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OBAMA WINS RE-ELECTION

STUDENTS MARCH IN CELEBRATION

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On the cover:

Student supporters marched around the Monroe Park Campus after the re-election of President Barack Obama.
Photo by Amber-Lynn Taber

Local & VCU

Jones easily wins 2nd term as Richmond's mayor

Richmond Mayor Dwight C. Jones easily won re-election Tuesday over real estate agent Michael K. Ryan Jr., though the mayor's challenger managed to pull about 27 percent of the vote, according to unofficial results that still were coming in late Tuesday night.

Jones, a former state delegate and Richmond School Board chairman who was elected as Richmond's second at-large mayor four years ago, entered to applause at his victory party at Havana 59 in Shockoe Bottom on Tuesday night.

"We have the opportunity to see the fruition of many of the things we've started," Jones said, citing initiatives that include overhauling Richmond's public housing and deconcentrating poverty in the city and hosting the UCI 2015 cycling championships.

Ryan, who waited until June to announce his run for office and fought a nearly four-month legal battle just to get on the ballot, faced an uphill slog in terms of campaign financing and name recognition.

Brief by the Richmond Times-Dispatch

Baliles holds 24-vote lead over Tyler in Richmond's 1st District

Former city employee and insurance broker Jon Baliles appears to have narrowly beaten incumbent 1st District City Councilman Bruce W. Tyler, though the Richmond Voter Registrar's Office has not declared a winner and couldn't say when it might do so.

Baliles held a 24-vote lead after all precincts were in the ballots counted, according to complete but unofficial results from the state Board of Elections.

Baliles got 6,183, or 49.85 percent, of the vote for the seat representing Richmond's West End, while Tyler received 6,159, or 49.65 percent.

In an interview today, Tyler said he would wait until the returns are certified before deciding whether to challenge the result.

"I've got to let the registrar certify it. At that point I'll take a look at everything," Tyler said. "I'm going to allow the process to move forward."

In an email, Registrar J. Kirk Showalter said the time frame for certifying the returns will depend on how long it takes to research the ballots.

"We do understand everyone's interest and wish to complete our work as quickly as possible, but we also need to take the time for special care and attention to detail given the closeness of this one," Showalter wrote. "I certainly do not anticipate anything before Friday (afternoon)."

Brief by the Richmond Times-Dispatch

Man beaten by juveniles on Broad Street, later hospitalized

A man was hospitalized after being beaten by a group of juveniles Monday night on West Broad Street in downtown Richmond.

Richmond police Capt. Paul Kiniry said the 51-year-old victim was taken to VCU Medical Center to be treated for a broken nose and other facial fractures after the attack, which occurred at 10:03 p.m. in the 400 block of West Broad Street, just east of Virginia Commonwealth University's main academic campus.

Kiniry said the man was not robbed, and investigators were continuing to try to determine a motive for the attack.

Kiniry said the man was confronted by a group of several juveniles who punched him, pushed him to the ground and kicked him in the head.

One juvenile was quickly arrested by 4th Precinct officers who were in the area, and police were looking for other suspects this morning. Detailed descriptions were not released.

Brief by the Richmond Times-Dispatch

National & International

Kaine: Divided Congress makes deal-making a must

Senator-elect Tim Kaine of Virginia says he believes Democrats and Republicans in Congress will come together to avoid the "fiscal cliff" threatening the country at year's end.

Kaine, the former governor of Virginia who defeated Republican George Allen, tells NBC's "Today" show that voters sent a message to Washington demanding "cooperative government." But he also says the election results show that the public doesn't want "all the levers in one party's hands" on Capitol Hill.

Kaine credits the rapid growth of the Virginia suburbs of Washington, D.C., for helping President Barack Obama carry the state over Republican Mitt Romney. He says the state "has moved from reliable red to just completely battleground" and that the results show that Obama's victory in Virginia four years ago was not a "fluke."

Brief by the Associated Press

Va. Gov. McDonnell says GOP must broaden its base

Virginia Gov. Bob McDonnell says the Republican Party must find a way to deliver its core political message and broaden the base of voters who are willing to support GOP candidates.

Interviewed on "CBS This Morning" the morning after voters re-elected Democratic President Barack Obama, McDonnell said Republicans have a very good message for "people of all stripes" about entrepreneurship, small business and opportunity.

But he says the party has to find ways to appeal to broader swaths of voters before election season begins.

Said McDonnell of Tuesday's results: "We are going to digest this over time."

Exit polls show Obama was propelled to a narrow victory over Republican Mitt Romney with strong support from blacks, Latinos and women. Obama also won McDonnell's state of Virginia

Brief by the Associated Press

Putin fires defense minister in wake of scandal

Russian President Vladimir Putin fired the country's defense minister on Tuesday, two weeks after a criminal probe was opened into alleged fraud in the sell-off of military assets.

Anatoly Serdyukov has been widely unpopular in the ranks because of his reforms that radically cut the number of military officers and army units, but Putin had staunchly backed him in the past and his dismissal came as a surprise. Some observers say that Serdyukov's successor may take a less radical approach to the military reform.

Putin made the announcement in a meeting with Moscow regional governor Sergei Shoigu, whom he appointed as the new minister.

Putin's comments appeared to connect the decision to a probe announced by the country's top investigative agency last month into the sale of military assets, including real estate, at prices far below market value.

The Investigative Committee says the state suffered damages of 3 billion rubles (\$95 million) in just a few cases reviewed.

Putin did not give specifics in his televised remarks, but said he made the decision "in order to create the necessary conditions for the objective investigation of all issues" regarding the situation in the Defense Ministry.

Russia's military establishment has been haunted by corruption accusations for years and several top military officials have been convicted of embezzlement.

Brief by the Associated Press

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NEWS

In this section:

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Obama re-elected, students flood streets



PHOTO BY AMBER LYNN TABER

Students marched in the streets around VCU for over an hour, many bearing campaign signs and chanting "four more years," "two terms" and "Romney don't pay no tax."

Ryan Murphy
News Editor

Liz Butterfield
Assistant News Editor

Hundreds of VCU students and Obama supporters flocked to the streets of Richmond after major news networks began calling the 2012 election in Barack Obama's favor around 11:30 p.m. On Nov. 6, a crowd gathered at the intersection of West Broad and Shafer streets, traffic was stopped and chants of "four more years" and "two terms" were audible for blocks around.

The crowd, led by students carrying a giant Obama/Biden campaign sign, proceeded to march east down Broad Street, through Monroe Park, through nearby neighborhoods and even into Cabell Library.

Cali Jackson, a social work major at VCU, declares herself to be extremely liberal and voted mainly on issues like Pell grants, health care and the economy this year.

"It's exciting ... I saw the mob running so I had to join in," she said. Jackson joined in the celebration around campus to express her continuing support for Obama.

Participating student Zeynab Abdul was also very excited about running down the streets with other students af-

ter the results were announced.

"I love it... it shows the youth vote is so amazing and we actually make a difference," she said. Abdul was happy Obama was re-elected so she wouldn't risk losing her necessary financial aid for school, a reason that Obama's policies attracted many of the student voters who celebrated election night.

