Ukraine) were named to the second team.



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# spectrum

REVIEW

## 'Chicago' truly razzles and dazzles

Maggie Marlin playing Velma Kelly in Theatre VCU's spring production of 'Chicago.'

Jake Cunningham photo

JESSICA PORTER

*Contributing Writer*

"Chicago" began with blaring trumpets and trombones that foreshadowed the powerful and sassy show to follow. The theater was filled to capacity for a good reason; "Chicago" is not only loud, controversial and provocative, but absolutely fabulous.

Elaborate costumes, such as short skirts, fishnets, sequins and heels, were aplenty. The detailed set lit up and the live band played catchy songs like "Cell Block Tango," "I Can't Do it Alone" and "Mr. Cellophane."

The story is about the married Roxy Hart (Kimberly Exum) who is sent to prison for murdering her lover in cold blood. In prison she meets other feisty widows who killed their husbands for reasons like polygamy, cheating and popping their gum.

One woman in particular, Velma Kelly (Maggie Marlin) becomes Roxy's greatest threat but her best

match. Velma's story was the one all the reporters wanted until Roxy came on the scene and stole all the headlines.

The story continues with every woman fighting for the best lawyer in town, Billy Flynn (Michael Rieman), who also happens to be a very seductive man. He can make any woman fall head over heels for him and make any woman guilty of murder appear innocent.

For the rest of the exciting and hilarious show, Roxy must figure out a way to stay in the headlines without losing her freedom, while Velma finds a way to get Flynn to notice her case, which is now old news.

The cast was flawlessly chosen. The actors captured their character's personalities perfectly. Rieman had every woman in the audience swooning over Billy Flynn. Exum completely captured Roxy's annoying innocence and narcissism and Jake Ashley, who played Roxy's unappreciated husband Amos, was so pitiful and delightfully painful to watch.

The only problems were occasional technical errors

that sounded like someone hitting a microphone.

This impressive version of "Chicago" is the only other production allowed in the United States while the show is on Broadway. "Chicago" is a must-see for any theater lover, anyone who loved the movie, or anyone up for a night of laughter and entertainment.

Director Patti D'Beck should certainly be proud of this production, which will be at the W.E. Singleton Center for the Performing Arts until April 26.

*"Chicago" will be showing April 23–25 at 7:30 p.m. and April 26 at 3:00 p.m. High school matinees run April 21–22 at 10 a.m.*

*Ticket prices are \$20 for general admission, seniors, \$18 for VCU faculty and staff and \$8 for VCU students with valid I.D. and \$12 per person for groups of 20 or more. Tickets can be purchased at the Raymond Hodges Theatre Box Office, W.E. Singleton Center for the Performing Arts or reserved by calling 828-6026, or by e-mailing theatretix@vcu.edu.*







Theater performance majors Sarah Hildreth and Dallas Tolentino perform for 'Mix Tape 2.0.'

Erica Terrini photo

# Students redefine musical theater

ERICATERRINI

Assistant Spectrum Editor

Theater performance majors set out to re-invent musical theater in this year's "Mix Tape 2.0," allowing students to direct and act in brief scenes that coordinated with songs of all genres.

Now in its second year, "Mix Tape 2.0" ran this weekend at the Shafer Street Playhouse.

Live musical performances took place directly after the theatrical performances. The artists who performed included Hi I'm Bryce, Shuga Blam and David Watkins.

The concept of "Mix Tape 2.0" was brought to life by theater performance major Louisa Sargent. Sargent said it was her love of music that inspired her. She spoke to people within the theater community who shared the same musical passion and creativity and realized she had what she needed to organize

and produce "Mix Tape 2.0."

"It's about the audience having just as much fun," Sargent said. "With music, it doesn't matter who you are or where you come from."

The actors encouraged audience participation and even took the time for a dance break as they poured into the rows of seats and pulled people into the aisles.

"Mix Tape 2.0" opened with an electro-dance performance that combined the effects of a black light and glow sticks carried by actors as they moved to the beat of the song.

The musical theater then switched gears with an alternative rock performance that portrayed the song's lyrics about heartbreak with a dramatic love scene.

There were several other performances that called for scenes wrought with drama and exaggerated emotions to portray the actors' experiences or

messages of the songs.

In one piece, actors displayed growth from childhood to adulthood using expressions that took the audience from innocent and blissful times to awkward teenage years and finally, full self-acceptance in adulthood.

