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

commonwealthtimes.org

University set to change, Rao expresses concern

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free





briefs

Local and VCU

Governor's budget cuts call for furloughs

Gov. Bob McDonnell's recommendation for closing the state's budget shortfall includes five furlough days for state workers over each of the next two years.

The governor would also scrap a recommendation in former Gov. Timothy M. Kaine's proposed budget that current state employees be required to contribute to their pension plans.

Acknowledging the effect of the furloughs on workers' families, the governor this morning said he is proposing a 3 percent bonus for state employees in December 2011.

Brief by the Richmond Times-Dispatch

Va. challenges EPA's stance on global warming

Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli turned up the heat on global warming Tuesday.

On behalf of the state, Cuccinelli filed a petition asking the federal Environmental Protection Agency to reconsider its December finding that global warming poses a threat to people.

Cuccinelli also filed a petition with the federal appeals court in Washington seeking a court review of the EPA finding.

Cuccinelli had no comment beyond a brief e-mail to news organizations. A news conference on the issue was scheduled for Wednesday afternoon.

Gov. Bob McDonnell supported the moves.

Brief by the Richmond Times-Dispatch

Health study ranks Fairfax high, Richmond low

Fairfax County is the healthiest city or county in the state, according to a new national report from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation that ranks localities by health outcomes and health factors in all 50 states. The city of Richmond ranks low.

In Virginia, many Northern Virginia counties are top of the list, while some counties in the southern part of the state generally fare worse.

Here are some rankings of central Virginia areas in health outcomes. Higher on the list is better.

Powhatan, 6; Chesterfield, 17; Goochland, 22; Henrico, 43; Colonial Heights, 64; Amelia, 95; Hopewell, 117; Richmond city, 124; Petersburg, 130.

Brief by the Richmond Times-Dispatch

National and International

Idaho families wait for news on US missionaries

A Haitian judge decided to release eight of the 10 U.S. missionaries arrested on child kidnapping charges.

Judge Bernard Saint-Vil told The Associated Press on Wednesday that eight of the missionaries were being released because the parents of the children they were accused of trying to kidnap testified that they voluntarily handed their children over to the group. The judge said the eight are free to leave without bail or other conditions.

But Saint-Vil said group leader Laura Silsby and her personal assistant and nanny, Charisa Coulter, must remain behind so they can be questioned about their visit to Haiti before the Jan. 12 earthquake.

The group was detained trying to take 33 children out of the quake-stricken country late last month. The missionaries said they were on a mercy mission and had no intention of trafficking in children.

Brief by The Associated Press

Western Pa. school OKs concealed weapons group

A Pittsburgh-area community college will let a student form a campus chapter of a group that promotes the rights of students to carry concealed weapons.

A Community College of Allegheny County spokesman says Christa Brashier must provide a copy of the group's revised constitution by March.

Brashier threatened to sue after school officials, at first, refused to let her pass out leaflets advocating concealed carry rights in May. After getting permission, she pressed forward with her efforts to form a local chapter of a Texas-based nonprofit, Students for Concealed Carry on Campus.

Brashier's efforts have been backed by the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education and the American Civil Liberties Union.

Brief by The Associated Press

Taliban using civilians as human shields in Marjah

Taliban fighters are increasingly using civilians as human shields in the assault on the southern town of Marjah, an Afghan official said Wednesday as military squads resumed painstaking house-to-house searches in the Taliban stronghold.

About 15,000 NATO and Afghan troops are taking part in the offensive around Marjah, which has an estimated 80,000 inhabitants and was the largest town in southern Helmand province under Taliban control. NATO hopes to rush in aid and public services as soon as the town is secured to try to win the loyalty of the population.

The Marjah offensive is the biggest joint operation since the 2001 U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan and is a major test of a retooled NATO strategy to focus on protecting civilians, rather than killing insurgents.

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

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

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news

Rao addresses university changes, student concerns



Cicily Robertson, a junior pre-dental hygiene major, asks President Rao a question at the SGA Presidential Roundtable Monday night in the University Student Commons.

Erica Terrini photo

ERICATERRINI
News Editor

A dwindling faculty, lack of state funding and financial aid were some issues addressed at the Student Government Association Presidential Roundtable Monday night in the University Student Commons.

About 100 student organization members attended the first roundtable for the spring semester to speak with VCU President Michael Rao, who spoke to students about how the university will change in response to the state economy.

"I don't think people in powerful positions are sure of how we are going to handle all of what's going on," Rao said. "What we don't know is actually much more than what we do know."

Rao said a number of students he has talked to said they were drawn to VCU because of the diversity of the student and faculty population and of the Richmond community, but that point of pride might be affected because of a lack of financial resources.

"We feel this important obligation to the university to be a diverse environment in which we have the chance to learn from each other," Rao said.

Rao said he thinks aspects of the learning environment at VCU are better than at other universities and there is much to be proud of.

"(VCU) has come a long way and has made great strides, and it continues to be on a relatively rapid trajectory toward success," Rao said. "But it is an emerging university and it is one that once it found itself along that pathway, (faced) a challenge, particularly the one in terms of its relationship with a state that faces a tremendous economic crisis."

Rao said he is concerned about where the university is headed and he is especially concerned about the small number of faculty and the lack of financial aid resources available for students.

"We are a people intensive organization," Rao said. "There's nothing to apologize for in that regard. We are very proud of the fact that what we do involves interactions between people and as you know it changes the lives of the people who come here."

Rao said over the past 10 years, the university has experienced a 22 percent decline in the number of faculty members per 1,000 students. The university also had 8,500 fewer students 10 years ago.

The second concern is financial aid: Rao said VCU has about half of the financial aid resources available that its research university peer, Virginia Tech has and about 10 percent of the resources available to the University of Virginia. VCU only meets 68 percent of student needs for financial aid.

Rao said with the state budget cut of \$13 million and an increase in student population has and will continue to take its toll on the university.

"I don't want to create a self-fulfilling prophecy but it could actually get worse," Rao said.

By July 2011, federal stimulus money for the university will no longer be provided. Rao said by mid-summer, the university has no reason to believe that the \$43 million it is spending now will continue.

RAO continued to CT4



VCUarts loses iconic professor, Gerald Donato

VCU Communications and Public Relations

A retired arts professor, who was a key figure in the development of the VCU School of the Arts into a nationally recognized program, died Sunday.

Gerald Donato, 68, retired from teaching at VCU in 2005 after a 38-year career. He was an influential figure on campus who helped push the school's artists in new, daring directions, according to Richard Toscan, Ph.D., dean of the VCU School of the Arts.

"Jerry was one of a group of faculty who joined the school as young artists in the late 60s and early 70s and painted like they didn't live here," Toscan said. "There was already a strong base here, but they blew open the options for painters in the same way and at the same time that others were doing the same in New York and Los Angeles."

In 2007, the VCU School of the Arts Anderson Gallery hosted "Gerald Donato: Reinventing the Game," an exhibition that gathered 40 years of Donato's paintings, drawings and prints.

A selection of images from the exhibition and essays on Donato's work are available on the Web site of Blackbird, an online journal of literature and the arts based at VCU.

In an accompanying essay to the exhibition, Richard Roth, former chairman of the Department of Painting and Printmaking at VCU, stated that Donato's "irreverent, in-your-face attitude, born of Southside (Chicago) streets, is an American story. He revels in the vulgar and the underappreciated, and he stands defiant of all forms of artifice and authority."

Roth stated Donato's work is a "distinctly eccentric, off-kilter and sometimes

perverse take on painting."

Donato's whimsical works belie the devotion with which he approached painting. He began his artistic career as a printmaker and originally taught lithography when he arrived at VCU, Roth stated.

"He realized he had the sensibility and constitution of a painter," Roth stated. "Donato taught himself to paint, methodically and with great determination, over a period of many years. He became not just a painter, but a hard-core, no-holds-barred painter's painter."

Donato was known for his witty, often subversive works that "mined both the high and the low," according to Amy Moorefield, former curator of collections of the Anderson Gallery.

Moorefield wrote the introduction to "Reinventing the Game." In the early 1980s, Donato began to frequently use a figure named "Mr. Man" in his works. The character, who was an appropriation of the Disney character "Steamboat Willie," would appear in Donato's works as his alter ego, according to Moorefield.

Donato's work has been shown at a number of galleries and museums across the country, including solo exhibitions at the Reynolds Gallery, the 1708 Gallery (where he was a founding member) and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond.