Before the crowds took to the street, hundreds of students assembled in the Commons for a watch party. Students cheered or booed in the Commons Theater as CNN called states one way or the other.

VCU alumna Ashley Evans was just as excited as current students about the election results. She came to VCU on election night to be in the same place she was four years ago when Obama won the election in 2008 and a similar demonstration took the streets of Richmond.

"Our rioting is peaceful, it's celebratory, people are happy," she said, adding that she was overwhelmed by the VCU support post-election and felt proud to be a part of the experience.

"When you got so much love and spirit for your school, your city, your state, your country, what're you going to do? You can't hold it all inside," Evans said about the swarm of students that took over West Broad Street after the announcement.

VCU Police, Richmond City Police and Virginia State Police stopped traffic and tried to direct the crowd to keep it near campus. There are currently no reports of injuries or arrests, and a broken window on North Pine Street is currently the only known damage caused by the crowd.

Mike Porter, spokesperson for VCU Police, confirmed that there are no reported arrests, injuries or property damage related to the crowd.

The group chanted pro-Obama slogans and marched for over an hour and a half before finally dispersing. Along the way, they stopped in Monroe Park twice, once congregating at and climbing on the little-used security building near North Laurel Street.

With 99 percent of precincts reporting in Virginia Wednesday morning, Obama looks to have carried the commonwealth by about 100,000 votes.

As the night wore on, highly-populated areas in Virginia with high voter turnouts were forced to keep polling places open late, which delayed reporting from Democratic-leaning areas like Northern Virginia and Norfolk. Romney's advantage, at one point around 10 percent, diminished to nothing until Obama finally pulled ahead, right around 11:20 p.m. when major news networks like CBS and CNN called the overall election in the

president's favor.

Final results Wednesday morning show Obama with 303 electoral votes to Romney's 206. Obama won both Ohio and Virginia, considered to be critical battleground states. Reports from Florida, another important swing state, say they are still tabulating votes, but the outcome in Florida won't change the result of the Electoral College. Obama won the overall popular vote by about two percent.

In Richmond's City Council elections, there were a number of tight races and surprising results. In the 5th District, Councilman Marty Jewell lost a three-way race to newcomer Parker Agelasto, a museum consultant and University of Virginia adjunct professor. Jewell has been on city council since 2005.

9th District incumbent Doug Connor also lost his race to Michelle Mosby, a salon owner. In the 1st District, an intensely close race looks like Councilman Bruce Tyler may have lost his seat to challenger Jonathan Baliles by just 24 votes. The final word on the 1st District may take awhile though — a recount is expected.

In the 2nd District, Charles Samuels was able to keep his council seat by earning 479 more votes than challenger Charles Diradour. **CT**

VCU votes, students take to the streets



PHOTO BY AMBER LYNN TABER

Voters wait to cast ballots at Dominion Place on Grace Street. Some polling places in Virginia saw hours-long waits and didn't report results until late in the evening.



PHOTO BY RYAN MURPHY

A huge crowd of students stormed Cabell Library after polls closed on the West Coast and media called an Obama victory.



PHOTO BY AMBER LYNN TABER

VCU students and Obama supporters flock to the streets and march around campus after national media called the election in Obama's favor.

What's new in America

The presidential race captured the nation's attention this Election Day, but many state contests and referendums produced important results. These historic firsts and far-reaching decisions aren't just relevant to people living in those states, but signal a shift in the makeup of national government -- and maybe even the makeup of America itself.

Puerto Rico's potential statehood:

Puerto Rico, a U.S. Territory, voted in favor of a nonbinding referendum that would make them the 51st state of the United States. U.S. statehood was listed with other measures and won out among three other options. The territory rejected being a U.S. commonwealth, 33 percent voted to be a semi-autonomous "sovereign free association" and 6 percent voted in favor of outright independence. This is the fourth time Puerto Ricans have voted on the referendum and Puerto Rico's Secretary of State, Kenneth McClintock, said the island's economic downturn and decreasing population were factors that helped the referendum pass this year. The referendum will have to be addressed by the U.S. Congress before Puerto Rico can officially become a U.S. State.

Maryland and Maine voters approve same-sex marriage:

Even though same-sex marriage is legal in six states and Washington D.C., voters often reject the measures. When voters approve same-sex marriage, it means the measure has been approved through the popular vote. The legality of same-sex marriage in states does not always align with voters' approval. In Maryland, the measure passed with 52 percent approval. In Maine, with 75 percent of their precincts reporting as of press time, approval of the measure was leading by 53 percent. As of press time, with 62 percent of precincts reporting, Washington state is also on track to approve same-sex marriage, with 52 percent approval.

Colorado and Washington state legalize recreational marijuana:

Colorado and Washington became the first states to legalize the possession and sale of marijuana for recreational use on Election Day. In Colorado, the constitutional amendment passed with 53 percent of the vote. In Washington, with about 60 percent of ballots tallied, 55 percent of voters approved of legalizing marijuana. Washington and Colorado's laws would allow for personal possession of up to an ounce of marijuana for anyone over 21. Marijuana will also be sold and taxed at state-licensed stores, modeled after state alcohol stores. Colorado's law allows for residents to have up to six of their own marijuana plants but Washington's law still prohibits cultivating pot privately. Medicinal use of marijuana was on the ballot in three other states, but was only passed in Massachusetts.



Charles Locke, co-owner of Go Green Pedicab, ferried voters to the polls.



VCU students in the Commonwealth Ballroom react to MSNBC's election coverage.



Hundreds of VCU students packed into the Commons Theater to watch election coverage from CNN at the Election Night Watch Party.

Hawaii elects first female Asian-American senator:

Rep. Mazie Hirono, D-Hawaii, became Hawaii's first female U.S. Senator as well as the country's first female Asian-American senator. She is also the first Japanese immigrant elected to the Senate.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE WIKIPEDIA COMMONS

Illinois elects disabled female veteran to U.S. House:

Illinois ousted Tea Partier Joe Walsh in favor of Iraq War veteran Tammy Duckworth, who lost her legs and part of her right arm in a rocket attack. Duckworth gained support in the state after defending women's right to abortion after Walsh suggested abortion was never medically necessary. She is the first U.S. representative with a disability to serve.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE WIKIPEDIA COMMONS

Wisconsin elects first openly gay senator:

Tammy Baldwin wasn't making history just by being the first woman elected to the senate in Wisconsin, she also is the first openly gay politician to be elected to serve in the Senate. According to Victory Fund, a political action committee that supports LGBTQ candidates, at least 118 gay and lesbian candidates won their election this year.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE WIKIPEDIA COMMONS

Texas elects first LGBTQ state representative; country's first openly pansexual representative:

Mary Gonzalez is part of the growing number of Latino politicians across the country and is also the country's first openly pansexual elected official. In her home state of Texas, she is the first non-heterosexual state representative.



PHOTO COURTESY OF FEMINISTING.COM

VCU Freshman featured by Obama campaign



PHOTO COURTESY OF OBAMA FOR AMERICA - VIRGINIA

Lauren Vickers (far left) was chosen by the campaign to represent students benefiting from Obama's Pell Grant and student loan policies.

