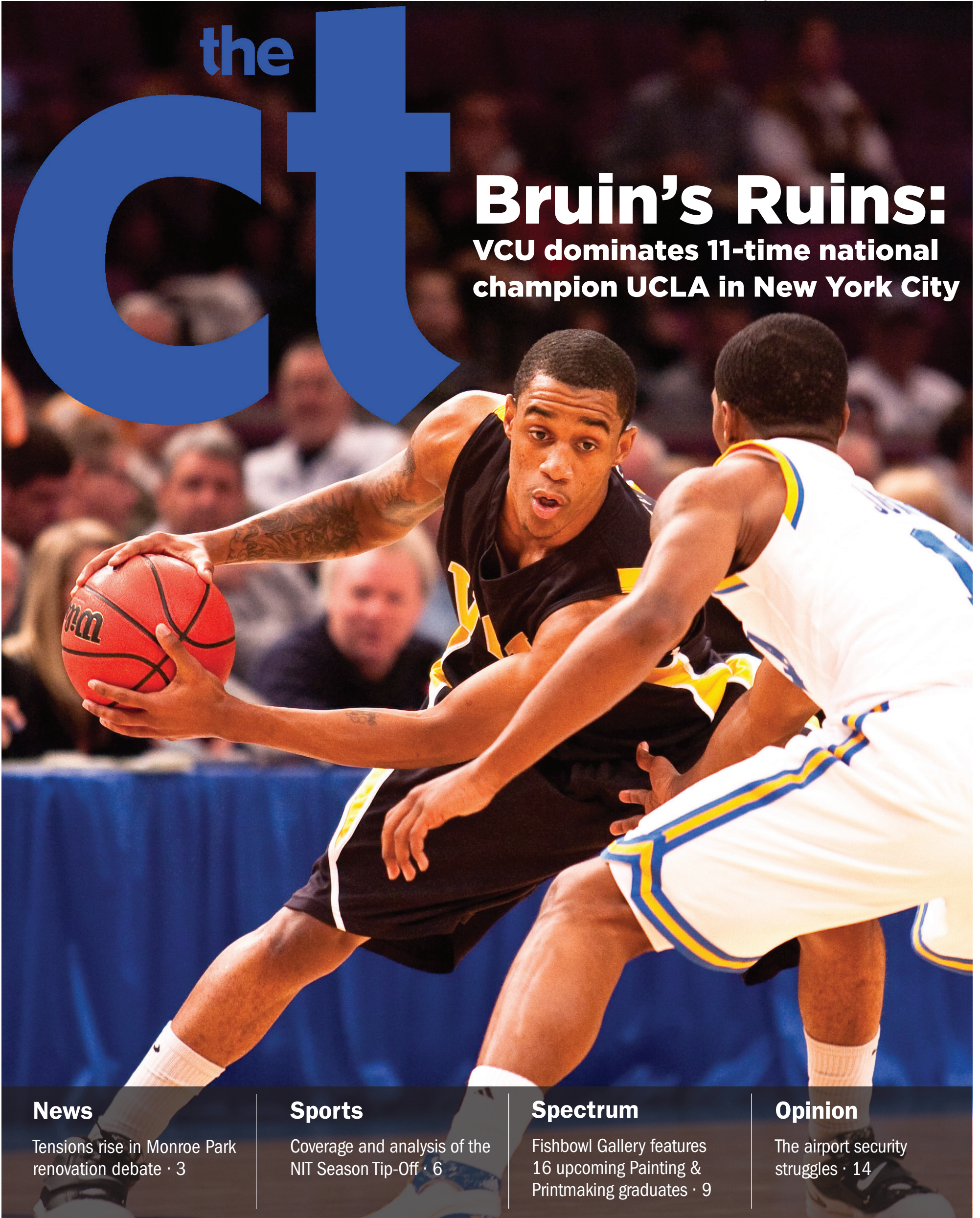




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the

ct

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

commonwealthtimes.org





briefs

Local and VCU

Walmart Foundation gives \$755,000 to Va. groups

Keep Virginia Beautiful, St. Joseph's Villa, Communities in Schools of Virginia and the Free Clinic of Powhatan are among a dozen Virginia-based organizations sharing \$755,000 from the Walmart Foundation.

The largest local grant, \$85,000, went to the newly revitalized Keep Virginia Beautiful.

Director Mike Baum said the money will help with newly launched programs such as A Bag's Life, which promotes the recycling of plastic bags.

Keep Virginia Beautiful also will use some of the money to establish its own grant program for localities. Ten grants of \$1,000 each will be available for projects to reduce cigarette litter and increase plastic-bag recycling.

The largest grant in the state, \$200,000, went to the Federation of Virginia Food Banks, which is based in Norfolk.

Executive Director Leslie Van Horn said a new program called Fresh Food for Virginia will have the goal of purchasing at least 1 million pounds of fresh produce for food banks around the state.

Brief by the Richmond Times-Dispatch

Va. seeks uniform rules on police lineups

Hoping to minimize chances of wrongful convictions, a model eyewitness identification policy for police was created in 2005, and the Virginia General Assembly ordered law-enforcement agencies to have written lineup policies.

Five years later, at least a quarter of the 134 departments across the state still have no written policy.

On Dec. 8, the Virginia State Crime Commission will consider endorsing a bill some experts believe could minimize eyewitness and victim errors by requiring police agencies to adopt simple, inexpensive methods for conducting suspect photo spreads and live lineups.

Nine other states have laws or state-wide regulations addressing lineups.

In 1989, not long after DNA testing started winning convictions in murders, rapes and other serious crimes, it also started exonerating wrongfully convicted persons. Since then there have now been 261 DNA exonerations in 34 states, including 12 in Virginia.

Brief by the Richmond Times-Dispatch

Nearly 3,000 enjoy Thanksgiving feast in Richmond

Close to 3,000 people came to the Greater Richmond Convention Center Thursday for a community Thanksgiving feast organized by The Giving Heart, a nonprofit that has put on the event for the past five years.

Vicki Neilson, founding director and president of The Giving Heart, said the official count was 2,800. More than 800 volunteers helped, she said.

Diners enjoyed turkey, ham and traditional Thanksgiving side dishes. The program also provided food bags, books, toiletry bags and refurbished shoes for anyone who wanted them. The meal is open to anyone without a place to go on Thanksgiving and those who came out included the elderly, homeless and people without family in the area.

Gene Hinton, 59, was among the diners. He said he skipped dinner last night in anticipation of the Thanksgiving meal. He got in line at 9 a.m., he said. The doors opened a little past the 11 a.m. starting time.

"I had nothing to do and nowhere to go," said Hinton, nibbling on carrot cake.

Brief by the Richmond Times-Dispatch

National and International

Ky. 'King of Pot' on lam 2 years after giant raid

With authorities closing in to seize 2,400 marijuana plants on John Robert Boone's farm two years ago, the legendary Kentucky outlaw vanished like a puff of smoke. The prolific grower has been dodging the law ever since, his folk-hero status growing with every sale of a "Run, Johnny, Run" T-shirt and click on his Facebook fan page.