Donato received two fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts during his career—one in painting and one in prints, books and/or drawings.

A celebration of Donato's life is scheduled for Sunday at 3 p.m. at the Plant Zero Art Center, 0 E. 4th Street.

Information provided by VCU News Center.

RAO continued from CT3

VCU has already cut \$20.5 million in the past year. According to Rao, Virginia has the lowest investment from the commonwealth per student of all the southeastern states.

Rao said possible solutions include scholarship funds, continuing to request donations, offering more online and hybrid (online and classroom-based) courses and reaching out to state legislators.

Cicily Robertson, a junior pre-dental hygiene major said she noticed a lot of students had concerns about the recent budget cuts but her main concern was whether Rao was aware of student concerns.

"For him not to know that the lease is up on Ramz Hall made me question how in touch he is with the student body," Robertson said. "Students may not have guaranteed housing—Ramz Hall is no longer going to be open for them to live in unless they get in contact with new leasing people."

However, SGA President Gabriel Walker said Rao has worked closely with the SGA and considering the amount of issues regarding the university; Rao is often available to address students' questions and concerns.

"We have got to figure out how to get back on track," Rao said. "I'm going to do everything I can despite the fact that there are lots of people trying to drag me down."

Following Rao's speech, students were able to ask questions.

Bill would require interlock for any DUI

SAMANTHA DOWNING

Contributing Writer

Anyone convicted of drunken driving would have to have an ignition interlock installed in his or her car under a bill approved by the House of Delegates.

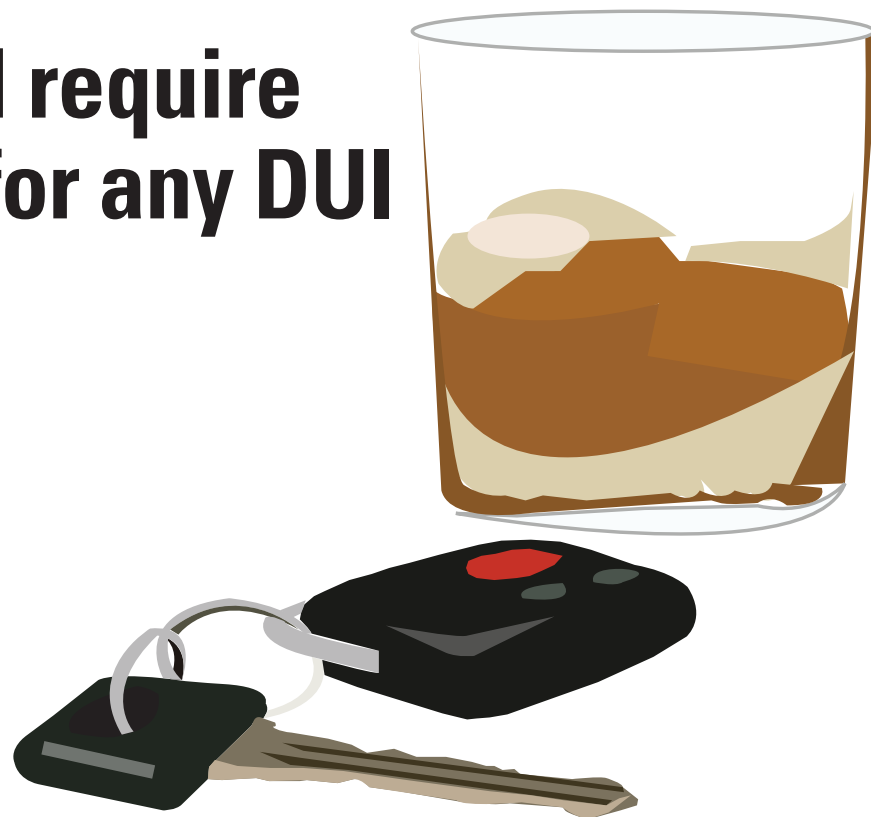
On an 84-13 vote last week, the House passed a bill to apply the ignition interlock requirement to anyone convicted of driving under the influence, even on the first offense.

Currently, Virginia law requires an ignition interlock only for drivers who have been convicted of DUI before or who have a blood alcohol content of .15 percent or higher. (A BAC of .08 is considered intoxicated.) Judges have the option to require the devices for a first offense.

House Bill 1197 would make it mandatory for an ignition interlock to be installed after the first offense as a condition for a restricted license. The motorist would have to use the device for at least six months.

There have been 23 alcohol violations on the Monroe Park campus, according to VCU Police Crime Logs for February 2010. A total of 149 drug-related violations were recorded in 2009 for both the Monroe Park and MCV campuses.

According to the VCU Drug and Alcohol Policy, the use of alcohol and illicit drugs on university property or during university activities is prohibited and could result in termination of employment,



Patrice Dalesandro illustration

DUI continued to CT5

Thursday, February 18, 2010



Carver Promise volunteer aids Richmond youth

ERICATERRINI

News Editor

It has been about 30 years since a group of Richmond higher education and corporate organizations started the Carver Promise.

VCU and three other universities—J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College, the University of Richmond and Virginia Union University—announced plans on Feb. 20, 1991 for a project for students at George Washington Carver Elementary School. The two-part promise provided the students with college mentors, according to the VCU Division of Community Engagement.

Nigel Brooks, a senior mass communications major with a concentration in strategic advertising, is a mentor in the volunteer program. Brooks also serves as the vice president for Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

The Commonwealth Times: When did you first start volunteering with the Carver Promise?

Brooks: I first started volunteering fall semester of my junior year after picking up a brochure at the SOVO fair.

The CT: Was it difficult to start volunteering?

Brooks: Volunteering was easy to start.

The CT: Who do you primarily work with?

Brooks: Casey Rogers – Carver Promise Program Coordinator and Willnette Lightfoot – CIS Site Coordinator.

The CT: Did you go through any training before volunteering?

Brooks: A mandatory training session that was only for a couple hours.

The CT: Can anyone volunteer?

Brooks: Yes, it is open to all college students who have an interest in making a difference in a child's life. I have even seen people who are not in college donate their time to the program. They do conduct

a background check to ensure the safety of the children.

The CT: Why did you decide to volunteer?

Brooks: I decided to volunteer because I had free time that I wanted to use constructively. Another reason why I volunteered was because of the lack of African-American males the program had at the time. I wanted to make a difference in a young man's life.

The CT: Why have you continued to volunteer?

Brooks: I continued to volunteer because I have seen how the program enhances the mentees' math and literacy scores. As mentors we form bonds with the children. If I didn't continue to volunteer in some shape or fashion I would feel as if I let my mentee down as well as myself

The CT: What does volunteering entail?

Brooks: Activities that improve math, grammar, reading and spelling skills. Sometimes the kids have a rough day and need someone to talk to so they talk to us to vent. Being that it's Black History Month, I read to my mentee about Jesse Owens. To improve his listening and comprehending skills I had my mentee draw a picture of what he heard me read to him. I also tested out my comprehension skills as well and drew my interpretation of the story.

The CT: What are the benefits of volunteering? What are some of the challenges?

Brooks: Knowing you made a difference, smile on a kids face makes you forget about your problems, looks good on resume (shows you are an involved citizen and that you want to make the community better).

Challenges—being patient and remembering that their attention span is not as long as college students.

The CT: Do you find it is difficult to balance volunteer work and school?

Brooks: No, all they ask is one hour a week. You can always volunteer more.

The CT: What is your opinion about community-serving programs?

Brooks: They are much needed.

The CT: What do you think these programs do for VCU and its students?

Brooks: Programs like this build ties with the community that surrounds VCU. Programs such as carver promise, know that the VCU students are willing to offer their time to children who will one day be the future advertisers, teachers, doctors, engineers and actors of tomorrow.

The CT: Describe the types of relationships you developed within the program.

Brooks: Good relationship with Casey Rogers (Known as Ms. Casey to the kids)—we always share a good laugh together, Ms. Casey and Ms. Lightfoot are easy-going, down-to-earth people.

The CT: Do you have any particular experiences that impacted you?

Brooks: When I first started mentoring, I had a mentee whose reading level was well below what it should have been. I knew I had to make a difference.



Since then I have been committed to enhancing the literacy skills of youth.

The CT: How have you changed since volunteering?

Brooks: I have become more humble, less judgmental, and more appreciative of what I have.

The CT: Do you plan to volunteer for any other programs in the future?