Amir Vera
Staff Writer

With the election over, campaigning has also come to a halt around the nation and many volunteers will look back on how they spent countless hours to help their candidate of choice.

One VCU freshman got the chance to do more than hand out flyers and drive people to the polls. Physics major Lauren Vickers was chosen by the Obama for America Virginia campaign to illustrate how President Obama's student loan reforms have made college more affordable.

According to a press release by the OFAVA, Vickers' parents told her when she started high school that they wouldn't be able to send her and her brother to college. However, Vickers was able to overcome the financial burden with the help of Pell Grants and student loans.

"The grants I received provided my family with a great relief as far as paying tuition goes ... my family and I all wondered where the money would come from," Vickers said. She admitted that she's not usually the kind of person to put herself out there like that, but this time was different.

"I'd like to think my story reached voters and helped persuade or encourage them even more to support our president," she said.

Vickers, a physics major, first got involved with the OFAVA campaign in August when she attended group meetings for the campaign. She volunteered, knocking on doors and making phone calls. After the campaign learned of her story, they thought she would be great to represent students in need.

"Lauren's story was chosen because it exemplifies how important it is to keep college affordable for the hard-working and talented students who will be our future political leaders, doctors, engineers and teachers," the OFAVA campaign said.

Campaign officials said Vickers was one of their "rockstar volunteers" who logged hundreds of hours making contributions to the campaign such as phone calls and knocking on doors.

The experience, Vickers said, has really affected her as a person and her outlook on education and the voting process. "It's actually made me reconsider my major in general. I'm thinking about becoming a political science major," Vickers said. "I've really enjoyed making a difference in voters and getting people to go vote. I didn't realize how important it was for people to go out and vote, especially students. It really does affect us." **CT**

Registration complications prevent students from voting

Ryan Murphy
News Editor

While some VCU students took to the streets to celebrate President Barack Obama's re-election, others were still struggling to make sense of issues that made it difficult for them to cast a ballot on Election Day.

Melissa Miller said she first registered in her hometown of Chesapeake after she graduated high school in June and when she arrived at VCU, she submitted paperwork to change her address to Johnson Hall. She said she received a confirmation email saying that Dominion Place on Grace Street was now her polling place. However, when she called the Board of Elections' registration hotline, she was told she was registered in Chesapeake and that she would have to cast a provisional ballot.

"I'm disappointed in how this whole process went," Miller said. "I also think it's absurd that they said my vote would not count through the provisional ballot. I mean, I voted."

Karishma Kainth also had to submit a provisional ballot, and was met with the same response from election officials — that there was a "zero percent chance" that the vote would count.

"It's not really fair that I can't vote. I did do the stuff that I was required to do as a citizen to vote, this isn't my fault and I shouldn't be penalized and not be able to have my ... right to vote," Kainth said.

She tried to register through one of the third-party registration groups that had been working around VCU's campus in the weeks leading up to the registration deadline on Oct. 15. She never received a voter ID card and began calling the election office a week before the

election with no response. She finally had the chance to show election officials the receipt she received when she registered, but they told her the registration form never came in and that she's not in the system, so the provisional ballot would not be accepted.

Kainth was frustrated with the Board of Elections and expressed concern because voter registration forms include personal information like Social Security numbers, and somewhere, hers was filled out and never turned in. She plans to contact the group that registered her directly.

MyHanh Lam said she had tried to change her registration to her Richmond address, but got a letter after the registration deadline that she had to resubmit her registration because the forms had been incomplete. Afterward, she received a voter registration card saying she was registered at her parents' address — with her name spelled "Muttanh."

Lam didn't know where she could and couldn't vote or whether she could vote at all since her name was misspelled on the card.

Across the state, local news outlets and social media continued to report long lines and lengthy waits at polling places well into Tuesday night. In Richmond, voters and volunteers said that issues with computer systems at the Main Library and Retreat Doctor's Hospital polling places caused delays early in the day but that systems were up and running after a few hours.

The Virginia State Board of Elections did not return calls for comment on Wednesday and had not processed any formal complaints for publication on their website, where they were reporting official poll results. **CT**

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CRIME LOG

11/02 – 11/06

FRIDAY, NOV. 2

Damage to personal property NN-Lot, 500 N. Harrison St. - A female employee advised that an unknown person(s) damaged her vehicle.

Drug violation Broad and Belvidere Dorm, 700 W. Broad St. - A male student was arrested for possession of marijuana.

Grand larceny Grace Harris Hall, 1015 Floyd Ave. - A student advised that an unknown person(s) removed an item from an unsecured location.

Alcohol violation 400 block of North Harrison Street - A male visitor was arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol and underage consumption of alcohol.

Alcohol violation North Laurel and West Franklin streets - A female student was arrested for underage consumption of alcohol.

Drug violation Kroger, 901 N. Lombardy St. - A male visitor was arrested for possession of marijuana.

Alcohol violation North Belvidere and Spring streets - A female visitor was arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol and underage consumption of alcohol.

Alcohol violation Rhoads Hall, 710 W. Franklin St. - A male student was arrested for underage consumption of alcohol.

Grand larceny 200 block of South Cherry Street - A male visitor was arrested for grand larceny and possession of burglarious tools.

SATURDAY, NOV. 3

Drug violation 1300 W. Broad St. - A male visitor was arrested for possession of methamphetamines and possession of marijuana.

Drug violation 1200 W. Clay St. - A male visitor was arrested for possession of marijuana with intent to distribute.

Robbery 300 W. Broad St. - A male victim advised that he was assaulted and robbed.

B&E residence 1106 W. Grace St. - A female victim advised that an unknown person(s) broke into her home and removed items.

Alcohol violation/Drug violation West Broad and North Harrison streets - A male visitor was arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol, underage

SUNDAY, NOV. 4

consumption of alcohol, and possession of marijuana.

Alcohol violation Johnson Hall, 801 W. Franklin St. - A male student and two female students were arrested for underage consumption of alcohol.

Alcohol violation 800 block of W. Grace St. - A male student was arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol.

Alcohol violation 700 block of W. Marshall St. - A male student was arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol and underage consumption of alcohol.

Assault offense Gilmer and West Broad streets - A female visitor advised that she was assaulted by an unknown person.

MONDAY, NOV. 5

Petit larceny Cary St. Gym, 101 S. Linden St. - A male employee advised that an unknown person(s) removed items from a secured location.

Grand larceny Bowe Street Deck, 609 Bowe St. - A male student advised that an unknown person(s) removed an item from a secured location.

Grand larceny Cabell Library, 901

Park Ave. - A female employee advised that an unknown person(s) removed items from an unsecured location.

Alcohol violation 7-Eleven, 1101 W. Main St. - A female visitor was arrested for being drunk in public.

Drug violation Rhoads Hall, 710 W. Franklin St. - A male student was arrested for possession of marijuana.

Weapons violation North Harrison and West Grace streets - A male visitor was arrested for possession of a stolen firearm.

Trespassing Barnes and Noble, 1111 W. Broad St. - A male visitor was arrested for Trespassing.

Alcohol violation Monroe Park Towers 520 W. Franklin St. - A male student was arrested for underage possession of alcohol.