Tracking down the fugitive who resembles a tattooed Santa Claus has proven as hard as "trying to catch a ghost" for the federal authorities canvassing tightlipped residents within the rural area southeast of Louisville. Boone, who's trying to avoid the life sentence he would get if convicted a third time of growing pot, has plenty of sympathizers in an area where many farmers have planted marijuana.

He spent more than a decade in federal prison after being convicted in the late 1980s of taking part in what federal prosecutors called the "largest domestic marijuana syndicate in American history," a string of 29 farms in Minnesota, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Nebraska, Missouri, Kansas and Wisconsin.

The group became known as the "Cornbread Mafia." Eventually, 70 Kentuckians were accused of growing 182 tons of marijuana.

Brief by The Associated Press

Wyo. official supports Yellowstone grizzly hunts

A Wyoming wildlife manager says he supports hunting grizzly bears now that the population in the Yellowstone National Park area has reached the highest level in decades.

Researchers said last month that more than 600 grizzlies roam the Yellowstone area of Wyoming, Montana and Idaho.

That's more than three times the number in 1975, when hunting was outlawed and the species was placed on the endangered list.

Mark Bruscino, supervisor of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department bear management program, tells the Powell Tribune that he favors hunting to manage the grizzly population.

Bruscino says he and his department support the bear recovery program, but the best habitat areas are now full and bears are moving into marginal areas.

Brief by The Associated Press

McCain: Time to discuss 'regime change' in N. Korea

Sen. John McCain said Sunday it was time to discuss "regime change" in North Korea, but didn't say how he advocates changing the government in the repressive and secretive dictatorship.

McCain said he was not suggesting military action against the North but the Chinese, the North's closest ally, should rein in its neighbor, and accused Beijing of failing to play a responsible role in the Korean peninsula or the world stage.

"The key to this, obviously, is China," McCain said on "State of the Union" on CNN. "And, unfortunately, China is not behaving as a responsible world power. It cannot be in China's long-term interest to see a renewed conflict on the Korean peninsula."

The Arizona Republican added: "They could bring the North Korean economy to its knees if they wanted to. And I cannot believe that the Chinese should, in a mature fashion, not find it in their interest to restrain North Korea. So far, they are not."

China on Sunday proposed an emergency meeting of the six nations that have tried to engage North Korea in talks about its nuclear program. The U.S. and South Korea began naval war games in spite of North Korea's protests.

Brief by The Associated Press

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Monday, November 29, 2010

COVER PHOTO BY KYLE LAFERRIERE





news



PHOTOS BY KYLE LAFERRIERE

Renovation plans for the park include a gate to enlose the area — forcing the homeless to relocate.

Monroe Park renovations stir emotions

Cordero Wallace
Contributing Writer

VCU and the city of Richmond are taking major steps to give Monroe Park a \$6.2 million renovation, which will force the area's homeless people to relocate.

The renovations will include repaving, reworking grassy areas, electrical wiring, drainage, lighting, seating areas, trash bins and a restaurant or coffee shop.

The plans are to make the park private after the renovations are finished by placing a gate around it. Therefore, the future renovations, which will cause the homeless people to be relocated to other city areas, has become a growing issue.

"They want the homeless people like me out of Monroe Park," Tiger Long, a longtime homeless patron of the park, said. "This has been VCU's main goal since they obtained the park — to kick us out."

According to NBC 12 reports, the homeless will be forced to relocate to the Conrad Center located on 17th and O streets.

Groups advocating homeless rights like the International Workers of the World have suggested that the location

of the Conrad center is not conducive to serving Richmond's homeless population.

In a statement, the Richmond chapter of the IWW said "The Conrad Center is geographically isolated and located in a valley involving steep hills, several miles away from temporary employment agencies, reliable public transportation, and other resources. How will those with physical disabilities get to and from the Conrad Center?"

Andrew Lamont, another homeless Monroe Park patron asked, "How can you force homeless people to move from a public park? We engage in activities here. We get fed food here, and I'm not leaving."

Arms Wide Open Organization co-founder Jennifer Simpson, said the charity feeds the homeless people at Monroe Park every Sunday.

Letters have been written to Monroe Park Advisory Board and protesters have been pressuring Richmond to stop relocation of the homeless once renovations have begun.

Workers of The World Union group in Richmond have issued several letters regarding the mental and physical disable homeless people who will not be able to adapt to these relocations.

Many local organizations are protesting plans to relocate the homeless but some students say they still feel uncomfortable walking through the park.



However, some students said that the behavior of some homeless caused them to refuse to walk through Monroe Park.

"They yell out sexually explicit words and it's not acceptable," VCU student Alycia Clayton said. "Who wants to hear rude and disrespectful remarks yelled across a park at them?"

The homeless have a right that could help them plead their case called the "Squatter's Rights," which states that a person occupying a vacant place for 15 years or more can legally lay claim to the place as their own property.

"I come out here to hang with my friends and been doing it for 25 years," Long said.

Homeless people are being offered beds on a first-come, first-serve basis at the Freedom House and Healing Place in Richmond, according to Virginia Supportive Housing website.

"Homeless people are on the outside looking in and nobody cares about us cause were homeless," Lamont said. "If they were homeless they would understand how important Monroe Park is to homeless people." **CT**





news



CT STOCK PHOTO

Organizations seek feral cat control

Alexa Barrero
Contributing Writer

The feral cat population is quickly becoming an issue in Richmond and surrounding areas, including the VCU campus.

What many students are seeing is a typical colony of feral cats. A feral cat is defined by aspc.org as “a cat too poorly socialized to be handled, and who cannot be placed into a typical pet home; a subpopulation of free-roaming cats.”

Some VCU students living around campus say the issue is affecting them.

“It seems everywhere I look, I see a stray cat running around. Sometimes they appear to be several traveling in a group,” VCU junior Alysha Newton said.

There is a debate over whether feral cat populations should be controlled or eliminated. Nationally, animal rights activists are promoting a trap-neuter-return initiative, which involves trapping, neutering and releasing feral cats back into the wild.

A non-profit organization that assists

in accomplishing this goal is Operation Catnip. It offers free spay or neuter, vaccination and medical services every month at no charge to caretakers of stray and feral cats.

Operation Catnip board member Jennifer Erisman said the feral population is out of control.

“You can find feral cats at apartment complexes, behind grocery stores, fast food restaurants and schools,” Erisman said. “They’re everywhere, unfortunately.”

Feral cats are protected under animal cruelty laws, but some people do not see the issue that way.

Robin Starr, CEO of Richmond SPCA, referenced an incident of animal cruelty occurring behind the Fox News station involving Critter Control, a company that provides animal control, animal removal and animal prevention services to homeowners and businesses according to its website, crittercontrol.com.

“Critter Control had actually sent an employee in a truck who trapped three cats and asphyxiated them with gas,” Starr said. **CT**



PHOTO FROM OPERATION CATNIP - RICHMOND





PHOTOS PROVIDED BY VCU NEWS CENTER



During a Veteran's Day ceremony, the SVA and VCU announced plans for the Green Zone program.



Special assistant to the Provost for the Student Veteran Support, Martha Lou Green, will organize USS-RAMS' Green Zone initiatives.

Green Zone program assists VCU veterans

Thomas Dickson
Contributing Writer

VCU has started the Green Zone program in an effort to enhance the quality of university life for military veterans.