Brooks: Yes, volunteering has become part of my personal manifesto.

The CT: What kind of impact do you hope you have had by volunteering?

Brooks: I hope my volunteering has encouraged the kids to believe in themselves even if the people closest to them don't. To let them know you don't have to be a product of your environment but rather a success story from your neighborhood.

The CT: What kind of feedback do you get from those you assist?

Brooks: Ms. Casey lets me know about what the kids are struggling with and she suggests ways in which I can help them. She sends friendly emails that keep volunteers informed.

The CT: Would you say volunteer opportunities are widely available at VCU?

Brooks: Yes, students can find out about all kinds of volunteer opportunities in the Student Orgs room in the commons.

The CT: In the Richmond community?

Brooks: Yes, people just need to ask and look around.

The CT: Is the Carver Promise volunteer staff short-handed? Or do they have a lot of participants?

Brooks: There are a good number of participant but always looking for more volunteers especially men.

The CT: What would you say to fellow VCU students about volunteering?

Brooks: Get out and volunteer ... We need you but most importantly the kids need you.

The CT: What are your career plans and how has volunteering affected those plans, if at all?

Brooks: My ultimate goal is to be a Chief Marketing Officer of a Fortune 500 company. Carver Promise has made me want to start my own program that will benefit minorities in low-income neighborhoods. The programs focused will be preparing pre-teens and teenagers for Corporate America.

news • commonwealthtimes.org • CT5

DUI continued from CT4

expulsion, referral for prosecution and referral for satisfactory participation in a rehabilitation program.

Under VCU policy, violators could be referred for prosecution by state law. Violators might face the ignition interlock requirement under this policy.

An ignition interlock is similar to a Breathalyzer installed in the dashboard of a vehicle. The driver must breathe into the mechanism and register a BAC lower than the amount programmed into the ignition interlock before the car can start.

Virginia is one of 47 states that have ignition interlock laws, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. Ten states require the devices for all drunken-driving offenses, as HB 1197 would do.

Three states do not have ignition interlock laws: Alabama, South Dakota and Vermont.

HB 1197 has been assigned to the Senate Committee for Courts of Justice.

For more information on ignition interlock laws, visit the National Conference of State Legislatures at www.ncsl.org/default.aspx?tabid=13558.



spectrum

book review

'A Lesson Before Dying': Worth a second glance

RAINBOW BRACEY
Assistant Spectrum Editor

"A Lesson Before Dying" by Ernest J. Gaines was assigned to me, like countless other people in middle school for Black History Month. And while the gravity of the message might be lost on the average middle-schooler, the average college student should think about wiping the dust off the cover of this classic.

"A Lesson Before Dying," the story of protagonist Grant Wiggins and Jefferson, immerses the reader from the first page. Wiggins, a black teacher on a rural Louisiana plantation, lives in a constant state of struggle for identity while simultaneously attempting to bring literacy and education to black elementary school children.

Though slavery is now extinct, the South is still divided by race. When Jefferson is accused of murder it only intensifies that division. The black community has little doubt as to what the outcome of the trial will be. Jefferson's court appointed defense attorney argues not for his innocence, but for his dim-wittedness, comparing him to foolish hog. It was not only demeaning but ineffective.

Through Jefferson was merely a witness to crime, he is convicted and sentenced to death. Through the determination of Jefferson's godmother Miss Emma, Wiggins enters Jefferson's life and begins to educate the now imprisoned young man in the short time before his death sentence is carried out. This journey takes both men down the road of acceptance-of-self, a path laden with bitter mistrusts for Wiggins. He's lost faith in the church, which is ironically the school.

"My classroom was the church. My desk was a table, used as a collection table by the church on Sundays, and also used for the service of the Holy Sacrament. My students' desks were the benches upon which their parents and grandparents sat during church meeting. Ventilation into the church was by way of the four windows on either side, and from the front and back doors. There was a blackboard on the back wall. Behind my desk was the pulpit and the altar. This was my school."

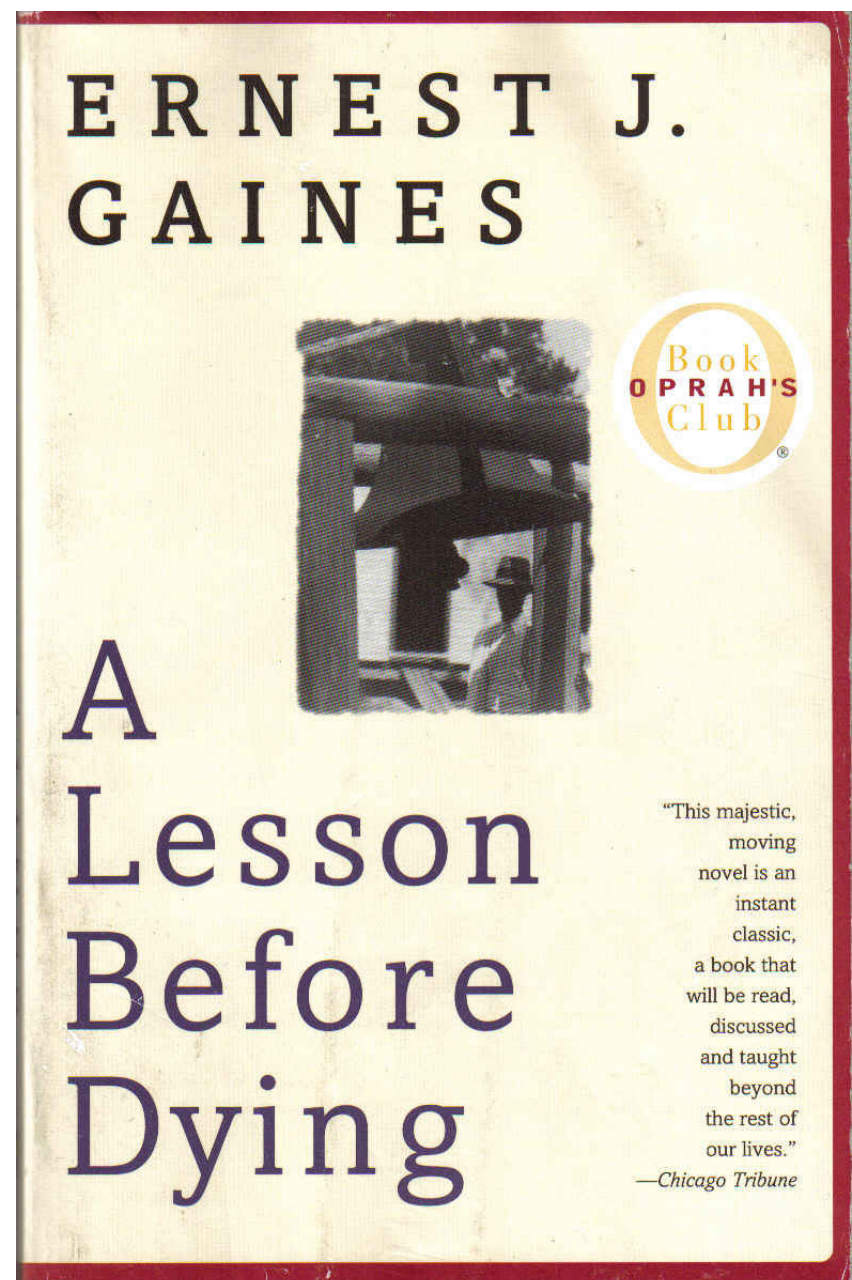
Though the language of race is subtle in the book, it carries potent impact. The author shines light onto the internal battle often waged with African-American males of the time. Though they are men, they're called boys. Though Wiggins and Jefferson appear to reside in two completely different circumstances, their inner plight is the same. Jefferson wants to be seen as a man, not a hog. Wiggins needs to view himself as a man despite the constant devaluation of southern society.

Accompanied by the naiveté of youth, my first read resulted in anger and disappointment—not at the writer, but at the reality of the situation presented in "A Lesson Before Dying." Now a decade older and wiser, the book perpetuates a re-evaluation of how far this country has come. The lessons Wiggins and

Jefferson learn are imperative to teaching present-day readers an antiquated lesson. So while Jefferson learns to write, the readers learn to appreciate the struggle of oppression; regardless of race.

As Black History Month hurdles toward an end, and we as Americans grapple to understand its continued value, Earnest J. Gaines offers a Pulitzer Prize-winning look into the African-American experience that might be worth another read.