TUESDAY, NOV. 6

Grand larceny Cabell Library, 901 Park Ave. - A female student advised that an unknown person(s) removed an item from an unsecured location.

Motor vehicle theft 700 W. Franklin St. - A female victim advised that her vehicle had been stolen.

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SPORTS

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The CT Sports VCU basketball predictions 2012-2013



PHOTO BY CHRIS CONWAY

(Left to right) Senior point guard Darius Theus, sophomore point guard Briante Weber, sophomore power forward Jarred Guest and senior shooting guard Troy Daniels look on during VCU's win over Old Dominion at the Siegel Center a year ago.

The CT Sports makes predictions for the upcoming VCU men's basketball season, which begins officially Friday at 7:30 p.m. when the Rams host Florida Gulf Coast in their 2012-2013 regular season opener.

PROJECTED A-10 FINISH FOR VCU

Quinn Casteel, Sports Editor: **2nd.** Preseason No. 3 Rams will finish No. 2 in A-10, lose in championship to Temple but still earn single-digit NCAA Tournament seed.
Jim Swing, Sports Editor: **1st.** The fact that VCU faces each of its Atlantic 10 brethren besides Richmond just once this season bodes extremely well for the Rams and their style of play.

Zachary Holden, Staff Writer: **2nd.** VCU will bring a style of play most of the A-10 teams are unfamiliar with, but a costly loss or two will keep them from the top spot. Rams will be runners-up in A-10 Tournament.

PROJECTED FINAL REGULAR SEASON RECORD FOR VCU

Casteel: **24-7.** Two early losses at the Battle 4 Atlantis will ignite anger and motivation for VCU much like Alabama and Seton Hall a season ago.

Swing: **26-5.** I can easily see VCU heading into January 12-1 give or take a loss. The Rams don't face an abundance of tough road test in the non-conference and their home record speaks for itself.

Holden: **25-6.** The Rams have a good chance to finish second in the Battle 4 Atlantis and should ease through the majority of their opposition, but a strong Alabama team and slip-ups on the road in conference will get the Rams to this mark.

NCAA TOURNAMENT FINISH

Casteel: **Round of 32.** Moving forward, a trip to the Sweet Sixteen is going to be the new benchmark for VCU. However, no Mo Alie-Cox or Jordan Burgess may slide that back a year.

Swing: **Sweet 16.** VCU should receive anywhere from a five to seven seed in the NCAA Tournament and earn its second Sweet 16 berth in three years.

Holden: **Sweet 16.** Barring a shock defeat or a run similar to 2010, the Rams will win their first two games in the big dance before suffering a tough loss in the Sweet 16.

MOST VALUABLE PLAYER

Casteel: **Juvonte Reddic, Junior.** Reddic literally and figuratively grew into a big role last season as the team's primary big man. That role will grow exponentially over the next two years as he turns the corner to potential college basketball stardom.

Swing: **Darius Theus, Senior.** You should have heard it by now: Darius = team, team = Darius. It's true; Theus is the unquestioned leader of the Rams. He won't put up a ton of points, but that's not his role. His role is to be a field general and a lockdown defender.

Holden: **Darius Theus, Senior.** He will step up in the absence of Bradford Burgess and be the leader of the team and produce MVP numbers in points and assists this season.

BREAKOUT PLAYER OF THE YEAR:

Casteel: **Treveon Graham, Sophomore.** No longer playing behind Bradford Burgess, Shaka Smart expects Graham to make an even bigger step than Reddic made be-

tween his freshman and sophomore years.
Swing: **Briante Weber, Sophomore.** It's difficult to deem him a breakout player after his freshman outing. He led the team with 77 steals and was by and large VCU's best defender last season. This season, he will be an even better defender and a better scorer to go along with it.

Holden: **Briante Weber, Sophomore.** He should consistently put up a few steals each night and add in a handful of points to be a subtle, but key contributor to the Rams offense and defense.

DEFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR:

Casteel: **Briante Weber, Sophomore.** Weber's eight steals in the exhibition against Virginia Union would have been a regular season school record; only a sign of things to come this season.

Swing: **Briante Weber, Sophomore.** Weber will increase his steals total from his freshman season. His challenge will be to remain disciplined and avoid racking up fouls.

Holden: **Briante Weber, Sophomore.** Named to the A-10 Preseason All-Defensive Team and notched a would-be school record eight steals against Virginia Union. Enough said.

LEADING SCORER

Casteel: **Treveon Graham, Sophomore.** Senior Troy Daniels will hit an excess of threes but Graham's inside-outside game and ability to get the free throw line will make him VCU's most dangerous offensive weapon.

Swing: **Troy Daniels, Senior.** Daniels three-point game will improve from his 38 percent mark last season, but we will also see a side to him that likes to step into the

lane and get to the charity stripe.

Holden: **Troy Daniels, Senior.** His ability to put up 20+ a night should make him the leading scorer. Not to mention he's pretty good at making three-pointers.

FINAL TAKE

Casteel: It's going to be an exciting first year in the A-10 and I think VCU makes the most of it. The Battle 4 Atlantis and other big non-conference opportunities like Alabama, Wichita State and Old Dominion will give the Rams more than enough chances for quality wins making the NCAA Tournament more reachable than ever. A-10 teams seeing HAVOC for the first time will struggle as the Rams cause opponents to adjust to them. VCU maintains a top 25 ranking most of the season and earns a third straight Tournament appearance.

Swing: This is easily Shaka Smart's most talented team up to this point, making this one of the most exciting seasons in recent memory. VCU carries a huge advantage heading into the A-10 in the fact that many teams might not know how to prepare for the Rams. That, mixed with a strong non-conference schedule gives VCU a chance to build a strong resume to hand in come March.

Holden: The Rams will have a great first year in the A-10 showing their opposition the dangers of HAVOC basketball. Beating Duke in the 2nd round of the Battle 4 Atlantis tournament will be a highlight of the season, as will traveling to Norfolk to beat ODU. If they play to their potential, another late season run could be a possibility. **CT**

No. 19 VCU men's soccer eyes trophy in first A-10 Tournament appearance

Neil Raetz
Staff Writer

Its tournament time for the VCU men's soccer team, and the Rams (10-2-5, 6-1-2) have put themselves in position to accomplish the goal they set at the beginning of the season: winning some championships.

With the regular season now in the rear view and the Atlantic 10 Tournament set to begin on Thursday, the 19th-ranked team in the country begins a postseason with the potential to make a championship run not only in the A-10 but also in the upcoming College Cup.

Senior leader Joseph Haboush, who has played a big role in the team's success so far this season commented on where the team stands now saying, "It feels great, but the work's not done. Hard work has paid off so far but we still have a lot of work to do."

A win last Friday against intercity rival University of Richmond would have secured a first place finish in the A-10 for the Rams but they walked away with a 3-3 draw.

The Spiders of Richmond had something to play for as well in that game with their soccer program being cut after this season to make room for an incoming lacrosse team. Playing against a rival on their senior night, in which a team would never play together again, would not make an easy game for VCU. But a tie was good enough to get the Rams a fourth place finish in the A-10 and still challenge for the tournament title.