"Mix Tape 2.0" included several performances that used dance to project a song's message. In some instances, it was the sole element used to convey a broad range of topics including the lighter subjects of lust and love to the heavier subjects of suicide and emotional abuse.

The performances were all brief, and the show was only one hour and 15 minutes long, but the performers showcased common emotions and situations by using a variety of musical tastes and perspectives.

As an entirely student-run operation, "Mix Tape 2.0" provided actors the opportunity to direct and act, which brought

a diverse range of songs, talents and artistic vision to the set. Carolyn Boucher, a theater performance major, attended to support friends who were performing, and recognized the importance of students getting the hands-on experience.

"It's a great project because it gets different types of people together," Boucher said. "It allows us to focus on creating works, which we should be using our talent for."

"Mix Tape 2.0" became a forum for individual artistic expression for many of the actors involved.

Theater performance major Jordan Frink enjoyed seeing the show evolve.

"It's really amazing to work with different talent and seeing everyone's piece come together," Frink said.

"Mix Tape 2.0" will continue to feature theater performance students next spring as the production moves to a new theater.





# opinion

## Cake seduction

SARAH SONIES

*Opinion Editor*

There is no doubt that desserts can definitely be an aphrodisiac. From chocolate-covered strawberries to the tasty treats you dropped a bundle on from the bakery down the street for your anniversary, but where does cake fall in?

If you think about it, baking a cake (or cupcakes) for somebody can mean a lot more than a nice gesture nowadays. We have always heard that food is the way to the heart and we all know everyone likes cake.

Therefore, it makes sense that if you are trying to seduce somebody, get them to break up with you, or even if you just want to be friends, the best way to say it is through the wonderful language of cake.

Sure, the empowered woman doesn't need to bake anything for a man, and men should do all the baking, but we're not talking about barefoot and pregnant in the kitchen—in fact, proper footwear is recommended. Baking can get intense.

Ladies and gentlemen, make sure your baking is up to par and take note of what this list of baked goods means.

It's not official, but it should be

- Red velvet cake with cream cheese icing: Nothing says, "I want to do you" more than baking a red velvet cake for somebody. Added points if you made cupcakes and put a chocolate Hershey's Kiss in the center.

Red velvet cake is scrumptious and downright scandalous. It can be the Angelina Jolie of cakes – a home wrecker – so watch out. If somebody brings your significant other red velvet cake, keep a close eye on the situation, they mean business.

- German chocolate cake: This cake says "no frills commitment." This person probably likes you, but doesn't want to limit their options. Chocolate is universal – except for the freaks that hate it – so keep in mind, this person could be baking 10 other German chocolate cakes for their other lovers, too.

- Funfetti: Fun and innocent, Funfetti is what you bring to your nephew's 5th birthday. This cake brings back the sweet childhood memories of birthdays, tree climbing and jumping on trampolines. Nothing is as fun as Funfetti cake. You don't want any drama; you just want to eat some cake with some good company.

- Yellow cake with chocolate icing: OK, you mildly like this person. Maybe it's a new friend whose birthday is around the corner and you want to do something nice. Yellow cake with chocolate icing is the procrastinator's baking solution. Easy to make, and you probably won't have to worry about your new friend's picky eating habits because everyone likes yellow cake.

However, if it is yellow cake with vanilla, this person probably doesn't like you very much and their mom might have made the cake for you.

- Strawberry shortcake: This is the brotherly love of cakes. Definitely a summer cake, this cake just wants to be loved by everyone. Not appropriate to bake in winter. Bottom line.

- Double-chocolate cake: This not only says seduction, but passion and sensuality. This cake wants to make love. Bonus points for adding a raspberry layer and/or strawberries. This cake is deeply sexual and deeply meaningful.

- Angel food cake: Despite its random popularity. Angel food cake is gross. This is what you bought on sale at Kroger when you remembered you said you would bake your ex-boyfriend or ex-girlfriend something and kicked yourself immediately after making that promise.

Angel food cake is what you bring to your "fake friends" and enemies.

- Cheesecake: If red velvet and double chocolate cakes are sexy, this cake is full of committed love. The person that baked the cheesecake for you will love you no matter what, wants to get old and fat with you, and will take walks with you on Sunday mornings.

It is a given that there are a about a million different types of cake out there. Of course I didn't list them all, but hopefully this gives you a rough idea of what to expect the next time somebody graciously offers you a slice of (hopefully) yummy cake.

## — Letter to the Editor —

Dear Editor,

In response to Mr. Jones' piece in last week's CT, I feel compelled to respond. I'm not a bright person, but I am a hell of a mechanic, so this is in my wheelhouse.

