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Call of duty

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BRIEFS

On the cover:

VCU junior forward Lauryn Hutchinson scissor-kicks the ball at team training Friday.
Photo by Chris Conway

Local & VCU

U.S. budget plan would cut Amtrak funding for local routes

A new federal budget proposal threatens to end funding for regional Amtrak service at a time when Virginia is expanding passenger rail in the state and has no source of operating money for the trains.

State officials say it's not clear yet how the measure would affect Virginia's six regional Amtrak trains, including Newport News service and the anticipated Norfolk service that's slated to start in two years.

But rail advocates interpret the proposal as ominous.

"If this legislation is enacted, Virginia will lose 64 percent of its Amtrak trains, including all of the services that start in Virginia," Danny Plaugher, executive director of Virginians for High Speed Rail, said in an email to its members.

The House Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee wants to cut Amtrak's budget by 60 percent, including all state-supported routes in 15 states, beginning with the new federal fiscal year on Oct. 1.

Amtrak runs two trains a day connecting Newport News and Richmond and beyond. The state is spending \$101 million to upgrade freight tracks between Norfolk and Richmond in preparation for service beginning October 2013.

Brief by The Virginian-Pilot

Virginia jobless rate rises to 6.3 percent

Virginia's unemployment rate rose for the second straight month in August, underscoring an anemic job market as the uneven economy continued to affect many industry sectors.

The state's jobless rate stood at 6.3 percent in August, up from July's rate of 6.1 percent, the Virginia Employment Commission reported Friday. The rates are seasonally adjusted.

Payroll employment fell by more than 9,500 jobs with industry sectors including government, leisure, and business and professional services shedding workers.

Virginia reflected a national trend, as unemployment rates increased in 26 states in August, the U.S. Labor Department said. Rates fell in 12 states and were unchanged in 12.

Employers in Virginia have added a net total of about 4,300 jobs this year, a growth rate of less than 1 percent.

Nevada had the nation's highest state unemployment rate for the 15th straight month. The rate there rose from 12.9 percent in July to 13.4 percent in August.

North Dakota had the nation's lowest unemployment rate at 3.5 percent.

Brief by The Richmond Times-Dispatch

Richmond universities ranked nationally

U.S. News & World Reports 2012 rankings of Best Colleges ranked VCUarts as the fourth-best Fine Arts program in the nation and ranked the whole university as the 170th out of the 194 schools ranked this year.

VCUarts' sculpture program came in first in the nation while the fiber arts and graphic design programs were ranked fourth in the nation.

VCU's Nursing-Anesthesia program was also ranked first in the nation. VCU was ranked 29th for best education schools, 74th for psychology and the 75th best medical school for research. VCU was also ranked as the 94th top public school in the nation.

University of Richmond also made the list, coming in 27th place for the best liberal arts program in the country. UR was also ranked as the third most up-and-coming school in the nation.

Virginia Union University was also ranked as the 65th best regional school in the South.

Brief by Mechelle Hankerson

National & International

Palestinians to request full U.N. membership

The Palestinian president said Friday that he would ask the U.N. Security Council next week to endorse his people's decades-long quest for statehood, but emphasized that he did not seek to isolate or delegitimize Israel.

Mahmoud Abbas' plan to seek full membership at the United Nations and bypass negotiations with Israel sets the stage for a diplomatic confrontation with Israel and the United States, which has indicated it would veto the measure in the Security Council.

Both the United States and Israel fear the U.N. move could lead to violence and other negative consequences, and stress that statehood should come about through negotiations, the cornerstone of Mideast peace efforts for the past two decades. The Palestinians already are planning two mass demonstrations in the West Bank next week.

The Palestinians say they are turning to the United Nations after concluding that peace talks will yield no breakthrough at this point.

Brief by The Associated Press

Spain court convicts Basque leader of terrorism

A Spanish court convicted a prominent Basque separatist of terrorism Friday and sentenced him to 10 years in prison for trying to resurrect the banned political wing of the militant group ETA.

Arnaldo Otegi, former leader of the outlawed Batasuna party, can appeal the conviction handed down by the National Court. Four other suspects were also convicted, and three were acquitted.

In this court case, Otegi was charged with trying to form an organization that would replace Batasuna. During the trial, which ended in July, he argued that it was this group which persuaded the pro-ETA Basque separatist community to reject violence.

But the court ruled Friday that Otegi was acting on orders from ETA to regroup pro-independence forces into a new political tool for ETA.

ETA declared a cease-fire in September 2010 and has not killed anyone in Spain in more than two years.

The government says the group has been weakened by arrests and dwindling grass roots support, but rules out negotiations and insists ETA must simply surrender. That would bring an end to Europe's last major armed militancy.

Brief by The Associated Press

NY attorney general asks court to toss anti-gay marriage lawsuit

New York's attorney general has asked a state court to throw out a lawsuit challenging the gay marriage law signed by Gov. Andrew Cuomo in June.

New Yorkers for Constitutional Freedoms and several other opponents of the law sued on July 25. They claim in part that the law should be nullified because the state Senate violated its own rules and the state's open meetings law before the critical vote that led to its narrow passage.

Attorney General Eric Schneiderman argues in papers filed Friday that the opponents haven't been harmed by the law, don't have standing to challenge the actions of the Senate and any procedural actions of the Senate and governor aren't subject to judicial review.

He's asked for a hearing on Oct. 17 at the Livingston County Courthouse.

Brief by The Associated Press

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ADAM STERN
Executive Editor
editor@commonwealthtimes.org
703-965-9811

MEL KOBRAN
Managing Editor
managing@commonwealthtimes.org

MECHELLE HANKERSON
News Editor
news@commonwealthtimes.org

JIM SWING
Sports Editor
sports@commonwealthtimes.org

NICK BONADIES
Spectrum Editor
spectrum@commonwealthtimes.org

SHANE WADE
Opinion Editor
opinion@commonwealthtimes.org

KYLE LAFERRIERE
Photography Editor
laferrierejk@vcu.edu

EMMA BREEDEN
Copy Editor
breedenep@vcu.edu

MARLEIGH CULVER
Art Director
commwealthtimesgraphics@gmail.com

YING CHENG
Graphic Designer
commwealthtimesgraphics@gmail.com

HUNTER NYE
Graphic Designer
commwealthtimesgraphics@gmail.com

HANNAH SWANN
Graphic Designer
commwealthtimesgraphics@gmail.com

JACOB MCFADDEN
Advertising Manager
ctadvertising@gmail.com
804-828-6629

MONIQUE WILKINS
Associate Advertising Representative
ctadvertising@gmail.com
804-827-4562

JOHN MCWHORTER
Advertising Graphics Specialist
ctadvertising@gmail.com
804-828-6629

SMC STAFF

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

LAUREN KATCHUK
Business Manager
827-1642

MARK JEFFRIES
Production Manager
mjeffriesVCU@gmail.com

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

NEWS

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FOLLOW-UP Virginia Board of health passes regulations for women's health clinics



VCU students and other opponents of the now-passed regulations gathered in the Compass last Wednesday to voice their dissatisfaction. Young Democrats' president Vicki Yeroian said another protest is in the works for October.