Grade: A



Lil Wayne hosts rock/rap/pop mosh pit

JEREMY CLEMMONS

Staff Writer

Conceived as rap/rock, drawing comparisons to Run D.M.C. and N.E.R.D, Lil Wayne's latest record, "Rebirth" (which was conveniently released to make it seem like the rapper won't be in jail for a year starting this month), is the product of an entertainer who loves sound for effect. The single "Prom Queen" boasts larger than life riffs, crashing guitar solos, and operatic choruses. "Get a Life's" stop-and-go bass line sounds like The Crash meets the Black-Eyed Peas, while the punkish "Knockout" ft. Nicki Minaj swiftly moves from pathos to anger, from Taylor Swift to the Ting Tings.

All of rock's grandest and most recognizable tricks are here, or at least the ones that have been acclimated to the mainstream, and Weezy wants to try all of them. Lyrically, he's surprisingly revealing. When he's not flaunting it, there's actually some hilarious parody (of teen break-up songs, of rock ballads, of the Beastie Boys—"Da, Da, Da").

However at times "Rebirth" seems indistinguishable from any other Wayne record. The reason is simple: the twin stars of rock and rap have aligned the last decade under pop's "let's include everybody" motto. Just last year, and with an album still reigning large on popular music radio stations, Jay-Z declared practically the same thing (on "D.O.A." he raps, "This s*** need a verse from Jeezy, I might send this to the mixtape Weezy") creating an album in "Blueprint 3" that veers dangerously close to a pop medium. Why exclude anybody? Isn't that what music is all about?

"Rebirth," an album so enigmatically terrible, but also so full of swagger it is either the most benevolent album ever written or a piece of crap. Good luck figuring that one out.

Grade: C+**Download (don't steal):** "Prom Queen" ft. Shanell by Lil Wayne

album briefs

February music frenzy

ANDREW SHILLING

Staff Writer

"The Rainwater LP" by Citizen Cope**Release Date: February 9, 2010**

Clarence Greenwood, originally from Washington D.C., is known to most of his fans as Citizen Cope. His new album, "The Rainwater LP" doesn't take much of a step forward, although it doesn't take any backwards either. It is actually very reminiscent of his last three records; there just aren't any songs like "Son's Gonna Rise" this time. Rather than putting out a one-hit-record, Greenwood toned it down and produced a more complete LP.

Grade: B-**Download (don't steal):** "I Couldn't Explain Why" by Citizen Cope**"Another Round" by Jaheim****Release Date: February 9, 2010**

Jaheim's fourth album has a refreshing, retro-70's vibe. The R&B artist sets the tempo of his new album, "Another Round" with laid-back finger snapping rhythms and heartfelt keyboards under choral background singing. Nevertheless, the repetitive nature of this album, that which that makes this album entertaining, also makes it a little monotonous.

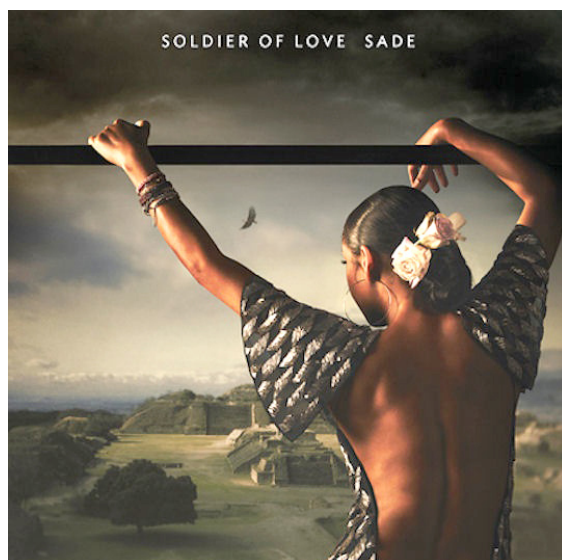
Grade: C+**Download (don't steal):** "Finding My Way Back" by Jaheim**"Heligoland" by Massive Attack****Release Date: February 9, 2010**

Robert "3D" del Naja, Grant "Daddy G" Marshall and Andrew "Mushroom" Vowels of Massive Attack, have been together since 1988. The group's subterranean intensity has been their trademark since they put out their first album in '91. It's been seven years since the band's previous studio release, "100th Window." This time the legendary trip-hop band from

London is leaving nothing to chance, and has joined forces with vocalists from bands like T.V. On The Radio and Gorillaz.

Grade: B+**Download (don't steal):** "Pray For Rain" by Massive Attack**"Soldier of Love" by Sade****Release Date: February 9, 2010**

It was the fall of 2000 when Sade put out her last album, "Lovers Rock." Now, 10 years later, her attitude is a little darker and a little more reflective; however her voice is still undoubtedly the best in the of adult contemporary genre. Sade Adu wrote the songs for "Soldiers of Love," and while some of the hip-hop rhythm on this album may be a little out dated and under-produced, her casually dynamic voice definitely compensates.

Grade: B**Download (don't steal):** "The Moon and Sky" by Sade

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Weekend Calendar

spectrum

Thursday 2/18

MAC Events Home Show: Enjoy the regions of the premier home and garden show. 1-9 p.m. \$8. Greater Richmond Convention Center. 403 N. Third St. 783-7300.

Art After Hours: VMFA features Michael Clark Blues Band and poetry by Laura Davenport. 6:30 p.m. \$10. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. 200 N. Blvd. 340-1400.

North Star Light: Pathway to Freedom: Learn how Harriet Tubman and other inspiring individuals made the trek to freedom. 7 p.m. \$3. Science Museum of Virginia. 2500 W. Broad St. 864-1400.

“Grapes of Wrath”: Presented by Theatre VCU and Barksdale Theatre. 8 p.m. \$10 with valid college ID. Barksdale Theatre. 1601 Willow Lawn Dr. 282-2620.

Tegan and Sara: With Holly Miranda/Steel Train. 8 p.m. \$30. The National. 704 E. Broad St. 612-1900.

Friday 2/19

Round Up Richmond: Take a ride on a mechanical bull and dance to your favorite country artist. 8 p.m. Free. The Hat Factory. 140 Virginia St. 788-4281.

Brews and Blues with Rattle Snake Shake: 5-8 p.m. Free. Capital Ale House. 623 E. Main St. 780-2537.

Facing East: Delve into the story of a family’s immense loss. 8 p.m. \$20. The Richmond Triangle Players. 1300 Altamont Ave. 346-8113.

The Little Prince: The Latin Ballet brings the classic to life through dance. 7 p.m. \$15 students \$20 general public. Empire Theatre. 114 W. Broad St. 783-1688.

“Grapes of Wrath”: Presented by Theatre VCU and Barksdale Theatre. 8 p.m. \$10 with valid college ID. Barksdale Theatre. 1601 Willow Lawn Dr. 282-2620.

Saturday 2/20

Perpetual Groove with Larjar: 9 p.m. \$15. The National. 704 E. Broad St. 788-4281.

The Richmond Symphony presents Peter and the Wolf: 11 a.m. \$17. Carpenter Theatre at Richmond CenterStage. 600 E. Grace St. 225-9000.

Upstairs/Downstairs at Maymont: Explore the upper and lower levels of the Maymont Mansion. 11 a.m.-12 p.m. \$7. The Maymont House Museum. 1700 Hampton St. 358-7166.

Arabia: IMAX Dome film. 9 a.m. \$8.50. Science

Museum of Virginia. 2500 W. Broad St. 864-1400.

Maymont Flower and Garden Show: 10 a.m.-9 p.m. \$8. Greater Richmond Convention Center. 403 N. Third St. 783-7300.

Green Unity Community Cleanup: 2 p.m. Mojo’s. 733 W. Cary St. 703-994-6542.

“Grapes of Wrath”: Presented by Theatre VCU and Barksdale Theatre. 2 p.m. and 8 p.m. \$10 with valid college ID. Barksdale Theatre. 1601 Willow Lawn Dr. 282-2620.

Sunday 2/21

Tyler Perry’s Madea in One Big Happy Family: 3 p.m. \$50-\$60. Richmond Coliseum. 601 E. Leigh St. 780-4970.

An American Turning Point: The Civil War in Virginia. 10 a.m-5 p.m. Free. The Virginia Historical Society. 428 North Blvd. 358-4901.

“Grapes of Wrath”: Presented by Theatre VCU and Barksdale Theatre. 2 p.m. \$10 with valid college ID. Barksdale Theatre. 1601 Willow Lawn Dr. 282-2620.