First, manual transmissions are not magically more efficient. They're generally a few percentage points more efficient than automatic transmissions, if you are talking about fuel economy. Depending on how conservatively you drive, you can save 2-3 miles per gallon.

Second, the fact that you can't find high-mpg automatics is not because they're significantly less efficient, it's because almost nobody makes large consumer vehicles with stick shifts. The vehicles with larger, less efficient engines generally don't offer a manual transmission option. You can no longer buy a full-sized pickup truck or van with a manual

transmission. Less than 2 percent of new car sales include a manual transmission, and most new cars do not have it available as an option.

Third, the cars that DO offer manual transmissions are little roller skate cars, not God-fearing American Monster Trucks. A Nissan Versa is not my idea of comfort and safety.

In summation, you've needlessly oversimplified a complex relationship. If you want good fuel-efficiency numbers, buy a little roller skate car with a manual transmission and a 1.6 liter engine.

I, however, will be pouring gasoline into my automatic 1994 GMC Jimmy, while it grunts and snorts and shoots flames out the back.

That's how I roll.

Joe Anderson

the  
ct

ROBERTO  
CURTIS

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.

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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.



# comics

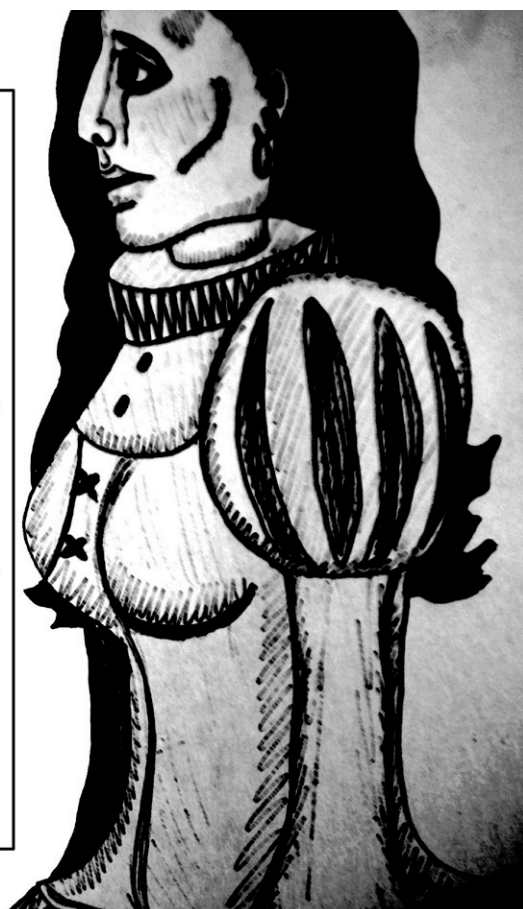
Forget Fairytales

Christine Stoddard

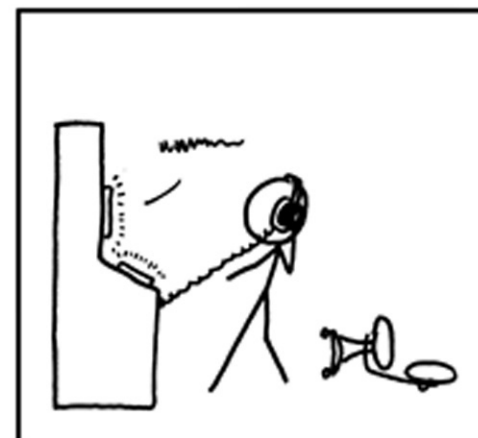
xkcd

Randall Munroe

ONCE UPON A TIME, THERE WAS A BEAUTIFUL, SMART, INTERESTING, COLLEGE-EDUCATED, CAREER-ORIENTED PRINCESS SEARCHING FOR HER PRINCE CHARMING. SHE THOUGHT, "SURELY A HANDSOME, EMPLOYED, LIBERAL-MINDED PRINCE WITH A GOOD SENSE OF HUMOR WILL WANT TO MARRY ME." THE DRAGONS FLYING IN THE SKY LAUGHED AS THEY OVERHEARD HER SAY THIS. THE PRINCESS SCOWLED, BLUSHED, AND RETURNED TO HER PERSONAL LIBRARY, WHERE SHE READ--CAT IN HER LAP--HAPPILY EVER AFTER. THE END.