Jessica Dahlberg
Contributing Writer

On Sept. 15, 2011 the State Board of Health passed the new Regulations for Licensure of Abortion Facilities with a 13-1 vote.

The regulations will affect 21 women's health clinics in the state.

The new regulations are part of Senate Bill 924. The bill requires that the Board of Health create regulations that contain minimum standards for policies related to infection prevention, disaster readiness, security, construction, maintenance, operation, staffing, equipping and staff qualifications for hospitals, nursing homes and certified nursing facilities. The bill also categorized clinics that perform five or more first trimester abortions per month as hospitals.

"We encourage public participation, and it is critical to (our) deliberations," chairman of Virginia's Board of Health Bruce Edwards said.

The Board heard 32 two-minute statements from both supporters and opponents of the regulations.

Tosha Yingling, a student from VCU, told her story of how state clinics gave her assistance when she didn't have health insurance.

Yingling needed screening done for lumps found in her breasts and lymph

nodes. Without health insurance, Yingling said a clinic helped her get the necessary tests done to confirm or deny a more serious condition.

Opponents like women's health specialist Dr. Wendy Kline are concerned with the costly changes the regulations would impose on clinics as well as the potentially insecure handling of patient records.

"The regulations are a violation of privacy and unnecessary," Kline said. "Patient safety is first and foremost, but these regulations are excessive."

Louantha Kerr, a supporter of the regulations, presented photos of a clinic in Norfolk that was surrounded by overgrown grass, had boarded windows, missing exterior lights and missing door knobs.

Kerr asked the group what would happen in emergency personnel needed to access the building.

"Coming up with these regulations has been a thoughtful and deliberate process," director of Governmental and Regulatory Affairs Joseph Hilbert said.

During the two weeks before the meeting, the Board reviewed and analyzed the regulations from 22 other states using regulations from South Carolina as a frame of reference.

The 17 amendments proposed by consumer member of the Board of

Health James Edmondson included distinguishing between medical and surgical abortions, protection of patient and employee information and lessening the pressure of building codes and licensure on the clinics.

Two of his amendments were adopted, changing the renewal date for clinics that just received their license, along with another amendment that stated when an inspector comes every two years, unannounced, they would have to identify themselves as an inspector before being allowed into the clinic.

Catherine Slusher, from the Medical Society of Virginia, proposed to have an amendment that said if any copies of records are taken off the premises by inspectors, patient names and addresses shall be edited out of the record before removal. It was approved 13-0.

Following the amendment process, the board voted to pass the regulations with only one vote against them, coming from Edmondson.

In a statement released Friday, the Virginia Coalition to Protect Women's Health said that "the new regulations passed have no proven medical benefit to patients and, instead, will only serve to further limit patient access to abortion care as well as life saving cancer screenings, birth control and the wide range of preventive care provided at

women's reproductive health centers."

Simply put, rather than implement medically proven policies, the Board of Health passed regulations that will put women's health at risk."

The Virginia Coalition to Protect Women's Health was one of the groups that organized a rally Wednesday in VCU's Compass to protest the regulations along with the Young Democrats at VCU.

President of the Young Democrats, Vicki Yeroian said that the group will be organizing a petition and will be working with Planned Parenthood and the Virginia Coalition to Protect Women's Health to explore the next course of action.

"It has been suggested that we begin looking towards the legalities of this bill and take it up in the court system," Yeroian said.

The regulations will now go to the executive branch for review and will be effective once approved by Gov. Bob McDonnell. If approved, they will be implemented Jan. 1, 2012. The regulations will be in effect for one year and can be extended by the governor for six months. Hilbert said that during this time, more permanent regulations will be in the works. **CT**

Implementation of Monroe Park plan still up in the air

Stephen Nielson
Contributing Writer

Richmond Parks and Recreation, in association with other local organizations, is continuing plans to renovate Monroe Park. Dates for the beginning of construction and completion of the project are still unknown.

"The plan has been accepted by the mayor and the community at large ... now we're fundraising," said Tesha Davis, Parks and Recreation public relations specialist. The Monroe Park Master Plan was adopted in 2008.

The estimated total cost of the first two phases, including the majority of construction, is over seven million dollars. While the fundraising is progressing, a true timeline won't be made until it's completed, according to Davis.

The park, a prominent city feature for VCU students, will undergo extensive construction intended to improve park use.

The planned changes "fall into two main categories: physical changes to Monroe Park and programmatic site elements introduced into the Park" according to the Master Plan posted on the city's website (www.richmond.gov). The construction will come in multiple phases, the first two containing the major alterations.

Those will include changes to the paths, improved lighting, removal and new additions to vegetation and other park-wide additions. After that, construction will focus on the Checkers Building, renovating the bathrooms, up-

grading the existing facilities and adding new areas like a plaza and playground. After that, construction efforts will focus on smaller additions like information kiosks and more lighting.

Programmatic elements include changeable additions meant to give visitors a reason to attend events and stay to enjoy the park. Some ideas that are intended for the renovated park are seasonal market stalls, a temporary stage and a carousel.

Since its adoption, there has also been vocal opposition against the park renovations. Opponents of the plan worry that the construction will close off the park for an extended time, displacing the many homeless people who rely on the park for a place to stay.

"The homeless presence in Monroe Park poses an impediment to increased park usage," states the Master Plan, highlighting the complication the homeless would present in improving park attendance by updating both the facilities and programming, thus overshadowing a long-standing reputation for crime and vagrancy.

"You've got the folks that are against displacing the homeless, but no one doesn't want the park renovated," Davis said.

Davis, however, said that "we take into consideration everyone."