Richmond Shakespeare: Presents the singer Othello. 2:30 p.m. \$26-\$38. Carpenter Theatre at Richmond CenterStage. 600 E. Grace St. 225-9000.

Weekend Traveler

W a s h i n g t o n , D C .

Thursday 2/18

Prince vs. Madonna vs. Michael Jackson Dance Party: DJ Dredd mixes up the Purple One, the Material Girl and the Thrillermaker for what is sure to be a packed house. 9 p.m. \$15. 9:30 Club. 815 V St. NW Washington, D.C. 202-397-7328.

Tegan and Sara: 8 p.m. \$35 in advance \$38 on event day. Warner Theatre. 13th and E streets NW Washington, D.C. 877-598-8696.

Dining out for Haiti: All of restaurateur Ashok Bajaj’s restaurants will donate \$1 to the Red Cross every time certain appetizers and entrees are ordered between Jan. 19 and Feb. 19. Around Washington, D.C. 202-463-8700

The Used: 6 p.m. \$25. 9:30 Club. With Atreyu and Drive A. 815 V St. NW Washington, D.C. 202-265-0930.

Friday 2/19

Iranian Film Festival: See what’s new in Iranian

cinema at these free screenings. 7 p.m. Free. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institute. Jefferson Drive and 12 Street NW Washington, D.C. 202-633-1000.

“Three Sisters”: Constellation Theatre presents Anton Chekhov’s classic play about the slow death of the privileged class in turn-of-the-century Russia. 8 p.m. \$20. 1835 14th St. NW Washington, D.C. 800-494-8497.

Chinese Lunar New Year Celebration: See an exhibit about Confucius, displays about Chinese art and culture and live entertainment from noon to 5 p.m. on the weekends. Noon. Free. Lakeforest Mall. 701 Russell Ave. Gaithersburg, Md. 301-840-5840.

Saturday 2/20

Bolshoi Ballet: The renowned company from Moscow performs Yuri Grigorovich’s rendition of “Spartacus.” 1:30 and 7:30 p.m. \$47-\$135. John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. 2700 F St. NW Washington, D.C. 202-467-4600.

Cosmo Baker: One third of The Rub’s party rocking

DJs. With Sharkey. 10 p.m. Free. Little Miss Whiskey’s Golden Dollar. 1104 H St. NE Washington, D.C.

The Dig: Electro, house, funk and party jams from DJs Meistro, Deep Sang, Nacey and Juan Zapata upstairs, and drum n’ bass pressure in the basement. 10 p.m. \$5 before midnight \$10 after. Trinidad and Tobago Association of Washington, D.C. 5123 Georgia Ave. NW Washington, D.C. 202-722-1210.

Sunday 2/21

A Rare Encounter: The Hope and Wittelsbach-Graff Diamonds: Exhibition. 10 a.m to 5:30 p.m. Free. 10th St. and Constitution Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. (202) 633-1000.

Nature’s Best Photography Awards Exhibition 2009: Exhibition. 10 a.m to 5:30 p.m. Free. 10th St. and Constitution Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. (202) 633-1000.

Kathy Engel: Reads from her poetry as part of The Sunday Kind of Love Series. 4 p.m. Free. Busboys and Poets. 2021 14th St. NW Washington, D.C. 202-387-7638.



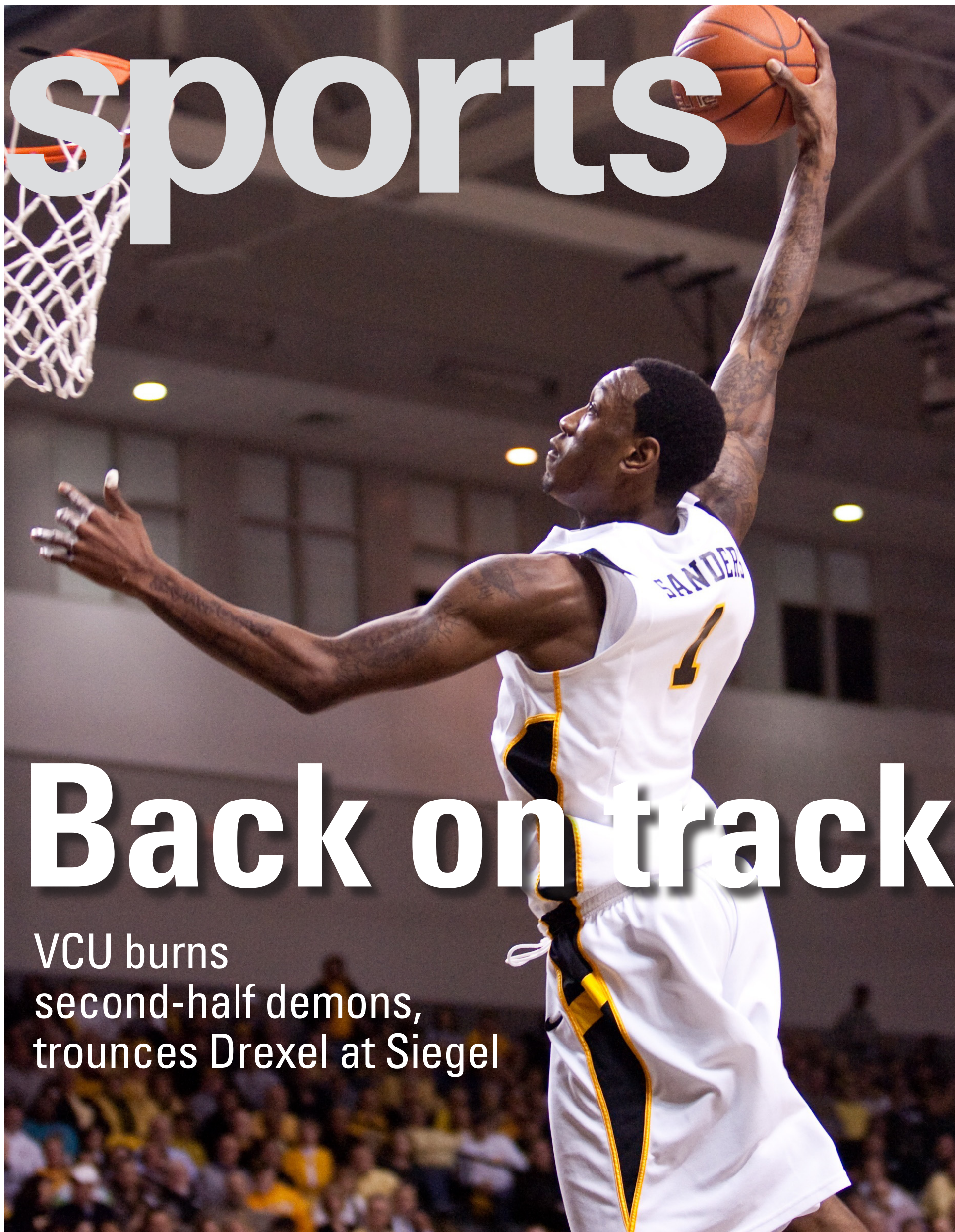


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sports

Back on track

VCU burns
second-half demons,
trounces Drexel at Siegel



TAYLOR HOWSMON
Sports Editor

With about nine minutes remaining in the second half of Tuesday night's game between VCU and Drexel, the Dragons' junior guard and leading scorer Jaime Harris went charging down the left-side of the lane towards the basket.

When he threw up his shot he found the 46.5" arm of Larry Sanders (Fort Pierce, Fla./Port St. Lucie) waiting to slap the ball into the first row of students behind the east-end basket of Verizon Wireless Arena.

After the tremendous block, Sanders fifth on the night, he turned to the students with a smile and imitated the patented finger wag of former NBA star Dikembe Mutombo.

The five blocks were just a piece of the dominance of the Ram' big man as VCU rolled to a huge 73-54 win on its home floor.

"I love the crowd here, I love the crowd so I get involved with the crowd whenever I get a chance," Sanders said. "This game I just tried to play with a lot of energy and it worked out."

The 6'11" superstar scored his 10th double-double of the year with 29 points and 13 rebounds, shooting a staggering 13-15 from the floor. And he completely separated his game from anyone else's on the floor.

"I told him that when you come with that kind of approach, we're going to be extremely tough to beat," VCU coach Shaka Smart said.