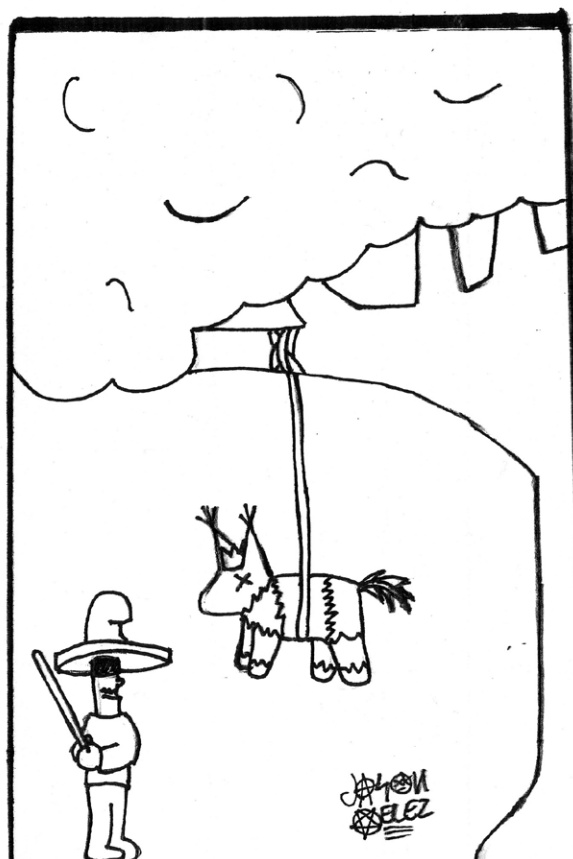
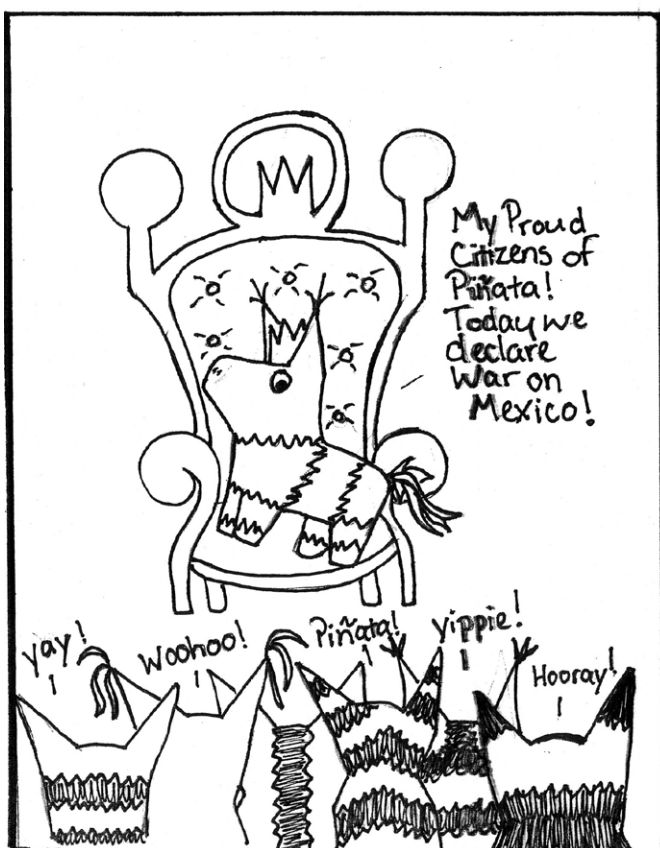
NOW AND THEN, I ANNOUNCE "I KNOW YOU'RE LISTENING" TO EMPTY ROOMS.



IF I'M WRONG, NO ONE KNOWS. AND IF I'M RIGHT, MAYBE I JUST FREAKED THE HELL OUT OF SOME SECRET ORGANIZATION.

Time to Kill

Jason Velez



Opinions expressed within the comics pages are those of individual artists and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Commonwealth Times or Virginia Commonwealth University.

## Add your voice

The comics pages of The Commonwealth Times are open to the VCU community. Contributors are welcome by email at [graphics@commonwealthtimes.com](mailto:graphics@commonwealthtimes.com), or by mail and in person at 817 W. Broad St., Richmond, Va. 23220-3806.