Davis said the renovations are important because they address the dangers that Monroe Park currently represent, such as safety at night. **CT**



"You've got the folks that are against displacing the homeless, but no one doesn't want the park renovated."

-Tesha Davis, public relations specialist at Richmond Parks and Recreation



Monroe Park houses some of Richmond's homeless population and is the site for many local churches and organizations to distribute free meals and other free services. Many opponents to the plan are against the potential displacement of the homeless when the renovation plan is implemented.

PHOTOS BY KYLE LAFERRIERE

VCU first ARAMARK university to strike contract with Wendy's, IHOP

Michael Pasco
Contributing Writer

Popular fast-food restaurant and 24-hour chain restaurants Wendy's and IHOP are making their collegiate debut this semester on VCU's campus.

Wendy's, located in the hospital on the MCV campus, has been open since Sept. 2. IHOP is undergoing a building inspection next week. If IHOP passes the inspection, they will open their doors to students on Oct. 17. Unlike traditional IHOPs, VCU's location will only be open from 8:30 a.m. until 3 a.m.

The locations will accept Dining Dollars, and Dining Services has plans to negotiate the use of dining blocks at IHOP.

The presence of Wendy's and IHOP

on the VCU campuses is only made possible through cooperation with ARAMARK, the company responsible for much of the cuisine located on VCU's campuses, and the only company IHOP is willing to work under.

"We are actually the first school with IHOP and Wendy's under contract," Michael Martin, resident district manager of ARAMARK, said.

VCU is the first ARAMARK school in the country to go under contract with IHOP.

VCU's process to introduce new dining services is a long one that begins with student input.

"We discovered that folks were interested in the diner concept," assistant director of Dining Services, Dan McDonald said.

After figuring out what the students want to have on campus, Dining Services takes that information and finds new restaurants that they can bring to VCU.

Dining Services' marketing and public relations manager Rebecca Jones said that VCU creates committees of students and staff and faculty members to vote on potential dining concepts.

"In the spring of 2010, we conducted an intercept survey with our students," Dining Sales and Services manager Tamara Highsmith said. "(A team) put together a survey and went out and said, 'What do you want?'"

In addition to Wendy's and IHOP, VCU is introducing two other new dining services for students on Oct. 17.

Dining Services has worked to

introduce Raising Cane's and Croutons, Salads & Wraps. Raising Cane's is completely new to the VCU campus, while Croutons, Salads & Wraps is relocating from their old location in Park Place in the Commons.

"(Raising Cane's) ... menu is simple," Martin said. "(They offer) chicken tenders with french fries, cole slaw, grilled texas toast bread and their secret sauce, and that's it."

"(Croutons, Salads & Wraps is) something for vegetarians to really meet that niche," Martin added. **CT**

IHOP, Raising Cane's and Croutons, Salads, & Wraps are planned to open in Laurel and Grace Place, which is located on the street level of Laurel Street Parking Deck.

Monroe Park drug dealer turns himself in to Richmond Police

Mason Brown
Staff Writer

A Monroe Park-area drug dealer has turned himself in after police issued a warrant for his arrest.

Tony Short, 40, has been arrested on a felony charge of possession of marijuana with intent to distribute within 1,000 feet of a school and misdemeanor charge of possession of marijuana with intent to distribute, according to a VCU Police press release.

A drug investigation involving illegal activity in Monroe Park that began in June has led to the arrests of Short and three others. Performed by VCU Police Special Operations Unit, the investigation began in response to complaints from residents, students, faculty and staff.

"Monroe Park is frequented by students, faculty and residents of this community; drug dealing and illegal activity will be pursued aggressively and will not be tolerated," VCU Police Chief John Venuti said in a statement.

On Sept. 14, Richmond residents 42-year-old David Coley, 46-year-old Angela R. Thompson and 40-year-old Jonathan C. Motley were arrested by police as a result of the investiga-



PHOTO COURTESY OF VCU POLICE DEPARTMENT

Tony Short turned himself in on Sept. 16 after a three-month special investigation by VCU Police.

tions. The three were arrested without incident and charged with intent to distribute within 1,000 feet of a school and misdemeanor charges of possession of marijuana with intent to distribute according to the press release.

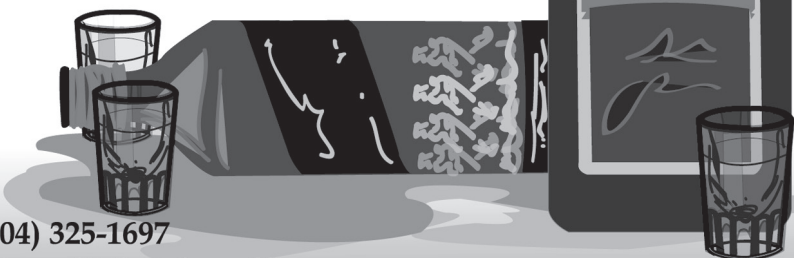
Short, who was flagged as part of the investigation, was considered at large until he turned himself in on Sept. 16. **CT**

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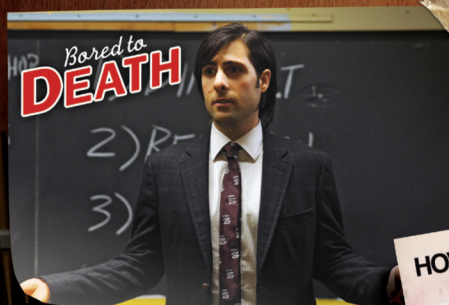
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SPORTS

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Hutchinson sees rare opportunity on Trinidad and Tobago national team



PHOTOS BY CHRIS CONWAY

Junior Lauryn Hutchinson looks to make the most of her opportunity playing for Trinidad and Tobago.

Jim Swing
Sports Editor

Nearly a month ago, Lauryn Hutchinson received a call requesting her to come to Trinidad and Tobago to try out for its national team.

The junior forward had never been to Trinidad, but her father is a native of the southern Caribbean republic so she was eligible for the team.

On the morning of Aug. 26, Hutchinson was named to the country's squad in preparation for the upcoming Pan American Games in October.

In her first two years at VCU, Hutchinson has scored two goals and produced 27 shots in 38 games played.

FOCUSING ON SOCCER

Hutchinson was just five years old when she discovered soccer.

Sitting by her father at a baseball game, she looked over and saw a couple of kids kicking a soccer ball around.