The program identifies VCU faculty trained in dealing with veterans' issues. A volunteer faculty member can assist a veteran with his or her problem, or give the vet information on where to receive the appropriate care, VCU Veterans Administrator James Chambliss said.

According to Chambliss, training helps volunteers better understand the veteran, the veteran's experience and the way of military life.

The Green Zone program is an initiative stemming from VCU's larger program called USS-RAMS.

"These programs are designed to help veterans transition from military life to college life," Chambliss said.

One of the driving organizations behind these programs is the VCU Student Veterans Association. Veterans sit in on the training to ensure the program is as accurate as possible.

"It's admirable," SVA president Kazonga Singleton said. "The university has thrown its support behind us."

The SVA raised veterans' concerns to VCU administrators when the school was developing USS-RAMS and Green Zone, Singleton said.

"It is making VCU more vet friendly," Iraq veteran and VCU junior Johnathan Hoggatt said.

Hoggatt said that transitioning from the military to a college life is difficult.

The USS-RAMS program has more initiatives ready for implementation. Next semester there will be a veterans-only orientation that will provide new student veterans with information that will help them be successful at VCU. Certain classes soon could be exempt for veterans who receive similar training in the military.

Chambliss said the new VCU veterans program requires active involvement from the individual veteran and in order for veterans to benefit from these programs; they must let someone know about the issues they are facing at VCU. **CT**

Monday, November 29, 2010

11/19

- At the corner of Bowe and West Marshall streets, a male visitor was arrested for being drunk in public.
- At 7-Eleven, 1003 W. Grace St., a male visitor was arrested for possession of an open container of alcohol.
- On the 300 block of West Cary Street, a female employee advised that an unknown person struck three vehicles.
- At the Main Street Parking Deck, 801 W. Main St., a female employee advised that an unknown person drove through a barricade gate.

11/20

- At the Main Street Parking Deck, 801 W. Main St., a female student advised that an unknown person damaged a vehicle and removed property from it.
- At the corner of South Pine and West Cary streets, a male visitor was arrested for discharging a firearm in public.

11/21

- At Monroe Park, 1 Monroe Park, a male visitor was arrested for public intoxication.
- At Grace Harris Hall, 1015 Floyd Ave., a male visitor was arrested for urinating in public.
- On the 1000 block of Parkwood Avenue, a student advised that an unknown person(s) damaged a car and removed items from it.
- At the Harrison House, 816 W. Franklin St., a male employee advised that an unknown person(s) damaged a door.
- At 4 S. Vine St., a female student advised that she was harassed by a known person through e-mail and text messages.
- At the Main Street Parking Deck, 801 W. Main St., a female visitor advised that an unknown person(s) damaged a vehicle.

Crime Log

11/22

- At The Daily Planet, 517 W. Grace St., a male visitor was arrested for having open container of alcohol in public.
- At the corner of West Broad and Bowe streets, a male visitor was arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol.
- At the corner of West Broad and Ryland streets, two female students were arrested for underage possession of alcohol.
- At Cabell Library, 901 Park Ave., an employee advised that two unknown persons damaged a wall.

11/23

- At Rhoads Hall, 710 W. Franklin St., a female student advised that an unknown person removed property from an unsecured location.
- At Franklin Street Gym, 817 W. Franklin St., a male employee advised that an unknown person falsely summoned a fire apparatus.
- At Rhoads Hall, 710 W. Franklin St., a male student was arrested for underage possession of alcohol.
- At Rhoads Hall, 710 W. Franklin St., a male student was assaulted by a known person.
- At Student Commons, 907 Floyd Ave., a male employee reported suspicious circumstances, claiming that he recovered various merchandise from a trashcan.





sports



Last week marked the first time in program history that VCU has completed in the legendary Madsion Square Garden.

VCU channels emotions, avenges UCLA in NIT Tip-Off Consolation

Jim Swing
Assistant Sports Editor

At a recent team dinner, Jamie Skeen sat down and told his fellow teammates and coaches that he wanted the ball more.

The response came in a timely manner for Skeen who went 8-of-13 from the floor with 23 points to lead the Rams to an 89-85 victory over UCLA in the NIT Tip-Off Consolation game.

After a tough loss to No. 23 Tennessee in the semifinals in which VCU shot with a little more than 30 percent, the Rams shook off the jitters of playing on the large stage of Madison Square Garden and got down to business.

“I’m really proud of the way our guys battled,” head coach Shaka Smart said. “Being able to throw the ball into (Jamie) Skeen on the block and get positive production from there was a big key for us.”

Utilizing the same senior leadership trait he has all season, Skeen would not allow the Rams to fall into another slow start to a game, so he supplied an early attack on the

basket and scored the game’s first six points.

With less than five minutes off the clock in the first half, Skeen tallied 10 points and four rebounds to give VCU a 12-8 lead over UCLA.

“I was just in the right place at the right time,” Skeen said. “I was very aggressive on the backboard, and so whenever I saw one of my teammates miss a shot, I was just on it.”

Three consecutive 3-pointers on Rams’ possessions, including a momentum-shifting jumper by junior Bradford Burgess, gave VCU an 11-point lead with just under five minutes remaining in the first half.

The Bruins would tame the fire however, with a 14-6 run heading into halftime, headlined by two back-to-back threes by sharpshooter Malcolm Lee that cut the Rams’ lead to three, 40-37.

VCU found a way to feed the ball inside in the first half, scoring 22 of its 40 points in the paint, improving from its 16 points underneath overall against Tennessee.

The Rams would come out of the half looking to pull away once again with help from Burgess and senior Joey Rodriguez who fired up two 3-pointers to put VCU up 50-41 just under four minutes into the second half.

Moments of tough defense would keep the Bruins in the game and manage to cut the



PHOTOS BY KYLE LAFERRIERE

Win over UCLA could prove critical for post-season aspirations

Adam Stern
Sports Editor

Come the end of the season, will The Garden bear fruit?

That’s the question that remains for the VCU men’s basketball team and their post-season aspirations after downing 11-time National Champion UCLA 89-85 in the NIT Season Tip-Off at Madison Square Garden Friday.

Theoretically, the win – which came in the tournament’s consolation match after falling to No. 24 Tennessee on Wednesday – counts the same as any other game. However, a victory over one of the country’s most celebrated schools, which came before a national television audience in one of the nation’s most celebrated arenas, adds obvious intangibles.

There’s the increased experience and expertise that comes along with playing teams in the upper tier of college basket-

CONTINUED ON PG. 8

CONTINUED ON PG. 8





sports

Rob Brandenburg recorded a career-high nine points in the Rams' win over UCLA.



Toby Veal added six points and three rebounds in 20 minutes of play against Bruins.



Brandon Rozzell led VCU in scoring throughout the NIT Tip-Off with 57 points.



PHOTOS BY KYLE LAFERRIERE

Jamie Skeen recorded 36 rebounds and was named to the NIT Season Tip-Off All Tournament Team.



lead to one on two separate occurrences down the final three-minute stretch.

Two consecutive UCLA turnovers converted to a dunk from Skeen and a bench-exploding one-handed slam by Brandon Rozzell would give VCU an 84-79 lead, forcing the Bruins into a fouling situation for the remainder of the game.