In what could have arguably been the Rams' best defensive performance of the season, VCU held the sixth-best scoring team in the CAA to only 54 points on 36 percent shooting.

Through the first 10 minutes of the opening half, it appeared that the Dragons would fight VCU tooth and nail the entire way.

With the score 16-15 with 10:05 remaining, VCU took to the task and according to coach Smart said as a team, "we're not going to let this happen tonight."

VCU finished the half with a 17-6 run, forged by Sanders' 10 points in that stretch. The Rams were also able to begin dominating Drexel in the paint.

Besides Sanders, both Jaime Skeen (Charlotte, NC/Wake Forest University) and Terrance Saintil (North Miami, Fla./Monsignor Pace) contributed major efforts on both ends.

Saintil played a whopping 14 minutes in the game, his second highest total on the year, and helped Sanders with a great defensive effort in the post.

In what seemed like a blink of an eye, the

BASKETBALL continued to CT12



Ed Nixon (50) goes up strongly for two.

LEFT: Larry Sanders (29 points) led all scorers.

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Kyle Laferriere photos



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Honor the Richmond 34 this month during **Sit-In|Stand Out at Richmond CenterStage**, the downtown performing arts center located at the site of the former Thalhimers. Attend lectures, performances and other events at CenterStage and Virginia Union from February 17– 22, and recognize this important chapter in American history.

For more information, visit RichmondCenterStage.com or Facebook.com/RichmondCenterStage.





BASKETBALL continued from CT11

Rams had surged the lead from one to 12 on a three by Joey Rodriguez (Oviedo, Fla./Lake Howell).

“The end of the first half was what killed us. The game was tight ... and we started the second half the same way we finished the first,” said Drexel coach Bruiser Flint.

The Rams seemed to cure whatever ailment was afflicting them in the past two games, where the Rams blew leads at the half to lose.

On this night, VCU had the lead and was not going to surrender it in the final 20 minutes.

“I think to fix the problem, we had to figure out what the problem was,” Sanders said. “It wasn’t offense; it was all defense ... I think we tried to fix that tonight.”

The Rams leaped out of the locker room on a 10-4 run and, with the lead at 43-25, they never looked back and kept the foot on the gas pedal.

Even though Drexel found a way to cut the lead to 13, the result of the game was never really in question as VCU forced the Dragons into submission.

With a few exclamation-point plays down the stretch including a play-of-the-year quality no-look pass and jam from Brandon Rozzell (Richmond/Highland Springs) to Sanders, the Rams were able to pull away once and for all, winning 73-54. Bradford Burgess (Midlothian/Benedictine) also contributed a double-double with 11 points and 10 rebounds. Twelve Rams saw action and nine scored in the game as VCU shot a sweltering 52 percent for the game. Harris led Drexel with 20 points. Now VCU looks to make a run toward the end of the season with an ESPNU Bracketbusters game Saturday against Akron.

As Sanders indicated afterward, last season VCU lost a close game at Nevada and responded, reeling off five straight victories, including one in the CAA title game to earn a trip to the big dance. VCU is now tied with Drexel for fifth in the CAA with a record of 18-7 and 10-6 in the league.

By the Numbers

Drexel (15-13, 10-6) Colds 0, Harris 20, Thomas 6, McCoy 0, Sam. Givens 2, Spencer 6, Phillip 0, Neisler 8, Sha. Givens 12.

Totals: 21 8-14 54

3-pointers: Harris 2, Sha. Givens 2 (team: 4-11)

VCU (18-7, 10-6) Sanders 29, Rodriguez 8, Burgess 11, Skeen 5, Nixon 4, Grayson 0, Saintil 2, Theus 3, Pishchalnikov 0, Daniels 0, Rozzell 9, Gwynn 2.

Totals: 27 12-20 73

3-pointers: Rodriguez 2, Burgess 1, Theus 1, Rozzell 3 (team: 7-15)

2010 ESPNU Bracket Busters

Feb. 19-20, 2010

(CAA games in bold)

TV Matchups:

Fri. Feb. 19

Old Dominion at No. 22 Northern Iowa – 7 p.m. ESPN2

William & Mary at Iona – 9 p.m. ESPNU

Sat. Feb. 20

Siena at No. 15 Butler – 11 a.m. ESPN2/ESPN360.COM

Morgan State at Murray State – Noon, ESPNU

Louisiana Tech at Northeastern – 1 p.m. ESPN2

Nevada at Missouri State – 3 p.m. ESPN2/ESPN360.COM

Akron at VCU – 4 p.m. ESPNU

College of Charleston at George Mason – 8 p.m. ESPN2

Western Carolina at Kent State – 8 p.m. ESPNU

New Mexico State at Pacific – 10 p.m. ESPNU

Wichita State at Utah State – 11:59 p.m. ESPN2/ESPN360

Non-TV Matchups:

Sat. Feb. 20

Boston U. at Delaware

Drexel at Bradley

South Carolina State at Georgia State

Rider at Hofstra

James Madison at Canisius

Towson at Manhattan

UNC Wilmington at Radford

Loyola-Chicago at Creighton

Drake at Cal State Northridge

Illinois-Chicago at Evansville

Morehead State at Illinois State

Indiana State at Green Bay

Western Michigan at Southern Illinois

Oral Roberts at Austin Peay

Buffalo at Saint Peter’s

Valparaiso at Bowling Green

Winthrop at Eastern Kentucky

Wright State at Ohio

Toledo at Cleveland State

UC Santa Barbara at Fresno State

Fairfield at Vermont

Eastern Michigan at Detroit

Tennessee Tech at Appalachian State

Niagara at Milwaukee





sports

2010 ESPN Bracketbusters

men's basketball preview

All time record

VCU is 4-0
Home: 2-0 (Siegel
Center: 1-0)
Away: 2-0

Last time out

VCU defeated Akron at the Siegel Center in December 2008 behind Eric Maynor's third 30-point game of the season. VCU led by as much as 17 points in the second half, but the Zips rallied and ended up only falling short thanks to a combination of missed shots in the final minute coupled with near perfect foul shooting from the Rams.

Akron at VCU
Sat. Feb. 20, 4 p.m.
Verizon Wireless
Center

VCU

Record of 18-7 overall, 7-1 at home.
Fifth in the CAA with a record of 10-6.

Head Coach: Shaka Smart, first season at VCU with a record of 18.7
CollegeInsider.com Mid-Major Top 25 Ranking: 19 (VCU dropped eight spots from last week's pecking order after they went 0-2 on the week.

Probable starting lineups:

Joey Rodriguez (G)
Bradford Burgess (G)
Ed Nixon (G)
Larry Sanders (F)
Jamie Skeen (F)

Akron

Record of 19-7 overall, 5-3 away.
Tied for first in Mid-American Conference's East Division with a record of 9-3.

Head coach: Keith Dambrot, sixth season at Akron with a record of 115-51.
CollegeInsider.com Mid-Major Top 25 Ranking: 12

Probable starting lineups:

Steve McNees (G)
Anthony Hitchens (G)
Nikola Cvetinovic (F)
Jimmy Conyers (F)
Zeke Marshall (C)

Notes

Akron's game at VCU concludes a five-game span where they only had one match at home. So far, they have won all of those games.

VCU coach Shaka Smart was hired by and served as an assistant to Akron coach Keith Dambrot. Smart was an assistant for the Zips between 2003 and 2006 and Smart regards Dambrot as his closest compatriot in the coaching realms.

Streaking: Akron had won four straight heading into Wednesday's game against Miami (Ohio) and seven of their last nine.

Saturday's matchup marks the third time the teams have played each other in the last three years. Before the first of those matchups in 2008, the Rams had not played Akron in 38 years.

This week

Men's basketball

Sat. Feb. 20, Akron, Siegel Center, 4 p.m., TV: ESPN U

Women's basketball

Thurs. Feb. 18, William & Mary, Siegel Center, 7 p.m.
Sun. Feb. 21, at George Mason, Fairfax, 1 p.m.