It is now at that point of the season where the players and coaches have been waiting and preparing for all year. The chance to take home the A-10 tournament title was a goal from the start of the season and now the Rams have

given themselves a great opportunity to do that this weekend.

The first test will be against a respectable Temple team who comes in as the fifth seed in an eight-team tournament field. Temple finished with the same 6-1-2 conference record as the Rams in a conference schedule that didn't allow all teams to play each other. This will be the first time the Rams will face the Owls from Temple this season, and will be one they are looking forward to.

To take home the A-10 trophy it will take three wins in the next four days. The first game comes Thursday night against Temple with a 5 p.m. kick off time. All of these games will be played at the host site in Charlotte, N.C.

The Charlotte 49ers were also able to take home the first seed in the tournament with a 7-1-1 record. Their only loss came from a 4-1 defeat to that of the Rams at Sports Backers Stadium on Oct. 5 when the 49ers were ranked 13th nationally.

"Like every season, it's a journey," said VCU head coach Dave Giffard in an interview with vcuathletics.com. "There are some highs there's some lows and there's some valleys. We certainly are doing our best to prepare ourselves to continue to have several more highs in the next month or so to come."

"We're getting down to Charlotte playing on a nice field against a lot of good competition, hopefully we can move on beyond the first game but certainly looking forward to the game with Temple," he continued.

The Rams finished the regular season ranked 19th nationally and will look to improve on that ranking the next few weeks closing out the season this weekend with the A-10 tournament and then followed by the NCAA Tournament. **CT**



Junior forward Jason Johnson's (left) 13 regular season goals are tied with six other players for 10th in Division I soccer. Senior defender Juan Arbelaez (right) was tied for third on the team with four assists in the regular season.

PHOTO BY CHRIS CONWAY

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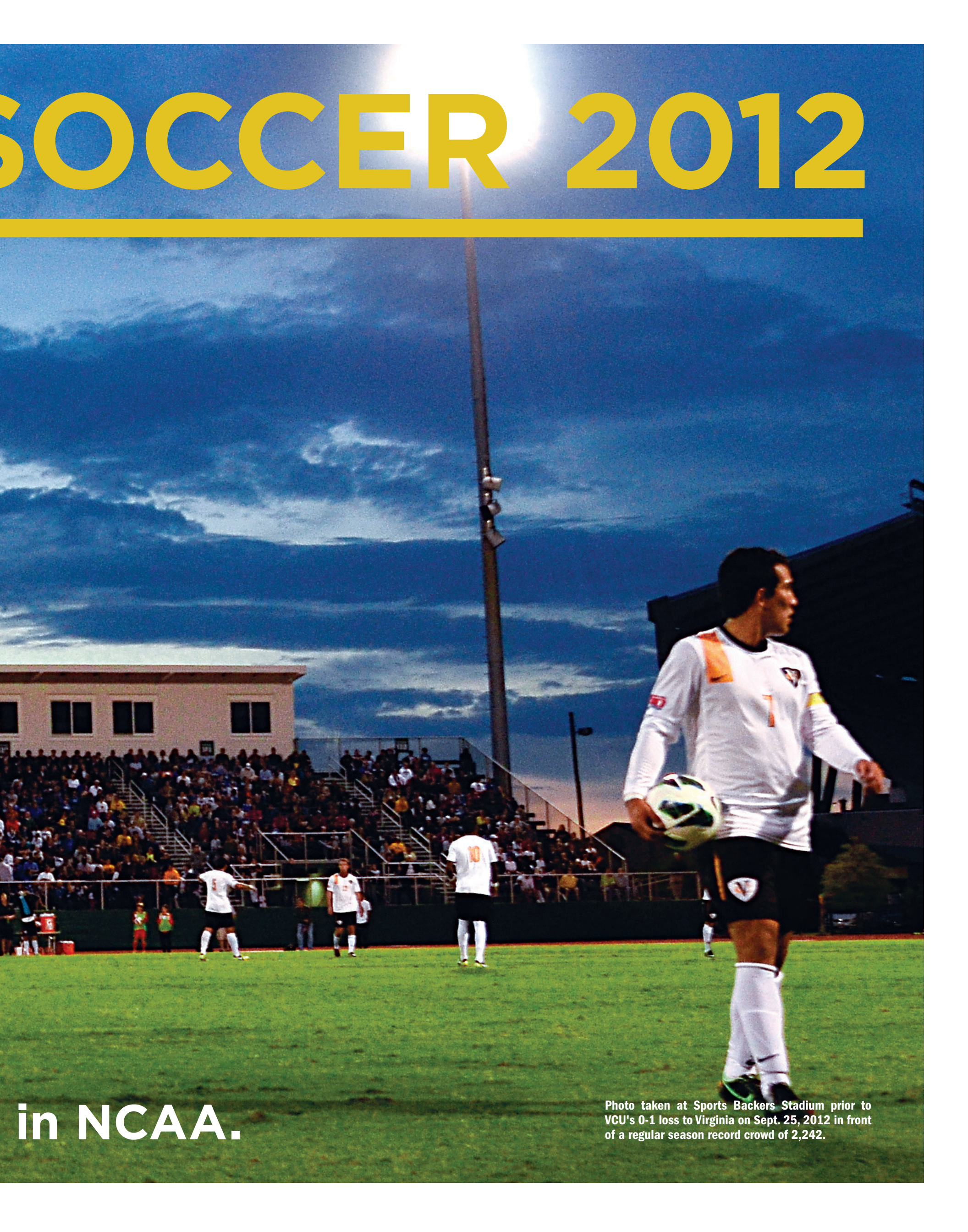
VCU MEN'S S



**Atlantic 10 Tournament No. 4 seed.
6-1-2 A-10, 10-2-5 overall.
Finished regular season ranked 19th**

PHOTO BY CHRIS CONWAY

SOCCER 2012



in NCAA.

Photo taken at Sports Backers Stadium prior to VCU's 0-1 loss to Virginia on Sept. 25, 2012 in front of a regular season record crowd of 2,242.

SPECTRUM

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PHOTOS BY MICHAEL TODD

Sophomore Shane Moran portrays recent college grad and protagonist, Preston, in VCU Theatre's "Avenue Q".

"Avenue Q" puts honesty and hands into puppets

Michael Todd
Assistant Spectrum Editor

The long-running and popular television show "Sesame Street" uses puppets to teach children simple lessons, like how to count or to be nice to your neighbor.

"Avenue Q," the hit Broadway show and VCU Theatre's next Main Stage production, takes this idea one step further.

"Avenue Q" centers around protagonist Preston, a recent college grad about to face the real world on his own for the first time. On its surface, the show

is a lighthearted musical comedy that primarily uses puppets to address very adult content and lessons, like learning to pay bills instead of going out drinking.

However, as VCU students have discovered through the rehearsal process, there is a lot more to the characters of "Avenue Q" than felt, fur and creative sex positions.

The content of the musical—featuring such songs as "If You Were Gay," "The Internet is for Porn," and "Everyone's A Little Bit Racist"—does a pretty good job of entertaining viewers while still communicating points that are

everywhere from negative and hurtful to complicated truths. However, to do this, students had to quickly master the technique of puppeteering in order to communicate their character's stories at all.