The Rams would be sent to the line with less than a minute remaining on four separate occasions, forcing immediate improvement on a part of the game, in which VCU struggled at the beginning of the season.

A set of clutch free-throws by guard Darius Theus was followed by one-of-two free throws made by Rodriguez, which awarded the Bruins a chance to tie on the ensuing possession and ended up giving the Rams an 88-85 lead.

Lee dribbled down the court but drew traffic, forcing him to give the ball to forward Reeves Nelson, who had been practicing his deep shot in the off-season. But a bad miss gave VCU the game and the ball with just under three seconds remaining.

“(Nelson) Reeves has been practicing his shot a lot, so I had confidence in him,” Lee said. “I easily could have shot it myself, but I saw him open.”

Down the stretch, the Rams made five-of-eight shots at the free throw line,

where they have shot just .630 percent so far this season.

“We made just enough free-throws; I would’ve liked to make more,” Smart said. “I’m proud of our guys, they stepped up and showed a lot of fight.”

In just its third meeting with a Pac-10 conference member, VCU wreaked havoc on UCLA, forcing 21 turnovers, which converted into 24 points for the Rams.

“You can see how motivated they were to play against us,” Bruins head coach Ben Howland said. “They’ve got a very, very good team, so you have to give them a lot of credit.”

After the Rams were excused from the 2009 NCAA Tournament by the Bruins in the first round on a 65-64 heartbreaking loss, revenge came at a perfect time for a VCU organization that now has the chance Wednesday against South Florida to win three out of four meetings with teams from the ACC, Big East, Pac-10 and SEC.

“Being highly competitive in the first game, coming up a little bit short, we learned things about our team,” Smart said. “Then being able to win the second game against UCLA, I think that’s really going to pay dividends for us down the road, both in terms of the experience for our guys but also with our resume.” **CT**



PHOTO BY KYLE LAFERRIERE

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Win over UCLA CONTINUED

ball. There’s also the increased exposure that should continue to enhance VCU’s standing as one of the top mid-major universities in the country. But above all, the win means the Rams will have taken at least one major scalp by the time the NCAA Selection Committee reviews the Rams’ resume on Selection Sunday.

“Being able to win our second game against UCLA, I think that will really pay dividends,” head coach Shaka Smart said. “(It will help) both in terms of experience for our guys, but also our resume.”

It’s a resume that will need every victory the Rams can get. That’s because the team’s schedule this season is neither terrible nor terrific; the Rams will face a few teams from such power conferences as the Big East, SEC and ACC, but those squads are projected to finish towards the lower half of their conferences and won’t be given as much credit.

So, why would a tournament that came towards the beginning of the season bear any impact on it come the end?

“You’re talking about three out of the top 10 programs in the country,” Smart said in reference to the tournament participants. “Just getting a chance to be here and be around those coaches and those players (is big).”

Just how big remains to be seen, but if you ask senior forward Jamie Skeen – who was the team’s star of the show with

23 points, nine rebounds and two blocks – he’ll tell you beating the Bruins is no mean feat.

“It’s a great experience playing a great team like UCLA,” Skeen said. “They’re one of the most winning teams in the world, or the United States, so it’s just a great team to beat.”

It was also a great time for Skeen to step up. With team leader, senior point guard Joey Rodriguez having struggled in the previous game vs. Tennessee – thanks in no small part to a reoccurrence of an ankle injury – the team turned to Skeen when the game first started. The Wake Forest transfer scored the game’s first six points and was so dominant that he registered double-digits in the points column before five minutes had elapsed.

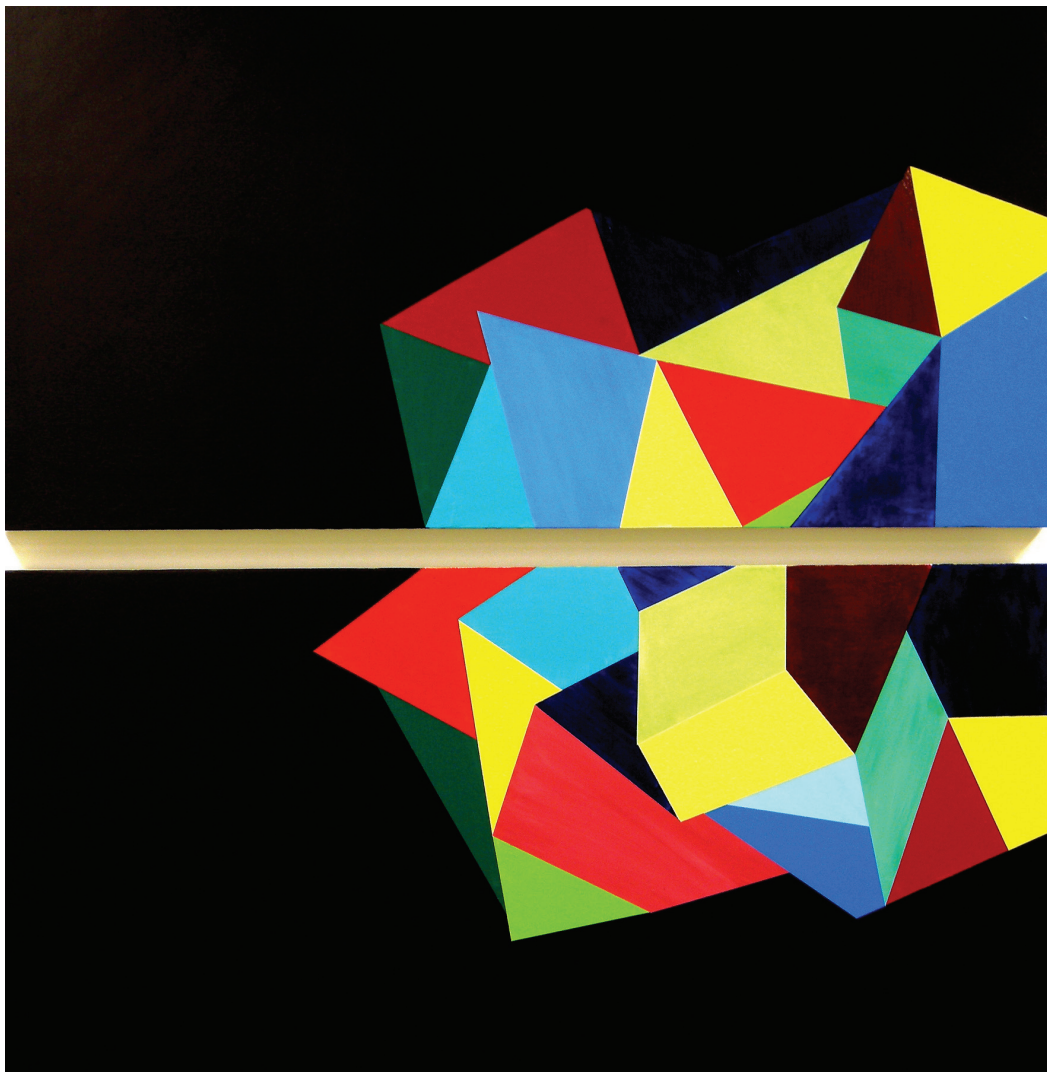
Such was the dominance of Skeen on the night. And, with the loss of former player Larry Sanders to the NBA, these are the sorts of performances the team will need if they’re to have a shot at an at-large bid come early March.