"I was like, 'I want to do that,' and he was like, 'OK, we'll sign you up, cool,' and ever since then I haven't stopped."

From then on, she continued playing soccer, but in her freshman and sophomore years at Dominion High School in Sterling, she picked up the sport of basketball, playing for the school's varsity team.

"Basketball was my love," Hutchinson said. "It was everything to me."

While juggling the two sports in high school, she began being recruited by colleges to play soccer. The recruiting got serious until one day, Hutchinson tore her ACL playing basketball.

Her parents then decided enough was enough and cut her off from basketball to begin focusing fully on soccer.

"They were like, 'you're done; you're

not going to throw all your hard work away from soccer and all the recruiting,'" Hutchinson said.

After recovering from the ACL tear, Hutchinson was playing travel soccer at the Disney Showcase Tournament in Orlando, Fla. when VCU coaches Tim and Tiffany Sahaydak asked her to come play for their program.

"I didn't even know about VCU," Hutchinson said. "Then I came here, I loved it and I signed, and that was it."

Hutchinson knew she found the right fit with a coaching staff that's always looking out for its players.

Sahaydak knows one of the Trinidad and Tobago coaches and contacted them about Hutchinson playing for their team.

Sahaydak put the coach and Hutchinson's father in contact and the two emailed back-and-forth. Luckily for both sides, it was something they all wanted.

The squad just happened to be looking for players from other countries who were at least half Trinidadian to come play.

AN EMOTIONAL VISIT

Nigel Hutchinson hadn't been back to Trinidad in over 30 years.

So, returning after three decades to watch his daughter try out for the national team of his native land reigned in a bundle of emotions.

"It was really emotional for him," Lauryn said. "Watching me play for his country, where he is from and me seeing it for the first time, it was just great."

Trinidad and Tobago has long been associated with the term "Third World Country," a developing country with a low state of well-being.

"It's way different from here,"

Hutchinson said emphatically. "I just learned that I'm pretty fortunate here at VCU to have such a great facility, great coaches and great teammates."

A GLOWING ASSET

On a windy Friday afternoon at Joseph Bryan Park, practice winds down and finishing stretches are being held for the VCU women's soccer team.

The group is wound together in a wide circle as the joys of practice coming to a close can be seen on nearly every face, including one in particular.

There's a beaming sense of jubilee that surrounds Hutchinson.

She's seen dancing, singing and joking around with nearly every player on the team, bringing a touch of brightness to a squad that began the season on a 2-5-1 downspin.

"She's really a goofball," teammate and friend Bre White says. "She's really fun to hangout with, she's very outgoing, she's always making someone laugh, and when it comes to soccer is the only time I can really see her being serious."

White and Hutchinson met nearly five years ago when the two teamed up on the Loudon Hotshots club soccer team.

The two friends roomed together in their freshman and sophomore years at VCU, giving them a chance to get to know each other further on and off the field.

"She's tough," White said. "She's a hard worker, and she's just a very reliable person."

MAKING THE MOST OF A RARE OPPORTUNITY

If anyone on VCU's campus knows what it's like to play at a national level, it's Tiffany Sahaydak.

She starred on the United States

women's soccer team from 1995-1999 including assisting the team in claiming the 1999 World Cup title.

So when asked about the importance of an opportunity like the one Hutchinson has been given, Sahaydak holds the key to the lock.

"It's a huge opportunity to play for your national team," she said. "So it's going to be great exposure for her to play against international players and go to a great tournament like the Pan American games. I think it's going to give her great experience so I think it's so positive."

Opportunities to play for a national team don't always knock more than once. If players don't perform at a high level, their first chance can easily be their last, and to that, Sahaydak tossed a bit of advice in Hutchinson's direction.

"She needs to take advantage of it," Sahaydak said. "Because a national team, doesn't matter what country you're from, is very competitive, and a lot times you get one opportunity and if you don't make the best out of it, it could be your last."

But Hutchinson knows the gravity of the situation. She knows that playing at a national level is no joke.

And with that, she also knows what it's worth.

"It's worth more than life probably," a lighthearted Hutchinson said. "Most of my teammates don't get this opportunity, and it made me really thankful for everything I have, and I wouldn't give it up for the world. It's scary, but it's going to change my life." ■



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Sanchez was deemed a junior by the NCAA, which means she and Carden each have two years of eligibility at VCU.



Granados was granted true freshman status, giving her a full four years on VCU's front line.

Costa Rican imports are stars in the making for women's soccer

Quinn Casteel
Assistant Sports Editor

A trip to Costa Rica is an ideal vacation for most Americans, but for VCU head coaches Tim and Tiffany Sahaydak, it was the ultimate business trip.

The Sahaydaks traveled to the Central American nation last year on a recruiting trip and would later receive commitments from two members of the country's national team.

Cristin Granados is already one of the team's most talented offensive players, and she is only a freshman. The other import is Carol Sanchez, a brilliantly smooth center back, who plays the position with a combination of speed and grace foreign to the American game.

"They definitely bring something new to our team," Tiffany said. "Cris (Granados) is very comfortable on the ball, and (Sanchez) is so fast and aggressive in the back. We're very happy with both of them."

Sanchez is from the city of Palmares, just 70 miles from Cartago where Granados calls home. Cartago, which is a city not much smaller than Richmond, with a population close to 150,000; it's an affluent area just minutes away from the nation's capital.

Palmares, on the other hand, has a population of just 4,000. But despite its small size, every January Palmares plays host to "Fiestas," a festival which annually consumes more beer than any festival in the world besides Oktoberfest.

Being so far away from home has been a difficult transition for the Costa Rican tandem, which is why they stick together for the most part.

Neither Granados nor Sanchez speak English, which has made the transition that much harder. In order to communicate, Sahaydak and the rest of the players rely a lot on Azania Barbosa, a senior forward from Brazil, to translate. But some things remain lost in translation even then because Barbosa speaks Portuguese, not Spanish. She is still able to get by because the languages are so similar.

"Communicating with the team is difficult but not that complicated because the game is the same," said Sanchez, as translated by Barbosa. "We are able to communicate through the game and through gestures when we're on the field."

As a center back, Sanchez is the last line of defense which means she has to be constantly communicating with the goalie. And as much of a challenge as that has been, her chemistry with starting goalie Kristin Carden has been fantastic as of late.

"It's been interesting trying to incorporate Carol," Carden, a transfer from Virginia Tech, said. "We've had to work with her some, with English and everything, but she's very quick and she helps our back out a lot."