The rehearsal process, which began in mid-September, was a difficult one on many levels, the most obvious being the actual operation of the puppets.

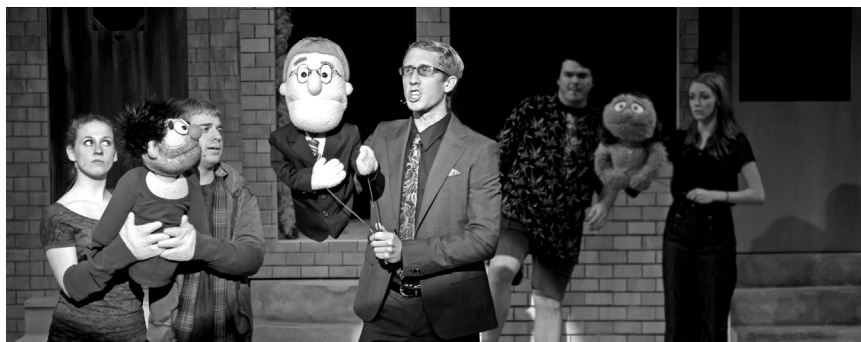
On "Sesame Street," puppeteers are concealed from view. However, all performers operating "Avenue Q" puppets are visible throughout the entire show. This is something audience members are meant to forget as the show goes on

and they find themselves focusing more on the puppets and their stories rather than the puppets themselves.

While puppets like Preston require only one cast member for operation, others like Trekkie Monster and Nicky require multiple performers to bring them to life. Additionally, because costume changes for puppets are essentially impossible, each puppet came with multiple versions of itself for each new outfit worn throughout the show.

Matt Johnson, a VCU graduate student, adjunct faculty and, conveniently, master puppeteer, worked closely with students to help them develop a firm

Continued on page 13



**“THIS IS A PUPPET
SHOW WITH PEOPLE IN IT;
IT IS NOT A SHOW WITH
PUPPETS IN IT”**



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL TODD

Continued from page 12

grasp on the art of acting through puppets.

Actors received rehearsal puppets that followed the basic construction of the actual show puppets in terms of similar size, coloring and manipulation, but lacked distinguishing characteristics like facial features or clothing.

Cast members engaged in a number of motion and focus-based exercises in order to synchronize their movements with that of their puppets. One exercise involved using the puppets eyes to follow a moving balloon around the room while simultaneously singing. Multitasking exercises such as this allowed the actors to manipulate the puppets almost subconsciously, like a second nature.

“In normal puppeteering, you look at the puppet as you use it, so your focus kind of guides the audience’s focus to just the puppet,” said Alan Vollmer, a senior performance major. “But because we’re seen, we’re supposed to look where the puppet is looking. It’s not harder, it’s just different.”

The actors worked in front of mirrors during the first half of the rehearsal process, observing themselves and the ways in which they acted through their puppets. This allowed them to observe themselves—and their puppets—first-hand, and to see what was working and what needed changing.

Certain obstacles arose after the switch from practice to actual puppets. With no two puppets constructed exactly alike, actors had to make small adjustments in the handling.

Another obstacle in the process involved the character development of the puppets, a normal practice for actors that became complicated in the communication of the puppets’ traits.

To help develop the personalities of their puppets, as well as to continue work with movement, actors engaged in “therapy sessions,” led by Johnson, for their characters, with improvised dialogue.

One-on-one coaching helped establish personalities through movements specific to each puppet. As the process progressed, actors adopted and discarded little movements to help define their character and increase a natural feeling.

“You have to make sure it’s always

alive, because if it’s still, it’s dead,” said Maggie Horan, a senior performance major. “Even if its just the smallest movement, you have to make it seem like it’s a human being and nobody is ever just completely stiff.”

The cast found that, rather than over exaggerating with the puppets, subtlety was key.

“What we had to learn was that, the more honest the puppet was, the better,” Horan said. “At first, I was trying to make (the puppet) this cartoon.”

For some cast members, connecting to characters was somewhat seamless, as their own personalities seemed almost to mirror that of their puppet counterparts.

“I relate to my character... in many different ways,” Horan said. “(Kate) has a lot of... personality traits that remind me of myself. She wants to be a good person, and wants everybody to like her ... I really lucked out with getting a part that was so similar to me.”

Others, however, did more digging to connect to more abstract traits shared with their characters.

“At first I found it very hard to connect with Trekkie in being a chronic masturbator,” said Mahlon Raoufi, a sophomore performance major. “He watches a lot of porn, and I don’t even have time to watch some porn... but I was able to connect with his passion. He’s very passionate about this one thing, and that’s just like my passion with other things.”

After becoming comfortable with the technique, actors were able to use much of their previous training in their new characters. As the puppets became extensions of the actors’ bodies, working with them became like doing a regular scene without a puppet. At this point, the cast put the “honesty” back into the show.

“This is a puppet show with people in it; it is not a show with puppets in it,” said Gallahan, attributing the quote to Matt Johnson. “The focus is these puppets that we’re giving life to. It’s their stories, not the other way around.” **CT**

The VIP show “Avenue Q” will open Friday Nov. 9, with a VCU Theatre Student opening Nov. 10. The show will run Nov. 15-17 and Nov. 29 - Dec. 1 at 7:30 pm, Nov. 11, 18 and Dec. 2 at 3:00 pm.



“Avenue Q” is a musical comedy, featuring songs like “Everyone’s A Little Bit Racist” (pictured), “If You Were Gay” and “The Internet is for Porn.”

Interesting People



PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION 2012

Spectrum reporters asked VCU students what their opinions were after Tuesday night's election.



"I'm extremely happy that 'Mittens' lost but Obama wouldn't have been my ideal candidate. I voted for Obama to keep 'Mittens' out of office because he didn't need to be president. I would have liked a third-party candidate to have won, just to allow third parties to gain some kind of credibility. I think third parties need to rise so we can have fourth and fifth parties and have a multiple party system as opposed to this ridiculous bipartisan (stuff) that we're going through right now."

Philip Roberts
Sculpture
Sophomore



"I'm definitely happy for it. That's who I was voting for, who I wanted to win. I thought it was interesting to see how close Florida came. It was extremely close, almost a couple thousand votes. It was good for me. The riots were kind of crazy. I was a little afraid for my safety but those were interesting."

Brianna Upton
Biology
Freshman



"I wish it went the other way. That's all I'll say."

Stephen Pryor
Business Administration
Senior



"I didn't vote. I was too lazy to register, but I'm not going to complain."

Marjan Aghaebrahim
Education
Sophomore



"I felt pretty good, but I'm sure everyone else did too. I heard there were riots, but I just kind of celebrated in my own house."

Negeen Kianersi
Biology
Sophomore



"It excited me, I think. Pro-bama. I like abortion and I like freedom, eagles, liberty."

Kawthar Ahmed
Cinema
Sophomore



"I didn't think that it was going to end up in a little riot going on. I just thought 'Okay, we see who wins,' just because it's always been like that back at home. It was really nice to see how the school just kind of came together and just supported Obama. I didn't think it was going to be like that, so it was a surprise."