Regardless, though, nothing can take away from a win that amounted to at least some form of redemption for the team’s one-point loss to the Bruins in the first round of the 2009 NCAA Tournament.

“Everybody (on the team) gave us positive production,” Smart said. “They stepped up and showed a lot of fight.” **CT**

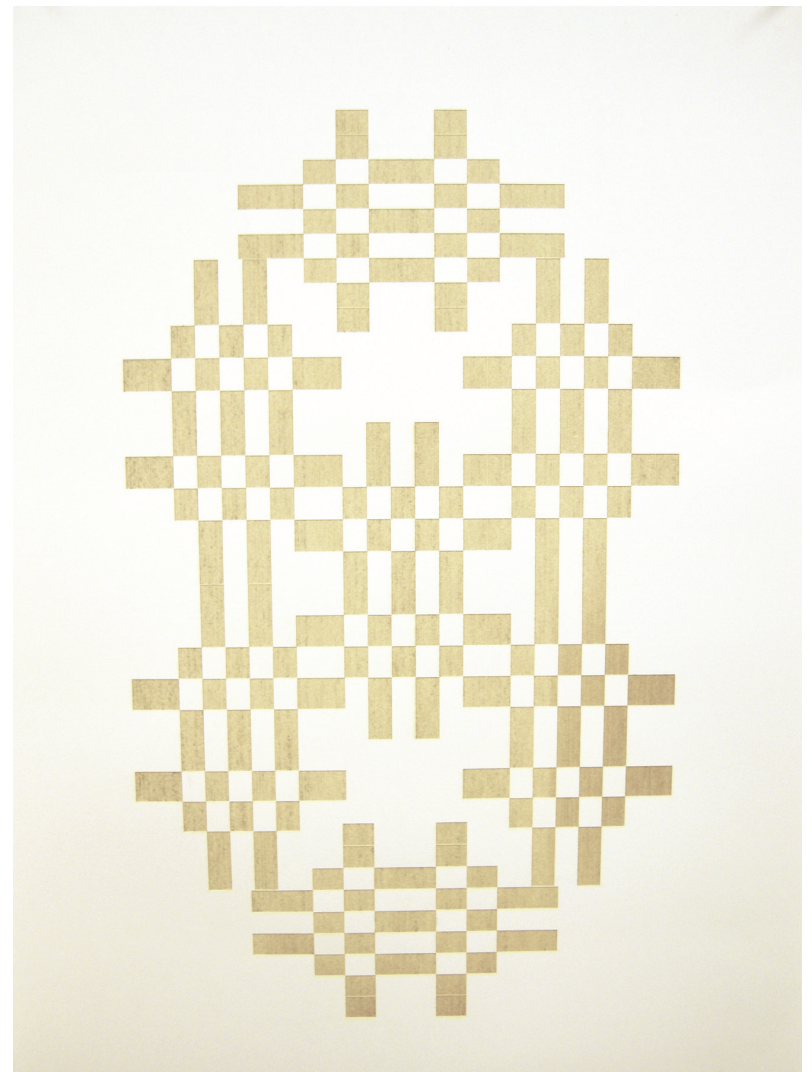
spectrum

‘Interaction 37’ showcases Painting & Printmaking seniors



LEFT: “The Approach,” Andrew Indelicato

RIGHT: “Mapping for the Future,” Andrew Indelicato



ARTWORK BY ANDREW INDELICATO

Danielle Elliott
Contributing Writer

VCU’s Department of Painting and Printmaking opened “Interaction 37” last Tuesday, Nov. 23 at the Fishbowl Gallery.

The showcase is a collaborative effort of 16 graduating senior art students and explores a multitude of themes ranging from social commentary to personal iconography.

Edward Gross, one of the seniors featured in “Interaction 37,” recently dropped out to explore other opportunities and recently returned to finish his education with VCU.

He created an illustration that epitomizes his experiences in those years that he was not attending school. “I left VCU years ago to pursue the life experiences outside the institution,” Gross said. “This ‘sabbatical’ was the inspiration behind my illustration.”

Gross described his illustration as a man in a striped

shirt walking along a scenic path. He explained that there is a much deeper meaning to the drawing than what one would expect.

“The real narrative is within the clothing,” Gross said. “His shirt is adorned with stripes, and it is my hope that people reflect on them as restraints binding him from his full potential.”

While his piece carries a heavy undertone, Gross said that he does not consider himself a serious artist.

“I still debate that I am making art seriously,” he said. “I make art my avenue to escape seriousness.”

Dane Cozens, a communication arts major, said that home schooling in his early childhood made art a major part of his life, but it was not until high school that he considered it as a career.

“I began doing illustrations for local bands and high school plays,” he said. For Cozens, this was a major motivation for him when choosing his eventual field.

The painting that Cozens created for the show was inspired by his childhood, specifically a friend’s refrig-

erator. The piece, appropriately named “Refrigerator,” is actually part of a larger series Cozens created about life in American suburbs.

“When I painted ‘Refrigerator,’ I was inspired to paint my friends’ first house,” Cozens said. “The food above and the papers magnetically held to the refrigerator seemed like personal artifacts of my friends’ lives in their new house.”

Andrew Indelicato is also a painting major that found his passion late in his high school career. He draws his inspiration from space and its vastness.

“All my work centers around the theme of the vast void of space and (the) loneliness we associate with it,” Indelicato said. “The piece (in the exhibition) comes from the stars and the void of space.”

“Interaction 37” features mediums from various disciplines including lithography, etching, silkscreen, oil, charcoal and digital prints. **CT**