"I already learned the basic things so I am able to communicate in English with (Carden)," said Sanchez through Barbosa. "And for the things I don't know, I learn by watching my teammates. So the other defenders, I'll copy them."

Balancing VCU soccer with the Costa Rica national team's schedule is yet another challenge the two have to face. So for now, Sahaydak has asked them to take a leave from the national team so they can focus on academics as well as VCU's upcoming conference slate. Granados said she hopes to return to the national team at some point next year, or whenever the opportunity arises.

Sanchez and Granados are using their time in the U.S. the same way an American student would if they were to study abroad. It's a chance to be immersed in another culture and to experience the American lifestyle. But as much as they are enjoying their time here, they plan on returning home once their collegiate careers are over.

Until that time comes, though, there is still a lot to look forward to from these two.

Both have started all of VCU's eight games this season, and they will be major factors in the team's overall success over the next few years. **CT**

"They definitely bring something new to our team."

Weekend scoreboard

Men's soccer

Friday, Sept. 16

UAB 2, VCU 1

Sunday, Sept. 18

Gardner-Webb 1, VCU 0

Volleyball

Friday, Sept. 16

Sacred Heart 3, VCU 2

Saturday, Sept. 17

Michigan State 3, VCU 1

Ball State 3, VCU 1

Field hockey

Thursday, Sept. 15

Longwood 2, VCU, 1

Sunday, Sept. 18

Penn State 6, VCU 1



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SPECTRUM

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Campus variety show enters fifth year, shameless • 13

Like Sex? There's a club for that • 13



PHOTOS BY MEL KOBAN

Hundreds of local hopefuls line up for 'Lincoln' auditions

Nick Bonadies
Spectrum Editor

A line of hundreds snaked through the Greater Richmond Convention Center lobby Thursday, Sept. 15, all hoping to snag their 15 seconds of fame as extras in the upcoming Stephen Spielberg film, "Lincoln."

The film about the 16th president, starring Daniel Day-Lewis, will begin shooting in Richmond and Petersburg in October.

Hopefuls from all over Virginia – from entire families, to groups of college students, to office workers on lunch break – turned out in a steady stream from 9 a.m. until 6 p.m. for their chance at stardom.

Fame and fortune for a Hollywood extra might amount to a hundred bucks, catered lunch and some face time, but Morgan Shelton, who graduated from VCU with a B.S. in accounting this year, said she would be happy enough with non-face time.

"If my arm is showing, I'll be like, 'that's my arm!'" she said. "I'm going to go through that movie and identify my arm."

Senior criminal justice major Logan Elliott and his compatriots were among those whose substantial beards would

particularly befit a Civil War soldier or citizen. (The notice for the casting call specifically requested African American or white men with beards, African American or white women with natural-colored shoulder length hair and African American men "adept at horseback riding.")

"I'm sure my mom would be happy," Elliott said, describing his dreams of big-screen fame. "She'd probably be like, 'Oh my god, I'm so proud! I can't believe you're in the movies!' And I'll be like, 'Mom ... I'm walking across the street for three seconds.'"

Richard Fox, who traveled from Gettysburg, Pa. for the casting call, stood out among the crowd for his uncanny resemblance to Benjamin Franklin – the front half of his crown is shaved off in classic Franklinian style.

He revealed his status as a veteran Franklin impersonator and reenactor for the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia with quiet pride.

"I mainly work in the 1700s," he said. "So the 1800s is a new thing for me."

"The potential that they have, the research that's going in – it's looking really good," he said of Spielberg's film. "They're actually doing history, not Hollywood's version of history." **CT**

Stephen Spielberg's new movie "Lincoln" will begin shooting in Richmond in October.



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VCU grads bring 'stripped-down' theater to Richmond

Samantha Foster
Contributing Writer

The brainchild of VCU graduates Tommy Callan and Lucian Restivo and current VCU student Lisa Hardt, Stage B is Richmond's newest source for edgy, stripped-down theater.

After graduating, Restivo was planning a production of Neil LaBute's "reasons to be pretty" when he and Callan decided to take the plunge and follow their dream to make their own theater company.

"The biggest question we ever had was when we do it," Callan said.

Because they have no permanent theater house, Stage B has held productions at venues across Richmond. Stage B's past plays have explored sex, drugs and homosexuality. Through their productions, they hope to promote the discussion of taboo subjects in a public forum.

Their productions avoid expensive lighting, sound or costumes, which Callan describes as a "stripped-down"

approach to theater. Stage B's strategy allows the actors and directors to focus more on the acting and conveying the message of the play.

The theater company is funded by donations, attendance and Kickstarter.com, which is a project-funding website made specifically for artists and designers. Once the artist meets his or her initial monetary goal, all money made after that goal is kept.

Stage B has an upcoming holiday fundraiser at Gallery 5 in December,

as well as a night of staged readings of Clay Chapman's pieces at Chop Suey Books on Saturday, Oct. 15 at 6:30 p.m.

Currently, Callan and Restivo are also working on a commissioned piece called "Brew" about Richmond's coffee culture. It will be performed at the Globehopper Coffeehouse and Lounge on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays Nov. 11-20 at 8 p.m.

VCU student Martha Johnson has been working

as a stage manager for "Brew."

"To witness (Callan and Restivo) founding their own company is inspir-

ing to say the very least," she said. "I believe all young theater artists should take example of both these people."

"We like to use the talent we know comes from VCU's excellent theater department," Callan said.

Callan is hopeful that people will spread the word about Stage B, considering it is a small and locally produced company. Stage B has open auditions a for each play, and donations are accepted. **CT**

To attend any one of Stage B's plays or readings, there is a flat rate of \$10 for general admission and \$8 for anyone with a valid student ID. Their Facebook page is the best place to find out about any upcoming performances.

"To witness (Callan and Restivo) founding their own company is inspiring to say the very least ... I believe all young theater artists should take example of both these people."

'Flash mob' or just 'mob'? You decide

Word had long since spread about a flash mob in the Compass this past Friday, Sept. 16 at 1 p.m.

When a dance team of students broke out a choreographed rendition of Beyonce's "Run the World (Girls)," therefore, a crowd was already waiting for them.

Some in the audience questioned the descriptor "flash mob" as applied to a

performance that was not necessarily a surprise.