Shirley Claire
Math and Fashion Merchandising
Sophomore

Dear Rachel,

I'm a single guy and I don't know how to flirt. I feel like girls don't know when I'm flirting or when I'm just being playful and sarcastic. Any tips?

Flirting Failure



ILLUSTRATION BY PHIL WHISENHUNT

Flirting Failure,

Flirting is easier for men than women; it's just another unfairness among us all.

Any conversation you have with a woman will probably be thought of as flirting by your friends and people just standing around (unless you're talking about video games because women don't call that "conversation.")

Remember, flirting is supposed to be sexy and fun! Keep it that way and don't be creepy.

The easiest way to not be creepy is to be naturally beautiful or hilarious, special bonus if you're both. Besides handsomeness, women love babies and animals and baby animals—turn yourself into a super flirty chick-magnet by carrying at least one of the aforementioned around with you at all times. Easy peasy!

You can also match your flirting with the mysterious bad boy types from movies. Women honestly aren't that hard to understand as long as you watch a romantic comedy every once in awhile.

We are fragile, evil, lovely, dramatic creatures with a penchant for the guy who doesn't call us back. All you have to do is use your first impression to make her believe you're the sexy and mysterious bad boy that you're (probably) not.

Take this scenario for example: you're standing in line at Starbucks and you notice a cute girl in front of you. Casually make a joke about how slow the line is moving, wink at her and shut

up. First, she'll think your drive-by joke was hilarious (funny). Second, she'll find your opposition to the big brother Starbucks refreshing and brave (sexy). Third, she'll be heartbroken when she realizes you ordered your drink and disappeared without a trace (mysterious).

Those three components together ensure you a victory in the flirting department! It's amazing what being fake can do for your confidence! So, in conclusion:

- Barely talk to her, establish your mysteriousness
- Find a way to wink that isn't creepy or disgusting
- Tell a brash joke to shock her and make her laugh
- Disappear forever

Don't let a girl think you're being nice or sarcastic or playful by sticking around and making conversation. You'll only fall into the trap of having a pointless and boring conversation and she will never see you as the sexy or flirty person you're trying to turn into.

Good luck,
Rachel

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PHOTOS BY BRITTANY BARBOUR

Sunday night's Ram Slam was held to complete the team that will participate in competitions for the rest of the school year.

Ram Slam competition team finalized

Hal Dockins
Staff Writer

A spot was up for grabs Sunday night on VCU's award-winning Slam Nahuatl Poetry Team, Ram Slam. The one spot came down to two very talented poets.

Sophomore Josh Braunstein, one of the poets in the running to be chosen for the team said he would be more than happy to be chosen.

"I was on the team last year. It's a lot of fun to perform and compete."

Slam Nahuatl at VCU hosted their third Ram Slam Poetry Competition of the semester on Sunday, Oct. 4 at the Shafer Street Playhouse. The auditorium buzzed with excitement as poets spoke on topics ranging from VCU crime reports to the power of religion.

Braunstein successfully performed his first poem and waited anxiously in the front row for the second round to begin. He was one of only four poets that were chosen to advance to the second round

out of a dozen performers. A panel of five judges gave him some of the highest scores of the night.

In the back of the auditorium sat freshman Shavontae Patrick. She chatted with her friends who congratulated her after her electrifying first-round performance. With the final round upon her and victory within reach, she said it would be nice if the spot on the Slam Team were hers.

Senior Rob Gibson helped launch Slam Nahuatl at VCU in 2010 and said that he is very satisfied with its accomplishments. In 2012, the competitions started and the team went to the College Unions Poetry Slam Invitational. Last year, Ram Slam placed 10th out of about 40 teams total.

It wasn't difficult for Gibson to find poets who were interested in joining Ram Slam.

"I just hit up my friends and we kind of brought some members in from that," Gibson said. "Most members were

recruited via word of mouth (which)... is ironic because (Ram Slam) is all about word of mouth."

Junior Chase Turner was performing for the first time on Sunday night.

"As an artist, I really enjoy people expressing themselves," Turner said. "It's nice to see that in a more direct way with words."

According to the Slam Nahuatl at VCU website, the mission of the group is to "help community members achieve self-actualization through the use of poetry and spoken word."

"Nahuatl" is the language of the Aztec people which translates into "a good, clear sound." Turner believes that the club has already made a tremendous impact at VCU.

"I think that the event is necessary on campus. I think poetry is an essential part of the college community. It serves as a good outlet," Turner said.

After two more poems by Braunstein and Patrick, they found themselves

in a tie for first place and the right to represent the Slam Nahuatl Team in competition. Slam Nahuatl had planned to hold more Ram Slam competitions that would determine the final spot of the two remaining on the roster.

However, in an astonishing decision, by audience vote, both Braunstein and Patrick were selected to represent the Slam Team and the plans for the final Ram Slam were scrapped.

Despite his accomplishments, Braunstein has no plans of slowing down.

"I feel like I'll be able to perform forever," Braunstein said. "As long as I keep living life, I'll have things to write about. The sky is the limit."

With the Slam Nahuatl Team complete, including Braunstein, Patrick, Gibson, senior Breonca Trofort, and sophomore Saidu Tejan-Thomas; attention turned to the "Survivor Slam" Poetry Competition the following night at the Nile Ethiopian Restaurant. **CT**

Survivor Slam gives to the community

Hannah Coates
Staff Writer

Slam Nahuatl, a Richmond-based poetry group whose mission is to uplift the community through poetry, hosted its fourth Survivor Slam of the year at the Nile this past Monday night.

For some, the term Slam Poetry is foreign. Rob Gibson, a VCU student heavily involved with the movement, defines it as, "thoughts, ideas, words, put together in a form of expression that is community-based. It's not just poets talking to themselves," he said.

Slam poetry is not as simple as usual open-mic poetry. There is a level of competition between the performers

because they have a limited amount of time to deliver their previously rehearsed poems. In round one they have one minute, round two they have two and in round three they have three.

There are a few key differences between Ram Slam, the slam poetry competition affiliated with VCU, and Survivor Slam, a Richmond-based group. According to Gibson, who has performed with both, the obvious perks of being at the Nile was the food and the smaller, more intimate setting of being in a restaurant instead of a black box theater.

To Faisal Ilyas, a VCU senior who has performed with the group before, "Ram Slam is a very general audience while

the people (at Survivor Slam) have been coming to slams for a while and therefore there is a greater familiarity."

Another difference between traditional poetry and slam poetry is that there are judges, usually randomly selected from the members, who give points (from one to 10) to each artist. In addition to the judges, the rest of the audience members are encouraged to participate in the evening by "giving love" to the poets in the form of whistling, snapping, "umhumm"-ing and "ahha"-ing whenever they feel something.

"Slam poetry is something ancient," Gibson said. "You can trace it back to Homer and what he did. That was

spoken word poetry. He had all this stuff in his head, thought of lines and one day he starting speaking to the masses. And if you follow the story of Jesus Christ, he also was a spoken word poet who gathered followers by (impressing them) with his words."

Gibson, considering himself a poet and a "manicurist of words," said slam poetry is an important way to communicate to a broader audience.