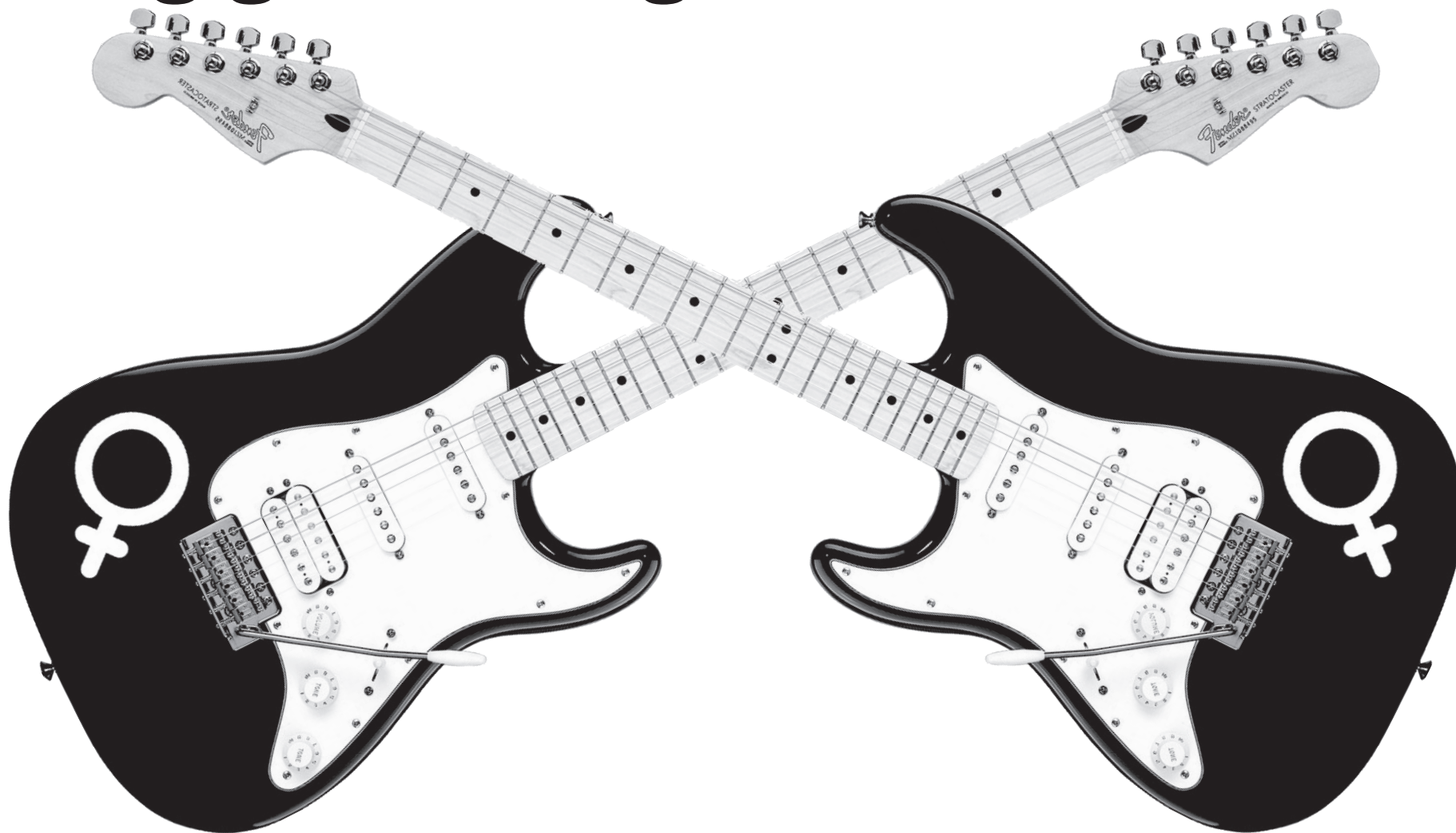
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spectrum · commonwealthtimes.org · CT9



VCU volunteers look to empower young girls through music

GRAPHIC BY CLAYTON RIGSBY



Carliss Hardy
Contributing Writer

With help from VCU volunteers, more young girls might be rocking out in Richmond soon.

VCU students and alumni are working to expand the popular “Girls Rock Camp” to Richmond. The program’s promoters say they want Richmond to host a two-week summer camp, where girls ages 8-18 would learn to play guitars, drums and other instruments, write songs and perform in their own rock bands.

“I got inspired to work on this project when I watched a documentary that was made about a similar camp in Portland, Ore. It was a powerful and fun film, and made me want to be a part of bringing a program to Richmond,” said Constance Sisk, a local cellist and music teacher.

The first Rock ‘n’ Roll Camp for Girls was held in Portland in 2001. There are now about 10 camps, from Washington, D.C. to Oakland, Calif. The idea has even spread internationally, with camps in London and Sweden.

The concept got a boost from the 2008 documentary “Girls Rock!” The film follows four girls from the Portland camp as they learn how to play and write music and form a band. Along the way, they also learn self-confidence and other life lessons.

Critics generally praised the movie.

The website DVD Talk called it “a film not just to be commended and enjoyed, but a remarkable camp that should be a requirement for every teen girl out there in dire need of empowerment and focus.”

Musicians in Richmond want to address that need by organizing a Girls Rock Camp for the coming summer. They say it will take a lot of work.

“GRC - RVA is going to require instruments, instructors, volunteers, food, office supplies, a location, etc. Community involvement can certainly help this all come together,” said Josette Matoto, a VCU graduate and local musician.

“It’s imperative that people know they do not have to be able to play an instrument in order to help out.”

Erin Kemmerer, a VCU philosophy and women’s studies major, said the first step to establishing the camp is to form a nonprofit organization.

“The process to becoming a nonprofit is lengthy ... it is also the most challenging part of the project,” Kemmerer said.

Once Girls Rock Camp - Richmond attains official nonprofit status, the group will be able to accept tax-deductible donations and seek grants and other funding. In addition, it will be easier to provide scholarships to girls who could not afford to attend the camp otherwise, according to Kemmerer and Matoto.

To jump-start the project, supporters are using the very thing that makes the

camps so successful: music.

Organizers of Girls Rock Camp - Richmond are holding benefit shows to raise money and awareness of the program.

“We’re trying to explore different types of music in our shows. All music is encouraged. We would like to possibly combine art and music together in our shows,” Kemmerer said.

The first benefit show will be a singer/songwriter night on Friday, Dec. 10, from 6 to 10 p.m. at Ellwood’s Coffee in Carytown.

The show will feature local performers, including Kemmerer, Shannon Keeter and Maria Medas (aka Trouble!). It will be free and open to the public.

Musicians interested in playing in a benefit concert for the camp are encouraged to sign up on the Facebook page, Girls Rock Camp RVA!

Matoto said her goal for the camp is to see the young musicians gain confidence.

“I want to see young girls rocking out – playing music like no one is watching and taking that mindset with them even after the camp session is over. Everyone deserves to be heard.” **CT**



PHOTO COURTESY OF CARLISS HARDY

Organizers of Girls Rock Camp - Richmond, a two-week summer camp where young girls form and perform in their own rock bands, are holding benefit shows to raise money and awareness of the program. The first show, a singer-songwriter night, will be held at Ellwood’s Coffee in Carytown at 6 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 10th.





Film Review: ‘Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1,’ the best Potter film since Azkaban



STILL COURTESY OF WARNER BROS. PICTURES

“Many critics of the two-part concept believe that it is a ploy by the studio to make more money and milk the franchise for all it is worth. It could be partially true, but it is also hard to say whether one film could have done Rowling’s work justice.”

Jordan Wilson
Staff Writer

“These are dark times, there is no denying,” says Minister of Magic Rufus Scrimgeour (Bill Nighy), as the “Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1” opens.

Indeed, the forces of darkness are stronger than ever this time around, and Harry Potter (Daniel Radcliffe) and his companions Hermione Granger (Emma Watson) and Ron Weasley (Rupert Grint) must accept Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry as a mere memory.

The trio is now on the run from Lord Voldemort (Ralph Fiennes) and the Death Eaters, who seek to destroy them and the impure muggle (non-magic) world.

Now that Dumbledore is no longer in the picture, the evil doers have also taken over the Ministry of Magic and Hogwarts and because Harry shares a unique, clairvoyant connection with Voldemort, he is the one and only hope for good to prevail over evil.

Harry and his friends face certain doom around every corner and constantly seek sanctuary in the woods – one scene shows the young wizards taking shelter in a tent where they hear over the radio the endless list of muggles who have died or been executed, which in-

tensifies the importance of their journey.