"This isn't a flash mob," Nelson Johnson, junior creative advertising major, said. "It's just a mob."

Whatever you call it, the dancers and other impromptu performances that followed drew cheers from the Compass crowd, which took well over half an hour to dissipate. **CT**



“Everyone’s like, ‘what’s a virgin?’ And then you get deeper and deeper – no pun intended.”



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY KYLE LAFERRIERE

‘Let’s talk about sex’: VCU Sex Club breaking taboos

Megan Gallagher
Contributing Writer

“Let’s Talk About Sex!” is a phrase you might find planted on a pamphlet on your high school guidance counselor’s door. While those pamphlets never seem to get any action, this is hardly not the case with the Sex Club at VCU.

Despite common first impressions, the VCU Sex Club does not gather for orgies or to watch porn. The club is set up to discuss sex and sex-related topics in a positive, open-forum setting.

“I wanted to become involved in Sex Club because I felt that it was too good of a club to not exist ... and what better club to be a part of than one that revolves around sex?” said Anna Scott, president of the Sex Club.

No topic is off-limits for discussion: in fact, the more obscure the topic is, the better. Popular topics from the past have include prostitution and fetishes. Scheduled topics at future meetings will be sexual relations between transgendered individuals, pornography and human trafficking in America.

For the first meeting of the year, the officers started the meeting by telling new members their names and their “favorite flavor.” A muddled expression of confusion and embarrassment crossed the faces of first-time attendees.

“The favorite flavor was mostly an

icebreaker to see if your mind goes into the gutter, per se,” Scott said.

Once the ice was sufficiently broken, Scott led the meeting with a PowerPoint presentation on the night’s topic, virginity, picked because this was the club’s first, or virginal, meeting of the year.

Scott’s slideshow listed several types of virginity, statistics and video clips. She encouraged attendees to offer comments and questions throughout the entire presentation. Scott explained that there are many ways to look at a topic such as virginity, whether it’s from a cultural aspect, a media-and-society-influenced aspect or a religious one.

Scott kept the mood light throughout with her fair share of “that’s what she said.” During a reading of statistics, everyone laughed when Scott said, “Everyone’s like, ‘what’s a virgin?’ And then you get deeper and deeper – no pun intended.”

Scott closed the meeting by giving the group’s disclaimer that the Sex Club doesn’t promote having sex, and it doesn’t condemn those who do. They want to make talking about sex informative, and at times hilarious, for any curious person with a sense of humor. **CT**

The next VCU Sex Club meeting will take place in the Commons Forum Room on Monday, October 10 at 7 p.m.

No Shame Variety Show surprises audiences, keeps traditions

Paislee Winkler
Contributing Writer

The No Shame Variety Show presented by the Shafer Alliance Laboratory Theater (S.A.L.T.) kicked off the second show of its fifth year this Friday at the Shafer Street Playhouse on campus.

The line for No Shame outside the Playhouse door regularly grows so long that S.A.L.T. members have to turn people away.

“It’s a blessing and a curse; we have to follow fire code of only 150 people in the theater,” Kyle Raiche, senior theater major and the host of No Shame, said.

Shortcuts do exist to bypass the No Shame line: during the last performance, audience members who brought school supplies to donate to dosomething.org, a charity organization, were allowed to cut to the front.

“We (S.A.L.T) try to give back to the

community – like in the winter months, we ask for canned food,” Raiche said.

The audience started off the show according to tradition on Friday night, applauding and chanting the host’s name and singing the chorus to the opening song.

No Shame does not have a program, and the set list is a surprise to the audience. However, there are some long-running traditions, like “Chef Armada,” which has run since No Shame’s inception, a post-show roast and the improv group, “Foreign Exchange.”

Austin Graham Seay, the senior theater major who plays “Chef White,” described Chef Armada as “One of those things where it just kept getting passed down to people year after year until it became ingrained in No Shame.”

“People love seeing their friends as villains, ridiculous plot lines and epic fights,” he said.

The skit involves copious stage combat with very little dialogue and usually returns for three acts in one show. Glenn Jodun, junior photography major, is a longtime fan of Chef Armada.

“It is really random, and you don’t have to see every episode because it is just that random,” he said.

The next show is scheduled for Friday, Sept. 30 at 11 p.m. Sign-up sheets are available to any interested participants in the Green Room of the W.E. Singleton Center for the Performing Arts under the S.A.L.T bulletin board. **CT**