Men's track and field

Sun. Feb. 28, Mason Last Chance, Fairfax

Women's track and field

Sun. Feb. 28, Mason Last Chance, Fairfax

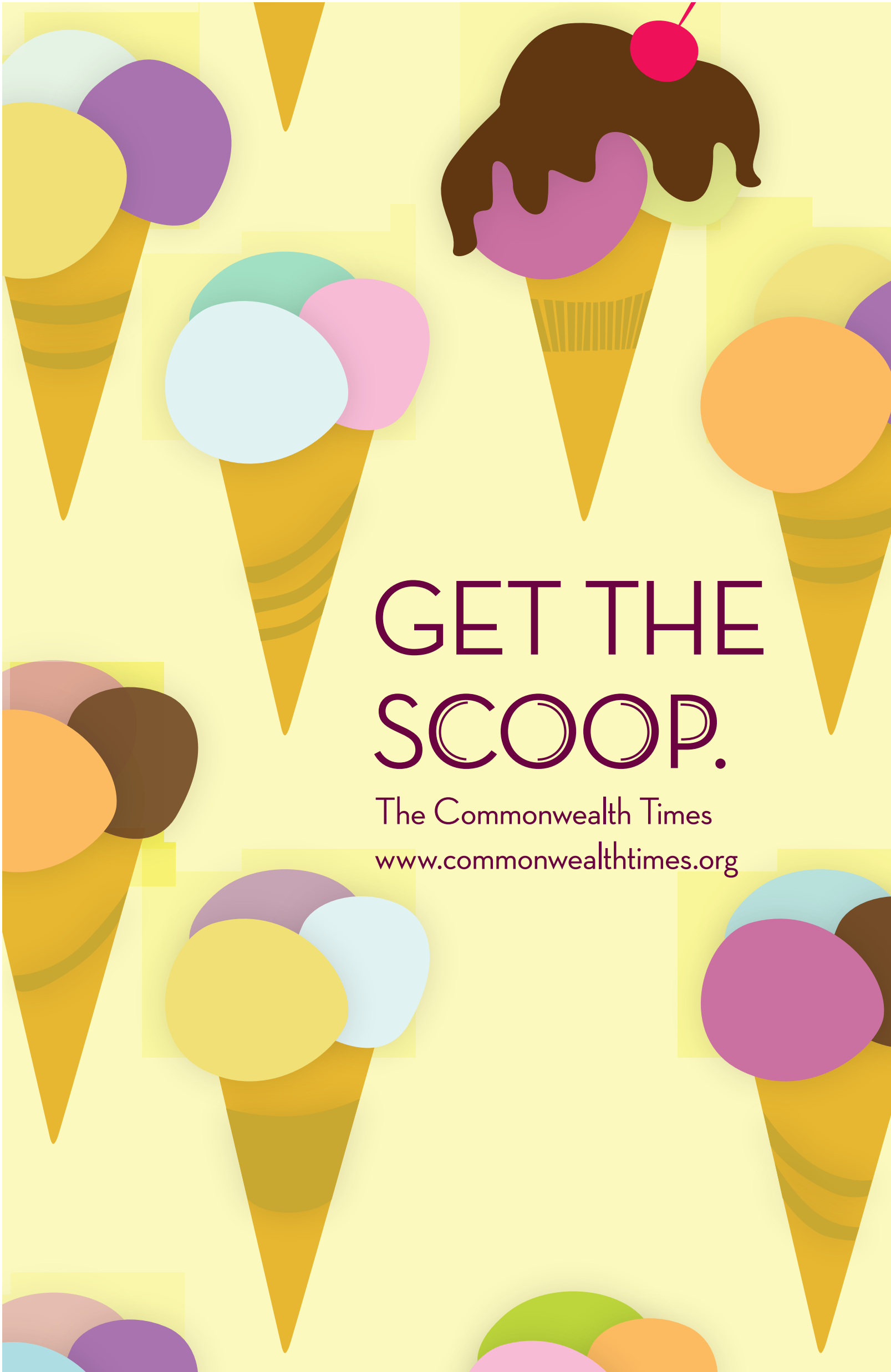
Men's tennis

Sun. Feb. 28, North Carolina, Thalhimer Tennis Center, 5 p.m.

Women's tennis

Sat. Feb. 20, at Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, 11 a.m.
Sun. Feb. 21, Penn, Thalhimer Tennis Center, 1 p.m.





Dear VCU Students,

Creating and maintaining a safe campus requires our continuous individual and collective efforts. We each have a responsibility regarding personal safety as well as a collective responsibility to sustain a safe and healthy campus environment for all. Although these efforts do not make us immune from crime, they draw us toward a common goal of preventing crime while strengthening our university community.

The practical steps we can all take for our individual and collective safety include:

- Become familiar with the campus environment
- Be aware of what is going on around you and who is around you
- Commit to memory the emergency phone number for VCU Police: **828-1234**
- Utilize the VCU Alert page (www.vcu.edu/alert/) and pay attention to communications from VCU Police and other University officials
- Sign up for security and other alert text messages from the university by going to www.vcu.edu/alert/notify
- If you see something suspicious or unusual, say something by contacting VCU Police immediately
- Prevent theft by making it a habit to lock doors, secure personal belongings, and never leave possessions unattended
- Use well traveled, well lit routes avoiding shortcuts
- Develop a personal safety plan rather than assume “it won’t happen to me”
- Enlist friends as travel companions – do not travel alone late at night
- Avoid alcohol and other substances which impair judgment and increase crime vulnerability
- Identify the yellow Emergency Reporting Telephones (ERTS) on campus and in the campus vicinity and utilize them for assistance
- Use the Security Escort Service by calling 828-WALK or using an ERTS phone
- Develop relationships with other students, faculty, staff and VCU Police. Ask others for assistance when needed
- Treat others with respect, care and civility
- Participate in university safety programs and presentations
- If you or someone you know is a victim of crime, talk to staff at University Counseling Services (828-6200)
- Post important phone contact numbers including
 - VCU Police, Emergency, **828-1234**
 - VCU Police, Non-Emergency, 828-1196
 - Security Escort Service, 828-9255 (WALK)
 - Division of Student Affairs & Enrollment Services, 828-1244
 - TDD 1-800-552-7917

Additional safety information can be found on the VCU Police web page, www.vcu.edu/police/, and from offices within the Division of Student Affairs & Enrollment Services, www.students.vcu.edu.

We wish you safety and great success this semester!