At one point, Ron begins to grow jealous and feels left out when Harry and Hermione spend so much time together. He storms off and the two seem lost without their companion there to provide some comic relief, as he usually does. These are disturbing and dark passages in the film, and highlight the characters’ loss of hope.

Meanwhile, Harry frequently dreams about Voldemort searching for something. He can’t seem to figure out what until they travel to the home of Xenophilius Lovegood (Rhys Ifans), where they learn about the deathly hallows, which will enable Voldemort to finally kill Harry. After learning this, Harry’s journey to destroy all of the horcruxes (pieces of Voldemort’s soul) and defeat evil once and for all begins.

What really must be said of “Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 1” is that although it only part of the story, it flows nicely. The end does not feel like a premature slicing of Rowling’s tale.

What director David Yates and his team have done is to allow enough time for the ending to feel complete without cutting it in half too abruptly, as if to break for an eight-month commercial break.

Many critics of the two-part concept believe that it is a ploy by the studio to make more money and milk the

franchise for all it is worth. It could be partially true, but it is also hard to say whether one film could have done Rowling’s work justice.

Fans have previously cried out that in previous entries, too much material has been scrapped in the adaptation process. Their cries have been heard, and close to 90 percent of what Rowling wrote in the first two thirds of the book are on the screen and have been adapted wonderfully.

Thanks to cinematographer Eduardo Serra, this is the best-looking Potter film yet. There is a brilliantly crafted shadow-animation shown during the telling of the Tale of the Three Brothers, where Harry learns of the deathly hallows. The visual effects are all top-notch.

It has been exciting to see Radcliffe, Grint and Watson grow up, and to see what strong actors they have become. Each carries his/her own weight very well, and will hopefully be offered more projects after this series is finished.

Aside from the young leads, this series has also managed to gather together what could arguably be called the most impressive cast of British actors in history. We have seen: Helena Bonham Carter, Kenneth Branagh, Jim Broadbent, Julie Christie, John Cleese, Robbie Coltrane, Ralph Fiennes, Michael Gambon, Brendan Gleeson, Richard Harris, John Hurt, Jason Isaacs, Gary Oldman, Miran-

da Richardson, Alan Rickman, Maggie Smith, Timothy Spall, Imelda Staunton, David Thewlis, and Emma Thompson, just to name a few. Bravo to the casting directors on all of these films.

Seven books and six and-a-half movies later, “Harry Potter” has become the most successful film franchise of its length ever, a remarkable achievement. Rowling’s terrific storytelling ability thankfully never discarded the spirit and heart that lie at the core of the series, although they undeniably grow darker as they progress.

The films, on the other hand, up to this point seem to have fumbled that spirit whilst getting lost in the darkness. After the third installment, the series took a sharp turn toward dreariness and couldn’t quite manage to balance it with the adventurousness the way that the books had. The fifth movie, “Order of the Phoenix,” was just plain tedious.

Fortunately, “Harry Potter” fans have been faithful enough to stick around for this first part of the final chapter of the story, and director David Yates has delivered an exceptionally filmed prelude to the final hours of our journey with the boy who lived. **CT**

Grade: B+





spectrum

Music Review: 'Broken Dreams Club' EP by Girls gives fans a taste of summer

Sabrina Barekzai
Contributing Writer

Though Girls' lead singer, Christopher Owens, was raised in a Children of God cult, it's not evident on the band's "Broken Dreams Club" EP.

After releasing "Album" in Sept. 2009 to critical indie-rock acclaim (Pitchfork's verdict was a 9.1 of 10), the San Francisco natives headlined a U.S. tour. Needless to say Girls delivered with "Broken Dreams Club," released on Nov. 22, and the newest album has a way of saying thanks to devoted fans.

The mellow surf rock of "Broken Dreams Club" sound comes off as charmingly earnest rather than trying-too-hard, which is no easy feat. They perfectly marry the sounds of an idealistic image of sunny California with the tongue-in-cheek reality check in their lyrics. There's something so soothing about Christopher Owens' voice on "Broken Dreams Club." Whatever seemed unpolished and lazy on "Album" has been tuned up and matured on this EP, which perfectly highlights Owens' soothing mix of sweet and sad vocals.

Owens is also chief-songwriter and sticks to the same bag of tricks that worked on "Album": simple lyrics longing to be loved.

Though the lyrics might seem stationary, a driving dedication to experimenting with new elements is clear on a track like "Alright." The EP is nicely closed out with the nearly-eight minute "Carolina," a catchy, fuzzy number.

This psychedelic theme is well-played on "Broken Dreams Club" and leaves a wide-open door to what is in the future for Girls.

"Broken Dreams Club" might have all the right qualifications of the perfect summer album, but their stellar jangle-pop sound makes it a great album year-round. **CT**