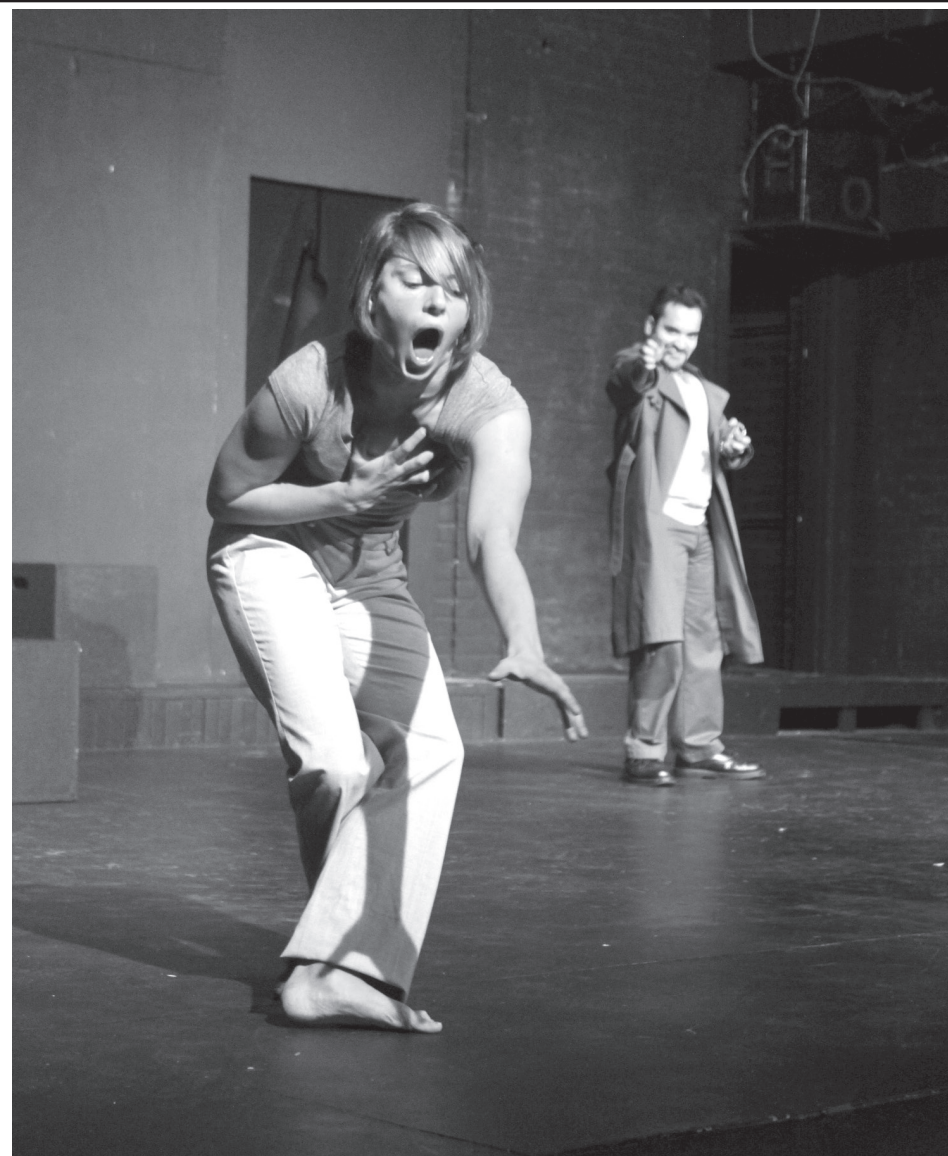


PHOTO BY AMBER-LYNN TABER

No Shame Variety Show continued its long-running epic “Chef Armada” on Friday night.

OPINION

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Traffic laws hindering cyclists • 14

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Richmond's traffic laws unrealistic for bicyclists



ILLUSTRATION BY HANNAH SWANN

Shane Wade
Opinion Editor

Last week, I was stopped by a VCU police officer while biking to class. The officer kindly informed me that it was Virginia Bicyclist and Pedestrian Awareness Week, gave me a brochure and vaguely mentioned potential citations for bicyclists that break traffic laws.

That stunned me; I stopped driving in Richmond in order to avoid tickets, especially after I amounted over \$120 in parking tickets in a three-month span.

Sure, concerns about the cost of gas and the environment proved to be factors as well, but the worst thing to see after you get out of an exam is a yellow paper stuck to your windshield wipers.

I bike the streets of Richmond daily and have never seen a bicyclist wait more than 30 seconds at a red light. As soon as cars stop coming, we go. That seems to be the bicyclist's rules of the road.

But according to the state law,

bicyclists may only proceed through stoplights after waiting two minutes or two complete cycles of the traffic light, whichever is shorter. I'm certain stoplights never exceed anything longer than one minute, but that's almost beside the fact. Two minutes seems to be a fairly arbitrary number, and I cannot fathom why anyone would wait two complete cycles of the traffic light.

Bicycles are considered vehicles under the law, yet the law also dictates that bicyclists must ride to the right side of motorist traffic. If Richmond had bicycle lanes, this would make sense.

Unfortunately, the right side of the travel lane is filled with parked cars featuring doors that can be opened at any moment. Telling bicyclists to stay to the right, instead of allowing them to operate as motor vehicles and taking up the whole lane, is more dangerous than protective.

I bike for the freedom – freedom from parking tickets, freedom from the confinement of a car, freedom to

get to my graduate class on MCV from Monroe in 10 minutes. But the laws that govern bicyclists in Richmond are inane and unrealistic. If you think bicyclists in Richmond feel they have a sense of entitlement, it's because we do. We're entitled to a safer city with common-sense laws.

Don't misunderstand me; I applaud the efforts by law enforcement to try to make Richmond a safer, cyclist-friendly city. But I don't feel like the current laws are realistic. These are restrictive laws that negate the idea that people use common sense when crossing a street. The current laws are not a proactive solution to our safety problem but simply a reaction.

If I had my way, I'd declare the entirety of the Monroe Park campus a car-free zone. No more pedestrians or bicyclists running into cars. No more afternoon traffic jams in front of the Commons. No need for crossing guards.

Sure, drivers would have to find an alternate route around the campus, but

they'd probably save themselves some time and Tylenol. They wouldn't have to worry about a rogue cyclist darting out of nowhere or the texting pedestrian walking in front of them while crossing the street. Campus would undoubtedly be safer, and more students would feel safer commuting to classes through alternative modes of transportation.

The brochure I was given says that in 2010, 88 people died walking or cycling on Virginia roadways. While it doesn't say if they were hit by cars, I'm willing to bet that cars were a major factor in their deaths.

Bicyclists don't deserve free reign, but the city of Richmond needs to understand that Richmond, and the VCU-area in particular, is part of a changing environment. We ride bicycles, mopeds, skateboards, longboards and scooters. They pose a real hazard on the roadways, but don't blame the victims; drivers are the problem. **CT**

Freshman surge frustrates upperclassmen

Rana Harvey
Columnist

The surge of 3,800 freshmen students has sent ripples of both excitement and pressure throughout campus. Upperclassmen welcomed the vast array of freshmen with open arms, only to later question VCU's lack of preparation.

Why? Because the unexpectedly large amount of freshmen has so strained VCU's resources, especially in relation to housing, that it has left upperclassmen frustrated and inconvenienced.

This year, freshmen have moved into the upperclassmen residency halls, leading them to occupy over half of VCU's total housing capacity. As a result, upperclassmen are being encouraged to move into off-campus apartments or commute, and RAs are being asked to share their rooms with residents. Everywhere we turn, upperclassmen are being pushed aside to accommodate freshmen. Needless to say, this should not be.

Although it may seem and actually be an extremely trivial issue, one of the joys of being an upperclassmen is the freedom from freshmen, those students

experiencing their first year of freedom from home and the supervision of their parents. Upperclassmen housing better allows for serious students to live in an academic, mature environment.

VCU housing has always been a prevalent issue, but this new strain could also lead to a new trend for a number of availability-based resources, including class sizes, financial aid efficiency and various other university services.

VCU's total enrollment is down from last year, so plain numbers are not the issue. The fact that the increase comes from freshmen, however, does impact the allotment of resources.