Henry G. Rhone
Vice Provost for Student Affairs & Enrollment Services

John Venuti
Chief of Police

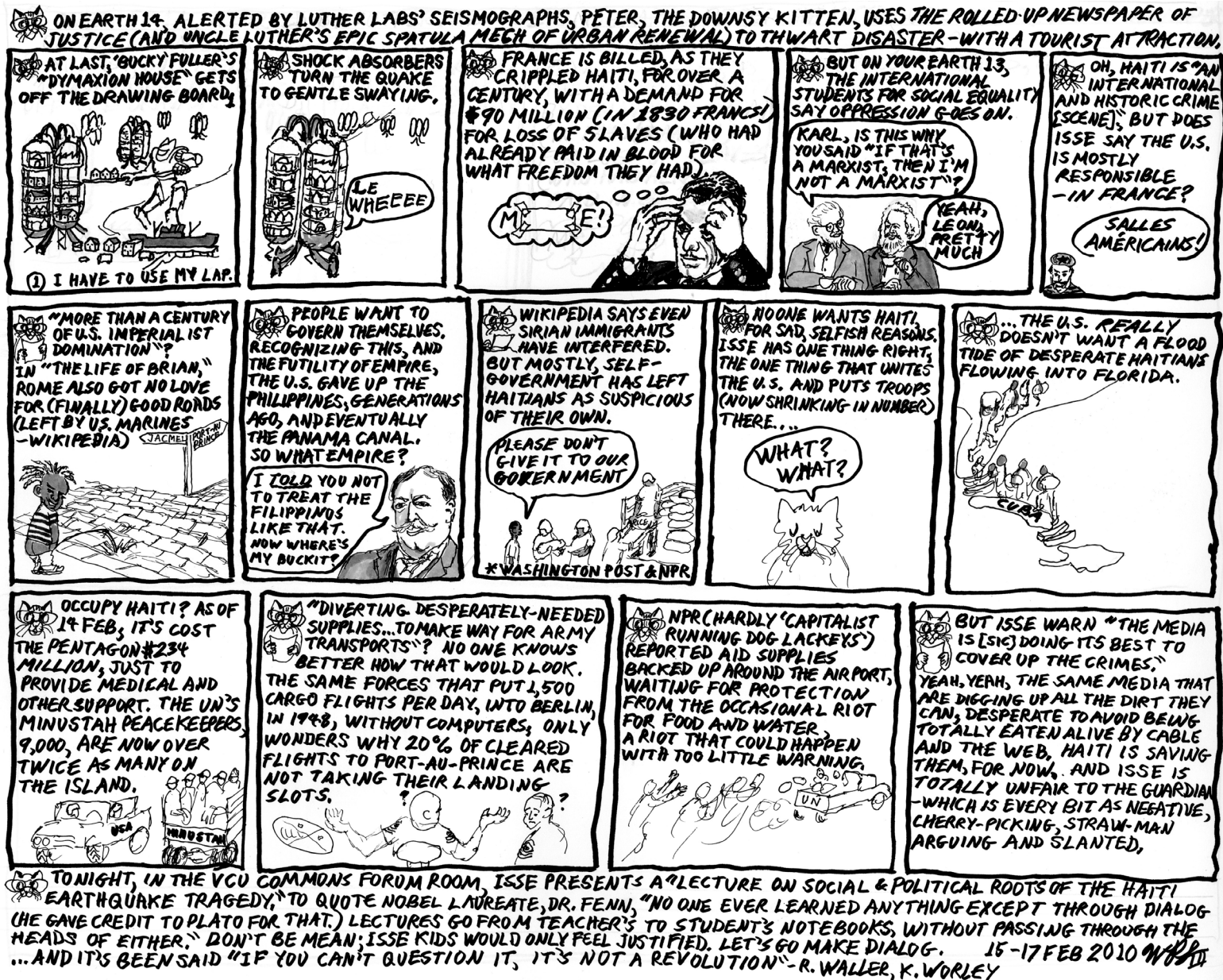
Thursday, February 18, 2010

commonwealthtimes.org · CT15

comics

Pizza from Scratch

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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, 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

Caroline Evertz
Production Manager



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opinion

Social and historical roots of Haitian earthquake disaster

JEFF LASSAHN
Contributing Writer

"A crisis is a terrible thing to waste," Georges Sassine, president of Haiti's manufacturers association, told the *Washington Post*. "This is what the earthquake is today—an opportunity, a huge opportunity," added Reginald Boulos, described by the Post Monday as the owner of a "small empire" of supermarkets, a hotel and a car dealership. "I think we need to give the message that we are open for business. This is really a land of opportunities."

Vultures are descending on Haiti, feeding off of the "opportunities" of the catastrophic earthquake that struck the country on January 12. Long term plans by foreign powers to reorganize the Haitian political system are now seen as possible. Investors plot that the desperation for jobs will allow for the lowest wages in the hemisphere. The U.S. Government, above all else, has decisively taken control of the small island nation.

The mass media has presented the U.S. response to the earthquake in the most flattering light, claiming it is a generous humanitarian mission. Indeed, the American population has been generous, donating millions in genuine sympathy for the suffering of Haitians.

The response of the Obama Administration has been quite different. Long before substantial aid was distributed the U.S. military landed thousands of troops, took control of the main airport and seaport, and locked down borders.

International aid organizations have bitterly complained that the military was given priority over aid efforts, even stating that the delays of critical food and medical supplies caused hundreds of needless deaths.

Even now, tight control of supplies has led to food spoiling and massive under-distribution of existing resources such as tents, tarps, and medical supplies.

Aside from the criminal mismanagement of relief, the abysmal conditions of Haiti prior to the earthquake served to make the devastation more profound. There are now estimates of more than 1.5 million left homeless, but many barely had homes before the earthquake. Building codes to withstand a shock were practically non-existent. Poverty was and is immense; Haiti is the poorest country in the Americas. Behind all this is a notoriously corrupt political system that serves to prop up immense inequality.

As usual, media coverage has lacked both historical and critical analysis.

The intrusion of over 13,000 U.S. troops can only be called humanitarian if Haitian history is ignored—for the U.S. has already occupied the nation twice, suppressing unrest and propping up murderous dictatorships. Prior to that, the 1804 slave rebellion that created Haiti immediately brought hostility from major (slave-owning) world powers, causing a continued lack of economic development.

International Students for Social Equality, a socialist group at VCU, will host a presentation on Haiti at 5:30 p.m. in the Forum Room of the VCU Student Commons. Bill Van Auken, a reporter for the World Socialist Web site, wsws.org, will examine the complex economic, social, and historical issues raised by the disaster, and pose the question of how such a tragedy can be avoided in the future. Discussion will follow. We welcome all those concerned.

Jeff Lassahn is a member of International Students for Social Equality.



Jeff Lassahn illustration

the
ct

ROBERTO
CURTIS

Executive Editor

ERIC
HILL

Opinion Editor

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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.



Sour grapes for education

Gov. McDonnell cuts social state programs

ERIC HILL
Opinion Editor

Not to be pessimistic but, start stocking up on your ramen, folks, the Republicans are back in the Governor's mansion and that means the poor house is about to lose a wall and the school building is about to lose its roof.

The Richmond Times-Dispatch reported Feb. 17 that a series of confidential budget papers were obtained from a legislative budget-writing committee outlining what McDonnell recommends to do to fill the over \$4 billion budget shortfall for the projected fiscal years 2011 and 2012 (the budget it balanced every two years in Virginia.) Who's the biggest loser in this proposal? That would be the thousands of state workers who will be forced to take 10 furlough days (\$180 million) and cuts into their pensions (\$550 million) not to mention the \$730 million that K-12 education will lose.

Who are the other victims of this budget from hell? Well we won't have anymore state funding for public television after four years, there will be cuts to homelessness services, teen pregnancy prevention programs and a large chunk of health care funding will be taken out of the budget (on the order of \$300 million).

So why all of the cuts in these areas? Well Bob McDonnell has a thing against raising taxes against big business, he also has a problem with having to buy his wine from another state. If you didn't get that reference, it is toward the proposed spending increases (yes, Bob does suggest spending money sometimes) for the Governor's Opportunity Fund. One of the grants proposed in the Governor's Opportunity Fund by the governor himself was an incentive to market Virginia wineries, according to the Virginia Economic Development partnership website www.yesvirgina.org. The website proudly proclaims that Virginia is the fourth friendliest state for corporate taxation.

Now the amount of money Bobbo wants to give to the Virginia wineries is small compared to the budget gap that we're facing, but it shows where Bob's ideological bones are. Ten years ago a similar thing happened when then Gov. Jim Gilmore attempted to give almost \$1 million in small business money for a Wal-mart plant. The budget crisis wasn't as bad then as it is now, but it flies in the face of real fiscal conservatism when you are incentivizing corporate involvement on a small scale while chopping social programs on a large scale. The Governor's Opportunity fund awards tens of millions of dollars in grants for producing anywhere from 50 to 100 jobs, which doesn't sound like small business economics to me. Considering that the median income for a single individual in 2006 was \$29,000 according to the U.S Census Bureau, that isn't any loose change. McDonnell's proposed budget calls for an increase of \$12.1 million as reported by the Washington Business Journal in late January.

So here we have the same game of attempting to give tax credits and incentives to corporations and new small businesses. The state's economy does better but the taxation is so low that every year it gets more and more difficult to balance the budget, so we continue to cut taxes and reduce social programs. As it stands our public schools systems are wallowing in mediocrity when compared to educational systems overseas. Yet we consistently decide to short education funding when it inconveniences our purses.

Now the state budget is more complex than this. There is entrenched wastefulness in many social programs and cleaning house is good, however thinking that private business will solve our money woes will not help us. What will solve this budget issue is a new look at the tax code, a simplification and the removal of all of these cumbersome "credits" which create holes between collections and refunds. Why can't we create a flat sales tax, so that consumption itself is taxed? Establish a base minimum tax at a base income and then tax consumption. If you save your money by consuming less and pooling resources, then you can start a business with cash in hand, instead of having to rely on the government or a bank to fund you at interest. I would rather pay higher taxes and live with educated and secure people, then live in a land where the people are free to be stupid and capitalize without social responsibility.

The buck does not stop at K-12, higher education will have to pay the piper too in due course. When your tuition jumps by double digits, or your major disappears, you too will feel the effects of the Republican social crunch. So tighten your belts, and try to get a new job with a small business. Maybe they will give you a good paying job—without a degree.

Thursday, February 18, 2010

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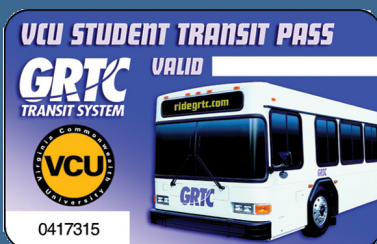
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