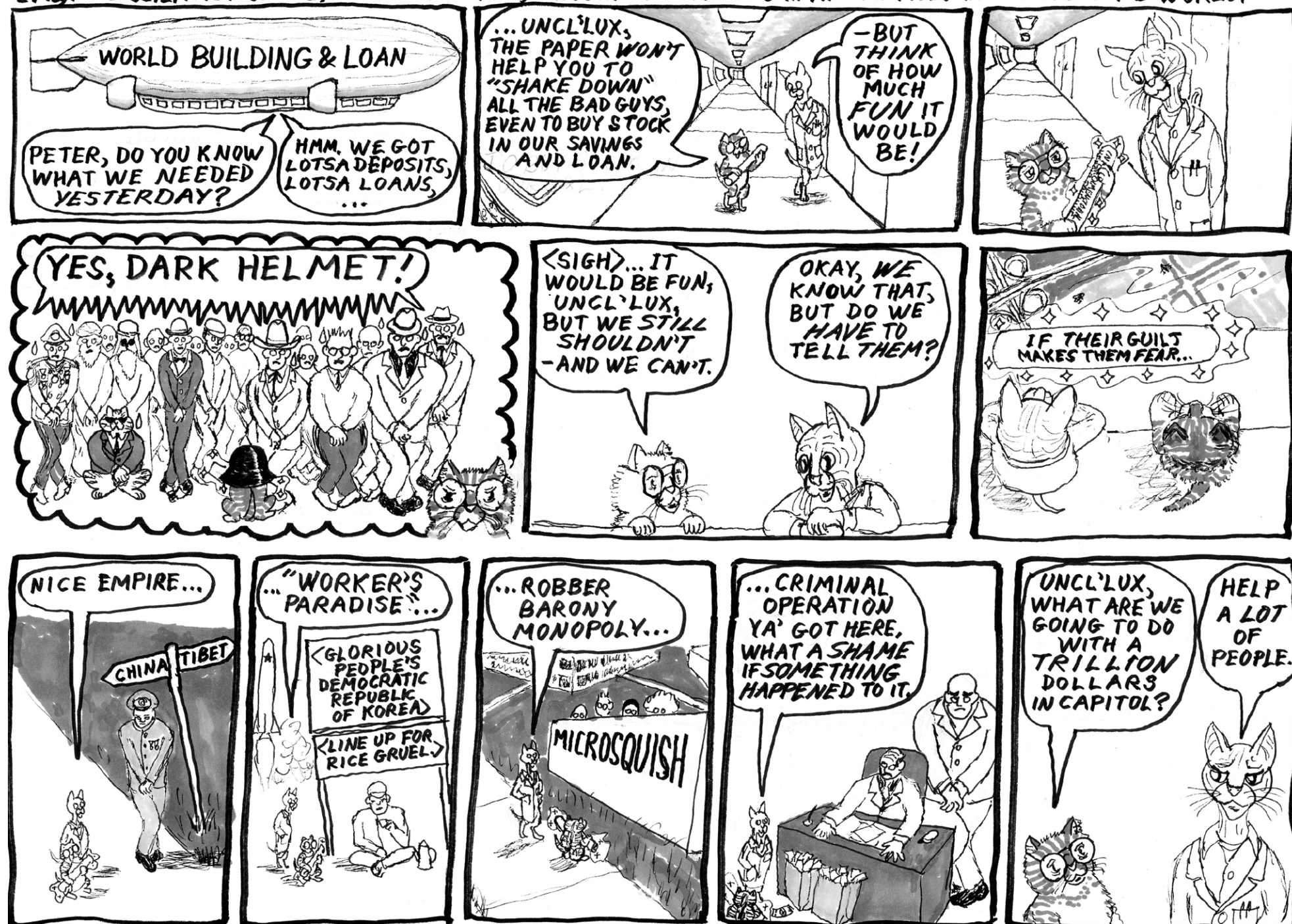
Comics must be sent from a valid VCU e-mail address or signed with daytime and evening telephone contact. We reserve the right to edit for grammar, style and space.

Roberto Curtis  
Executive Editor

Melissa Tablante  
Graphic Designer



PETER THE KITTEN, WITH SANTA'S ROLLED UP NEWSPAPER OF JUSTICE ON LOAN, AND WITH HELP FROM (LAPSED EVIL) MAD SCIENTIST UNCLE, DR. M LUX LUTHER, BROUGHT HOME OWNERSHIP AND MICROLOANS TO THE THIRD WORLD.



... AND THAT'S ALL I'M GOING TO THROW AT YOU ALL, ABOUT HEROIC, REDEMPTIVE HIGH FINANCE. IT'S BACK TO MORE BELIEVABLE THINGS (FNORD).

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