Aside from their sheer numbers, this year's freshmen have a truly unique quality. With 47 percent of the class of 2015 identifying as minorities, they add to the cultural diversity that VCU is often praised for. If we are able to take full advantage of VCU's influx of freshmen and improve our graduation rates, tuition could decrease for the entire student body. With time and patience, the freshman class could truly make a positive difference.

The freshmen here are arguably

better accommodated than any other school, but their size has made their presence daunting.

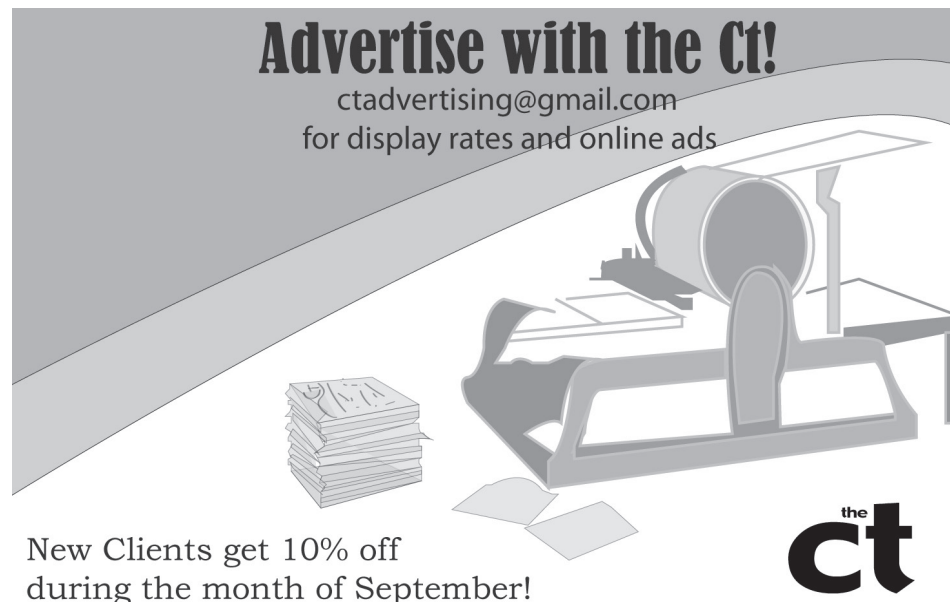
Upperclassmen have been neglected and resources overused. VCU should better divide the resources distributed toward freshmen – such as faculty, dorms, and classes – to increase efficiency

and avoid these problems in the future.

The VCU recruitment office needs make a more concrete effort to predict these influxes of students. And if not, they should expect even more stressed-out resources and increasingly intolerant upperclassmen. **CT**

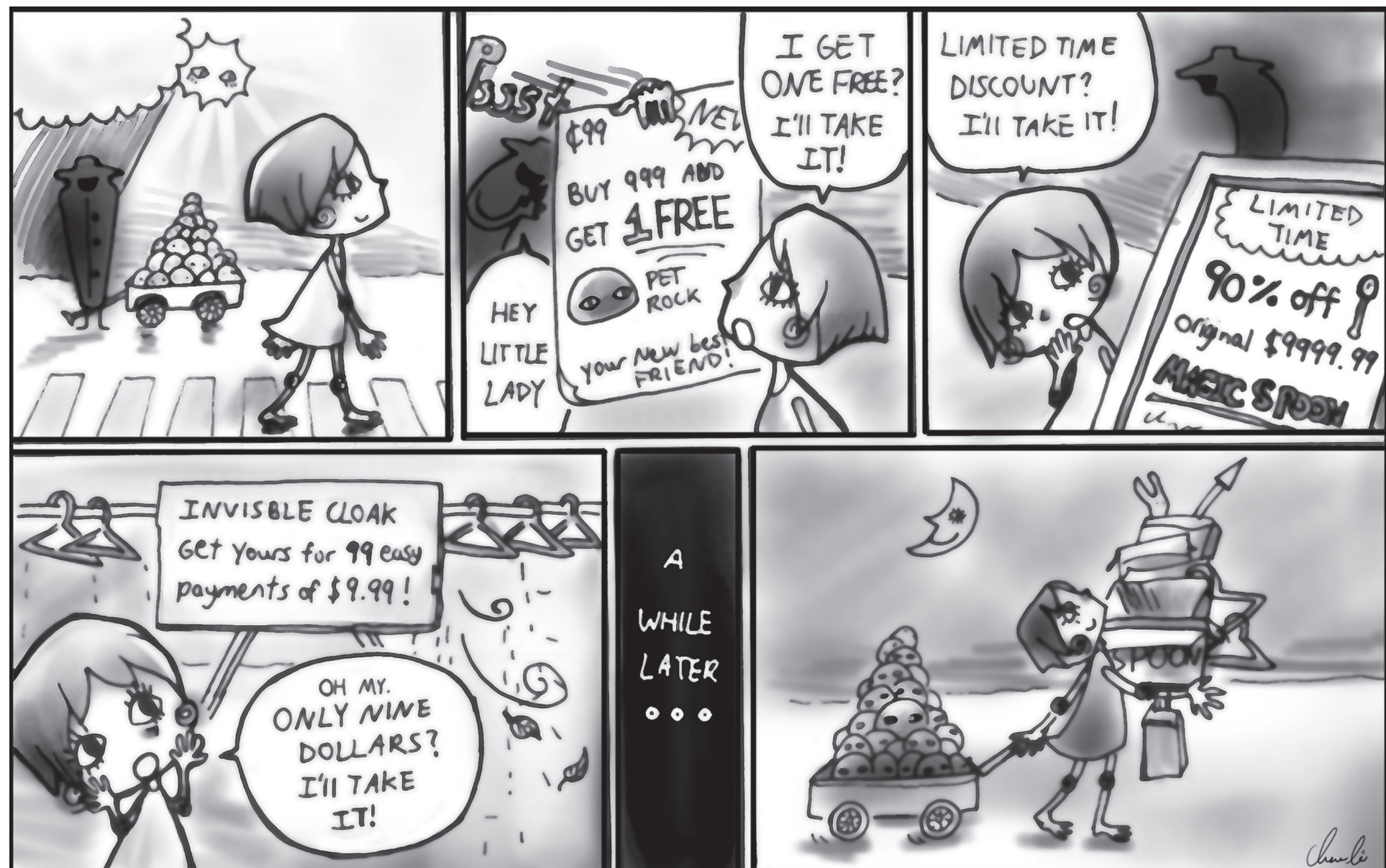
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