"It's free to speak but expensive to be heard," he said. "I saw that on the wall at Gallery 5 the first time I performed and it's taken me awhile to fully understand what it means."

Hamilton Graziano, Slam Nahuatl's Slam Master, the host of VCU'S Ram

Continued on page 17



PHOTOS BY AUDRY DUBON

Creator of Ram Slam Rob Gibson (top) and Slam Nahuatl's Slam Master Hamilton Graziano (bottom) both performed at Survivor Slam at The Nile on Monday night.

Continued from page 16

Slam and the coach of VCU's national team (composed of the winners of Ram Slam), enjoys this early art form "because it's therapeutic."

"When I first started writing it was primarily about things I needed to get off my chest and I found that speaking about the things that I couldn't speak about in front of an audience of strangers is very freeing," Graziano said. "It's the rush of that release that draws you in, and once you get the negative stuff it opens you up creatively."

"The spoken word is something all people can connect to. It's not about grammar or anything, it's real people telling real stories," he said.

Ilyas, who came to support on Monday, said, "When people come up to

me and say 'I understand, I get it, what you've said has really helped me get through some things,' it's so rewarding. And that's why I do it."

Survivor Slam, in an attempt to follow through on its mission to uplift the community, donates any and all money that they receive at events. The donation amount Monday night was a suggested \$5 but that much was not required. Currently, proceeds benefit survivors of traumatic accidents and go to the Bruce McCoy Brian Injury Camp for summer 2013.

"I really think what they are doing with Survivor Slam, donating proceeds to charity, is great," Ilyas said. "The whole Slam Nahuatl movement using this art to uplift the community is a really a beautiful thing." **CT**

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OPINION

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ILLUSTRATION BY DAN NACU

America's need for direction

Shane Wade

Opinion Editor

Poll numbers are still coming in and the results of the 2012 presidential election are close, with President Barack Obama courting 50.2 percent of the vote to Governor Mitt Romney's 48.3 percent, according to the Associated Press.

But while Obama supporters riot in the streets, Americans of all political parties need to ask themselves the same question:

Where do we go from here?

It's not uncommon for incumbent officials to keep their seats (President Jimmy Carter notwithstanding). Americans aren't quick to toss a president. It's also common, however, for executive power to switch after that incumbent's second term is over.

For Democrats, that means finding their new Obama as soon as possible. With the exception of the House of Representatives, where Republicans lead them by 41 seats, Democrats have done well this election. There's a swath of viable candidates that'll need to assert their credentials if they want to take up

the president's mantle in four years.

For the Republican Party, the answer is less clear and more dependent on whether or not they take their loss as an indictment of Republican policies and agenda or as a vindication of the ideas of President Obama.

If it is indeed an indictment, Republicans will once more be forced to challenge their current course and pump new blood into their core in the form of personalities, party leadership and policies. If it's considered a vindication, then Republicans will be forced to distance themselves from the more extreme members of their party, including pundits and supporters, and move closer to the political center.

That might mean, unfortunately for them, cooperating with Democrats legislatively and supporting initiatives led by President Obama, or at the least sponsoring alternative initiatives and programs.

For Republicans, it means becoming not only what they tout themselves as, a party of big ideas, but also a party of active ideas.

Unfortunately, old dogs don't learn new tricks. The next few months could,

and probably will, be a repeat of the typical do-nothing obstructionist Congress that Obama faced during his first term and politics as usual.

Contrary to what the hundreds of VCU students that gathered in Monroe Park last night would have you believe, President Obama's re-election is not a transformative mandate by the nation. In comparison to the 2008 election where he received 52.9 percent of the vote, Obama just barely won. His re-election is less about America's faith in his second term agenda and more about America's fear of a Romney presidency.

That's not to take away from Obama's victory or his supporters, but it's important to remember what was forgotten and ignored during the election.

It's one thing for Romney, a conservative that doesn't believe in climate change, to ignore environmental issues, but for Obama to do the same is, for many voters, irreconcilable. Neither politician addressed environmental issues beyond linking them to the economy, nor did they engage in a constructive discussion on how America would lead the world in reversing poor

environmental trends.

Americans voted for the lesser of two evils last night. It's disingenuous to think that Obama's re-election victory was a rebirth of the original movement that brought him into power in the first place. The proof lies within that small percentage point difference in the electoral votes and the fact that his 2008 victory of nine million popular votes dwarfs his roughly three million popular vote lead this time.

We're not living in a new America, but a progressing America, as evident through passed ballot measures in states that legalized marriage equality, like Maryland and recreational marijuana use (in Colorado and Minnesota).

Where we go from here is the decisive question for all Americans. While we're certainly not regressing in terms of our social positions, we, particularly those within Congress, have not yet begun to seriously tackle issues in a collective manner.

To contrast with President Obama's victory speech, for the most part, we are not all Americans. We are a nation artificially divided by our politicians, deeply in need of direction. **GT**



VCU's new buses: overly costly or valuable service

Phil Cunningham
Guest Contributor

Last week, VCU revealed their new bus fleet. It's a new privatized charter run by Groome Transportation, a company founded in Richmond back in the 1930s. It's a transition for VCU, as they've been using the city's Greater Richmond Transit Company buses since 2004.

But what are the implications of these changes?

To lay the groundwork, we've got a local company taking the college students off a few public buses, freeing GRTC to enhance or extend other routes. Groome, as many students might already know, is a quality shuttle service, based in airport travel, but boasting military licensing as well. That's not to mention their service to seven universities in Virginia now with the addition of VCU. The seats are cushioned, the drivers are professional and VCU's logo is absolutely everywhere.

One of the most user-friendly fea-

tures is the RAMRIDE bus locator, a Google-based map with three layers of the Campus Connector, Medical Center, and Sanger routes. Connection points are plotted with the estimated time of arrival of buses en route. There's also a search bar with the connection points already cached, as well as a mobile app.

All of these additional features allow for a more comfortable experience for students, particularly in the coming winter months.

But despite all these innovations and upgrades, there's no guarantee that GRTC will or even can improve or expand its routes for the rest of the city to compete with Groome's buses.

Furthermore, the introduction of VCU buses serve to further remove and isolate students from both the real world and the city. It creates a distinction, either that students are better than other at-large transit users, or that it is a continuation of the K-12 school bus system of shuttling children and young adults between two relative points.

As a VCU student, I'm concerned

about the cost: how is this all being paid for? New buses with amenities, soon to come upgrades and private drivers? That has to cost quite a bit. Is it coming from previous tuition increases and will future increases be directed towards maintaining this transportation system?

I can't help but wonder if this whole thing is indicative of a larger trend; the privatization of public services. Let us not forget that VCU is a public institution, despite quite a few of their practices. It's not the buses themselves that bother me, but rather, the dynamics of policy and underlying power.

For a university that touts itself for being actively engaged with the city, it's odd that they would hire a private company to shuttle students about, separating students from the typical city dweller and elevating students by placing them on buses that are more comfortable than the city buses.

Quite a few different groups stand to gain from this, but the real question is, who is going to lose? **CT**

Mechelle Hankerson
Executive Editor

Shane Wade
Opinion Editor

the
ct

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