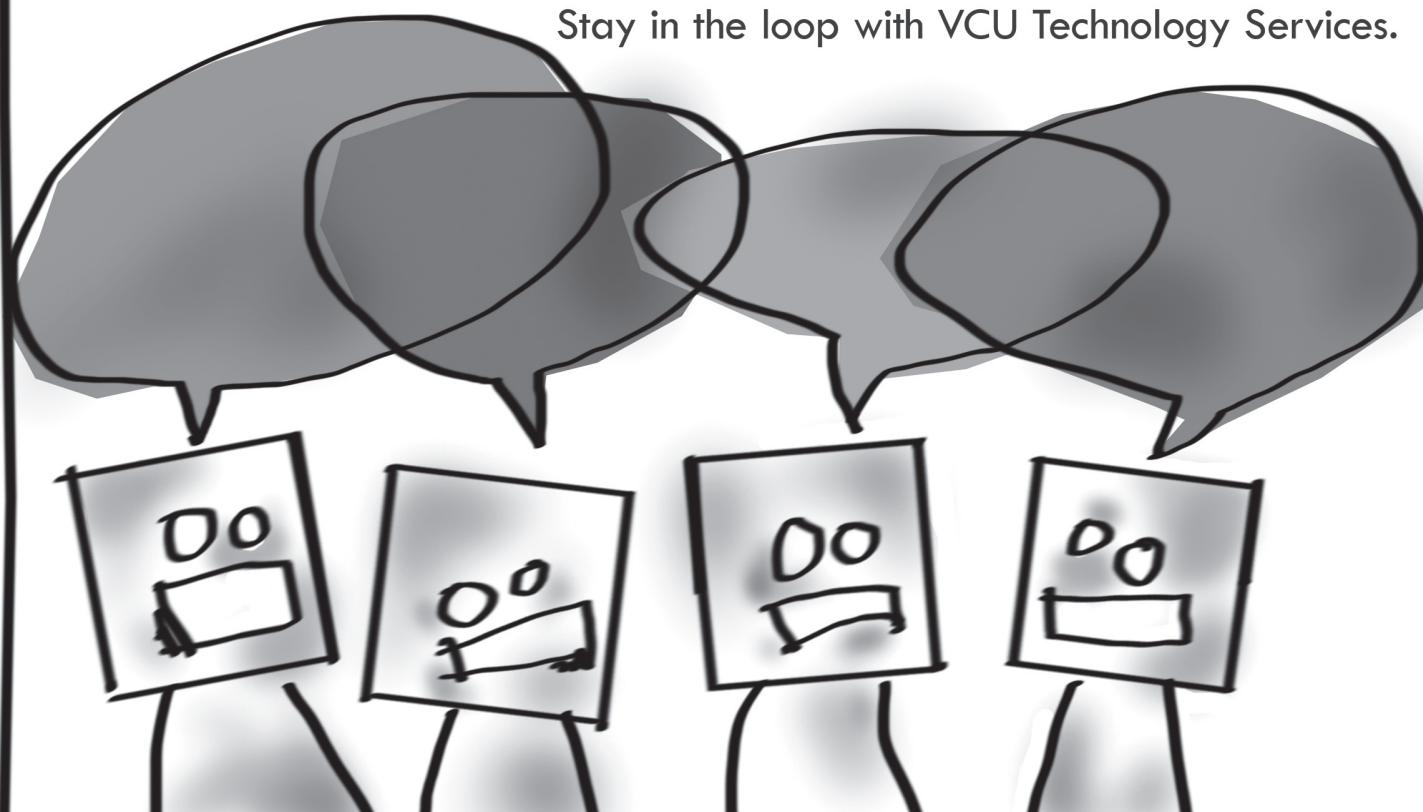
Grade: B



GIRLS
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ILLUSTRATION BY HANNAH SWANN

Airport security in need of pro-activity

Colin Hannifin
Columnist

With stomachs still full from Thanksgiving weekend and Christmas music filling the airwaves, the holiday season is upon us.

As it happens every year, with the holiday season comes the dreaded holiday travel and those long lines at the airport will become more bothersome this year with the latest security procedures unveiled by the Transportation Security Agency earlier this month.

The new procedures have brought on an outcry against the TSA's full-body scans and the affiliated thorough pat-down reserved for those who opt out of the full-body scan. The causes given by protestors vary from the unknown medical consequences of the full-body scan to complaints of the pat-down being too thorough. Horror stories of the pat-down have been percolating across the internet, with varying degrees of veracity.

The TSA has refuted many of these stories or attributed them to the fault of the employee, but despite the public backlash, the full-body scans and thorough pat-downs, for now, continue.

The TSA should reconsider their position on the matter, not because of privacy issues, but based on how it reflects TSA's failing method of flight security. The TSA is a very responsive agency and has been since its inception just over nine years ago. Normally, this would be something to be praised; however, when the goal is to promote the security of our transportation and capture terrorists before they board the plane, it is better to be proactive than reactive.

Terrorists are not prone to returning to the same tactics, particularly after security forces learn about them – yet this is exactly what the TSA is counting on.

After an attempt to blow up an airplane using explosives hidden in shoes, we have to remove our shoes.

After an attempt to blow up an airplane using liquid explosives, we can't take more than a certain amount of liquid past the security check. After an attempt to blow up an airplane using explosives hidden in a man's underwear, we have to digitally de-robe.

The pattern is clear. The next terrorist is not going to hide explosives in his shoes, his water bottle or his underwear, but he will get past security because

these are the things the TSA checks; they don't actually check the person in the shoes.

The TSA must fundamentally change its ways. The full-body scanners and thorough pat-downs should be reconsidered. Not because of possible radiation or an invasion of personal property, but because it seeks out the means of terrorism – knives, guns and bombs – not the person behind the terrorism.

There are also other practical problems with the security as it stands now.

First of all, the medical consequences of the full-body scanner are as of yet unknown, though the TSA assures it is safe.

Secondly, there is the matter of personal privacy. While a Gallup poll this month showed that a majority of those that have flown twice or more in the past year would not be bothered by a full-body scan, this is done with the premise that everything the TSA has said is true – namely that the machines will not and cannot save your image. It will be looked at briefly then discarded.

Yet hundreds of these images were leaked earlier this year. By the same coin, many have felt molested after going through the pat down spawning talks

of lawsuits and litigation coming TSA's way. The Gallup poll showed that only 42 percent of those same fliers weren't bothered by a full-body pat-down, a significant decrease. But perhaps most important is the fact that these scanners may not be totally effective anyway. For one thing, they may show things hidden between the clothes and the body, but not within body cavities, which leads me to wonder and fear what the security checkpoint may be in the years to come.

Additionally, consider what Adam Savage of "MythBusters" managed to accidentally sneak past the TSA security scanner: two twelve-inch razor blades. What exactly is the point of a security checkpoint at all if it can't catch two twelve-inch razor blades?

While the TSA's use of full-body scanners should be reconsidered, they need to more fully reconsider how they search to stop terrorists. They need to stop searching solely for the means of terrorism – the knives and bombs – and more for those behind terrorism. Until then, they will face a rising tide of frustration from the traveling public. **CT**



Confidence for the holidays

Robert Showah
Opinion Editor

The best course of action for economic recovery will not be coming out of the lame-duck Congress but rather from the American people themselves this holiday shopping season.

According to a Gallup poll, half of Americans say they feel able right now to make a major purchase, such as a car or furniture – up from 46 percent last year. Fifty-eight percent say they feel pretty good about the amount of money they have to spend these days up from 54 percent in 2009. Most timely to the season is Christmas gift spending, which is at \$714, up significantly from \$638 from last year.

Major news outlets reported optimism among shoppers many saying that they had not seen such energy during the holidays in years – traffic lines are longer, parking lots are more full.

While government is being consistently blamed for the unemployment rate, another cause to the stalled recovery

also deals with consumer spending and confidence, a key part to our recovery. If people spend, businesses make money and hire people to work. When that happens, unemployment decreases.

The stock market has been on the rise for the past three months, however unemployment continues to lag. The political consequences of this resulted in a change of power in the House of Representatives and a president who is taking much of the blame.

Consumer confidence this season will certainly be more important than the tax cuts being discussed in Congress. Tax cuts are not going to help anyone recover but are merely a ploy to play to voters.

A report by Bloomberg earlier last month revealed that the wealthiest Americans gaining from the Bush tax cuts have actually been saving the money instead of “trickling down” and using the savings to hire workers. The rest of America is likely using them to keep their head above water.

There are a lot of factors as to why

people aren't spending and why they do not have confidence in the economy. A part of it is the media feeding off of bad economic news, but a larger part is the expectation of government.

If Americans, as they displayed on Election Day, do not know who they want in power, then they certainly do not know what policies they want to see enacted in order to “create jobs.” Anti-government sentiment makes things all the more difficult. If government “creates jobs” it is expanding its size. If it gives tax breaks to large businesses, they end up holding the savings. Because government continues to keep promising to create jobs and grow the economy, people continue to hold it accountable for something it cannot do upon request.

There will be no one solution. Those who have the money should spend though not out of their means. They can consider it their part and their vote in supporting economic recovery without the partisan gridlock their representatives are fighting through to reach the same goal.

Consumer confidence could be the ultimate trickle strategy as it will help lead to a domino effect towards recovery. We certainly will not shop our way out of this hole but it is a healthy start that can grow into something greater even after the holiday season is over all with less, not necessarily government intervention, but representatives unwilling to compromise for the sake of Americans and the economy. **CT**



Bros - Will Barnes

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